‘Battlefields of Shame’

A Socio-analytic Study of Overtly Known Workplace Transgression

by

Susan Caroline Mravlek

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Declaration of Originality

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis, nor does the thesis contain any material that infringes copyright.

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Susan Caroline Mravlek
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Authority of Access

Susan Caroline Mravlek

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Abstract

This research explores how organisational experience and behaviours are shaped when the culture has been permeated by an overtly known workplace transgression. The purpose is to build knowledge to better understand and deal with the impact of workplace transgressions within organisations. The study is based on a collection of case studies of individual experience of members of an organisation in which an overtly known transgression occurred. The study takes an inductive, exploratory approach using socio-analytic methodology to understanding complex group dynamics.

In all cases unacknowledged shame emerged as the overarching theme. This theme centred on anger used to control shame, withdrawal employed to conceal shame, and dissociation to deny shame. The study concludes that shame is a ubiquitous dynamic in the aftermath of an overtly known workplace transgression, and is unrecognisable and fiercely defended against to prevent exposure of organisational and leadership failings. Further those impacts are not only devastating morally, but also psychologically for both the individual and organisation, and that the experience of moral transgression may leave longstanding transmission of shame that is unrecognisable for decades. Critically, organisations need to be receptive to creating awareness of the hidden language of shame; investing time to enable expression of shame and consideration of moral injury, without prejudice. Addressing these issues is crucial for voices to be respectfully heard.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the 1950s there has been increasing social pressure (societal and organisational forces) in public advocacy (Carroll 1999) for organisations to do good and correct injustices on the social impact of business in society (Folger & Skarlicki 2008), with the intent to improve the responsiveness to those they serve (Luo 2005). This resulting in greater consciousness and adoption of social responsibility (morality and ethical) ideologies within organisations, whose policies and activities regulate assurances of both social and economic development (Cohen & Simnett 2015; Driver 2006; Minor & Morgan 2011; Stachowicz-Stanusch 2015). These are largely conceptualised as 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (CSR) (Carroll 1999) and corporate governance that align with an organisation's identity and vision, and embedded organisational values that are quantifiable (Shaw 2016). The general belief is that a socially responsible business will institute the enactment of altruistic ethical ideals in their business dealings and foster the perception of organisational virtuousness in its organisational members (Tsachouridi & Nikandrou 2016). Optimistically, emphasis is on positive human affect and to motivate behaviours that surpass self-interest in entitlements (Levermore 2011); thereby mitigating malevolent capitalistic virtues of greed, individualism, materialism, abuses of power and corruption (Hoggett 2010; Long 2008)

Yet paradoxically, recent global research on the 'darker side' of organisational misconduct and systemic ethical dilemmas, particularly following the global financial crisis in 2008 suggests a paucity of will and an illiberal approach by organisations that are permeated by dynamics of systemic perversion (Long 2008; Long & Sievers 2013). Within Australia, this contradiction in behaviour is evident in the high number (thirteen) of Royal Commissions appointed by the Australian Government since 2000[1] across varying business sectors that has exposed the fault lines of immorality embedded in major Australian institutions and society. As an under researched area, the commonalty of findings from these investigations suggests corporations and institutions alike are more focused on undertaking observable compliance activities to satisfy community, investors and/or regulators, than they are on acknowledging wrongdoings[2].

[1] The list of all Royal Commissions and Commissions of Inquiry (the nomenclature varies) appointed by the Australian Government, under the provisions of the Royal Commissions Act 1902. It does not include Royal Commissions appointed by Australian state or territory governments, unless the Australian Government was also involved.

[2]https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Browse_by_Topic/law/royalcommissions

Organisational values and moral virtues tend to be used as an espoused stance by organisations, to insure against reputational damage (Minor & Morgan 2011). More so, social responsibility is opportunistically used as a diversionary instrument (McMurray 2015) to avoid the observing of eye of evaluating others (internal and external regulators) or as a denial of unethical or immoral practices and/or non-disclosure of practices that are exploitive and opportunistic of employees for the sake of profit and power (Pearce & Manz, 2011). More critically, social responsibility is not so much concerned with good governance, rather on preserving an organisation's reputation that enables them to sustain market share, when confronted by intense competition from other rivalling organisations (Minor & Morgan 2011).

These principled intentions arguably defensively mask exposure and reputational damage of organisation's public exposure of corruption and exploitation of resources in consumerist demand for perpetual growth (McMurray 2015). These forces in its effect have driven perverse systemic behaviour, embodying collusive relationships (Chapman, 2003), moral loss, judgement and moral injustice that are often denied in the business world (Hopper 2003). Conflicted, by moral reasoning, organisations frequently deny the existence of this un-discussable 'dark side' of organisational life. Seemingly, challenged by various stakeholder demands that are a disconnection from organisational reality around financial performance, the implicit assumption about capitalism is that people are basically acquisitive, individualistic and materialistic. As a result, the propensity for such behaviour seems to be reinforced by cultures of individualism, with no consideration for the trauma or psychological damage inflicted on its employees or the greater good of the organisation and society in general they are members of (Lewis 2018).

This research is an exploration into the 'darker side' of organisational life, in the wake of overtly known workplace transgressions that are often ignored, denied or concealed in society. It investigates what is the felt experience of eighteen individuals from varying fields, positions and hierarchical rank, and their experience of being in the midst of social and organisational forces in the fall out of transgression. It examines the impacts of these experiences on the individuals and the system, based on the individual's group membership experience. Moreover, the exploration delves deeply into the complexities of the conscious and unconscious processes by which individuals, as well as groups, come to feel and avoid feeling these experiences and other interrelated emotions.

The thesis takes a socio-analytic approach to study these impacts and associated psychological processes. Socio-analysis as an interdisciplinary framework is a confluence of

theory and methodological practices from the field of open systems, group relations and psychoanalysis that in its application, facilitates deeper understanding of group functioning, more specifically the unconscious attributes of group life. My application of this theoretical and methodological framework provided the necessary containment to undertake an interpretivist approach for my investigation to understand the individual's perception of group functioning post transgression, to explore the participants' emotional experience of how the work was performed, and how in turn these social processes regulate group functioning and social cohesion. From this stance formed my primary research questions: 'What are the elements of the lived experience of individuals within organisations where an overtly known workplace transgression had occurred?' and 'How can those experiences be understood at an individual and system level?'.

What emerged is the overarching theme of unacknowledged shame. Although the individual experiences are subjective accounts, the findings highlight that emergent destructive forces associated with hidden shame are prone to be in any organisation, indiscriminate of sector, role, hierarchical level or gender. It brings awareness to the experience of being in a system dominated by rivalry, acquisition and imbalanced power relations. I argue that the perpetrators of workplace transgressions represent systemic perversions related to shaming authorities that infect social relations within organisations and more broadly across societal level. The shamed organisational system unconsciously colludes with the transgressor in subsequently shaping a maladaptive culture.

I also contend the manifestation of shame is a self-perpetuating dynamic; ubiquitous and invisible in its presence in organisations, yet, fiercely defended against to prevent exposure of organisational and leadership failings. The shaming effects are damaging and distorting for both individuals and systems that cause pathological behaviour of denial or withdrawal, causing any expression of shame to be unconsciously hidden or disguised (Lewis 1971; Lewis 1995; Lynd 1958; Kaufman 1996). More so, the impact is of systems that maintain disorder and unconsciously perpetuate shame, by way of obfuscating the reality of their failings. These findings are exemplified through the four individual participant case studies that are highlighted in this study (Chapters 5 – 8) whose experience is based on four different organisations, of varying industry sectors and explores how hidden shame shaped organisational behaviour, as a result of the moral dilemmas. The deep level analysis undertaken of these case studies typifies what was consistently found across all the cases, as happening in organisations and institutions of Australian society.

Drawing on the primary research questions I considered the findings through fours thematic lens. These lens' briefly listed here, are 'Objectification', to control shame in silencing dissent; 'Self-mutilation' as a self-harming processes to kill off unwanted (inferior) parts of the organisation; 'Impossible speech' in which the burden of shame held on behalf of the organisation by moral agents and finally, 'Moral injury' which represents the traumatic enduring effects of the trauma of shame and unresolved conflict.

For the purposes of this study, a transgression is an act of wrongdoing or misconduct that violates legal, ethical or social boundaries. Such incidents may include, but are not limited to collusion, embezzlement, financial inducements, price fixing, insider trading, inappropriate marketing, misleading investors/clients, misappropriating funds/resources, theft, vandalism, political deviance (gossiping and favouritism), coercion, bullying and harassment. By overtly, I mean an incident that has public awareness; be it through internal and/or external intervention, media awareness and/or prosecution. A key finding of this study is that all the cases related to a moral transgression, centred on leadership improprieties that involved emotionally abusive relations, which ruptured social bonds and violated social (moral/ethical) norms. Furthermore, the term moral is used in this study, as conveyed by participants, to mean fundamental expectations about how one/groups should behave and how things should function in organisations and in society (Breslavs 2013). These assumptions are either tacit or explicit, based on personal and shared cultural, legal and societal rules for social behaviour.

Moral injury in this study is defined as involving an act of transgression that creates dissonance and conflict because of contravention of deeply held moral beliefs about right and wrong (Hogan & Dickstein 1972; Litz et al. 2009; Shaw 2016). I refer to participant observations of incidents of injustice that they believed were immoral by nature, the experience of which caused some form of harm or injury. These incidents involve a victim (generally the participant) or other victims, experiencing abuse or reactions that upon reflection contravene deeply held moral beliefs and expectations. They may also involve bearing witness to, learning of immoral acts, engaging in or failure to prevent inhumane or persecutory actions (Litz et al. 2009).

I do not present or depend on any specific theory of morality, as this is not the core focus or outcome of this study. However, I refer to 'moral injustice' where leaders (perceived as perpetrators of abuse) are conveyed by participants as disingenuous, hypocritical, untrustworthy and manipulative, inflicting unfair/wrongful acts on employees/clients that influence participants reactions to maltreatment of others. These were generally based on their own, as well as the organisation's moral codes/values or the ethics of social

responsibility. Participants were often critical of how the efficacy of organisational and legislative rules are flouted, yet held conflicting beliefs that most of the perpetrators (leaders/systems) are inherently benevolent. Generally, the main offender is perceived as the perpetrator of abuse and scapegoated for the demise of the organisation's social identity, culture and performance.

From a socio-analytical perspective, the community, regulators, intrusive governing boards and senior executive leadership of these social systems are all collusive in relations and major contributors of moral injustice and shame dynamics that permeated these systems. The inequities experienced and understood by participants as psychologically injurious, a consequence of the workplace transgression. Deemed as highly distressing and unforgettable events, participants were victims to some degree of psychological abuse, as well as, bearing witness of others being hurt. Moral injury is therefore a key finding of this research, which its application in this study is defined as involving an act of transgression that creates dissonance and conflict because it violates assumptions and beliefs about right and wrong and of personal goodness (Hogan & Dickstein 1972; Litz et al. 2009; Shaw 2016).

My interest in this research topic is to provide clarity and deepen organisational understanding on this puzzling social phenomenon that is from my own personal experiences morally injurious and traumatising. It is an under researched topic that has little empirical research conducted from a qualitative stance in the fields of social psychology, systems psychodynamics, socio-analysis or business management. There is a vital need to further understanding on how to address the perplexing negative emotional responses that arise and get embedded in organisational cultures. This study fulfils the need in understanding the role hidden shame plays in how it dysregulates human social life within an organisational environment.

The metaphorical reference to warfare reflected in the title of this thesis summarises the brutality experienced by individuals (as actors and victims of immorality) in being in an organisation in the aftermath of a transgression, where a key component of the various abusive relations were played out in organisational landscape that became a battlefield. I came to identify the experiences of the dynamic as shame as the motivating destructive social force. The battlefield was a common term used by participants, as was the metaphor of 'arena' in describing the 'setting' in which the abusive relations were experienced. Extending Sievers (2000, p. 4) notion of this metaphoric concept, I argue that organisations are incapable of acknowledging shame associated with the destructiveness with competition or battle for market share. The aggression projected is against perceived 'enemies (judging other). I argue

the aggression is driven by fear of annihilation, in which shame is perpetually re-triggered based on fear of exposure and negative evaluation in their dealings with competition. In these ways 'endless warfare' is created against fantasised enemies, in which responsibility and shame for the destructiveness is denied (Sievers 2000, p. 4).

The research also shows that it is not uncommon for shame reactions to be triggered by historical transgressive events. Furthermore, employees caught in aftermath, often become victims of abusive relations. The impact on employee's psyche and behaviour, particularly on an emotional level, within these systems is under reported. The findings of this research show a real need for empathic responses that acknowledge and speak of these contagions, specifically of shame, and most critically, hear the voices of those shamed by a morally transgressive system.

Regarding research limitations, as explored in detail in Chapter 11 section 11.3, one was the sensitivity to the research topic. The organisations I approached (which are discussed in in more detail under section 1.1.1) appeared to have an aversion or defensive resistance to wanting to engage with this topic. This required me to redesign my research approach. Another limitation was the time required to undertake deep immersion into the data and develop understanding of unacknowledged shame. Shame was not a concept I set out to study and had little theoretical knowledge of. My awareness emerged during the analytical phase of the research and required extended time in which to comprehend and integrate the theory. Last, the lack of mindfulness of shame proneness (one's own and that of the research participant) has the potential to unknowingly re-trigger shame and unwittingly cause a participant to re-live a traumatic experience; contaminating relations and causing intolerable anxieties in working with the material.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate from a socio-analytical perspective how organisational experience and behaviours are shaped when the culture has been permeated by an overtly known workplace transgression (Hopper 2012; Long & Sievers 2013; Tang et al. 2011). It seeks to promote discourse on a topic that is all too commonly silenced. I draw into this introduction the significant findings of the research as a container for what is to come, for the journey that I took to discover these things.

The impact of the negative human emotion of shame in organisational and societal contexts tends to be avoided, denied or hidden. Yet, as a core social emotion it vitally regulates and shapes our relational interactions and guides ethical constitution. When relational ties are violated by moral transgression, shame is activated, and when unacknowledged, the impact

at both an individual and group level can be felt as catastrophic. As a cultural phenomenon, the impact of shame is insidious and destructive on organisational functioning, not only from a commercial sense but also in its ability to be a commanding social force that demarcates our relational experience from inclusion to exclusion. The immediacy of impact is inescapable, with shame having an extraordinary ability to immobilise us, to incapacitate our ability to function coherently. It can psychologically debilitate for a lifetime.

Shame, at an unconscious group level, manifests in abusive cycles of behaviour that are enacted in ensuing battles between victims and perpetrators and engages others as accomplices to 'turn a blind eye' in the act of exerting power and control (Long 2008). These can be understood as social defence behaviours mobilised to avoid intolerable experiences of shame. They range as controlling shame with anger; concealing shame through withdrawal; and compensation, and denying shame by dissociation. Organisational behaviour becomes an interchange between hostility and an aberrant desire to deviate from moral principles (Mravlek 2016). This behaviour re-triggers shame and re-traumatises an organisation that then, in its wake, struggles to recover legitimacy and reputation. In this pattern, shame can stay unrecognisable within the organisational system for decades.

At an individual level, shame can make us feel objectified, invalidated, mutilated, assaulted, violated (emotional and psychological), obfuscated, isolated, alienated, engulfed, rejected, abandoned, enraged, contempt, disdain, disgust, disappointed, distrust, paranoid, indifferent, confused, doubtful and misunderstood. These are but a few more consistently identified felt experiences found in this study. Organisational shame effectively dehumanises its employees, and at worst, annihilates sense of self and the systems identity (Asser 2004; Kane 2012; May 2017; White 2004). This research is about such experiences. It is concerned with how the impacts of overtly known workplace transgression shape organisational behaviour. It focuses on the experiences of individuals in such situations.

1.1: Research Focus and Design Development

The aim of this research is to investigate from a socio-analytical perspective, how organisational experience and behaviours are shaped when the culture has been permeated by an overtly known 'workplace transgression'; specifically the after effects of such an event (Hopper 2012; Long & Sievers 2013; Tang et al. 2011). It aims to explore how groups deal with the tensions of preserving a group's identity during the aftermath (Clancy 2012; Clancy, Vince & Gabriel 2012; Haynes, Campbell & Hitt 2010; Jensen 2009; Resick et al. 2013). Coming to this focus has been a slow emergent process. The following articulates the

experience of this process. The trajectory is included here as both explanation of the emergence and as documentation of the beginnings of my understanding of the threat inherent in researching such a sensitive topic as workplace transgression.

1.1.1: First iteration – Basic Assumption Family

Initially, the objective of my doctoral research was to explore groups where group life is experienced 'as if' it were a family as an attempt to deal with the anxieties associated with perversity and the restoration of moral order. This was the juncture at which I concluded a yearlong action research project in in the third and final year of the Master of Applied Science (Organisation Dynamics), a degree that was conceptually based in systems psychodynamics theory and application.

The objective in this first iteration of the doctoral research focus was to confirm or otherwise what surfaces as basic assumption behavior (Bion 1961) when an organisation's value system has been violated by an abuse of power and authority as a result of systemic perversity. The working hypotheses coming out of the master's study was that instinctive reactions to immorality within the work environment are to regress and recreate the family unit in which to enact authority relations; the family system being where we first formulate our moral codes. In the masters research findings, I argue that the experience of an organisation's ethical and/or moral boundaries being violated surfaces associated anxieties, which cause individuals to mobilise regressive behaviours in the form family roles. This I viewed as a maladaptive response, as a pattern of basic assumption behavior enacted by groups (both consciously and unconsciously) in the hope that these family relations would be a solution to restoring moral order. The basic assumption behaviour is seen as a defense that is mobilised in order to control and reduce the intolerable feelings of anxiety associated with the deviation from moral norms.

Organisational and socio-analytic theorists (Bowen 1976; Brown 1999; Brown & McCartney 1996; Casey 1999; Hirschhorn & Gilmore 1980; Turquet 1974a) support these ideas, contending that the family dynamic can be enacted in small groups or coexisting subsystems as a means of providing paternalistic structure to maintain and regulate varying degrees of cohesiveness, attachment, developmental transition and intergroup conflict. Thus I wanted to research whether organisations affected by 'workplace transgression' mobilsed dynamics of this 'Basic Assumption Family'.

Further thirst for knowledge in this area derived from my own experience as a Human Resource Executive in dealing with workplace transgressions. I observed first-hand how commonplace transgressions become destructive, and saw the crippling effects on teams across all hierarchal and functional levels, as well as the organisation as a whole. I saw how often the cost, from reputational, operational, psychological and social perspectives is so significant, yet often denied.

This first iteration of the doctoral proposal was titled 'Basic Assumption Family: A Research of Maladaptive Responses to Cultures of Perversity' with the central research question being, 'In what ways do organisational systems enact family dynamics when imbued by a culture of perversity?' However, on testing interest in being involved with such research with members from professional networks, there was clear discomfort. I found myself being steered by others' influence to explore what impacts governance may have on an organisation in managing tensions in having to preserve a group's ethos or purpose in the face of external demands. This became central to the research question.

I struggled with the authenticity of this focus and felt conflicted. I had grave concerns about the deviation. It raised questions in my mind about my collusion in presenting a topic or aim that felt safe for the other. It was masking the reality of what I was actively seeking to explore, which for me felt a violation of an ethical boundary. I concluded that to do so, I was being disingenuous and allowing myself to be coerced into enacting the perverse dynamics I was wanting to study. I recognised my masking of the research orientation as a defensive position mobilised to avoid the intolerable feelings of anxiety associated with unpleasant, perhaps even threatening connotations of the research topic. Later I came to understand this more deeply as also my own defensive, submissive reactions to the shame of not creating a 'good enough' research topic in the eyes of the 'other'.

1.1.2: Second iteration – the aftermath of workplace transgression 'whole of organisation' case study

I started listening to my gut and in so doing knew that it was critical for me to be authentic in my approach. To do otherwise would comprise me and my study. This led to the current iteration of the research topic - 'A Socio-Analytic Study of the Effects of Overtly Known Workplace Transgression'. Though there is no reference to family in this title, the fascination with the ideas of basic assumption family remains unchanged. However, I no longer endeavoured to test the original hypothesis: the study instead focused on being inductive

rather than deductive; an emergent exploration of the impact or overtly known workplace transgression on organisations.

In designing this research, I intended first to conduct a preliminary investigation about the experiences of individuals from a range of fields with experience of a transgression that may have occurred in a current or past organisation they had worked in. It was anticipated that the outcomes of this first stage would inform the development of the research design for the second stage; a case study of a whole organisation. This was my ideal scenario in being able to holistically and rigorously explore organisational dynamics where an overtly known organisational transgression had occurred. It was anticipated that entry to an organisation would most likely to emerge from either the preliminary investigation or identification of a potential case study organisation through a search of publicly available data on companies within Australia who had a recent record of an overtly known transgression.

Twenty organisations were identified in publicly available records as potential research partners. In sixteen cases, I approached these organisations by way of a formal introductory letter or email. In four other cases, I directly approached leaders who I had previous professional relationships with. Considerable time and effort was spent in meeting with the CEO's/Executive Leader of these organisations, and in follow up meetings with various senior leaders. In some cases, this what felt like a 'courtship' that spanned three to six months' in duration. It is also worth noting that three of the local government organisations (two of which had been under administration) declined any involvement within a twenty-four hour period of receipt of my email. In one case, the executive assistant to the CEO rang me to inform me personally. During this call, my phone line was scrambled and was cut off. The executive assistant called back immediately in a heightened state of concern and told me she thought I had been attacked.

Unfortunately, none of the organisations approached were willing to agree to participate as a case study organisation/research partner. The reasons were eclectic and in common. They included a lack of resourcing, lack of time, changes in leadership, or there were too many organisational changes and research did not fit with their priorities. Given this disappointing, yet telling outcome, I deferred any further recruitment activity for a 'whole' of organisation to study. I was feeling again like a lightning rod for confused feelings I could not yet fully understand, but what I now know to be feelings of shame; shame about not providing these organisations with a palatable research question, infused no doubt with some projective material relating to workplace transgressions from the organisation members themselves. I felt I had opened Pandora's Box.

1.1.3: Third and final iteration – individual case studies

The third and final iteration of the research focus and design became that which I had earlier planned as a preliminary stage with the research topic staying the same and the design being exploration of case studies of experience of members of organisations in which an overtly known transgression occurred. By overtly, I mean an incident that has public awareness; be it through internal and/or external intervention, media awareness and/or prosecution.

The study became based in the data from eighteen semi-structured interviews of individuals who worked in a range of sectors in state, national and global organisations. The research participants are typically at a relatively senior level, all of whom volunteered to explore their experiences as a member of an organisation in which an overtly known transgression occurred. The nature of transgressions range from bribery and fraud, sexual misconduct, violating religious prescriptions, embezzlement and kickbacks, breaches of governance, corruption of internal electoral processes, abuse of staff welfare, to unlawful expulsion of a CEO.

The study employs three main methods to gain insight into participant experiences. These include face to face and skype interviews, the unique tool of role drawings, and intensive reflexive examination of the researcher's emotional experience through attention to transference, countertransference and somatic counter transference phenomenon. Further, the use of psychoanalytic concepts illuminates deeper understanding of the data. Given the explorative nature of the study, findings were iterative and progressive in their emergence.

The key questions to the research became:

- What are the elements of the lived experience of individuals within organisations where an overtly known workplace transgression had occurred?
- How can those experiences be understood at an individual and system level?

As such, I commenced my research in a position of not knowing (Berg & Smith 1988; Bollas 1989) with intent to have working hypotheses and questions emerge from the experience of the research and analysis of data.

1.2: Thesis Structure

The thesis structure and content is outlined in the following manner:

Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical frame of socio-analysis and the confluence of theories used in this study. The literature review then moves into examining the concept of shame and interrelated theories on attachment, trauma and the phenomenological manifestations of shame as social defences in organisations. Chapter 3 outlines the research design and the underpinning philosophical stance undertaken. It articulates the strategy of inquiry that incorporates interpretivist approaches and socio-analytical methodology and methods of data collection, as well as methods of data analysis used to explore the research question.

Chapter 4 acquaints the reader with contextual understanding of the four individual case studies presented to exemplify the core findings of the study. Each case is outlined separately in Chapters 5 to 8. These chapters articulate interpretation of the experience of unacknowledged shamed in the aftermath of an overtly known workplace transgression. This is analysed through the themes of shame spiral, controlling shame, concealing shame and denying shame. Chapter 9 provides an understanding on how I came to identify unacknowledged shame and presents an overview of nuanced findings. Chapter 10 discusses the significance of the findings. Chapter 11 summarises the major findings and discussion points from the preceding chapters. It also presents the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1: Introduction

As the research progressed the pattern of data revealed shame as the central organising theme of this thesis. As such, the literature review focuses on existing knowledge about shame, within both socio-analytic [3] and mainstream literature, with the intent to add depth of understanding to analysis of the data and to discover where the research can extend existing knowledge.

First, I begin with an outline of the socio-analytic concepts of Group Relations, Open Systems and Psychoanalytic theory that are the foundations of the primary conceptual framework of the research. Specifically I review the psychodynamic theories on unconscious processes, including transference (Bion 1967; Ogden 1979; Thompson 1994), countertransference (Racker 2018) and somatic countertransference (Margarian 2017), followed by a review of object relations (Klein 1959), intersubjectivity and social defences (Benjamin 1988; Jaques 1955; Long 2006; Menzies-Lyth 1988). Psychoanalytic developments on ideas of shame are woven through these reviews.

The second part of the chapter focuses specifically on shame. I found the topic of shame both salient and seemingly avoided, often obscured within literature on organisational culture. As a little understood emotion, shame has seemingly only been explored as an affect in its own right in the last seventy or so years despite the significant impact that it has on human functioning. I explore conceptual understandings of shame more broadly within interrelated theories of moral transgression and moral failure (Gilbert 1997; Lewis 1971; Lewis 1995; Scheff 1988), attachment (Ainsworth 1969; Bowlby 1958, 1960a, 1960b; Bretherton 1992; Fonagy 2004), trauma (Curnow 2007; Gordon 2007; Hopper 2003, 2012; Tehrani 2010) and social defence strategies against shame of attack self/other, avoidance and withdrawal (Kish-Gephart et al. 2009; Nathanson 1987, 1994; Oathes & Ray 2008; Scheff 1988; Scheff & Retzinger 2001).

[3] The reference to socio-analysis is to Long's (2013) definition that, 'Socioanalysis is psychoanalysis linked to systems thinking in order to explore individuals (as social animals), groups, organisations, and society' (p.xix-xx).

2.2: Application of Socio-Analytic Concepts to the Research

The theoretical concepts that underpin the research are based in a socio-analytic framework. This framework allows exploration of both conscious and unconscious processes that influence and shape group functioning within social systems. In this research, the theoretical applications are utilised to explore and understand the relationship between research participants and their experience of being in an organisational system in the aftermath of an overtly known workplace transgression, including the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Morgan 2009).

Socio-analysis is an interdisciplinary field that integrates the three theory streams of psychoanalysis (De Board 2006; Diamond & Allcorn 2003; Huffington et al. 2004), group relations (Barnes, Ernst & Hyde 2017; Bion 1961; Fraher 2004; Hirschhorn 1997; Wells 1995), and open systems theory (Argyris 1952; Emery & Trist 1965; Miller 2001; Morgan 2006; Scott & Davis 2015; Trist 1980; Weisbord 2012). I define these theories in detail further down in this section (p 12-15).

Figure 1 below, highlights the main threads of theory and ideas that inform a socio-analytic approach.

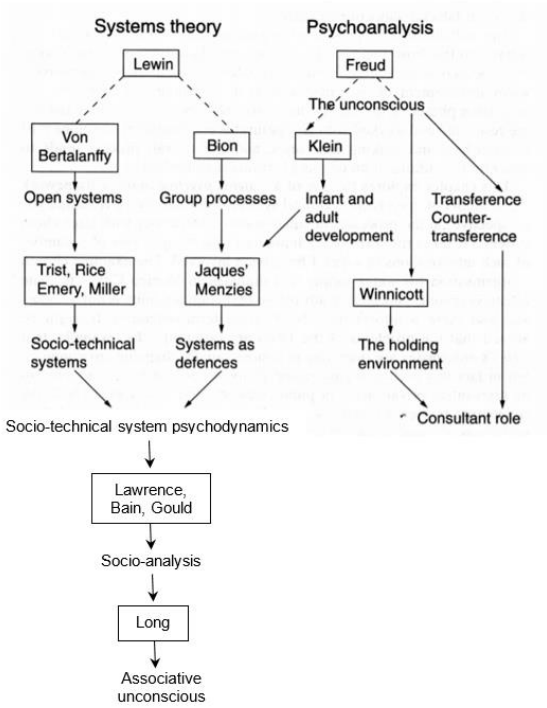

Figure 1: Genealogy of Socio-analysis

Source: Adapted from Miller 1997

The origins of socio-analysis traces back to the work of the Tavistock Institute in the United Kingdom. The Tavistock Institute was founded in London after World War II by a group of professionals from varying disciplines of anthropology, psychology, psychiatry, neurology and general medicine. Utilising a multidisciplinary approach of psychoanalytical, group relations and open system thinking, their aim was to explore the nature of shellshock that was experienced by soldiers in the war, and the implications of their findings for post-war organisations (Fraher 2004). In pioneering action-oriented philosophy, the Tavistock Institute linked social sciences with medicine and psychiatry (Trist & Murray 1990). The Institute was influential in developing ways to apply psychoanalytic and open systems concepts to group and organisational life. Today, the Tavistock Institute continues on in its dedication to the study of human relations within organisations, communities and broader societies, as well as being a stimulus for the development of systems psychodynamic theory and work practices globally (Fraher 2004; Trist & Murray 1990).

Socio-analysis more currently complements and elaborates on the Tavistock tradition of a systems psychodynamics perspective. Socioanalysis as developed within Australia, is, in the main, more particularly used by organisational consultants and researchers as a synthesised discipline, adding to and enriching theoretical developments in varying psychoanalytic and complex systemic perspectives, such as systemic perversion (Long 2008; Long & Sievers 2013; Sievers 2006). Working in professional affiliation with the 'International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organisations' (ISPSO) (Long 2018a), the objective of such collaborative endeavours has widened the focus of a systems psychodynamic stance in the scientific exploration of human social phenomena, using the strengths of a psychoanalytic approach to better understand systemic issues that prevail in organisations (Stamenova & Hinshelwood 2018). Socio-analysis examines societal influences on organisations (social, cultural and political phenomena) and how they impact social relations, including within and between social systems (Long 2018b; Long & Sievers 2013). Essentially, socio-analysis facilitates learning how these dynamics are interrelated (Long 2018a).

As an extension of systems psychodynamics, the discipline promotes the strategic thinking of social systems through exchange of ideas, best-practice, theory, knowledge and experience in the field of predominately academics, organisational consultants and researchers. These advancements have been significant in the development of methods in which to study unconscious social processes. These include, but not limited to, organisational role analysis (Newton, Long & Sievers 2006) organisational observation (Hinshelwood 2018), socio-analytic interviewing (Long & Harding 2013), system drawing (Nossal 2013) to illuminate workplace

issues, social photo matrix (Sievers 2018), social dreaming, (Lawrence 1998) which is a method where unconscious social processes are expressed through dreaming, and listening posts (Khaleelee & Stapley 2018). Socio-analysis is conceptualised on the understanding that unconscious processes occur collectively and systemically. It provides a lens that assists in surfacing what belongs of the group/social system rather than the individual, though the individual may contain aspects of the unconscious phenomena. Moreover, socio-analysis enables understanding that different groups unconsciously represent an aspect of a whole organisation or a whole institution, much as individuals unconsciously represent something of the group-as-a-whole (Long 2018b).

Of noteworthy prominence is Susan Long, a contemporary theorist and researcher in the field. Long furthers the cumulative contributions of Bion, Gould, and Bain (Mersky 2015, p. 287) in the exploration of unconscious dynamics of groups, organisations and society. Long argues that to 'access' the unconscious in organisations and society, exploration should be within and between social systems (Long 2018a, 2018b). Drawing on the philosophical ideology of Charles Sanders Peirce about abductive logic and the associative unconscious (theory of collective thinking), Long (2018a) adopts Pierce's ideology, contending it is most useful to investigate collective phenomena. Long describes this as 'a matrix of thought that links members of a community at an unconscious level' (Mersky 2015, pp. 287, citing Long 2010). Long adds, 'knowledge is generated collectively' based on relations with others and that 'thought is collectively owned and discovered' (p. 287). This means that thought is a social process that reflects the thinking of a group/system. From a socio-analytic perspective, an individual's thinking is therefore considered a representation on behalf of a group. Using abductive logic in the investigation of social phenomenon, socio-analytic methods facilitate bringing into awareness the collective unconscious, in which valuable insights can be gained in thinking about systems.

The following describes the three streams of socio-analytic theory as they apply to this research: Group Relations theory; Open Systems theory; and Psychoanalytic theory.

2.2.1: Group Relations Theory

Conceptually, Group Relations theory is a confluence of action learning/action research, psychoanalytic and open systems theories (Fraher 2004). Kurt Lewin (1947) was instrumental in his contributions to this theoretical development. Based on learning from experience, the emphasis is about self-in-role and relatedness between self and other, self and group, intra

group dynamics, intergroup dynamics and the organisational system as a whole in the context of the broader social system (Miller 1990; Wells 1990) .

Furthering theoretical developments, it is Wilfred Bion (1961) who made the most significant contribution to group relations theory (Alderfer 1987; Fraher 2004). Bion forwarded a theory on group processes about intra-group and intergroup behaviour that provide a link to unconscious experience. Bion's idea is that every group has two groups that operate at different times in the group's life: the 'Work Group', which is focused on achievement of an agreed task; and the 'Basic Assumption Group', which is focussed on threats to the group's survival and is manifest in a range of unconscious defensive behaviours (Bion 1961).

This unconscious behaviour can obstruct or prevent achievement of task. Bion's idea is that groups oscillate between the two modes of functioning in response to the tension and anxiety of the group as it goes about organisational and work life (Bion 1961; Fraher 2007; Rioch 1975). Bion (1961) believes that there are three distinct emotional states of unconscious basic assumption groups that substitute for thinking and are employed to avoid/defend against the pain of reality, whilst preserving the group. These are Basic Assumption Fight/Flight, Basic Assumption Dependency and Basic Assumption Pairing.

Conceptualisation of intergroup processes, group dynamics and parallel process have further extended this approach (Alderfer 1987). The work of Smith (1982) and Smith and Berg (1997) also provide strong contributions to considerations of power and paradox as they affect leadership and organisation dynamics, including the clinical research methods needed to rigorously investigate these dynamics. More currently, Long (2013) extends the field of socio-analytic research methods and provided deeper insights to the ways that organisations develop cultures that cause tacit deviations from sanctioned responsibilities. The body of thinking and practice in making sense of incomprehensible aspects of organisational life continues to be advanced by the Tavistock Institute and practising organisational consultants (Barton & Kahn 2019; Obholzer & Roberts 2019)

2.2.2: Open Systems Theory

Open Systems theory (Miller & Rice 1967) traces its origins to Von Bertalanffy (1950) who transposes theoretical frameworks from mathematics to social sciences. Open Systems theory is founded on the idea that organisations are akin to living organisms, in that they have the ability to organise themselves to accomplish substantive work within a changing environment through a continuous cycle of importing, conversion and exporting across internal

and external boundaries (Alderfer 1980; Emery 2000; Trist 1980). A central tenet in open systems theory is 'Primary Task'; that is the task which the system must perform in order to survive. A primary task is the yardstick for organisational functioning in relation to its purpose and direction (Huffington et al. 2004). In systems thinking, organisations are conceived of as being within a series of sub-systems: the organisational system, the system domain (Bain 1998) and the broader social system. All are considered interrelated and interdependent (Nossal 2007). Adding to the systems framework are the notions of authority, boundary and role. Socio-technical theory emerged out of application of systems theory in the 1950's (Trist & Bamforth 1951). Theorists (Miller and Rice, 1967) in this domain consider that optimal work environments and outcomes are mobilised by the right fit, in relation to the primary task, between technical task and social systems sentience.

2.2.3: Psychoanalytic Theory

The psychoanalytic contribution to socio-analytical thinking centres on Sigmond Freud's principal theories of unconscious psychic processes (Freud 1912, 1915; Kahn 2002; Mitchell & Black 1995) and impulse/instinctual drives (Freud 1920, 1921, 1923), as furthered by Melanie Klein's work on Object Relations (Klein 1959, 1975). These concepts are the foundational perspectives to understanding how individuals learn from infancy to cope with intolerable emotions by relying on the psychological defences, and how unconscious processes shape behaviour of individuals and the social systems (groups, organisations and society) they work in (Sher 2018). Moreover, they illuminate how unmetabolised emotion and emotionality cause disturbances to organisational life and how intolerable feelings are repressed and defended against (Long 2006).

Whilst classic psychoanalytic thought and practice is clinically orientated to the individual in a dyadic setting (analyst and analysand), it is the seminal work of Wilfred Bion (Bion 1961) that provides the bridge from individual to group. The 'systemic' perspective that Bion contributes to psychoanalytic thinking (Bion 1970, 1984), extends understanding of the materialisation of hidden unconscious processes from the individual, to groups working within organisations, alongside an understanding of how these social systems are shaped by the environment the organisation is located in (Sher 2018).

Likewise, Bion's suppositions enlighten thinking about how groups can induce irrational thinking and how the expression of resistance, anxiety and fear manifest into basic assumption defences, within and to other social systems (Gould, Stapley & Stein 2006). The practical application within a research methodology, of some of these psychoanalytical concepts

informs the study of social relations of organisational systems and is therefore most applicable in a socio-analytic research approach (Long 2018a). I now move into the related concepts that have direct relevance to this thesis, commencing with an outline of the psychoanalytic conceptualisation of shame and then describe some of the underpinning psychoanalytic theory that frames the conceptual basis for the subsequent chapters.

2.2.3.1 Psychoanalytic Theory of Shame

Early psychoanalytic theory conceptualises shame somewhat simply, situating it under the concept of guilt rather than differentiating the two. Freud (1923, 1959) initially related shame to sexuality, as a defence against exhibitionism. He believed shame arose out of tension between the ego and the ego ideal that developed when a goal presented by the ego ideal is not met. More specifically, Freud believed that guilt ensued from transgression, whilst shame stemmed from failure to meet perceived expectations. Consequently, he argues that one develops an unconscious, irrational fear of abandonment or withdrawal of love that is analogous to 'death by emotional starvation*'* (Piers & Singer 1953, p. 16).

Other psychoanalysts extend Freud's theory about the role of shame in personality development. The range of theories to emerge is perhaps an indication of the struggle within the psychoanalytic field to define and clearly depict shame. Some of the most notable contributions have come from Adler (1933), who progresses Freud's ideas about inferiority[4]. Adler broke away from the Freudian school of thought, tempering the concept of inferiority with the notion of ego psychology. He equalises the importance of conscious factors, alongside unconscious elements, as motivational forces in one's behaviour. Adler argues that all humans develop a sense of inferiority from early childhood experiences, and then devote their lives striving to overcome or compensate for one's limitations in adulthood (Mosak, 1987).

According to Adler (1933), enduring feelings of inferiority vary with intensity in each person and may serve as a positive motivational factor to neutralise harmful feelings of inferiority. However, for others they are overwhelming and incapacitate their functioning with a sense of

[4] Freud's notion on the sense of inferiority stemmed from his analyses of the cases of the Rat Man (1909d), Schreber (1911c), the Wolf Man (1918b), as well as, exploration of the theme in his interpretations on narcissism (1914c). Freud examined feelings of inferiority specifically within the framework of the oedipal complex. A powerful quote has Freud exemplifying this, as follows: 'The threat of castration that weighs upon the little boy distorts his self-esteem, and the absence of a penis leads the little girl to devalue herself. In both cases, feelings of inferiority are intimately linked to the guilt inherent in the oedipal drama. The loss of love of the object and the sense of rejection accentuate this feeling*'.* https://www.encyclopedia.com/medicine/psychology/psychology-and-psychiatry/feeling-inferiority

inadequacy. In this Adler coined the phrase ‘inferiority complex’ (Mosak 1987, p. 20). Adler subscribes to the notion that guilt is established by ethical and moral realms of society. When these are violated, guilt and feelings of inferiority are mobilised. He argues a person overcompensates this sense of inferiority by choosing to feel guilty with an accompanied feeling of personal responsibility, the purposes of which are redemption from punishment or atonement for their violation. Adler’s conceptualisations of the inferior complex exemplify initial efforts to differentiate shame from guilt and emphasise its central role in the development of personality.

Following this is Erikson’s (1950) seminal work on psychosocial development. Erickson’s work is based in Freud’s psychosexual theory and referred to as the ‘Eight Stages of Human Development’. Erikson emphasises the significance the role of shame has in development of one’s personality. He argues that we are motivated by the need to master competence in certain areas of our lives. According to this theory, we experience eight stages of development over our lifespan, from infancy through to late adulthood. As each stage is successfully mastered it creates a newly constructed part of the individual’s personality. Successful completion of each developmental crisis or task results in creation of a healthy personality. Inability to master these tasks leads to feelings of inadequacy. The second stage, known as Autonomy versus Shame/Doubt, is understood to occur between the ages of one to three. Erikson contends that when the child is unable to master autonomy at this life stage shame ensues. He suggests that the origin of shame is partially related to difficulties in achieving tasks of independence, such as toilet training. Shame in this instance relates to experience of failure, lack of achievement, lack of self-control, dirtiness and disgust.

In the 1970’s, Helen Block Lewis’ (1971) exploration of the relationship between guilt and shame extends Adler’s contributions. Lewis illuminates the differences in the phenomenology of guilt and shame, arguing that guilt is evoked and experienced in identification with a threatening parent or significant other, whose influence regulates ones value system relating to social and moral interests. Failure to live up to these values may generate ‘negative self-evaluations’ and guilt for disappointing a significant other. Consequently, guilt reactions are discharged for reparation to remedy problems created by one’s moral lapse. Lewis therefore considers guilt as the focal point of awareness of one’s value system. Whereas with shame, the awareness is of self in relation to the internalisation of an idealised parent/other. Shame is induced when one has thoughts about what is perceived the other is thinking of them and the fantasy that one fails to live up to the admiration in ‘whose eyes shame is experienced’ (p. 23). Lewis argues that the feeling of shame might play out as either an ideation or an

awareness of what the other was thinking of them. The self becomes a 'participant and watcher' of their own fantasy (p.24).

Subsequent to the work of Lewis, psychoanalyst Wurmser (1981a) re-examined Freud's notion that shame was a response to libidinal drives, arguing that the roots of shame lay in infancy. From this point in history, most psychoanalytic theory and literature on shame inclines towards clinical research, and is classified under phenomenological and psychological areas such as anxiety, narcissism, borderline or dissociative disorders (Campbell & Miller 2011; DeYoung 2015; Ford & Gómez 2015; Glasser 1992; Heinze 2017; Steinberg 1995), as distinct from being classified as a discrete phenomenon. Though theory on shame has continued to advance relating to personality development within psychology disciplines, the range of conceptions on group and system behaviour is limited. This conceivably indicates the challenges within the field of socio-analysis to define and describe shame more articulately within system contexts.

2.3: Underpinning Psychoanalytic Concepts

This section outlines the key psychoanalytic concepts that underpin the socio-analytic theoretical framework of this research along with interrelated theories used to explain the origins of shame within relational perspectives. Foremost are the concepts that provide understanding about unconscious processes, including transference, countertransference, and somatic countertransference (Margarian 2017; Racker 2018). These theories illuminate why unacknowledged shame operates at an unconscious level and how it can be conveyed non-verbally, out of our awareness. Shame is borne out of inter-relations, therefore object relations theory, intersubjectivity theory and social defence theory are key to understanding anxieties and hidden conflicts experienced with shame (Clarke, Hahn & Hoggett 2008; Krantz 2013; Obholzer & Roberts 2019). These concepts are reviewed throughout the remainder of this section before moving into a detailed review of the literature about shame.

2.3.1: Unconscious Processes

The origin of psychoanalytic thought stems from Sigmund Freud's anthropological scientific explorations in the early 1900's about the existence of unconscious mental processes and emotional functioning of individuals, structured around impulses and defenses (Freud 1915, 1921; Mitchell & Black 1995). Freud's work transformed developments in clinical methods of psychology at the time, with the principal concepts of psychoanalysis remaining unchanged since then. Freud's most notable contribution is about the process of repression. He considers the unconscious as repository for intolerable, distressing and unwanted thoughts and feelings

that are resisted, forgotten or disallowed entry into one's consciousness (Freud 1915; Kahn 2002). People unconsciously develop defence mechanisms to avoid the trauma, imagined or real, of knowing their deep motives and feelings. However, the repressed material still affects everyday life. As Long (2018a, p. 5) states, this interference of conscious will is 'not totally forgotten, because their influence continues even while the thinker or actor is unaware of their so doing'.

Freud argues that the unconscious contains biological based, primitive instincts for sex - eros/life and aggressions - thanatos/death. He named these as libidinal drives. The idea is that instinctual human drives or impulses can only be satisfied by an object. The object may be a person, parts of people or an inanimate object (Mitchell & Black, 1995). The object of a drive is understood as the factor that satisfies the drive and can only be discovered through experience. For example, an infant discovers the breast object as a source of food to satisfy its hunger drive, which is a source of libidinal pleasure.

Freud later extends his ideas to encompass unconscious processes in groups and organisations, particularly in the context of the church and the army. In 'Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego' Freud (1921) conceptualises the nature of bonding in groups and the role and influence of the leader on group psychology. His observations are that common identificatory and libidinal ties to the leader bind group members to each other. Freud argues that the principal phenomenon of group psychology is an individual's lack of freedom in a group and fear of annihilation, and that these primitive unconscious fears are characteristic of group membership. Anxiety arises out of the necessity to resolve competing needs between feelings of dependency and desire to retain individuality. Regression to infantile and primitive behaviour is a result of conflicted fears of annihilation by the group and possible loss of membership. In shame, the experience of being perceived as inferior or inadequate by one's peers and/or leadership/authority is analogous to 'life threatening uncertainty' (Kaufman 1996, p. 48) that triggers a silent descent into a state of isolation and a sense of invalidation, rendering one powerless and seemingly immobilised. This, according to Kaufman, is 'itself a regressive experience'.

2.3.2: Transference, Countertransference and Somatic Countertransference

Stemming from psychoanalytic origins and central in the analytic process within psychoanalytic treatment (Mitchell & Black 1995), transference is the phenomenon of feelings

states[5] identified by Freud (1912) that are unconsciously aroused in an analyst and felt as inappropriate by them (Hammond 2016). These feelings states are a repetition[6] and a displacement onto the analyst of the patient's unresolved issues or conflictual feelings and wishes that are unconsciously transferred/re-directed onto the analyst and whose origins belong to someone else (i.e. parent, siblings, superior/manager or significant other) from the past (Kahn 2002; Malansharuvil 2004; Mitchell & Black 1995; Thompson 1994).

Countertransference is the unconscious reaction experienced by the analyst, in which both the analyst's past internal conflicts are aroused by the client's transference of their own intolerable feelings they are unable to contain. This creates specific defensive patterns of interaction within the analytic process (Hahn 2000; Holmes & Perrin 1997; Mitchell & Black 1995; Waska 1999). According to Kahn (2002) Freud initially considered countertransference phenomenon as a hindrance in the analytic process, inhibiting the analyst's ability to comprehend the client. However, later he realised the emotional material could be used as a tool to assist in revealing the patient's repressed knowledge (Hahn 2000; Hammond 2016; Mitchell & Black 1995; Racker 2018). Racker incorporates this view in his conceptualisation of 'concordant countertransference identifications', which he describes as occurring when the analyst identifies closely with a client's negative self (Racker 2007, p. 135). In relation to shame, Hahn (2000) and Hammond (2016) argue that a therapist's mindfulness of countertransference is particularly salient in the identification of client's shame, as without mindfulness there is the potential to unknowingly engage in 'mutual collusion' to avoid dealing with shame. Extending the theoretical notions of countertransference is the concept of somatic countertransference, which incorporates attention to physical experience as well as emotional responses aroused in the therapist/researcher that may be thought about as qualities unique to the patient/participant (Ross 2000). As Margarian (2014) defines: 'Somatic countertransference is considered to be the physical sensations experienced by the therapist in relation to the transference emerging from the therapeutic relationship' (p.4).

These sensual communications are a useful view on how physical experiences can be a communicated in pre-verbal form by the research participants about their shame state that then maybe thought of and verbalised in word form (Ross 2000). Theoretically, the origins of

[5] The experiencing of feelings, drives, attitudes, fantasies, and defences. The analyst becomes an object of intense longing, love, and/or hate (Mitchell, 1995)

[6] Repetition is a form of memory block and compulsion to repeat and takes the place of remembering in trying to achieve closure on an unresolved issue (Fiorini, 2009, p.6).

somatising are largely argued to stem from the relationship between the pre-verbal infant and mother/carer (Bowlby 1958; Mc Dougal 1989). At this stage of infant development, the maternal transference reactions to the baby's needs are thought to be vital in recognising the baby's relational state; to interpret and convert this pre-verbal form of communication to an accessible form to the baby (Ross 2000, p. 457).

Within the psychoanalytic field, there is relatively little literature on somatic countertransference as compared to the vast collection on countertransference. Given that nonverbal expression of shame is conveyed more so than one's conscious understanding of the experience of shame (Kaufman 1996; Lewis 1971; Scheff & Retzinger 2001; Tangney 2014), there is much relevance in working with somatic material. It can be freely processed whilst working with research participants and adds a level of sophisticated thinking about unconscious shames states. Studies which research this phenomenon empirically are less available. Current studies instead tend to focus on clinical situations about the type of patients who elicit somatic countertransference or the types of patient history, characteristics or defences that may enable an analyst to experience the phenomenon (Gubb 2014; Margarian 2014; Ross 2000).

According to seminal theorists and researchers in the psychoanalytic field, Samuels (1985) and Mc Dougal (1989) report that according to therapist testimonies, therapists were more likely to experience physical counter transferential reactions whilst dealing with visceral issues of clients suffering eating, aggression or sexual disorders (Ross 2000 citing Samuels and McDougall 2014, p. 55). They assert that somatic manifestations in the therapist's body tend to be symbolically represented in unique and strange manners and, if able to be considered, can be effectively employed as a tool for greater clinical insight (Margarian 2014). An example provided by Gubb (2014, citing Greene 2001) in her research on Somatic Countertransference, provides a sound overview of insights that can be learnt from the practical application of the concept:

> Focusing particularly on countertransference feelings of hunger, Greene (2001) suggests that hunger in the therapist generally represents deprivation that the patient is beginning to explore, and that the deprivation is resonating with a deprived place in the therapist. Greene's work is starting to suggest the idea that, for a somatic countertransference to develop, it is a combination of the patient's pathology and the therapist's psyche that play a role (p.55).

Given the hidden emotional and dissociated feelings associated with shame, applying ideas around somatic countertransference in the context of shame provides greater richness in

illuminating somatic reactions experienced in relations between researcher and research participants. This is especially so, granted the varying observable physical reactions and paralinguistic cues which shame elicits (Herman 2012; Retzinger 1995; Ryan 1993). Shame is, more often than not, unconscious or unable to be expressed. Paying attention to bodily reactions provide vital shame markers which are worth exploring deeply to validate initial interpretations based on more overt data. Literature on this concept largely recommends continued investigation in order to validate and acknowledge the experience of somatic countertransference (Gubb, 2014; Margarian 2014; McDougall 1985; Ross 2000; Samuels 1985).

In investigating the literature on countertransference in shame as described in this section, especially in relation to somatic countertransference, it seems few scholars have explored how shame is experienced in the countertransference and the somatic countertransference. A significant obstruction that stood in the way of this research through the data collection and initial analytical phases was the ability to make sense of participants' preverbal and nonverbal experience. Considerations of somatic counter transferential phenomena has deepened and enriched the research approach.

In summary, transference, counter transference and somatic countertransference are important concepts that emerge out of unconscious social processes. Their importance lies in enabling the unconscious to be available for analysis and interpretation. The understanding derived from interpretation of these phenomena provides the researcher with critical information that enhances the depth of understanding that can be brought to the research setting. I now move to explain the psychoanalytically oriented relational theories used in the study.

2.3.3: Object Relations

Object relations theory provides a conceptual frame to consider why groups infected by shame mobilise defensive patterns of organisational functioning. It deepens understandings of the effects on emotional and psychological well-being of individuals, groups and social relations (Obholzer & Roberts 2019). The concept of 'object relations' originates with Klein (1959). Klein furthered Freud's work on intrapsychic processes to include object relation concepts. This involved study of infant psychological functioning focussing on the relatedness between the infant and the mother. In this, Klein's seminal contribution is in exploration of the process of individual psychological development in relation to others in the environment and how the individual develops the capacity to cope with anxiety and uncomfortable emotions by relying

on the psychological defences of splitting and projective identification (Fraher, 2004; Benjamin,1988; Nossal 2007).

According to Klein (1970), we each struggle with the deep fear of 'annihilation' paranoid anxiety and 'utter abandonment' depressive anxiety. Her idea is that in the infant's relatedness to its mother, she/he experiences the breast as a part object that is internalised. The breast either a 'good breast' that is nourishing and arouses strong feelings of love or a 'bad breast' that is felt as depriving and arouses strong feelings of hate and rage for fear of loss, starvation and abandonment. Klein describes this as a 'splitting'; of separating the destructive emotions, of disowning intolerable feelings and unwanted parts of self and 'projecting' them onto others. This state is named the 'paranoid-schizoid' position, first described by Klein in 1946, in 'Notes on some schizoid mechanisms' (p. 160)'.

The 'objects' of object relations theory concerns the people, places or possession that a person subject/other can relate to; these can be real or in one's internal world as internalised image of others (Benjamin 1988). Klein's contributions to the theory of object relations have been transposed and extended to apply to the system contexts through the work of Jaques (1955) and Menzies Lyth (1960) with their emphasis on social defence mechanisms. In the conceptual frame related to shame, object relations pertain to the loss of a significant other or love object, in which one may perceive the self as not good enough in the eyes of the abandoning or rejecting other. These feelings, whilst originating in infancy, can be mobilised in adults particularly where regression occurs in the face of anxiety (Kaufman 1996), which, according to Lewis (2003), may conversely lead to depression. This stance in thinking supports Freud's (1917) seminal thesis on depression in 'Mourning and Melancholia'. Weiss and Lang (2000) extend these notions, saying that a person may struggle considerably to tolerate fundamental conflicts of their existence and relationships if rejected in some way, invalidated, disappointed or ridiculed. The loss does not necessarily need to be a person, it maybe loss of workplace, work role, hierarchical status or a disappointment (Weiss & Lang 2000, p. 321). These characteristics are all symptomatic of the shame struggle. I now move onto to consider intersubjectivity and its relation to shame.

2.3.4: Intersubjectivity

As noted above, shame arises in the relationship between the self and other (real or imagined), where the self cares about others' judgement (Lewis 1971). Intersubjectivity, as it relates to shame, is where both the intrapsychic self is diminished and the intersubjective component of shame is the 'vicarious experience' of being diminished in the eyes of the other. Lewis refers

to this as inducing a ‘doubleness of experience’ (p.107-108). The self is felt to be both abused (physical and/or psychological) and rejected by the evaluating, dominant other (Johnson & Moran 2013). A central conceptual focus in intersubjective theory is the dynamic of assertion and recognition in self-other relations. The ways in which recognition is achieved is critical for the identity of the individual and group (Benjamin 1988; Habermas 1973; Harding 2006; Hegel 1977; Izod 2014). The theory provides a frame in which to understand how groups and organisations provide sufficient levels of recognition in workplaces; levels sufficient ‘to sustain a sense of identity and self of its members’ (Harding 2007, p. 1).

The formative ideas on intersubjectivity are influenced by Freud’s notions about intrapsychic phenomena (Freud 1924, 1926), in that our instinctual drives are a forming principle in relations (Harding, 2007). It is a seminal conceptualisation by Hegel (1979) that recognition by the other is a precondition of self-consciousness; that it is only in being acknowledged by the other that our self-consciousness exists. This is the basis for the desire and drive towards finding recognition. Intersubjectivity theory postulates that a sense of self evolves from the recognition of oneself and others as separate subjects each with distinctness and differentiation (Benjamin, 1988). Klein (1975) conceptualises this as our individuality being defined by that with which we identify; in searching for and creating our identity, we create the other.

Conceptually, mutuality is a reciprocal process where the self is affirmed through the asserting oneself and being recognised, and there is acknowledgement of that expression by the other. Mutuality is the desire and tension that manifests between the self and the other (Benjamin 1988). It is the paradoxical tension between dependence and independence: ‘In holding of both in mind creates a relational space within which aggression associated with assertion, and other emotion, may be symbolised and contained’ (Harding 2007, p. 5).

In the context of shame, the intersubjective structure or relational space is best conceptualised by Steiner (2003) whose contributions arise from clinical experiences on psychic retreats. He identifies the experience of relational space as one where a person can feel inescapably exposed and observed by the gaze of others. Moreover, feelings of shame emerge and the desire is to escape or hide. This despite, or alongside, the drive towards gaining recognition. From a philosophical standpoint, Guenther (2011) explores the temporality of shame in relational contexts through phenomenological accounts. She deliberates on intersubjective experience of shame as moments of provocations or, as Lewis (1995) likens, to ‘patterns of social responsivity’. Reflecting on the philosophical stances of Sartre, Levinas and Beauvoir on shame, Guenther speaks of the embedded nature of shame where one can be mobilised

to feel 'frozen in time, stuck to a moment that goes nowhere, opens into no future and gives no possibility of becoming otherwise' (p.25).

I was particularly drawn to Guenther's (2011) interpretation on Beauvoir's philosophical explorations of the distress involved in developing female identity. According to Beauvoir, a female's existence is politicised, marked as inherently shameful and oppressed by the gaze of others. Shame is lived in the body, a social and political boundary. Beauvoir describes the enculturation of this where a woman is 'encouraged to identify with a doll, a passive plaything whose value lies in being looked at and manipulated by others, There may be pleasure to be found in being treated like a living doll…a reflection in the gaze of others; a reflection she can neither escape not identify with' (Guenther 2011, p. 35 citing Beauvoir, 1949). This association aptly depicts some of the phenomenological accounts given by female participants in this research. Though not outwardly expressed by participants in this research, the data was presented in the triangular structure of intersubjectivity, where the gaze of the other distorts the individual's sense of self, splitting into relational parts between 'me' (subject), myself (object) and 'not me'/ separate from self (other) and other's imagined perception of self. These views aligns with Steiner's (2011) theoretical offerings in that the feeling of being caught in the gaze of the Other, real or imagined, changes the conditions of one's existence and obscures one's relation with time. The intersubjective structure regulates social interaction and social bonding, used for social control and oppression (Sanderson 2015). When shamed, regulation has failed within the relational space and one's self disintegrates in response to the misattunement that is visceral in experience (DeYoung 2015). This in turn triggers protective strategies enacted as social defence mechanisms. I outline these in more detail in the following section.

2.3.5: Social Defences

Jacques (1995), Menzies Lyth (1970) and Long (2006) are all instrumental in demonstrating how collective unconscious social defences against anxiety are created in organisations as structural elements and cultural activities through which to dispel, fight or avoid anxiety. Jacques (1995) conceptualises social defences as protective mechanisms against experiencing intolerable recurrence of early paranoid and depressive anxieties. Menzies Lyth (1970) in her studies illustrates how such defences are employed to manage anxieties, and are created in association with, or are induced by, the emotional labour of work. Social defences can be understood as protective, though they often exist at the expense of efficient work.

Social defence theory has significantly informed the work of researchers and practitioners in the socio-analytical traditions (Long, 2006). Long argues that social defence theory provides a useful tool to help researchers and consultants understand why it is often difficult to effect change in organisations. In this study, the application of the social defence theory is useful in discovering the prevalence of defences against shame. Namely, the unbearable nature of shame that elicits protective mechanisms against shame. The defences operate to conceal, deny, avoid and compensate against the anxieties of exposing a system's failure, inferiority or inadequacy. These strategies include: withdrawal, attacking others/self and avoidance (Nathanson 1994; Sanderson 2015). I provide detail on this further in Section 2.6 below, after I have introduced the wider theory on shame and trauma.

2.4: What Is Shame?

A critical review of shame as a concept is essential for positioning this research project. A comprehensive review of the literature indicates that discussions of shame are largely absent in management and organisation studies disciplines. Specific to what the findings of this research may contribute, there is an absence of how unacknowledged or unconscious/hidden shame might play out in shaping organisational behaviour in the aftermath of workplace transgression. Of note, there has been considerable exploration in clinical studies on the role shame plays in intra and interpersonal dynamics in everyday life (Heinze 2017). As Heinze found, studies tend to consider the links between unacknowledged shame and emotional variants, such as humiliation and embarrassment, and to a range of maladaptive and pathological behaviours (see also Lansky 1994; Lewis 1971; Morrison 1989; Nathanson 1994; Scheff & Retzinger 2001; Tomkins 2008; Wurmser 1981b).

Shame is widely defined within psychoanalytic, psychological and relational literature as a social emotion that involves acutely negative global evaluations of self (Kaufman 1996; Lee & Wheeler 1996; Lewis 1971; Lewis 2003; May 2017; Nathanson 1987; Steiner 2006). These appraisals are generally characterised by a pervasive sense of failure, irrational feelings of inadequacy or inferiority, and are supplemented with a strong wish to avoid, withdraw, attack in self-protective rage, hide or escape from the origins of the evaluations (Kaufman 1974; Nathanson 1994; Scheff & Retzinger 2001). Shame is a complex phenomenon that brings into focal awareness the intersubjective experience between the self, other and society (DeYoung 2015; Lewis 1971; Lewis 2003; Lynd 1958; Tangney & Dearing 2002).

Shame is constructed through the presence of others, in which one's sense of self is heightened or depleted from the unavailability of, separation or threat of separation from, and

censure of, the other (Nathanson 1987; Scheff 2003). One's social membership in this situation obstructs development and one experiences self as humiliated, betrayed, rejected, as well as devalued in the eyes of others. That is, 'I am as I am seen' (Hartling et al. 2004; Kaufman 1996; Lee & Wheeler 1996; May 2017). Lewis (1971) argues that shame functions as a protection against the loss of self-boundaries and as a painful reminder of the fantasised experience of the other as vicarious. Within organisations, shame can be induced within a number of contexts such as competitive defeat, social or hierarchical rank, inequality, abuse of power, public rebuff or ridicule, intrusion of privacy, financial and/or business loss, reputational damage, loss of purpose, pay inequity, failure at work, loss such as severance of relationships through redundancy or termination, speaking out, or whistleblowing. These elicitors of shame may also inhibit interest and innovation or block desire (Tomkins 1963). At a systemic level, the social source of shame is an indication of the 'state of a relationship' (Scheff 2014 citing Cooley 1922).

In clinical contexts, empirical research has validated links to shame as rooted in interpersonal failure, and identifies shame with mental illness: 'The propensity to experience shame is associated with a broad range of psychological disorders' (Dearing and Tangney, 2011, p. 400). Such illnesses include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, paranoid and schizoid phenomena, compulsive disorders, self-injury disorders, suicide, borderline conditions, dissociative disorders and narcissism (Asser 2004; DeYoung 2015; Dorahy 2017; Ford & Gómez 2015; Gordon 2007; Kaufman 1996; Lanius 2015; Nathanson 1987).

2.4.1: Shame Elicitation - Moral Transgression and Failure

A key discovery of shame as a social emotion is made by Lewis (1971). Lewis' research on shame found negative evaluations commonly result from moral transgressions or moral failures where societal or group principles had been violated (Scheff 1988). This notion is extended by Lewis (1995) and Gilbert (1997) who argue that these moral transgressions constitute shame-eliciting events that may cause one to feel detached or disconnected from the group, saying that the shame affect may be one of the most psychologically damaging and emotionally distressing experiences humans can experience.

Further, Lewis (1971) found that individuals tend to react intensely to moral failure. She argues that when triggered, shame releases a sequence of cognitions and emotions that in the first instance manifest as shame-anger variants involving guilt and resentment. Lewis contends in the shame-anger sequence, guilt and anger is directed back at self, with resentment and anger directed outwards to the other. Lewis suggests that in the sequential nature of this model,

emotional reactions can loop or retrigger impact such that emotions may be felt indefinitely (Lewis 1971; Scheff & Retzinger 2001); thus feeling ashamed of being ashamed.

Scheff and Reitzinger (2001) reaffirm this notion of circularity arguing that moral indignation, anger, rage and resentment of a victim and their supporters may be enacted, with or without awareness, toward the offender, and then the experience of being caught in these reactions may lead to denial or unacknowledged shame in the victim in relation to themselves. This circular dynamic is coined by Lewis (1971) as 'bypassed' shame. Lewis found that unacknowledged shame is usually invisible or hidden from the self, as the self consciously separates from the other's position. This distancing stance enables the self to recognise the shame event, without feeling the affect. This dynamic is a common finding of this study.

Unacknowledged shame has been validated in more recent studies by Hartling et al. (2004), (Branscombe & Doosje 2004) and Gausel et al. (2012) all of whom found in their relational analysis of groups, that individuals are inclined to react intensely to in-group moral failure. Gausel et al (2012) suggest that this is because of the actions of others within the in-group are strongly connected to the individual. They contend that the experience of moral failure can be dissected into two areas of understanding. First, a group's sense of rejection, which they link to in-groups concern for condemnation by external others. Second, a sense of shame can be seen as linked to others' judgement or observation of the in-group as flawed. Moreover, their review of recent studies of moral failures of groups identified that a number of groups seemed to be motivated to restore their sense of self, protecting from further injury. Gausel et al. (2012) say the motivation for this is 'to achieve in the face of failure and a willingness to risk further failure by trying harder' (p.942). This conception infers that by saving the group's face ensures the preservation of one's identity.

Lewis's (2003) research on shame triggered by shame eliciting events such as moral failures, found that shame can be an adaptive function. For example, one might often lie so as not to be shamed by a deficiency in the eyes of the other. Misleading falsehoods or distortions of truth are orchestrated and conveyed publicly to avoid condemnation from others, as well as internally (Lewis 2018). As asserted by Ho (1976) and Kohut (2013) the misrepresentation of facts, that is, concealment of one's failures, is a way of saving face through various distortions, cognitive and behavioural; to avoid shame at all cost.

Though there is no one succinct definition of shame, the range of characterisations identified within psychological disciplines, have been illuminating throughout investigation of the

literature. I was surprised to discover the theoretical neglect in the last century in refining an explanation of shame. However, upon review across psychoanalytic literature, as discussed in the preceding section (2.2) there is significant complexity, due to its interrelatedness with other affects, particularly in determining unacknowledged or hidden shame. From a socio-analytic perspective, defining shame has been translated into organisational contexts using traditional psychoanalytical concepts. Though typically theorised for clinical application, what is developed is useful in elucidating shame markers, and in the case of this research, in the narratives and symbolically represented in system drawings.

2.5: Shame and Attachment - The Rupturing of Social Bonds

As social beings, humans are innately driven to maintain and preserve social connections with others (attachments) that enable a balance in proximity between social (group) unity and individuality (Bowlby 1960b; Matos & Pinto-Gouveia 2014). These connections are the emotional ties that individuals/groups form and endeavour to maintain. They are central to feelings of belonging, safety and shelter from fear (Sable 2008). Bowlby (1958) argues that attachment is a fundamental part of human beings need to be connected to another person (attachment figure/caregiver). This bond is an inherent motivational system in our functioning that commences from infancy through to the end of our existence (Braun 2011). Its function to ensure development of dependable relationships that are abiding for psychological and physical protection, including affect regulation (Sable 2008).

Secure attachments positively affect wellbeing (intimacy, avoid separation and loss) and promote desire for learning and expansion (autonomy, avoid engulfment) (Bowlby 1960b; Matos & Pinto-Gouveia 2014; Zimberoff & Hartman 2002). Paradoxically, we use the façade of being in connection, to safely hold off our vulnerable self's intolerable feelings of being 'out of connection'; to avoid the possibility of being shamed (DeYoung 2015, p. 61). Shame acts as a moral guide that forms from childhood and regulates the relationship between child (self) and the parent (caregiver/attachment figure). It shapes the internal mental constructs of the child informing its perceptions and behaviours about how social relationships are affected (Bowlby 1960; Scheff 1988). As adults, our attachments or affiliation continue to be shaped by relationships with evaluating others and is influential in our own choices and behaviours (Matos & Pinto-Gouveia 2014).

Negative or insecure attachments in relationships occur when there is a threat or loss to these social bonds (Ainsworth 1969; Kaufman 1996; Nathanson 1994; Shorre 1994). This signals a failure of interpersonal relationships and may result in maladaptive development. Lee and

Wheeler (1996) add an alternative conceptualisation that they derived from clinical experience. They contend that shame may also be elicited from 'boundary violations'; being gross misconducts such as physical, psychological or emotional abuse and other behaviours that are shame inducing.

Building on Bowlby's theory, Ainsworth et al. (1969), through their research of infant behaviour, identified three patterns that reflect dysfunctional attachments. These are summarised in Table 1, as follows:

Table 1: Attachment Styles

Secure	In which the active involvement of the parent and their sensitivity, responsiveness, predictability and consistency gives the child a secure base from which they can take the risks necessary for exploration and play.
Insecure avoidant	Where a child has been turned away or rejected when they look for care from their attachment figure. They have learnt that it is better not to attach to anyone. The child minimises attachment needs and keep to themselves. Generally, this occurs by moving or turning away, and avoidance of being soothed. The child may show little or no proximity or contact seeking, and no distress or anger at separations.
Insecure ambivalent or resistant	When parents or caregivers have been unreliable; sometimes available and responsive, and sometimes not. Often there will also have been separations and the use of threats of abandonment to control the child. The child may seem preoccupied with the status and location of the caregiver and may appear angry or passive. Insecurely ambivalent children are always anxious about separation and, in contrast to insecure avoidant children, tend to cling to their attachment figure.
Insecure disorganised *4th Attachment subsequently identified by Main and Solomon 1986*	This pattern is most often associated with maltreatment from a parent that is frightening to the child. The child displays disorganised or disoriented behaviours in the parent's presence, suggesting a temporary collapse of behavioural integrity and organisation. For example, the child may freeze with a trance-like expression with hands in air. They may rise at a parent's entrance then fall prone and huddle on the floor, or the child may cling, crying, leaning away with an averted gaze.

(Becker-Weidman 2009; Braun 2011)

These attachment patterns are argued by theorists to lead to the internal working model in our mind about how we form relationships. In applying these insecure attachments patterns to shame, they may be signalled by failure of interpersonal relationships and provide markers to unacknowledged shame.

Lewis (1971) hypothesises insecure attachments as being when the other is encountered, perceived and internalised as abandoning or rejecting of the subject, either real or in fantasy. Scheff and Retzinger (2001) refine this notion and contend that when one comes too close in proximity with the other it creates a shame state of feeling exposed or attacked. As Hartling et al. (2004, p. 1) state 'These experiences of shame or humiliation can disrupt our ability to initiate and participate in the relationships that help us grow'. Alternatively, they say, if the distance is too far then it may generate a feeling of being rejected or abandoned. Lewis (1971) conceptualises the notion of 'internalised other', in which shame plays out as an internal critic in one's psychic life, where the whole or global self is censured by the fantasised 'other'. The experience often leads to alienating and silencing individuals (Miller 1988; Retzinger 1991a).

Lewis (2003) furthers this, arguing that the function of shame is intrusive and debilitating; that one becomes completely self-absorbed, rendered confused and incapable of clear thinking, clear speech or clear action. Paralinguistic cues underlying the many hidden faces of the visceral experience of shame are often ignored, misinterpreted as a deficiency or overlooked. These may also include, 'hesitation, soft speech, mumbling, silences, stammering, long pauses, rapid speech, or tensely laughed words' (Dearing and Tangney, 2011, p. 378 citing Herman, 2011). Other behavioural cues reported by Lee and Wheeler (1996), are described as depression or a sense of deflation, a withdrawal from social contact, and being acutely self-conscious. Lee and Wheeler argue that these reactions to shame signal a sense of inferiority and impotence, a questioning of one's legitimate standing in the world. Kaufman (1980) portrays this experience as feeling immobilised, trapped or imprisoned, worthlessness and isolated.

Sanchez and Zahavi (2018) speak from an intersubjective perspective of the imagined sense of self as reliant on the other for its manifestation. They postulate it requires the self to have the ability to comprehend and relate to others as subjects who can identify with them. Further, that the self can impact the other, 'an object of their experience, an object who is thereby

affected and changed' (p.197). In its most destructive form, Lewis (1971) contends that shame might be invisible or hidden to the subject. Schneider (1977) supports this notion believing that this denial signals the disconnection, or as Kaufmann (1980, 1989) describes, a 'rupture' in the social bond between self and others that places the subject 'out of the context within which we wish to be interpreted' (Schneider 1977, p. 35). The notions on the dysfunctionality of shame as a result of insecure or broken attachments align with the findings of this study.

2.6: Trauma and Shame

Shame events that have a strong relational component, particularly where one is a victim of abuse, can operate as traumatic memories that may be mobilised as intrusive feelings and thoughts, hyper-arousal and avoidance of the feelings of shame during or after the event (Lee, Scragg & Turner 2001). According to the literature relating to trauma and shame, memory is not only emotional and cognitive, it has somatic components. In particular, traumatic memories are somatosensory and the nonverbal experience of the trauma lives on in the body, held within particular dissociative parts (Margarian 2017; Van Der Hart et al. 2004; Van der Kolk 2015; Yarom 2015). Van der Kolk (2014) noted, 'The body keeps the score' even when an individual cannot recall a traumatic experience or has only fragmentary recall. Matos and Pinto-Gouveia (2014) agree, saying that triggered, traumatic memories may 'affect body memory and the felt sense of self and guide attention, emotional and cognitive processing, determining the activation of defensive strategies such as fight, flight or appeasement' (p.221).

The state of shame has a significant effect in the formulation of peritraumatic and post traumatic disorders (PTSD). Herman (2011) contends that PTSD results from repetitive persecution at the hands of a perpetrator and can be conceptualised as both an anxiety and a shame disorder. Abuse or threats of abuse, be it physical, psychological or emotional, can evoke fear; however, it is boundary violations, degradation and being socially isolated by the other that may evoke shame.

Extending this, Charles (2004) argues that in experiencing a deprecating authority or persecutory figure from whom the self must hide, trauma will likely continue to play out internally (Charles 2004). Linking this to the theories on attachment patterns of development, and more specifically on the disorganised attachment pattern, this maladaptive behaviour (often associated with abusive or neglectful parenting – See Table 1, Section 2.5) has been shown to lead to dissociative difficulties. Consequently, the individual becomes solely absorbed in their own experience and is thus disconnected (Ford & Gómez 2015; McFadden 2011; Yarom 2015).

Lyons-Ruth (2003) contends that in situations where fear is present, dissociative freeze responses with associated silence can signal an attempt to become disconnected from the fearful stimulus. When an individual is experiencing a dissociative episode, such as feeling detached from their body, it has a significant impact on their ability to stay emotionally present in that moment to another person. Steele, Boon and van der Hart (2016) suggest that dissociation is both an intrapsychic and intersubjective phenomena that reflects fragmentation of a coherent relational self. Thus, dissociation can have a considerable effect on the ability to sustain emotional relationships and 'relational disconnectedness' (Dorahy et al. 2013).

Linking trauma to dissociation van der Kolk (2015, p. 66) contends that 'Dissociation is the essence of trauma'. Theory on trauma related dissociation and shame explains dissociation as the disruption to usually integrated functions of consciousness, memory, identity or perception of the environment (Steele, Boon & van der Hart 2016). It is characterised by an involuntary flight from reality, resulting from a disconnection from one's conscious awareness, behavioural patterns, and/or self-concept (Krippner & Powers 1997). Dissociation is considered in two key streams of the disorder as detachment surrealness, depersonalization or absence of identity, and compartmentalisation amnesia between memory streams (Steele, Boon & van der Hart 2016). Dissociative phenomenon allows one to withdraw from the emotional impact of trauma, thereby acting as a defence strategy. I discuss dissociative phenomena and its relevance to shame in more detail in the next section. In closing this discussion of trauma and shame, chronically traumatised individuals feel shame for not only what occurred to them, but also for who they perceive themselves to be. Boon, Steele and Van Der Hart (2011) argue that trauma related shame induces behaviours of self-degradation that lead to feelings of inferiority, weakness and social inadequacy, central to the self-perpetuating, dynamically cyclical affect of shame.

2.7: Protective Strategies Against Shame

It was not until I was deep into the data analysis period of the research that it became clear how important it was to the research to understand as fully as possible theory about defences/protective strategies against shame. I present a brief summary of the defences here, acknowledging that it is in the case studies that the applicability of the ideas become so salient. In this saliency, they became the structural parameters guiding presentation and discussion of the data.

Horney (1945) developed a seminal model about the strategies of defence against shame. The model was intended as a typology of personality types, or as she termed 'neurotic trends' that occur when a child confronted with a hostile environment. The model proposes that in this instance the child will unconsciously gravitate to three key courses of direction. Horney's categories reflect the basic anxiety felt by the child and the protective strategies employed in defence. These categories are: 1. Moving Against (helplessness), 2. Moving Away (isolation) and 3. Moving Toward (hostility). This model has subsequently been adapted by others across psychoanalytic and psychology fields as a way to understand how shame impacts and influences human behaviour, most notably so by Nathanson (1994).

Nathanson's (1994) model extends across four strategies of defence or systems of affect management against shame. Categorising each defence strategy as 'Avoidance', 'Withdrawal', 'Attack Self' and 'Attack Other' the collation of these strategies form what he terms the 'Compass of Shame' (p.305). Nathanson argues that when shame is experienced, an individual may respond with the defence mechanism of avoidance or withdrawal. Alternatively, they may try to defend against shame by attacking self or attacking other. The clinical applications of the Compass of Shame illustrate how a traumatised individual might utilise features of the various poles concurrently to defend against feelings of shame (Nathanson 1994). These protective strategies characterise patterns of physiological, emotional and cognitive responses that when activated direct behaviour. Considered as repetitive defensive scripts, they are employed in response at different times to the individual in varying shaming experiences, and in others witnessing the shame (Sanderson 2015). Hartling et al. (2004) extend Horney's model to utlise variations and combinations of her three strategies therapeutically. Applying the relational practices with individuals assists healing from experiences of shame and provides opportunities for developmental growth. From a socio-analytic perspective, Bion's (1961; 1984) concept of basic assumption behaviour has similarities to Horney's model of defence strategies against anxiety. As noted in the previous section on Group Relations theory, Bion's idea on basic assumption groups Fight, Flight and Dependency focus on threats to the group's survival and how these manifest in a range of unconscious maladaptive behaviours.

The following defence strategies describe in detail the manner in which we manage shame anxiety; the varying paths taken to escape the direct experience of shame.

2.7.1: Attacking Self/Other – Controlling Shame

'Attack Self' (Nathanson 1994; Sanderson 2015) involves a shamed individual who responds with contempt, harsh criticism, and anger or rage directed at themselves. This intensifies the feelings of shame and engages in self-deprecation to elicit reassuring affirmations from others (Retzinger 1995). The strategy of 'Attack Other' (Nathanson 1994; Scheff & Retzinger 2001) is considered to alleviate the emotional pain by attempting to make another feel worse (Nathanson, 1992), and in controlling or disempower others (Hartling et al., 2004). Emotion is often experienced as anger and directed outward, at times at the source of the shaming event (Scheff & Retzinger 2001). The intent here is to defend the vulnerable self against messages of failure or worthlessness. As Hartling et al. (2004, p.10) describe, 'Dominant groups characteristically use shame against subordinate groups to keep them from expressing their reality in a way that would threaten the dominant view of reality'.

2.7.2: Withdrawal – Concealing Shame

The copying strategy associated with withdrawal is to take flight, to escape or hide/conceal feelings of shame. Identified by Horney (1945, p, 73) as 'Moving Away', some individuals may engage in this strategy, separating themselves from relations with others, for example, withdraw, silencing themselves or attempting to make themselves invisible. Many individuals shamed through neglect and abuse may adopt this strategy as a survival mechanism (Hartling et al. 2004; Nathanson 1994). Other physiological expressions of overt shame are to hide, blush, lower gaze or head or a submissive stance (Sanderson 2015). These mechanisms keep important parts of the shamed person's experience out of relations in an attempt to earn or keep connection (Oathes & Ray 2008), and is often exhibited as an attempt to appease or please the other, to secure survival in the relationship. These strategies may explain the logic underlying the behaviour of some individuals coping with difficult, problematic, or abusive relationships (DeYoung 2015).

2.7.3: Avoidance - Denying Shame

Avoidance strategies employed to circumvent shame are generally attempts to distract, dissociate or disconnect the self and others from perceived inadequacies and the overwhelming feelings of unworthiness from the feeling of shame (DeYoung 2015; Nathanson 1994; Steele, Boon & van der Hart 2016). With reference to Horney's model, avoidance aligns with the strategy of 'Moving Toward'. The purpose of this reaction is to minimise awareness of shame or to dismiss the shaming experience as inconsequential. Strategies are employed

to divert attention from perceived inadequacies and the overwhelming feelings of unworthiness that accompany them (Nathanson, 1994). Often this is the contradictory assertion of the reality of a situation. In other words, it is a denial of our perception of the existence of something (Wurmser 1989, 2015). Avoidance or denial is intended to prevent one from consciously acknowledging the experience of shame and is believed to usually operate outside of a person's awareness (DeYoung 2015).

Lewis (1971) refers to denial of shame as 'covert shame'. She described the state as a person being numb; of no longer feeling mental pain, as it is covert for the individual. This form of denial is also referred to as 'disavowal' (Zepf 2013), denoting one's rejection of perceptual facts. Alternatively, a person may defer responsibility of thinking what is unthinkable and integrating what cannot be integrated, by projecting onto the other. This is due to traumatic associations that trigger unpleasant or painful affect (Nathanson 1987, 1994; Penot 2019). Generally, avoidance reactions include narcissistic defences, such as grandiosity; substance abuse such as drugs use, sexual exploits, compulsive eating, gambling, excessive competitiveness, depression, general or social anxiety, psychic numbing, dissociation, and insensitivity to emotional and physical pain in both self and others (Dearing & Tangney 2011).

2.8: Summary

The objective of this chapter was first to provide the reader with an outline on socio-analytic conceptual framework that informed the research approach. The theories that are presented as most useful to consider puzzling feelings and behaviours of research participant's and myself as a researcher, as well as enabling reflection on the hidden processes at play in the dynamics that exist in organisational systems in the aftermath of an overtly known workplace transgression. The conceptual frame is extended with an overview of scholarly understanding about shame, the core theme of this study, and its causality and effects on human beings. The examination of these theoretical elements provide the backdrop to understanding unconscious processes and social defences that are enacted when attachments within intersubjective relations are disrupted or broken. More so they are helpful when considering the traumatising impact a moral transgression has on group life that cannot be consciously thought of or expressed. The review of literature found that socio-analytic inquiry is most appropriate for this study in understanding complex dynamics that are not easily identifiable and how this can be experienced in organisations. As a synthesised framework of theoretical contributions and scientific methods of exploration, socio-analytic inquiry facilitates learning about what is beneath the surface of what is known, and raises questions about what is assumed of the impact of 'the social' on individuals and their inner world. It enables consideration of the

systemic and institutionalised ways this unconsciously occurs in those involved in these systems. The emphasis of this theoretical perspective in this study is the ability to illuminate destructive impacts of unacknowledged shame that obstruct the effectiveness of organisations, as well as, the quality of organisational life for its members. The next chapter will explore the research design and methodological stance.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1: Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the key elements of the research design and their aptness for the research.

Recall the key research questions:

- What are the elements of the lived experience of individuals within organisations where an overtly known workplace transgression had occurred?
- How could those experiences be understood at an individual and system level?

A qualitative design is adopted to explore these questions. The design amalgamates methodology and methods from the socio-analytical discipline, interpretivism, reflexivity and case study.

3.2: Research Approach

3.2.1: Interpretivist Paradigm

As the purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of the meaning of human behaviour, the underlying philosophical assumptions or beliefs systems are most suitably located in the interpretative paradigm (Burrell & Morgan 1979, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln 2011; Guba 1990). These beliefs guide the research process (Creswell 2013). Interpretivism enables 'another world view' into human behaviour. Interpretivism, from an ontological perspective, positions the social world differently to the natural world in that it is created through emergent social processes (Burrell & Morgan 1979). Reality is multiple and understanding of the phenomenon and its complexity is intrinsically related to its unique context (Hammersley 2013; Pham 2018). Reality is relational, produced in the dialogue between researcher and researched, and founded in meaning attributed by individuals (Schwandt 1999). These realities vary between individuals and are generated through interaction with others (Cherry 1999). They form 'a network of shared assumptions and intersubjectively shared meanings context by history and culture' (Harding 2006, p.42).

From an epistemological standpoint, interpretivism assumes that the researcher and the subject/research participant are interdependent and mutually interactive (Hudson & Ozanne

1988; Maxwell & Mittapalli 2010). Knowledge is therefore subjective and socially constructed, rather than objectively determined (Holloway & Jefferson 2013). In this research the interpretivist paradigm enabled, and is represented by, the questioning of the existence of phenomena beyond the cognitive realm of the individual (Crist & Tanner 2003; Flick 2004).

3.2.2: Socio-analytic Methodology

With its emphasis on co-construction of reality, socio-analytic methodology is centrally located within the interpretivist paradigm. Socio-analysis is a synthesis of concepts and methodologies, derived from group relations, systems theory and psychoanalysis (Fraher 2004; Long 2018a; Sievers 2006). Socio-analytical methodology gives weight to interpretation and association (making conscious the unconscious), with emphasis on reflexivity as a distinct aspect about the research process (Clarke & Hoggett 2009; Holloway & Jefferson 2013; Long 2018a). The significance of this approach is that it allows individuals access to their own experience and provides consideration on how unconscious processes have been 'taken in' by individuals (Sievers 2006). This includes any pre-conceived ideas and assumptions about the research topic (Jootun, McGhee & Marland 2009); and how these then in turn shape relations between researcher, participant and the data gathered (Holloway & Jefferson 2013). A key characteristic is the researcher's role as tool for data creation in listening and attending to psychological as well as somatic experiences of both the participant and the researcher.

The socio-analytic perspective is focused on understanding how subjectivity is employed collectively in systems (Long 2018a). The methodology makes use of key psychoanalytic concepts (as outlined in Chapter 2, p.23) of transference, countertransference, and social defenses to facilitate this understanding. It incorporates investigative methods such as workplace observation (Hinshelwood & Skogstad 2002a; Willshire 1999)[7], interviews (Holloway & Jefferson 2013; Holstein & Gubrium 1995; Kvale 2003; Long & Harding 2013), drawing (Cain 2010; Guillemin 2004; Literat 2013; Nossal 2013) and the use of metaphor (Morgan 2006) as principle techniques. These methods facilitate access to internalised imagery and interpretatively examine the social reality of organisational phenomena. As Clarke & Hoggett (2009) state, a socio-analytic methodology allows the researcher to consider their 'subjectivity, emotional and participatory involvement'..(in connection to the)..'unconscious communications, dynamics, and defences that exist in the research environment' (p.3). Socio-analytic methodology means working to bring unconscious phenomenon to the surface to be joined with previously conscious data. This enables

[7] I did not have access to workplace observation in this study; however, this is commonly used when researching a case study organisation

possibilities of gaining insight into covert organisational issues and how they may be affecting the organisation's performance (Long, 2013).

Using socio-analytic methodology allows for, and facilitates, the development of hypotheses from patterns in data, rather than deductive methods of hypothesis testing. A fundamental component as a researcher is to draw data from a position of 'not knowing and coming to know' (Willshire 1999). This is achieved through the application of socio-analytic theory. The premise is to enable the generation of unique findings: 'novel theoretical insights that reframe empirical findings in contrast to existing theories' (Timmermans & Tavory 2012, p. 174). In this research, I was able to identify nuanced elements of the data, aspects that may not be obvious or that have not have been considered previously in the literature (Long 2018a; Lu & Liu 2012; Reichertz 2007; Taylor & Bogdan 1984). The methodology helped, not only in method development and in data generation, but also in building theory and theory elaboration (Flick, Von Kardorff & Steinke 2004; Long 2018a).

3.2.3: Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a pivotal concept in qualitative research, and is described by Josselson, Lieblich and McAdams (2003, p. 4) as 'an inductive process' involves using the researchers emotional responses as a medium to in which to discover and make known interpretation of non-verbalised meanings. The practice assumes the researcher is part of the researched; they are 'part of the setting, context, and social phenomenon he or she seeks to understand.…(and)… can be a means for critically inspecting the entire research process' (Schwandt 2001, p. 224). Creswell (2013) contends that the researchers' 'presence' is in the accounts they present on sharing the participants experience.

From a socio-analytical perspective, reflexivity is applied in inquiry techniques to study both conscious and unconscious social phenomena that influence group/organisational perceptions of reality (de Gooijer 2013; Harding & Nossal 2008; Hinshelwood & Skogstad 2002b; Long 2018a; Long & Harding 2013; Newton, Long & Sievers 2006). In the context of this research, applying reflexivity principles enabled balancing understanding between my own experience as a researcher and that of the participants. This stance was incorporated in my research strategy and accomplished through the use of a journal, constant review and peer consultation (Berger 2015). I discuss these methods in more detail further in this chapter.

3.2.4: Collective Case Study Method

In a collective case study, cases may or may not be physically co-located with other cases (Goddard 2012; Stake 2010). Collective case study has been found to be especially suitable for studying phenomena that are highly complex, where causality is evident (Long 2018a), and that are embedded in their cultural context (Stake 2010). The research questions explore highly complex organisational dynamics where an understanding of the cultural context is essential.

In this research each individual participant is treated as a single case (Goddard 2012), regardless of their event or context. In exploring the subjective experience of each individual case in interview, I incorporated role drawings (which is described in more detail further in this chapter) as a primary source of data. The premise was to converge verbal (narrative) and visual (drawing) information data so that it could be triangulated *'as an independent source of information'* (Harper citied in Flick 2004, p.179).

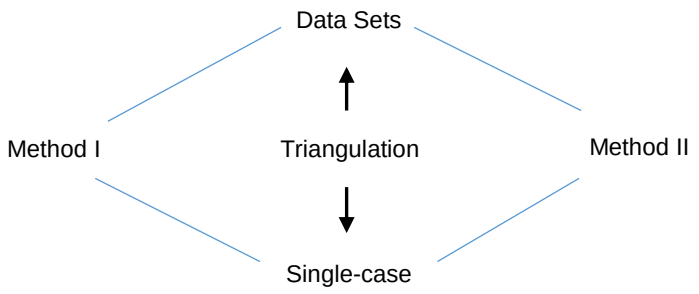

Figure 2: Starting points for triangulation of methods in collective case study

Source: Flick 2004

This approach to use a 'triangulation of methods' is a shift from being a validation strategy to an approach where additional knowledge is gained through explanation and reinforcing knowledge (Flick 2004, p.179 referencing Denzin and Lincoln 1994). This enables substantiation of theory development.

3.3: Data Collection

3.3.1: Introduction

Data collection centred on research participants' experience of working in an organisation affected by an overtly known workplace transgression. This stage of the research involved multiple sources of data collection. The iterative nature of these contributed to the conceptual rigour and robustness of the study (Eisenhardt 1989; Rousseau & Fried 2001). The methods employed in the creation of data: Socio-analytic interviewing and Drawing are detailed in the following.

3.3.2: Socio-analytic Interviews

A review of research literature about qualitative methods informed the decision to conduct semi structured socio-analytic structured interviews (Creswell 2013; Crotty 1998; Denzin & Lincoln 2011; DiCicco - Bloom & Crabtree 2006; Elmir et al. 2011; Holloway & Jefferson 2013; Kvale 2003; Kvale & Brinkman 2009; Long & Harding 2013; Seidman 2012). The practice of semi structured socio-analytic interviews is guided by open questions, tailored around the research topic, aim and promotes less reliance on set questions. I chose this method as it supported the interpretative stance and provided a conceptual frame in which I could employ a deeper enquiry into understanding of social phenomena in organisations (Long & Harding 2013). Socio-analytic interview differs from many interview orientations in that it does not seek to compare and replicate data from one interview to another, rather it differentiates data amongst the interviews to form a 'whole' or system wide perspective. Each individual interview is considered a representative part that contains unique and valuable experiences (Izod 2016; Long & Harding 2013).

3.3.3: Interview Approach

The purpose of the interviews was to explore case studies of individual personal experience following an overtly known workplace transgression. I sought to position myself in close proximity to the participant's lived experience (Seidman 2012) through their reconstruction and narration of 'a range of constitutive events in their past' (p.21) as related to the research topic. I wanted to discern, at both a conscious and unconscious level, how 'systemic processes were evidenced through the experiences and behaviours of individuals and their interactions' (Long & Harding 2013, p.91) within a group or system wide level in an organisation. The intention was to delve directly into the 'uniqueness of the individual (experience) while attempting to

gain a picture of the whole' (p. 91). Moreover, to determine how unconscious dynamics played out at a systemic level in the aftermath of an overtly known workplace transgression.

The overall aim of the interviews was to expand understanding of the function of the interviewee's role, reflections on their experience of their role and role relations and perception of organisational dynamics that were enacted in the aftermath of the overtly known workplace transgression/s. I used open-ended questions to guide participant's account of their experience and mental model of the organisation and incorporated role drawings to support this (Newton, Long & Sievers 2006; Nossal 2010).

3.3.3.1: Interview Questions

The interview questions explored role, role relatedness and authority (Long 2018a; Newton, Long & Sievers 2006). They were formulated to bring to close proximity the social reality of the participant's lived experience of an overtly known workplace transgression (Bryman & Bell 2011).

The interview questions were framed in an open way to mitigate against interviewees responding to perceived expectations (Hancock & Algozzine 2011). I ensured that there was a clear separation between the information and explanation provided to interviewees and the interview questions (Hollway & Jefferson 2012).

The line of inquiry was designed to:

1. Consider the experience of individuals working within a group/function as well as across an organisation that has been impacted by an overtly known transgression;
2. Identify how differing roles within teams work together as part of the broader system, when impacted by an overtly known transgression;
3. Identify how authority and leadership are consequently taken up within the organisation by its members; and
4. Seek to gain an understanding of the identity and work culture of the relevant group(s) and the group's relatedness to the wider organisation.

The interview questions for face-to-face interviews were the same as for the Skype interviews. These are:

1. Can you tell me about the situation you experienced and what that was like for you?
2. Would you please tell me about your drawing?
3. How did the transgression shape the behaviours and experience of organisational members? What was your experience like?
4. From your observation, how did authority and leadership consequently get taken up within the organisation by its members?
5. In your opinion, what impact did this workplace transgression have on the organisational culture?
6. Is there a metaphor related to family that's reflected in roles taken up by members/stakeholders? Talk me through why you think this?
    a. Father/Absent
    b. Mother/Absent
    c. Sister/Brother
    d. Grandmother/Grandfather
    e. Aunt/Uncle
    f. Infantilised relations
7. Is there a particular stakeholder(s) who stands out in your experience and why?
8. What family role did you play?
9. Is there anything further that you'd like to share?
10. Now we're at the end, what would you change in the drawing?

These questions were chosen as most appropriate to guide participants' accounts of their experience and mental model of the organisation (Armstrong, Obholzer & French 2005), as well as elicit discussion about their interpretation and meanings that they attach to their experiences (Izod 2016; Newton, Long & Sievers 2006). The question on metaphor allows a bridge to the unconscious, a transitional object that is less threatening and safe in its symbolic representation (Lloyd 2017). Family metaphors allow insight into authority relations, again without having to touch consciously on what may be difficult. The questions were structured in a manner that allows the researcher to explore emergent themes (May 2011).

3.3.3.2: Selection of Interview Participants

Though purposeful sampling was not intended, individuals were recruited and/or referred via professional networks, leveraging my professional credentials and affiliations (Welch et al. 2002). They came from a range of fields and leadership levels (refer Appendix 6). Individuals became research participants based on their interest in the research topic and their experience

of being in an organisation in the aftermath of an overtly known workplace transgression. Individuals represented themselves and not an organisation.

Fifty people were emailed invitations to voluntarily participate in an interview of approximately ninety minutes duration (refer Appendix 1). Twenty-one people volunteered to participate, of which I interviewed nineteen. Two participants withdrew prior to commencement of interview process, due to conflicts with overseas work commitments and one participant withdrew, two months following the interview for fear of repercussion. This meant that the sample size of participants for the research is eighteen.

Of these twenty-one people, four were 'individual contributors' in terms of leadership level. By 'individual contributors' it is meant organisational leadership levels that refers to entry-level and/or first-line employees, and who do not have employees reporting to them (Maurer & London 2015). The other seventeen were an even mix of departmental or functional leaders that had direct reports; of these two were Non-Executive Directors of Boards and one CEO. I considered the high volume of leaders from an operational level and above as beneficial in gaining insight into systemic behaviour. Adopting Steger's (2007) stance as appropriate to socio-analytic interviewing, I considered these leaders as likely closely attached to the identity of the organisation.

In all, sixteen individuals declined in response; of these, thirteen rang me directly to inform me of their decision not to participate. The remaining three individuals (all based interstate) emailed me and formally declined. The reasons cited for declining to participate included potential conflicts of interest with current roles; and despite assurances of anonymity, two individuals stating that it would be detrimental to their careers if ever their involvement became known to their current employers. Other reasons were that the organisation was under investigation in a royal commission, and that any knowledge of person's involvement in my research might be misconstrued, thereby threatening their tenure.

I received no response from the other thirteen invited people, despite being individuals known to me. I speculate that the shift in interest is attributable to unease surrounding the research topic. Feelings of being censored and suppressed were once again creeping into me.

Scheduling interviews with a senior cohort of leadership was a lengthy task, varying from two to ten months from the time I received individual's agreement to participate in the interview to the day of interview being conducted. These delays were primarily due to individuals work demands and travel commitments. In all cases, I endeavoured to accommodate individual's

needs for date, time and location. My first interview was conducted in July 2016 and the last interview in April 2017.

3.3.4: The Research Process as a Container for Anxiety

Much effort was expended to ensure participants were offered as 'safe' a research environment possible. This involved provision of clear communication that articulated all the relevant details regarding the research intent and context, definition of terms (i.e. meaning of transgression), interview process, participant involvement, research intent, as well as ethical and confidentiality requirements (see Appendices 1-3) .

Prior to commencement of the research, meetings were held with each participant for approximately one hour. These were to ensure clarity about their involvement in the research and to address any concerns about confidentiality and anonymity. All eighteen participants had some anxiety about exposure of their identity and in six cases individuals expressed some fear of reprisal from their organisations if confidentiality was breached. Quite frequently, I felt as if participants were assessing me to determine whether I was 'safe' enough to authorise me to conduct the interview (Long & Harding 2013, p. 96). This is entirely understandable given the sensitive nature of the interview content. I also ensured that safety concerns regarding choice of interview venue were accommodated; this was about minimising the likelihood of being seen by others.

In addition, it was critical that I attend to my own boundaries and capacity to provide 'containment' (Bion 1962); to hold their feelings and be emotionally receptive in the exploration of their experience (Clarke & Hoggett 2009 p. 12). In each of the negotiation meetings, the process involved establishing clear boundaries that were mutually agreed upon (Long & Harding 2013). I found these meetings emotionally exhausting. At times, I felt as if individuals were pushing for me to take up the role of therapist. I had to attend carefully to my role as a researcher, to ensure that role boundaries were not blurred given the risk that colluding with the interview participant would invariably enable the employment of defensive behaviour and thereby effectively subvert the research process. I believe I adequately achieved this by being mindful of my emotional reactions to the experiences shared (Izod 2014), by staying mentally present and journaling any reactions I felt, or behavioural shifts in my mannerisms as they occurred during the interview and in any other dealings I had with the participants.

3.3.4.1: Interview Location

Selection of an appropriate venue proved critical. Apart from being geographically convenient, careful planning of a 'neutral' venue location was required to ensure flexibility with access, operating hours and 'safety' arrangements for both the participants and myself.

As the majority of participants were based within a major Australian capital city, I used two key locations. One was in a central business district and the other in a bayside suburb on the city fringe. The meeting rooms were quiet, and simply furnished with table and chairs conducive for interviews.

Three participants preferred to be interviewed in a venue of their choice. I also had two participants whom I was unable to conduct face-to-face interviews: one participant relocated overseas and the other is interstate. To accommodate these distances, I arranged for their interviews to be conducted via Skype.

3.3.4.2: Skype Interviews

Skype provided a practical solution to mitigate the 'distance of space' (Deakin & Wakefield 2014, p. 605). It eliminated travel costs where participants were located in interstate and overseas locations, and the software is easily accessible and free to download. Skype enabled me to talk to the interviewee and see them in real time. A limitation of Skype is that visibility of the participant via the web cam is restricted to a head shot, thereby obstructing observation of the participant's body language (Cater 2011).

To circumvent some of the issues and satisfy ethical requirements in using this tool, I approached participants prior to conducting the interviews and asked they confirm in writing that they had the appropriate technology, technical knowledge to use the application, and access to a quiet room.

3.3.4.3: Interview Duration

The interviews were planned for ninety minutes in duration, however, in six cases they extended to two-hours. This was because it was first time these participants had opportunity to speak of the experiences and I made a judgment call that it was very important for the individuals to have their voice heard; to not shut them down without them having the opportunity to complete their narrative due to the pre-established time boundary. Participants in each of these cases were given the option, prior to the conclusion of the interview, to reconvene on another date or to extend the interview to a maximum of two-hours. They each

chose to continue. Retrospectively, I recognised by extending the interview time I was risking corrupting the 'time, task, territory' containing structure of the interviews, however, the data did not suggest this as each of the interviews continued with similar depth of narrative. .

3.3.5: The Interview Technique

The interview technique I employed enabled active participation between myself, as interviewer and the interviewee in the co-construction of the interview content (Seidman 2012). This interview logic fits in with socio-analytic practice and aligns with interpretivist philosophical underpinnings. I adapted ideas from Long & Harding (2013) together with those of Holloway and Jefferson (2013) for my face-to-face and Skype interviews. Both sets of authors promote a fluid and free associative style. The socio-analytic interview method relies less on structured questions, with greater focus on a guided conversational style that emerges between interviewee and interviewer. This interviewing process enabled participants to consider their own experiences, that illuminated aspects not previously contemplated.

My approach to the interview process was adaptive and improvised (Etherington 2004). This allowed for participant stories to unfold in a more intimate way. Interweaving the questions through the conversational flow, furnished the interview purpose and aim. Digitally recording the discussions seemed to further facilitate this process. It enabled me to focus on the dialogue and stay present. I used notes to record nuanced comments, as well as, any observable or felt phenomenon of mine that transpired during the interview. While individuals completed their role drawing, I stepped out of the room. This freed the participant from any potential performance anxiety relating to my visible presence and provided me some time to reflect on any puzzling phenomenon that surfaced earlier. I was able to bring this back into the interview in the form of questions of clarification, or working hypothesis, as a means of validating the experience.

The interviews were emotionally laborious in actively attending to the participant's verbal responses and non-verbal actions, as well as, being attuned to my own reactions, especially my bodily state (Etherington 2004; Hochschild 1983; Holloway & Jefferson 2013; Margarian 2014). This practice of 'self-scrutiny' (as coined by Berg and Smith 1988) was made more so laborious, given the difficult personal experiences shared by the individuals. Providing 'containment' (Bion 1962) of the painful aspects of the participant's story was not an easy task. I constantly felt I was walking a swaying tight rope, balancing my capacity to be empathetic, with objectivity and self-reflexivity (Etherington 2004; Kvale 2003). This struggle was compounded with having to balance my frustration of 'not knowing' and my endeavour of

‘coming to know’ (Berg & Smith 1988; Bollas 1987). Post interview, I captured and explored my thoughts of any phenomena I experienced. This was made up of quotes, key words, my emotional and/or somatic reactions, observations of unusual or surprising incidents that occurred just prior to and during the course of the interview. These field notes were a salient data source, which aided in my recollection of events. The field notes were then transcribed later (Lofland & Lofland 1995). I employed the same practices outlined in this section in the conduct of my Skype’s interviews.

3.3.6: Recording of Data

Digital recordings of individual interviews were made with the explicit knowledge and consent of participants (both oral and written) prior to the commencement of the interview. Recordings were made using a digital audio taping device on my smart phone. ‘Naturalized Transcripts’ (Mero-Jaffe 2011) were then generated, as a ‘less filtered transcription…detailed as possible and focused on the details of the discourse, such as breaks in speech, laughter, mumbling, involuntary sounds, gestures, body language, etc. as well as content’ (p. 232). This allowed for deeper immersion of the data. No photographic images were taken during the course of the interviews. In addition, all field notes and journal entries were transcribed and considered a vital part in developing familiarity with the data.

3.3.7: Affirming Interview Representations

The interviews were digitally recorded so that transcripts could be generated. The transcripts were forwarded to each participant for them to sight and correct as a true representation of the interview. The premise was to ‘avoid significant errors that may have an impact on the quality of the transcript and, as a result, on the quality of the entire research’ (Mero-Jaffe 2011, p.234). This occurred about a year after the interviews and was undertaken in two stages. The first stage involved contacting participants, either by phone or email as a reminder that the interviews had all been conducted and were now completed. I requested the participants permission to send their own transcript for affirmation. All interviewees consented. Each participant was then emailed a copy of their transcript and asked to validate it by making any amendments or corrections they felt necessary, as well as clarifying any unclear excerpts highlighted within the document.

Participants took up to three weeks to return the reviewed transcript. In six cases, four of which are the cases exemplified in Chapters 5 - 8, I sought clarification on the comments made. These discussions about clarifications provided crystallisation of data (Flick 2004; Morse et al. 2002; Patton 2015). The meetings enabled me to present working hypotheses generated from

the data collected in interviews, as well as validate interpretations and associated emotions identified, using the emotional connections table (refer section 3.3.12.3). I considered these meetings vital in stimulating feedback and to substantiate hypothesises, thereby refine findings. The participants also provided me with some data about the impact on participants being interviewed. I was surprised to learn that in four circumstances, participants felt the experience was cathartic and in two instances, participants made a significant decision to resign from their position of employment as a result of participation.

3.3.8: Using Drawing Technique

Drawings were used as an adjunct method in this research. Commonly used as a diagnostic tool in socio-analytic exploration, drawing is also widely used as a research method in cognitive psychology, social and organisational sciences (Guillemin 2004; Literat 2013; Nossal 2013). The method is considered by researchers as a powerful tool in which to garner rich visual data and, as Nossal (2013) contends, enables straightforward expression of complex emotions and cognitions of organisational life.

Drawing provides a stimulus for thinking, shaping knowledge production and how meaning is made (Cain 2010; Guillemin 2004; Roberts & Riley 2014). Bound in a process of immediacy, it allows for images to emerge uninhibited and spontaneously in the progression of the activity (Cain 2010). The outcome is a graphic artefact of the process that produced it (p. 30). It represents 'a visual record of how the drawer understands his or her...(experience)...at that particular place and time. In this way, drawings, like other representations, can be used as ways of understanding how people see their world' (Guillemin 2004, p. 275).

Drawings were used in interviews to broaden and deepen participant's account of their experience of what was occurring for them and in the organisation (Newton et al, 2006). Participants were asked to draw them self in their role in the aftermath of the overtly known workplace transgression. To depict any challenges or obstacles in role relations with others, as well as any external environmental influences. Participants were also asked to use colour to express emotional experience and if possible, to try to refrain from the use of words. The drawing can be images that are symbols, metaphors or simply stick figures (it did not have to be perfect). The aim was to enable access to a deeper understanding of the organisation that may not be able to be verbalised, and that then could be explored in the conversational flow of the interview (Hutton, Bazalgette & Reed 1997).

What emerged in all cases was a variety of powerful and colourful visual depictions of their experiences. The discussion then continued, focusing on the interviewee's interpretations of what their drawing revealed and the meanings that they attached to their experiences. This included their reason for their choice of colour, what emotions they connected to this choice, as well as, the structure (spatial arrangement) of images. Intermingled in this process, were my associations to the drawing, with the aim of triggering new thoughts. The drawings created a deeper understanding of the participant's experience and additional, supportive rich data. The participants were often surprised by their own revelations.

3.3.9: Keeping a Journal

Another salient data source was my research journal. This was used as a reflexive tool in the process of 'self-scrutiny' throughout the research journey (Holloway & Jefferson 2013). The method, as described by Holloway & Jefferson (2013) and Berger (2015), requires the researcher to:

- engage with one's own subjectivity
- have the capacity to have an open mind, focus on self-knowledge and experience through sensing
- be vulnerable in 'not knowing'
- better understand the role of the self in the creation of knowledge
- carefully self-monitor the impact of one's biases, beliefs, and personal experiences on their research and
- maintain the balance between the personal and the other.

I used the journal to reflect on aspects of my progress in the research and how these all shaped my thinking. The journal became an important tool in which I could process my observations, thoughts and feelings without feeling judged. More significantly, it enabled me to be playful in exploring my associations to the parallel experiences to those of the research participants. The journal provided me the safety to archive thoughts and ideas, which became an important data source for the data analysis phase. Journaling kept me connected.

3.3.10: Research Reflection Group

Peer consultation was another significant element in my practice of reflexivity. To enable this I participated in a Research Reference Group (RRG). The RRG used a reflective practice model. The group was a cohort of four PhD candidates and one master's student, who are all qualified socio-analytical content and process experts. We formed to enable critique of

underlying theoretical assumptions and perspectives related to each of our research topic (Morgan, 2006), and to explore dynamics that we encountered through our research experience as potential data about the various research systems. The meetings were daylong workshops that took place on a monthly basis over the first four years of the research. In each session, there were approximately six participants, all of whom were females.

3.3.11: Data Analysis

Thematic analysis both within and across the data of the individual participant interviews was adopted. Thematic analysis is a form of inductive analysis where findings emerge through the analyst's interactions with the data (Merriam 1998). The method follows a process of identifying, analysing and documenting themes within data and minimally organising across data set to build a rich description of collective experience (Taylor and Bogdan 1984). However, it also often goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke 2006). Data sources that were analysed included:

- Semi –structured face-to-face interviews with 18 individual participants
- Visual representations from interview participants' role drawings
- Research Reflection Group – a group of five PhD and Masters research candidates in the field of organisational dynamics who met for three years with a supervisor facilitating the group. We explored and tested theoretical assumptions, constructs and conceptions, as well as considered what I possibly experienced in the research system that may impact my ability to stay in role as researcher
- Exploration of the Researcher's experience - An important component of the researcher role was to attend to the subjective experience of what is being studied; using self as a 'primary instrument' in data collection and analysis (Barrett 2007; Hancock & Algozzine 2011).

Initial analysis of data and emergent themes occurred at the completion of each interview and more broadly at the completion of all interviews. The intent was to identify recurring messages and thus discover the themes of each of the interviews and bring together the themes as a whole; to inductively develop a narrative; to 'marry' concepts and illustrative viewpoints (Biggerstaff 2012; Miles & Huberman 1994).

I commenced this stage of the research by coding interview transcripts. The initial open coding (Matthew & Price 2010) of key themes immersed me in the data (Holloway & Jefferson 2013).

Open coding is an inductive process of pattern identification across the data sets. I coded unstructured data that categorised to fit in pre-determined coding frame, or my own *'analytic preconceptions'* (Braun & Clarke 2006, p.12). Coding involved listening to each interview audio recording and reading through data records of interview transcripts, field and journal notes gathered throughout the research. As I went, I highlighted and coding relevant material that supported or negated the emergent themes. A sample interview map of Interview 18 'Holly' is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Sample Interview Map from Participant 18 'Holly'

P1:	A black and white scenario
P1:	We'll give this person some money to go away
P2:	His performance was failing.
P2:	There was this attitude, 'I know what I'm doing', 'you're an idiot, nobody likes you in the business'
P2:	The 'word on the wire'
P3:	We ask him to leave now and let him go with some um, respect you know, we can say that he resigned'.
P7:	It was a boy's club…they all thought it was very funny
P7:	The people who were senior to him in that office, turned a blind eye to his behaviour
P8:	The undercurrent was that everybody was talking
P8:	He's a charismatic guy and everybody likes him….
P8:	From an external viewpoint the reputation of the organisation was… it wasn't what the business wanted. You know, the 'boysie' kind of reputation was not what the organisation was trying to head towards; it was trying to elevate itself to a different level.
P9:	He kept telling everybody he was really capable...
P9:	He said, 'you know what I don't care. Do you know what car I drive?' and I went, 'what had your car got to do with it?' 'I drive a Ferrari'
P9:	I almost wanted to say 'have you got a small pecker because you're telling me your car is a red Ferrari'
P15:	Mood and the temperature…veering towards very sort of sexist and um, immature behaviour.
P15:	It was becoming a sort of boys own kind of environment
P15:	The language was a little bit too blue and it, you know, it shouldn't have been

P17:	The boys, on the contrary when I interviewed some of the guys in the office they actually thought it was a hoot and he was a really good guy

From these coding activities core thematic categories became evident. Once the themes were established, I repeated the coding process, going back through all the data, adding new pieces of dialogue that became more figural when seen against the backdrop of the themes. This iteration refined and further defined the themes. Thematic analysis provided a planned approach that enabled a process of comparing individual responses those categories (Holloway & Jefferson 2013). Interviews were then clustered according to similar themes. Through this process of discovery and interpretation, I progressed to the next stage of underpinning theoretical concepts to the themes. This was informed predominantly by socio-analytic theory. This stage of the research journey was all consuming. I felt overwhelmed by this task and often doubted my ability to competently see my way through the fog.

Further data analysis was undertaken using abductive logic. This style of analysis is consistent with the interpretivist, nonlinear nature of the research. Abductive analysis enables the generation of 'novel theoretical insights that reframe empirical findings in contrast to existing theories' (Timmermans & Tavory 2012, p. 174). In this the researcher identifies nuanced elements of the data; aspects that may not be obvious or that have not been considered previously in the literature (Long 2018a; Lu & Liu 2012; Reichertz 2007; Taylor & Bogdan 1984). The combination of inductive and abductive analysis enabled the creation of nuanced working hypotheses about the effects on individuals and groups within an organisation after an overtly known workplace transgression has occurred.

The key patterns identified across the collective case studies are reflected in Chapter 9. The breadth of themes include: the dynamics of perversion (Diamond & Allcorn 2006; Gabriel 2012; Hoggett 2010; Long 2008; Long & Sievers 2013; Stein 2007; Steiner 1982, 1985; Stoller 1986) shame (Asser 2004; DeYoung 2015; Lickel et al. 2005; Nathanson 1987, 1994; Scheff 2003; Schneider 1977; Steiner 2011; Tangney 1995); social defence mechanisms (Jaques 1955; Long 2006; Menzies Lyth 1960); silence and censorship (Kish-Gephart et al. 2009); and trauma (Fischer 2012; Freud 1915, 1921; Hopper 2012; Morgan-Jones 2018; Steiner 2011; Tehrani 2010; Yarom 2015).

3.3.12: Additional analytic methods

During the process of interviewing and validating interviews with participants I encountered a series of 'peculiar' phenomenon and noted these as critical incidents that were potentially a

‘mirroring’ of dynamics of the participant’s organisational system (Long & Harding 2013). Given the potency of these ‘intersubjective’ experiences, alternative analytic tools were incorporated to make greater sense of these patterns in this data. The following points outline the ‘interpretation and association’ (p. 103) methods I utilised to assist with this process.

3.3.12.1: Countertransference and Somatic Countertransference Phenomena

As discussed in Chapter 2 (p. 26) the concepts of ‘Countertransference’ and ‘Somatic Countertransference’ have been used by psychoanalytic practitioners as therapeutic tools in clinical contexts for decades (Holmes & Perrin 1997; Margarian 2014; Racker 2007, 2018; Samuels 1985; Yarom 2015). Within the research setting, countertransference is the specific reaction the researcher has to the participant’s transference (Moore & Fine 1990). Likewise, somatic countertransference is somatic, bodily-felt experience, in which the researcher attempts to makes sense of the participants unconscious shifting self-states during the interview (Dosamantes-Beaudry 2007). These concepts are further defined in Chapter 2 and ascribed to the data in Chapters 5 – 8.

Due to frequency of visceral reactions I experienced in each of the interviews, I was particularly interested in the phenomenon of Countertransference/Somatic Countertransference and adapted Margarian’s (2014) use of the concept for the purpose of this research. That is to represent any sensation (emotional) experienced by the researcher, as data, in relation to the transference and the emerging relationship between interviewee and researcher. The somatic component of countertransference phenomenon regarded as physical sensations felt within the body of the researcher (Ross 2000; Samuels 1985).

I used this concept as a tool to explore the unconscious meanings attached to these experiences. I employed Margarian’s (2014) categorisation of the data into three groups: 1. affective (emotional); 2. cognitive (images); and 3. somatic (physical sensations) responses. Interpretation of the countertransferential and somatic countertransferential data was then made using a socio-analytical conceptual lens. The interpretations were then married with themes found in the other data-sets.

3.3.12.2: Metaphor Analysis

Analysis of participants’ use of metaphors became an additional analytic tool. Metaphors became evident to me during the review of one particular transcript. The transcript had 88 different metaphors in the interview. I had found this interview very hard to understand, however, consideration of the metaphors allowed access to another way of communicating.

This triggered me to recognise metaphors in the other transcripts and to recognise their importance in the narratives as a mechanism of being able to communicate something that may not have been able to be said directly.

On review of the literature on metaphors in qualitative research, and in their usage in organisational settings (Carpenter 2008; Morgan 2006; Steen 2011; Steger 2007; Wiklund 2010), Steger's (2007) ideas aligned most strongly with this sense of the metaphor being an alternate form of communication. Steger argues this, saying that when metaphor is used to describe organisational experience it is potentially an alternative expression of thought and emotion that is too difficult to express. Steger advocates the use of a three step model to making meaning of such metaphors. He describes this model as 'a highly heuristic method'. Namely, the imprecise nature on whether specific metaphors are included or not in the analysis, with no assurance of producing thought provoking discoveries.

The application of this analytic method was undertaken using the following steps:

- Identify the participant's repeated use of related terms and phrases to describe a significant event (i.e. 'being on a sinking ship') and centre on the metaphoric phrase (i.e. 'the company is a ship').

- Search the literature for applications of the specific metaphor (i.e. Ship) and other similar metaphors. Do they share characteristics with the identified metaphor and related terms (i.e. interdependency, hierarchy, and potential danger)?

- Return to the narrative to put the metaphor in context. Given the participant's background, does the metaphor reflect the participant's self-concept that was not expressed (i.e. being stuck and barely surviving in a destructive environment where the organisation is in demise)?

This method enabled deeper analysis where the individual's account of their experience was littered with metaphors. Time did not allow the interpretation of every metaphor within each transcript. Instead I selected what Steger (2007, p.19) describes as a 'promising metaphor' that encompasses elements such as emotion, amplification, reiteration, relatedness and contrast. Interpretation of metaphors helped illuminate and add to the data set for triangulation and convergence with other data and themes.

3.3.12.3: Symbolic Representation and Emotional Connections

In reviewing one particular case, I noted that the person did not provide any narrative relating to emotion associated with the colours used in their drawings. Concerned about this gap, I developed a simple table (refer below to Table 3 Emotional Connections Template and Table 17, p. 223 for Completed Sample) that could provide links between the symbols/images participants drew, their interpretation of what these images represented, associated colour, and emotion(s) evoked in association to these images/ experience. The table was very helpful in ordering of this data for the analytic phase.

In the follow up meeting, I tested the use of this table with one participant and asked them to complete any blanks that I was unable to validate from the material in their transcription. The method proved to be a 'container' (Bion 1962) that provided the participants with the capacity to put boundaries around the experience, enabling the turning of emotion into thought.

Table 3: Emotional Connections Template

Interviewee No.____ - System Drawing
Symbolic Representations and Emotional Connections

Colour	Symbol/Image	Representation of	Emotion Evoked
Black			
Yellow			
Orange			
Red			
Light Blue			
Pink			
Purple			
Green			

3.4: Summary

This chapter outlined the philosophical approach to the design, methodology and practices that governed this research project in accordance with a socio-analytical stance and relative to the research questions. The chapter began by outlining socio-analytic interview methodology, the interview approach and technique, as well as an overview on how the research process was a container for anxiety (researcher and researched). More specifically,

it outlined the practice of reflexivity used to critique underlying theoretical assumptions and perspectives related to the research topic (Morgan, 2006), and dynamics I encountered through the research experience, as additional data about the various research systems. The chapter then provides an outline of when and where data collection was undertaken. It then provides a detailed account of how complimentary data was collected through drawing, through which underlying unconscious dynamics at the systemic level were surfaced. The chapter then moves to describe the use of thematic data analysis as an in-depth exploration of the conscious and unconscious system dynamics, as well as, alternative analytical methods of countertransference, somatic countertransference, metaphor analysis and emotional connections, which impacted individuals' experiences of the traumatised social systems they were part of. In this, I outline how data analysis occurred and validated. In the following chapter, Chapter 4, I outline the aim and structure of the analytical chapters, Chapters 5-8, of four individual case studies that exemplify the main themes of this study are introduced.

Chapter 4: Introduction to Exemplified Case Studies

This chapter introduces the next four case study chapters of individual participant experiences. The choice of these four participant's experiences exemplify the main themes commonly identified across all eighteen cases.

Each case study includes: introduction to the interview participant and their context; an outline of the transgression as interpreted by the participant; the impact of the transgression on the individual and the system in the aftermath; the researcher's reflections on the interview; and a descriptive and interpretative overview of the main themes identified. Each case is presented as a separate chapter.

The first case study, Chapter 5, Holly's Story (Case 18), highlights the main theme of activation of a 'Shame Spiral' and explores the phenomenology of emotional sequencing in recurring shame as a result of a moral transgression. The fusion and interconnection of affect with unacknowledged shame scenes identified in Holly's narrative is powerfully illustrated in her system drawing. In this, I argue Holly (self/individual) and the organisation (group/system) represent the impact of being unconsciously entrapped in shame. The exploration of Holly's narrative and, most poignantly, her system drawing illustrates the inward focus and experience of unacknowledged shame. Explored in this is how the circular flow of shame feelings and accompanying thoughts trigger each other. The reliving of the event that activated shame is symbolised through imagery in Holly's drawing (Kaufman 1996).

A theme of 'Controlling Shame' emerges in the analysis of the second case study, Chapter 6, Oscar's Story (Case 14). The theme of Oscar's narrative is unacknowledged shame mobilised as anger (Retzinger 1991a, p. 19). It is proposed that Oscar's accounts of his experience of the judicial system he worked in mirror relations with the detainees and the community/external social world. Further, that traumatised and detached, the system as a whole and its individual members engage in dynamics of catastrophic shame and humiliated rage (Hopper 2012).

The third case study, Chapter 7, Fleur's Story (Case 6), explores the theme of 'Concealing Shame'. The analysis focuses on the defences of hiding against the blinding effects of exposure; of the individual and the system feeling exposed or seen, scrutinised and judged by the other. Intermingled in this complexity, the defence of compensation is also considered. This is framed through Fleur's depiction of an organisation's striving for perfection, and characteristics of hubris and narcissistic greed. It is argued that this defensive organisational

behaviour is in place to compensate for feelings of inherent deficiencies and need to expunge perceived internal blemishes (Kaufman 1996).

The fourth and final case presented is Chapter 8, Claudia's Story (Case 2). Explored is the theme of 'Denying Shame', arguably enacted through avoidance and dissociative phenomenon. This is considered through cultural scripts of popularity and conformity in which uniqueness/individuality and one's identity is neither recognised nor valued. It is proposed that societal and institutional pressures of valuing popularity, alienate and invalidate those who are different from valued/popular others, and are thus shamed. And further that to avoid this shame, non-conforming individuals/ non-popularised sub groups, avoid being different or seen as different for fear of being obliterated by the system (Kaufman 1996).

As discussed in Chapter 3, the data for analysis was principally collected from the narratives of individual participant interviews, their role drawings and somatic countertransference phenomenon experienced by the researcher during the interview process. The research questions are (1) How the participants were effected by an overtly known workplace transgression and (2) Perception of how stakeholders in that system dealt with tensions of preserving the identity of the system, in the aftermath.

It is important to restate that the research did not intend to explore the specific details of the overtly known transgressions or to seek to discover any illegal activity (either covert or overt). This was a key ethical requirement for this research, based on mitigating any risk of legal exposure and safeguarding my role as researcher. Participants' understanding of an overtly known workplace transgression was subjective and interpreted within the confines of the definition provided to them in the invitation to participate in the research project. This was: by transgression, I refer to an act of wrongdoing or misconduct that is a violation of legal, ethical or social boundaries.

Though participants did discuss some details on the transgression that occurred, the core focus of the analysis was on their experience. The intent was to gain a deeper understanding of the impacts on the individual's exposure to an overtly known workplace transgression and impact on the system they were part of in the aftermath. Thus, the data presented is a construction of the situation of each participant's experience and what that was like for them. Any details requested about the transgression was done to provide understanding about the type of transgression. This enabled me to gain some insight to how it may have shaped and influenced the situation.

Each case includes: introduction to the interview participant and their context; an outline of the transgression as interpreted by the participant; the impact of being in the aftermath of the transgression on the individual and the system, thought through with reference to theories of shame; reflections on the interview; and a descriptive and interpretative overview on the identified main themes. Each case is presented as a separate chapter and is introduced at the chapter's outset using the tables 4-7. These tables identify the main themes for each case and supporting sub themes.

Table 4: Theme generation from Chapter 5 Holly's Story - the Spiral of Shame

Chapter 5 Sub Themes	**Main Theme - Shame Spiral**				
	Controlling Shame (Anger)	**Concealing Shame (Withdrawal)**	**Denying Shame (Avoidance)**	**Compensation**	**Inequality**
	Attack the Other Mutilation Moral Indignation Disappointment	Isolation Abandonment Rejection Concealment Rumours & Secrets Escape	Avoidance Denial Transfer of Blame Unwanted Identity Polarisation	Grandiosity Narcissism Hubristic Pride Perfectionism Idealisation & Omnipotence Manipulation	Sexism Cronyism Misogyny Exclusion Devaluation Judgement

Table 5: Chapter 6 Oscar's Story Main Theme - Controlling Shame

Oscar's Story - Controlling Shame			
Chapter 6 Sub Themes	**Distress**	**Fear**	**Rage**
	Neglect Dissociation Crying Dependency Denial Detachment	Fear Dread Self-Preservation Guilt Engulfment Hypervigilance	Persecutory Attacks Anger False Pride Resentment Moral Indignation Disparagement Enactments Retribution

Table 6: Chapter 7 Fleur's Story Main Theme - Concealing Shame

Fleur's Story - Concealing Shame			
Chapter 7 Sub Themes	**Concealment**	**Compensation**	**Disillusionment**
	Omissions Secrecy Deception Blame Invisibility Obfuscation Hiding – Psychic/Black Hole	Narcissism Grandiosity Perfectionism Hubristic Pride Manipulation	Illusion Idealisation Disillusionment Disappointment Sens of Failure Hopelessness Repetition Compulsion

Table 7: Chapter 8 Claudia's Story Main Theme – Denying Shame

Claudia's Story - Denying Shame			
	Trauma	**Humiliation**	**Disassociation**
Chapter 8 **Sub Themes**	Traumatic Memory Abandonment Isolation & Depression Anxiety/Worry	Rejection Identity Loss Inferiority/Superiority Objectification Powerlessness Exposure	Detachment Dependency Freeze/Numb Fragmentation Flooding

Chapter 5: Holly's Story– 'You're My Only Hope'

5.1: Introduction

This chapter analyses Holly's Story (Case 18), highlighting the main theme of activation of a 'Shame Spiral' and exploring the phenomenology of emotional sequencing in recurring shame. Illustrated is the fusion and interconnection of unacknowledged shame scenes identified in Holly's narrative. In this I argue Holly (self/individual) and the organisation (group/system) were unconsciously entrapped in shame. The exploration of Holly's narrative and her system drawing shows the inward focus and experience of unacknowledged shame. Explored in this is how the circular flow of shame feelings and accompanying thoughts trigger each other. The reliving of the event that activated shame is symbolised in Holly's drawing (Kaufman 1996). Table 8 summarises the themes that are presented.

Table 8: Theme generation from Case 5 - the Spiral of Shame

	Main Theme - Shame Spiral				
	Controlling Shame	**Concealing Shame**	**Avoiding Shame**	**Compensation**	**Inequality**
Chapter 5 Sub Themes	Attack the Other Mutilation Moral Indignation Disappointment	Isolation Abandonment Rejection Concealment Rumours & Secrets Escape	Avoidance Denial Transfer of Blame Unwanted Identity Polarisation	Grandiosity Narcissism Hubristic Pride Perfectionism Idealisation & Omnipotence Manipulation	Sexism Cronyism Misogyny Exclusion Devaluation Judgement

The structure of the chapter is as follows: introduction to the interview participant and their context; an outline of the transgression as interpreted by the participant; an analysis of the impact of the transgression on the individual and the system in the aftermath thought through with reference to theories of shame; the researcher's reflections on the interview; and a descriptive and interpretative overview of the main themes identified.

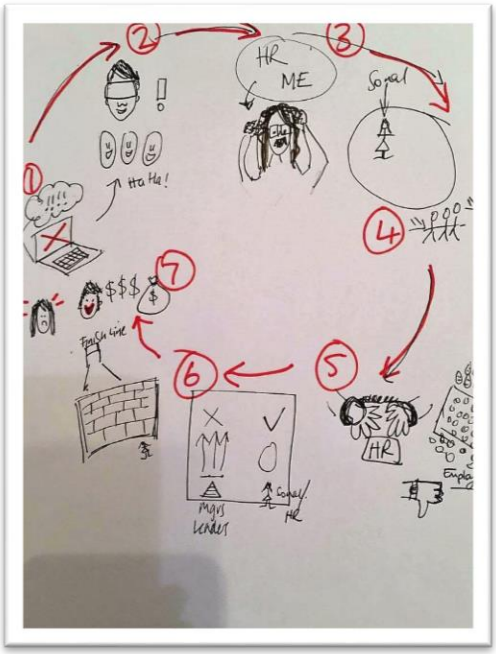

Figure 3: The System and its Spiral of Shame

Source: Holly, Case 18

5.2: The Interviewee

'Holly' is a female human resource (HR) senior executive, with over 10 years' global experience in senior management positions in the Information Technology (IT) sector. A self-proclaimed and vociferous advocate of ethical work practices, Holly considers herself 'very black and white with my moral standards*'*. The company she shared her experience of is a large global software development firm; a 'new and budding organisation with a new and budding technology... (that) was going to revolutionise the world*'.* She joined as a member of a national senior management team some five years earlier. In this position, she held dual reporting lines; a direct reporting line to the Head of HR for the Asia Pacific (APAC) region and an indirect reporting line to the country leader within Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) region. The HR function was populated predominately by female staff.

5.3: The Transgression

Based on Holly's recollections, the transgression was a multi-layered issue primarily relating to sexual misconduct that occurred between 2010 – 2013. This initially surfaced as a performance concern about a senior regional leader of a sales division, 'John', who was located within ANZ and considered the agent of transgression. John had been recruited as 'a top ranking individual for that region*'.* Viewed in the upper echelons as an instrumental part in

executing the organisation's 'growth strategy', he had an esteemed reputation within the organisation as a 'charismatic thought leader' and played a pivotal role as a company representative at industry forums. He was 'the person who would be on the PR sheets'.

Holly's portrayal of the organisation was that of carefully cultivated image, perceived both internally and externally, as 'inclusive', 'open' and 'honest'. Reverence of these values she attributed to the global CEO, whom Holly described as being a 'Guru…he was well known in the technology world and complete, complete genius and a very, very respected as a technology guru'. These 'special' qualities she felt underpinned the company's veneration (both internal and external) of having the 'best talent', as well as 'best resources'. Moreover, these lofty aspirations were reinforced by the grandiosity of the organisation's physical surroundings:

> The offices in 'US'….they're very academic so it's like a college, like a university...beautiful state of the art offices, lots of high ceilings. The campus was created from nothing, it's got water running through it, it's an architectural dream…so you could see you were going into, you know, it was blue sky. It was like a new thing. It was totally revolutionary…it was a different way of operating, a different way of being, you know, it was when pantries were still being created. They had a Friday night bar and you know, they had food stations within the campus so you could go and get food that was...you didn't have to pay for you know, the pantries were full all the time. You could have breakfast, lunch, dinner there so that you could stay at the campus all day if you needed to work overnight. You know it was just...all the perks were there and it was all bright and shiny...

Nonetheless, Holly described the internal culture as far from 'bright and shiny'. From Holly's observations, there were discernible geographical polarities that were of oppositional force. She described the 'West', US global headquarters, as 'positive, happy…no sort of debacles…no negativity...no downsides really in...how they wanted the world to perceive our organisation'; versus 'APAC' meaning Eastern geography, which Holly described as 'disconnected'[8]. She blamed the APAC CEO for the group's inability to unite. At a national level, Holly described a polarised situation with 'North' 'behaving in the manner that the company needed them to behave', versus 'South' which was 'a little bit more boys own',

[8] 'Disconnectedness' or separateness denotes damaged social bonds between the global headquarters and the APAC region which spiralled downward and was mirrored in the APAC region between the APAC leadership and country/regional leadership. As argued by Retzinger (1995) any threat or damage to social bonds (resultant of loss of face, demeaning criticism, contempt, disgust, blame, perceived injustice, rejection, demeaning criticism or perception of unworthiness in the eyes of others) triggers separateness which arouses shame that frequently leads to hostile conflict or silent stalemate.

meaning risky and unruly behaviour. Holly apportioned blame for the split within the national level on John's conduct, as 'cutting that south division away from the national directive and the national leader'; the split between APAC and global she blamed on the APAC CEO, 'He actually disconnected the APAC world from the global culture and the global culture today is held in very high regard, very high regard'.

Likewise, polarity existed between the technical/academic function of the business known as 'entrepreneurial' led by 'creative…geniuses'; versus Sales which Holly deemed 'aggressive' in its desire to achieve revenue and sale targets; the latter led by 'go-get' leadership mindsets. This was further epitomised by Holly's depiction of the Global Head of Sales, 'He's a preacher so you can imagine it's like 'hallelujah' right.' This suggests that there was an experience of omnipotent leadership, within a culture dependent and expectant to be a worshipful followership. Contrary to this adulation afforded to the organisation's talent, John's leadership capacity to drive sales was in serious decline. Recall John is the senior regional leader of a sales division. His 'performance was failing…he wasn't actually meeting his quotas or revenue'. This triggered a more formal review of his performance, managed by the country leader, with guidance from Holly. John underwent one-on-one executive coaching as a corrective measure to help remedy his 'failing' performance. In Holly's view this was to no avail, 'The coaching wasn't being understood or taken on board' by him, adding, 'He just didn't want to hear it. That was frustrating as well. So, he just refused to hear it'.

Whilst 'the rest of the organisation was growing; growing at a rate of knots', senior management were concerned about drop in revenue in a growing market. Holly believed John's failing performance, 'wasn't because of the market,...talent,…internal support mechanisms or resources; it was mainly to do with the fact that he was lazy…. his laziness was observed at a national level'.[9] Further, Holly described how sales staff became critical of John's performance:

> You'd hear a few of the...the account managers…. the client sort of focused individuals, make mention of the fact that he just wasn't supportive or he hadn't done what he was expected to do or he hadn't shown up for something or he'd got pissed with the wrong people the night before.…there wasn't any um, there wasn't an overt or explicit judgement on him, but there were lots of comments about him.

[9] I suggest Holly's criticism of John as being 'lazy' masked any expression of anger or contempt for him. Lazy also denotes apathy or indifference, typically associated with an inner state of depression. Holly's reference to John's laziness is possibly a shame code or marker to symbolise John's depression or anger turned inward (Kaufman 1996).

Around this timeframe, a number of female employees approached Holly and made complaints regarding John's behaviour in the office. John was based in the same office as these females. The office was designed as an open office environment, in which John's desk was positioned near them. The workforce in the location was predominately male (approximately 90%) and a small percentage of females. Though the organisation globally promoted diversity, there was an imbalance of gender ratios reflected in this region.

The allegations related to a 'black and white scenario of misconduct' in the open office environment. They claimed that they 'caught (him) a couple of times watching… porn' on his company-provisioned laptop at his desk. This conduct, as purported by Holly, constituted a blatant violation of the company's Code of Business Ethics (COBE). The women alleged, 'He had his headphones on and it was plugged into the laptop, but it wasn't plugged in well enough so he was watching porn...during a workday!'

Holly relayed that the women were affronted by this behaviour, also revealing to her that John would sit at his desk and regularly 'fart loudly where everybody could hear', and that he would explicitly tell 'inappropriate jokes' amongst the team that they considered lewd in nature. It was also reported to Holly that John would participate with the other male staff members in the office playing 'pranks on each other', and that they were 'further concerned that the mood and the temperature, if you like, in the office was veering towards very sort of sexist and immature behaviour'. According to the female employees, the office had become 'a sort of boys own kind of environment', in which the John had instigated and encouraged 'unprofessional conduct'. Further, they felt the language spoken amongst the male staff 'was a little bit too blue' and that 'even if they were in the office it was disregarded'. Holly recalled one of the female employee's saying:

> Look, I've been an engineer all of my life and I've never had language like that between boys, and boys can get rough and I can have beers with them and I can go party with the rest of them, but I've never heard things that coarse.

Holly had previously been unaware of these events, 'I was clueless to it, even though I was going into that office, I was visiting it, I had no clue this was going on. But out of the ninety people that were there only three thought it important enough'. Whilst conducting the formal investigation into these allegations, Holly interviewed a number of males in the office or as she referred to them as 'the boys':

> They actually thought it was a hoot and he was a really good guy…..they think it's actually ok for him to behave that way. They appreciate that it was cutting it fine and it was close to the wire, but they don't see anything wrong with his behaviour.

Notwithstanding this contrary mindset, to Holly the 'boys' responses were affirmation of the women's allegations. Holly summarised:

> There was at least forty people who heard him farting, there was at least thirty people who heard the porn video, there was at least three people who caught him at the hotel with a 'female employee'. So the facts were all there right!?... He was dumb enough not even to clear the cache, it was all there, it was all there…. On the COBE stuff, the ethics stuff he just could have been fired straight away and even if we wanted to be kind we could have said 'Oh ok maybe you didn't know it, go and do the exams… you're going to get a final warning if this happens again'.

In addition to these findings, Holly discovered that 'John' misappropriated company funds for personal gain and was involved in sexual relations with a junior staff member. She noted, 'Ok, personal lives are personal lives; you can have an affair with 'an employee', but not on the company's dollar. You don't expense it to the business'. According to Holly:

> It transpires as we're investigating this scenario that he knew her already and he'd shoehorned her into the role and he'd shoehorned her for the purpose of having her close by, right!

John had recommended this person for a role in his office location and used his positional authority to influence the business's decision to employ her, and either used this power to manipulate her to carry out questionable business practices on his behalf, and/or there was a collusion to this end. According to Holly, this was:

> In terms of managing the organisation and the costs and the office supplies and all of the bullshit stuff that you do - arranging events, arranging expenses, organising dinners for people - all of these things were like not ethical….not part of our COBE either, so he violated our COBE and she (receptionist/John's lover) hid it.

The examples of misconduct and misappropriation of funds extended beyond the internal boundaries of the business. Holly ascertained that 'John's' apparent sexist conduct was known externally:

> 'The 'word on the wire' was he could, would take the clients out to 'girly bars' and get them pissed and win deals that way…'.

Holly relayed that this behaviour was damning on the organisation's reputation and created an 'environment that was getting very caustic'. The latest finding about client management, explained Holly, shocked both the national leader and herself. She expressed this revelation as 'the final cherry on the cake'. More so, because 'the national leader has very specific ethics, very specific' and had terminated a previous director for similar unethical practices. Mirroring this stance, Holly mimicked, 'You guys can do whatever you want in your own time, but on work time you don't do that', adding that the national leader's ethical views were widely known across the organisation.

Around this time, Holly's direct line manager left the organisation and Holly stepped in as her successor. Though she was based in Australia, Holly worked remotely in her capacity as the interim APAC HR Director; with her span of control over the APAC region. Holly's role was to lead remote (virtual) HR teams, across cultural and physical borders, ensuring the effective delivery of all HR services across the region and support the APAC executive team. Her reporting lines shifted, with a direct reporting line to the global head of HR, based in the United States and an indirect reporting line to the APAC CEO, based in Asia.

With no immediate replacement for her previous role, Holly continued to support the country leader for the Australia and New Zealand (ANZ) region which meant it was she who presented the findings about John's behaviour to the APAC Executive Team. From a HR capacity, Holly considered the differences between global and regional knowledge on domestic employment law matters, as well as cultural workplace practices, as vastly limited within the organisation. She described this as, 'There wasn't another HR person but me at the time who could take this on…..so there was only me to help them with this'.

In consultation with legal counsel, Holly affirmed that the allegations made against John, together with supporting evidence were conclusive. 'The exit scenario came together' based on his poor performance and sexual misconduct. Holly presented these findings to the APAC CEO and relevant global executives for the business's decision on the recommended disciplinary action. Given the numerous and serious breaches of the company's Code of Business Ethics, the conclusion was there were sufficient grounds for termination of employment and 'that it would be the appropriate thing to do'. As Holly stated,

> I gave them a legal scenario, a perfect scenario to get rid of him. If you want to do it nicely tell him to resign and you know, we'll do a deed and release. Perfect scenario - there's all the evidence, let's just fire him.

According to Holly the business dismissed her advice and decided against this action as they feared John would litigate. They did not want to take the risk, even though 'the legal advice was he had no leg to stand on. The legal advice was we would win our day in court'. In the interim, John allegedly breached confidentiality around the investigation. According to Holly, an employee informed her that he had leaked details of the proceedings to the regional team, in attempt to cover up his wrongdoings and lay blame on her:

> Not wanting to upset the apple cart and his boss, who was the APAC leader…through the sideline he didn't really want to upset his relationship with that guy so he was just blaming….the 'word on the wire' was HR was after him…..HR going on the warpath against this one individual…He told them. He told them…the Regional Team were talking about it all over the place.

Holly noted that after she left the organisation, the ANZ leader performance managed John out of the business. At this John blindsided the organisation by taking legal action against them, 'on the basis that he was unfairly terminated and bullied'. Holly stated she offered to help the organisation by acting as a witness in their defence in the lawsuit. However, this was declined. Holly asserted that 'He didn't have any evidence'. However, the company continued to ignore the advice she provided post her tenure and tried to prevent public disclosure of the matter. Holly's belief was that the company felt:

> If it's going to cost them too much money, they won't be ethical and therefore.. pay this person out…he went away with a load of money because the company didn't want their name through mud…. They just...they paid him to go away and they paid him a ton of money. A ton of money. So he was rewarded for his bad behaviour and he continues with his bad behaviour.

According to Holly, it took a number of years to resolve the case after she left the organisation. From Holly's observations, for all the company's efforts to keep the matter out of the public arena, in the end 'somebody else leaked it to the papers. So it was in the papers anyway actually, afterwards...'

5.4: Impact - Individual

Holly described the impact of these experiences as an attack on her 'professional identity', She felt that any opportunity for career advancement was obliterated by the system as consequence of this case, 'They weren't going to promote me no matter what outcome came out of this'. The impact appeared to be profoundly personal and seemingly outside of her conscious awareness. Holly was unable to identify or name shame, instead she tended to

label her experience and of others in a more diffuse way as ‘silly’, ‘stupid’ or ‘idiot’. This was also evident in Holly’s disclosure of her emotional state, in which she used key words as feeling ‘ignored’, ‘isolated’, ‘alone’ and ‘neglected’. She also provided clues to her sense of diminished self, illustrated in her drawing that correlated to being in a shame state (refer Figure 4). About this, she said:

> They weren't going to promote me no matter what outcome came out of this and no matter what I suggested we do, they didn't follow it….they didn't follow my lead on anything, they didn't follow the advice on anything. They didn't actually*...(short pause)*...they didn't trust...my sense is, and nobody ever said this to me, but my sense is they didn't trust me.

Figure 4: Diminished
Source: Holly, Case 18

A key admission of the impact is in Holly’s description of the experience as ‘horrific’ and ‘I had to leave’. Though Holly did not explicitly state she was traumatised by the experience, it was symptomatic in the description she provided comparative to her current state:

> I am not as anxious as I was in those days…I sleep these days. I don’t wake up with anxiety, I don’t wake up you know, with a headache or a deadline. I don’t wake up feeling alone and isolated and trying to solve a problem by myself. All of those things I felt as a HR person.

Further, trauma was ‘pointedly’ drawn through metaphoric illustrations in her system drawing (refer Figure 5 below). The sequential spiral formation of incidents marked the path of her sense of disintegration. The use of only two the colours, red (indicative of anger & shame) and black (indicative of fear & depression), as well as graphic images that represented the onslaught of attacks she experienced were evocative. She stated that the images ‘sort of fell out of my head this way’, indicating repressed memories or unthought knowns (Bollas 1987). Each image she associated with an emotional connection and sequentially numbered the

critical incidents that served as markers to the psychological injury she sustained. The arrows signifying the cumulative impact on her that led her to spiral down into '*depression*'.

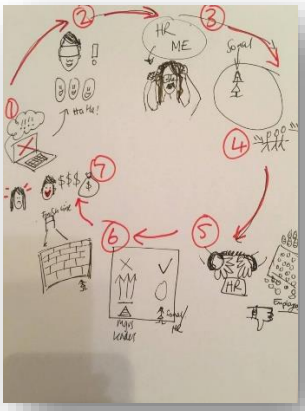

Figure 5: Shame Spiral
Source: Holly, Case 18

More specifically, the first image Holly noted as 'shock', depicted as exclamation marks within a thought cloud connected to a computer and a cross on the screen, symbolising the transgression. As Holly explained, 'I was shocked with it but nobody else seemed to be shocked with it, they were all laughing about it'. The subsequent image of a blindfolded person, embodied Holly feeling 'clueless' and blind to the transgressions. She rationalised her lack of awareness as, 'Even though I was going into that office. I was visiting it, I had no clue this was going on'. I noted a sense of embarrassment within myself as she shared this and wondered whether this was countertransference of her embarrassment about not knowing the wrongdoings were occurring.

The third image represented her felt 'frustration'. Holly drew herself as 'pulling my hair out' with a bubble above her head that asserted her identity in capitals as 'HR ME'[10]. This symbolised her anxiety in being unsupported by senior executive: 'There were people above me who knew this' and 'left me alone' to deal with the issue. This was emphasised in the image of a single figure in a circle, with stick figures and arrows outside. Holly interpreted this as her feeling 'isolated' by the organisation, whilst 'everyone ran away' from the issue. From

[10] Each time I see Holly's system drawing and read the capitals 'HR ME', I see 'HEAR ME'. It is 'as if' it is an illusion and I have to read it twice to re-focus my vision.

here, the images she drew of her whole self became decreasingly smaller. This possibly an unconscious representation of feeling invalidated and her sense of self diminished.

The illustration in the drawing of her ‘hands tied’ shows Holly rendered helpless and powerless by both the APAC CEO and the global head of HR. She experienced this as rejection of her and avoidance of risk, in not taking up her proposed ‘ideal legal scenario’ to most effectively terminate ‘John’. She noted this as,

> They listened to the APAC CEO more than they listened to me, even the senior vice-president of HR listened to him, more than she listened to me. Even though she had a better relationship with me, than she had with him - she still listened to him!

The next image of small heads to the side of the bound hands, symbolised the gaze of voyeuristic employees in regional office that behaved like innocent, yet collusive bystanders. Holly felt they watched in judgement of her, as she was accused by others of ‘being on the warpath’. Holly expressed her sense of self, disconnected and divergent from her peers. This was notable in the positioning and size of the figure she drew of herself stepping outside the bottom of the square. She explained this as being outcast by the organisation for her moralistic stance on maintaining the organisational values:

> The whole sort of leadership pyramid on the business side -they were all going towards the wrong you know, in terms of the moral compass, they were heading towards wrong. And in terms of the right it was...it was literally only me and I put HR because that was my job, it wasn't really personal to me but it felt personal towards the end.

It was as if the organisation had absolved itself of responsibility around ethical governance and projected it onto her:

> You know when you suddenly feel like you're Joan of Arc and you're the only one on the horse and you look behind you and there's no one there.

Last, the tiny figure facing a massive brick wall was Holly’s experience of feeling obstructed and annihilated by system. It was also her point of departure from the organisation. The sad face and the broad smiling face at the end of the finish line, denoted Holly’s ‘depression’ and anger at the organisation’s neglect of her and the sense of injustice she felt of John being ‘rewarded’ for his transgressions.

5.5: Impact - System

The revelations about the sexual misconduct and threat of public exposure can be thought about in one way as affecting the organisation by mobilising shame of inferiority and in turn generating a range of defence mechanisms to avoid exposure to this shame; to guard the hidden shame within (Lynd 1958; Nathanson 1994; Lewis 1995; Kaufman 1996). According to Holly, the organisation's prized identity within the region was under the scrutiny of gazing others (non-APAC/ANZ North Region employees/external stakeholders). Tarnished and in disrepute by John's morally transgressive behaviour, which Holly characterised as 'corroding' the organisations once tightly valued standards. This caused 'others' (non-APAC/ANZ North Region employees/external stakeholders) to question the organisation's perceived perfectionistic identity (namely of leaders perceived as high performing and infallible). The latter she associated in context to 'charismatic' leaders. Of this, Holly deliberated on John's duplicitous persona: 'He is very charismatic and presented a certain...I'm HR...so, he presented a certain demeanour to me'.

Holly rationalised John's, as well as the senior executives' failure to uphold the organisation's values, stating, 'Essentially I actually think we shouldn't have hired him. He was a wrong hire'. From Holly's observation, the organisation's realisation that its values were 'corrupted' resulted in what I see as the traumatisation of the system. Though trauma was not specifically verbalised by her, the lack of acknowledgement of shame and its impact on the system was identifiable via shame markers in her illustrations of the system drawing that paralleled her own personal experience (refer Figure 6)

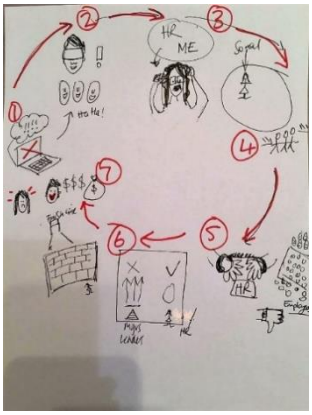

Figure 6: Shame Spiral
Source: Holly, Case 18

When considering the images from a system's perspective, the spiral composition and direction of red arrows I argue can be seen as shame markers of a recursive dynamic of shame and un-integrated (decoupled) relations that intensified in experience as the investigation progressed. This was notable in Holly's interpretation of the spiral formation, in this she perceived the decoupled relations as a defensive strategy to mitigate loss:

> I actually think it is a spiral in the corporate world. I think it's a spiral. The reason it's not a circle…is because we didn't.. get a positive outcome. We didn't get the right outcome. So it's not like it's a learning. It's not like we learned from it in a positive way and improved the environment around us. We learnt from it in a negative way and we didn't improve the environment…So did we improve the culture? No. Did we improve the behaviour? No. Did we improve the way that leadership behave? No. What we did was we put into place a way that we would mitigate the risk, so it couldn't occur again. So it's [more] about mitigating financial loss than it's about creating positive environments or positive reinforcing cultures that don't need bad behaviours.

The organisation's inability to acknowledge the wrongdoings perpetuated this cycle of shame through the enactments of key protagonists, in which I argue three subjective positions were taken up and played out in the system. The first was the females/Holly as victim/survivor. Secondly, the abuser/ perpetrator represented by John and the senior executive (APAC CEO/Global Executive). The third position was the silent bystander enacted by the regional employees, who signified organisational complicity. As Holly observed and experienced, they collusively partook in the systems abandonment and rejection of her, by blaming her for the attempt to terminate John. All the while protecting/identifying with John through their denial or 'turning a blind eye' to his transgressions.

As symbolised in her drawing, the point marked '1' metaphorically symbolises the ignition point. Denoted as 'X' on the computer screen, the effect was illustrated as a 'thought cloud', which Holly verbally expressed as hers, as well as the females and National Leader's 'shock'. 'Shock' represented the ensuing release of negative energy, following the explosive revelations and the start of the expansion of the sense of inferiority (shock waves) that reverberated through the organisation. This is symbolised by the red arrows[11] in her drawing that triggered concurrent denial and acknowledgement of reality in the 'turning of a blind eye'. As Holly reflected:

[11] Another consideration of the red arrows in Holly's drawing, is as possibly representing protracted anger or long chains of alternating shame and anger (Scheff & Retzinger 2001, p. 152), in which anger is a disguise for hidden /unacknowledged shame, experienced by Holly as hatred (misogyny and indifference to women).

> I was shocked with it, but nobody else seemed to be shocked with it, they were all laughing about it.....I actually was really shocked by his behaviour in the place that he behaved that way and nobody else seemed to be like, they thought it was ok. I...I...that shocked me in itself, it was like 'What you don't think it's wrong that he did this in the office? Why don't you think this is wrong? I don't understand why you don't think this is wrong.

Though Holly quizzically perceived the employees lack of distress, as their denial and 'turning of a blind eye', the impact was also indicative of their emotional detachment. The reaction of laughter may be symptomatic of the organisation's embarrassment / humiliation and a defence mechanism to diffuse tension, as well as the discomfort of the negative thoughts associated with the seemingly perverse behaviour that had permeated in the region.

Furthermore, the organisation's inferiority may have been unconsciously experienced by Holly, as projective identification, in that the organisation projected its own perceived inadequacy (self hatred) onto her. These projections and her identification with them consequently distorting her and others' ability to clearly distinguish the reality of the situation at the time:

> I almost felt like they didn't trust in me...this is their own bias is coming through where they always thought I was a bit of a junior... but now when I think about it I think that, the organisation didn't support me at all, at all.

From Holly's observations, the organisation's anger was a defence to deflect attention away from the systems' perceived deficiencies: namely, the senior executive (APAC and global), who may have overtly shamed others to regain control and power over employees. Holly observed this in an incident where the executive tyrannised the National Leader following the investigation. The motive for this was relayed as in part to castigate others into silence through fear of annihilation and ensure tacit obedience. Holly expressed this as:

> At the time within the organisation he (National Leader) was being slightly ostracised because of this noise coming up from the southern side... he was moved away from the ANZ job soon after....I think it was a form of punishment, but it wasn't necessarily to do with this one event. It was to do with the fact that this one event was part of a few events that he was calling out.

I consider that while the revelations of John's conduct was an initial source of shame, shame of inferiority impacted the organisation more broadly in that it was possibly re-triggered unconsciously by HR or Holly, as the representative of the region's HR leadership and then being a symbolic reminder of moral consciousness. By her own declarations, Holly repeatedly

stated being ‘black and white’ on her ‘moral compass’ and her public declarations of this stance. Yet, this characteristic conflicted with HR reputation within the industry:

> I think in the IT world it's forgotten that HR is actually there for employees. It's understood that HR is there as the whipping person, to beat employees into submission and to get outcomes and to safeguard money for organisations, so I think the role of HR is sometimes misunderstood.

Holly’s portrayal of HR as an ‘enforcer’ implied an unwanted identity, perhaps unconscious personification enacted in a blurring of boundaries. The impact of personification was evident in what may have been countertransference phenomenon, shared with me by Holly in recounting dialogue with John. In this, she reprimanded him on his contemptuous conduct. This suggests that she may have re-triggered shame in him, in being inferior:

> Look you can't behave this way. It's not acceptable, you appreciate this is...that you're demonstrating the wrong behaviour and it's not amusing so why, you know, why would you carry on doing it, you know, it's not...you're a grown up and you're the leader, you can't play these silly games in the office'. And he said, 'You know what I don't care. Do you know what car I drive?' and I went, 'What had your car got to do with it?’ 'I drive a Ferrari' and I'm like, 'So?’ And it was literally...I almost wanted to say 'Have you got a small pecker because you're telling me your car is a red Ferrari.’

The organisation’s deficiencies were subsequently turned on Holly, in which she felt objectified as ‘HR’ and dehumanised through abandonment, neglect, isolation, as well as alienation, thereby disconnecting her from the organisation. She expressed this as:

> They didn't look after my welfare so I was actually very depressed after...that whole...it wasn't this scenario; it was the whole environment that was getting very caustic. They didn't actually...there was no one there looking after the welfare of the HR person at all, at all.

In defensively attacking the ‘other’, the organisation seemed to discharge shame and substitute it inversely with the feeling of power, symbolised by Holly’s submission in ‘hands being tied’ and arrogance in dismissing her advice. In doing so, the organisation may have unconsciously displaced the responsibility of inferiority onto Holly. The organisation was then perhaps able to modify its shame regarding sexism and gender inequality in the workplace, by converting the emotions to resentment and anger towards empathic others (Holly/women). Holly personified the female complainants and ‘HR sorority’ (female sub-group) as emasculators. This was implied by Holly on the APAC CEO’s ‘dislike’ of her independence and strong feminine presence:

> He didn't like me. And that's because I didn't suck up to him. I didn't tell him he was a lovely man. I didn't go and have drinks with him. I didn't do all that stuff to be friendly to him.

Holly consequently became the target of these projections, which she described as ‘I felt like it was an HR problem’, implying that females were to blame for the transgressions. Taking this thought further and acknowledging this as thought rather than supported by hard data it may be that these actions were the organisation’s revenge on the women; malicious acts to punish them for reminding the organisation of the goodness it was meant to represent.

5.6: Reflections on the Interview

Holly was the first interview I conducted via Skype. From the moment we connected online, I had a strong visual association of being the audience in a peep show, with the black framing of my laptop screen seeming to blinker my peripheral vision of her. I drew a quick image of this vision in my notes, remarking how disturbed I felt. The image felt so perverse.

Throughout the interview, I found myself oscillating emotionally. From the onset of Holly’s outline of the transgression, I felt silly, almost giddy and was aware of the need to suppress a strong desire to laugh. Yet, at the same time, rebuking myself, knowing this was no laughing matter. I noted that this was followed by a sense of conflict about writing notes, questioning what I needed to capture and how I needed to perform.

Approximately forty minutes into the interview, I asked Holly to describe the difference between the global, APC and national cultures. We were interrupted by a call she received from one of her current team needing her to contact a senior executive. She continued the interview, describing the technology developed by this business as akin to:

> The little video clip where Princess Leia is sending that message and it's a 3D clip… 'We need you Obi One Kenobi' …you know, and the war is about to start and there's Princess Leia that the computer imaging goes down and it's a 3D image that you can see, not just a video clip but 3D um, ah thing. That was like imagery that had been put together by computer graphics but what we were doing was the technology to actually do that physically.

This anecdote triggered a strong emotion of helplessness within me. I found myself wondering if this scene was not of the software, but more of the dilemma Holly faced in her struggle to manage the exit of John. Following the interview, I found myself drawn to the actual script of this movie scene, in which Princess Leia says:

> General Kenobi. Years ago you served my father in the Clone Wars. Now he begs you to help him in his struggle against the Empire. I regret that I am unable to convey my father's request to you in person, but my ship has fallen under attack, and I'm afraid my mission to bring you to Alderaan has failed. I have placed information vital to the survival of the Rebellion into the memory systems of this R2 unit. My father will know how to retrieve it. You must see this droid safely delivered to him on Alderaan. This is our most desperate hour. Help me, Obi-Wan Kenobi. You're my only hope.

This association appeared to bear close links to Holly's experience, in that the national 'empire' (APAC region) had fallen under attack to the 'Rebellion' (aka the rebellious APAC CEO, Sales Director and his followers), who were potentially acting as iconoclasts or rebels. It was 'as if' at the height of this issue (in Holly's 'most desperate hour') her appeals for help to global leadership ('You're my only hope') had failed. I wondered if this paralleled her experience of feeling helpless to deal with this situation alone and the terror this may have induced.

Towards the end of the interview I asked Holly if she were to consider the organisation through the lens as the metaphor of family, what familial roles would she assign to various stakeholders. She could not make a direct association of the organisation as a family; instead her response was:

> I actually in my head as you're talking about it, I'm seeing it as um, army sort of scenarios and war scenarios. I don't know if it's a war scenario, so much as it's like you know. I see General's and Lieutenants and I would say that the ANZ leader was a Lieutenant and the northern leader was definitely...sorry, the national Australian leader was the General and the northern um, Sales leader was the true 2IC or a Lieutenant to him whereas the southern one had the job of being a Lieutenant but most probably um, was still a private in his capability

When I asked her what role she played, she stated 'I was in the diplomatic service… I was there to keep the peace'. My initial association was of the UN Peacekeeping forces, in which the intention is to help the various regions navigate the difficult path from armed conflict to peace. Yet, it felt a futile exercise, in that her advocacy was in moral discourse, speaking to conscience in the service of community. Whereas the internal clients/leaders she supported focused on power and profit, not people and justice. Consequently, she was a casualty of war, an expendable token or scapegoat, in which blame was transferred onto her for leaderships' failings: exiled, abandoned, isolated, invalidated and humiliated right to the end of her tenure. Though she may have resigned voluntarily, conceivably the system had killed her off for upholding moral values and shaming the system.

5.7: Main Themes

The themes presented in this section are identified from Holly's narrative and system drawing, and from my reflections of the interview. The themes are of defence strategies unconsciously employed to protect the system from experience of the pain associated with shame. I present these as characterised in the sequence of defensive strategies elicited to ward off and protect against further shame, which in turn perpetuates in a spiral of shame (refer Figure 7):

(5.7.1) Controlling Shame / Anger: Attack Other, Mutilation, Moral Indignation, Disappointment

(5.7.2) Concealing Shame: Isolation, Abandonment, Rejection, Concealment, Rumours and Secrets, Escape

(5.7.3) Denying Shame: Avoidance, Denial, Transfer of Blame, Unwanted Identity and Polarisation

(5.7.4) Compensation: Grandiosity, Narcissism, Hubristic Pride, Perfectionism, Idealism and Omnipotence and Manipulation

(5.7.5) Power/Inequality: Sexism, Cronyism, Misogyny, Exclusion, Devaluation and Judgement

Figure 7: Spiral of Shame

Source: Author

5.7.1: Controlling Shame - Anger

Shame and anger seemed to merge and be implicitly/defensively expressed within the organisation, mainly within the APAC region. This served to deflect attention and acknowledgement away from the rest of the organisation, of its own shortcomings and inadequacy.

5.7.1.1: Attack the 'other'

Anger took form as harmful persecutory attacks to control by instilling fear and gain power over others. As mentioned in the previous sections, Holly's illustration of her experience of the organisation provides a pictorial depiction of the system that defensively attacked others. This may be an unconscious strategy to distance the organisation from shame. From Holly's accounts, the attacks were projected through 'inappropriate jokes' to minimise the other, 'pranks' considered as banter, obstruction through lack of support, criticism and blaming others for wrongdoings. Another example was the scapegoating of Holly by the business. These psychological attacks involved being ignored and isolated by leadership, as well as rejecting her advice (refer sections '5.7.2.1: Isolation' and '5.7.2.3: Rejection' for supporting evidence). The invalidating behaviours extend to her experiencing exclusion from the wider organisation. Conceivably, as a self-acknowledged moral advocate, Holly willingly led on ethical issues of sexual discrimination that may have led to her be scapegoated. Arguably, her actions led to conscious and unconscious shaming of the males in the male dominated system, who possibly felt threatened and awkward by the truth of their misconduct exposed, thus stirring anxieties and moral tensions amongst the homogenous group of men (White 2004), and who possibly phantasised about their desire for her to disappear (Wood 2018). I propose they may have retaliated by singling Holly out and victimising her. This was reflected as:

> The exit scenario came together - I didn't decide to fire him. It wasn't my decision. It was my conclusion from the investigation that there was enough evidence to fire him and that it would be the appropriate thing to do.... but even then it was made out that by the business, by the noise in the business that it was my decision and that I was trying to get him fired and then I was trying to make it happen.

5.7.1.2: Mutilation (Attacking Self)

The APAC CEO in Holly's narrative was a key protagonist whom Holly spoke critically of, with an undertone of disdain. Most notably this implicit anger related to his restructuring efforts across the region, which she considered nonsensical and referred to numerously as if it were an encrypted act. It was as if the restructure, referred to by Holly as 'his actions of cutting',

was an s act of self-harm (Boon, Steele & Van Der Hart 2011) by the region. It seemed like an attempt to exonerate itself of the organisation's shameful conduct. Holly expressed this as the region as a masochistic victim:

> We were in an environment that was growing so there was no need to cut it but he wanted to...remodel it, to cut all the fat and then get going, you know, again. We didn't need, at that stage, any kind of remodelling or downsizing - what we needed was growth, high growth….. but we didn't need to just you know, cut layers out because we needed all the bodies to help us grow right!

The 'restructure' could also be seen as a moral violation and portrayal of the leader/system as a perpetrator of sadistic abuse (Blizard 2001), inflicting psychic pain of loss and rejection:

> He cut the ranks and he cut it into a different shape to the way it was when we started and so it felt more military and more disciplined than before.....So that was why. It was almost more hierarchical than it was when I started as well and that hierarchy was because he put those generals in and he wanted certain outcomes and he wanted it to be driven a certain way.

Blizard (2001) says the sadistic abuser (dominant perpetrator) identifies with the system's unconscious hostile projections and therefore unknowingly takes up the role as an abusive object. Their behaviour is enacted as rageful and can be understood as a dissociative defence against dependence. I contend that in this way the CEO unconsciously identified with the system's hostile projections and enacted the role of sadistic abuser, using the restructure to act out the system's unconscious rage by severing dependent attachments.

5.7.1.3: Moral Indignation

Though Holly was measured in the way she expressed her disdain for the organisation in harming her, her anger surfaced in the narrative as moral indignation directed toward the contradictory standards of the senior executive:

> I think it's disingenuous that people write their mission values and actually don't follow them. I think it's really disingenuous that they put so much money into leadership programs when they know their leaders don't give a flying fuck…

Further, she expressed her indignation as:

> In terms of corporate behaviours and how corporations don't actually..they're not very moral right, the bottom line is all about cash and the cost - and so they're not going to be ethical. If it's going to cost them too much money, they won't be ethical and therefore you pay this person out.

5.7.1.4: Disappointment

Holly's disappointment in senior executive behaviour was conveyed as being cynical of their selfish motives:

> I would say it coloured my black and white vision of life in a very specific way around the, the leadership. It was a really good experience to see and to quantify that no matter how much people say they are great leaders and profess to be great leaders and show the world that they're great leaders, actually when the push comes to shove, they're not.

and

> The leaders are only concerned about their bank accounts…they're only concerned about the value of their bonus.

5.7.2: Concealing Shame - Withdrawal

Withdrawal as a reaction and defence mechanism seemed to encompass the impact of Holly's experience of the global leadership's indifference and emotional unavailability in their dealings with her, as well as, disregard of women in the workplace. I contend these reactions and defence mechanisms were and implicitly implied or explicitly present through the following encoded themes:

5.7.2.1: Isolation

Isolation was experienced by Holly and the other women (complainants), as the organisation dismissing and 'disregarding' their presence. This included their thoughts, feelings and perceptions. For Holly, isolation was felt as being separate or a singleton to the rest of the organisation: 'I drew that little...me isolated in a little ring, because I felt like I was the only person who was transparently seeing this individual'.

5.7.2.2: Abandonment /Helplessness

Holly felt the organisation had forsaken its accountability in supporting her through the investigation. In her experience, absence of supportive relationships in the system left Holly in a state of helplessness. She expressed this in terms of desertion:

> I looked to the legal team internally and nobody was there, I looked to the HR team there wasn't anybody there apart from me, so there was only me. I looked to the business and they weren't there, they weren't helpful or supportive and at this time the national guy had been taken out of his job and put somewhere else so he wasn't even there to support me.

5.7.2.3: Rejection

The system's refusal to listen to Holly was experienced by her as rejection. She conveyed that the organisation denied her legitimacy in her role:

> No matter what I suggested we do, they didn't follow it so they didn't get the best outcome because they didn't follow my lead on anything, they didn't follow the advice on anything.

Further, rejection was also experienced as an aversion to others. Holly expressed this as her dislike of the APAC CEO, who she believed disliked her for rejecting him:

> He didn't like me. And that's because I didn't suck up to him. I didn't tell him he was a lovely man. I didn't go and have drinks with him. I didn't do all that stuff to be friendly to him. And like I said to you, you saw I didn't do that with anyone...

5.7.2.4: Concealment

Holly's experience of the organisation's decision to not terminate John was of a cover up. She believed this was exhibited in 'paying people off' as a tactic to avoid exposure and hide from what was known to others. She perceived this as an inducement to silence offenders. However, it set the stage for leaks and unwanted disclosures:

> He went away with a load of money because the company didn't want their name through mud.....somebody else, not him, somebody else leaked it to the papers. So it was in the papers anyway actually, afterwards…….So the bottom line was they didn't want it to go through court, because they didn't want the hassle...they just...they paid him to go away and they paid him a ton of money. A ton of money. So he was rewarded for his bad behaviour and he continues with his bad behaviour.

5.7.2.5: Rumours and Secrets

According to Holly, the organisation's attempts to conceal John's misconduct produced a culture of rumour and secrets that in turn was a stimulus for lies or silences. This was conveyed metaphorically numerous times by Holly as 'the word on the wire' or 'the undercurrent and the

grapevine*”*. Similarly, she cited an example of John using the process of spreading rumours against Holly, to undermine her authority and conceal truth about his misconduct from his line manager, Holly conveyed this as;

> …him (John) not wanting to upset the apple cart and his boss, who was the APAC leader um, you know, through the sideline he didn't really want to upset his relationship with that guy so he was just blaming you know, the word on the wire was HR was after him.

Kibel (2018, p. 3) describes the projective purpose of rumours; ‘as psychological spaces into which people can project a host of fantasies’. Based on Holly’s accounts, rumours, for John and the organisation served a destructive function in which she was singled out and victimised, whilst John was able to maintain the image of a ‘good guy’. It seems rumours, lies and secrets allowed the rest of the organisation to unify in the grips of this crisis, enabling the system to unconsciously attempt to resolve its moral dilemma.

5.7.2.6: Escape

Escape or taking flight from a situation occurred when the system possibly felt exposed to the gaze of external others (non-organisational members). This protective strategy can be seen as the wish to retreat and hide in the abyss of shame’s internal wound (Lewis 1971; Lewis 1995; Nathanson 1994; Steiner 2006). Escape reduces exposure and avoids further shame by withdrawing internally, allowing diversion from the torment of shame. For the organisation, the executives escaped or retreated from taking a legal stance and disciplining John through the appropriate justice processes. This was possibly to minimise anguish of public exposure and awareness of their failings, as well as nullify the possibility of reinstating John, the shaming object (Kaufman 1996, p. 99). This was expressed as;

> The legal advice was we would win our day in court, but with the organisation, I'd left it by that time, was too chicken to go forward on this...and on the basis that I had left and the national leader had left, by that time, as well um, they didn't want to go ahead with it. Even though we had both committed to coming back and helping them to win this…They just...they paid him to go away and they paid him a ton of money. A ton of money. So he was rewarded for his bad behaviour and he continues with his bad behaviour….The company didn't support him to do that. The company ran away from it and actually just misbehaved in a way that allowed this person to this day.

5.7.3: Denying Shame – Dissociation

5.7.3.1: Avoidance

Holly referred to avoidance in the senior executive abstaining from their accountability to terminate John's employment; done to minimise the risk of exposure to the organisation's inadequacies and avoid reputational damage. The shame associated with John's sexual misconduct, according to Holly was deflected:

> They all want to be hands off because nobody wanted to get...you know, it was the 'cover their asses' sort of strategy, nobody wanted to get in trouble, and nobody wanted to be fired so they left it to HR.

5.7.3.2: Denial

Holly conveyed denial as the organisation's inability to acknowledge the painful reality of its own inferiority:

> The people who were senior to him in that office, turned a blind eye to his behaviour basically.

She also rationalised the global organisation's denial of events in APAC, as diverting attention away from the reality:

> I was the only one who could see the ethical piece in this whereas everybody else was focusing on the dollars piece

5.7.3.3: Transfer of Blame

Another form of denial or avoidance behaviour is the transfer of blame away from self (system). According to Holly, this was a diversionary strategy, insinuating the organisation abandoned 'right' (good ethical) leadership. This behaviour could possibly be explained as a transference of the systems affect (executive leaderships' shock) onto the national leader and Holly. It was 'as if' they were used as receptacles whom the organisation projected all their intolerable anxiety and shame into.

> It was only the previous national leader and myself who were astounded and the previous national leader was affected more by the PR release, than I was because his name was in that release…And he was the person that was said to be the ass who had fired this individual

> wrongfully and had bullied him. So um, it was all...it was all PR'd in favour of that employee, as opposed to the leader, who was trying to do the right thing and even if that leader wanted to do the right thing...you know, an example of a leader who was in effect doing the right thing at the right time.

5.7.3.4: Unwanted Identity

Holly implied there was a tacit imposition of role or unwanted identity projected onto her by the organisation. It was 'as if' she was expected to perform in defined ways, rather than be able to bring herself to the role (Sanderson 2015).[12] Holly exhibited this in interchanging between first and third person in her narrative, representing self repeatedly as 'HR' whilst speaking about the impact on her:

> It was made out that by the business, by the noise in the business that it was my decision and that 'I' was trying to get him fired and then 'I' was trying to make it happen. So this is all about how 'HR' is used as the fall guy, how 'HR' is used and abused within the organisation. It was probably this whole scenario that made me think that this wasn't the place that I want to be in…

Holly also presented unwanted identity as lack of role clarity:

> I think in the IT world it's forgotten that HR is actually there for employees. It's understood that HR is there as the whipping person, to beat um, employees into submission and to get outcomes and to safeguard money for organisations so I think the role of HR is sometimes misunderstood.

5.7.3.5: Polarisation

Holly throughout her narrative noted numerous dichotomies she had either experienced or observed across the organisation (geographical, ethical stance and role). These splits seemed to indicate polarised tensions that were either an unconscious denial, or a disowning of intolerable feelings associated with shame. She reported this as:

> The frictions were becoming more in terms of north and south divide, as opposed to him (John) being the issue. It was more he was creating that north and south divide because it was becoming a little bit more boys own down south, whereas north was still behaving in the manner that the company needed them to behave (small laugh) if that makes sense?

[12] It was insinuated by Holly that this professional identity was unpleasant and unworthy. Similarly, Holly may have identified with the burdens of the role's history that may have been introjected, finding it difficult to exercise her authority, due to the previous incumbent's performance in the role (Long 2018a).

5.7.4: Compensation

Compensatory defense strategies were employed within the organisation to cover up or mask the systems shame of inferiority and protect it from further experiences of shame. The range of strategies engaged, including grandiosity, narcissism, perfectionism and hubristic pride, enabled the organisation to distance itself, and remain out of contact with self and others.

5.7.4.1: Grandiosity

The definition of grandiosity according to Pincus & Roche (2012, p.34) is behaviour 'characterised by seething anger, manipulativeness, pursuit of interpersonal power and control, lack of remorse, exaggerated self- importance, and feelings of privilege'. At both an individual and system perspective in Holly's narrative these characterisations tended to be externalised in the organisation in the projection of superiority, with little awareness of behaviour (self/leaders/groups); the exterior persona masking a fragile state, unable to sustain a grandiose sense of self .This evokes narcissistic vulnerability that is characterised by shame, anxiety, depression, and feelings of inadequacy (Kernberg 2009).

In the system, grandiosity was conveyed as the organisation's inflated sense of self-importance or 'specialness' and an absence of empathy (Pincus & Roche 2012). This was symbolised in Holly's description of the US offices and in the idealisation of global CEO:

> I think he was God to most people, because he was just such a genius so you know, he would be...he's like a big teddy bear Daddy kind of personality but he was probably more awesome in that he was God. He was your best uncle kind of thing who rolls into town but who's really fun to play with and...but he's a total introvert so he wouldn't play with you - but you idolise him.

Grandiosity was also implied in an account of dialogue Holly had with John. She had been critical of his conduct and his response lacked empathy for others. This was expressed as:

> You know what I don't care. Do you know what car I drive?' and I went, 'What had your car got to do with it?'…'I drive a Ferrari'…I'm like, 'so?' And it was literally...I almost wanted to say 'Have you got a small pecker because you're telling me your car is a red Ferrari.

John's abrupt changing of subject during the conversation was possibly a diversion strategy, triggered by Holly's criticism (unconscious shaming) of him. By deflecting her attention away from his transgressions and asserting his superiority in relation to status, suggests that Holly

may have caused him narcissistic injury[13], exposing his vulnerability to shame. The red Ferrari from a psychoanalytic perspective is seen as a phallic symbol (Campbell & Miller 2011; Freud 1905; Lantos 2015; Thompson & Holt 2004), denoting masculine virility (power) and superior status over Holly, who as a female unconsciously symbolised weakness (powerlessness) (Campbell & Miller 2011). My interpretation of this data suggests that John substituted inferiority with superiority, by presenting himself to Holly and 'Others' (internal and external stakeholders) as 'special'(Campbell & Miller 2011; Manea 2014; Pincus & Roche 2012). This was also representative of the organisation's own perception of its specialness for the technology it developed (Pincus & Roche 2011). It suggested the systems desire for adulation to compensate for inadequacy, may have adversely effected relationships.

From a systemic perspective, Holly and John's pairing may represent the splitting formation (Klein 1959, 1975) of the organisation's culture of narcissism (grandiose sense of self) that was co-dependent on others to satisfy an excessive need for validation. The schism was unconsciously characterised by the system's inability to integrate its ethical and moral social responsibilities ('good' object or systems moral consciousness, as represented by Holly and the ethical function of HR) with its lust for power and market domination ('bad' object or social risk, as represented by John and the profiting function of Sales). The system's disavowal of its transgressive reality (exploitation of power and domination), characterised unconsciously by John's denial of his performance failure, underlined the organisations shame anxiety (Long & Sievers 2013) associated with uncertainty in maintaining the organisations elite status in the global market, as creators of revolutionary and disruptive technology.

I contend the system's grandiose sense of self and inequality (Morf, Torchetti & Schürch 2011) is characterised by John's sense of entitlement in terms of personal pleasure rather than moral consciousness or emotional connectedness with Holly/others (Foster, Shrira & Campbell 2006). Arguably, the red Ferrari unconsciously symbolises the organisation's reputation in the market place or possibly an extended self-object of its 'self-aggrandisement' (Campbell &

[13] As defined by Halewood and Tribe (2003, p. 88), Narcissistic injury describes damage to the individuals' [or systems'] experience of their `real self'. In its more extreme forms, individuals [or systems] are left with no awareness at all of who they really are. In the less extreme variations of this disorder, there is often a vague comprehension of the real self, but also a rejection of it'. Johnson (1987) suggests that narcissists have learnt to deny their true self-expression in response to an early rejection of this by their caregivers and have replaced it with a highly developed 'false self'. Winnicott's (1960) model of the 'false self' suggests that people with a false self are more aware of how they must present themselves to others than they are of their own inner feelings. According to this theory, because the 'true self ' was not recognised and responded to by the mother or caregiver, individuals suffer a profound lack of confidence in their actions and feelings'.

Miller 2011). This reference is conceivably a shame marker on how the system used status symbols of its success to deflect scrutiny away from exposing leadership's deficiencies in their ability to form genuine relationships with the people whom they were responsible to lead. Leadership lures superior talent, seeking to monopolise power and profit, under the guise of elitist intellectual superiority (Campbell & Miller 2011) thereby unconsciously or sometimes consciously permeating inequality and encouraging social risk under the guise of innovation (Goldin & Mariathasan 2015).

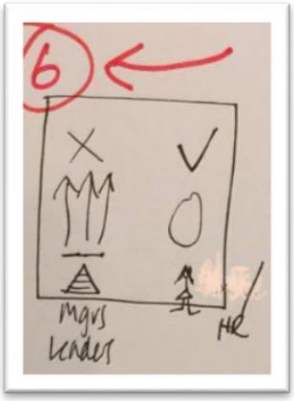

Figure 8: Gender and Power Imbalance
Source: Holly, Case 18

Perhaps Holly felt envy (unconscious) of John's maleness/power and acted this out in her desire to tell John he had a 'small pecker'. The dynamic of masculine superiority, I posit is representative of power relations across leadership in the system. The dominance of males in leadership positions greatly out numbers females, who also tended to be in stereotypical roles. Holly illustrated this in her system drawing by symbolically depicting the dominate males as three arrows and pyramid (phallic masculinity). Whereas the feminine is depicted as a solidary figure (conscious representation) and circle arguably an unconscious symbol for a womb, denoting femininity (refer Figure 8).

5.7.4.2: Narcissism

Holly described senior leaderships' altruistic endeavours to care for others as acts of narcissistic pretence. Senior leaders were seen to be exploiting others to increase their self-worth and conceal how they saw others as objects to be sacrificed and used to meet their own avarice and need for aggrandisement:

> They might be concerned about the legacy that they're leaving and the PR that goes with that and you know, global martyrdom if they're that high - but a majority of them are only concerned about their bank balance and being able to buy their Ferraris.

and epitomised in Holly's observations of the APAC CEO:

> He knows how to play the game. He is a psychopath (short pause) and he knows how to play the game. He does ethical stuff because he knows that's what he must do, not because he wants to do it. He's…he's orchestrated in his empathy. It's not emotion empathy, its orchestrated empathy so his brain is helping him to behave empathetically, as opposed to his heart.

5.7.4.3: Hubristic Pride

In the context of shame, hubristic pride is an egotistical form of pride (arrogance) or feelings of superiority, to inflate self-esteem. It is also seen as an avoidance to the affect of shame (Pincus & Roche 2012). During her narrative, Holly's raptured tone of speech when describing the organisation at the global level, suggested the presence of hubristic pride. She seemed to imply the organisation had superiority over its competitors in the development of revolutionary technology. It was as if the organisation would dominate the market, effectively eliminating any competitors (others): 'Everybody in the world, everybody at a global stage knew that we were going to hit the world like rockstars'. This despite her knowledge of the real issues the organisation faced.

5.7.4.4: Perfectionism

Holly's insights into the organisation's perfectionism is that it was in the pursuit of exaggerated levels of ability, competence and resources. This suggests the setting of unrealistic expectations that were failed to be achieved in the APAC region. This was in the advent of John's misconduct:

> We needed to make sure we got the best talent. We needed to make sure that we had the best support and the resources and that the leaders understood with clarity what we were trying to do and how we were trying to do it and demonstrated the best openness that they could in order to create to the best stage for this new technology.

5.7.4.5: Idealisation and Omnipotence

Holly conveyed idealisation and omnipotence as blinding adulation. She expressed this in her description of the global CEO, who succeeded the founding CEO:

> The new guy who took over from her, he was well known in the technology world and complete, complete genius and a very, very respected, as a technology guru. Perhaps not so much as a business creator. So he was really about revolutionising the world and then money would come in....

5.7.4.6: Manipulation

Manipulation is a narcissistic quality characterised by Holly as leadership/system controlling the environment and other people from behind a mask: as Hopper (2003) describes as idealised despots. This means using people as a means to an end rather than as an end in themselves to bring about the desired responses; in business language, 'strategic impression management' (Rhodewalt 2001). The APAC CEO's use of posters of himself, may be a subliminal omnipresent reminder of oppression and murderous destruction, perhaps designed, consciously or unconsciously, to induce conformity in the masses (Scheff 1988):

> He had his poster...you know I was funny about his face everywhere, but his posters with his face were everywhere……It was like big brother was watching you. It was a silly sort of picture of him...like I said it was silly airbrushed and made him...it was like a sort of I don't know, one of those um, corporate sort of... It was almost like it was staged! You know, that's what it was for him - it was a staged picture. But it had you know, our values and I can't remember what the exact poster said but I just remember his face as you walked into various offices. It was this huge picture and you remember like in the Soviet Era and you've got Mao Zedong posters and you've got you know, the Soviet leaders styling posters...it's almost like we have to put the effigies of our leaders up to revere them...and we don't...*(pauses)...*it's very odd behaviour anyway. I think the corporate behaviours that he displayed or the business behaviours that he displayed were not necessarily the*...(short pause)...*company's values.

5.7.5: Power/Inequality

Gender power imbalance was a prevalent feature in the data of the organisation, with a cynical pattern of indifference towards females, privileging the perpetrator (males) over the victims (females). The cited comments below under the sub-themes of sexism, misogyny and exclusion are examples of the possible conscious and/or unconscious collusions within the system relating to oppressive sexist norms surrounding gender inequality. Most notably, leadership's dereliction of a duty of care for female employees.

5.7.5.1: Sexism

The presence of sexism was demonstrated linguistically in Holly's use of infantalised language when referring to males as 'boys' and females as 'girls'. These terms reinforced the gender divide within the organisation, insinuating male assertion of power over females, implying masculine superiority. Holly characterised this as:

> The boys thought it...it was a boys club, so they all thought it was very funny…...They all thought it was really funny, but the girls were feeling increasingly uncomfortable.

Further, the infantilised language expressed by Holly, may unconsciously represent the diminished worth of females as adults and objectification present within the system. An example of this was prevalent in Holly's description on how the transgression transpired:

> It was known very clearly, he (country leader) had fired a previous person for the whole 'girly' club thing - where somebody had taken them to 'girly' clubs and used the company expenses to entertain clients in a strip joint.

5.7.5.2: Cronyism

Cronyism was inferred by the data within the organisation in the form of homogeneous same sex membership and elitist sub-groups. This was intimated by Holly in reference to superior-subordinate power relations amongst the senior male executive leadership group across the region. It involved an exchange of support downward with personal loyalty upward. 'Hierarchical protection' was assumed, based on this alliance with the region's CEO. The following quotes captures the essence of cronyism:

> The senior leadership at APAC level...he created a bunch of cronies around him who were managed with a sense of fear. They pretend to respect him and they pretend to be friends with him and they pretend to go and have drinks with him….but essentially it's all tokenistic and it's all - they maintain those relationships for one thing….for what they can get out of him.

As implied favouritism afforded to select members:

> …at a higher level 'John' had good relationships with the CEO of Asia Pacific and at that time the CEO of Asia Pacific...there was frictions between the country leader and the CEO. They didn't see eye to eye, they had different relationships so the fact that the 'John' had a sort of sideline conversation going on with the APAC CEO didn't help at all either. But it comes back to what I was saying, 'the fraternity is stronger'.

5.7.5.3: Misogyny

Holly reported she was subjected to much hostility for not taking up the role as a submissive female and for driving what the CEO (white male) perceived as driving a feminist agenda. This fear of femininity is metaphorically expressed in his dislike of her:

> The Regional CEO didn't like me. He still doesn't like me. He called me the 'Black Widow' and he refused to give me the APAC job… the amount of times I had to sit on my hands to stop myself from saying something untoward. But yeah, he, he, he didn't like me. And that's because I didn't suck up to him. I didn't tell him he was a lovely man. I didn't go and have drinks with him. I didn't do all that stuff to be friendly to him….I didn't do that with anyone!

Akin to the Femme Fatale archetype, the metaphoric expression of the 'Black Widow' implies Holly is a disingenuous woman who exploits her position in the relationship with men (John) to ensure the male's demise. Moreover, this insinuates Holly has power over men, thus the male executive's fear of female emasculators and engulfment.

5.7.5.4: Exclusion

Holly's rumination[14] about 'John's' desire for belongingness in the system is indicative of the system's hegemonic masculinity that thwarts agency and connection:

> I think he has lots of insecurity and you know, as an individual he was trying to, to be part of the boys club, he was trying to be part of the group.

In this organisation females appear to be excluded in a male dominated work environment that intimidated, demeaned and institutionalised hostility toward women. 'Raucous' conduct of lewd jokes and taking clients to 'girlie clubs' objectify women. In addition this conduct indicates abrogation of ethical responsibility. As Holly described,

[14] There is no unified definition of rumination. However, based on a review of literature associated with shame, rumination is interrelated with trauma and social anxiety. It is commonly defined as preoccupation with recurring repetitive and irrepressible processing of past negative relationship experiences or traumatic events, and with implications of those events (Cheung, Gilbert & Irons 2004; Dorahy et al. 2013; Sanderson 2015; Speckens et al. 2007).

> After this guy coming, his style of operation permeated the organisation over a period of nine months where he permitted them to be much more raucous. He permitted...and he thought this was useful for them to be this way to build the team better

Further, exclusion was identified in the form of the other or ‘not like us’, implying inferiority:

> I don’t know that I would fit into that family (executive leadership) circle. I think I definitely fell outside of that circle - before and after the whole event - I wasn't really in that circle…I think my role was such that HR was not seen as one of the family. HR was something that you brought in. I'd probably say Legal was the same - that we were people, that we were perhaps the Doctor or the Nanny.

5.7.5.5: Devaluation

Holly felt the senior executives’ refusal to engage with her during the investigation, as an attack on her sense of self-worth, effectively disqualifying her. She rationalised this behaviour as the organisation’s ‘distrust’ of her: ‘They didn't actually...they didn't trust...my sense is, and nobody ever said this to me, but my sense is they didn't trust me’.

Further, this is depicted in Holly’s illustration of herself in the final marker of her drawing. The diminutive figure facing a larger brick wall may be symbolic of the impact of the organisation’s emotional abuse on women (Holly and other female victims). The overbearing wall possibly was an unconscious representation of the women’s diminished sense of inner control. For Holly, this was in losing her hierarchical status and value in the eyes of others, and for the other women, their identity as woman disregarded and objectified. This may have triggered powerlessness. Alternatively or as well, the wall possibly symbolises the system’s shame, triggering angry responses of disaffectedness and a lack of empathic attitude towards Holly and the women victims, and in turn preventing Holly advocating on their part (Nathanson 1994; Scheff & Retzinger 2001).

5.7.5.6: Judgement

Holly experienced the organisation’s subjective evaluation of her capability:

> It felt a bit like that when you were on your own and you were expected by...at a global level I was expected to have a result right. I was expected to produce a result.

Holly in turn subjectively assessed the APAC CEO’s capability, suggesting inferiority:

> He wasn't necessarily equipped with the right knowledge to do the right thing, but he came in and just cut and pasted his previous experience into our organisation. Some of what he did was good. Most of what he did wasn't good.

5.8: Concluding Remarks

This case offers valuable insight into the phenomenon of the spiralling of shame as a contagion across the system. Triggered by transgression, the events discharged numerous affects in association to shame that range from distress, anger, humiliation through to depression. Holly's account reveals the full spectrum of defences employed against shame that were most profoundly characterised in her system drawing. The illustrations depict each shaming event in which individual/self and organisation/other were objects of shame, as well as, the shaming other. Holly's visceral expression of her experiences of the ensuing struggles she encountered provide a graphic account of an alienating organisational culture pervaded by narcissistic relations where denial, hubris and censure are commonplace. Further, the analysis of the data illuminated much richness about Holly's role, in which she took up a role of moral advocate on behalf of the system. Yet contrarily, her role was also blemished with an 'unwanted identity'; this aspect representing a part of the system that seemed so intolerable. I contend Holly's stance as moral advocate played a complementary role to that of the whistle-blower. This role or identity is often tacitly assumed by the human resource function of an organisation (Greene & Latting 2004; Kalshoven & Boon 2012). However, there is a paradoxical tension in that part of the role which is intended to take up advocacy for employees becomes over shadowed by its obligations to the organisation, more specifically executive leadership. In closing this chapter, the system seemed to use the HR role as a receptacle for moral goodness, and in which the system's unconscious self-hatred of its shame was projected. The consequences of these murderous projections may have seen the killing off Holly for upholding moral values as the shaming other.

5.9: Summary

In this chapter, I present the theme of the shame spiral in which protagonists and accomplices utilise guises through a spiral of shame-anger (controlling shame), shame-withdrawal (Concealing Shame), shame-avoidance (Denying Shame), as well as inequality and compensation to protect the system from shame. Notably, John's transgressions were a front for wider system failings in the global IT world. I highlight this complex phenomenon as an endless cycle in which both the individual and system are trapped. Speculating on whether there was an escape appeared to trigger thoughts of further humiliating defeat or hopelessness. Consideration on the impacts of these dynamics to the individual and system offers valuable insights about how both the individual and system react to an overtly known

workplace transgression. The following chapter presents and interprets the interview with Oscar, whose case exemplifies the theme of Controlling Shame, and provides a particular perspective on the experience of shame in the juvenile justice system and its impact on organisational culture.

Chapter 6: Oscar's Story - 'A Few Good Men'

6.1: Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of Oscar's Story (Case 14), highlighting the main theme of 'Controlling Shame' in an environment stuck in state of protracted conflict. It explores the manner in which a traumatised system defensively deals within deeply embedded shame that extends beyond organisational boundaries. It illuminates the tensions between societies' collusive (im)moral demands on a system, arguably intended to hide societies failings of abused and deprived children. A system that espouses to care, protect and nurture, is shown instead to be highly perverse and persecutory to both the detainees and officers burdened with their caregiving. The significance of this case is the broader societal implications about organisational demands and the consequences caused by neglect on those at the coalface.

Table 9: Theme generation from Case 14 – Controlling Shame

Controlling Shame			
	Distress	**Fear**	**Rage**
Chapter 6 **Sub Themes**	Neglect Dissociation Crying Dependency Denial Detachment	Fear Dread Self-Preservation Guilt Engulfment Hypervigilance	Persecutory Attacks Anger False Pride Resentment Moral Indignation Disparagement Enactments Retribution

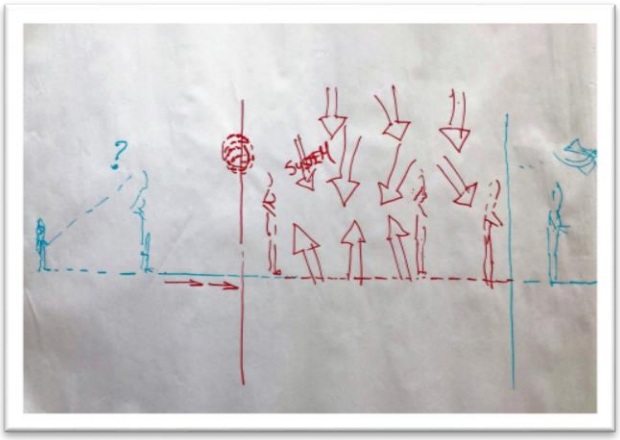

Figure 9: The System as a Battlefield of Shame

Source: Oscar, Case 14

6.2: The Interviewee

The data presented in this study came from a male participant, 'Oscar', who was referred to me by another research participant. Oscar, recently retired (within the last five years) had previously worked across five arms of the justice system in Australia over a 30-year period. Commencing his career as a corrections officer, he rose through the ranks in various management positions. The focus of the interview with Oscar is on the period of time he worked as a senior officer in a juvenile justice institutional setting.

Oscars participation in the research was aspirational in motivation in that he hoped that his input could be heard and ultimately be utilised by others when confronted by such experiences; namely, to stop the dynamics that played out in this system and help those caught in and victimised by the systemic abuse.

6.3: The Transgression

The overtly known workplace transgression in this system brought to the interview by Oscar was not clearly articulated. However, he alluded to a series of incidents that stemmed from what he referred to as 'an industrial dispute' that he believed crossed numerous ethical and moral boundaries. He explained this in terms of 'industrial issues', detailed as:

> Changing the guard, the old to the new... people have stayed too long, people who aren't productive, people aren't creative, poor leadership, industrial issues...these changing type of young offenders or young persons coming through culturally....it was a combination of old leadership going to new leadership, pressure on you know, the style of running the place was coming under pressure from a way of being in the past to the new world you know, new world order. A lot of younger new staff starting…not prepared to not put up with the way things have been. A lot of poor selection of staff. That was really apparent - a lot of staff with you know, records that should never have been allowed to work near young people.

The sense that I made of this communications was in the context of the then current Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC Report 84) written in the late 1990s, about the administration of legal processes and operations in correctional service systems. The aim of the report was to enhance humane care and treatment of all children in juvenile detention facilities, and to change the juvenile justice system from being unyieldingly hegemonic and punitive in its custodial orientation. Based on Oscar's account of his experience within these correctional facilities the changes failed to be effectively integrated. He described this as:

> Twenty years later the place is still rioting, young people are wrecking the place, staff members hurt. Um, you know, trying to get a mixture between therapeutic and custodial. Um, I think that's one of the biggest issues - getting the place to run properly or how it should run you know what I mean? A mixture of therapeutic, custodial...not just one or the other. Um, getting good leaders to go in the system. To want to work in it.

I interpreted his explanation to be that the reforms seemed to challenge historic leadership practices in correctional services. Implementation of the report's recommendations was intended to facilitate a more therapeutic approach in merging security roles with human services components of the work; which was referred to by Oscar as a 'new order'. My understanding was the purpose of detention had been lost and the role of corrections officers and managers was not consistently known. 'Industrial issues' relating to poor working conditions and neglect of officers' wellbeing, compounded resistances to these enforced changes, as intimated by Oscar:

> Bit by bit by bit...things haven't been picked up - not noticed. And not you know...boundaries had been overrun, you know, worked on...you know, small things...chip, chip, chip away and it gradually comes apart. It's like...it's like any relationship. What didn't I see? What should I have seen? You know...what...you know...um...

Consequently, the tensions within the prison environment emotionally destabilised detainees, and developed as a contagion. The point of 'rupture' located by Oscar, was a major 'insurgence'. This incident occurred thirty-three years prior to the research interview. Oscar reported the consequence of the insurgence thus:

> Some staff took advantage of it. I'd say some of the staff were more...some of the more renegade than some of the young people. There were some staff there who were pleased to see the place in chaos and were pleased to see the place in uproar because they didn't like management, they didn't like ah, the government, ah, you know, the role and they wanted to...you know, it was their own...

The 'insurgence', according to Oscar, was opportunistically used by officers to re-establish the need to maintain the status quo on historic practices and 'strong arm' the government into submission on their industrial dispute over their working conditions. This was characterised by Oscar as:

> There's all levels - industrial, there's management, there's young people...everybody's using it for their own ends if that makes sense? You know, using the struggle. You know, and all sorts of

> agendas that you don't see at the time are inside this. 'Oh you know, we'll use this opportunity for a pay rise' or 'No, we're gonna hold the government to ransom' or um, young people think this is a great time to even up with people you know, like there's a lot of...in the chaos there's all sorts of other things happening….Some people can see it and some can't.

Though leadership endeavoured to repair the damage immediately following the incident, according to Oscar, the attempts involved 'several structural and role changes, including secondments from Head Office, investigations and debriefs'. What ensued, by Oscar's account, was a political struggle over power between officers, management and government. This resulted in issues left unresolved in its wake for the next two decades:

> There's still some discussion with some of the people that I worked with at that time about incidents that happened there that were never resolved. You know, never...

6.4: The Impact - Individual

According to Oscar, the impact of these events, events that he experienced as transgressions, was of a highly persecutory and damaging work environment. This was central to his experience in the aftermath. He described 'the environment as unhealthy, an unnatural context, often containing conflict, abuse and constant negative commentary – sexist, violent, 'them v. us'. Oscar recounted his foremost experience as being 'called up' in the middle of the night, to assist in regaining the control of a facility that was in 'mayhem' because of an 'insurgence'. He described how the call triggered feelings of dread and anxiety about the impending 'chaos' he was to face, expressing the incident in the form of a soliloquy: 'Do I really need to go back to this? Do I need to do this?' He expressed how he was conflicted by what felt like management's coercive appeals of, 'Oh you can't walk away from us! Who's going to do it if you don't?' What about those poor you know'. Oscar rationalised this as the 'pull of responsibility'. Even 'with the benefit of experience', he likened the impact as being caught in a toxic 'fallout' that reverberated through the system. He told how the events that unfolded from this period 'changed his whole life' for 'thirty-three years'. Some of the insights Oscar shared were of feeling obstructed and isolated in performing his role, referring to the aftermath as:

> One big transgression…..against me, the individual too. You know, everything's against me. Shift work, supervision, weak leadership, you know, difficult people. There's so many things that impact on you when you, you know, you're just trying to start...you walk in you know, 'Here I am, I'm gonna do something to help all these young people'...you know.

The above excerpt conceivably is indicative of the significant long term job strain and psychological distress Oscar and possibly his peers experienced. Coupled with lack of organisational support and supervision, his sense of disconnection and alienation was further effected by what he considered leadership's neglect, 'An individual such as I, had to find my own boundaries'. Oscar illustrated this experience within his system drawing. Central to this picture was a section coloured in red that depicted his experience of the attacks he endured during his tenure in the system. Describing the red figures as representing himself, they appeared fractured amidst a battering of 'arrows'. Oscar referred to the system's hostile and combative environment metaphorically as an 'arena' and a 'battleground'. These 'arrows' or 'spears' were indicators of rage, which he described as 'stepping on landmines', suggesting being ambushed by hidden dangers. According to Oscar 'the arrows are all the things that are in there that are against you, around me, that you've got to manoeuvre and dodge and you know, they're always comin' at you'. Moreover, he interpreted red in his drawing as felt 'anger' and hostility He emphasised the felt attacks from the system by capitalising the word 'SYSTEM'.

Oscar, I sensed, feared sustaining irreversible damaged or dying from the system's abuse. This was reflected in his recollections of the death of a close friend that occurred in the system, which left him 'heartbroken'. Self-preservation became a goal for Oscar and this was denoted in an anecdote he shared of a peer giving him advice, 'You've gotta work out how you're gonna leave… are you gonna walk off injured?' 'How are you gonna be seen by the spectators?'. He expressed this aspiration of survival as, 'I wanted to go out really good and that's what I've done', implying psychologically intact. By his accounts, his peer's word of advice was the catalyst for him to seek psychological support, as personally investing in 'self-development'. His goal to exit the system 'not broken, not angry, not upset but to come out so I made a contribution and I feel really good about it - which I do'.

Oscar's own internal torment was conveyed as 'a struggle in me' dealing with the 'dark stuff', 'the black stuff...knowing it's there'. Though Oscar was unable to explicitly articulate the impact as trauma, he simply referred to the traumatic events as 'major incidents. His reference to 'dark stuff', indicated he may have suffered from anxiety and depression. He revealed this as experiencing 'flashbacks', 'nightmares', being 'numb' (distancing himself from events as they unfolded), anger intimated through the expression of indignation and contempt towards those whose intentions were far from altruistic. Publicly, Oscar portrayed himself as having a 'clear conscience', a 'good reputation', of being strong, 'capable', morally upstanding and untarnished. However, for all the goodness and 'self-development' Oscar undertook to 'come

out the other end', he acknowledged 'There's been a cost to it all. Now there is! You realise it after'. Privately, the 'dark stuff' loomed:

> it's interesting now, in my life like I've done a lot of inner work...but you can still see that imagery and those, those things you know?

6.5: The Impact – System

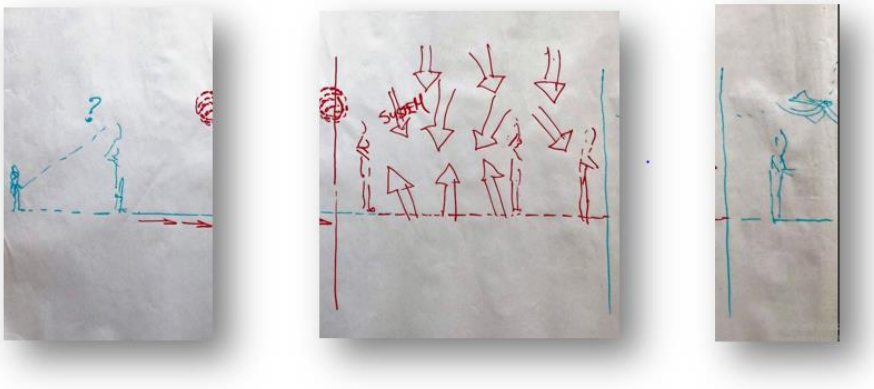

Figure 10: Pre-Entry, Surviving the System & Exiting the System
Source: Oscar, Case 14

Interspersed throughout Oscar's narration was the impact on staff and detainees 'locked in' the environment of hostility and their struggle for survival. He considered many had 'suffered' longer-term damage and 'left broken'. This was most evident in Oscar's system drawing. Segmented in three key lifecycle stages (refer Figure 10 above), the drawing reflects images in the first stage all coloured in light blue. For Oscar, this signified the pre-entry period (with a defining red line being a barbed wire fence that represents the boundary walls of the correctional services system); the second stage depicts 'going in' to 'the institution' and draws your focus to 'all the different pressures', the hostility that took place. For Oscar and his fellow peers, 'It's about coming out the other end'. The final stage, being his exit out of the system, also symbolised in light blue, representing his joy in being able to 'fly away' undamaged. Yet, I felt this was not the only possible interpretation of the latter stage; my association with 'bluebird' (of happiness/joy) was of it possibly symbolising his and systemically, the detainees and officers' phantasy of hope for reintegration. Though Oscar insinuated he possibly suffered from trauma, his inability to overtly express this was conceivably his denial of his shame regarding his/others 'brokenness'. This was arguably masked by his conscious choice of words to describe his exit, as 'flying away' undamaged. I suggest this was in reality his 'flight' or escape from the 'custodial punitive environment'. By Oscar's admission, the system was 'a tough unforgiving place….it was not rehabilitative, it was punitive'; in which he felt trapped for

30 years. Though Oscar had undergone a lot of 'self development' in the last few years of his career, the image he drew of himself/others is still one dimensional and not whole. This may denote that Oscar was still traumatised by his experience and unable to acknowledge a sense of shame he may have felt in surviving the system (Steele, Boon & van der Hart 2016).

Using Oscar's depiction of the system drawing, as his three-phased journey, I considered this depiction from a systems perspective of longstanding unresolved hostilities to understand the relational meaning. I presented a working hypothesis to him in a follow up meeting. My contention was that the images he drew were an unconscious metaphoric representation that substituted the depiction of himself to that of a young offender. I viewed the drawing from the perspective of a young offender's experience (and possibly of officers in general) and wondered whether it mirrored the experience of their journey through the juvenile justice system and the 'delinquent' rehabilitative services provided to them. I considered the stages to parallel:

First stage

- Child (under 18) experiences possible parental neglect and/or abuse from others. Early experience of trauma. The familial identity is lost and young person has no stable and continuous social/community and family relationships.
- The 'state'/juvenile justice system intervenes in families when children are in a period of irresponsibility or delinquency, during which the child is in need of firm, often coercive control.
- The juvenile justice system determines that detention is justified as corporal punishment to control or prevent a child from being susceptible to adverse influences (criminalisation).

Second Stage

- Once into the system, the child has to navigate through aggressive, abusive and obstructive forces (physical, emotional and psychological). The dashed lines indicate gaps between the principles/policies/ standards required by international human rights law and their operation in practice. Deficiencies in the system are the result of resistance to the adherence of these policies and principles. The young person is re-traumatised by this experience. Some youth disintegrate and are incapable of surviving this experience[15], whilst others manage to survive (though psychologically blemished).

[15] Refer to sub themes '6.7.1.3: Crying' and '6.7.1.6: Dependency' under 'Distress' in Section 6.7: Main Themes for supporting data on this point.

Third Stage

- Young person transitioning out of the system – need to develop own maturity in terms of self-direction, must learn how to take up responsibility and reach out to a network of community resources before release (which by rights the system must provide, but fails).
- On release, exiting the system, young person faces difficulties re-integrating into the community; encounters problems with adapting to day-to-day life. They experience a loss of initiative; have issues with communication skills and independence.
- If able to re-integrate, young person is liberated and independent. However, reality is they are unable to cope with societal pressures of conformity and take flight, triggering the spiral of shame.

In response to this hypothesis, Oscar agreed with my association, stating,

> Yes, there are definite similarities and I am able to understand that my entry into, return to and long-term commitment to the system was to address my own similar journey. Much of why many staff enter these roles, knowingly and unknowingly, is to do with an attempt to understand and resolve own personal issues. The system does re-traumatise young people in the same way it traumatises and re-traumatises some staff. For those who have a much greater awareness of themselves, and their own drives, there is an opportunity to separate from the system, either through resignation or forced leave, but like detainees, they may not reintegrate into the community and bear the scars or develop illnesses both physical and psychological.

The juvenile justice system, by Oscar's accounts, was marked and stigmatised[16] by a core legacy of traumatic events linked to authority figures' past transgressions. Oscar alluded to

[16] By stigmatised, I refer to the seminal theory of Goffman (1963), who argues that stigma represents a 'spoiled identity… imperfect in regards to the standards of the society in which one lives'; a perception of 'not quite human' (Lewis 1995, p. 194) by community/wider society. Stigma lies in the centrality of shame, as it characterises a person/group as being flawed, damaged, inferior, inadequate, unwanted and/or different as compared to the norms of community/ wider society. These deviating characteristics are a key source of stigma that marks them as being spoiled in the eyes of others. Lewis (1996) argues this evaluation emerges in the intersubjective relations with others or anticipated interactions with others. He further posits that 'stigma not only resides in the marked individual, but in the societal value system, that shame is the consequence of the failure around a specific set of standards, rules, and goals. It not only impacts on the person's sense of his spoiled identity and prompts feelings of shame and embarrassment, but also impacts on how he goes about trying to cope with his everyday life. Such an intense feeling as a spoiled identity, as a self that is no good, as an unworthy person, must be a public mark almost too hard to bear' (p.196). In this case, stigma of the detainees associated with being unloved/damaged/deformed

this in reference to officers and management having ‘to live with their own…conscience’. The system seemed to be tarnished by the reputation of shame, for the abuse and neglect in the manner it incarcerated society’s dysfunctional youth that were perceived as nefarious and unwanted societal objects. Oscar articulated this in derogatory terms used amongst officers/leadership as, ‘society's mistakes and brokenness - the broken toyshop we used to call it’. Likewise, another deprecating reference to the detainees was as ‘the beast at the bottom of the garden, close them up’. These remarks implied detainees were evaluated as primitive, defective and inferior, the latter words possibly revealing inhumane treatment of them.

Reflecting on Oscar’s observations, the system seemed motivated by the desire to improve its own self-image, whilst projecting shame into and onto others. Oscar expressed this in a number of incidents involving management. According to Oscar, management used their position of authority to subjugate detainees or officers into a position of submission, emphasising their inferiority, while allowing themselves to appear blame and shame free, and thus superior. This was achieved by engaging with others in a range of behaviours such as put-downs, bullying and violence to blame and thus produce shame in others. Conceivably, these behaviours constitute ‘revenge based cycles of conflict’ that when referenced to Scheff (2001) are of shame-rage. A portrayal of this was:

> Some of these hotshots from town they see it as like you know...(short pause)...you know, like ‘Tobruk’ you know, they want...they want to come out there and get out.....confrontations, clashing, 'don’t you dare put that...' you know, 'you're not having....' (Laughs)...I remember seeing...he's still in the department, very senior. He got in the most amazing row over a cigarette. I'll never forget you know, and um, I realise you know, I understand they're in this secure unit watching him, yelling and this young bloke was going toe to toe with him. ‘You are not to have...', 'I'll fuckin' have the fuckin'...and this is going backwards and forwards and I thought this is unbelievable. I remember having to walk between them and say look you know, put my arm around the boy, calm down, ‘It's ok...Oh it's not fair...I know it's not fair but we've got a difficult situation...so it's all the skill...’

According to Oscar, efforts were attempted by the government to facilitate a ‘therapeutic approach’ to juvenile detention:

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impacts their (detainee/system) sense of identity, and possibly marked for life. Conceivably, shame and stigma are significant contributing factors for their antisocial behaviour. The sense of ‘loved and wanted’ versus unloved and unwanted, is culturally defined by society.

> The government was going to spend a lot of money there and I think for the value of their dollar they wanted the different style. They were trying to clean up what was there. There had been reports written on the place over the years. It had a bad name, you know, there's been a lot of young people who've you know, suffered if you like, or gone on to the penal system from it all you know, there was money...

However, 'changing the guard, the old to the new...new order', in Oscar's opinion was met with resistance. As he reported, 'You've got the history of the place. The reputation of the place you know, a lot of people were, I think, wanted to keep it the way it was. Some wanted to keep it the way it was'. Oscar viewed 'The system at a higher level does not really believe in rehabilitating young peoples' lives…they pay lip service to it'. He attributed this to a lack of understanding of the nuanced complexities of the internal operations. In his opinion, this consequently resulted in 'operational high level management' never developing 'a custodial/therapeutic plan that everybody understands and then agrees and commits to'. This behaviour and cognition is suggestive that obfuscation (implied by lack of understanding) is symptomatic of dissociative state, an overwhelm of anxiety due to a sense of deficiency or failure (Archer 2005; Nijenhuis & Van der Hart 2011; Oathes & Ray 2008) by leadership.

An impact of this shame was the permeation of narcissistic elements that were viewed by Oscar as the exertion of power by 'management'. This he believed was a means to control and manipulate others for their own extrinsic gain. Oscar expressed this indignantly as:

> There's a type of human...well you meet a type of human I think in here in services area who, you know, and I've met them all the way through criminal justice in various types of roles. They're political. They're politically reading the game on how it affects them. They won't do anything if they think 'This may affect me in the future'. They don't sign anything in case it could get brought up. They don't make a decision that's got a lot of conflict in case it's...you know. They're risk adverse but cunning. And I've worked with them and seen what they do. They are a fuckin' pain in the ass those sort of people because you can never...you know, you can't get things. But if there's something that comes out that thinks 'Oooo that puts me in a good light' they're right there sitting on your shoulder.

Further, Oscar considered these imbalances or inequities within the system as extremely divisive, polarising relations between stakeholders. He characterised relationships between leadership as the 'roof' and officers as the 'floor', denoting hierarchical indifference in which 'People who are good operationally and people who are better off [in a] support role or policy or research or whatever...'. Oscar also depicted the system's anger of himself being seen as inferior and treated inequitably through his association with the colour red in his drawing: 'The

red was the you know, I was always...it was the anger...all the different things are always...there wasn't anything joyful about it for that period of time...kindness or joy or humour'.

When prompted whether he was angry towards the system's neglect of him, his response was 'Yeah, yeah, yeah for sure! Yeah. I had to do a lot of diffusing, a lot of...'. Displays of anger and rage, according to Oscar were ubiquitously enacted across the system. In terms of the detainees, Oscar described them as a 'chaotic group of young men who were angry you know, wrecking the place, smashing the door, all this sort of stuff'. He observed these displays of rage were mirrored by officers. This he alluded was in reaction to the system's mistreatment of them where, 'the staff if they've been not...the staff can start to act like young people. They can form like that you know...they get angry, they get you know, destructive, they get disruptive...they go missing you know, it's all the same...you just have an adult form of what the young people are doing'.

The imagery of rage, violent attack and being caught in this system was further illuminated in Oscar's use of a jungle metaphor: 'I'm in the jungle here. I'm in the fuckin' jungle'. This suggested a culture of lawless that permitted the objectification of others (officers and detainees) without impunity. This state of lawlessness was reiterated in his expression of the journey through the justice system. He spoke of this as:

> When you get in there, all the different things go against that. All those different...whether it's unions, bureaucracy, government, system, you know, they're all things that you've gotta try and manoeuvre and dodge to try and get there, to get to the other side.

Further, I assume the system's inner conflict with its blemished identity as 'punitive', lay repressed beneath the surface of the organisation. The system's inner torment of shame (individual/group) insinuated by Oscar as uncontrollable aggression, having perhaps arisen from multigenerational shame, was possibly too catastrophic, and therefore unthinkable (Amir 2018; Van der Kolk 2014; Wurmser 1989; Yarom 2015). Oscar seemed to unconsciously mark this with the two red arrows below the surface facing the system wall that spanned underground (refer Figure 11 below, as highlighted by green outline). Its solid vertical red line possibly marking the beginning of alienation, to the external world and within system, as well as, denoting the transition of self (detainee/officer) entering into the system, to self-as-other (objective self) (Archer 2005). The objective self could be seen now as prone to the gaze of the other (not me/not us/system) and projections of the systems humiliated rage for one's badness, abandoned, rejected and neglected (ibid). The cavity I argue was possibly the system's emotional numbness, 'emptiness' as a result of detachment, an inner emotional pain

that was its repressed state (Boon, Steele & Van Der Hart 2011). I associated the broken lines depicting of the ‘floor’, representing the loss of feelings of connectedness and hope for any good relationships; also conceivably, the detainees and officers’ inability to contain and provide emotional regulation of unacknowledged shame. Oscar’s reference to unresolved historical issues, I assume was multigenerational, and possibly surfaced continually through the ‘floor’ as projected anger toward the system (self-hatred).

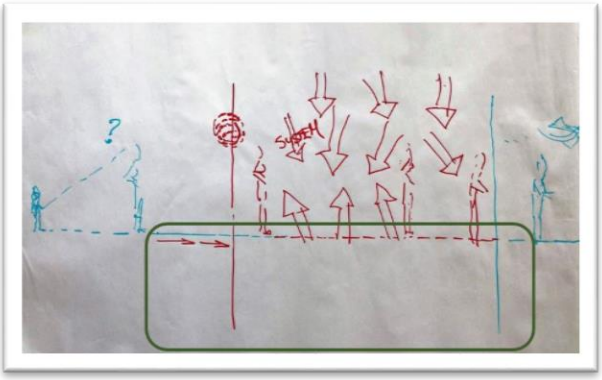

Figure 11: Unconsciously Numb/ Empty
Source: Oscar, Case 14

There seemed something deeply sadistic and perverse about the wider system not wanting change. Reputedly, the organisation’s image according to Oscar, was ‘a tough unforgiving place’. As he noted;

> For some officers, it served a purpose, in that young people were frightened of it. In other words, it was not rehabilitative, it was punitive. There were also parts of the criminal justice system - police, courts etc. who like to maintain that dark reputation to intimidate and scare young people out of crime.

These ‘young people’ were just boys between the ages of 10 to 17, imprisoned and treated inhumanely. Supposedly, the system was meant to provide safety, protection, and physical contact, companionship, communication, support, and a sense of belonging, all characteristics of healthy relationships (Boon, Steele & Van Der Hart 2011). Yet, according to Oscar’s narrative the system more broadly failed to do so.

The impacts on officers as revealed by Oscar were, ‘absentees and alcoholism’, ‘people go missing, they just stay home...they don’t want to go into it’. As he reported, ‘there were indicators’ of ‘domestic violence’, ‘a lot of people's relationships were precarious’ and ‘some people were numb’. Another telling anecdote shared by Oscar was:

> Once your mind's been open it can't be closed again. Once you've seen what you've seen (pauses)... So, I remember talking to a girl once who worked with sex offenders and her old boss said, 'Remember, once you go in there you'll see things you'll wish you've never saw them'.

These behaviours denote trauma and dissociation.

6.6: Reflections on the Interview

From the onset of my introductory meeting with 'Oscar', I felt my professional integrity intensely scrutinised. What was initially intended to be a one-hour meeting, took two-hours. In this period, Oscar extensively probed me on my background. I felt as if I and my credentials were researched and exhaustively evaluated to determine whether I was a 'good enough' researcher for him to participant in the process. I sensed that this was necessary in order to prove my trustworthiness. Once he seemed satisfied, there was a notable shift in the dynamic in our relations. I felt a strong pull from him to use the interview as a therapeutic forum. This become more apparent towards the end of the meeting, when he showed me a passport size photo of himself as a small child. He shared that he carried this on him to remind him of who he once was. My immediate association was of grief for lost innocence. Little did I know at the time the difficult times (physical, emotional and psychological) Oscar had experienced.

I left feeling uncomfortable and disturbed about the pull for the interview to be a therapeutic space. Prior to the follow up meeting, I resolved to reaffirm with Oscar the purpose of the research interview and my role as researcher. Though the research interview boundaries (task, time and territory) were restated, the time boundary during the interview was extended by thirty minutes. I sensed that Oscar needed the additional space to convey his experience and rationalised this as providing him sufficient time in which to answer all the questions. I now wonder if the extensions of time to both the interview and follow up meeting was my unconscious collusion with Oscar's desire to alter the boundaries, i.e. the purpose of his participation.

During the interview, Oscar made reference to the movie 'A Few Good Men', where he associated this to his anger at finding a senior manager hiding in a cupboard during a violent episode in the detention centre. He verbalised his thoughts on how he wanted to say to the manager 'You can't fuckin' handle it'. This reference left an imprint on my thoughts, I felt the full force of the anger in expression, as if I was being challenged. I considered this a key marker in his narrative, indicative of paralinguistic cue in the form of vocal withdrawal or hiding

behaviour (Retzinger 1991a).The statement was effectively a judgment. This verbal behaviour where ‘shame and anger co-occur’ (p.8), insinuates both emotions were engaged and supported my notions on the main theme of controlling shame. The last forty minutes of the interview focused on Oscar’s drawing of the system drawing and his interpretation of these images. His illustrations depicted his life path into and through the system and marked how the system dynamics shaped this experience. It felt as if I was presented with a hieroglyph, its symbols coded by a hidden meaning that I needed to decipher. I was struck by the breadth of scale of the images, and was curious as to why the landscape of the drawing incorporated aspects of his childhood, as well as empty space under the surface line. This also became another key marker.

Oscar’s narrative throughout the interview was disjointed and at times lacked clarity, as well as lacking congruency in the flow of sequence of events. Most statements were punctuated by ‘You know’ or train of thoughts left unfinished mid-sentence. It was not uncommon for Oscar to speak in a soliloquy when describing an experience. At times I felt frustrated, it was as if he was guarding and disguising the information he was giving me. I wondered whether he did this so that it might not get me (the other) into trouble such that might ‘be seen’ to comprise his (self) social status within the system. At one point during the interview, Oscar described a few incidents that related to executives hiding in cupboards and asserting their superiority over others. I found myself interjecting and saying: ‘I get a sense around, 'What were you protecting? Because I feel like you're almost protecting me of a sense of how...the ugly reality of how brutal this scenario was… (Interviewee makes sounds of agreement)…And I'm only just getting glimpses of it, but part of me wants to just go (makes a whooshing sound) like wanting to 'rip it right off'.

The sense of protection stirred so strongly within me that I made a note in my field notes. On reflection, I wondered how our relations resembled the prison code of conduct on not ratting out the other, or of collusive relations that may have played out between officer and detainee. I wondered what could not be openly spoken about and whether protection was a fear of the consequences of disclosure.

At the end of the interview, Oscar made a point of showing me a newspaper released that day. It headlined and featured storylines on prison insurgences that had flared the day before. To Oscar, the current events were a stark reminder of what he encountered and affirmed that the system had not changed. On departing, Oscar considered that the interview experience was ‘therapeutic’. Ambivalently, I felt elated that I provided a safe enough environment for Oscar to reflect on his experiences, and yet deflated in that I had not been able to facilitate an

environment where Oscar was able to be more articulate in his responses. I was left questioning my effectiveness as a researcher.

6.7: Main Themes

Oscar's interview was selected to illustrate the phenomenon of the experience of shame in connection to the key theme of controlling shame and its influence on group relations in the aftermath of an overtly known workplace transgression in a detention centre. The original trauma occurred many years ago in an institution, in which the participant had experienced multiple incidents of insurgence. The system was stigmatised by dysfunction of the detainees it serves to protect and ironically, by the systems neglect in failing to do so. The following are the substantive themes identified from Oscar's narrative and his interpretation of the system drawing he presented. These themes were commonplace across the collective cases.

Due to the breath of themes identified, these were grouped for further exploration under main themed headings as related to the defense strategy of Controlling Shame - Anger. Overall, the themes sit under the overarching theme of Shame and supported by exemplar quotes. In this case were most notably on:

(6.7.1) Distress: Neglect, Dissociation, Crying, Dependency, Denial and Detachment
(6.7.2) Fear (Loss): Fear, Dread, Self Preservation, Guilt, Engulfment and Hypervigilance
(6.7.3) Rage: Persecutory Attack, Anger, False Pride, Resentment, Moral Indignation, Disparagement, Enactments and Retribution

6.7.1: Distress

Oscar's characterisation of the institution was of a distressed system that was traumatised by decades of ineffectual leadership and stigma associated with its failure to provide secure relational ties, protection and rehabilitation of the disturbed children detained in the facility. I argue that the result of this is catastrophic shame that manifests into a state of psychosis. In this state, normal psychic functioning is disrupted by acute and chronic anxieties, triggering a contagion of madness and primal behaviour that is perversely acted out on the detainees; this then re-traumatises detainees and arguably the officers. The sub themes under this key theme explore shame rage dynamics through the lens of distress and related affects, cognitions and behaviour.

6.7.1.1: Neglect

Oscar referred to how detainees endured the system's ignoring of their efforts to rehabilitate, which ironically is a primary task of the system:

> You've got people...then you've got the young people who everyone forgets in the equation, it's supposed to be their place but they're the bottom of the barrel.

On a more personal level, he expressed the systems' neglect of himself as:

> You know, and I remember a psychiatrist told me, 'You should have been getting debriefed back here'...you know, not here...you know, you should have been..'

6.7.1.2: Dissociation

Implied by Oscar and supported by literature (Finney et al. 2013; Hohfeler 2018) safety within an incarceration environment is upmost. Oscar repeatedly spoke of his survival function in the system through many distressing situations. This took form in a number of defence mechanisms. By his accounts, Oscar (and other officers) had to ultimately deal with distressing trauma by not dealing with it. He reported this as disassociation from his own agency, expressed in:

> I stood back watching...I was watching him and I had an eye on him and this guy I work with, another fellow said 'X, keep out of it, let him sort it, keep out of it, let's just watch from a distance, don't step in and save him'.

Arguably Oscar was a 'regulating other', pulling away and emotionally distancing from the violence that played out between the colleague and a detainee (child/young person). This was possibly a depersonalising effect as if they were 'not properly human' (Hopper 2012, p. 134). The account could also suggest that this behaviour may be institutionalised, assumed through rigidity of roles, procedures and relational discourse that acts as a buffer between officers and detainees. This could induce hyperarousal (Steele, Boon & van der Hart 2016) or hyper-vigilance, an avoidance strategy that operates as a defence mechanism, serving to distance emotional connection when distressed.

6.7.1.3: Crying

Dissociation was also conveyed by Oscar in the form of an attachment cry (Nelson 1998). This he shared as a detainee's desperate need for closeness and reconnection with a caregiver

(the system) in the face of danger and fear. I considered this as salient data within the theme of dissociation:

> We had these really volatile, angry young men. And some just...like there were some...I remember a young fellow, he's dead now, but I remember him screaming at me - 'it's not fair Oscar, its fucked!' - and I remember I held him...in the end I just grabbed him and held him and let him and he just you know...and then he just cried and cried and cried and cried and I remember holding him. 'Don't let me go, don't let me go' and I was just holding him and I remember thinking, 'It's not about belting him and putting him away...putting him in isolation...it's holding him, letting him cry.

Adding

> So yeah, so there was me in that too, when I'm in, you know, I wanted to cry. You know, there's times in my life where I've wanted to cry and I didn't want to...you know, I wanted to be held and I wanted to be...just cos' (talks in almost a whisper)...because I'm the size of him you know and he's a big strong bloke and go breaking doors...no, we're all like that. Um, where am I...so..

The above account of Oscar's revelation of his vulnerability and need for care contains a number of shame markers, in the lowering of his voice and being misunderstood by others, of fearing the gaze and judgements of others. This is in reference to conceptions about his large stature, references which I believe were insinuating that 'big boys don't cry'. His loss of train of thought may have been a marker of possible intrusive and intense trauma related memories (Steele, Boon & van der Hart 2016).

Further indicators of trauma-induced dissociation mentioned by Oscar, were in the form of nightmares and flashbacks. He reflected on this as:

> We never got debriefed or...you managed yourself and you didn't realise you were trying to manage yourself and you wondered why you had nightmares, you wondered why you might have drunk a lot, you wonder why your relationship...

6.7.1.4: Dependency

Based on Oscar's account, the relational ties developed between the detainees (boys) and officers (caregivers) were based on highly unstable and destructive bonds, in which detainees had experienced significant hurt and possibly betrayal by the officers/others (non-officers/caregivers) with whom they perhaps associated unconsciously as a major caregiving relationship (possibly transference of parental/primary attachment figures). Arguably, these

relationships were further experiences of 'failed dependency' (Hopper 2012, p. 171). This was characterised by provocative relational events i.e. Oscar noted that Officers would often provoke conflict with the detainees through slights and intimidation. Thus, the dependency needs of detainees were an additional source of shame, compounded by their experience of denigration. Perhaps also for the officers whose role relied on detainees to function. The latter may induce feared rejection and humiliation, at the same time recognising that detainees' basic needs are inherently shameful (Herman 2012).

6.7.1.5: Denial

Denial, a form of dissociation, serves to divert awareness from anguish of shame by shutting down one's capacity to think or recall memories of actions, events or traits. According to Boon, Steele and Van Der Hart (2011) the drive is to dismiss any awareness of shame. Alternatively, it can operate to demonstrate one (and system) is not affected by shame. Oscar alluded to a denial or avoidance of the painful reality he experienced of being in this traumatising and traumatised system. His distress was expressed as:

> I started as a young man... and unknowingly I think, on a deeper level, didn't realise how affected I was by what I was working with…..what it was actually doing to me. So there's the doing that I'm doing. But there's also the doing that's happened to me, the effect on me…. believing in what I was doing.

6.7.1.6: Detachment

Oscar shared insights of Officers' withdrawal or social isolation from others. He described this as:

> I know men, I've talked to them, who've gone in when I did...come out here...so it's thirty years or thirty five years and they're angry or they've got something wrong or you know, or they retreat or they're in isolation

He also spoke of alcohol addiction amongst his peers that was used as a means of avoidance of anguish or dissociation. He spoke of this as numbing distressing feelings:

> I know a lot of people that had drunk all the way through you know, ah, absent, whatever they did...and a lot of them never got to this point.

Of note was Oscar's (and system) reference to the detainees as 'young people' and not boys. This suggests avoidance: he (and the system) may have, both consciously and unconsciously, detached emotionally. This in a sense was a form of objectification. By not acknowledging the

detainees as boys, which they were, was effectively dehumanising them. This may have been a protective mechanism indoctrinated by the system, to avoid the distress of emotional connection with the boys, whilst working so closely with them. However, at an unconscious level, I contend Oscar was unable to acknowledge the shame he felt in witnessing the abuse done to the boys, which by his own admission and as previously stated, ‘I stood back watching’.

6.7.2: Fear (Loss):

6.7.2.1: Fear

Fear was implied by Oscar, of being possessed by the evil within the system itself. It was a fear of becoming inherently flawed and feeling contaminated, likened to the system; the loss of goodness and innocence:

> I believe there is evil. A lot of people don’t but I believe there is. I've seen it, I've been in it you know, you can just about taste it. ...but I feel comfortable saying it. I believe there is.

The other expression of fear was of the exposure of the system’s vulnerability and of being shamed, guarding and disguising self and other, inducing feelings of defectiveness, inadequacy and humiliation. This was presented in a story Oscar told about a fellow Officer as:

> I went looking for this particular fellow...I've got to put this in...I couldn’t find him...and he was always you know, um, he was always you know, the golden child, of the department...seemed to be...not always but seemed a bit to be the golden child...and I found him in the broom cupboard, hiding. I've never forgotten it. I went looking for him and you know, there he was. And he wouldn’t come out...this was during all the...and I said...I didn't embarrass him, I said...I could've...but to this day he knows that I saw him in that time in his life. He's got a big job now, we haven’t seen each other...well, once we did. We just...he just looked the other way...because he probably realised that I saw him and I thought, 'You can't fuckin' handle it'. Remember that great scene, um, did you ever seen the film um, Jack Nicholson and Tom Cruise when Tom Cruise is havin' a go at Jack Nicholson in the um...

Last, there was the fear of engulfment by the system, of losing one’s identity and independence. Formidable and dangerous forces of the system were kept private or hidden from the outside world (public). This was conveyed as:

> So as you go in...meaning once you walk in behind the door, you know, the wall - we can do anything to you, you know!? Or the system can do anything to you. You are in here with us now.

6.7.2.2: Dread

Dread was expressed by Oscar as an intolerable anxiety he faced having to go into the unknown and an uncontained facility:

> I receive a phone call in the middle of the night... 'Can you please come and assist, there's a lot of issues at a particular facility'.....both on industrial...both...on a number of levels I'll just say, right? ….. I remember lying there thinking, 'God I'm out of this. Do I really need to go back to this? Do I need to do this?

In the interview, so many years after the events, Oscar recalled vividly the sense of dread he experienced at the time:

> I went back and I remember coming home one night really late and we'd...there'd been...been a really bad incident you know, really distressed young person has hurt himself and I remember coming home and I was exhausted. I went to get something to eat really late at a, you know, at a take away food...I don't know what time it was, one o'clock and I was sitting there thinking...sitting on my own thinking 'well you know, I'm nearly forty years old what am I doing!?'...you know, 'I've gotta be in this forever you know. Is this me...going through all that..

6.7.2.3: Self-Preservation

Self-preservation was expressed as the psychical processes employed by Oscar in his attempts to safeguard his existence and ensure he exited the system psychologically intact. This was conveyed as:

> I went to find out who I was, how I tick, what motive…you know, all that sort of stuff to help me to become...to become better at what I did in here... And that's where I spent my money. Self-development. Finding out who I was...why...you know, what am I doing, where...you know, what am I...and wanting to go out on top. When I finished. to walk out not broken, not angry, not upset but to come out so I made a contribution and I feel really good about it - which I do…. But it took a lot of work.

6.7.2.4: Guilt

Guilt was identified as a perceived sense of injustice, based on judgement of others for having violated a social, ethical (and legal) sanction. For Oscar, it was his intense reaction to perceived harm or wrongdoing by himself and others to detainees:

> My intention was you know, I've gotta do something about it...feeling responsible for this brokenness, damage, disadvantage mess. You know, I was made to feel, 'Only you can do this - we need you'.

6.7.2.5: Engulfment

Engulfment was felt by Oscar as the system beseeching him to feel as if he was somehow indebted to the organisation. It was as if the needs of the organisation came before his and he needed to sacrifice aspects of himself to maintain relations with the organisation (Scheff & Retzinger 2001). He described engulfment as:

> I get the phone call, 'Can you please come down and help there's a lot of trouble here' you know, 'You're respected and people want you here'. 'Who wants me there?'...'Oh, well the fellows that are trying to do the work down here know you and they trust you and they want you to come down'. And I remember lying in bed and thinking that I'm out of it you know...anyway I got up and I drove there to the facility….

Furthermore, pressure was tacitly applied aimed at luring him back into a system:

> But you know, there's that um, pull of um, responsibility. There's the pull of 'Who else is going to do it?'. You know, you can feel...there's the pull of um. They've asked me to come here, to come back...(pauses)...you know.

6.7.2.6: Hypervigilance

Hypervigilance was symptomatic of trauma (individual and system's) that was felt by Oscar in being subjectively evaluated by detainees. He described this as if they were looking for holes or gaps in his character, suggesting defectiveness or inferiority in his capacity to perform his role. This was expressed from a moral standpoint. He reported this as:

> People talk...they know, you know. In those sorts of arena's people know things, they hear things...they you know, young people watch you...they know what you're like, they judge you, they summarise you, they can tell how you dress, whether you smoke, whether you drink...you know, whether you're a good person, whether you're kind, whether you care about them really or whether

> you're just there, because it's a job...young people can sense that. It's all emotional you know, you're working very closely um...it changes you. It changed me.

This level of scrutiny indicates fear of a perceived threat of hostility in the immediate work environment (Fritz et al. 2018).

6.7.3: Rage

6.7.3.1: Persecutory Attacks

Persecution most acutely represented in Oscar's system drawing through depictions of arrows, spears and landmines in the central body of the drawing. Oscar explained these as:

> Spears…they're embedded in...and you step into them. Landmines. You know, they're like landmines, you fuckin' try to walk through them...BANG...you know, 'Where'd that come from!?'...you know, or 'I didn't see that' or you know, yeah all that...all of that. Spears, um, traps and what was the other thing we said, you know, where they can rain...and can come at you from anywhere. Arrows.

This experience was amplified by his choice of only using two colours in his drawing; light blue and red. These colours illustrated his polarised experience of masculinity with light blue representing a young male, suggesting vulnerability, naivety and joy, and red, in contrast portraying a hegemonic expression of masculinity in the system. This was in the form of anger and rage:

> Yeah well blue for boy. This little boy. I like blue. But the red was the you know, I was always...it was the anger he...all the different things are always...there wasn't anything joyful about it for that period of time...kindness or joy or humour or you know

Aggression

It can be understood that aggression was a defence strategy used to attack any source of shame and protect against exposure of any vulnerability or perceived deficiency. Oscar implied employment of this strategy in his assessing of the defectiveness of others:

> The conditions we worked in, the style of work we do...(pauses)... you treat each other differently. But, I said to 'Z', in that close quarter raw culture it's very different - man on man, man on woman, you know. A lot of feelings about the sexes in a male institution you know, I've been guilty of it

> myself - I can tell you that truthfully you know, about how I would you know who I thought was suitable and who I thought wasn't.

6.7.3.2: Anger

Oscar's experienced the system as eliciting rage. He described the expression of rage as a discharge of primal emotions and destructive behaviour:

> Sometimes as civilised as we are, we're never too far away from that. You know, that starkness, that raw culture, that um...(pauses)...you know, that pain of spirit you know, that screaming, ranting, smashing...you know, that...you know, like when you worked in that arena and you see people who can absolutely go right off - it's frightening but there's something about it...it's primal, it draws you in.

He also portrayed the rage as threatening behaviour that was engulfing:

> Some men I've seen who cause the conflict. They push it. They go at it. They don't know how to handle it and they crowd that person.

6.7.3.3: False Pride

Oscar implied (false) pride in how he perceived his overall capability and how others perceived his identity. This was conveyed in a manner in which he moved away and distanced himself from the shameful system/offenders, invoking a sense of dignity. Furthermore, he intimates superiority to others, of 'being decent', suggesting worthiness. Yet his assertion of 'I'm not a cruel person' insinuates that Oscar possibly doubted his goodness, implying shame proneness. This expressed as:

> I, thank god, I had a name for being decent, which I was told later. You know, I wasn't cruel, I'm not a cruel person does that make sense? Or a harsh person.

6.7.3.4: Resentment

Scheff and Retzinger (2001, p. 132) describe resentment as 'helpless' or 'impotent anger'. The data suggests Oscar was possibly caught in the shame - anger sequence; ashamed of his envy of others' self-centeredness, yet angry with them for not being more charitable in orientation:

> So, there's all levels - industrial, there's management, there's young people...everybody's using it for their own ends if that makes sense? You know, using the struggle. You know, and all sorts

> of agenda's that you don't see at the time are inside this. 'Oh you know, we'll use this opportunity for a pay rise' or 'No, we're gonna hold the government to ransom' or um, young people think this is a great time to even up with people you know, like there's a lot of...in the chaos there's all sorts of other things happening….Some people can see it and some can't.

Resentment was articulated by Oscar as the system enabling others (non-officers) to sustain the façade of grandiose self-worth or self-aggrandisement over others (officers). This was experienced by Oscar as calculating behaviour; a deviation from his/good officer's, altruistic beliefs about working in the system. This perception is enemy to competition:

> There's a type of human...well you meet a type of human I think in here in services area who, you know, and I've met them all the way through criminal justice in various types of roles. They're political. They're politically reading the game on how it affects them. They won't do anything if they think 'This may affect me in the future'. They don't sign anything in case it could get brought up. They don't make a decision that's got a lot of conflict in case it's...you know, they're risk adverse but cunning. And I've worked with them and seen what they do. They are a fuckin' pain in the ass those sort of people because you can never...you know, you can't get things. But if there's something that comes out that thinks 'Oooo that puts me in a good light' they're right there sitting on your shoulder.

Further, I posit that resentment may be an unconscious representation of a collective view (good officers/volunteers/other moral agents or advocates) against the organisational culture that inhibits redressing wrongs perpetrated against it by those (bad officers/leaders) who pledged to uphold the principals of this justice system (Nathanson 1994).

6.7.3.5: Moral Indignation

Expressed as moral superiority, moral indignation was a manifestation of shame and anger and, I argue, was used by Oscar as a defence against the other:

> So I would say there's some people I worked with that would have nightmares I have no doubt, as they get older. They have to live with their own...and the royal commission's been interesting because I saw a fellow there give evidence who was one of the cruellest men I ever met in the system. And I saw him trying to justify his decision on TV and I remember what he did to some of these young blokes. And I can lie down at night and go to sleep and I know my conscious is clear.

6.7.3.6: Disparagement

Oscar's perception of the system's morality was raised a number of times during his narrative. It was 'as if' he represented the voice of the system's conscience. This was expressed as critical disapproval of others (inferior/bad officers) whose values and ideals failed to marry with his/systems, and as a source of shame. It seemed this was a threat to his and the system's identity. His disapproval of these officers, perhaps indicate Oscar's elevation of his identity (superiority), insinuating that others' lack of morality (inferiority) and are beneath his/system's dignity (Kaufman 1996). Moreover, it was acknowledgement of the violations of others' rights and their suffering:

> A lot of poor selection of staff. That was really apparent - a lot of staff with you know, records that should never have been allowed to work near young people.

These admissions imply threats to organisational identity through a lack of cohesion and institutional divide (people/subgroups as either 'good'/'right' or 'bad'/'wrong') regarding organisational purpose and ethical principles. This was reported by Oscar as:

> See some people really go out of the way to do the right thing. There's others that go out of the way who don't have that same motivation or that same care factor or think about it totally from a selfish point of view. People go to work...I've noticed this and some people go in there and, 'What can I do for the system?'...other people go, 'What can I do for me?'….. And it's a big difference. Particularly when you are trying to manage a place like that with disruptive, destructive people.

6.7.3.7 Enactments

In Oscar's system drawing, he depicted a small boy that seemed to be urinating on the older figure. This enactment mimics defiling the other (humiliating), a form of eroding or stripping away any sense of self-respect. Oscar presented his observations of officers mirroring the behaviour of detainees, suggesting that officers became enmeshed in their identification with them, that this was possibly a deflection of their shame, and that it may spill over into hostility (Sanderson 2015):

> Oh you know, they see themselves as you know, part of you know, the young people you know? I've noticed that a lot actually. A lot of people become very juvenile, immature...they forget who...they're not clear...when I come back to..a lot of people aren't clear in who they are.

6.7.3.8 Retribution

Oscar presented retribution in his relaying of the interconnectedness between personal, organisational and systemic (societal) purpose. He expressed this in terms of the conflicted feelings and polarised intentions (good and bad), in which officers unconsciously reversed roles with the 'perceived humiliator' from their past (implying that a number of officers themselves once detainees), to be the humiliated one, who now humiliates the other/system (Kaufman 1996):

> Some people are just angry about you know, how they're being treated and they go there for their own ah, reasons. Their own solace. Their own salvation if you like what I mean...I mean I've worked with staff...some staff tell you in their private moments, 'Oh yeah I was terribly treated, I was this abused' you know, 'fuck the system' and 'I'm gonna help any you know...' So people...I said to you before about people being clear about why they do what they do, I don't think there's enough emphasis on that - looking at people clearly.

6.8: Concluding Remarks

Emerging from the analysis conducted in this chapter, is the finding of the ferocity of shame anger sequence used to control the exposure of organisational failings, and the complexity of human behaviour involved when shame co-occurs with psychological distress, fear and rage as a result of moral transgression. In this case, the data reveals an organisation stigmatised by a long-lived reputation of violent behaviour and dysfunction, conflicted by its purpose. Oscar's story tells of a system resistant to change in its operations, maintaining unyieldingly hegemonic and punitive custodial orientation. The uniqueness of this case are the many parallels about survival conveyed both consciously and, I contend, unconsciously by Oscar, ranging the detainees plight within society to the aspirations (real and imagined) of the officers wish to 'come out the other end' undamaged. The case also highlights the severe distress and harm inflicted from perverse neglect. Added to this is seemingly sadistic pleasure attained in triggering psychotic rage manifest in the form of insurgence for individual gain. The collateral damage is akin to a battlefield strewn with broken and severely traumatised individuals. Oscar's system drawing is a powerful depiction of catastrophic relations and the deep sense of hopelessness and impotence. Most prevalent is the lack of cohesion and institutional divide (people/subgroups as either 'good'/'right' or 'bad'/'wrong').

The meaning of his story is a rarely ventured exploration of the shadow side of organisations. This is especially true of those organisations imbued by emotional and/or psychological violence and stigmatised by longstanding histories of unacknowledged shame. The journey depicted in Oscar's system drawing, in many ways reflects the experiences of the participants

in this research. Each told stories of entering into an organisational system with altruistic motives, only to have their beliefs and hopes diminished or annihilated. Oscar's story resounds the sentiment that existence in these types of organisations is about self-preservation and survival. By being hidden behind the confines of impenetrable (real and imagined) walls prevents the persecutory gaze of the external other, avoiding the distress of navigating a hostile battlefield of political landmines and envious projections. The objective of survival is one's own (detainees and officers), as well as for the system; to control shame and leave, at least on the surface, psychologically intact and not broken by the system.

6.9: Summary

This chapter describes the lived experienced of a senior officer within a juvenile justice system. The account, through the lens of the fall out of an attempt to shift an organisational culture, offers some insight into the external pressures (societal and government) which when combined with internal hierarchical structure, portrays a workplace that is highly politicised, autocratic and persecutory in its operation. Oscar's story presented opportunities for rich discernment about how a correctional officer viewed significant interactions with colleagues, detainees and leadership. The following chapter interprets Fleur's story from the lens of concealment, giving meaning to the experience of shame following an overtly known workplace transgression in the finance sector and its impact on the banking culture.

Chapter 7: Fleur's Story - 'Masking Excess with Success'

7.1: Introduction

In this chapter I present Fleur's Story (Case 6), which explores the theme of 'Concealing Shame'. The analysis focuses on the defences of hiding against the blinding effects of exposure; of the individual and the system feeling exposed or seen, scrutinised and judged by the other. Intermingled in this complexity, the defence of compensation is also considered. This is framed through Fleur's depiction of an organisation's striving for perfection, and characteristics of hubris and narcissistic greed. It is argued that this defensive organisational behaviour is in place to compensate for feelings of inherent deficiencies and need to expunge perceived internal blemishes (Kaufman 1996).

Table 10: Theme generation from Case 6 – Concealing Shame

Concealing Shame			
	Concealment	**Compensation**	**Disillusionment**
Chapter 7 **Sub Themes**	Omissions Secrecy Deception Blame Invisibility Obfuscation Hiding – Psychic/Black Hole	Narcissism Grandiosity Perfectionism Hubristic Pride Manipulation	Illusion Idealisation Disillusionment Disappointment Sense of Failure Hopelessness Repetition Compulsion

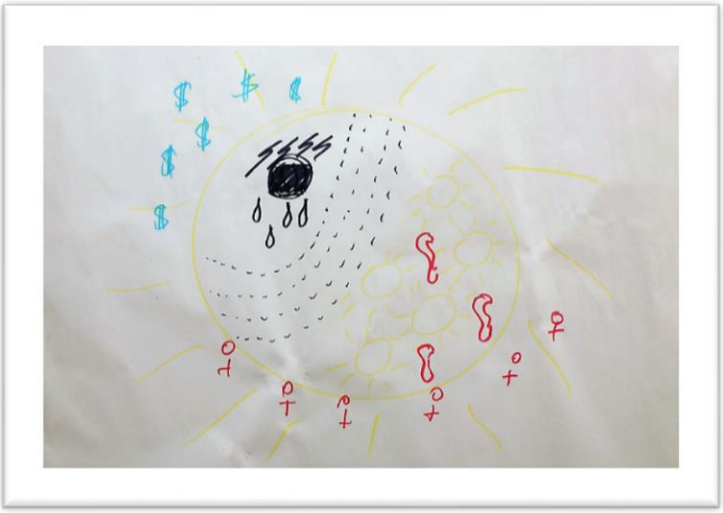

Figure 12: The System's Eye, the Organ of Shame

Source: Fleur, Case 6

7.2: The Interviewee

'Fleur' is a consultant with over 20 years' experience working at executive and board level in global organisations across multiple sectors. Fleur's narrative was based on an experience that took place fifteen years ago. At the time the transgressions occurred, she was a senior human resource (HR) executive, responsible for a HR function of a tier one banking institution, based in Australia. Fleur was a member of the top-level executive team that totalled one hundred in number. Fleur played an instrumental role in leading a significant culture change program across the organisation which attained much global recognition. In her executive capacity, Fleur worked closely with the CEO and the 'Management Board'. Given her seniority and nature of her role, she was privy to much sensitive information. A critical part of her leadership portfolio was senior executive appointments and responsibility 'for the values and the role modelling that (leaders) demonstrated'[17]. As Fleur stated, 'There was an implicit expectation that…(she)…would counsel and coach leaders around behaviours that were aligned to the values of this organisation'.

Paradoxically, these values are an acronym[18] that metaphorically stand for nurturance. Yet by Fleur's account, the behaviours of indifference exhibited within the system towards its own people in some areas was trauma inducing.

7.3: The Transgression

The case described by Fleur is complex and multifaceted. The transgression centred on sexual misconduct perpetrated by a senior executive, 'Jordan', whom Fleur stressed was the

[17] According to Fleur and findings in public documentation, the organisation linked its identity strongly to its values in the drive for cultural transformation, and used them to regulate social cohesion, as well as maintain a form of culturally sanctioned morality (Sanderson, 2015). The program was a key aspiration for the CEO, whose aim for this initiative was to humanise public perception of the institution. Yet, in admissions by the current leaders during the 2018 Financial Institutions Royal Commission, the organisation has a history of considering bringing in revenue as defining good behaviour, adding that employees essentially pushed for positive revenue outcomes, and were not scrutinised. There was little concern for how these outcomes were achieved (reference removed because of identifiability). This supports Fleur's disclosure of how Jordan's behaviour was overlooked, 'He actually was seen as someone who generated a lot of income, a lot of revenue and therefore to some extent was untouchable. And I think that continued for a long period'.

[18] The values and acronym are not included to preserve the anonymity of the system.

‘main character’ of this case[19]. According to Fleur two issues arose from the situation. First, ‘was the slowness…the organisation was willing to act on an issue of values’. The other was the manner in which Jordan was exited. From Fleur’s perspective, Jordan should have been terminated for misconduct ‘instead…he was allowed to leave on the basis of cost overruns and performance issues’. This enabled payment of a bonus[20], worth some millions of dollars. The payout was made on the basis litigation would be avoided. Fleur stressed it was ‘a commercial decision’ determined by ‘the CEO and the head of HR’. Yet, for all their strategising, Jordan litigated for unfair dismissal and the matter ‘was settled out of court over lack of clarity about performance and therefore settled’. Jordan was awarded a significant multimillion-dollar compensation package. Fleur saying that in the aftermath, ‘there was this kind of, seething in the organisation’ over double standards applied by the senior executive and a sense of injustice in ‘the way in which the whole thing subsequently was covered up to look like a… just an ordinary departure of a senior executive’[21].

Fleur relayed that the CEO (‘Lloyd’) was pivotal to the case. Lloyd had a long prestigious career within the sector, with considerable accomplishments. Working in a variety of international markets, he was highly revered externally, as well as, internally for ‘turning around ‘the company’ that was on its knees’. Prior to Lloyd’s tenure, the organisation had a legacy of failed (inferior) financial performance. Amid this, Fleur affirmed the share price hit ‘rock bottom’, there were threats of takeovers, including a public ‘fight between the Chair and

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[19] During the early stages of the interview, when establishing the context of the case, Fleur made a point of distancing any connection to the key perpetrator. She stated clearly she worked in another area of the business when she first came across this individual”, in his first appointment and asserted, “There had been some sort of past but I wasn’t fully aware of what this past was”. It felt as if Fleur were fearful of being contaminated by his association.

[20] Fleur placed much emphasis on this second issue, referring to the bonus plan five times within a 10-second piece of dialogue. This was then underscored by the contradiction that employees, when terminated for misconduct, were not entitled to any bonus. Fleur conveyed that she, as well as her boss, the CEO, “Lloyd” and the legal counsel knew that if they withheld his bonus it would lead to ligation, due to its significant value. This action is data about manipulative behaviour, characteristic in a culture of narcissism (Twenge 2011).

[21] The institution, one the major financial establishments in the sector, was exposed for malpractice in the 2018 Financial Institutions Royal Commission. The organisation publicly acknowledged that it engaged in a range of misconduct, with the current CEO blaming the culture for being overly focused on revenue outcomes. The various scandals had been common knowledge across the sector for many years, however, nothing was done to address the issues either internally or through the relevant governing and regulatory bodies (Reference withheld to preserve organisational anonymity). Media reports noted that whistle blower cases almost doubled within the organisation in the 12-month period prior to the Commission hearings.

the CEO, the old CEO and they fought it out in the (media)'. Fleur described it as 'a dreadful time' in the organisation's history[22]. This implies a state of disillusionment in the organisation where its leaders, possibly neglected the system, creating an sense of failed dependency (Turquet 1974b).

Lloyd instated a values driven culture transformation program through the institution two years prior to Jordan's tenure. The program had a cathartic effect, metamorphosing the organisation to achieve phenomenal financial success[23]. As Fleur stressed, this success and Lloyd's charismatic leadership propelled his status; he was perceived as 'very powerful CEO' and much 'loved' by staff. These qualities are akin to a 'father-god substitute' (Masterson, 1988, p.215). This aligned with Fleur's association whom she considered:

> The CEO was father and the board was mother…the board had quite a non-interventionist kind of nurturing role of the CEO. I mean, the CEO had a very good relationship with the board and the board trusted and supported him.

Fleur's veneration of the CEO and her emphatic assertion on how 'People still talk about this CEO as being a stunning CEO', was palpable in the interview. Further she contended that the organisation during this period was observed externally, 'as a shining light. It was seen as an exceptional example of a well-run 'company'. The perceptions of Lloyd implies that the system members considered him as an object of perfection (Bigliani 2013), 'as he had done the impossible' in reviving it from imminent death. My immediate associations were of a spellbound system with imagery of Lloyd pedestalled in god-like superiority and perfection. The praise of him felt false. It was as if Lloyd was an extra in the narrative and somewhat free from wrongdoing. I felt an acute sense of discomfort for my cynicism about the heroic status bestowed upon Lloyd and feared retribution if I vocalised these perceptions. I consciously contained (concealed) my thoughts so as not to trigger any form of resistance from Fleur. It maybe that the system members' belief in Lloyd was an unthought through/unconscious desire for this role to be experienced as worthy, unmitigated by reality (Teitelbaum, 2007 citing Chasseguet-Smirgel and Grunberger).

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[22] Newspaper reports on the organisation at the time attributed the organisation's demise to autocratic leadership, individualism, siloed functions, confusion over organisational strategy and transgressive conduct (reference withheld for identifiable purposes).

[23] Paradoxically, the cultural program's name was synonymous with taking flight or escape. Unconsciously, this may have reinforced the system's defensive strategy of withdrawing and concealing its anxiety surrounding its historical failures (inferiority) and subsequent feelings of shame.

Similarly, Jordan had significant international experience in global financial institutions. According to Fleur, his background afforded him a reputation as being 'very well regarded in the industry' and 'seen as somewhat untouchable'. He had a 'history' with the organisation, having formerly worked in the company some years prior that linked him to the legacy of the previous culture. Fleur stated Jordan was controversially re-appointed to head a key division of the organisation, a decision that Fleur regarded as somewhat irrational by Lloyd. Adding to this was 'the one blemish on his (Lloyd's) record'. In this, by Fleur's recollection, a colleague of Lloyds's had referred Jordan and in meeting him, Lloyd was overly accepting of Jordan's credentials. So much so, that he gave Jordan a verbal offer without 'clearing it with any of us', meaning that the appointment had not been cleared by the HR Executive.

According to Fleur, due process in relation to recruitment practices and policies was ignored, 'all out of the window', with no consultation and 'very little involvement' of others'. My reaction was that this was a glaring ethical transgression, yet a transgression that was unspoken of and feasibly unknowable for Fleur (Bollas 1987; Orange 2011). From a psychoanalytic perspective, this state of mind may embody transference communication, an 'unthought known' (Bollas 1987, p. 235), in which Fleur demonstrates an awareness of the transgression, yet is unable to think it. Drawn back to Fleur's impassioned description of Lloyd's 'brilliance', I considered this idealisation as data suggesting the system's projection of hubris on Lloyd. If so, this in turn may have fuelled a grandiose illusion that Lloyd (and others) may had viewed himself as having limitless power; that he could do anything, and remain oblivious to the reality of the serious ethical breaches (Teitelbaum 2007).

Jordan's appointment was formalised on the basis that the 'verbal offer had already been made'. These actions suggest that the CEO felt himself above the realm of all others and as such commanded unquestioning obedience (conformity and appeasement) that superseded any governance requirements (Frawley-O'Dea & Goldner 2016). In the follow up meeting with Fleur when I posed consideration of the system idealising Lloyd, she asserted divergent views. In one stance, she thought 'no' and then proposed that he may have been 'idealised as a 'rockstar' because of his guitar playing'[24]. However, on concluding the meeting she declared,

[24] This was an intimate aspect of the CEO not previously revealed and seemed out of context. I sensed that I had triggered some discomfort that was possibly confronting and anxiety provoking. Perhaps Fleur's response was an unconscious diversion to my question of idealisation, in that it was difficult for her to identify with any experience/reaction to my question as it may have mobilised shame and therefore was subsequently, perhaps unconsciously denied.

‘I think he had every reason to be idolised in that he had done the impossible’. It is feasible to extend this system view of Lloyd to the potential that this fed into his own view of himself, possibly ‘taken in’ or seduced by the system and experienced the adulation as so compelling that he was possibly caught in feeling omnipotent and omniscient (Kohut 2009; Long 2008; Long & Sievers 2013): a grandiose sense of self (‘I am perfect’) (Sorotzkin 1985) and therefore, strove for perfection in doing ‘the impossible’.

Fleur, referring to Lloyd’s action regarding Jordan’s hire, said ‘it was entirely a CEO's pick. A captain's pick so to speak’. According to Fleur, the majority of the management board were unsupportive of his decision; ‘There was too much noise about him’; they advised ‘don't hire him’. Lloyd’s disregard of the executive’s recommendations is perhaps a characteristic of hubristic pride marked by Lloyd’s overestimation of his own success (Lewis 2018), and contempt for the opposing judgement from others[25]. This was affirmed by Fleur when asked if she thought the CEO’s pride got in the way of him making a more logical decision in regard hiring of this director. Fleur considered Lloyd as ‘seduced by this guy’ and contended that he ‘found it very, very hard to step away from a personal hiring decision he had made and then hoped that he would somehow make it work...’

Lloyd’s action may have induced shame that was masked by a sense of grandiosity (Kohut 2009). Nevertheless, Fleur portrayed not Lloyd but Jordan as the hedonistic deviant, that he ‘emulated everything that was bad’’[26] about that section of the organisation he had authority over. Fleur claimed that this part of the system ‘wasn't often liked by the rest of the organisation’ and there was a ‘distrust’ of them. Suggesting ‘otherness’ or ‘not like us’ (Lewis 1971); a broken damaged self (Lewis 2018). Fleur provocatively stressed this ‘badness’ in her associated experience of:

[25] Hayward and Hambrick (1997, p. 106) define hubris as ‘exaggerated pride or confidence often resulting in retribution over confidence in decision making’. This argument is also supported by studies undertaken by (Fast et al. 2012) who have demonstrated that powerful leaders with narcissistic tendencies, when ‘made to feel personally incompetent in their domain of power’ (p.1) are likely to defensively make decisions from a position of retribution .

[26] In this excerpt, Fleur began to laugh after referring to Jordan representing the ‘bad’ aspects of the institution. Her laughter was possibly a non-verbal cue of arousal and embarrassment that is an unconscious fusion of ashamed excitement (Lewis, 1971). This contradiction of emotions stirred within me, initially aroused salacious thoughts of Jordan‘s sexual prowess, quickly followed by embarrassment in allowing my thoughts to stray into perverse fantasy and not staying present in my role as interviewer.

> I remember going to see the movie 'Wolf of Wall Street' with someone who had been in the bank at the same time that I was and had witnessed what had happened and her response to me was, at the end of the movie, 'Wow, it was worse in our bank'.

From Fleur's perspective, Jordan played the central role for the trauma and psychic pain inflicted on the system, that the system in turn endeavoured to conceal (Dorahy 2017). By her accounts, issues of sexual harassment surfaced soon after Jordan's commencement. Fleur relayed that the first complaint arose from a newly appointed female graduate. The graduate had attended an induction event during her second week with the company. During this event, Jordan allegedly approached her and made 'very lewd remarks', propositioning her for sex. According to a manager (a direct report to Fleur) who reported the matter to Fleur, the graduate was 'quite shaken'. This incident seemed to have a deep effect on Fleur. In speaking of this incident, she appeared to mirror her disturbance in the manner (pauses and um's) she recounted the graduate's version of events:

> He had asked her...he'd had a bit to drink, he asked her um, he said that she had a very trim body and um, she blushed and then he said um, 'Do you like it in the morning or in the evening?' Um, to which she said 'No, I generally go to the gym after work'. And he said, 'I'm not talking about the gym, I'm talking about whether you like 'IT' in the morning or in the evening.

Fleur stated that she initially rationalised Jordan's misconduct towards the victim as 'invading her personal space', contending that:

> To me that sounded like someone who was just inebriated, didn't know what he was doing um, made some inappropriate comment and therefore needed to be counselled, not sacked.

Fleur said she ambivalently escalated the matter to her 'boss'. Doubting his intentions, she 'wasn't sure if he really was going to speak to him'. This suggested a dilemma of guilty thoughts, followed perhaps by conscious or repressed feelings of shame that he may not act on this matter (Breslavs 2013). To my mind Fleur then rationalised this by saying that she believed this was an isolated incident, however that 'the issues became more significant'. She then recounted how Jordan at another event around this timeframe, 'put his hand up the skirt of one of the graduates'. She asserted that she felt 'something needed to be done' but contended 'nothing was done'. The matter once again was avoided by the management board, most notably Lloyd. For Fleur, 'It was hard to fathom why the organisation would turn a blind eye'. Yet, 'the indiscretions continued, and they continued with much more seriousness'. Fleur recalled how another formal complaint was lodged against Jordan after he attended an event

in an overseas office. Jordan allegedly physically violated a woman, 'had rubbed her...basically rubbed her bum'.

Describing this incident as 'shameful', Fleur affirmed that Lloyd engaged a law firm to 'contain information' within the country to circumvent litigation; this was another form of concealment (Tourish 2013). Lloyd overlooked Jordan's behaviour and once again neglected to discipline him. Adding to the gravity of this situation, a 'separate issue' arose that was further evidence of Jordan's conduct:

> A video surfaced and this video came from while he was in 'the other division'.…'the other division' often has lots of cameras and um, this video was of him having sex with his PA on the table after hours um, in his room. It surfaced and it actually went to the CEO.

Fleur believed this was surely grounds for termination, yet this did not occur. Fleur implied the CEO downplayed the matter, arguing that it 'occurred in a previous appointment, not his current appointment…apart from invading personal space and having groping hands that there was nothing'[27]. The matter was shut down and dismissed, as 'the video seemed to suggest that it was a mutually agreed sexual act'. Lloyd's passive stance toward Jordan caused much outrage. According to Fleur 'people were horrified'. The latest revelations triggered a sudden surge from within the organisation. Fleur described how it 'started slowly emerging from every corner of the organisation', depicted as analogous to a 'box being slightly opened' and then:

> Suddenly all these things emerged from this box and we couldn't put the lid back…it was sort of stuff from other far reaches of the...of this particular bank's branches across the globe. You know, people were, were recounting 'Well I have a story about this guy'

Fleur's use of sensory-object or visual-sensory metaphor, from a psychoanalytic perspective may represent the mental and complementary emotional states of the system that are inaccessible (Yarom 2015, p. 187). The spilling out was suggestive of the system's violent rupture and flooding of unbearable anxieties that are split off and dissociated from.

Two key elements surrounded the defensive stance taken by Lloyd. The first was normalising the inappropriateness of the perverse nature of the conduct on work premises. The second

[27] This behaviour was evidence of a form of normalising, which according to Ashforth and Kreiner (2002, p. 216) is where institutionalised processes exist by which extraordinary situations are rendered seemingly ordinary. In this situation, Lloyd attempt to reduce the emotional impact of Jordan's antisocial behaviour.

was that, despite knowledge that Jordan had forced himself on other women, no one questioned whether Jordan was predatory in seducing or 'grooming' his PA (Lanning 2018), or used his positional power to manipulate her into what could have been unwanted sexual activity 'with minimal resistance or risk of disclosure' (Dietz 2018, p. 332). The number of these accounts indicate Jordan had a propensity to engage in sexually aggressive behaviour (unwanted sexual contact and sexual coercion), in which he exhibited 'exploitative-ness' (Widman & McNulty 2012). It is reasonable to assume that Jordan's sexual exploitations and misconduct was need gratifying and risk taking behaviour, both characteristic of narcissism (Campbell & Miller 2011; Kohut 2009; Westen 1989).

Following this incident, Fleur and others in the organisation became 'progressively more concerned' about Jordan's behaviour leading to Fleur's manager requesting she discretely conduct background checks on Jordan. The intention was to discover any further prior history of sexual misconduct. This was possibly a form of the system's monitoring of self from the standpoint of others (Scheff 1988). Fleur rang 'a doyen on a number of major boards', who substantiated Jordan's pattern of behaviour. According to Fleur he was 'absolutely appalled' by Jordan's re-hire. He advised that in relation to Jordan that historically, 'There were a number of issues with him'. It was implied that his sexual misconduct led to his exit from that company, that it 'was the straw that broke the camel's back', alleging,

> We made an excuse for why we were getting rid of him but you know, we weren't going to keep someone like that who was such a big liability and I'm really surprised that 'the company' has rehired him, obviously it's a new CEO.

No one from the Board of Non-Executive Directors to the Management Board were mentioned in Fleur's narrative as raising the governance breaches with Lloyd. This omission of something not done suggests that there was also something done, i.e. active silence and concealment of all these matters. This indicates collusive relations with the CEO in turning a blind eye and denying acknowledgement of the misconduct (Long 2008).

7:4: Impact – Individual

My attempts to understand the traumatic origins of this system and its impact on Fleur often felt obscured by various guises and shifts in her narrative. What was explicitly stated, was a deep sense of good (moral/obedience) and bad (immoral/dissent) in relation to the enacted behaviour. This was most notably a sense of injustice and polarised tensions surrounding the

organisational values. In this Fleur expressed feeling ‘massively disappointed’[28] that the organisation legitimised Jordan’s ‘shameful behaviour’ by allowing him to ‘resign….rather than being fired’. Moreover, he was compensated millions of dollars on his exit. She ‘felt that bad behaviour should not be rewarded and that was a reward for bad behaviour’. Adding,

> His departure was not what his departure should have been about. His departure should have been an opportunity for the bank to say, 'We will not tolerate this kind of behaviour and this kind of behaviour runs across everything we stand for in terms of our values'. But that's not what they did.

Fleur’s expressed her moral condemnation of Jordan as ‘so angry…that the organisation disregarded all the women who had been violated by Jordan’. This was potentially where shame was evoked for Fleur, a manifestation of hidden or repressed rage towards the CEO for the loss of stability within the organisation, directed at Jordan. Given Fleur’s idealisation of Lloyd, it may be that she was ashamed of being ashamed of him. To acknowledge this, was possibly too catastrophic to conceive. Hidden shame was also conveyed as, ‘I thought of all the women that he had harassed and disrespected and I thought 'Well what would they be bloody thinking!’. In this account, Fleur was possibly imagining the negative image this had in the eyes of these women, as well as external others. It’s conceivable in this experience that Fleur, in a rapid sequence, first felt shame (in the guise of disappointment) then anger at the executive, then possibly guilt about feeling angry with the executive (Scheff & Retzinger 2001). An unconscious downward spiral in which she felt disrespect and anger for the organisations/Lloyd’s unconfronted shame, which was left unresolved and subsequently displaced onto Jordan.

Disappointment seemed to merge with feelings of hidden shame, in that it was experienced as both as failure of self (though not explicitly stated, it was implied she did not live up to the expectations of others/women) and as perceived failure of others (executive did not live up to her expectations in upholding organisational values). Fleur’s expression of disappointment denoted that she may have previously perceived the organisation’s stability and positivity as idealised and then experienced realisation of leadership’s failure and imperfection (Clancy, Vince & Gabriel 2012).

[28] Disappointment can be seen as a shame marker or code for Fleur’s accusation of Jordan’s deficiency and unworthiness of belonging to the organisation. According to Kaufman (1996) the expression of disappointment occurs ‘whenever expectations are thwarted…shame is also activated’ (p.31).

These tensions appeared to split Fleur's sense of self into a duality of polarised affective states – good and bad. These were expressed as admiration (of Lloyd's achievements) and disgust (of Jordan's conduct), love (of the organisation) and anger (hatred of the double standards); as well as achievement (successful cultural transformation of the organisation) and disappointment (sense of helplessness for the victims and, in relation to the exiting of Jordan, denial of issues and concealing reality). My assumption is that this led to a pervasive sense of failure, in not being able to protect the victims of sexual harassment amongst her leadership cohort. The splits I believe paralleled her experience of the system dynamics:

> You could feel it because of...because of how strong the opposite feeling was, as well, right. You could feel the pull and the push, the tension pulling either way. Um, I mean this topic, this issue; this man divided the bank in a way I've never seen an organisation divided. Um, and never since.

Fleur's narrative often touched the edges of what I came to understand as unspeakable and unknowable shame and humiliation (Bollas 1987; Orange 2011). I wonder if this was often under the guise of others' experience, a duality, to which she unconsciously merged her own experience with a representation of the 'others' experience:

> All these females if you like right, that somehow seemed marginalised by this process um, as a consequence of the ears being turned the other way. There were you know, a whole lot of women, young women, vulnerable women who clearly felt that this was intolerable behaviour. Um, so I mean in a way it was…. it's painful. I mean it was you know, it's painful to turn your ear the other way. Um, but it's also painful for the people who are victims of such a process I think.

This merging of Fleur's own and others' experience was reflected metaphorically in a phrase she used to describe the red ears in her drawing, stating, 'It's painful to turn your ear the other way'. This suggests a sense of shame in distancing herself from the organisation's failure to protect these victims and yet, complicit in concealing these failures. It drew me back to an excerpt in her narrative, describing the experience of being in Jordan's presence in a meeting where she 'found it very hard to have any eye contact with him'. It was as if he was a hostile observer (Steiner 2011; Yarom 2015). In this, it may be that she was unconsciously pointing to the difficulty she had in 'identifying in the shame experience' (Lewis, 1971, p. 196): Her verbal expression of this was 'I just couldn't look him in the eye. It just repulsed me almost you know. So I didn't cope very well (laughs) on that side of things'.

Fleur's admission of her inability to cope may indicate her discomfort of feeling shame. Her looking away from Jordan is characteristic of denial. Looking away or 'gaze aversion' is

understood as an unconscious defence against looking (Lewis, 1971). I wonder if Fleur feared her innermost thoughts being exposed. Her expression of repulsion or disgust may also have possibly been an unconscious concealment of sexual arousal. According to Sanderson (2015, p. 133), it is not uncommon for women to be pressured in various cultures to produce overt displays of sexual modesty, as evidence they are not aroused. Generally the means is through reduced and measured gestures, language, dress and behaviour. Did she phantasise or muse about the pleasure of a sexual relationship with Jordan? Did these thoughts arouse her? Were my fantasised thoughts of what was playing out in the 'private theatre' of Fleur's mind another countertransference phenomenon to a shame reaction (Lewis 1971, p. 218). In taking this line of thought then Fleur's inability to look at Jordan and the feeling of repulsion may have been a fear of being overpowered with disgust at the possibility of being aroused by such an immoral/taboo person (Nathanson, 1994). I base this conjecture on my somatic countertransference reaction to Fleur's expression of disgust toward Jordan. I found myself awkwardly aroused, with a sense of perversion in allowing my thoughts to wander. I found myself feeling and thinking lurid thoughts on whether Fleur secretly wanted Jordan to desire her and whether she felt rejected, because he made no advances on her; this possibly triggering in her unconscious envious rage. It felt deliciously salacious; I wondered if perhaps Fleur had felt aroused by Jordan. However, in realising the arousing affects he had on her, perhaps shocked her and made her feel cognitively dissonant. I imagined the disgust she felt was possibly denied and consumed by self-loathing in realising she felt erotic strivings for Jordan. I then wondered if this was her emotional reaction, was it her somatic countertransference experience of his sexual desire for her, but that this reality was obfuscated by her unacknowledged shame.

Avoidance of eye contact may have been an avoidance of an 'activation of shame' (p. 315). The inadequacy Fleur felt, I further contend is denoted in the use of the word 'repulsed'; a linguistic expression of shame that is associated and synonymous with disgust (Rahm 2006). I consider this word as a cue to detect shame that was in disguise, and possibly denoted in Fleur's observation of Jordan being 'unworthy'. Further, Fleur's hidden shame may be evident in the slight laugh that accompanied her description of her acute feelings toward Jordan. The laughter possibly being an unconscious release of the discomfort for feeling the shame, and a mechanism to free herself from the shame. Alternatively, the laughter may indicate that her shame reaction was at odds with herself, in that shame involves the image of self being an 'oddity' (Lewis 1971, p.202). It was as if she attempted to rationalise it by trivialising the shame. This in itself maybe an additional source of shame, being ashamed of being ashamed (DeYoung 2015; Lewis 1971; Nathanson 1987).

Furthering this thinking it may be that Fleur's denial of shame was shame functioning underneath guilt ideation (Lewis 1971); her helplessness in not being able to protect the victims in her leadership cohort. This was alluded to as;

> I actually have always had...I've always felt that the weaker must be protected and um, this was an example of vulnerable graduates and vulnerable people at the bottom of the organisation like PA's and so on...whose career depended on very senior people, being exploited or being bullied, or being harassed, or being taken advantage of, and I felt deeply offended by um, sort of not being able to help them, you know. Um...so it was a very difficult time for me, yeah.

And still further, her repetitive ruminations during the interview regarding leadership failings may indicate that she struggled to identify with her sense of self in the shame experience (Lewis 1971). Though she explicitly declared Jordan's transgressive behaviour, naming it three times in her narrative as 'shameful', she was unable to identify her own experience as shame. This is evidenced in the last few minutes of the interview when Fleur spoke of how she felt it necessary to keep her genuine experience to herself:

> I mean it was very traumatic for everyone involved. It was traumatic not just for me but also for a lot of women who were involved in it. Um, the only thing I would say is that as a senior woman, and there weren't many senior women in the company, I had to really be careful that I didn't sound like this whinging female. Um, I needed to...I needed to not sound partial to the cause of women, and so I was constantly conscious of making sure that my voice counted, but for the right reasons if you know what I mean?

The shock (disturbance) discharged through the system in the aftermath of the transgressions, seemed to escape Fleur's understanding of how deeply it affected her. At the extreme end of the spectrum this could also be indicative of a dissociative state. Nevertheless, her traumatic memories appeared unconsciously hidden in the non-verbal elements of her voice (tone, pauses and speech rate), transference phenomenon between us and in her system drawing. However, her declarations of feeling 'disappointment' in response to Lloyd's failing ('blemish') and 'revulsion' or disgust towards Jordan's sexually gratuitous (inadequacy) behaviour, were inherent shame cues. Yet a prominent feature of this case was Fleur's attempt to dismiss the trauma and downplay the number of people who knew about the transgressions. In the follow up meeting when asked specifically to clarify who knew about the transgressions,[29] she stated,

[29] Fleur contradicted herself in this meeting. At first she stated the approximate number who knew about the transgression to be around 20-30 people. However, later in the meeting while outlining who knew within the

> Amongst the executive group there were probably hundreds of senior executives of which maybe only a tenth would have known what was happening, except for some of the women that he had harassed...it wasn't...yeah...so just thinking about it...it wasn't like a major drama, it was something that was quite hidden in the organisation.

In saying that the transgressions were 'no major drama' could have been a dismissive ploy, an 'affect management script' (Nathanson, 1994, p. 379) to draw me away from her case and by positioning it as not worthy of interest (Nathanson 1994). Simultaneously it may also be an indicator that our interaction in this meeting triggered much emotional pain. On closer exploration I consider this another marker of shame.

7.5: Impact – System

Fleur's illustration in her drawing, of the system as a cancerous sun was a profound representation of a system contaminated by shame. I came to associate this image as the system as an organ (isation) of shame: a doubled experience of shame that involved both the self (Fleur/Internal system) and an imagined or real other (Non-Bank/External Other). The system's shame both shaped and was shaped by the cultural and social dimensions of the banking system. Internally, the system attempted to protect against various ethical and moral violations of the inner boundaries and of sensitive areas of the system (executive/management board) that didn't want to be subject to /was unable to tolerate, exposure. The defensive response to shaming on the system, I can only assume, was caused by historical traumatic events. This is suggested by representation of infected generations symbolised by the dotted lines in Fleur's system drawing, which I associated with as the spread of shame that went beyond the individual (Jordan) to infect entire functions and generations within the system that had profound societal and cultural resonances.

Though Jordan was blamed for corrupting the organisational values and in turn, the culture, the impact on the system appeared to be its failure in its striving for perfection (financial performance) and inability to live up to its own moral codes (Rohan et al., 2014). I argue that Jordan unconsciously took up the designated role of 'dis-eased' (bad/immoral) on behalf of the system and was scapegoated by 'untainted' (good/moral) parts of the system, and furthermore was blamed collectively and unconsciously, for the system's hedonistic attitude

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organisational structure, it extended beyond the senior executive group, including some of the senior executive direct reports, victims, some of the victims' managers, certain members of two international divisions in the range of 20-30 employees and the function that Jordan led, which in itself amounted to approximately 250 employees.

and practices. I contend that this enabled the system to deny anxiety of its contamination of shamelessness and defend against exposure (Long 2008). These moral codes were symbolised by the tightly held belief in the organisational values, established as part of the cultural transformation program some years prior to Jordan's re-hire and perceived by Fleur as sacred[30]. It was as if the program miraculously redeemed and cleansed the system of its legacy of past quite public hedonism: 'It was very clear what its external reputation was and how it was seen'; thereby, restoring it into a harmonious whole that kept the scrutiny of the external 'other' at bay (Kelley-Lainé 2014). Fleur reflected this illusionary belief, in the context of individuals' strict adherence to the program norms:

> The business would only transform if individuals transformed themselves and that if enough people transform themselves...so we put twenty thousand people through 'the program' right, it cost a fortune but if you put a critical mass of people through 'the program' that it will fundamentally change the organisation and it can never go back to what it was before.

I contend Lloyd's actions in hiring Jordan activated a major seismic reaction[31], repressed by the executive group as a defense against intolerable feelings relating to cataclysmic failure and betrayal of sacred values. The shock was so disturbing that it ruptured the social bonds of the executive group, thereby wiping out or repressing memory of Lloyd's fault (Long 2008; Scheff 2003). This experience seemed to parallel the image of Fleur's drawing, in which she drew a black hole in the sun. Fleur interpreted this image as a rain cloud and the tears as rain, symbolising 'disappointment', 'frustration', 'exasperation' and the black lines 'pessimism'. My association was of a crying eye.

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[30] Critical to this case, yet hardly spoken of by Fleur during the interview, was the context of the culture transformation program. The program, as revealed by Fleur in the follow up meeting, incorporated a series of exercises that ranged from 'a-tension, intention, staring into someone else's eyes for half an hour, to walking across the field blindfolded…to personal clearings of long held tensions we had with each other'. Consequently, "everyone had their 'X' moment", implying they were reformed. My association was of cult-like edicts based on selectively conflated psychological and philosophical techniques. I assume the premise of the change program was to 'influence' followers into believing the doctrines as transformative. Within a two year period twenty thousand employees undertook the program. This seems to me, highly questionable from an ethical perspective in regard its cult like characteristics. I wondered whether Fleur, consciously and/or unconsciously omitted these details in the first interview so that I could not scrutinise and reject the change program's validity, or perhaps in anticipation of deference to such a scrutiny that may trigger shame.

[31] This was downplayed by Fleur as a "blip" in the follow up meeting, which is a complete contrast to the interview, where she used strong language such as Lloyd being "flawed".

I played with the notion of the black hole being a ‘psychic hole’ or a black hole of despair and a location of the system’s hidden shame and humiliation related to old legacy. Further, the image appeared to symbolise a ‘dis-eased’ eye, perhaps representative of the system’s incapacity to see; its blind eye or blind faith or possibly the ‘evil eye’ of the observing object (Steiner 2011; Yarom 2015). I considered this image as the exposure of hidden truths, through the porous lines of leadership (defective barrier); the systems dread at its failure and possible humiliating ‘collapse of its narcissistic superiority’ (Steiner 2011, p.941).

Likewise, Fleur’s expression of disappointment was possibly representative of the systems/executives projection of disillusionment in Lloyd that could not be consciously expressed (Clancy 2012; Teitelbaum 2007). Symbolised by tears in Fleur’s drawing, this may also denote the felt loss of the broken attachment caused by Lloyd’s betrayal in hiring Jordan; this act a symbolic expression of the ruptured bond (Nelson 1998). Further, the tears were possibly an unconscious representation of the ‘protest, despair and detachment’ (ibid, p. 14) that masked the sense of loss of hope.

Nevertheless, Jordan was subsequently blamed for being the degenerate and creating instability. This was evident in Fleur’s reference to the system’s specialness as she reflected on her system drawing:

> There was this incredible magic in the organisation but there was this one blemish, one black spot that somehow the magic just couldn't permeate, and in hindsight now I know it's because he was pretty much a ‘X group’ boy.

Fleur’s reference to ‘incredible magic’ indicated that the system was possibly caught in a narcissistic illusion of itself, in its ‘attempt to retain the illusion of their own magnificence’ (Teitelbaum 2007, p. 218). This was also reflected in her system drawing as the illustration of the sun that for Fleur represented ‘the ‘change’ experience and the optimism and the excitement and personal change’, and was characterised by Fleur as:

> There was this incredible sort of euphoria that ‘the program’ was getting um, getting a reputation globally, people were coming from all over the world to understand what it is we were doing that was different and would scratch their heads going away thinking ‘Well you know, how do you get people to walk across a field blindfolded?' right...it just doesn’t make business sense.

Conformity seemed implicitly mandated in program participation and in role modelling values. According to Fleur ‘The values of this organisation were very clearly stated. They were on

screen savers, they were on um, mouse mats, they were everywhere - they were on key chains, they were on cups on our tables etc. etc'. This expectation may have been reinforced by Lloyd's charismatic leadership, with tacit group pressure and a 'system of social sanctions' (Scheff 1988,p.395). Reward was elevation in status and hubris attained through public acclaim, with punishment being expulsion from the system. Fleur disclosed,

> A third of the people had been shown the door of the senior executives. A third of the top hundred had been shown the door. A third had sort of totally evolved and transformed personally and then a third were being given additional development - so there was a mark two of 'the program' and about a third of those people were promoted from within. Um, so...to replace the people who had left. So there was an entire large scale renewal of leadership in the organisation.

This can be seen as the defense of homogenisation of the system (Hopper 2003; Turquet 1974b), which may have been another form of unacknowledged shame: the individual's loss of self.

The insight of expulsion of a third of the workforce ('unwanted identities') was only revealed during the follow up meeting with Fleur. On hearing this disclosure, I felt the system had been taken in by its own fantasy of omnipotence, stability, and being error-free (Gabriel 1999); measuring its self-worth based on the judgement of external others, and represented in Fleur's glorification as, 'People still talk in a legendary sort of way…and what the CEO achieved'. Lloyd offered the organisation an alternative belief system by way of this program…. perhaps an illusion of hope that exploited emotional cravings of his followers.

Ironically, Jordan refused to participate in the program and evaded indoctrination. This detail was omitted during Fleur's interview, however, shared in the follow up meeting. It speaks to an underlying assumption that Jordan would 'never change' and was 'not congruent with the 'program' values'. That Jordan did not participate, is possibly an unconscious expression of autonomy that was more about what the system avoided than of Jordan.

Further repression may be seen in Lloyd's re-hiring Jordan being considered as a 'blemish' or 'blip'. This reductionist language seemed to disguise the system's displaced disgust and anger of Lloyd's wrongdoing. It may have synonymously and unconsciously masked the expression of Lloyd's behaviour as an act of 'corruption' or 'contamination'. I contend that this denial of reality represented the system's inability to identify with their experience of shame in being 'taken in' by Lloyd's charismatic leadership (Teitelbaum 2007).

As noted above, the exposure of Lloyd's 'blemish' was conceivably the point the system ruptured; the organisation's illusionary ideals of perfection shattered causing shock, confusion and disbelief. This was denoted by the various repetitive ruminations expressed by Fleur (hers and others') of Lloyds hiring decision. These expressions about Lloyd's failure as a 'blemish' may symbolise contamination, possibly stirring belief and fear that failure could/would occur in other areas, for example, a failed outcome of the culture change program. Fleur twice in her narrative conveyed the critical need to not dig into the 'blemish', the first was: 'It was like a sort of festering sore that no one wanted to lance because it was just too dangerous to lance right'.

The other reference was her account of a Management Board Member, 'Xavier', who described Jordan as being 'sick… some sort of sexual pathology'. This statement perhaps is representative of a wish in the Board, as well as the Executives, to dissociate from Jordan. I propose, from a systems theory perspective, Jordan may have taken up a role of a 'depraved narcissist', on behalf of the system (Izod 2016; Obholzer & Roberts 2003), and in doing so, enabling the group to disown this aspect of the system and/or themselves, through the process of projective identification[32]. Xavier's statement may also be an indication of the executive anxieties about a contagion and admission of being infected by perversion. These perversions can be understood as both Jordan's and as being unconsciously projected into Jordan (Lewis 1971).The unconscious nature of the projective processes may have enabled the Executives to deny and hide their own shame.

These words by Xavier about Jordan may also indicate suppressed anger over the loved object, the organisation, with the system failing to see that it had become toxic and contaminated by 'bad' people, for example Jordan, who disturbed the institution by seducing others for destructive purposes (Nathanson 1994; Obholzer & Roberts 2003). Xavier's statement also denotes a sense of fear and disgust, overtly towards Jordan, as the problematic perpetrator. However, from a systems perspective, unconsciously, the choice of the words 'festering sore', 'sick' and 'pathology', signifies this was a shame reaction (disgust) and an aversion to the whole system becoming contaminated by perversion (Obholzer & Roberts 2003; Rahm 2006; Yarom 2017). Fleur further contextualised this as:

[32] Projective Identification from a socio-analytic perspective is where indigestible or intolerable thoughts and feelings of members of a group or possibly an institution as a whole are split off and projected into a recipient of projection. The recipient can be a member on behalf of other members of a group or a group or groups on behalf of the institution as a whole). They unconsciously identify with these feelings and then act them out through organisational/institutional roles, expressing or characterising unwanted feelings that are often out of their awareness (Amir 2018; Long 2008; Obholzer & Roberts 2003).

> In his mind he said, he just couldn't explain it any other way...the 'company' should have recognised it and perhaps suggested that he had therapy or something. That was his explanation.

This assertion perhaps represents the system's perplexity and rumination over the CEO's actions. Nonetheless, it is also suggestive that the executive were immobilised by shame and caught in cognitive processes that replayed the shame events as ruminations[33] (Lewis 1971; Sanderson 2015). The paralysis of immobilisation is possibly characteristic of dissociation, another defence strategy against shame (DeYoung 2015; Dorahy et al. 2013; Knipe 2015; Steele, Boon & van der Hart 2016; Van der Kolk 2015). Similarly, Fleur shared her own perplexed thinking on this matter, which she conveyed in a somewhat censored manner:

> So I have explained it away now in a different way in my own head. I have explained it away as actually being none of that. I have explained it away as the CEO rehiring him against advice, against explicit advice um...re-hiring him and then not wanting to admit or own that he'd made a terrible mistake and so he persevered with the issue hoping it would go away, and it didn't go away.

Moreover, this incident may have been experienced as cataclysmic by the Management Board; in that it was 'a sudden, unexpected, intolerable disappointment in the idealized object' (Kohut, 2013, p. 55). This may also indicate that the system possibly split its identity into polarised dyadic relations of superiority and inferiority, as a wish to hide its anxiety of its immorality (ibid). Perhaps Jordan was unconsciously employed to be the scapegoat or ''bad object' toward which the organisation could direct its acute feelings of disdain, related to its own defectiveness and depravity' (Mravlek 2016, p. 85).

Fleur's reference to the organisation's 'distrust' in describing the transgression (Jordan and his area 'wasn't often liked by the rest of the organisation' and there was a 'distrust' of them) is suggestive of contempt and of an unspoken fear of judgement and devaluing by the (external) other. This was marked in her characterisation of the group's exhibition of grandiose self-worth as 'Those that wear shiny shoes and drive Ferraris and have um, they only look after themselves and all they're there to do is earn big bonuses'. Fleur's focus on their opportunistic behaviour ('me-ness')[34] and materialistic status, may be an envious attack.

[33] Refer to Footnote No. 16 for definition of rumination

[34] (Lawrence 1996)

Though not explicitly expressed, it may also signalled contempt in her judgement of them, possibly as a defence against her own shame (Long 2008; May 2017; Nathanson 1994).

At a system level Jordan's dissent from the cultural transformation program, possibly masked the system's desire for dissent, in having to conform to the new cultural order and in its inability to cope with external pressures. This was feasibly signified in Fleur's observation of the divisions within the system and indicative of it splitting off and projecting unwanted or intolerable parts onto Jordan. She noted: 'I mean this topic, this issue; this man divided the bank in a way I've never seen an organisation divided. Um, and never since'.

7.6: Reflections on Interview

The relational dynamics I encountered in my dealings with Fleur were remarkable compared to other research participants, in particular in relation to the number of countertransference phenomena I experienced in my dealings with her. It began with the scheduling of her interview, which at the time centred on accommodating her hectic work calendar and travel commitments. Several attempts were made to lock in a suitable date. Fleur did not seem too enthusiastic with the premises where I generally conducted the interviews and seemed resolute for the interview to occur at her preferred location. She suggested an exclusive business centre in the central business district. I agreed on the basis that she could obtain a suitable meeting room that enabled confidential discussion. Upon entry, I was struck by the opulent environment and felt highly aroused, almost intoxicated by these surrounds. It was more reminiscent of a five star hotel than a work environment. We were greeted by a woman seated at an elegantly designed, yet bare table. Her role appeared to be more concierge than an administrative assistant. I was directed to a chair whilst she informed Fleur of my arrival. As I sat there, I was drawn in and felt consumed by an enormous landscape painting positioned before me. The subject matter portrayed a raging bushfire, with a lone diminutive figure fighting the fire[35]. Fleur appeared from another area on the floor and proceeded to guide me to a quiet area.

Expecting a typical meeting room that accommodated up to four people, I was surprised that the room we were assigned was tucked in a corner with no door, only a glass partition. I felt

[35] On reflection, my association of the raging fire was of shame anger or narcissistic rage that permeated through the system. The lone figure representing Lloyd (and possibly Fleur), confronted with the impossibility of the task of extinguishing this inferno (organisational failures) and the deep sense of isolation in carrying the burden. The rest of the system was hidden in an invisible state, avoiding and incapable of acknowledging its shame. Like this painting, Lloyd was immortalised through lore and in an amplified picture of heroism.

exposed and anxious that our conversation would be overheard. A tiny square table pushed up against a window faced the street. I had a momentary sense of panic, concerned about the potential breach of confidentiality boundaries. Quickly scanning the area, I was relieved to observe that no one was in the vicinity. Not wanting to create a scene or defer the interview (as rescheduling would be problematic), I decided to proceed. Curious about the dynamics that were playing out, I allowed for things to emerge. I sat diagonal to Fleur at the table, whilst she faced the window directly. My vision was peripheral to both the activities outside the building and my vision of Fleur.

Approximately forty-five minutes into the interview, Fleur completed her system drawing that symbolised the image of a sun. Some fifteen minutes later, as she shared her interpretation of the images, sunlight beamed through the window directly into our eyes. Blinded, I shifted my chair to move away from the direct glare of the sun (brilliance) and asked Fleur if she wanted me to close the blinds, which she declined. Intrigued that she was happy to sit in the sun glare, I noted this phenomenon and wondered what this represented of Fleur's experience of the system in connection to the images drawn. Reflecting on this, I wondered if she had been caught in the radiance of seduction that may have affected her visibility of the system's transgressive culture? Did she allow the system to blind her vision in the expectation of obedience? Why did she allow herself to be subject to pain/discomfort of the system's glare/gaze? Was this indicative of the system's attempt to stop things from being seen? On reflection, my conjecture is that Fleur needed my gaze to grasp the pain and shame of being seduced by the system. I believe my gaze was needed to record her now-exposed feelings.

The second key phenomenon that played out during the interview was at a point when I asked Fleur if the transgressions influenced her decision to leave the organisation[36]. During this dialogue, police sirens wailed in the background. Alarmed by the disturbance, this heightened my curiosity about her response. Not wanting to question the validity of what she shared with me, I noted my scepticism of her claims in not knowing the timing of restructuring her role. This happened in synchronicity with the siren at its peak volume. I considered this passage as a marker to the impact on Fleur and perhaps her defence strategy to 'withdraw', severing her attachment to the organisation:

[36] Fleur left the organisation 12 months after this incident was at its height. A public document (identifying citation withheld) revealed how the succeeding CEO disbanded the cultural transformation program and those involved in its facilitation made redundant.

> So I'd started formulating that notion already and I started making some specific, taking some specific steps to prepare myself for exit right (police sirens can be heard faintly in background)…Um, and I did a few things like got myself trained up as an ontological coach and I did quite a lot of things during that twelve months. Because I knew that at some stage, I didn't know the timing (police sirens now blaring very loudly in background)...But, what then happened is there was a restructure and I saw that as an opportunity to say to my boss 'I'd like to go but I'd like a package'. And so, what he did was he effectively restructured my role, broke it into two um, and made me redundant basically (Police sirens fade very quickly and sounds stop)…So the role was divided up and um, my direct reports took those roles.

I felt unconvinced by this rationale for the visceral reaction it triggered within me and thought it conceivably a guise, to protect hidden shame that was possibly the impetus for her departure. I can only speculate that my question re-triggered shame of her severed attachment with the beloved organisation and the rationale perhaps sheltered her image in how she perceived that I would see or judge her (Yarom 2015). This led me to question the extent to which her pride (reputation and status) had been 'infected' by the contamination of the toxicity that had permeated the organisation.

The third key phenomenon transpired during the follow up meeting. During the first half of the meeting I had questions of clarification for Fleur, as well as sharing with her some initial thoughts on identified themes and working hypothesis that touched on the system's idealisation of Lloyd. Fleur seemed opposed to this notion and proceeded to correct my understanding on the extent to which the transgression was known across the organisation. Her change in position was quite notable. Referring to Jordan's transgressions as 'indiscretions', she proceeded to underscore the breadth and depth of awareness, as 'there was a very, very small number of people who knew what was happening and they were generally at the top of the organisation'. This was correct in terms of an organisation that employed approximately twenty thousand employees. However, in response to my further questioning, when she worked through who knew across which levels, it amounted to nearly three hundred people, if not more.

I felt slighted and questioned myself how she now reduced knowledge to a small circle of Executives. I sensed the tension between us and found myself becoming highly annoyed when I attempted to reiterate back to Fleur what she shared in the interview. Her sudden change felt like a huge backflip and I feared I had made a terrible error in my analysis of the data she presented in the interview. I noted my distress and anger, wondering how this could have happened. Paranoid, I found myself fantasising that someone from within her networks

connected to this institution (that knew of her participation) had got to her and warned her off revealing any truths.[37]

Staying with the emotion, the thought crossed my mind that my intense emotional reaction was possibly a countertransference phenomenon of Fleur's shock at confronting the notion of being caught in idealisation.[38]. Acutely aware of my emotional reactions I noted a shift occur in my acknowledgement of this. The tension between us seemed to immediately dissolve and Fleur revealed other aspects about the organisation not previously discussed, most notably the culture transformation program and how much it had impacted the institution, and in particular, the revelation of her prior knowledge of Jordan:

> I knew what Jordan was like and why we'd got rid of him in the first place so in my mind it was...I just knew what he was like. I mean I was horrified that he was actually re-hired.

On leaving the meeting and farewelling Fleur I received a BBC news alert on my phone informing me that 'Charles Manson Dies at 83 After Four Decades in Prison' (https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-42016704). This bulletin validated my thinking regarding the system's blind faith in the cult of transformative leadership.

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[37] During the follow up meeting Fleur was emphatic about the points of view she presented, stating 'my interpretation, not the company's interpretation' or similar words to that effect. This she had not done so during the first interview. Phenomenally, on 30 November 2017 the federal government publicly announced to undertake a banking royal commission in 2018. This was ten days after I met with Fleur. A credible news broadcaster headlined this change (reference removed because of identifiability), as the Prime Minister backflip on banking royal commission after leading banking institutions call for inquiry to restore public faith. It seemed to parallel my experience of the follow up meeting with Fleur.

[38] The enactment that played out between us conceivably mirrored the impact of Lloyd's failings in hiring Jordan on the executive; the realisation that Lloyd had failed in not living up to their expectation. My anger was possibly part at least hers/their anger, in response to the affective experience of humiliation. My sense of humiliation was in part possibly Lloyds/theirs/hers. Of note, was an article I found in a leading Australian newspaper (Reference removed because of identifiability). The journalist had interviewed Lloyd in relation to the current attitude towards banking and its relations with the community. He reported on Lloyd's proclamation of shame he felt of the sectors soiled reputation, contrary to a bygone era when the bank manager was a revered leader of the community. Stated further, in the article as advocating that, "The focus of management should be on superior performance over the long-term, while producing acceptable rather than superior returns in the short run". The language used by Lloyd signifies his identification and emotional response to disappointment. This may be conscious or unconscious.

7.7: Main Themes

The central theme in this chapter is of concealing shame, and the compensatory defences to ensure this concealment. The data indicates the organisational system was compelled to hide inner realities from others, internally across the system and from the gaze external other. Key elements of this include: the system turning away; concealing truths; apportioning blame; and denial to see and to know which internal and external sanctions (policies/process/agreements) machinated to keep the system from looking at and acknowledging shame. There were many non-representations or omissions and silences that served as oppression (Kaufman, 1996). I took these to be concealment of shame. As part of this, women are condemned to a shame status within the organisation. The elements presented in this section are identified from Fleur's narrative and system drawing, and from my reflections of the interview and follow up meeting. Each characterises key defensive strategies as sub themes:

(7.7.1) Concealment – Omissions, Secrecy, Deception, Blame, Invisibility, Obfuscation and Hiding.

(7.7.2) Compensation – Narcissism including Narcissistic Rage and Vindictiveness, Grandiosity, Perfectionism, Hubristic Pride, and Manipulation

(7.7.3) Disillusionment – Illusion, Idealisation, Disillusionment, Disappointment, Sense of Failure, Hopelessness and Repetition Compulsion.

7.7.1: Concealment

Intrinsic to the concept of shame is the notion of concealment or hiding. Within this case, I contend concealment was used as a defense strategy, to keep secret the intolerable feelings related to a flawed sense of self (individual and system) and to avoid relational contexts that may expose inadequacy or inferiority that in turn may lead to further rejection (Morrison 1989; Lansky 2005). Concealment is identified in the following sub-themes:

7.7.1.1: Omissions

Omission was a protective strategy employed by the executive, including Fleur, to control behaviour and avoid shame. This can be evidenced in the Lloyd's decision not to include HR in the hiring decision of Jordan, as well as Fleur's omissions during the interview about the culture transformation program that surfaced in the follow up meeting. Regarding Jordan, Fleur shared an example where she stopped inviting him to public events. This was akin to a wife/partner whose husband/partner has a sexual addiction issue, preventing him from harassing other young women. This was evident in her following comments:

> I stopped inviting him to events… because I didn't...I felt the risk was too great. So I just dropped him from invitations. Which would have been very obvious to people, because he was so senior. Sometimes I would go out of my way to find out when he was out of the country to organise those events, so that I didn't have to not invite him. So at a...in a formal sense I coped in that way.

Fleur's efforts to control Jordan's behaviour appeared driven by a belief that it was in her power to stop his sexual harassing behaviour. Her obsession of protecting the integrity and purity of women within the system from being contaminated by Jordan, may be symptomatic of the shame she vicariously experienced in the system (Lewis, 1971).

7.7.1.2: Secrecy

Secrecy was employed to avoid shame and conceal truth from others for fear of being harshly judged, rejected or punished. In this case, the management board went to great lengths to hide the truth surrounding Jordan's appointment, misconduct and his exit. Fear of exposure prevented the executive, and thereby the system, from expressions of authenticity (True Self). Secrets were used as mechanisms to preserve and hide reality through compliance with environmental demands (Winnicott 1960a). This was expressed as:

> Um, and by the way, I'm probably one of the few people who knew that twelve out of the fourteen...I mean it was not minuted in any board meeting but one of the board members who was there, one of the management board members who was there actually told me much later what had happened and the nature of the conversation. It was never recorded. So possibly I am one of the very small handful of people who knew this happened.

Another element to keeping secrets was avoidance. The difficulty conveyed in the excerpt below, evidences this avoidance and also shows a fear of retribution. This reinforces Long and Sievers (2013) argument that there is risk in 'disclosing the organisational secret that everyone knows but cannot acknowledge. The organisational whistle-blower is bullied and often fired' (p.132):

> Truth...people find it very difficult to speak the truth to power and I think this was a classic example of that. Um, it's easier to turn a blind eye. Um, because it's more comfortable. Um...(pauses)...

7.7.1.3: Deception – Masking Reality

According to Fleur's narrative, misleading falsehoods or distortions of truth were orchestrated and conveyed publicly, to possibly avoid condemnation from the external market, as well as internally (Lewis 2018). This misrepresentation of facts, the concealment of leadership failures,

may have also been a way of saving face through various distortions (cognitive and behavioural) to avoid shame at all cost (Ho 1976; Kohut 2009). To Fleur, masking reality seemed fraudulent. She expressed this as:

> When I left they were faffing around, trying to find a way of exiting him. So I knew when I left that he was um, potentially going to be exited, but it took another twelve months for the organisation to find the moral courage to do it. But even then masked it as a performance issue, which I think was the wrong, the wrong decision.

In relation to the facts surrounding Jordan's dismissal:

> See...none of that came into the public domain. None of his abusive behaviour actually got surfaced. Eventually it was settled out of court over um, lack of clarity about performance and therefore settled.

7.7.1.4: Blame

It can be understood that Fleur's, as well as the Executive's ('good others') preoccupation with solely blaming Jordan (protagonist/bad other) and his department served to displace their anger and fear of loss. The bad other became 'an object of hatred' (Long, 2008, p. 212). In doing so, they shifted the focus of responsibility away from Lloyd, the management and governance boards for the wider systemic issues. Their incapacity to acknowledge their own errors and displaced rage possibly denoted a fear of punishment or being attacked. By displacing the fear of attack on the 'bad others', enabled the executive to avoid the system's dysfunction, as well as hide their own. This found expression as:

> I think he didn't know how to behave in such a senior role reporting to the CEO because when he left he was two levels down from the CEO. So I think it was kind of quite interesting case actually of you know, promoting people who are not culturally in tune with the organisation and certainly this guy wasn't.

and

> He was a classic kind of 'command, control' type leader. Very unskilled, very old fashioned, what I say is the only thing that matters kind of thing. So no one's going to tackle a leader like that.

7.7.1.5: Invisibility - Don't See Me

Non-verbal elements of Fleur's speech are identified as shame cues that seemed to parallel the system's desire to conceal hedonistic energy in and of the system. This became evident during the interview when Fleur conveyed Jordan's exploits. I noted my excitement levels

increase, with a desire to know more. This stirring of pleasure was in stark contrast to the cadence of Fleur's speech. In describing the issues Fleur was quite measured, speaking at a slow pace. Yet, I found myself wanting her to accelerate the pace of what she was revealing regarding the video of Jordan's sexual act and the organisation's knowledge of this. It felt voyeuristic, self-indulgent and in the midst of a highly taboo space.

It dawned on me that my reaction was possibly a countertransference phenomenon of Fleur's felt experience of the organisation's reaction to the video; my high energy representing the hedonistic energy of the system and her low energy representing the affect of shame that may have been intolerable to Fleur as such had to be concealed (DeYoung 2015). Fleur referred to the video incident within fifteen minutes of the interview commencing and within forty-five minute period, cited it eight times in her dialogue. DeYoung (2015) citing Schore (2012), refer to this type of phenomenon as a 'parasympathetic affect of shame', in which there is a 'misattunement' of arousal states (high and low) in the 'intersubjective field' between the self and other (p.41).

The moments of Fleur's shift of energy to a low arousal state was possibly her energy being withdrawn or dissociated into a 'don't see me' state, This low arousal state is conceivably a defence to protect her from more 'shame assaults' on her sense of cohesion, as well as to repress the experience; to 'keep memories and experiences of acute emotional pain completely out of her conscious awareness' (DeYoung 2015, p. 42). I believe the culture transformation program symbolises the system's high arousal state and the low arousal state was the slowness of response to managing Jordan out of the system, evidenced in the following: 'People continued to talk about how shameful this was and how slow the bank acted'

and

> So there are two issues with this: one was the, the slowness with which the organisation was willing to act on an issue of values I think. And the second was the way in which the whole thing was covered up to look like a...look like it was just an ordinary departure of a senior executive?

7.7.1.6: Obfuscation

The data suggests obfuscation was a diversionary defence mechanism employed by the system to conceal, keep information or understanding of situation more difficult to see or understand. This was expressed by Fleur:

> And I think it was just people trying to, trying to reconcile in their own minds what was really irreconcilable really. You know, and we try and do that don't we - when we're so confused we try

> and sort of reconcile almost in a stupid way you know, kind of trying to make sense of this world that no longer makes sense.

and

> Everyone made different interpretations. So when I talk about confusion, I'm referring to being confused about the organisation's response rather than their own…Being confused about what such a, a role model of an organisation would act in this way that was so totally incongruent with the public perception of it (Laughs). You know, I mean...um, yeah.

7.7.1.7: Hiding – Psychic/ Black Hole

'Hiding' was epitomised by Fleur's drawing of the 'black hole', which, to me, represented the location of the system's shame or source of shame, hidden and protected behind four tiers of leadership (symbolised by the dotted lines). The black hole and tears possibly denoted the system falling into an abyss of depression. This was expressed by Fleur as: 'I drew these as rain clouds, but also they could be tears right...I mean there was a lot of pain associated with this guy'.

The tears that to me looked nothing like rain clouds possibly signal the system's despair of its inferiority being exposed. Additionally, Fleur's depiction of the 'black hole' in her drawing may denote a metaphoric black eye; with the black eye symbolising the organisation's loss of respect and the tears reflecting the acute pain felt by the system in how it may be perceived externally.

7.7.2: Compensation

The affect of shame is central to the problem of narcissism, hubristic pride, grandiosity and perfectionism, which are related phenomenon and considered as compensatory defences. These defences were seemingly enacted by Lloyd and Jordan (who can be seen as symbolically representing the split in the emotional functioning on behalf of the system) to protect the system from any further experiences of shame (Scheff 2003).

From a systems perspective, this may be the experience of failing to live up to internalised standards (financial excellence and moral codes), the struggle with the sense of self, as defective and inferior. Arguably, Lloyd and Jordan connected implicitly with these compensatory characteristics that were personified in their roles and perhaps drawn to these

positions, to neutralise feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. These roles would then allow them and the system to feel brilliant, superior, special, venerated, envied and powerful.

7.7.2.1: Narcissism

Narcissism as a defence can be seen in excessive focusing on the self that is in opposition to shared organisational values (social norms). For example, Jordan's and Lloyd's focus on individual and system wide implementation of the culture change program versus Investment Banking, Jordan's area of work. Some key expressions of narcissism used to avoid shame included lowering standards and regulations to ensure one's own success, bypassing of policies, overestimation of achievement, excessive need for admiration, a sense of entitlement, exploiting towards others, lack of empathy and blaming others for failure (this was mainly evident in management board members) (Chasseguet-Smirgel 1984; Kohut 2009; Long 2008; Long & Sievers 2013). These narcissistic attitudes appeared in the system culture of Investment Banking, as well as at individual level (Jordan) with each influencing the other in a recursive loop. As noted by Fleur:

> Oh just generally you know, in banking um, the bulk of the bank tends to see investment bankers as those that wear shiny shoes and drive Ferraris and have um, they only look after themselves and all they're there to do is earn big bonuses. So there's this kind of, in all banks, it's not just this particular bank; in all banks there's always been a dislike for investment bankers. And of investment bankers (sic). So this was the broader context in which this story sits. So to then have someone who emulated everything that was bad (starts laughing) about investment banking...

As an expression of a metaphoric family role, Fleur considered Jordan to represent an older male sibling:

> An elder brother that was such an abusive character, and wielded so much power in the family that somehow no one including the parents were prepared to challenge him on it. Um, and all the weaker siblings just sort of let it go, if you know what I mean.

7.7.2.1.1: Narcissistic Rage

I contend the drawing of the eye within the sun illustrates characteristics of unidentified shame experience within the system (Lewis, 1971). Fleur does not explicitly identify her own or the system's feeling of shame; rather she conveys it as 'seething anger' and 'disappointment'. These can be understood as shame variants relating to the Management Board's denial of Jordan's shameful behaviour (Pincus & Roche 2012). This was expressed as:

> There was this kind of, seething in the organisation that I've never seen anywhere before. And never seen since in fact….It was like, you know, people were angry and um, and disappointed in the organisation and sort of almost felt the organisation was saying one thing were its values, but really when it came to very senior people it was ok um, to turn, turn, turn ones face away.

7.7.2.1.2: Vindictiveness

Symptomatic of narcissism was vindictive behaviour (Campbell & Miller 2011). In this Fleur conveyed Jordan's perceived omnipotence as malicious in nature: 'He was so powerful in the organisation…. his power came not from a positive place'.

And,

> …sort of a power because if people disagreed with him in meetings they eventually found themselves out of a job…. people feared him…and always gave him good news…he created a culture of good news around him.

This suggests that Jordan used a self-regulating style of denying all negative incidents, using aggression to defend against an ego threat (implicit low self-esteem) and concealment of underlying feelings of inferiority by ensuring that people overstated all positive experiences (Tracy 2012). These are all characteristic of shame (Campbell & Miller 2011).

7.7.2.2: Grandiosity

Jordan's grandiosity can be seen as a retreat into a phantasised state of omnipotence. This was exhibited by anti-social behaviour, an exaggerated sense of superiority and exclusivity, exploitive-ness, envy and aggression. Moreover, negative aspects seemed to be projected onto 'others' who were systematically devalued (Campbell & Miller 2011; Pincus & Roche 2012). This was experienced as splits across the system:

> There were two different sorts of people. One that joined in, that um, somehow just joined in the party sort of, the party spirit, the sort of drinking too much, going out to bars, including, by the way, girly bars. Um...so there was kind of one group that joined him in bad behaviour but there was another group that actually avoided him and avoided having anything but a transactional relationship with him. Um, and I knew who they were. I mean I knew who was playing on which side of the...of the um, sort of like in rugby - the 'tackle line'. I knew...I knew which side each one was playing and it often had to do with their own values and their own...the way they interpreted what was happening in the organisation and the dissonance it had created for them.

Dissonance as described by Fleur, was likely to be narcissistic injury, and the use of splitting enables keeping the ambivalence unconscious. These contradictory feelings may have been two forms of narcissism – overt and covert (Gruber 2009; Kernberg 1975; Kohut 1977; Wink 1991).

7.7.2.3: Perfectionism

Perfectionism as a compensatory defence is evidenced in the need to control performance. This saw the system striving to measure itself against overly ambitious goals. By taking on a belief in their own and the organisation's superiority may have compensated for feelings of inferiority and concealed any sense of inadequacy (Hewitt 2017). Failure to meet these expectations evoked intense shame and rage. This is evidenced in Fleur's summation of Lloyd's performance:

> People still talk about this CEO as being a stunning CEO um, in the way he led the bank to recovery, but also presided over twelve years of huge value creation. But they always talk about the one blemish on his record, being this guy (i.e. the rehiring of Jordan). It was almost like 'How does someone so brilliant make such an error of judgment? How is it possible?

and

> I suppose everyone wanted to believe something different. I think everyone wanted...you know we all tend to want to believe the best of people and the best of organisations, the best of the CEO. And because he was such a brilliant CEO, we all wanted to believe that he knew what he was doing in keeping this guy on. So we all wanted to believe that. But we all knew in our heart of hearts that nothing was bloody going to change. Um...so, so what was the organisation caught up in? I think it was caught up in this sort of wanting to believe…believe the success of the organisation - wanted to believe that this was an incredibly successful intelligent organisation. When actually, the evidence at least from this story was that, that the organisation just wasn't...it wasn't living up to what it said it was.

Other expressions that indicted perfectionism are:

> 'The brilliance within the organisation'.
> 'He was such a brilliant CEO'.
> 'He had done the impossible'.
> 'A very large successful bank'.
> 'The external reputation of the organisation…it was seen as a shining light. It was seen as an exceptional example of a well-run bank'.

7.7.2.4: Hubristic Pride

Hubristic pride is characterised by Lloyd's inability to admit his wrongdoing in hiring Jordan. This was considered by Fleur as display of arrogance:

> It was his lack of moral courage um...to somehow own up that he was wrong. Um, but because he didn't...either because he didn't think it was important or he thought the consequences on him personally would be just too great...

In addition, from a systems perspective, hubristic pride is reflected in the organisation's admiration of its own success that came at the expense of corruption of organisational values. This is symbolised in Fleur's system drawing as dollar signs:

> I mean with the dollar signs there was also pride that the bank had been turned around. Um...and...um...yeah I mean I think it was pride really.

7.7.2.5: Manipulation

Manipulation is a technique that it seemed Lloyd and Jordan employed to control others. By diverting focus away from inferior aspects of themselves and the system as a whole, the 'others' focus is kept towards idealised organisational attributes and demonstration of achievement. This is a fundamental characteristic in narcissism in which the exaggerated self 'draws attention away from centrally damaged self-concept' (Nathanson 1992, p. 348). This is evident in Fleur's perception of Lloyd's design of the culture transformation program, which she expressed as 'magical' and which provided a renewed sense of 'optimism'.

Further, manipulation is shown in the activities employed in the culture transformation program. Rituals such as staring into others' eyes and personal clearing were possibly selected by Lloyd to ingrain the 'right values' and produce the perception of a superior organisational identity (Tourish 2013). Fleur spoke of this as follows:

> It was probably the most transformational experience I've ever had, not just professionally but personally and I'm not the only one. It was quite awesome. It was cobbled together by Lloyd. That's why I say he's such a brilliant CEO...but he really gave us permission to play with ideas around personal change and we used a lot of Peter Senge stuff. We used um, there was Yogi that came out from India as well so it was kind of very alternate right.

and

> You get kind of dragged in and pulled along and then as you get pulled along into this vortex of hedonistic fun you sort of forget what you stand for. And that's sort of what happened here right,

> I mean people got...I mean I'm not saying that people did it without being conscious, but there was some sort of unconscious stuff happening there as well. You know people just, if they valued their career they just went along with it you know.

7.7.3: Disillusionment

Disillusionment was experienced as the loss of self-esteem in the individual and the system, and the puncturing of the system's illusionary view of its omnipotence, specialness and invincibility under the leadership of Lloyd. This is represented in sub themes of Illusion, Disillusion, Disappointment and Hopelessness:

7.7.3.1: Illusion

Illusion is a characteristic shown in 'fantasy about the organisation's perfection' (Schwartz, 1990a, p.1), and presented by Fleur in a duality of interpretations. This was evident in the pale yellow images illustrated in her drawing. They epitomised the system's, as well as her own need to preserve and sustain illusion about how stakeholders engaged 'others' including external audiences, such as media, industry peers, to obtain their approval and adulation (Teitelbaum 2007). The 'others' were used as 'agents of the reflection' of the system's specialness. By maintaining this illusionary belief, the system's narcissistic supply of approval and affirmation of adequacy was reinforced. Fleur expressed this in her drawing as:

> The hole is actually a brilliant sun and um, for me that was the external reputation of the organisation. It was seen as a shining light. It was seen as an exceptional example of a well-run bank (laughs). Um...um, and it was big right, I mean it was sort of large and covered the space…and there was no sort of doubt, it was very clear what its external reputation was and how it was seen.

This belief is a stark contrast to the aesthetic of her illustration, which looked dull and faded. Further, illusion of superiority was created through organisational values, which were used as a tool to engender credible demonstrations of ethical practice for the observing others, being the system's internal and external audiences. This illusion enabled Fleur to cultivate the set of beliefs through public displays, both physically as artefacts and behaviourally, that fostered the illusion of moral ideals. This intensified conformity in the pursuit of financial superiority (Tourish 2013):

> The values of this organisation were very clearly ah, stated. They were on screen savers, they were on um, mouse mats, they were everywhere - they were on key chains, they were on cups on our tables etc. etc

7.7.3.2: Idealisation

Idealisation is expressed as the organisation immortalised in memory, of being in a utopian state. It was as if the conception of culture transformation program and Lloyd's leadership were a complete departure from its sullied past; one free from imperfections and moral decay. In regard this Fleur stated:

> People still talk in a legendary sort of way about 'the program' and what the CEO achieved in turning around a bank that was on its knees and about to be acquired with a share price of X dollars....ah, turned it around within four years with a share price of XXX dollars[39].

7.7.3.3: Disillusionment

Disillusionment is expressed as a punctured realisation (loss of illusion) that the system's brilliance was a fantasy. This is reflected in the Fleur's quote under the sub theme of 'Perfectionism' that also speaks to disillusionment. However, disillusionment is evident in Fleur's system drawing in which she associated the mini suns within the sun as 'cancer'. This suggests a 'malignant' reality of the disease or decay of narcissism that had taken hold in the organisation. She described this as:

> An abnormality in a very strong, very positive, very dynamic culture and I think because it was so consistently that way this one thing that really was largely known by a small coterie of executives um, was talked about because it was so unusual in an organisation where everyone had personally transformed you know!?

7.7.3.4: Disappointment

Both Jordan and Lloyd were experienced as traumatic disappointments, who represented the 'idealized parent imago' (Kohut 2009, p. 28). Their omnipotence is symbolised in the image drawn of the chronically 'dis-eased' sun or a 'diseased entity'. The system's 'unsustainable illusions' (Teitelbaum 207, p.172) about Lloyd's capabilities, powers and invincibility, led to the Management Board's realisation of his 'flaws' that emerged from the decision made on 'Jordan's' appointment and subsequent inaction in performance managing him. Lloyd and the system were unable to measure up to aspirations of excellence; ideal self and core company values, that in turn were characterised as deflation and disappointment. In Fleur's words:

[39] Amount withheld to preserve organisational anonymity.

> I think for me what was probably the most disappointing of all was the final excuse for his (Jordan's) departure, was not what his departure should have been about. His departure should have been an opportunity for 'the company' to say, 'We will not tolerate this kind of behaviour and this kind of behaviour runs across everything we stand for in terms of our values'.

and

> It was like, you know, people were angry and um, and disappointed in the organisation and sort of almost felt the organisation was saying one thing were its values, but really when it came to very senior people it was ok um, to turn, turn, turn one's face away.

7.7.3.5: Sense of Failure

Disillusionment is also expressed by Fleur at Lloyd's disregard of the organisational values in the process of hiring Jordan and failure in effectively performance managing his misconduct. These are representative of the system's inability to admit its failings, undermining and fracturing social cohesion, and creating a perception of failed dependency (Retzinger 1995). This is evidenced in the following statement by Fleur:

> Eventually the departure of this individual manufactured as a performance issue. That final discussion um, occurred through the HR director. The CEO didn't call him in and say 'I'm not happy with your performance'. It was my HR director that had to do the deed on the day. And um, it's now public knowledge that that was the case. Because you know, six months later he mounted a challenge to the bank for unfair dismissal. Um, so yeah...

and

> So I have explained it away now in a different way in my own head. I have explained it away as actually being none of that……I have explained it away as the CEO rehiring him against advice, against explicit advice um...re-hiring him and then not wanting to admit or own that he'd made a terrible mistake and so he persevered with the issue hoping it would go away, and it didn't go away.

7.7.3.6: Hopelessness

Hopelessness was experienced as a sense of inevitability, an apathetic resolve that the system would never change. It was the feeling that the system was so broken that the psychic wounds could never be healed; the pain of feeling immobilised, overpowered and fear of annihilation was evident. It was as if it was stuck in the black hole. Fleur stated:

> There were people who tried to call it out but didn't have the skill to do so. There were people who thought 'The consequences for my career are just too great'. And there are people who actually said 'As long as we're making money as a bank does it really matter!?

Further, the sense of hopelessness is captured symbolically in Fleur's system drawing as ear lobes. These isolated body parts representing the experience of acute fragmentation, disconnectedness and loss of cohesion with others across the system. This resulted in the executive feeling 'as if' the situation was hopeless (Brunning 2014).

> The ear lobe. And it was like the ear lobes were all turned the other way (laughs). It was like people were not...people were hearing but not listening to what it meant for the organisation. And it was sort of almost as if the brilliance was somehow making it okay for the organisation to say 'shit happens' or stuff happens you know, and let's not listen about it.

7.7.3.7: Repetition Compulsion

The following excerpts illustrate the 'repetitious compulsion', as coined by Freud (Freud 1920), or obsessive rumination that signalled 're-presented' information about the traumatic experiences that were encountered. This appeared to be enacted in a recursive loop of shame that was kept active in Fleur's, as well as others' minds. This was possibly an attempt to overcome or master feelings and experience that were encoded in memories (Rogers 1987). Expressed by Fleur as:

> I've thought a lot about this incident actually. Not just because of this interview, but it has influenced the way I think about personal change, because people don't...people don't do things, either because they don't think it's important or valuable. In this case someone not calling out that behaviour, either because they don't think it's valuable or important to call it out - or they think that the consequences of calling it out might be dire for them, or their career or the people they love in the organisation. Or, um, they don't call it out because they don't have the skill. Um, in this particular scenario it was sort of all the above really.

and

> I think many of the people that I'm still in contact with who were there at the time um, just shake their heads because they can't explain, they can't reconcile how this could be - with such an incredibly successful 'company.

7.8: Concluding Remarks

The concealment of shame, and its many manifestations, emerged as the main theme of this story. The findings reveal an organisational system deeply stained. The story as told by Fleur seems to contain a preoccupation with particular focus on blaming a single protagonist (bad other or shamed object); this blaming appeared to serve the organisation by allowing its

members to displace their anger and fear of loss in him. The data suggests that in this the system seemed to shift the focus of responsibility for the wider systemic issues away from the CEO, management and governance boards, and that the incapacity to acknowledge their errors, along with the displaced rage, heightened the shame experienced by part of the system. These issues undermined and fractured social cohesion. Misleading falsehoods or distortions of truth were orchestrated and conveyed publicly, to possibly avoid condemnation from the external market, as well as internally. This misrepresentation of facts, the concealment of leadership failures, may have also been a way of saving face through various distortions. My analysis is that the obfuscation of truth was a diversionary defence mechanism employed by the system to conceal information and make the task of understanding of the situation more difficult to see.

7.9: Summary

In this chapter I presented the main theme emerging from the data of Concealing Shame and explored three sub themes of Concealment, Compensation and Disillusionment. A range of contexts within these sub themes were represented and reflected upon, from both subjective and intersubjective standpoints. The following chapter presents the final case study that exemplifies the core defence of Denying Shame, in this three key themes: trauma, humiliation and dissociation, are presented and explored.

Chapter 8: Claudia's Story - 'They Need People Like Us'

8.1: Introduction

This chapter analysis centres on Claudia's Story (Case 2) and explores the theme of 'Denying Shame', arguably enacted through avoidance and dissociative phenomenon. This is considered through cultural scripts of popularity and conformity in which uniqueness/individuality and one's identity is neither recognised nor valued. It is proposed that societal and institutional pressures of valuing popularity, alienate and invalidate those who are different from valued/popular others, and are thus shamed. And further, that to avoid this shame, non-conforming individuals/ non-popularised sub groups, avoid being different or seen as different for fear of being obliterated by the system (Kaufman 1996).

Table 11: Theme generation from Case 2 – Denying Shame

Denying Shame			
	Trauma	**Humiliation**	**Disassociation**
Chapter 8 **Sub Themes**	Traumatic Memory Abandonment Isolation & Depression Anxiety/Worry	Rejection Identity Loss Inferiority/Superiority Objectification Powerlessness Exposure	Detachment Dependency Freeze/Numb Fragmentation Flooding

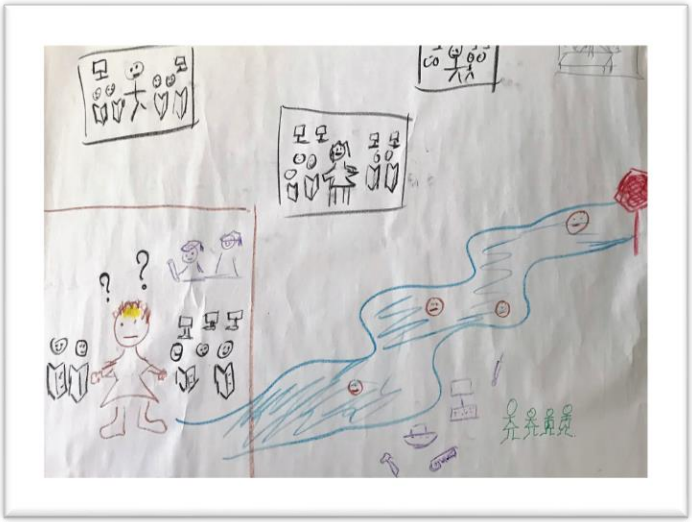

Figure 13: The System

Source: Claudia, Case 2

8.2: The Interviewee

Claudia, a teacher in her mid to late fifties was, at the time of the interview, an academic support lecturer with over twenty years' experience working across a dual sector university in Australia that combines technical and further education (TAFE) with higher education. Though her department was within higher education, the client base she supported was primarily in the TAFE sector of the university. Claudia had a long working history within this sector of the institution, having commenced her tenure there. Her role entailed facilitating English language programs and providing learning support to students, for whom in most cases English was a second language (international and domestic refugees/migrants). The university has diverse origins and many incarnations since it was first established as a technical school in the early 1900's, merging with a number of other technical institutions over its hundred-year life span. As a qualified teacher, Claudia commenced her tenure in a predecessor institution of the university, a metropolitan vocational education system. This was an autonomous institution, originated and developed as parts of government departments. There was a successful push by the state government for the institute to establish itself as a University of Technology, offering both vocational education (VE) and higher education (HE) qualifications across an extended metropolitan region. This expansion involved acquisition of a number of geographically strategic sites across the region, of which Claudia worked in four main campus sites. The university became the largest tertiary provider in the region. However, the following decade saw a reduction in the number of campuses and the formal removal of reference to technology from its name.

8.3: The Transgression

The initial transgression Claudia spoke of was the University's exploitation of entry requirements in lowering Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) scores across the two sectors within the university[40], so that full fee-paying international and refugee students were in Claudia's words, 'being accepted into courses where they don't have the language competence to cope with it'.

Claudia described her experience with the institution's leadership as 'They come from business and they are worried about dollars - it's all they are worried about. Auditing and

[40] The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) is the primary benchmark for entry into most undergraduate-entry university programs in Australia. It was introduced through 2009 and 2010 to replace the Universities Admission Index, The rank gives an indication to the overall position of the student in relation to the student body for that year across the state. A higher ATAR gives preference to that student for the course to which they wish to enrol in a university of their choice. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Tertiary_Admission_Rank

dollars.' This implies that authority figures were no longer institutional leaders with academic backgrounds or understanding of vocational education. She asserted 'They were bringing business managers in to run departments. To get economy working'. Claudia substantiated this further in the interview by stating:

> When I started teaching English in TAFE it was wonderful. It was supportive and collegial...and we all worked together and oh, it was fantastic! We bounced ideas off each other, teaching strategies...

Claudia spoke about how under the new leadership, social bonds within the institution were uncoupled by oppressive measures (Sanderson 2015). This was conveyed in the following.

> I've been there twenty years. And our boss...I had marvellous bosses, but they were teachers who came up through the system and ended up being treated terribly, made redundant, and they had terrible pressures put on them for auditing requirements and it was awful.

Moreover, Claudia believed the emergence of a new business administration had subverted collegial governance of the institution; that their focus on 'money' had created a sense of disconnection and worry across the vocational education sector of the university. She expressed this as, 'We were reminded that our information had to be accurate because if the auditors found any anomalies, there would be significant fines to the University'. When asked about the support Claudia received from leadership, she noted that the last team meeting she attended was a long time ago: 'probably five years ago, was the last like regular one'. It appeared that the only form of communication Claudia had with management was via email: 'We have no meetings. We get told...the only communication my boss has with me is when she decides to cut our time'.

Claudia gave context to the transgression when speaking of the university's struggle for survival to maintain a competitive edge with other institutions around the country. Claudia believed that this competition between universities and other VET institutions was the root cause, the competition '..driving them to accept very low ATAR scores for post-VCE...but also very low language competence scores for mature aged students that we see'. She identified literacy skills and academic standards as extremely inadequate. By Claudia's accounts the levels of illiteracy were staggeringly high, the task of getting students to an adequate level of proficiency felt insurmountable. Claudia described her primary role as helping students to develop their written communication skills: 'Giving them (students) the confidence to be able

to do...to do the assessment tasks. Um, giving them the language competence. The literacy skills'.

This observation is supported in the media, in which it is documented that not only was the TAFE System in crisis within Australia (Martin 2018), but that universities were being called into question regarding students being admitted despite not meeting English requirements. In some cases, this was admission into degrees that placed the general public at enormous risk[41]. Claudia cited numerous examples that epitomised this systemic issue. One such instance pertained to nursing. She expressed this as,

> I had a student today... she clearly did not understand the work that was required...even though I explained it to her in detail...she kept coming back 'Is that right?'... she couldn't understand how to fit the information in or where to get it or...she couldn't even really define...she was looking at diseases and there were neurological diseases...and she couldn't even differentiate between them in simplistic terms. So it's very hard…I get concerned that this student is going to be a nurse...and I often wonder...

adding

> I see a lot of students - even more students that I think...I hope I never see them in a hospital...because their lack of...um...their competence and their writing skills for a start...and their lack of knowledge of how the hospital system works...This is one thing I have found with second language students.

This instance highlights a 'turning of the blind eye' (Long 2008, p. 12) by institutional leadership in a drive to attain revenue from full fee paying international students and government funding for refugee students within this system. In regard students who were refugees to Australia, Claudia stated, 'They were getting big bucks for these refugees'.

Arguably, the lowering of ATAR scores was opportunistically driven to prop up the institution's survival in a highly competitive market. As Claudia contends, vocational education was 'whittled down' with 'campuses shut down' and 'teachers retired' or 'some went to other areas and some went to Higher Ed'.

[41] ABC Four Corners journalistic TV report, titled 'Cash Cows' was posted Mon 6 May 2019, 8:30pm. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-06/uni-academics-risk-jobs-to-speak-about-international-students/11082640. As well as another report titled 'Degrees of Deception' posted Mon 20 Apr 2015, 2:10pm https://www.abc.net.au/4corners/degrees-of-deception-promo/6398568

The external pressures eventually pushed the institution to re-orient itself and create interrelationships between Vocational Education and Higher Education. Yet, according to Claudia, these boundaries were blurred, and Higher Education took precedence as the revenue generated in this domain far exceeded that of Vocational Education. As she stated 'TAFE's funding has been withdrawn...so we are at the beck and call of Higher Ed.' She went onto describe TAFE as operating in 'isolation' and alienated from the rest of the institution. For her she became 'institutionalised to that'. Claudia also seemed caught in the pull between the two sectors. Tainted by previous association with Higher Education, TAFE staff were suspicious and fearful of her purpose. She expressed this saying,

> For some reason they see me...what frightens them...is that, and I think, is that they come from a trade background. So they're childcare managers, social workers or tradies. And so because I've got an academic background in actual teaching, I'm there to judge how they teach. And I'm not!

The next section brings forward data from the interview that suggests further transgressions occurred in the organisation relating to Claudia's employment and beyond; transgressions of organisational duty of care and management's responsibility towards employees. This research is focused on the aftermath of overtly known workplace transgressions. In this case it seems there is a culture of systemic transgressions, with cause, transgression and aftermath, cyclical and entwined. Each stems from the other with it not possible to determine what came first, not possible to determine what is the specific aftermath being considered. The transgression of the University in lowering Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) for admission to their courses is an overt flouting of Higher Education regulatory requirements. The data described below illuminate the context in which this transgression occurred and its impact on Claudia as she relayed in the research interview. This data is worked with through the overarching theme of shame.

8.4: Impact – Individual

Claudia's narrative is repetitively laden with themes of loss and grief over changes to her professional identity. This particularly relates to broken social bonds across the university. She asserted this occurred during a 'really bad period' of ongoing redundancy and erosion of practices, roles, programs and campuses within the TAFE sector of the university in the last decade. She described this:

> Almost every course I was going to...even the courses that had good numbers, and experienced teachers….they were um, suddenly made redundant because dollars came in...why they...it's...it's politics

Though, as can be seen in the above quote, Claudia's reasoning for redundancy was somewhat incoherent, I speculated that this emulated a sense of hysteria or 'emotional contagion' that may have besieged the university at this time (Scheff 1988), centred on a fear of annihilation (organisational survival) (Tamas 2016). What seems of related significance is that Claudia referenced redundancy eleven times during her interview.

This repetition of loss is possibly symptomatic of repressed traumatic memories that appeared as unresolved issues surrounding these events (Mitchell & Black 1995). Though there were no physical signals in the interview to indicate Claudia was in distress, the thoughts she conveyed often seemed disjointed and disordered, marked by numerous pauses, um's and ah's, with constant switches in the directional flow of her dialogue. For instance:

> My role as a teacher uh, where I go into a TAFE organisation into the actual course being offered as an Academic Support Teacher. And there have been many courses I've been um, to...as they've been made redundant...the courses and the teachers...so I've shifted to other courses...um, and it relates to the issues surround (pauses mid-word)...um...causing me not to be effective in my job. And not allowing me to do my job. And having my role disrespected.

It is possible that this excerpt suggests that in the interior theatre of her mind, both shame and embarrassment occurred (Scheff 2003). Claudia's statement of ineffectiveness and lacking capability felt highly exposing to me. The self-evaluation seems to infer that she saw herself 'negatively in the eyes of others as the origin of shame' (p. 244), and in being disrespected she had been vulnerable to abuse (Scheff 1988). I wondered if the interaction between Claudia and I mirrored the social relations of the TAFE system; whether Claudia's recollection of what seemed, to me, traumatic memories, stirred feelings of shame; seeing herself in the systems eyes, in the gazing/judging of the other (Steiner 2011).

In describing the incidents that took place in the system, Claudia recalled the insults she endured from staff across the TAFE system. One of these related to a collective training program with TAFE teachers where the TAFE teachers had not been informed of the Academic Support people involvement. Claudia gave context to this saying,

> No one bothered to tell the people who we were to work with. So we were basically...there was no preparation for the staff, apart from us - we knew what we had to do but they didn't.

This resulted in Claudia being subjected to numerous insults from TAFE teachers. Claudia stating she was called 'an 'inspector', 'a threat', 'useless' and told 'I don't want you anyway', 'Why did they force you on us?', 'What's the point of having you here?'. It wasn't until the latter part of her interview, when speaking to her system drawing, Claudia emphatically declared she felt 'bullied', 'demoralised' and 'disrespected' by the staff and stating that one group of TAFE teachers 'didn't speak to me, barely at all'.

It may be that that in use of the word 'concern' in the following quotation, Claudia masks her grief over identify loss (self and role) and rejections. This was expressed as:

> I made an agenda for this meeting because I was concerned about communication problems with students...and my boss actually brought in the people that run the student writing mentors, which I didn't want, because some of the issues I had with them.

I consider 'concern' a code word to conceal feelings of anxiety, associated with the demise and degradation of the role, and self-esteem (Lewis 1971; Scheff 2003). Claudia refers to the culmination of experiences as being 'whittled down'. I associated this with 'cutting down' or being 'killed off. 'It felt to me as if her role, like TAFE, was on the precipice of extinction. As Claudia explained, her professional teaching role was being superseded by unqualified undergraduate 'student writing mentors'. She expressed much dismay at the introduction of this role:

> They got student writing mentors coming in now… how students can give the same level of support to other students when we've got, I've got, and I'm not saying it makes me the best, but it makes me certainly more competent to have thirty teaching years' experience in different areas.

adding

> Not only that, they're marketing them. They've got their own office. I don't even have a room for my bag. I have to cart it around in an open area all the time.

According to Claudia, this was not a lone incident with institutional leadership having disregarded the Academic Support role since its introduction across the university. Claudia said there was 'no communication' to campuses about their arrival or explanations on the purpose of the role:

> My boss wasn't given the time or opportunity to go into the trade area and have a meeting with them to talk about what we do. That never happened. And that was a terrible thing.

Claudia relayed that the TAFE teachers were not happy about the presence of the Academic Support staff; that they 'didn't like academic teachers coming……a lot of the animosity came in'. This point is possibly indicative of transference phenomenon (Racker 2018) with the institutional leader's failure to support the role, paralleling insecure ambivalent attachments[42] in the TAFE teacher's relational bonds to the Academic Support teachers (Ainsworth, Bell & Staton 1969).Their unavailability was experienced by Claudia as abandonment by a deprecating authority. As she conveyed:

> We just rely on our own ability...our own sense of what is right and wrong…we get no professional support.

The effect of this isolation, as Claudia relayed, was that staff seem preoccupied with the status and location of institutional leaders. This possibly indicates anxiety about separation from them.

It is possible that separating was an act of power by the leadership to assert control over staff. For Claudia, she felt leadership's lack of availability 'compromised' the legitimacy of her role. Her experience of this as neglect, compounded the feeling of abandonment and may have increased her vulnerability to interpersonal violations (Mackelprang et al. 2014); violations in the form of bullying behaviour. When touched on in the interview it seemed an overwhelming surge of memories were mobilised with Claudia relaying incident after incident. For example:

> In quite a few courses, I was just ignored and made to sit in the classroom like a student. In fact, one - I was told to sit in the classroom like a student, verbally. 'You are to sit there and not say a word'. And I said, 'That is not why I am here'. And they said 'Well you sit down, or you go out.

and

[42] Insecure ambivalent attachment styles individual/group are seen to have the following properties: fairly reclusive, not inquisitive or explorative; wary of strangers ('not us'), even when the leader/caregiver is present. When the leader/caregiver leaves individual/group, they are often highly concerned and generally ambivalent upon return. The individual/group tend to seek yet resist contact with unpredictably responsive leadership/caregiving.(Sable 2008; Zimberoff & Hartman 2002).

> When I worked in children's services, when I walked in there I had no desk. I had to sit on a chair next to a photocopier, even when I was you know, I was trying to prepare some work or do something useful you know. I had to keep moving because other specialist teachers came in.

and

> Students had to see me in a formal class setting for a period...it was supposed to be three hours... but I was never given three hours…they gave it to me at the end of the day...they gave me an hour...I had this whittled down class. They weren't tuned in anyway, so it was just an absolute waste of time. But it fulfilled their accreditation requirements. It's just crazy, and often I would go and they would say 'Oh no, didn't I tell you', like they didn't bother to ring me to say 'Oh no sorry'. You know, you go in in peak hour traffic and.cope with that and then find that you're not wanted and then,.then I had to make up time in the holidays! In my time.

and

> I feel like I have to go, like I need a letter from my mum to get a key to open the door.

The data suggests that the institution Claudia depended on for her professional survival and identity had allowed her to be undermined and abused. Such repeated acts caused her deep psychological wounds, that she had not quite fully appreciated the extent of the impact on her until the interview (Gordon 2007). Claudia did not relay understanding of the cause for this victimisation.

I noted another impact that seemed not of Claudia's awareness, when I asked her what the colour green represented in her system drawing. Claudia's reply was:

> I don't know why I selected green. Um (pause). I found that working with children's services probably the biggest disappointment.

Claudia's incapacity to spontaneously express why she selected green may suggest memory block, possibly related to repression of memories of traumatic events experienced in this department[43]. Given the ubiquity of shame that occurs in intersubjective relations, my probing conceivably may have made Claudia feel vulnerable being under scrutiny of my gaze,

[43] Repression is defined as 'a motivated mental effort to escape discomfort by pushing uncomfortable realities out of conscious awareness….it may be transformed by the mechanism of dissociation into a full-blown splitting-off' (Nijenhuis & Van der Hart, 2011, p. 436 citing Dell, 2009, p. 808)

triggering a traumatic memory (Dorahy 2017; Nijenhuis & Van der Hart 2011; Steiner 2006). The psychological purpose of non expression may have been to block intolerable feelings of humiliation and rage. Claudia's subsequent deflection after the mid-sentence pause may have been an unconscious distraction, preventing her from feeling any pain, perhaps symptomatic of dissociative phenomenon (Dorahy 2017).

A working hypothesis based on this preceding data is that Claudia and her peers collectively represent superior technical qualities that symbolised the bygone erudite identity of a university system, and as such were perceived as a threat by dominant groups who had different ethos and drives (Gómez 2019). In shaming Claudia, it may have enabled these 'others' to divert attention away from their own behaviour and silence her from exposing unethical practices. By putting pressure on her they would then maintain control.

The data of this section illuminates how the dynamic of shame seems entrenched within the social inequality of the university (Gomez 2018) and played out in enactments, which may be conscious or unconscious.

8.5: Impact – System

Based on Claudia's accounts of what triggered and played out in the aftermath of the transgressions, the institution appears to have little sense of emotional containment, with relational boundaries too permeable, allowing vulnerable parts (individuals and departments) to be violated by 'others' abuse and exploitation. From a systems perspective, TAFE seemed to be caught and victimised (scapegoated) by the wider system with the scapegoat dynamic mirrored within. I posit these impacts are reflected metaphorically in Claudia's drawing where she symbolises TAFE as the inferior and opposing division to Higher Education. The various departments are depicted as sub systems, with social bonds to the wider system detached from each other. Thematically, I associate the detachment with the psychological concept of dissociation. In the following I use Nijenhuis & Van der Hart's (2011, p.420) 'corporate metaphor' as a lens to consider the impacts of the transgression on the wider system and how dissociation was possibly activated as a protective strategy to avoid shame.

Figure 14: Dissociation in Trauma – Division of Sub Systems
Source: Claudia, Case 2

I view each of box or parts in the drawing as subsystems (refer Figure 14) as dissociated parts or distinct personalities of TAFE. Each department has their own objective to pursue. Within these sub systems, some employees were associated with one or more departments, and others engaged in one or more temporary actions that ran across different departments that cooperated temporarily, in particular circumstances (Nijenhuis & Van der Hart, 2011). Each of these subsystems had patterns of relationship with each other[44].

Some relations were relayed by Claudia as defensive in denial of wrongdoings and avoidance of shame (Trades, Child Services and Nursing). Claudia considered their actions as rigid and controlling of everything and everyone in their realm. Other parts Claudia experienced as being caught in re-living the trauma of declining academic standards and disrespect of staff (Claudia/Academic Support Teachers). These parts were described as having no control and feeling out of control. They were depicted as a coursing river that permeated the boundaries of the brown subsystem (Higher Education): 'We feel like we're on a river course you know, in the education system…swept up in changes.' In explaining this Claudia said,

> There was no discussion about whether any of these changes would negatively impact on Learning/Academic Support Teachers. We were swapped and changed around and had to fit in with the changes as we had no ability to challenge any decisions made even if it was clear these would be detrimental to student support.

[44] The dissociation metaphor was useful to highlight that no matter how dissociated different the parts of the system's personality/culture were, they are irrevocably linked and collectively constitute a whole system (Nijenhuis & Van der Hart's, 2011).

What was initially absent in the drawing, and added in by Claudia as she was speaking, was the central management system of university (top right-hand corner and coloured in grey)[45]. The subsystem is barely visible. The initial omission was possibly an unconscious representation that the highest hierarchical level was absent in guiding lower level subsystems (or dissociated parts) and avoided integration/caregiving. Claudia's positioning of the leadership sub system a long way away from her subsystem may have unconsciously represented her experience of them being distant (physically, emotionally and psychologically). Their 'situatedness' was held as a singular phenomenal system (subjectively experienced by Claudia as emotionally numb, frozen and detached) (ibid). Reflected as grey, Claudia depicted this as 'gloom, gloomy future of TAFE'. My association to this was of leadership's dread of intelligent subordinates' gaze, who assessed their failings, and their consequent wish to be invisible. Their location being almost out of sight, suggests how they avoided the others' (Teachers/Staff/Students) gaze (Yarom 2017).

Further, the lack of connection between the various boxes (departments) in the drawing may unconsciously indicate disorganised attachment (Braun 2011; Main & Solomon 1986) across the TAFE system with the institutional authority, authority which Claudia experienced as neglectful. She expressed this as, 'They don't care about us'. The sense of grief and anxiety in being abandoned, was reflected in her prominent use of black in the top half of her drawing. Some of the interpretations Claudia associated with the colour were of feeling 'depression', 'fear', 'anxiety', 'lonely', 'abandoned', 'dehumanised', 'disempowered', 'devalued', 'dismissed'. These black 'isolated' figures perhaps depict the experience of being immobilised, worthless and isolated or in depressive states (Kaufman,1980; Lewis, 2003). My association with black is of 'deadness' or 'emotional numb'. This is symptomatic of the phenomenon of dissociation in trauma (Gordon 2007 2012; Boon 2011; Nijenhuis 2011; Knipe 2015; Steele 2016).

An alternate hypothesis relates to Claudia's perception of TAFE and the individuals within it being under the constant scrutiny from the leadership: 'the next level up'. Evidence for this is Claudia having been told by a TAFE teacher that they thought Claudia was 'a spy from

[45] I came to realise whilst writing up the analysis of this case that any 'normal' or integrated functioning part of the institution was also absent or repressed in Claudia's drawing. These functions I posit represented the Higher Education system and its subsystems, of which the Student Writing Mentors were part. Claudia perceived these parts of the institution as not dysfunctional or broken/damaged (Student Writing Mentors/Higher Education). These groups were perceived enviably by Claudia as safe, loved, worthy, effective and normal. For example, this was expressed in Claudia's statement, 'The writing mentors have got an office...and they get paid for meetings. And then they get professional development every week for half an hour they get paid for. And we are just totally ignored'.

management looking at their teaching performance'. The sense of paranoia and overwhelm at being scrutinised may account for the hysteria Claudia relayed over 'auditing pressures'. It may also be that this scrutiny was a devaluing process or shaming technique implicitly utilised by leadership to reinforce the perception of TAFE's inferiority (Waska 2013). This data leads me to think that this is possibly leadership's 'intense transference' (p.468); with the staff's vulnerability perhaps inducing feelings of overwhelm and painful countertransference in them; that the intent was for the staff to comply with leadership's demands for evaluation. Claudia emphasised the stress related to auditing three times during her narrative of the drawing, however, there was no obvious representation in the drawing itself:

> They're very stressed and under pressure and there's auditing requirements...it was a really stressful environment.
>
> I didn't know how to express pressure…working with these women in childcare...they were under extreme pressure themselves.
>
> Extreme auditing pressure. I couldn't begin to tell you...one of my colleagues; one of these people (makes banging noise as if pointing to drawing) has stress leave. And we worked out, working in this department...um, for all the auditing and reporting, we worked out our pay was about ten dollars an hour. For the hours we worked.

These comments imply that leadership's pressure and exploitation of their labour have caused psychological injury. Yet, I wonder why Claudia was able to vocalise pressure, but unable to illustrate pressure in her drawing. What blocked or disrupted her ability to think of a symbolic image? What did this omission denote about what had to be avoided in being seen/exposed? I am also curious of the physical gesture of banging on the table she made through this discourse. It was as if she was unconsciously transferring the felt experience into me. The banging on the table was perhaps a stimulus to snap my attention to the present (Nijenhuis & Van der Hart, 2011). Was this countertransference of her dissociative state, in avoiding recollection of the traumatic memory?

It can be understood that this phenomenon is a re-enactment of the traumatised memory that represented the impact of auditing pressures had on TAFE. Arguably, it represents the 'disruption' or trigger that split the usually integrated functioning of TAFE. The banging

(metaphor for constant abuse) of the table unconsciously pinpointed this disruptive impact[46]. Considered by Nijenhuis & Van der Hart (2011, p.325) as a 'phenomenal now'[47] that she unconsciously situated herself in the experience at the time the incident occurred. This intersubjective phenomenon is also symptomatic of dissociation.

According to Claudia, leadership's dysfunction and their unavailability was a significant factor in rupturing the institution's state of wholeness (Oathes & Ray 2008; Van der Kolk et al. 1996). In Claudia's experience, the 'new leadership' regime used fear and coercion to instil compliance and alter the connectedness of relationships to and with others (May 2017; Nathanson 1994; Pettigrove & Parsons 2012; Sanchez & Zahavi 2018). This impact is possibly represented in the drawing as the unattached/disconnected subsystems.

I posit that another salient hidden impact is the toxicity of greed that had permeated the system and eroded the integrity of the institution. I contend the shame markers on this impact were unconsciously concealed beneath metaphoric representations. The first relates to leadership's conduct, the shame marker being their communication style. Claudia stated this as, 'They talk such crap. I mean they talk in political...in this language that is only how management talks'. This statement implies the communication from leadership was lacking authenticity, was duplicitous and contained untruths. Claudia went on the say,

> I can go into the management meetings, I've been to enough now and I can speak the same sort of shit and look like I'm really good at saying things. But I walk out and I think 'God I've talked a load of shit'. But I talked their shit because it's in their language! It's the catch terms that they want to hear and all of this sort of crap. So, if I want to get something, a problem sorted...I transfer into this stupid language...I'd hate anyone I know to see me there because it's not me. I act!

[46] In a follow up meeting with Claudia, she clarified that the pressures stemmed from the termination of Administrative Assistants who used to perform the function of fulling auditing requirements. These duties were subsequently given to the teachers to fulfil on top of their normal role. The added tasks included 'enrol students, follow up with absences, compile auditing statistics and do other administrative work on top of preparation, teaching and correction'.

[47] Nijenhuis and Van der Hart (2011, p. 425) define 'phenomenal now' as whatever dissociative parts are experienced, they are experienced now. This now is not a formal now or a now that is shared among different individuals but which constitutes a subjectively experienced present. The phenomenal now generally encompasses a couple of seconds, and it may be displaced in objective time. For example, a dissociative part in an adult patient may be convinced that now is a moment in 1986 rather than a couple of seconds in the actual intersubjective present.

This excerpt illustrates shameful dependency on the relations within the leadership subsystem, which can be seen as a narcissistic defensive state that induces complicit intersubjective relations. The character of these relations, using terms from dissociative literature (Boon, Steele & Van Der Hart 2011; Knipe 2015; Steele, Boon & van der Hart 2016), is superficial, self-centred, devious, acquisitive and exploitative; all denoting a 'perverse state of mind[48] (Long 2008, p. 15). These diversionary and dissociative tendencies (Knipe 2015) can be thought of as an impact of the fallout of the transgressions; that leadership's dread of 'others' evaluative gaze (subordinate's/external stakeholders) and prevailing anxieties in having their failings exposed, unconsciously drove them to defensively conceal the realities that were taking place.

Claudia's statement of 'It's not me, I act', may unconsciously epitomise leadership's covert existence behind a 'shell and a façade' of grandiose relations (Wurmser 1981b); with shaming, blaming and exploiting others (individuals and groups) enabling the reinforcing of their superiority. Alongside this, beneath the surface, they relive trauma of their sense of inferiority, self-evaluating as 'I do not matter to anyone and I'm nothing' in the mind of the institution (Knipe 2015,p. 51). I posit that their 'greyness' is the leadership's unconscious sense of shame associated in being inadequate and unlovable in the gaze of 'others' (subordinates). From a psychoanalytic perspective, 'shit' is a metaphoric expression for money (Freud 1905). More specifically, anxiety over money[49]. Noteworthy is Claudia's repeated stressing through the interview about the leadership's anxiety over money and her concluding comments that the pivotal negative changes she observed were, 'money and bringing business managers in to run departments'.

In another dimension of the transgressions, Claudia observed injustices and exploitation of international students. She felt the students were tyrannised when questioning lecturers on their 'results'; disregarded and silenced into submission. Advocating on their behalf, Claudia attempted to 'speak truth to power' that resulted in her being 'warned off' and dismissed: 'As a TAFE employee, (you) can't represent students to the student counsellor'. With exasperation,

[48] Long (2008, p344), defines a 'state of mind' as 'a particular configuration of thoughts, perceptions, emotions and beliefs that also look to particular behavioural tendencies'.

[49] The anal phase of a child's development in Freud's (1905) theory on psychosexual development is defined as the fear of loss of control that not being toilet trained represents. Consequently, the child becomes ashamed and fears their dirtiness. To compensate for the dirtiness they become obsessed with cleanliness. This symbolic representation may unconsciously suggest that Claudia perceived the staff in Child Services Department as having become filthy or deeply stained, inducing shame that could not be communicated.

she added: ‘Oh there's been some shocking things happen and the students have ended up leaving a course...but having to pay thousands of dollars!’ This data suggest both staff and students were de-realised in their attempts to right wrongs. Those who took up their own authority to act as whistle-blowers were harshly treated.

Figure 15: Toxicity

Source, Claudia, Case 2

Another system dynamic, toxicity of greed, arguably is covertly depicted in Claudia’s illustration of Child Services, most notably, her green colour coding. I associate this as the subsystem having ‘turned green’ or ‘gangrene’ meaning this part of the system was dying of toxicity. My supposition is that in being seen in the gaze of the other, the staff within Child Services may have perceived themselves as infected/tainted by immoral and unethical practices. This, I posit, is implicitly embedded and revealed by Claudia in her account of the teachers’ humiliation of her. Arguably, the minimised figures signify the department as infantilised or diminished in some way. I consider the association of ‘turned green’ to be akin with psychogenic vomiting induced by fear and depression.

The impact of transgression on the overall TAFE system seems to have resulted in it being whittled down into victimised minority groups. Disillusioned by the trauma of ‘institutional betrayal’ (Smith & Freyd 2014), the losses (identity, role, purpose and people) and corruption of standards was described by Claudia as;

> ‘We can't work miracles and teach people literacy skills to the level that it’s expected…..there's no magic wand...for suddenly becoming literate’.

8.6: Reflections on the Interview

This case is the most difficult and painful piece of narrative and countertransference phenomenon that I worked through in this study. In my endeavours to make sense of the underlying dynamics in this system it felt overwhelming voluminous and onerous.

The transference, countertransference and somatic countertransference phenomena I experienced in my relations with Claudia commenced pre-interview. I noted I felt tired, almost fatigued. I longed to be home lying on a sofa watching TV. Prior to the interview I had a strong urge for coffee and something sweet to eat. I devoured a small packet of chocolate wafer biscuits and literally skulled my coffee in the hope that the caffeine and sugar would re-energise me. Before Claudia arrived, I noted the room felt very cool and put the heater on so that the temperature would be more comfortable. Unfortunately, the fan operated noisily. I became increasingly frustrated attempting to re-adjust the speed so the noise would not be a disturbance. Within fifteen minutes of the interview, I felt myself tire again, becoming lethargic and having an overwhelming desire to sleep. Worried, I wondered if the heater would lull us both to sleep and that Claudia would be unable to concentrate. I felt strangely immobilised, unable to turn down the heat.

The above dissociative phenomena I encountered are feasibly somatic countertransference, of the sensations (physical and emotional) imprinted unconsciously in Claudia of the trauma she experienced. As discussed by Van de Kolk (2015) these encounters may have been 'not as memories, but as disruptive physical reactions in the present' (p.204). Claudia's revisiting the trauma during the interview may have triggered unconscious feelings and sensations of overwhelm associated with the past. My tiredness and sleepiness may have denoted somatic countertransference; an attempt to shut out feelings of anger and sadness by freezing and dissociation (Van de Kolk 2015). It is fascinating that the unconscious does not have time boundaries. At the point I felt these things I had not yet met Claudia.

Similarly, I found myself struggling to stay present whilst Claudia spoke. Her narrative felt extraordinarily convoluted and fragmented. I had forgotten about these emotions until I revisited my interview notes and was surprised to read that I felt 'vacant', 'alien' and 'detached'. My notes also indicate a strong desire I had to pressure Claudia to provide definitive responses on what the transgressions entailed. I was constantly frustrated by what felt like a lack of clarity and evasiveness.

I had an irrational desire to understand the institutional hierarchy, however, felt much confusion, to the point of getting irritated and impatient with Claudia. I noted that I felt like I was pushing her to give me straight answers and struggling to contain my aggression. On hearing the audio recording there was no evidence of this in the tone or manner I spoke to her

with. Perplexed, I wonder if my reaction was one of projective identification[50] to her emotional experience she had in dealings with the system's authority, as an aggressive unconscious resistance to their misconduct (Ogden 1979; Scheff & Retzinger 2001). This 'push' seems to be activated from the time she spoke on lack of communication regarding the implementation of her role. This may have been her psychological distance from leadership, and I felt profoundly connected. More so notably, whilst Claudia described incidents relating to the detrimental decline of assessment standards for nursing students to be 'pushed through and passed', I was horrified to hear this situation. My immediate thoughts were to avoid being hospitalised and cared for by these incompetent nurses. I did not want my life in their hands.

On reflection, the 'push' is perhaps countertransference phenomenon relating to Claudia's internal theatre that replayed the drama of TAFE's need for clarity on the future direction of the institution. To this I would also add the 'push' represented TAFE's frustration, confusion and anger in their lacking understanding of Claudia's role and function. The contra analogy of 'being afraid to bite the hand that doesn't feed you' comes to mind that best sums up the projection of misdirected anger at Claudia (scapegoated), when leadership should have been challenged. Moreover, the 'push' may also be an unconscious representation of leadership's pressure on teachers to 'push' incompetent students through their assessment and turn a blind eye.

It is at this point in the interview Claudia is speaking of the 'Student Mentor' role and how she felt 'dulled' by the experience, I noticed that I am mirroring Claudia's clasping of her face with both hands. I move my hands away from my face and struggle to fight the desire to touch my face again. On reflection, I believe this somatic countertransference encounter is of Claudia/Academic Support Teacher's dissociative phenomena to the demise of the role. This encounter perhaps unconsciously characterises the felt terror and trauma that was so visceral in its foundation. The sensation of numbing and the desire to touch my face possibly symbolises 'primitive responses to threat where escape is thwarted in some way' (Van der Kolok, 2015, p. 97). Feasibly, the analogy of having one's life in someone else's hand, best represents the mirroring that played out between us; the holding of one's head symbolic of the fear of placing one's life in the hands of the less competent student mentors.

[50] I refer to Ogden's (1982) exposition on projective identification as a defense that 'serves to create a sense of psychological distance from unwanted, often frightening aspects of the self. As a mode of communication, projective identification is a process by which feelings congruent with one's own are induced in another person, thereby creating a sense of being understood by or "at one with" the other person. As a type of object relations, projective identification constitutes a way of being with and relating to a partially separate object' (p.21).

By the end of the first hour of the interview, my awareness was on the temperature of the room again. The heat felt oppressive, I felt as if I was suffocating. This coincided with Claudia expressing how she felt bullied by TAFE staff and compromised by leadership. My thoughts were once again of horror and wonder how she managed to survive. The sensation of suffocation in the oppressive temperature on the room, perhaps can be likened to the felt experience of the organisational climate at the time of these incidents.

Drawing towards the end of the interview, I was shocked by Claudia's revelation that the interview was the first time in ten years she shared this experience with anyone and felt heard. She described the experience as 'liberating'. Some months after the interview, we happened to cross paths in public. Claudia somewhat excitably disclosed she had resigned from her role and decided to go into early retirement. Stunned by this disclosure, I felt the weight of burden on how to best present the gift she had bestowed on me in this thesis.

I struggled for over a year to read Claudia's transcript and listen to the audio recording. My first attempts of coding the transcript felt disastrous. I was incapable of processing her words. I had no capacity to think. I was fixated on how I conducted myself. I become highly critical in my self-evaluation, to the point of paralysis and consumed by self-loathing. I felt like I had failed miserably as a researcher and was so incompetent that it shut down my capacity to function. Blaming myself for Claudia's incoherency and lack of clarity, I was unable to move beyond the first six pages of the transcript. Struggling to stay alert, often falling asleep or collapsing in tears as I re-lived her experience. The insults Claudia endured took me sometimes days to recover from. Going back over my notes, I felt and still feel much embarrassment and shame in the realisation I was so emotionally detached and distant in my conduct towards Claudia during the interview. I was puzzled how I became so devoid of empathy. Yet contrarily, post the interview I was a complete emotional mess. Many times, I wanted to evacuate and drop this case. Thankfully, I was dogged in my goal to work through the pain. I was determined to understand what had transpired.

The task of analysing the data required much reflection and felt to me akin to nursing with intensive care, to find thought. After what felt like an infinite amount of time, I came to love what felt like an unlovable object. On reflection of the interview, I believe the intersubjective relations I formed with Claudia in the search for authentic engagement and connection (Jordan et al. 2000) evoked relational shame. I think this most likely occurred in Claudia's need to transform shame and dehumanisation (Wiener, 2009). The experience of the interview highlights that shame is a 'bi-directional process' (Herman, 2011), in that, shame may be inadvertently triggered and re-triggered in intersubjective relations (Sanderson, 2015).

By its nature the relational structure of the qualitative interview may have mobilised past and present relationships, a potent elicitor of shame. Though the interview was not intended as a therapeutic forum, it certainly acted as a reconstruction process of her ordeal. I can only surmise that the boundaries maintained throughout her involvement provided sufficient containment to help her process the traumatic memories.

The most critical learning for me in analysis of this case study is how important it is to pay attention to emotional and physical reactions during the interview process. My naivety or willingness to collude in the 'pull' of countertransference phenomenon is one aspect of this. Taking up the role of an 'empathic researcher' enabled the experience to be transformative for the interviewee (Holloway & Jefferson, 2013). It gave Claudia the right to be listened to and enabled her testimony of what she experienced to be examined and more understood (Sanchez & Zahavi 2018). As Claudia expressed, 'I hope it doesn't get me the sack but then again...it's nice to tell someone.'

I would also assert that in Claudia's case, there is a reverse transformative impact (Bigliani (2013) with Claudia assuming 'the role of revealer' of the shameful acts of the university (the other). Her identification with the shame pursued her, and consequently she became a pursuer of the system, a system who, using Bigliani's words, 'put (her) to shame before all others, who could have seen (her) shame, (her) weakness' (p.24) and did nothing. I feel one aspect of Claudia's purpose as a participant in this research project was to recruit me to join in her desire for justice and possibly revenge for the university's violations.

Shame as a relational emotion, was ubiquitous in the researcher and research participant relationship. My biggest surprise was to find that I was caught in this cycle.

8.7: Main Themes

The key themes identified in this case that exemplify the collective defence 'Avoiding Shame', are namely in response to trauma enacted through dissociative phenomenon. As noted in Chapter Four, I reflect on this through cultural scripts of popularity and conformity in which uniqueness/individuality and identity is neither recognised nor valued in the institution. I explore the impacts of societal and institutional pressures of this through the main themes of trauma, humiliation and dissociation. The themes presented in this section are identified from Claudia's narrative and system drawing. Each theme characterises key defensive strategies of 'Avoidance' related to shame. A range of reactions are presented as sub themes:

(8.7.1) Trauma – Traumatic Memories, Abandonment, Isolation and Anxiety/Worry

(8.7.2) Humiliation – Rejection, Identity Loss, Inferiority/Superiority, Objectification, Powerlessness and Exposure

(8.7.3) Dissociation – Detachment, Dependency, Freeze/Numbing, Fragmentation and Flooding

8.7.1: Trauma

8.7.1.1: Traumatic Memories

Trauma was depicted by Claudia through metaphoric clues in her system drawing about: isolation (people isolated and kept at a distance within the boxes); detachment (disconnected/insecure attachments illustrated (as shown in Figure 16) as absence of connection between objects, figures or boundaries; terror (illustrated as facial expressions akin to shell shock, and verbally recounted as 'bewilderment') and fragmentation (scattered boxes) (Chernus 2008; Gordon 2007).

Represented in Figure 16 (refer below) by Claudia, these memories are symbolic images that depicted both Claudia and the collective experience within the TAFE system of being taken by surprise and caught unprepared by the various transgressions – ethical (i.e. lowering of ATAR scores) and moral (i.e. bullying).

Figure 16: Expression of Traumatic Memories

Source: Claudia, Case 2

These experiences potentially induced a sense of inadequacy and inferiority in being exposed and judged by the broader system (Lynd 1958). Given the intrusive nature of shame, I propose

that each group of images represents split off or ‘dissociated parts’ of the vocational system that contained a traumatic memory (Boon, Steele & Van Der Hart 2011). Collectively, the drawing may unconsciously represent the unintegrated/fractured image of the vocational education system and how shame was masked in this system through avoidance (Lewis 1995). I posit that Claudia’s ability to verbally form an integrated view of herself and others was overwhelmed (Liotti 2004).

Conceivably, the act of drawing enabled Claudia to unconsciously find expression and convey this through illustration. The drawing seemed to enable her to emerge from a psychic retreat (Steiner 2011; Tamas 2016) that was a withdrawal state. I believe this was in response to overwhelming and unbearable feelings that possibly arose during the interview, and threatened disintegration; the drawing representing the failures in containment and attachment and resultant overwhelming emotions.

8.7.1.2: Abandonment

Abandonment is conveyed by Claudia as the university system’s/institutional leaders’ abandonment of support and lack of care for the Academic Support Teacher role and the TAFE system as a whole. She expresses abandonment as a sense of being unwanted/ unloved. She stated this as.

> ‘The management. They don't care about us in terms of...they won't even have staff meetings because they won't fund it’.

and

> ‘No communication from above….we just rely on our own ability um...our own sense of what is right and wrong, our own um. We get no professional support. We don't get any professional collaboration in meetings because they won't pay for meetings. We're being casualised’.

8.7.1.3: Isolation & Depression

Isolation and depression were experienced by Claudia and TAFE staff as a result of leadership’s avoidance of intimacy and closeness (Lynd 1958).

This is symbolically illustrated in Claudia’s system drawing (Figure 17 & 18) as depressed looking figures & featureless detached objects, isolated in black and grey boxes.

Figure 17: Isolation

Source: Claudia, Case 2

Claudia was unable to make an emotional connection with her choice of black, offering only an interpretation of the systems as being in ‘isolation. They're in isolation’. The absence of colour seems to suggest there was little sense of emotional boundaries. The black outlines of the boxes may represent the department’s defensive building of boundaries through isolation to prevent being under constant scrutiny of others (Boon, Steele & Van Der Hart 2011).

The only other time Claudia referenced isolation in her narrative was to disclose her disconnection in relations with her peers. She stated this as: ‘Well my actual peers are my learning support teachers. And we all work in isolation. We never see each other’.

In saying this, her response felt cold and distant. It was if she was masking a deep sense of loneliness in performing this role. Ironically, the purpose of the role was to provide support to students and other teachers, yet leadership failed to provide the same level of care.

Figure 18: Gloomy future of TAFE

Source: Claudia, Case 2

Claudia associated depression to the University’s future direction. She depicted this in Figure 18, interpreting the grey system as, ‘I see that’s the gloomy future of TAFE’. This expression

may point to the loss of the social bonds within the university system (Scheff 2003) or on an individual level, as the sense of isolation in management's inaccessibility to discuss issues: 'I never had anyone to speak to about it.

8.7.1.4: Anxiety/Worry

Claudia implicitly conveys anxiety as broken social bonds (Scheff 2003), as insecure attachments with authority figures, and 'being seen' as 'not good enough' to belong in the university.

Claudia often made slips such as 'I...we' that possibly concealed her own fear of being killed off and demoralised by institutional leadership, however, it may also indicates her bypassing of shame (Lewis 1971; Scheff 1988). Her use of 'we' could be seen as suggesting that she was avoiding the pain of recalling events by 'stepping outside' of herself, as if the pain was not present (Scheff 1988, p.402). Further, she used code words as cues for shaming behaviours of others that affected her, whether this was conscious or not (Lewis 1971). Examples of these were in the following statements reflecting anxiety over the potential for termination:

- 'They've (Peers) been 'whittled down' from something like probably twenty-four or thirty...there's now about five or six (whittled denoting termination and fear of being cut out of the system, annihilation).
- They're 'whittled down' too in TAFE (as above).
- We are 'discardable' (implied Claudia perceived self as worthless in leadership's evaluation of her and her terminated peers, by association).
- We 'morphed' into being 'taken over' by Higher Ed and not the TAFE' (suggesting they felt overwhelmed or engulfed by the more dominant half of the university).
- They (TAFE) are slowly being 'stripped out' (implies deprived of existence).
- 'We didn't know who our second boss was most of the time (implies neglect and abandonment), I mean it was just 'chopping' and changing so quickly' (turbulent and insecure environment).

Each of the above statements repudiates anxiety provoking experiences as her own, placing it onto others ('they') or group ('we'). This seems to serve as a dissociative function, as a collective defence that includes others' emotional experience (Lewis 1971; Retzinger 1991a).

Adjectives such as ‘whittled’, ‘chopping’, ‘discardable’ and ‘stripped’ all have hostile connotations.

To finish this section on anxiety and worry I refer to the last example provided in the themes of ‘Isolation and Depression’ where Claudia interpreted the illustrated grey system as, ‘I see that’s the gloomy future of TAFE’. The links between anxiety and shame are made by Boon (2016), who puts forward an argument that worry about the future may be a shame marker and/ or symptom of dissociative phenomenon.

8.7.2: Humiliation

Humiliation is a common response to being outcast. This can be experienced as a result of betrayal (from leaders/caregivers) (Boon, Steele & Van Der Hart 2011). Humiliation may feel catastrophic in its impact, often amplified by memories of past traumas of abandonment or misunderstanding, or fear of consequences for asserting oneself. Humiliation most notably occurs when caregivers (in this case leaders/organisations) fail to protect us (individual/group) from psychological harm or when under stress. Consequently the painful conflict is too intolerable to realise and therefore triggers a retreat or dissociation from the present experience of humiliation, to avoid pain (Gordon 2007; Oathes & Ray 2008; Steele, Boon & van der Hart 2016). A feature of reaction to humiliation involves wanting to inflict punishment or persecutory pain (Scheff & Retzinger 2001). In this study, suffering was imposed by ‘others’ (Leaders/TAFE Teachers) with the intention to destroy. Humiliation was experienced by Claudia in the following actions:

8.7.2.1: Rejection

Claudia experienced the TAFE teachers rejecting of the need for Academic Support Teacher role as difficult:

> They were calling out for an academic support teacher - then when I came they didn't want anything...they didn't have a role for me...and wouldn't allow me the time... they had no time for me in the breaks, no time for me after class, no time in lunchtime. So I spent what was it - three years there, learning a hell of a lot about children's services! But not being helpful.

and

> Often I would go and they would say 'Oh no, didn't I tell you'...like they didn't bother to ring me if there was a special day so they didn't ring me to say ‘Oh no sorry'. You know, you go in in peak

> hour traffic and um cope with that and then find that you're not wanted and then, then I had to make up time in the holidays! In my time.

The data suggests that the humiliation Claudia experienced was not only persecutory, but also an action by 'the others' (TAFE Teachers) to lower Claudia's status while others (teachers and students) were observing (Dorahy 2017). The wounding impact is amplified by exploiting her willingness to assist students.

8.7.2.2: Identity Loss

Claudia's expression of being 'whittled down' is akin to identity loss. Most notably identity loss can be experienced as being dismissed and unacknowledged by leadership. This was expressed as,

> My last boss, she was made redundant...they didn't even...she'd been there twenty years...they never even got her a present. A farewell...and not one drink. No budget - we all paid for our own drinks, as we have for a few years. But they go to overseas...they go to...it's just...

Identity loss was experienced as persecutory and difficult to bear by Claudia and possibly others in her peer group. The excerpt illustrates leadership's denial of individual/group's identity through the withholding of funds and seeking to deny the group the ability to collectively grieve loss (by way of a farewell/wake. My speculation on this feature of humiliation is that leadership may have unconsciously inflicted this action as punishment for their perception of this groups' redundancy/unworthiness to the institution (Steiner 2011).

8.7.2.3: Inferiority/Superiority

Recounting what a peer told her, Claudia stated:

> They are extraordinarily ambitious. And they're all trying to climb over the top of one another to get the vice-chancellors attention. This sort of crap.

The excerpt suggests that competition for status was linked to aggressive and hostile relations amongst leadership. As a form of hubristic pride, rivalry is possibly a powerful defence against shame, to compensate for feelings of failure (Sanderson 2015). The tone of disdain in Claudia's narrative, especially in her reference to 'This sort of crap', marks disapproval and judgement of leadership's inferiority in her eyes and those of her peers. 'Crap' could also imply Claudia's concern or anxiety over leadership's morality ('filthy' behaviour).

Aggression and hubristic pride are also reflected in Claudia's description of the manner of male lecturers in the 'Trades' department: a department she describes as 'male dominated and very blokey' and 'a lot of the oldies had been there for years. There's a culture in trades and until you prove your metal'. This may imply gendered chauvinism, in which the older male lecturers are seen to be holding antiquated views towards women, and in political provocation in having to 'prove your metal'. The connotation here is of having the strength/power of a man. This indicates that Claudia was not part of the inner group and excluded. The dissociation is marked by her reference as 'you' and 'your', which suggests her disavowal of the experience.

8.7.2.4: Objectification & Infantilisation

The images in Figure 19 below symbolise the various courses Claudia had worked in. She interpreted the images thus:

> So there's the hammer and the saw and the boat, the computer for business admin, the needle for working with nurses, children….

Figure 19: Objectification of Trades & Infantilisation of Child Services
Source: Claudia, Case 2

Conceivably, these images unconsciously represent the institution's minimisation of the importance of TAFE's teachers' role and identity within the institution. By depicting 'Trades' and 'Business Administration' as objects, Claudia may have been unconsciously conveying how they may have been dehumanised and objectified by the institution. Leadership's disregard and invalidation of the staff in TAFE, may have reinforced feelings they were inferior and inept. This lack of acknowledgement by the persecuting 'other' I suggest intensified their angst and chronic shame. Further, these images are possibly an internalisation by Claudia as loss of worthy 'significant others' (Benjamin 1988), who are perceived as 'not good enough' in the eyes of the abandoning or rejecting 'other' (Institutional leadership/Claudia) with the

humiliation unspeakable and perhaps the associated trauma, unknowable. The depiction of objects suggests chronic shame is dissociated (DeYoung 2015).

8.7.2.5: Powerlessness & Helplessness

A sense of powerlessness and helplessness within the system and herself is notable in Claudia's choice of the colour brown in her system drawing. Claudia interpreted the brown with the feeling of 'ambivalence'. She expressed this:

> That's the way it is and I don't feel I can change it. So to me brown says um, it's what it is ok. So we're not in a position to make any change. So we are the driven rather than the drivers of change.

A further sense of the sense of powerlessness within the system is conveyed by Claudia in the following:

> If I could draw...I could just draw a big hook because I feel like the whole thing you are dangling all the time….You're drowning at one sense, but you're dangling from a management sense because...um...they don't have any... So it's a cursory acknowledgement what we do. We never...I tell you how bad they are - they would not even have a...

Claudia's reference to 'dangling' is perhaps indicative of leadership's disregard for the role of the Academic Support. My association is of Claudia and TAFE being put in a dormant catatonic state. This shutting down, characteristic of dissociative phenomenon, can be seen as a defence mechanism TAFE staff employed to protect themselves from overwhelming feelings of inferiority, projected onto them by leadership and the rest of the university.

8.7.2.6: Exposure - Through the Eyes of Others

It may be that the fear of TAFE's vulnerabilities and flaws being exposed necessitated, from a survival sense, the desire to hide or mask shame. Claudia stated,

> Most of my thinking at work is through the students' eyes. We've always worked; I've always worked, in every course, through the students' eyes.

The expression of 'through the students' eyes', suggests that Claudia's teaching approach was to help students succeed in meeting standards. However, from a psychoanalytic

perspective being seen through the others' eyes (Steiner 2006, 2011), insinuates being acutely self-conscious of real or imagined judgement by the 'Other'. Working 'through the eyes of others', possibly marks fear of judgement.

8.7.3: Dissociation

Dissociation, as defined by Boon (2016, p. 9) 'is a survival strategy that develops when an experience is too threatening or overwhelming at the time for a person to be able to integrate it fully, especially in the absence of adequate emotional support'. One or parts of self can feel 'stuck' in unresolved (traumatising) experiences, whilst another aspect of the self avoids these unintegrated experiences. By 'not knowing' or keeping thoughts repressed, it interferes with our ability to stay present. The tendency is to retreat from being present, to avoid being overwhelmed or feel pain. It may be experienced as being engulfed by negative images, feelings or thoughts from the past (Steele, Boon & van der Hart 2016). Alternatively, a preoccupation with worry about the future, prevents awareness of the present. Symptoms may include feeling fuzzy, spacey or foggy (Tamas 2016). It's not uncommon for one to unconsciously lose connection with being present and only to realise afterwards that one wasn't present. By pushing traumatic memories outside of conscious awareness, they cannot be processed or discharged and thus shame increases (Freyd & Birrell 2013; Lewis 2003; Nathanson 1994). According to Freyd and Birrell (2013) dissociation allows one to remain blind to betrayal by significant others, especially in the face of repeated shame, humiliation and abuse.

> The best way to keep a secret is not to know it in the first place; unawareness is a powerful survival technique when information is too dangerous to know' (Freyd and Birrell 2013, p. 6).

In my view, this quote by Freyd and Birrell sums up dissociative defence strategies employed by Claudia, as well as the system, to 'push' traumatic memories outside of conscious awareness. I contend dissociation allowed leadership within TAFE to remain blind to their betrayal of significant others Claudia/TAFE/Students) (Freyd & Birrell 2013; Smith & Freyd 2014).

'Dissociation' is the key theme for this case. Sub themes emerging from the data in relation to this theme are: Detachment; Dependency; Freeze/Numbing; Fragmentation and Flooding (Van Der Hart, Nijenhuis & Steele 2005; Van der Kolk & Fisler 1995). These are presented in the following.

8.7.3.1: Detachment

The data suggests an attachment problematic within the system. This was metaphorically represented in Claudia's drawing of boxes in Figure 16 (p. 175), which she interpreted as 'operating in boxes' meaning 'isolation'. I assume they symbolised TAFE's disengagement or decoupling from social attachments within the university system (Scheff 1988 2003). Detachment can be activated by fear of shame and humiliation and is a means of keeping others distanced. It is possible that this served to conceal psychological wounds held by the staff and students (Nathanson 1987; Lewis 1971; Lewis 1995 2003)

The following excerpt exemplifies how the phenomenon of detachment occurred in the system:

> Susan: 'So tell me about the black...what does the black represent? Because there is quite a fair amount of black'.
>
> Claudia: 'So I used the black to make it definite. This is what we're about, this is who we stand for, and this is what I feel we do best'. And so I wanted that to sort of stand out to say um, 'This is who we connect with the most' and 'This is who we see through their eye' '.
>
> Susan: 'Right'.
>
> Claudia: 'In a class or even looking at assessment tasks. I look at it through their eyes doing it but I also look through the assessor's eyes too, when I'm not in a course. I look through the assessor's eyes. What they are looking for'.

Claudia's description of her role drawing denotes some key shame markers. Namely, the absence of making a conscious emotional connection to the colour black, apart from describing it as a way of amplification. This may suggest emotional detachment (hers and of the broader system). The other key marker is no visual connection between the various stakeholders or between the various campuses and the wider system in the drawing itself. All the images seem detached. My association with the black images is of withdrawn depressed states and a sense of disconnection across the various TAFE campuses (staff and students). This is contrary to Claudia's assertion that the images represented 'Who we connect with the most'. This may be an unconscious denial that the reality of broken social bonds was too painful to acknowledge.

8.7.3.2: Dependency

Dependency is insinuated by the state of helplessness (Claudia's and TAFE system) in which mutuality was repeatedly sought. This can come about through the desire for, contact with and proximity to others (peers/leadership), but also the desire for help, attention and approval from others. Dependency is implied by Claudia in the following incident,

> 'When I'm in, when I'm in a class like children's services, the teacher rattles on something really complex and uses a lot of um, vocationally specific terminology, and in a complex way. So I'll say in the classroom, 'So do you mean this...this...' I act like the student because I can see the bewildered look'.

In this, I contend Claudia captures the ubiquitous nature of the shaming cycle in the students' dependency on the shaming authorities in the institution. In this instance, it relates to that of the teacher (superior/master) unconsciously belittling the students (inferior/slave). Shame was elicited in the absence of accurate mirroring or attunement where the teacher (authority figure/caregiver) was unable to respond to the student's (child) feelings (Trevarthen 2005). The teacher's denial of the students' confusion and lack of acknowledgement dehumanises and objectifies them, possibly intensifying fear and shame (Wurmser 2013). The student's incapacity to absorb and understand knowledge may have brought them to depend on Claudia/Academic Support Teachers to tacitly re-define their emotions on their behalf and help soothe their distress. According to Lewis, (1995), the paradox of dependency needs becomes an additional source of shame, especially if met with condemnation, indifference or ridicule. This serves to stir fear of rejection and humiliation, whilst recognising that one's basic needs are inherently shameful (Herman 2011).

In identifying with the role of the student, Claudia is possibly caught in acting out the co-dependent relations between teacher and student within this system. Claudia assumed the role of an idealised rescuer, protecting the students from the shaming effects of the teacher (shaming authority). Though there is no data to suggest that the students demanded to be rescued, I surmise that in Claudia's willingness to take up that role, she identified with it on an individual level. However, in terms of the group, she may have been unconsciously authorised to do so. If this is so, both Claudia and the students were potentially caught in collusive relations of co-dependency. In relation to dissociation, Steele, Boon and van der Hart (2016, pp. 11-12) refer to co-dependency as 'hyper-activated caregiving system', where one intensively seeks attachment for the purposes of safety and survival.

8.7.3.3: Freeze / Numbing

Freezing/numbing (Carter et al. 2011; Nijenhuis & Van der Hart 2011) is another form of dissociative phenomena that the data suggests is employed by Claudia and the TAFE system as an unconscious protective strategy to aid survival. Freezing/numbing is understood to be a protective mechanism to conserve energy until the threat of annihilation and shame is over (Sanderson 2013; Steele, 2015; Boon, 2016). The reaction is triggered when fear and shame experiences are overwhelming (Chernus 2008; Nijenhuis & Van der Hart 2011).

Freeze/numbing is arguably depicted in Claudia's illustration of boxes representing various departments and campuses in TAFE (refer figure 20). In this, the black colouring is a metaphoric expression of staff playing dead until the threat of danger (Higher Education) is over; to deflect attention away from them. The boxes also acting like time capsules, 'freezing' in time, to preserve the collection of artefacts and information of each department. My conjecture is supported by a conceptualisation of dissociation, in which the term 'freezing' refers to the psychobiology of dissociation (Loewenstein 2018). It is a clinically proven human response akin to animals feigning death, and considered a preservation capacity (Elbert & Schauer 2010). Hence, my association to the term 'freezing' as having a preserving function. Additionally, I considered the psychological meaning behind Claudia's choice of colour of black in her drawing denoting death and emotional connection to the colour black, which she interpreted as feeling (socially) 'isolated'

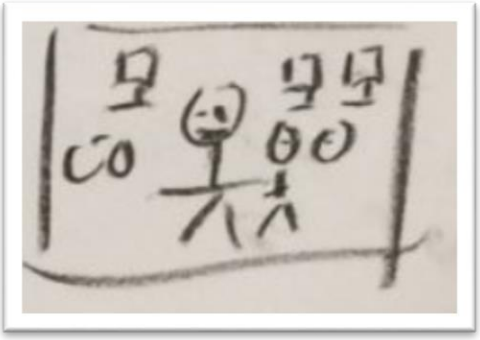

Figure 20: Playing Dead & Time Capsule
Source: Claudia, Case 2

Figure 21: Frozen
Source, Claudia, Case 2

The illustration in Figure 21 depicts Claudia standing outstretched within the brown box that resembles a frozen stature. The freeze response may have helped her make it through the difficult experiences. In her choice of words, in describing her feelings about the drawings, there is a script that may have existed to avoid the inner intrusive experiences, feelings or thoughts that may evoke shame (Sanderson 2015). For example:

> ‘I always say 'I'm still bobbing along'. If people say, 'Oh how you going, you still got work?' I say, 'Well yeah, I'm still bobbing along, you know'. My head above water..’.

8.7.3.4: Fragmentation

Claudia conveys that there was the deep sense of brokenness within the university. On an individual level, fragmentation was also observable in that Claudia seemed unable to coherently put together the events that occurred.

The drawing metaphorically illustrates the fragmented system, and also can be seen to be symbolically depicting the sensations, thoughts, and emotions of Claudia and the system’s trauma. These were drawn by each of the boxes representing functions/groups as isolated parts of the business, each symbolic metaphor separately containing the traumatic events, experienced as frozen, somewhat comprehensible fragments (Van der Kolk 2014).

Further, I suggest the red heads (round faces) that look like they are floating in the river, symbolise Claudia’s incapacity to think of the loss of her sense of self in her interactions with the others (Steele, Boon & van der Hart 2016), and the bobbing heads, as the split off or disowned parts of her body.’ This is characterised by her expression when telling colleagues who asked how she was;

> I'm still bobbing along, you know'. My head above water... In other words - having my job…Because you know, at any time we feel we will be made...possibly made redundant. Um...we are never given any um, certainty with our jobs, year-to-year, even semester to semester…So ah, and when we've seen our bosses be made redundant - well obviously if it can happen to them, it can happen to us too.

It is possible that by splitting of feelings of shame outside of conscious awareness, Claudia was able to avoid intense and unbearable feelings of shame (Sanderson 2015).

8.7.3.5: Flooding

Figure 22: River Course
Source: Claudia, Case 2

The river in Claudia's system drawing can be thought of as a metaphoric expression of flooding of emotions; of being overwhelmed by instincts, reflexes, motives, and deep-seated memories that emanate from the unconscious (Van der Kolk 2015). The red sign is perhaps a signal of danger that activates both a flight and freeze response (move away and avoid dealing with reality), and the red faces of the bobbing heads may represent the humiliation Claudia felt and the need for urgent care or rescue from potential drowning. I suggest that in denying her inner reality, Claudia's sense of self, identity, and purpose was eroded.

From a systems perspective, the drawing may unconsciously represent the flooding of anxiety and sense of overwhelm that permeated the boundaries of the TAFE system/vocational education as result of institutional betrayal (Smith & Freyd 2014). Further, the illustration of the river flowing through the box, denoting the overly permeable boundaries and the system's inability to contain the emotions or undercurrent of emotions.

8:8: Concluding Remarks

It is evident that this case provides illuminating insight into the phenomenon of avoiding shame. Claudia's story spoke of the unethical practice of lowering ATAR scores as transgression. However, it also revealed more strikingly the victimisation and marginalisation that occurred in the institution's haste to eliminate any reference to vocational education. No longer popularised, external pressures (societal and government) were applied to raise its profile of higher education offering. Survival for this institution depended on both student numbers and government funding. What's more, was pressure to compete with more enviable higher-ranking university systems that attracted hordes of international students for their offering of higher education programs. The analysis of the data illuminates much depth to the disturbing treatment of the staff and students within the vocational arm of the institution. The impact was

both traumatising and morally injurious as leadership effectively severed ties and abandoned both staff and students. Claudia's accounts reveal how these events were experienced as humiliating and illustrates how a range of dissociative mechanisms were employed to protect against any further shaming by the system. This story also strongly exemplified nonverbal expressions of shame, as well as countertransference phenomena. Claudia's case epitomises the devastating effects of shame when organisations dehumanise its people in desperate attempts to change. In closing, the data of this case illustrates the murderous hatred enacted on the vocational education division of this institution as akin to an unconscious act of self-harm and loathing. Unable to deal with the pain in being exposed for its deficiencies, the institution endeavoured to relieve itself of this pain by a form of self- mutilation.

8.9: Summary

In this chapter I discussed the lived experienced of a tertiary institution threatened by the need to increase student numbers and the denial of the ramifications of that, in particular denial of the ATAR issue. Further, I provided reflection on an individual's perception of some external pressures (government/regulatory) and institutional leaders response to this. The findings of this case encapsulate the experience of unacknowledged shame from the defence mechanism of Denying Shame and the impacts of this on intersubjective relations with peers, students and leadership. This brings a close to the four case studies. I now move into the section of the thesis in which I discuss the overall research findings.

Chapter 9: Coming To Know Shame

9.1: Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to illustrate how I came to understand the centrality of shame as a key dynamic in the participants' experience. I came to this through an iterative process of analysis, utilising sensitising concepts. By sensitising concepts, I refer to Blumer's (1986) stance that in order to capture the nature of the phenomena explored, concepts can be developed and refined over the course of an inquiry, and not be set as absolute from the beginning of the exploration (Hammersley 2006). These concepts pivotally informed the main thematic findings, as highlighted in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8, and evolved over three critical stages. Essentially, the first two stages guided the discovering of key themes and identified critical incidents, as well as directing the process of interpretation that led to underpinning theoretical concepts (Long 2018a). It was toward the end of the second phase of analysis that tentative findings emerged and I began to make meaning of shame. Having little prior knowledge of shame or shame markers and cues, my learning has been a steep ascent in coming to understand these as symptomatic of shame. A critical discovery for me in the complexity of working with shame is looking for the hidden and nuanced cues in what is communicated through different channels and importantly to identify possible omissions. It was in the third stage of analysis that shame findings were more concretely revealed. I present this discovery through a series of selective accounts and nuanced examples, I do this under four headings describing the specific aspects of the overall cases in the following sections:

1. The centrality of shame: I discuss how findings indicated that the workplace transgressions were experienced as morally injurious events, and explore the sources of shame that triggered the rupture of social cohesion across organisations.
2. Discerning the experience of shame: explains the process of sense making in relation to shame, this includes a sub section on the development of a model about the spiral of shame.
3. Deciphering the language of shame: explores the process I undertook to identify concealed shame markers or emotional expressions of the participants and their experience of others.
4. Destruction of social bonds: in this section I argue that organisations were experienced by participants as defensively protecting themselves from the exposure of shame and the impacts of defensive behaviours which centred on Controlling Shame (Anger –

Attacking Self and Other), Denying Shame (Avoidance - Dissociation) and/or Concealing Shame (Withdrawal - Social Isolation).

9.2: Centrality of Shame

The overarching theme that emerges in all cases is of unacknowledged shame. Participants struggled to put words to their own experience of being shamed and/or feeling ashamed of the organisation of which they were members. Yet, they describe their experience of the aftermath of an overtly known transgression, either knowingly or unknowingly [51], as traumatising. The data indicates social structures had collapsed and social relations within the organisations seemed governed by emotional and psychological violence, in varying degrees. I explore these findings more extensively in the next chapter. Further, the data indicates that in all cases the individual interview participants perceived the workplace transgressions as morally injurious events and the causal agents for rupturing social cohesion (attachments/bonds) across the organisation (refer Table 12). Participants conveyed social bonds to mean their relationships between self, interpersonal (within and between peer/group/organisation) and sector (external other). The findings also affirm that in all cases, the immediate impact is commonly described as 'shock' or 'surprise' in learning of the transgression. While not explicitly stated, I came to understand this to be the trigger point of unacknowledged shame. Further, the transgression in all eighteen cases, centre on a moral and/or ethical violation. With the exception of two cases, the violations included a legal breach.

Table 12: Causal Agents: – Shame Forms Experienced and Observed in Organisations

Form of Shame	Experience	Case
Rejection Neglect, Abandonment	Perceived as irredeemably flawed and unworthy of care (love). Self-defective, inadequate or unacceptable to others	4 (Patrick) 5 (Abigail) 14 (Oscar) 16 (Jasmine)
Unsolicited Exposure Vulnerable, Tainted/Diseased, Exposed	Exposed for being flawed/not meeting expectations (regularity/social). The gaze and judgement of others. Perceived as inferior, flawed, inadequate. This is mediated through significant others and reinforced by	6 (Fleur) 1 (Max) 8 (Stuart) 10 (Haley)

[51] As Long (2008) purports, taking on a position of not knowing can be seen as a shame marker of denial.

	media, community, competitors, regulators, and legal system.	11 (Ivy) 13 (Dior)
Disappointed Expectation Failure, Hopelessness, Powerlessness	Violation of social norms and failure to fulfil expectation of others in order to become valued. Defiance and disobedience of social norms.	2 (Claudia) 3 (Tania) 12 (Poppy)
Exclusion – Marginalisation Thwarted belongingness, alienation and isolation	Sub-group with the system, perceived by a dominant group as a threat, due to gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or ethnicity, and shamed and excluded in order to silence and render them invisible.	7 (Emily) 18 (Holly) 9 (Madeline) 15 (Harry) 17 (Bronte)

I interpret these findings to mean that the sources of shame referred to in Table 13 seemed to occur in constellations where participants described defective leadership or leadership failures, unethical governance practices, poor performance management practices, betrayal by peers or sexual misconduct. More specifically the key elements are: (a) violation of role and authority; (b) failure to meet expectations; (c) a defective characteristic of the system/leadership; and/or (d) betrayal of values, rules and standards. In general, blame seemed to be directed by participants at organisational leadership (at either Board, Executive or Senior Management level), castigating them as perpetrators or coercive accomplices. The use of blame (seen here as a defence mechanism of denial) was widespread, as was the denouncing of responsibility across the organisational landscape (Kaufman 1996). In all cases participants believed that the perpetrators were either explicitly or complicity corrupting organisational values, purpose or standard rules. Such corruptions were seen to result in a loss of trust. As in Fleur's case (Chapter 7) the key protagonist, 'Jordan', had allegedly sexually harassed a female senior executive based in the United States of America. The CEO (Jordan's line manager) chose to conceal this transgression and avoid performance managing him. Fleur's moral indignation of these violations imply this was a source of shame for her and others, as Fleur perceived both Jordan and the CEO as de-legitimising and betraying the integrity of internal policies on sexual harassment and organisational values. This double standard expressed as:

> Um she, um as you know Americans are quite litigious um, we had to engage a lawyer, had to sort this out in the US...it was, you know, it was just a...I mean to me it was sort of shameful because the values were so clear. This was someone who was um...this was someone who had

> been hired with some substantial experience and presumably um, strong values…somehow this sort of shameful behaviour was being...somehow not thought to be sort of kosher to share more broadly with the market um, and instead um, he was allowed to resign (’Fleur’, Case 6)

Table 13 below sets out, across the 18 cases, the nature of the transgression, my analysis of subsequent sources of shame which flowed from these transgressions, the nature of the sector from which the cases came, and finally a statement on whether the research participant is still in that system, and if not the terms of the exit. The four cases that are highlighted in yellow within the table, are those that have formed the case studies in Chapters 5 to 8: Holly, Oscar, Fleur and Claudia. The green highlighted rows within the table are the cases, where I draw on nuanced data or selective accounts to highlight my arguments in the discussion of findings through Chapters 9 and 10. The non-colour rows are cases that were thematically analysed, however the focus was not as in-depth as compared the other cases.

In six cases the failings were of an ‘idealised’ or ‘hero worship’ authority figure who had exposed the system’s inadequacy and incompetence. I explore this finding in more detail in the next chapter. However, it is worth reiterating at this point that although the detail of the actual workplace transgression is not a focal point of this study, there seems to be a correlation between moral transgressions and desire for power and control. Participants expressed this as: (1) anxiety around the organisation’s survival and/or (2) leadership(s) narcissistic desire for superiority in pursuit of their own individual agendas at the expense of others (group/system).

Table 13: Sources of Shame

Case No.	Transgression – Trauma Source and Activation of Shame	Subsequent Sources of Shame	Industry	Sector	Participant Exit
1	Bribery and Fraud	Inadequate leadership and emotionally abusive relations - alienating, rejection, divisive relations, coercion and invalidation of executives	Manufacturing – Currency	Private	Redundancy
2	Exploitation of entry requirements in lowering Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) scores	Inadequate leadership practices and emotionally abusive relations – abandonment, neglect, manipulation, exploitation and rejection	Tertiary Education	Public	Resigned
3	Violating Religious Prescriptions	Sexual misconduct, emotional conditioning and inadequate leadership practices – isolating, alienating, invalidation, coercion, rejection and abandonment	Religious Order	Public	Resigned
4	Favouritism and Incestuous Relations	Sexual misconduct and inadequate leadership practices – divisive, alienating, neglect	Primary Resources - Wine Production	Private	Resigned
5	Breach of Regulatory Requirements and Bullying	Breach of governance board, neglectful leadership practices	Mental Health – Forensic Services	Private	Still employed at organisation
6	Sexual harassment and Breach of Internal Policies	Sexual Misconduct, inadequate leadership practices and emotional conditioning – manipulation, exploitation, invalidation, sexism, alienation	Finance - Banking Tier 1	Private	Resigned
7	Bullying and Sexual Discrimination	Inadequate leadership and emotionally abusive relations - alienation, rejection, invalidation, abandonment	Health – Hospital	Public	Resigned

Case No.	Transgression – Trauma Source and Activation of Shame	Subsequent Sources of Shame	Industry	Sector	Participant Exit
8	Gross misconduct, Breach of Intercompany OHS Policy - Violations related to substance abuse	Failings in consistent policies across companies (loop holes exploited), failings in communicating policies adequately, lack of procedural fairness, Inadequate leadership, coercion, collusion, incivility amongst contractors and abusive relations across various intergroup stakeholders, greed	Tier 1 Construction	Private	Contract end
9	Unfair dismissal	Inadequate leadership and emotionally abusive relations	Allied Health	Public	Resigned
10	Governance breaches	Inadequate leadership and emotionally abusive relations – rejection, alienation, coercion and invalidation	IT Software	Private	Resigned
11	Embezzlement and Kickbacks	Inadequate leadership, cronyism and emotionally abusive relations – rejection, alienation, coercion and invalidation	Hospitality	Private	Worked till contract expired
12	Breaches of governance and unfair dismissals	Inadequate leadership and emotionally abusive relations – aggression, rejection, alienation, exclusion, coercion and invalidation	Finance – Banking Tier 2	Private	Resigned
13	Breach of regulatory requirements, Unfair Dismissal and Bullying	Inadequate leadership and emotionally abusive relations - aggression, rejection, alienation, exclusion, coercion and invalidation	Independent Tertiary Education	Private	Resigned
14	Breaches of governance, abuse of staff and detainee's welfare	Inadequate leadership and emotionally abusive relations - aggression, abandonment, neglect, rejection, alienation, exclusion, coercion and invalidation	Criminal Justice System	Public	Resigned

Case No.	Transgression – Trauma Source and Activation of Shame	Subsequent Sources of Shame	Industry	Sector	Participant Exit
15	Incestuous relations, sexual misconduct and breach of staff privacy	Inadequate leadership and emotionally abusive relations - abandonment, neglect, rejection, alienation, exclusion, coercion and invalidation	NFP – Community Services	Public	Resigned
16	Breaches of governance, corruption of internal electoral processes and abuse of staff welfare. Unlawful expulsion of CEO	Expulsion of CEO, Current CEO demoralised and expelled. Aggressive behaviour, undermining, demoralised and dehumanised behaviour	NFP - Professional Association	Public	Resigned
17	Breaches of governance and regulatory requirements and Unfair expulsion of COO	Inadequate leadership and emotionally abusive relations – manipulation, exploitation, abandonment, rejection, alienation and invalidation	NFP – Childcare Services	Private	Resigned
18	Sexual misconduct, misappropriation of funds and poor performance management practices	Inadequate leadership and emotionally abusive relations – coercion, exploitation, abandonment, rejection, alienation, isolation, cronyism/sexism	IT Software	Private	Resigned

Exemplar Case Study

Selective Account

From the perspective of individual impact, the data points to each participant having experienced some form of persecutory abuse during the aftermath of a workplace transgression, from a 'shaming authority[52]' or group. This abuse is seen as causing moral injury[53]. Participants gave examples including being 'censured', 'ignored' 'denigrated', 'demoralised', 'bullied', 'unfairly judged', 'marginalised', 'alienated', feeling 'powerless', 'helpless', 'alone', and/or treated 'as if' they were not performing to an expectation of their role This finding of moral injury is highlighted in each of the exemplified cases in Chapters, 5, 6, 7 and 8. The way the abuse was enacted was sometimes conveyed as a form of repercussion when the participant escalated, questioned or challenged unethical behaviour of the shaming authority (generally, senior executive or board member) or, as was described by four participants when 'speaking truth to power'. Further, participants reported moral injury sustained while bearing witness to: (1) leadership or subgroups perpetrating unethical or immoral acts; (2) leadership/groups failing to prevent transgressions; (3) learning about acts that conflicted with deeply held moral beliefs and expectations/values of the organisation; and/or (4) aftermath of abuse and human cost of redundancies

Participants' reports also point to a withdrawal of support or care from leadership. Examples given included participant or others (witness victims) being abandoned, neglected, excluded, disconnected, isolated, trapped, oppressed and/or pressured or pushed out from the system[54]. These emotional expressions are all characteristic of the affect of unacknowledged shame, referred to as the feeling trap (Lewis 1971, p.41) or as Kaufman (1996) posits 'shame language-feeling states' (p. 205). These findings take on particular meaning in the context of what Lewis (1996) refers to as the triggering of a 'shame spiral' within an organisation, in which

[52] I use the term 'shaming authority' to denote a perpetrator who is in a position of power and authority, who subordinates an individual/group by way of making them feel inadequate, incompetent or powerless (Oravecz, Hárdi & Lajtai 2004).

[53] By moral injury, I refer to (Drescher et al. 2011) definition as a 'disruption in an individual's confidence and expectations about one's own or others' motivation or capacity to behave in a just and ethical manner. This injury is brought about by bearing witness to perceived immoral acts, failure to stop such actions, or perpetration of immoral acts, in particular actions that are inhumane, cruel, depraved, or violent, bringing about pain, suffering, or death of others'.(p.8)

[54] This emotional sequence paralleled my own experience during the course of the research journey, records of which exist in illustrations of my felt experience at each significant incident/event. These drawings did not make sense at the time, though I continued to compile them to form a collage of my experience. It wasn't until I reviewed literature by Michael Lewis, more specifically his book, 'Shame : the exposed self' (1995) that I realised my emotional/lived experience paralleled those of the research participants – refer Appendix 2

the shamed authority defensively becomes the shaming authority, enacting violent retribution (emotional and psychological abuse) on, using this research as example, the participant and 'chosen' sub groups[55]. These findings also signal that social relations across the system becoming untenable and detached.

In analysing the data, I discovered that during the interviews participants were evaluating themselves as being shamed. I was not aware of this at the time. My lack of understanding of shame cues at that time may account for this lack of awareness. I am later able to detect self-evaluation through symbolic illustrations in their system drawings. This is most identifiable as a diminutive sense of self with participants describing being 'bullied' or 'demoralised' or feeling 'helpless'[56].

The data also suggests that across all cases there are four distinct forms in which experiences of shame was evoked by leadership and/ or subgroups. As set out in Table 12, these forms include rejection, unsolicited exposure, disappointed expectation, and exclusion/marginalisation. Noteworthy in the data is the ubiquity of injurious levels of shame experienced by the research participants and/or bearing witness of others (groups). Some words used to describe the levels of distress were 'crazy', 'terrifying', 'horror', 'despair' and 'dread'. Both verbal and non-verbal expressions signify that the individual and group struggled to assimilate following the traumatic event of the transgression, including how to manage the lasting impact. In fifteen cases this was reported as acerbated by a withdrawal of support from leadership. Reported in all but one case was implementation of change initiatives (structural and/or cultural) as corrective actions following the transgression. How these occurred across the cases is set out in Table 14 below.

Table 14: Change Initiative Post Transgression

Type of Change Initiative	**Case**
Culture Transformation Program, included restructuring	1 (Max), 6 (Fleur), 8 (Stuart), 10 (Haley), 12 (Poppy), 16 (Jasmine)

[55] By 'chosen', I refer to unwanted identities, in that the perverse system positions subjects as objects. As Long (2008, p. 33) posits, 'It involves acceptance and denial of the subjectivity of the other'.

[56] With the benefit of the learnings I have attained through this study, I am confident that if I were to reanalyse the transcripts I would find evidence of participants' self-blame.

Type of Change Initiative	Case
Restructuring Organisation or parts of, under guise of change initiative	2 (Claudia), 4 (Patrick), 5 (Abigail), 7 (Emily), 9 (Madeline), 11 (Ivy), 13 (Dior), 14 (Oscar), 15 (Harry), 17 (Bronte), 18 (Holly)

These corrective measures appeared only to create an illusion of unity (Hopper 2003). In all cases participants reported feeling inadequacy and disconnection in the relational sphere of the organisations, with leadership/board avoidance of acknowledging the failings of the perpetrator(s), and/or desire to deny or conceal the transgression. In fourteen cases, participants chose to resign from the organisation due to the high level of toxicity in the organisational culture and, more specifically, they reported relations with leadership so broken as to become unbearable. In these situations each gave explicit examples of psychological and social functioning problems or alluded to these through abstract verbal expression (such as the use of the metaphor of a 'dark space') or non-verbal expressions (examples given were the use of the colour black to denote sadness and depression, or black spots, tears, frowns and black boxes).

Of these 14 cases, two participants felt they had no other choice but to resign (constructive dismissals) and subsequently sought justice through legal avenues. Separate to this, one participant shared how she used the opportunity of a restructure to orchestrate the redundancy of her role. Another two participants on limited tenured contracts, worked to the end of the terms (they only had a six to twelve-month period to termination date). Only two individuals ('Max', Case 1, and 'Abigail', Case 5) continued to work in their organisations. 'Abigail' reported she had to 'escape' her experience of the humiliation (Tangney 1995) she endured from the persecutory abuse inflicted by her line manager. She did this by seeking redeployment within a client prison system for a period of six months, at which point the line manager had left on stress leave. 'Abigail' stated, 'I was protected there (inside the prison). I did feel safer strangely enough. It felt safer'. It seemed that the prison became her psychic retreat[57] during the aftermath. This need for a retreat is indicative of trauma having occurred (Steiner 2011; Yarom 2015). By comparison, 'Max' reported he was in the process of orchestrating his exit, insinuating a forthcoming restructure would facilitate this. I felt as if this was his escape, I fantasised this as a revenge act, coercing a 'golden handshake' from the company to compensate for the abuse he endured; in retaliation for the CEO's humiliation of

[57] According to Steiner (2011), 'Psychic Retreats' are places where an individual (or group) withdraw in search of respite from anxiety and emotional/psychological pain.

him in referring to him as a ‘token female’. As argued by Kaufman (1996), repeated and uncontrolled abuse is deeply injurious, and induces ‘hatred and revenge-seeking along with shame’ (p.40). I propose Max was unable to consciously verbalise this hatred, rather that its expression is primitively symbolised in his drawing as aggressive red strikes representing fire. From a psychoanalytic perspective, fire denotes libidinal expression of aggression and masculine potency (Freud 1963).

Figure 23: Flames of Humiliated Rage
Source: Max, Case 1

This section of the chapter has provided context on my coming to know shame. More specifically, it demonstrated how shame emerged as an overarching theme for this study, in being a fundamental role in dysregulating social relations and organisational functioning. The explanatory power of the centrality of shame in this research is fivefold. First, it demonstrates the connections between an organisation’s identity (reputation) that is blemished by unethical behaviour (morally transgressive) and rupturing of social relations across the system.

Second, it illuminates shame surfacing around a pattern of constellations of moral transgressions that occurred around defective leadership or leadership failures, unethical governance practices, poor performance management practices, betrayal by peers or sexual misconduct. The key elements of these constellations of transgressions include: (a) violation of role and authority; (b) failure to meet expectations; (c) a defective characteristic of the system/leadership; and/or (d) betrayal of values, rules and standards.

Third, in the aftermath of these critical incidents people experienced shame as persecutory abuse from a shaming authority or group in the form of: rejection, unsolicited exposure, disappointed expectation and exclusion/marginalisation. Within each of these shame forms, I outline examples that participants experienced as causing moral injury which include being ‘censured’, ‘ignored’ ‘denigrated’, ‘demoralised’, ‘bullied’, ‘unfairly judged’, ‘marginalised’,

‘alienated’, feeling ‘powerless’, ‘helpless’, ‘alone’, and/or treated as if they were not performing to an expectation of their role.

Fourth, the relationship correlation between sources of shame and change initiatives post transgression, which served to create an illusion of unity or reintegration.

Last, it reveals how participants when asked to discuss their experience of being in an organisation following an overtly known transgression, all disclosed experiences that on analysis can be understood as shame. That shame was not easily identifiable yet was so ubiquitous may indicate that it is a significant experience overlooked as a causal agent of maladaptive behaviour in organisations. This section helps to better understand the relationship between a moral transgression and the experience of shame, particularly when perceived as a moral injustice that I argue, leads to moral injury.

I now move on to discuss the finding of unacknowledged shame and the process by which this was discovered.

9.3: Discerning the Experience of Shame

A key finding of this study is that shame, surprisingly is not explicitly stated in the narratives. In the four cases in which I asked if there was a sense of shame felt within the organisation, the participants were either unsure, or the sense of shame was expressed as them being ashamed of the organisation’s handling of the matter (Case 1 and 12), or they considered the overtly known workplace transgression as shameful (Case 6 and 12). For the latter, the shameful behaviour was rationalised and reflected in association to a movie. In all other cases (Cases 2–5, 7-11 and 13-18), the outward expression of shame or feeling ashamed was not stated.

Participants commonly had an observable preoccupation with the events they experienced in the aftermath of the transgression. This occurred in fourteen cases, in the form of ruminations (Tangney 1995), repeatedly expressed by participants as their ‘curiosity’ in attempts to make sense of the events (which I now refer to as ‘shame scenes’[58]) whilst disclosing scenarios. In reviewing the transcripts, I found I was often overcome by sadness and discomfort in hearing

[58] As purported by Kaufman (1996, p. 37), shame scenes are events in which specific actions, images, language, affects and gestures we experience as shaming from others. These create a mental/psychic imprint that is internalised, stored in memory and when triggered the recurrence of shame engages other independent shame scenes that are fused and acts like a malignant contagion within the self.

the distressing situations participants experienced. Exemplified in Chapter 5 (p.66), I suggest Holly marked her trauma on being shamed, when in an even tone she said, 'Oh thinking about it you can probably tell my emotions are rising right now…even after seven years ago you know, its…'. At the time of the interview, I noted how perplexed I was that Holly did not express any outwardly observable signs of discomfort and on re-hearing the audio of this part of the narrative, I found it extremely difficult to gauge from her voice; there was no change in pitch to indicate any form of pain. Puzzled by her expression, I wondered why Holly's feelings were so invisible and what emotions had been stirred in her.

It was not uncommon for narratives to appear confusing, muddled or convoluted in parts that left me feeling inadequate and incompetent. I struggled to make sense of the individual experiences and code the data. I felt frustrated by the lack of coherency in responses and blamed myself, questioning my competence as a research interviewer. I winced at the frequency of the use um's and ah's, pauses, you know's, disorganised thoughts or shift/retreats of thoughts; as well as, hesitations or moments where both the participant and I would speak over each other[59]. I wondered why I was unable to enable a space where interviewees were able to be more articulate in their responses. As I kept delving into the transcripts, I became immobilised by my own sense of inferiority and failure. Feeling deeply ashamed for not producing perfectly coherent interviews, I was embarrassed to reveal to others the shame I experienced, for fear of being 'seen' and criticised as an inferior researcher. Unconsciously, my sense of self disintegrated and inhibited my capacity to see, think and hear what the participants articulated in their narratives. I essentially collapsed within myself.

Unknowingly, I was caught in my own accumulated shame experiences that were possibly triggered by the transferences of shame that I had introjected whilst immersing myself in the data of the transcripts (Malansharuvil 2004; Racker 2018; Waska 1999). Filled up by these painful and unbearable experiences, my holding capacity following the interviews felt overloaded. Frustrated by my inability to effectively code the data in an expedient manner, I

[59] Having had no previous knowledge on the concepts of shame, at the outset of the research I was completely ignorant that these were markers which could indicate hidden behaviour. I wonder now that due to my ignorance that participants may have experienced me as negatively judgemental about how they dealt with their experience (Scheff and Retzinger 2001). On reviewing my interview notes, I did make a highly critical observation on the manner one participant communicated, noting surprise that they were so inarticulate despite their seniority in the organisation. I wrote 'If this were a job interview and I was in my previous HR Director role, this person would not be shortlisted'. Reflecting on my judgement of this person stirs shame within for the arrogant stance I held. This then instantly triggers another loop of shame, as I feel the shame of being judged, knowing what it feels like to be in the gaze of the other.

feared the transcripts. Each time I went to them I seemed to re-experience a sense of failure in my research ability. Consequently, I delayed analysing a number of individual cases without fully understanding why, blaming myself for what I considered 'bad' interviews. My drive for learning and enlightenment was eroded by fear of knowledge and not wanting to know (Britzman 1998; Harrison 2018; Sonu 2016). My unconscious denial of the shame protracted the process of deep thematic analysis. Consumed by a hatred of learning and suffering with my sense of inferiority, I grew fatigued by the extraordinary efforts to silence my critical thoughts and work through each case. At my lowest ebb, I felt lost, confused, incompetent, fraudulent, deflated, helpless, isolated and abandoned by my peers. The felt experiences of this emotional sequence I reflected in a pictorial journal of my role as a researcher through this study (refer below example of Drawing 9 and Appendix 8).

Figure 24 Silenced

Source: Author, Drawing 9.

My desire to please and influence others (supervisors, peers and potential examiners) was conflicted by overwhelming anxieties on whether others would attack me and hate what I discovered and wrote. I wondered whether anyone truly cared about my contributions and I questioned my motives for this large undertaking. Somehow, I managed to emerge through what felt like a surreally cognitive and psychological fog. At the time, I had no knowledge that this experience was likely to be an dissociative phenomenon in defence of shame (Boon, Steele & Van Der Hart 2011; Steele, Boon & van der Hart 2016; Van der Kolk & Fisler 1995). Slowly the ideas of shame came out of the fog into my consciousness and I found the desire to know more and to widen my reading. The analytical process was paused until I could comprehend with more confidence the confronting data I had amassed. I needed to know how this related to shame.

It was through subsequent immersion in knowledge around seminal concepts of shame (Brown 2007; Lewis 1971; Nathanson 1994; Retzinger 1995; Scheff & Retzinger 2001) that I

came to understand more intricately the complexity in ‘finding’ shame in the data, and that my experience paralleled that of the individual participant’s experience of the dynamic of shame. Although not novel, this notion of my experience paralleling the experience of participants, was a pivotal finding for me and provided the impetus to move forward with a clearer conceptual frame in which to categorise the main themes, particularly on protective strategies employed at an unconscious level. Though this process was a long and fragile period of gestation, I came to realise that I could not rush the analytical process. I was paralleling the experience of chronic and unacknowledged shame and needed time to metabolise and integrate the experience.

Absence of emotion perplexed me during the initial attempts at analysing the data. Whilst the narratives were steeped in rich descriptions about the events that occurred, and about the key protagonists involved, in 10 cases, like my experience, there was a void of expression of emotions. For example, in 11 of 18 interviews there was no expression or naming of emotion associated with their choice of colours for their images. In six further cases emotion was named after probing on my part. When this occurred, participants linked some colours (not all) to an emotion.

Example 1:

> Susan: So tell me about the choice of colours… because you've used blue...
>
> Case 15: Yeah well blue for boy. This little boy. I like blue. But the red was the you know, I was always...it was the anger he...all the different things are always...there wasn't anything joyful about it for that period of time...kindness or joy or humour or you know, it was all...it was all...it's all...I wasn't going to go black but I thought red...yeah...I could have spent a lot more time on this.

Example 2

> Susan: Tell me about your choice of colour...in terms of what the colours represent?
>
> Case 6**:** I kind of made them black because I kind of wanted to make them dark. I don’t know, I think I just did blue as in that was my association with clouds.

I came to understand this absence as an unconscious omission that occurs when one is overwhelmed by a situation and avoids thinking about anything painful. This is symptomatic of dissociation (Boon, Steele & Van Der Hart 2011).

9.3.1: Spiral of Shame

It was the thematic analysis of the system drawing in Case 18 (Holly) that led to another crucial finding, being that the structure of the images suggested the presence of an unconscious recursive loop of shame. The imagery and her interpretation of her felt experience provided an invaluable frame that crystallised the themes and findings on unacknowledged shame, particularly around transference and countertransference phenomenon utilised within the system to discharge unwanted feelings of shame (Racker 2007, 2018; Scheff 2014). Importantly, these phenomena appeared in varying forms in all my interview experiences with participants. As conceptualised by Lewis (1971) and extended by Scheff and Retzinger (2001), what I was discovering resonated with their conceptual models, in that shame is ubiquitous in interaction and invisible within interpersonal relations. My own experience certainly attested to that.

To better aid my analysis, I adapted a conceptualised model of the Shame Spiral (refer Figure 25) to consider the dynamics from a systems perspective. This helped frame my understanding on the sequence of reactions (emotional, behavioural and cognitive), and how this was possibly discharged among the various responses and social relations within the organisational system environment. This consolidated understanding of the emotional expressions conveyed in the data, highlighting links to the causal mechanism associated with moral transgression and maladaptive responses in an organisational construct. Further, integrating open systems concepts (De Board 2006; Emery 1969; Miller & Rice 1967; Morgan 2006) with the shame spiral (Kaufman 1996; Sanderson 2015; Scheff 1987), facilitated the emergence of meaning of this social construct for this study. The strength of this conceptual model as a research output is that it offers a novel and insightful approach to explain the findings.

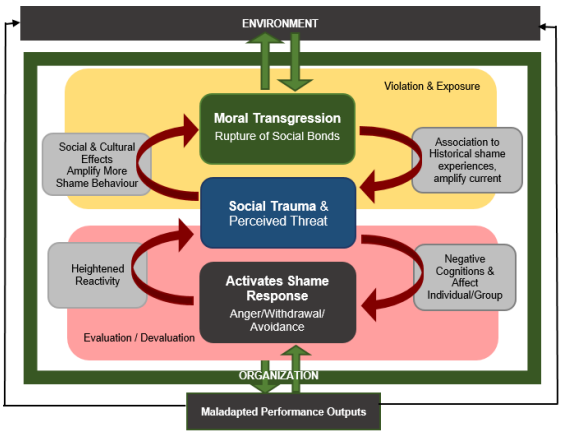

Figure 25: Shame Spiral

Source: Author

These next level findings about unacknowledged shame align closely with the theory argued by the key researchers cited in Chapter 2 (Kaufman 1996; Lewis 1971; Lewis 1995; Scheff 1987; Scheff & Retzinger 2001). The findings also provided me with clarity on the direction to take as I built the thematic analysis. I continue to discuss the development of thinking as this chapter progresses.

Through the research of Lewis (1971) and Scheff and Retzinger (2001) I built up my understanding of unacknowledged shame and by adapting their arguments I was able to use this lens to discover, within the narratives, how the participant experiences aligned with the spiralling of shame. Typically, this was initially signified by ruminations about what transpired after the exposure of transgression. The following excerpt epitomises Max's (Case 1) attempts to deconstruct events that took place in the aftermath of a transgression that involved fraud and bribery on an international scale. The transgression severely damaged the reputation of the organisation's identity. 'Max' was contracted as a senior HR executive to implement a culture program to restore order. The excerpt and my analytical treatment of it, is an example of discovering disguised language and markers in the narratives:

> I think the curiosity for me is what we touched on earlier you know, about you know, the dysfunctional family, the prison environment, the want and need to escape ah, or the desire to escape...um...you know, feeling constrained you know, my network is non-existent now - HR network - because I just don't have time to catch up with people you know...it's difficult. So you know, the isolation. Um...so I've had a lot of curiosity around that I guess and it's...it's been either managing that or being comfortable with that um...and reframing my role and reframing ah, how I take up my role' ('Max', Case 1)

Max's excerpt exemplifies spiralling shame scenes manifest in ruminations about what played out within the organisation and impact on themselves[60]. In this paragraph, there are direct and indirect words that indicate shame. Table 15 below illustrates the analysis of Max's discourse, in which the sequence of shame was possibly triggered and re-triggered during his recollection of the shame scenes he experienced (Retzinger 1991a, p. 5).

[60] Max appeared emotionally detached whilst pondering these events, possibly denoting unconscious overwhelm of shame and symptomatic of dissociation. As theorised in Chapter 2, the phenomenon of dissociation is closely related with shame and linked to trauma (Gordon, 2007, 2012).

Table 15: Analysis of Shame Discourse

Code Words/Phrases Representing Shame	**Context and feelings for shame revealed as**	**Symbolic Behaviour Shame Identified Through**
‘The curiosity for me’	Muddled thought processes	Confusion or possibly indifference
‘Dysfunctional family’	Phrase suggestive of being hurt (emotionally) or in abusive relations	Ridicule
‘Prison environment’	Phrase / metaphor indicates feelings of separated from significant others (examples: alienated, alone, deserted, detached, disconnected, distant, divorced, dumped, estranged, ostracised, rebuffed, rejected, split, withdrawn)	Abandonment & Engulfment
‘My network is non-existent now - HR network’	Sense of not belonging, loss of identity, social-emotional discomfort	Abandonment
‘Because I just don't have time to catch up with people you know...it's difficult.	Statement insinuates responsibility or fault on the other (role/organisation/external influences) for Max’s withdrawal for fear of being seen by his networks as lower in status (Retzinger 1991 citing Labov & Fanshel 1997, p.64)	Hiding Behaviour
‘So you know, the isolation. Um...’	Verbal withdrawal: change in verbal behaviour (withdrawal) from talking in sentence form just prior to this point, to talking in word form, as a minimal response	Hiding Behaviour

Code Words/Phrases Representing Shame	Context and feelings for shame revealed as	Symbolic Behaviour Shame Identified Through
Pauses interjected in a conversation i.e. 'ah', 'um' and 'you know'	Fillers; serve a similar function as projection; they attempt to affirm the bond and include the other in one's experience, or to deny one's experience.	Disorganisation of thought
'Feeling constrained you know, my network is non-existent now'	Fragmented speech: speech marked by rapid change in topic, so that it become inco-herent.	Disorganisation of thought
'So I've had a lot of curiosity around that I guess'	Statement reveals sense of uncertainty and/or helplessness, is an expression that relates to one not feeling like they measure up to own or another's ideal image	Inadequacy

Using Scheff and Retzinger's (2001) analytical methods enabled identification of clues of shame sequences in the transcripts and engendered confidence in arguing that the shame markers in Max's passage, as with all other narratives, disguise recursive loops of shame. In Max's case this was hidden in his initial association of the organisation akin to a 'dysfunctional family' ('not me'/'bad other'), signifying insecure/disorganised attachments as theorised in Chapter 2 (Main & Solomon 1986). I posit the mobilisation of this metaphor instantly[61] triggered a sense of inadequacy, which then triggered further shame in his association that the system's environment resembling a 'prison' and the 'desire to escape'. The prison and desire to escape images possibly signal engulfment and conceivably, unconscious flooding of shame caused by a perceived loss of autonomy and freedom, both at an individual and organisational level (Kaufman 1996). This finding of entrapment and sense of engulfment was indicated in twelve cases. It was not uncommon for the participant's in these cases to express they were burdened by anxiety that triggered a desire to 'escape' from the gaze of the external

[61] Research by Lewis (1971) and Scheff and Retzinger (2001), indicates a tendency of patients/research participants to experience shame while telling another about their experiences. Generally marked by utterances, as they did in Max's narrative, thus suggesting that the shame reaction may have occurred rapidly in verbal flow.

other, at both organisational and interpersonal levels. I argue these dynamics both reflect, and produce, unacknowledged shame (Scheff and Retzinger 2001).

Moreover, this finding suggests that feelings of engulfment pertains to either the individual or the subgroup having to give up some aspect of self for the needs of others. In Max's case, the needs of the organisation (culture change) took precedent over his needs (identity and belonging) to continue his affiliation with the HR Network (external other, sentient family). He tacitly implied the 'HR Network' was a cohesive family ('non-dysfunctional other') and that they were 'non-existent now' implies a lost or severed connection, possibly resulting from Max distancing himself. I also assume he was ashamed of his connection with the 'tarnished' organisation, based on his perception of media reports. He expresses this as 'I felt a bit less then because I was working for a crooked organisation in the eyes of many because of the media'. Max's emotional expression of 'constrained' may signify that he felt compelled to withdraw and isolate himself from others. Alternatively, it may signal he was coercively controlled/restricted within the organisational environment. In either scenario, I contend that shame was further triggered, spiralling Max and the organisation into isolation and silence - Max from the 'HR Network,' and the organisation from the external environment.

Figure 26: Flames of Humiliated Rage
Source: Max, Case 1

Ruminations of shame events and a spiral of shame are also symbolically represented in Max's system drawing (Figure 26: 'Flames of Humiliated Rage'). I associate the question mark and cowboy positioned in the centre as the epi-centre of the aftermath. Max began his interpretation at the centre of the drawing, and then moved unguided in a circular clockwise direction, looping around the page as he deconstructed the events.

Max's expression of 'curiosity' in the narrative excerpt is perhaps an unconscious verbal expression of residue shock. His inability to explicitly voice and name shame affects during

this passage may have triggered unacknowledged shame within him. Considered through a systems lens, Max's drawing vibrantly depicts the spread of humiliated rage through the organisation (as indicated by his red and yellow strokes representing fire) like a contagion. Three participants expressed contagion as 'disease' or 'cancer' in reference to behaviour they observed as unethical. These phenomena may unconsciously denote being contaminated by unacknowledged shame. The theme of cancer is exemplified in Chapter 7, 'Fleur's' Case.

A general finding of this study is that whilst painful emotion experienced by the participant was not fully expressed verbally the combination of data and theory suggest affect was either hidden, disguised metaphorically within narratives, or symbolically represented in drawing.

9.4: Deciphering the Language of Shame

The findings indicate that experiences shared by each of the participants were intensely painful and by their own admission difficult to discuss. Though not clearly articulated in the early part of the interviews, this was revealed by all participants either at the end of the interview or in a follow up conversation post the interview. In the latter cases, I was often surprised that I had been unable to register this during the interview and in going back over my notes, surprised at how emotionally detached I was. While this finding is not novel given the discussion in Chapter 2 about dissociation, it does validate the inherent nature of shame, which acts to hide and invariably silence voice and thought that disconnects the self/system with the external world. The experience of shame becomes unspeakable to others and unnoticed. What's more, the findings in all cases suggested that the decoupled or broken social relations caused pathological behaviour of denial or withdrawal, causing any expression of shame to be unconsciously hidden or disguised (Lewis 1971; Lewis 1995; Lynd 1958; Kaufman 1996).

Focusing on the detail of both the verbal and non-verbal elements in the configuration of the narratives, enabled me to identify concealed shame markers and cues (Kostic & Chadee 2014; Lewis 1971; Retzinger 1995; Scheff 2014; Scheff & Retzinger 2001). This process illuminated hidden or disguised emotional expressions of the participant and their experience of others (perpetrator, bystanders/accomplices/ victims) within the system, as shamed, shaming and ashamed of the organisations' failings (Kaufman 1996).

Armed with the findings I have explicated in this chapter, I proceeded to go back into the transcripts to conduct further in-depth analysis of the narratives. Given shame is an emotion inwardly experienced (Lewis 1971), I needed to be more sensitive to these nuances in my

deconstruction of the data in order to better understand unacknowledged shame. As I immersed myself again in the stories, I noticed patterns in hidden emotional expressions and the unconscious shame responses participants shared of themselves to others, and of their shared observation of others' reactions to shaming experiences. Line by line I unpicked adjectives, delving into clinical psychoanalytic interpretations on shame (Amir 2018; Boon, Steele & Van Der Hart 2011; Campbell & Miller 2011; Dearing & Tangney 2011; DeYoung 2015; Dorahy 2017; Heinze 2017; Ho 1976; Johnson & Moran 2013; Kaufman 1996; Lee & Wheeler 1996; Lewis 1971; Lewis 1995, 2003; Lynd 1958; Nathanson 1987; Piers & Singer 1953; Pincus & Roche 2012; Retzinger 1995; Ross 2000; Sanderson 2015; Scheff 1987, 1988, 2003, 2014; Scheff & Retzinger 2001; Steiner 2011; Tamas 2016; Tangney & Dearing 2002; Tangney 1995; Wurmser 1981b; Wurmser 2015; Yarom 2015), of various associations and metaphoric expression that related to shame. I re-considered paralinguistic aspects of the dialogue as clues to hidden shame (Lewis 1971; Retzinger 1995). These were typically accompanied by verbal descriptions of the others such as: 'stupid', 'silly', 'idiot', 'needy' or 'lazy' that likely reflect a degree of hidden hatred and contempt (Retzinger 1991). Furthermore, I took note of absences or resistances in speech that possibly disguised shame unconsciously within each of the narratives (Lewis 1995).

To assist in my ability to recognise these cues/markers, I created a table based on seminal research findings on shame, as discussed in Chapter 2, as a cross-referencing tool on verbal, non-verbal and paralinguistic clues expressed by participants (refer Table 16, p.223). Additionally, to address what I considered an absence of explicit emotional expression about the system drawings, I developed another table to link participant choice of colour and their emotional association with the image they draw (refer Table 17: System Drawing - Emotional Connections, p. 224). Further, I collated (refer Table 16, last column) a summation of the somatic responses I experienced in countertransference phenomenon in my interactions with participants. These collations I considered a useful guide to other indicators of unacknowledged shame, particularly with those participants who in my view disavowed shame and had no conscious awareness of it (Margarian 2017).

For example, in Case 9 (Poppy), in seeking Poppy's validation of the data of her interview I shared a somatic reaction I had during her narrative. When Poppy was describing how she challenged the CEO on unethical behaviour, resulting in him removing her as line manager, I instantaneously developed a violent skin irritation in my arm. The itch was so severe and painful it distracted my thoughts. I made a note that I longed to bathe myself in 'Pinetarsol' (a solution that relieves itching and inflamed skin). I recalled a similar experience in a highly stressful period of my past. From a psychoanalytic perspective, I interpreted the irritation as

rage turned inward, and my desire to violently scratch, a form of self-mutilation. I speculated that this irritation was the system's desire to mutilate itself in the form of severing unwanted others, the causes of intense pain, by cutting them out and thereby relieving or numbing the system of the emotional connection and reminder of its transgressions. I speculated that Poppy resigned from the organisation to relieve the psychological distress she may have felt. Her resignation may have been an unconscious symbolic act of self-mutilation, severing herself from the system, to stop any further contamination of the system's shame on her. Unacknowledged shame had become 'a sickness of the organisation's soul' (Kaufmann 1989, p. 5) that needed to be lanced and toxins removed. Poppy validated this hypothesis, affirming that the stress levels she experienced at the time, were so elevated that she believed it was a contributing factor to her experiencing a heart attack during this period (not previously disclosed in the initial interview).

The utilisation of the guides to decipher images in the drawings on nonverbalised shame proved invaluable in developing my findings. Most notably were expressions of posture and bodily movements that I came to understand as symbolising the defence strategy of shame and humiliated rage (Retzinger 1991). Referring to Figure 27 below and Figure 28 on p. 228, both drawings suggest the systems defence as controlling shame is by attacking others and driving for power. This is represented by the key perpetrators of persecutory behaviour depicted as having enlarged and swelling bodies. The depictions enabled participants (victims of bullying) to illustrate what they were unable to verbalise about the abusive nature of the shaming authorities and how these authorities silenced or isolated unwanted others. Further, these findings signal how one can feel invalidated by a shaming authority. Figures were presented as minimised in the presence of overbearing and perversely evaluating 'gazes of others'. These evocative shame scenes are some examples of the deeply disturbing chronicles of the agonising humiliation (as denoted by the colour red) endured by the participants.

Figure 27: Mutilated

Source: Poppy, Case 12

Table 16: Verbal, Non Verbal and Paralinguistic Clues

Non-verbal	Paralinguistic	Verbal	Cognitive	Behaviour	Somatic
• Gaze aversion • Staring directly at other • Downcast eyes • Bowed head • Blushing • Slumped or hunched shoulders • Covering all or part of the face • Squirming • Fidgeting • Biting or licking lips • Biting tongue • False smiling • Contraction of the body • ‘ Shrivelling’ or collapse in body posture • Restless shifts of posture or gesticulation	• Hesitation • Soft speech • Mumbling • Silences • Stammering • Long pauses • Rapid speech • Tensely laughed words • Vocal retreat • Disorganisation of thought • Over-use of qualifiers • Self-interruption • Self-censorship	• Negative language directed at self/other • Use of adjectives such as: needy, ridiculous, silly, idiotic, stupid, dumb, weak, pathetic, inept, worthless • Confused • Muddled • Inadequate • Angry • Inferior • Unworthy • Vulnerable	• Confusion of thought • Negative self-thoughts • Humiliated fury • Rumination • Memory of other shame experiences • Negative self-talk	• Hide • Shrink • Paralysis • Inhibition • Hostility • Rage • Violence • Shaming others • Appeasement behaviour: - submission - compliance - helplessness	**Hypo arousal – Energy conserving** • Sleepiness • Exhaustion / Fatigue • Muscle Tension • Yawning • Unexpected shift in body • Tearfulness • Headache • Stomach Disturbance • Throat Constriction **Hyper arousal - Energy-expending** • Raised Voice • Dehydration • Sugar Craving • Alcohol Craving • Giddiness • Aches in joints • Nausea • Itchiness • Sexual Arousal • Breathlessness

Table 17: System Drawing - Emotional Connections, Case 17 Example

Colour	Symbol/Image	Representation of	Emotions Evoked
Black	Large head of protruding figure with defined gaze (towards black barrier) and open mouth. Neck craning over 2 figures sitting in chair Alternative perception of figure as a bearded male puppet	• CFO's oppressive and manipulative influence over the two business owners. His malevolent glare towards the interviewee and the organisation – an 'evil eye' that caused psychological injury to others • Puppet signifies the masking of owner's evil/demonic power - controlling or controlled behaviour towards each other. Their anger and unresolved issues of jealousy were projected and projective identification taken up by CFO, who enacted their malevolence towards each other.	• Oppressive, malicious, immoral, terror, torment, anguish, hurt • Rage, hatred, danger, malicious, evil
	2 chairs • 1 x four legged (2 leg almost out of view, 1 looks stable and leads up to the back support, the other leg looks fractured) • 1 x office on casters	• Placed in an uncomfortable & unbalanced position of power. Difficult /precarious situation • Elusive, manoeuvrable, shifting position/direction/alliance, could spin in any direction – position & responsibility uncertain (moves around)	• Discomfort, insecure, powerless, uncertain, unease • Confusion, agitation, irritation, volatile, erratic, manic
	Thick curved line / outline of a breast (no nipple)	• Psychological Barrier, protection against the expression of destructiveness & persecutory attacks from leadership – barrier deflects the evil eye of the CFO and business owner's unconscious projections of rage. • Inside the psychic retreat (breast represents psychic/self-soothing environment). The curve of the breast is unconsciously symbolic of the good nourishing breast (organisation as a whole) has turned bad, depriving and no longer providing sustenance to all.	• Terror, despair, fear, pain, anger, rage, vengefulness, dislike, resentment, guilt, paranoia, • Suffering, pain, anxious, isolated, abandoned, deprived

Colour	Symbol/Image	Representation of	Emotions Evoked
	Behind barrier stands female/androgynous figure (tunic – feminine and leggings/pants – masculine) buffering or shielding the organisation	• The androgynous figure of the female represents the strong female presence (interview and others) whose emotional intelligence and defiant ethical/moral stance on matters was possibly experienced as an expression of destructiveness or a perceived threat to the leaders masculinity (emasculating/castrating) and in turn 'un-nurturing/unmotherly' (shaming/ humiliating), polarising the leaders incompetence/inferiority.	• Fear, neglect, uncaring, humiliation, deprived, lonely, alienated, rejected, guilt, shame
	Black heeled ankle boots – feet spread apart, pointing left & right direction	• Attempting to stay grounded, digging heels in ground – power derived from one's sexuality (femininity)	• Disgust, contempt, vengefulness, rage, wrath, hostility
	Lightly outlined dress, leggings & neck chain on female No hands	• Feeling empty /emotional void, detached, numb & powerless • Lost possession of hands, 'dead hands' being oppressed/obstructed by the strong influence of the CFO & others (HR Mgr/Owners)	• Gloom, despair, hopelessness, alarm, panic, depression, anxiety, distressed, lonely • Grief, suffering, anguish, mortified, powerlessness, helpless
	Light outline of male profile's face/head	• Dark face of the organisation • Employees feeling sad/depressed about the state of the organisation	
Blue	Collar on large protruding head ('puppet man') right hand side of drawing	• Perceived as unskilled/unknowledgeable in his role • Lacking legitimacy or authority of the wider system (unconscious)	• Inferior, disingenuous, distrust, deceptive
	Blue clothes on small male figure on top left side of drawing	• Male child / the other half of the paired children the business was meant to protect & care for	• Immaturity, vulnerability, naive
	Blue Eyes (female & male faces - left hand side of drawing	• Moral conscious of the organisation Seeing/witnessing and knowing of organisational transgressions / truth, but remain aloof	• Indifference, detached, distant, isolated
	Blue collar on male figure left-hand side of drawing	• Masculine or logical side of the business • Frontline services	• Aggression (passive), inferior

Colour	Symbol/Image	Representation of	Emotions Evoked
		• Lower hierarchy, implying inferiority / lacking equality	
Brown	Scraggy Hair & Beard of large protruding head	• Beardedness, signifying masculinity, aggression, dominance and strength. • The scraggy / dishevelled features represent his nature, which is perceived as soiled, deceitful and treacherous nature • Obscuring truth/reality	• Dislike, distain, contempt • Distrust • Vague, confused
	Hair • Interviewee • Female & male heads	• Covers 'baldness' or worn/damaged identity and intelligence • Protecting or covering up the emotional intelligence (feminine) and logical intelligence (masculine)	• Guarded, distrust, fear, soiled/spoilt, sullied
Pink	Head and legs (exposed) of central faceless female figure	• Loss of interviewee's identity, lacking authority /feeling de-authorised (loss of voice, sight to see and capacity to think) • Her experience of the leadership's relations towards her, as being rejected by them (& others), separated, abandoned & disconnected. • Lost or confused	• Hurt, sensitive, vulnerable, powerlessness, helplessness, alienated, lost, confused
	Profile of female figure's head	• Feminine side of the business – caring / nurturing • Rawness of organisation's emotional identity	As above
	Legs of 2 smaller figures standing abreast (solidly coloured)	• Footnote: the hands and legs extended on the girl and boy forms a pentagram (symbolic of faith) in each figure • 'Quintessence' or 'Quintessential', the fifth element being the spirit of the organisation/ essential purpose of the organisation – human spirit. • Located on left side of drawing may indicate that key purpose was the focus in the past	• Faith, hope, guarded, protection, unsafe, insecure, justness, fairness, righteousness

Colour	Symbol/Image	Representation of	Emotions Evoked
Red	Pedant on female standing within barrier line	• Externalising one's emotions (openly & clearly communicating one's feelings/anguish) – akin to wearing one's heart on a sleeve.	• Vulnerable, exposed/exposing, hope, passionate
	Open mouth/Lips on profile of female head	• Sexualised mouth - signal of organisation's immortality or unethical behaviour	• Disdain, anger, contempt
Grey	Outline of 2 figures sitting in chairs (with exception of their arms) looking at each other. Feet not touching the ground (only one leg showing of each figure). One has larger head/neck (head appears to be straining out) and the other a longer face/smaller neck	• Split /polarised, not integrated • Acting out an impasse – facing off, symbolic mediation between partners caught in stagnate partnership (marriage). Both acting defensively. The struggle to assert one's identity and rebellion against the other's control. • Younger brother appears resentful – irrational • Older brother (big / inflated head) appears arrogant, as if he is intellectually superior • Both projecting onto each other, primitive jealousies in terms of competing with each other for the CFO's attention and also older brother possibly competing with the CFO for the attention of the other brother (younger). The larger/strained head may be a mirroring of CFO's appearance	• Dissociated, fractured • Dependent, controlled, loss of identity, agitated, stubborn/proud, unruly • Spite, loathing, judged, inferior, defiant • Frustration, exasperated, proud, superior • Jealousy, anger, disloyal
Neutral /Light tan	Arms (no hands) of 2 figures sitting in chairs – 'no show of hands'	• Leaders keeping their intentions secret from each other and to others • Connotation of sleight of hand (deceitful)	• Deceit, distrust
Purple	Dress of small female child (top left side of drawing) Faint squiggly line running down between interviewee and profiles of female/male peers	• Female child /the other half of the paired children the business is meant to protect and provide care for – loss of integrity • Communication line between stakeholders, though appears active, but its impact seems ineffective, lost mid-air/space. This could connate unconscious dynamic of dependence and co-dependence between the triadic relations	• insecurity, guilt, shame, isolated, abandoned, hurt

Figure 28: Fight for My Life
Source: Dior, Case 13

In Figure 27, I associate the red seat (or as Poppy referred to it being in the 'hot seat') Poppy sat on as opened red lips. According to Freud's interpretations of dreams (1900), an 'open mouth' unconsciously represents female genitals. This led my thoughts to mutilation (attack as self defence against shame and representation of the system's attack on itself)[62]. Further Case 17 (refer p. 229 Figure 29, system drawing and Table 17, analysis of participant's interpretation and associated emotions on pages 224 - 227), provides a distinct example of a shaming authority (key protagonist and enemy). The erect posture and intimidating direct eye contact of perpetrator of abuse (Chief Operating Officer) as experienced by the participant, signifying the source of shame as narcissistic leadership. The representation of a 'beady eyed male', an unconscious metaphor for the contagion of narcissistic relations. Employees in this system used merely as objects for manipulation by the business owners who are portrayed as barely visible, detached and thwarted belongingness to the rest of the workforce. I posit they represent the system's split between the workforce and leadership (warring parties).

[62] The female genitals symbolically depict objects that can enfold a space capable of being filled by something. In Poppy's drawing, I contend she unconsciously sacrificed herself for the good of her organisation to prevent further degradation of the system in its growth (fertility). Poppy interpreted the small knife, as the executive's duplicitous behaviours, calling her 'a back stabber'. I contend the knife represented the distrust and severing of bonds between new leadership and the rest of the organisation. I also believe unconsciously it represented the CEO's penis; the CEO is symbolised as the boy in the drawing. The fat lady coloured in purple represented the abusive power the female executive member wielded over the organisation. The knife in her hand symbolised the 'cockhold' (humiliation) of the CEO. From a socio-analytic perspective, I believe she represented leadership's gluttony for power and its exertion of control over the system to ensure its success in changing its identity and purpose. The imagery of weapons is symbolic of the aggressive standover tactics, represented by three against one. I suggest this symbolises the new leaderships psyche of 'a win at all cost' mentality.

Figure 29: Beady Eyes
Source: Bronte, Case 17

The cold stare, used to silence, is an act of narcissistic rage; perhaps transference of the leadership's own shame, experienced by Bronte as profoundly debilitating. Staring directly into another's eyes is a tactic of manipulation. It is a form of belittlement, a non-verbal way of activating shaming. The level of observation is excruciating and torments self-consciousness. It has the immediate effect of silencing speech and incapacitating functioning, as one feels exposed and deeply scrutinised (Kaufman 1996). The greyed out figures of the business owners (who held CEO and General Manger position) in the seats below the overarching figure reinforce the individualistic focus, in which their existence (as 'mirrored other') is unacknowledged or denied except as an extension of themselves (Long 2008). By 'mirrored other' it is meant in this case as 'enemy mirrors enemy' (p. 141), a dynamic of retribution for past injustices that trigger justifications for further vengeance. I interpret this overarching figure as a puppet that symbolises the 'mask of shame', used and abused by a master puppeteer ('manipulative shaming authority') who keep their real self-hidden. In this case the source of shame within the organisation was of the business owner's narcissistic rage, enacted through exploitation and manipulation of the organisation purpose, values, standards and people to attain power and wealth for, arguably, their own needs. The COO, I speculate, unconsciously took up the designated role of enemy on behalf of the system. He was used as a scapegoat by the 'warring enemies', collectively and unconsciously, held the blame for the business owner's unethical business decisions and practices. I posit the COO unconsciously caught in identifying with system's rage, perhaps unknowingly enacted the role of perpetrator. This I believe, enabled the system to deny feelings of exposure and shame, whilst the warring pairs continued to respond to each other with amplified rage (Long 2008).

Across all of the interviews the findings affirm the presence of a plethora of hidden intimations of shame and a sequence of behaviours that realised in ruptured social bonds. At a systems level, there is a finding of a pattern of insecure relational attachments; with parts of the

organisations relinquished (restructured) or engulfed to maintain relational functioning across the wider system. This finding was conveyed either explicitly or disguised symbolically/metaphorically by participants as the experience of 'alienation' (Scheff and Retzinger 2001). The other signifier was of individual/group needs not met, or dominated by a shaming authority. In the latter scenario, emotional expressions were conveyed by participants, as they or their targeted subgroup were 'ignored' ('not heard') or 'isolated'. An example of this was expressed as follows:

> I…felt that I didn't feel that we had a very safe place to work, I thought you could be targeted. And I truly did think that...Well I think that all these people had been targeted and yeah, I didn't know whether you would be able to speak as possibly inarticulately as I might and sort of for them to want to understand what it was I was trying to get at. I thought they could just sort of you know, um...But what I mean is that it wasn't as inclusive...I didn't feel...I felt scared and I think the others did too, felt scared.
>
> ('Madeline', Case 9)

9.5: Destruction of Social Bonds

As theorised in Chapter 2, shame theory has a direct correlation between moral transgression and the rupturing of social attachment. This is understood to occur where a moral violation perpetrated by an authority figure (leader/caregiver) damages or destroys self/groups' tightly held ideals, beliefs and values, as well as damaging others' (non-leadership/followers) capacity for trust (Scheff 2003; Nathanson 1994). In gaining a greater understanding of the theory of shame it was remarkable how the data of the transcripts fell out or became illuminated in ways that gave much greater cohesion and depth to my understanding of what occurred. The destruction of social bonds is one such area.

Figure 30: Ruptured Relational Bonds

Source: Author

In this research, observed and experiential accounts describe moral transgressions as evoking a shattered shame state, with an initial impact of social relations being damaged (both for the individual and with reverberated impact across the system). These impacts were often denied. The findings suggest that the moral violation was the cause for 'incohesion' (Hopper 2003) across a part of or the whole organisations, rupturing attachment between participants with leaders, group(s) and within the organisation. This effect is emotionally injurious. Further, the data suggests that the participants were possibly (or likely have been) traumatised by the experience and in turn were unknowingly shamed (Gordon 2007, 2012; Knipe 2015).

Participants reported groups who were deeply dysregulated by relational trauma (as illustrated in the exemplified cases in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8), who had need for emotional regulation, however, had no leadership/ organisational support for maintaining cohesive relations within groups or the wider organisation following the transgression. Participants reported their subjective experience of groups as a negative community where they were ostracised, rejected, isolated and abandoned by 'shaming others' (perpetrators and accomplices). Social relations were therefore severely damaged or disintegrated. Further, these shame events were considered by participants as stressful life events, with the consequences deleterious on mental health (self and affected parts of the organisation, as observed by participants). This is expressed by 'Emily' (Case 7) in her interpretation of her system drawing and her endeavours to withdraw/exit the system. The below passage is suggestive that she struggled to assimilate the traumatic shame events she experienced in the organisation, as they were accompanied with other intrusive memories that triggered recall. She noted these affected her mental health and daily functioning:

> Emily: 'The black represents the really dark times and this was when I was at 'the organisation'.
>
> Susan: 'So sorry, this creamy colour figure down the bottom?'
>
> Emily: 'That's me with big, big tears. I cried a lot. Um, and, couldn't find my way out and why I couldn't find my way out was all this violence that was sitting up top. And the violence was my own family stuff that would resurge and then it was the violence of the organisation. But I was also in my masters doing domestic violence for action research project. It just...so this is the pile of shit really you know!'

Participants in five cases explicitly verbalised they and/or others were 'traumatised' by shame related events in the aftermath of the transgression. In the other thirteen cases, trauma was reported as experienced as 'shock' and closely linked to feeling 'fear' of a perceived or

imagined threat. In the latter situation, it was the threat of losing one's role. In all cases, the severing of social bonds produced negative responses that were often unseen and unshared with others or ambiguous in their acceptability. In these cases, the findings indicate it was associated with targeted groups (highlighted in Chapter 8, Claudia's case) or organisation as a whole (highlighted in Chapter 5, Oscar's Case) stigmatised by shame. The findings suggest that this typically may occur with psychological abuse, sexual harassment or physical abuse, and cause enduring negative emotional distress.

From a systems perspective, the findings suggest that groups as a whole suffered from unresolved trauma, reacting in unpredictable ways to employee emotional needs, in which the emotional response from leadership ranged from both vacant and sterile, through to attacking in rage. The findings in all cases suggest offending authority figures were experienced as persecutory by participants in their dealings with them: participants saw these figures as 'threatening', 'evil', 'scary', 'disgusting' or 'afraid'. Furthermore, in fifteen cases they argued that the CEO (perceived father figure in ten cases) was perceived or experienced as rageful or needy.

The interview narratives are key to providing insight into the subjective experience of the participant at an individual level. However, it is the drawings that provided wide-ranging clues to what played out unconsciously at the group / system wide level. They provided a visible window into the unconscious network of social bonds within the organisations. The examples in Figures 26 'Flames of Humiliated Rage' and 28 'Fighting for My Life' highlight some of these hidden clues that marked the state of social incohesion within the organisational systems. Scheff and Retzinger (2001) argue that the manner in which we look at the other and how the other looks at us, may indicate the state of social relations. They suggest that a stare (bypassed shame) or averted gaze (overt shame) are markers of insecure social bonds. This knowledge of the shame marker validated initial findings of 'stares' and 'beady eyes' in Figures 27 and 29 and affirm Scheff and Retzinger's comments. These were also typified in Case 14:

> When my boss was marched out he just turned and looked at me and I felt that he didn't know whether I was...whether I knew that that was going to happen or not. And I thought that he held me...I felt that he was holding me responsible. I've still talked to him...I talked to him later and he didn't, but as an HR manager, um, I felt guilt and shame as well, that I was helpless, I couldn't do anything and I probably couldn't convince him that I had nothing to do with this. ''Bob''! You know, I felt like saying that, but I couldn't. And he just gave me this look, which appealed to my shame about the whole thing'. ('Poppy')

Amplifying this is also the state of disgrace (insecure or severed social bond), signalled by 'not being able to look others in the eye' (p.115). This finding is exemplified in Case 6:

> So at a...in a formal sense I coped in that way. But in an informal sense I found it very hard to have any eye contact with him (perpetrator of sexual harassment). So um, because I was responsible for succession planning, I'd go up to the management board and I'd make presentations and I could never look him in the eye. And I suspect he...I suspect he recognised that. Um...(sighs and pauses)' ('Fleur': Chapter 7)

Another finding that initially lay hidden in all cases regarding insecure and secured social bonds is linked to the spiral of shame. This was signified in the data by a sense of overwhelm or emotional flooding, perhaps an avoidance strategy employed by both the individual and others (leaders/groups) to detach emotionally from the painful feelings of shame. Exemplified in Chapter 8, Claudia's Case, it was common for participants to avoid explicitly expressing their emotional experience. This experience is often hidden within the narratives as confused or muddled thought or ruminations. In drawings, alienation was signified by coursing rivers, turbulent seas, partial bodily images/body parts, split figures, zombie like characters and questions marks. In relation to countertransference/somatic countertransference phenomenon, I experienced this as confusion, fatigue and sleepiness.

In all cases, participants describe groups as being deeply dysregulated by trauma (as illustrated in the exemplified cases in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8), and in need of emotional regulation[63], but where there was a lack of support to reinstate cohesive relations. Any attempts made were on the basis of changing culture or restructure. Participants report feeling caught between a strong need for connection with authority figures and an equally strong need to avoid them (DeYoung 2015). From a systems perspective, groups caught in this dilemma tended to either dissociate, emotionally detach or exhibit tantrum behaviour or other addictive behaviour or resort to self-soothing behaviours (Boon, Steele & Van Der Hart 2011; DeYoung 2015). This is exemplified in Chapter 8, Claudia's Case. The passage below is another example of groups acting out in an infantilised manner:

[63] 'Emotional regulation is defined 'a person's ability to effectively manage and respond to an emotional experience. People unconsciously use emotion regulation strategies to cope with difficult situations many times throughout each day. In negative forms this may include substance abuse, self-injury, avoiding or withdrawing from difficult situations and physical or verbal aggression' (http://selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/perch/resources/what-is-emotion-regulationsinfo-brief.pdf)

> I think we got treated like children and we ended up acting like children and even some of the clinicians will admit the same thing. Like one of them had this embarrassing moment where she speaks about it now and laughs, but she got into trouble and she stomped her feet and kind of walked off in a bit of a tantrum (laughs). But I think that's what we ended up doing and we just ended up like children and kind of acting like we were back in school and kind of talking behind their backs and being bitchy and you know, trying to see what boundaries we could push without getting into trouble and sneaking off to do the wrong thing and yeah...we just...we didn't operate the same...we weren't as professional as we used to be ('Emily', Case 5)

I argue that the organisation perversely severed attachments with participants in instinctive acts of narcissistic rage, a form of retribution for amplifying the systems' inferiorities and inadequacies. Participants were in turn unconsciously shamed by being alienated and isolated to deal on their own with their distress. This induced intensely painful emotions. With no regulation from emotionally unavailable and neglectful leadership, shame continued to intensify. The findings suggest that in all cases, participants unconsciously dissociated in some capacity, to avoid feeling the pain of disintegrating into a state of hopelessness and powerlessness. The impact of the transgression in all cases was reported as acute, and at the core, unacknowledged shame strongly fused with fear, anxiety and obfuscation. The findings in seven cases also indicated when the organisation was confronted by external others and/or placed under stress (all cases), that the system fell into a pattern of frightening, disorienting, self-shattering shame, living out enactments of shame in a desperate search to have it regulated or to restore moral order.

9.6: Summary

In summarising this chapter, coming to know shame is a slow, painful and complex process given the extent to which it is hidden through the expression of words (directly and indirectly), paralinguistic cues, omissions, somatic reactions and countertransference phenomenon. To the uninitiated the experience of shame is not easily identifiable and so easily misunderstood, which in turn is responded to defensively. This triggers further unacknowledged shame that fuses fear, anxiety and obfuscation. Making sense of these often acutely traumatic and ambiguous experiences was only made possible through deep immersion in the data, in unison with socio-analytical theory and the incorporation of additional analytic methods framed around sensitising concepts that helped illuminate the experience of shame and facilitated the emergence of meaning of this social construct for this study. The core findings in response to the research questions about the individuals and group/organisational experience of how the transgression was experienced is as follows.

- Social relations within organisations were ruptured as a result of moral transgressions perpetrated by an authority figure (leader/caregiver), triggering pathological behaviour of denial or withdrawal, and in turn causing any expression of shame to be unconsciously hidden or disguised
- The transgressions were considered as moral violations that damage or destroy individual and groups' tightly held ideals, beliefs and values
- From a systems perspective, groups as a whole suffered from unresolved trauma, reacting in unpredictable ways to employee emotional needs. The emotional response from leadership ranged from both vacant and sterile, through to attacking in rage.
- Groups were experienced as being deeply dysregulated by trauma and in need of emotional regulation, however, there was a lack of leadership support to reinstate cohesive relations. Any attempts made were on the basis of changing culture or restructure.
- Participants dissociated by degrees to avoid feeling the pain of disintegrating into a state of hopelessness and powerlessness.
- Shame is ubiquitous yet almost invisible within interpersonal relations. It is not uncommon for this to manifest in transference and countertransference phenomenon within the system. Transferential phenomena, which discharges unwanted feelings of shame that are then manifest in varying forms.

I argue that the collective findings (main themes and sensitising concepts) indicate that organisations were experienced by participants as defensively protecting themselves from the exposure of shame. Such protective responses observed, experienced or interpreted include groups/organisations attempting to hide, escape or find other means to control their failings. Such defensive behaviours include: Controlling Shame (Anger – Attacking Self and Other), Denying Shame (Avoidance - Dissociation) and/or Concealing Shame (Withdrawal - Social Isolation). These reactions, though not surprising, reinforce studies done to date from a clinical stance that I believe can be extended and applied through a socio-analytic lens to understand impact on group/system level behaviour. Overall, the findings are consistent with Horney (1945) and Natheson's (1994) strategies of defence against shame. Moreover, the defences align with Bion's (1961) and Hopper's (2003) broader application on the notions of basic assumption behaviour.

Chapter 10: Discussion

Figure 31:'A lifetime of sin for an eternity of punishment'

Source: Rory Midhani

10.1: Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the overall findings drawn from this research and feature notions that influence my understanding of the experience of shame. Moreover, I point to new approaches to shame, hoping to stimulate dialogue about ideas not generally considered in relation to the dynamics of shame and the impacts this may have on organisational systems in the aftermath of a moral transgression.

Given the key motivation behind the purpose of this research is to build knowledge to better understand and deal with the impact of workplace transgressions within organisations, my research questions 'What are the elements of the lived experience of individuals within organisations where an overtly known workplace transgression had occurred? and 'How can those experiences be understood at an individual and system level?' are explored using an interpretivist approach. As summarised in the previous chapter, the answers to these research questions are briefly reiterated in this chapter, where I conclude are, that where the transgression is a moral violation, the impacts are felt as deleterious to tightly held ideals, beliefs and values by individuals and systems (group/organisation/society). Consequently, these deleterious impacts severely dysregulate social cohesion across an organisation, triggering pathological behaviour of denial or withdrawal, causing any expression of shame to be unconsciously hidden or disguised. The fallout of these impacts is acutely traumatic and ambiguous to individuals and groups, who react irrationally to the emotional needs of others. Leadership is perceived as emotionally vacant, and there is a lack of support to reinstate

cohesive relations amongst groups/system. Essentially, shame is experienced as ubiquitous and invisible within interpersonal relations, manifesting in transference and countertransference phenomenon within the system to discharge unwanted feelings of shame. Overall, organisations were experienced by participants, as defensively protecting themselves from the exposure of shame. Such protective responses observed, experienced or interpreted included groups/organisations attempting to hide, escape or find other means to control their failings. These research findings build on existing concepts of social defences from a socio-analytical perspective, and illuminate how organisational experience and behaviours are shaped when the culture has been permeated by an overtly known workplace transgression.

This chapter is a culmination of, and further expansion to the overall thinking presented thus far about the impacts of an overtly known workplace transgression on organisations. I draw on the findings of the exemplified case studies with the phenomenon of unacknowledged shame as the overarching theme. The results of this study contribute to an already exiting body of knowledge about shame and defence mechanisms associated with shame, as well as affirm the manifestation of shame as a self-perpetuating dynamic; ubiquitous in its presence and largely invisible in organisations, yet, fiercely defended against to prevent exposure of organisational and leadership failings. The shaming effects are damaging and distorting for both individuals and systems.

Across my candidature I have come to view the psychological violence exerted by organisations as ‘battlefields of shame’, in which the mortal combat acts to silence reality and attain sovereignty. The study reveals how the dynamic of shame became part of the research struggle in itself. Bringing the phenomenon to the surface was an immense battle. It is crucial that each notion about the defence mechanisms of shame, that is: anger used to control shame; withdrawal employed to conceal shame; and dissociation triggered to deny shame, are not be sequestered, but considered in their interrelatedness as functions of the whole phenomena and experience of shame in organisations. As this research has shown the impacts can be devastating morally, as well as psychologically on both the individual and organisation.

In this chapter I convey the concluding findings on the impacts of overtly know workplace transgressions as refinements drawn from the core themes. These themes are the processes employed by systems to maintain disorder and unconsciously perpetuate shame, by way of obfuscating reality of their failings. I use the metaphor of binocular vision to juxtapose ‘dialectical tensions’ (Miller 2008) on the experience of unacknowledged shame from both the individual and system field of vision. Bringing into sharper focus this multiple perception to

generate a whole view of the subjective reality of the experiences. I consider this metaphorically, as an interplay on how shame is externalised (projected out) by organisations as a reactionary mechanism to unacknowledged shame. I present this through conceptual lenses of:

- Objectification - indiscriminate and abusive process of controlling shame to serve the purpose of silencing dissent; and
- Self-mutilation - self-harming processes of cultural 'redress' put in place following transgressions to kill off unwanted parts of the organisation).

I explore these concepts in regards to how shame is internalised (taken in) by both the individual and system. I then present these internalisations through the concepts of:

- Impossible speech: the burden of shame held on behalf of the organisation by moral agents who are effectively scapegoated and annihilated by the system
- Moral injury: the enduring effects of the trauma of shame and unresolved conflict, experienced as catastrophic in its impact on individuals and on social relations within systems

To offer further explanation of the nature of the harms identified in each of the cases each of these concepts are discussed in the following chapter.

10.2: Objectification – Gender and Sexual

An illuminating feature of the findings is the use of objectification (namely gender and sexual orientation) as a protective strategy of Controlling Others, by those in positions of power to preserve rank order (Kane 2012), and also as a form of suppression in silencing moral consciousness and rendering the other powerless (DeYoung 2015). Shame in these situations is experienced by the objectified, as a devaluation in the eyes of a powerful other, and social rank (positioned according to social norms) and feeds into stigma associated with being humiliated. Traumatic memories are symbolically represented by participant ruminations and portrayed through self illustrations in shame scenes within role drawings. These suggest that shame impacts on identity and experience of oneself in relation to others.

The data across ten cases (eight females and two males) suggest that it is not uncommon for those who spoke 'truth to power' about inequities in power relations or where they defied

conforming to demands of shaming authorities, to be humiliated by a significant other (senior leader), by the leader trivialising their organisational identity (role and work performance)[64]. By 'truth to power', it is meant resistance by marginalised and silenced groups to speak out against those in authority on truths about inequity (Cary & Bristol 1955; Satterthwaite, Watts & Piper 2008). The findings indicate that objectification tended to be reported as slights or sexual innuendo. Retzinger (1991) argues this can be seen as a form of humiliated rage, and occurs when shame is elevated, and hostility is acted out in a brutal manner. This finding is featured in the exemplified cases studies under the sub theme of inequity (p.95). It is worthy of focus in the overall findings as the depth of aggression projected onto victims is reported as deeply wounding. The intensity of these feelings of unacknowledged shame, is expressed as anxiety over loss of control (both inner self, and perception of individual and system perceived by others, be it internally within the system or external others).

Further, the findings indicate a possible link between power, objectification and shame. In 10 cases there was sufficient data to plausibly consider that objectification, be it gender or sexual in orientation, was used by those in positions of power to subjugate and oppress less powerful others (individual and subgroup). By the accounts in this study, women continued to be chronically objectified by others (namely, powerful men or high-power groups) as, arguably, a means to an end[65]. It was generally implied by the participants that to be a female or non-

[64] Some poignant examples were in Case 1, 'Max' a male participant, who called out the immoral behaviour of a peer in an open forum. He was later demoralised by the CEO in front of this peer group (all male executive leadership team) and called the 'token female' of the team, and in Case 8, 'Stuart' (Senior OHS Manager of a large scale joint venture Tier One construction project), told how he felt 'less masculine but less empowered' by 'somebody with more power' who 'stripped' him of his subjectivity. Treated disrespectfully, he was told 'I don't really care what your opinion is, but just do as you're told'.

[65] In terms of females that were objectified, one participant (Case 7, 'Emily') in the interview disclosed as a lesbian and told how she was 'often be targeted because of my um, sexuality'. It was not unusual for managers to say to her 'I was told not to get too close to you because you're one of those'. This slight implies she was not normal. In another case, 'Ivy' (Case 10, only one of two Non-Executive Directors and the only female on a board) spoke how she felt her presence had become tokenistic. The chairman and rest of the board would exclude her from strategy meetings or send her board papers only a few days before meetings. Emily felt she wasn't 'respected', which she rationalised as her being in the process of 'coming up to speed very quickly about the industry they're in'. In both cases, the women were unable to voice their felt humiliation.

Lewis (1971) accounted for objectification of women in her research, arguing this was based on women's 'greater sociability and lesser aggression, taken together with their second-class status in the world of power, increase their tendency to the experience of shame'. In this study, 14 of 18 participants were females and in each case they shared an incident in which they knowingly or unknowingly were objectified relating to their gender and in some

masculine felt, as if they were seen by the shaming other as weak. There was also the connotation that to express one's feelings or concern for others as a male meant being judged as effeminate and seen as weak or inferior. The resultant feelings after this judgement was expressed as 'dread', perhaps an unconscious fear of annihilation. The males who experienced gender objectification tended to associate masculinity with power; a collusive element. These findings suggest that for a male to have an authority figure publicly devalue them in front of gazing others (shaming authority / peers), the self evaluation is to feel 'weak' (powerless) or inferior' (Lewis 1971). These covert violations are 'marked' or psychologically imprinted by the person they referred to as more 'powerful' (Kaufman 1996). Further, these findings suggest that the perception of groups or individuals who are part of a sub group perceived as lower power status (e.g. Claudia's case in which TAFE was devalued as compared Higher Education) were more likely to be dehumanised and experience acts of hostility towards them (Gervais, Vescio & Allen 2012).

The hostility experienced was perceived by participants as retaliatory action for their refusal to submit to tacit pressures to collude with leadership/system demands in ignoring unethical behaviour. The effects were debilitating enough to render them 'powerless' or 'traumatised' by the experience. Not one of the affected participants spoke of challenging the 'shaming other' or pursuing a formal complaint about their ill treatment. Each appeared shut down in speaking out on the abuse they endured. I speculate that the high degree of humiliation inflicted on these participants was so intolerable that it disintegrated their sense of self (DeYoung, 2015). In general, participants reported in the moments of feeling 'embarrassed', 'angry', 'disrespected', 'anxious', 'speechless 'or 'unable to think'. These expressions are also illustrated in representations of themselves in the system drawings as a sense of worthlessness and powerlessness (Lewis 1971), with the symbols being of hiding, shielded behind a barrier, as a miniaturised stick figure, invisible, bleeding, red faced or screaming. Moreover, representations of self were either incomplete images, missing body parts such as hands or facial features or one dimensional figures (stick figures). These latter images all denoting dissociation (Boon, Steele & Van Der Hart 2011; Steele, Boon & van der Hart 2016).

The data reveals how the organisations of which these participants were or are a part, were dominated by patriarchal structures imbued by aggressive masculine energy (manifest as competition). I argue that the systems seemed to fear any form of feminine expression,

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cases interrelated with their sexuality, age and hierarchical status. Based on the experiences of emasculation shared by the male participants. I extend this to include any gender regardless of sexuality.

meaning caregiving. Any sign of expression of maternal instinct seems suppressed and repressed. Patriarchy is also indicated by participants' characterisations of leaders as 'binary', 'objective', 'rationalised', 'logical', ''cold/ not warm, or 'distant' in their leadership approach[66]. In all the cases, authentic care for minorities within the system was absent in the organisations. In each interview I asked a question relating to metaphoric family roles that may have been taken up by organisational members. Not one participant could identify a mother/maternal figure in the organisation, suggesting this absence of maternal authority or matriarchal leadership. All other family roles, for example father, sibling, uncle and grandparent, were easily ascribed, except this role. These findings imply an absence of caregiving in each system. They also affirm the association of masculine leadership role with a paternal father figure, generally ascribed to a CEO who is either idealised or feared. In all cases, participants described that the experiences of objectification felt like a form of social control, rendering them powerless. I argue the pain that objectification causes is intolerably harrowing and that in becoming an object, one dissociates; the inanimate cannot feel pain (Johnson and Moran 2013).

This study demonstrates that the voraciousness of objectification applies to anyone (individual or group) and does not discriminate between genders; particularly those perceived to be lower power status or of those in minority group. All are potentially vulnerable to shame and being shamed. Objectification, as reported in this study is a humiliated rage reaction by the system that severs connection with others, as a means of controlling shame. The cruelty of objectification is that it both alienates and isolates the unwanted other and plants a seed that one (individual or group) is wrong and inadequate, thereby perpetuating shame (DeYoung 2015; Johnson & Moran 2013; Gervais et al. 2012; Lewis 1971). I now move from ideas about objectification to discuss the impact of organisational self-mutilating.

10.3: Self-Mutilation

Another significant finding on the impact of overtly known workplace transgression is the link to change initiatives employed following the transgression as a means of remedial action. It was commonplace for a restructure to occur or to hear in the interviews of the organisation

[66] One participant, 'Patrick' (Case 5), in relating his experience as chairman of a board, seemed to scapegoat and objectify a woman (assistant to the CEO) throughout his narrative. He described this woman as involved in 'intimate relations' with the CEO, portraying her as beguiling the CEO and having a corrupting influence over him. It was as if she were a femme fatale who emasculated the CEO and was blamed for his failings along with the organisation's demise. Further, he was critical of the CEO's lack of emotional control, implying he was not objective, meaning 'masculine' (Heppner 1981).

undertaking of a ‘cult’-ure transformation program’. This finding aligns in part with Braun’s thinking (2011 p. 137), who contends that restructures are an organisations’ ‘anxious response’ to clean up past mistakes. I extend this notion to argue that restructures are the traumatised organisation unconsciously concealing and severing (mutilating) perceived contaminated or perceived inferior parts of the system. The intent is to miraculously de-toxify shame. The findings suggest that restructures further heightened anxiety, as loss of attachments with others (peers and beloved managers), are experienced as social death. Consequently, the resultant feelings are of rejection, alienation, anger, grief, depression and loss of adequacy. These emotions are inflamed by the perception that the part of the organisation judged as the ‘spoiled object’, or a ‘required enemy’, is one used by leadership, and/or the rest of the system, as a receptacle for shame.

Following this line of thought, the contaminated parts are experienced by the shamed and shaming authority as ‘resource objects’ (Shields & Grant 2010, p. 63) that are used dispassionately, and expelled based on the basis of commercial unviability. The process of determining redundant parts and people of the organisation are often formally evaluated in strategic processes, reinforcing the cognitive rationale for what I am positing as an unconscious defence mechanism (Menzies-Lyth 1988) in which the organisation can hide and relieve itself of intolerable anxiety of unacknowledged shame. ‘Cutting’, I assert is an organisations unconscious manner of self-harm behaviour and symptomatic of the organisations mental distress and overwhelming shame response. Restructures can be seen as a systems shame reaction: by cutting (splitting) off potentially shame-inducing aspects of the system, to thwart being overwhelmed by blame or contempt from the internal system and/or external stakeholders (Kaufman 1996). This response activity is an avoidance strategy that is similar to the motivations underpinning dissociative disorders that have strong links to shame (Boon 2011, p. 316).

Using this clinical notion of dissociative disorders as a lens to apply to a systems perspective, I argue the motivations for an organisation to dissociate is a trigger for avoidance or denial of shame. The provocation may range from:

1. Relieving overwhelming emotions, tension or trauma
2. Being an unconscious expression of anger or aggression toward self (self-hatred)
3. Being a substitute for expressing anger or aggression toward others
4. Having control over pain of shame inflicted through judgement of external other (system hurt/ self before external other/regulator hurts it)
5. Garnering attention from others (shareholders, external regulators, media, competition)

6. Imprinting a wound of shame so the others can keep alive the trauma (some part of the system wounded in a similar way as it was during a previous traumatising event)
7. The system punishing or attempting to kill a part of the business that is perceived as a cancerous/diseased

These motivations parallel findings across the cases about affective states of the organisations in the aftermath of workplace transgression. They provide a possible frame to consider the correlation between the patterns of instability within the organisations, the organisations' self-image and affects, as well as the anxious reactivity of organisations in changing structure (self-image) to deal with exposure of transgression and unacknowledged shame. The frame also assists in understanding anxiety associated with shame and how moral advocates or whistle-blowers are feared for exposing leader/organisation's shame, and are victimised. The frame also helps understanding 'impossible speech', discussed below, which is another significant finding from this study.

10.4: Impossible Speech: The Burden of Shame

The presence of shame dynamics and the defences employed in the system to protect against exposure of shame, were not recognisable both to the research participants (18 of 18) or myself whilst gathering the data and in the subsequent 12 - 18 months of the first iteration of analysing the interview transcripts. As referred to many times throughout the thesis, this suggests that the unbearable nature of shame makes it difficult to be recognised and directly expressed. As such, the findings indicate that in the experience or presence of shame, the individual and the group actively attempt to conceal or deny it from self and others. Consistent with the narratives from all participants were elaborate efforts undertaken by leadership and collusive accomplices to control the exposure of shame. These findings are amplified in Chapters 5, 7 and 8, where it is identified that organisations attempt suppression (silence enacted as avoidance or denial) and omissions of truths (lies or untruths), to prevent further exposure of transgression and organisational deficiencies. In varying degrees all research participants stated they had experienced exclusion or censure because they engaged in 'impossible speech' (Kenny 2018). By this, I mean speaking out and confronting authority/senior leadership about wrongdoings that the organisations were endeavouring to cover up or minimise (Long 2008).

When speaking of these transgressions participants often expressed their outright disdain, contempt or moral indignation towards leaders, yet in a number of cases quite significant transgressions were seemingly minimised, indicated by the passive tones of 'disappointment'

in leadership's character flaws or betrayals. With reference to Retzinger (1995) these emotional expressions are all understood to denote anger. Assumedly, the evaluations felt as shaming by leaders when challenged, in turn provoked re-directed attacks of rage, and humiliating fury towards the participant (Sanderson 2015). The attacks were experienced predominately as covert expressions in which participants commonly described being ignored (this was consistently reported as feeling 'not heard' or leader and peers 'turning their back' on the participant), denigrated, mocked or dismissed by leadership in front of others. There were, however, more overt forms of aggression experienced by 12 participants. One participant reported being yelled at in front of others and another having their car tyres slashed in the company car park. In all though, whether more covert or overt, participants consistently describe how they felt psychologically violated, either being 'slapped', 'slammed', 'snapped' and 'smacked'.

In one disturbing case, the participant described the experience of abuse as 'emotionally conditioned', in which a trusted and admired leader physically violated their personal boundaries[67]. This act is conceptualised as grooming in Chapter 6, and can be understood as a form of sexualised aggression or erotised rage (Widman & McNulty 2012, p. 353). The corrosion of trust here is accessed through abuse of power and position, typically by perpetrators with narcissistic tendencies (Raskin, Novacek & Hogan 1991) who use their position of authority to charm, seduce, disarm and entrap victims by making them feel singular or exclusive in their relations, and in which unwanted sexual contact is masked as affection (Sanderson 2015). This exemplifies an unconscious defense of avoidance, in which dissociation is employed to prevent experiencing intolerable feelings of humiliation (Boon, Steele & Van Der Hart 2011; Sanderson 2015). In this instance the impossibility of being able to name the attack as eroticised rage or sexual violation is suggestive of shame's corrosive ability to incapacitate. The perpetrator has effectively shut down the participant's capacity to think, speak and feel.

[67] 'Tania' (Case 3): 'I would go into his office - this 'religious figure' and he'd say 'Could you read this letter with me, I want you to read this letter'. And I'd stand behind him to read the letter and he'd put his arm around my waist and draw me close…And at the time I...I didn't think much of it. I...I knew it was kind of weird and um, but he's a 'religious figure' so this is...he's just being affectionate like my dad you know, I took it like that. But I look back now and see that that was the beginning of emotional conditioning. To try and um, I don't know what the purpose of it was, but it was the beginning of the emotional conditioning and then I...just this constant praise or recognising or um...it's very subtle, very subtle. And he would say to me often; 'You're the most um,' what was the word he would use...'straight person I know' - because I would never cross the boundary. I held my boundaries really well. And that made him feel safe. Because I didn't cross his boundaries. So he could misbehave as much as he liked without any proper indiscretion occurring'.

The impact of attacks are described by research participants as ’demoralising’, ‘traumatising’ and ‘bullied’. In one case, the participant described her experience as ‘fighting for my life’. As noted previously in Chapter 9, (p 207), it was not uncommon for participants to described the initial reaction to attacks as feeling as if they were left ‘unheard’ or ‘ignored’. In speaking truth participants all experienced some form of victimisation (Alford 2002) and suffered retaliation, in which they described feeling deeply affected. This manifested as ruminations during the interviews, in which it was evident that participants were left grappling with their experiences. Speaking their truth about the organisational environment, participants were perceived by authorities as a threat to their power. In speaking out, participants risked annihilation, their knowledge seemingly experienced by others as their own moral illness. The perspective they shared was of forcibly being relocated to another existence; scapegoated.

In the interview setting participants tended to construct and reinforce an ethical or moral self of their own that was distanced from the wrongdoings of the perpetrators they identified. In this they positioned themselves as defenders of the system that ironically cast them out. My perception is that participants seem to use the research interview as a forum to gain understanding of an experience they had been unable to make meaning of. The interviews enabled them to explore, ruminate and share their pain. The accounts of their experience were all traumatic in nature and the subsequent hostility vividly described, even when the incidents occurred 10 – 30 plus years ago. In all cases, the experience of the aftermath of workplace transgression left indelible imprints on their minds.

10.5: Moral Injury

The final notable finding from the rich narratives provided was the high degree of aggression or violence enacted by organisational systems in attempts to control shame. The stories presented by the participants emerged as ‘What others did to us’ and additional features of the ensuing conflicts that were enacted in the aftermath of the transgression (Volkan 2001). Carnage of psychological violence was most evident in the system drawings, depictions of raw aggression, blood, rage, brokenness, terror, fear, torment, apathy, disintegration and dysfunction. I came to view the organisations metaphorically as battlefields of shame of mortal combat; kill or be killed. A clear exemplar of this is in the metaphor of ‘arena’ used by Oscar in Chapter 6. This metaphor is a profound analogy of organisations as public theatres in which opponents (good corporate citizenship vs evil corporate negligence), fought for and against the systems morality. The findings illustrate that the various moral transgressions; the arena

for the genesis of shame, were sites where the battle (or power struggle) for psychological control failed again for the research participants ending in further humiliation (Kaufman 1996).

I came to view the research participants as courageous survivors. All presented painful remembrance, if not at times what I felt as agonising narratives of trauma and abuse endured in their lived experience of an aftermath of an overtly known workplace transgression. As discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2, these affects are understood as common impacts of shameful experiences. The findings suggest that the study provided a forum for participants to be heard and make sense of their plagued horrific experiences and moral injury sustained, whilst failings could be explored and given due attention. This was particularly in relation to perpetrator failings that by the participants' accounts seemed to be were rarely dealt with appropriately by the organisation. Participants reported repetitive conflict and revenge occurring, shaming strategies that caused feelings of helplessness and a sense of entrapment within the organisational systems. Violence was reported as open disparagement or belittling, direct transfers of blame for wrongdoings, contempt, humiliation, defeat (this was illustrated in the drawings as physical beatings or retreat from perpetrators). Aggression is symbolised as arrows or weaponry in the various system drawings; symbols of masculine energy. The findings indicated both the participants and organisations used violence to protect a vulnerable self, whilst attempting to survive being in the system with others (DeYoung 2015). It was as if the organisation resorted to violence as means of obliterating the shameful reality that was seen as obstructing a 'shared illusion', in which all gratifying idealised leaders are under threat of exposure, and found out to be a mere mortal (Volkan 2001, p. 82).

As such, I include the notion of moral injury from the findings as an overarching impact to the shame, consistently found in each case. I consider moral injury in association with the transgression and the abuse inflicted on those that dare to hold a spotlight to exposing their reality or truth. I suggest this act of exposing is unconsciously depicted in the system drawings as a sun or rising star radiating light. Participants interpreted this symbol as 'sunlight' (Case 9, 10 & 16) or 'brilliance' (Case 6) or 'hope' (Case 3). Yet, the images are extremely faint, barely visible. The reality on discovery of the impact of exposure was deprivation and disillusionment of expectations (Hopper 2003). The battlefields or arenas of shame represent the futility in trying to find a voice for experiences that have no voice, the sense of not belonging, not valued and there being no place for the unwanted individual/group (Kaufman 1996). I argue that the

shameful reality was perhaps too painful to think of, let alone give voice to, and hence repressed as impossible speech[68].

I consider moral injury a serious and long-lasting consequence of relational distancing that stems from how the system addresses its transgressions. It is a shared open wound of the system, in which the harmful damage induced by severing of ties, resonates between and within the individual and group experiences. Such issues within the system are unable to thought or spoken of. I view this trauma as a psychic infection in which it seems the individual and group are vulnerable to wounding and infected by the system (Jung 1937; Laub & Auerhahn 1993; Schwartz-Salant 1987; Steele, Boon & van der Hart 2016), thereby open to rejection, pain and death. In response remedial attempts to localise putrefaction of shame under the guise of cutting out and removing the perceived offending objects or under the belief that resuscitation (that is cultural transformation) are aimed at eradicating the system's malignant shame, that, however, continues to spread and re-form. The effects of moral transgressions are debilitating. They imprint shame on individual and group psyche that results in developmental arrest (Kohut 2009). I reference on the idea of 'developmental arrest', as the arrested psychological or emotional development of an individual, as a result of past trauma (Kohut 2009; Lichtenberg 1991; Masterson 1988; Stolorow & Lachmann 1980) and extend this notion in its application to a systems perspective. By this, I conceive group/system as having it social development impaired, because of past trauma or disturbance within/across the system. Generally, this may be due to neglect or a lack of attunement with environmental entities or caregiving agents/authorities who fail to deal with group/system's distress. Alternatively, when development of cohesive social relations is threatened, the sense of self (group/system) is shattered. This triggers regression to early pathological lived experience from within the system (group/organisation), in which the social environment was possibly uncontained throughout formative years of the systems growth. The findings suggest that moral injury dominates emotional lives, of not only the individual but also the system. Thus organisations' denial and resistance to empathise with the human experience of

[68] In Case 9, 'Madeline' depicted an image of light that radiated on all the internal figures in her drawing. She initially interpreted this as being 'able to see the light, like being able to be free and out there'. However, as she delved deeper into her interpretations and reflected on what transpired in the system, she revealed the light was 'external pressure'. This realisation was a significant shift in her perception. It was an important marker in my thinking about the research in that it triggered me to look across the cases for similar representations. I discovered that this was a commonly felt experience by all participants. Pressure is experienced as a loss of all 'hope', and as one participant described it felt as it was 'squeezed out' of her. Pressure was of exposure or the felt magnification of the gaze of the external other on the scenes of shame.

unacknowledged and unprocessed shame, continues to go unrecognised in defended/protected states that prevent exposure, for fear it will create greater shame.

These findings also support Volkan's (2001, p. 85) notion of 'transgenerational transmission of trauma'. This occurs when individuals and groups are in acute vulnerable states of regression and psychic boundaries become penetrable. Each of the cases indicated that traumatic events of the transgression were akin to a psychological gene that influenced the systems identity and manifested in the group's unconscious mental representations of a traumatic past event in which the system suffered either loss, helplessness, shame or humiliation. As Volkan (2001) posits, this is linked to the past generation of the system's inability to mourn losses of its reputation, people, leaders and status. Such unconscious memories or moral injury is 'deposited' into the development of the next generation of the system to 'mourn or reverse the humiliation' (p. 88). This I argue links to restructures and culture change programs in which a chosen trauma can be unconsciously reactivated through these initiatives and act as shared defences against the identification and association with shameful past. The unresolved issues or chosen trauma is passed on to the next generation of workers to re-experience in a cancerous manner, so the contagion of shame continues to permeate the system, its 'psychological gene' lays dormant until re-triggered. So what is intended on being a miraculous solution paradoxically emerges as a new wound and a further source of shame (Wurmser 2015).

10.6: Summary

This chapter has focused on relations between the reported impacts of transgression and the hidden emotional expression of that experience. It is concluded that shame is ubiquitous in its presence and is fiercely defended against to prevent exposure of organisational and leadership failings. The impacts are devastating morally, as well as psychologically on both individual and organisation. The 'redresses' that several organisations in this study put in place following transgressions, were themselves costly, majorly disruptive, and often appeared to serve the purpose of obfuscation. Although at some level in society the injuries described in this study are known, this study sheds new light on the persistence, rigour, and violence which is required to be exerted in organisations in the pursuit of their refusal to deal with shame, enabling the cycle of transgression and psychological abuse to continue. Whilst the study did not test any pre-determined hypothesis on shame or its destructive impact of organisational culture specifically, the discoveries further affirms that shame is commonly experienced in organisations post overtly known moral transgressions. It also highlighted that the dynamic of shame is indiscriminate across sector and field.

This chapter has discussed the devastating impacts of organisations not dealing with their shame on its people, and the need for organisations to better diagnose unacknowledged shame. It highlights a significant gap in the literature in addressing how to deal and manage the associated emotions and responses in organisations. Critically, much work needs to be done on preventing the dehumanisation of the workforce and for organisations to think, hear, see, feel, and allow their employees to speak their truth of organisational realities that are experienced; not be shut down.

In closing, there are four key findings discussed in this chapter. The first key findings is of objectification used to suppress moral consciousness following a moral violation. I argue there is sufficient evidence to suggest a correlation between power, objectification and shame; in that objectification is used by those in positions of power to subjugate and oppress less powerful others (individual and subgroup). Most notably, this is in reference to those individuals who acted as moral agents on behalf of vulnerable others to challenge shaming authorities on inequities. The objectified individual/group reported the experience of being dehumanised by leadership, and/or experienced acts of hostility, in the form of retaliatory action. The latter was felt as tacit pressure to collude with leadership/system demands in ignoring unethical behaviour. The reported effects are debilitating and traumatic, rendering people powerless and engendering a sense of worthlessness. The other key finding was that women were chronically objectified by others (namely, powerful men or high-power groups); the women felt they were judged by the shaming other as weak. It was also inferred that if a male expressed empathy towards vulnerable others they felt judged as effeminate.

The second key finding is the link between unacknowledged shame and change initiatives (restructure or transformation programs) employed following the transgression as a means of remedial action. Extending Braun's (2011) notion that these initiatives are a reaction to anxiety to clean up historical issues, I argue that restructures are a shame reaction, the traumatised organisation unconsciously concealing and severing (mutilating) perceived contaminated or perceived inferior parts of the system. The intent is to miraculously de-toxify shame and self-harm behaviour. This is symptomatic of an organisations mental distress.

In the third key finding, it is argued that organisations utilise acts of suppression (silence enacted as avoidance or denial) and omissions of truths (lies or untruths) to prevent exposure of transgression and organisational deficiencies. This experience was reported as exclusion or censure against moral agents who were opposing and confronting organisational authority on wrongdoings. In this, the organisations endeavoured to conceal or minimise exposure of

truth. In doing so, this provoked re-directed attacks of rage, and humiliating fury towards the moral agents. This was experienced by those agents as being ignored, denigrated, mocked or dismissed by leadership in the presence of others. More overt forms of aggression were experienced by the agents as verbal abuse and, in extreme situations, physical acts of threat. Overall, the shaming experiences were felt as psychological violations. This manifested as ruminations during the interviews, in which interviewees observably grappled with their experiences, even when the incidents occurred 10 – 30 plus years ago, leaving indelible imprints on their minds.

The final key finding was the high degree of aggression or psychological violence enacted by organisational systems in attempts to control shame. I argue that organisations were metaphorical battlefields of shame in mortal combat; kill or be killed in a fight for and against the systems morality. These battlefields represented the futility in trying to find a voice for experiences that have no voice, of not belonging, not being valued and there being no place for the unwanted individual/group. I argue that the shameful reality was perhaps too painful to think of, let alone give voice to, and hence repressed as impossible speech. Reports of perpetrator failings were rarely dealt with appropriately by the organisation. The findings indicate both the participants and organisations used violence as means of obliterating the shameful reality and protect the systems vulnerability, whilst attempting to survive. I consider moral injury a shared open wound of the system in which the harmful damage induced by severing of ties, resonates between and within the individual and group experiences. Such issues within the system are unable to be thought or spoken of. I view this trauma as a psychic infection in which the individual and group are vulnerable to being wounding and infected by the system. The response to moral transgressions include remnants of past events of the system's inability to mourn losses. Such unconscious memories or moral injury is 'deposited' into the development of the next generation of the system to mourn. These contentions link restructures and culture change programs to chosen trauma that is unconsciously reactivated through these initiatives, as well as acting as shared defences against identification and association with shameful past. The unresolved issues or chosen trauma is passed on to the next generation of workers to re-experience, so the contagion of shame continues to permeate the system.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

11.1: Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I review the results of the study. My discussion includes the contribution the research makes to understanding the impact of overtly known workplace transgressions on organisations and organisation members. I also present the limitations of the research before finishing with recommendations for further research.

This study commenced from a position of not knowing and over the course of a six year period through deep immersion, evolved from my first iteration of the doctoral proposal where I was wanting to explore the emergence of 'Basic Assumption Family' as response to cultures of perversity, to its present form. I believe ideas about family enactments as a defence mechanism in organisations has merit. This as an opportunity for future research.

In this research, time was a recurring dilemma. A considerable period of the six year study was spent in a nebulous state, distilling ambiguity[69] and finding hidden shame markers within the data, constantly playing and replaying audio recordings, listening to laughs, um's, aha's, background noises, making sense of field notes on bodily noises and movements, taps, thumps and stutters. I repeatedly read scripts to make sense of the triggers that had me in flood of tears, angry, anxious, distraught, aroused, heart racing, body aching, headaches, cramped and so often sleepy. To be true to socio-analytic method, I took these associations seriously, and made them worthy of further exploration. To attend to the complexity behind the hidden layers of shame markers and cues required patience and resilience. The seriousness of the topic and its applicability to current crises in institutions warrants the effort required.

11.2: Contribution of the Research

The collective of experiences shared in this study of unacknowledged shame in organisations following the exposure of overtly known workplace transgression highlights the violations enacted by systems in their treatment of employees. The implications for wellbeing and operational functioning are profound, yet seem to be generally avoided and denied. Since 2000, there have been twelve Federal Royal Commissions and inquiries undertaken in

[69] Ambiguity, as defined by Bernstein (2006) is those 'primary processes (jokes, delusions, free association, creative intuition) to express latent thoughts and to provide verbal bridges to the unconscious' (p.3)

Australia[70] . The inquiries have exposed atrocities and corruption occurring in organisational sectors. While the motivations for, and outcomes of, some Royal Commissions may be questioned, in generalising the results of this study across organisations, it is without question that people are deeply traumatised by their experiences.

It is concerning that even after such investigations that so many of the organisations under scrutiny still continue in the same way, profiteering and finding loopholes to exploit regulations and people. Recent studies by Transparency International (TI) have decreased Australia's ranking back to where it was positioned in 2000[71] (https://www.transparency.org/cpi2019). A country prided on its ethical business practices, Australia sadly seems to have lost some of its moral compass. Transparency International states as its organisational purpose that it:

> Gives voice to the victims and witnesses of corruption. We work together with governments, businesses and citizens to stop the abuse of power, bribery and secret deals.

This study is timely and topical in that it supports global concerns raised by Transparency International about the rise of corruption and human rights violations. The study does this by giving voice to a small population of victims and witnesses of systemic misconduct, corruption and maladministration. The study highlights issues of psychological harm and loss of trust. It also points to fiscal issues associated with operational dysfunction through loss of productivity, absenteeism, restructuring and investment in companywide cultural transformation programs and reward systems. Programs which can be manipulated and exploited to benefit a privileged few. I refer here to exorbitant payouts to perpetrators of transgression and confidential separation contracts afforded to CEO's and a select few within corporations. Further, the study indicates a common practice within organisations of exiting 'unwanted identities' and silencing indiscretions with non-disclosure agreements. Some of the cases identified in this study, purported that their organisations outlaid multimillion dollars in countering legal disputes of

[70] It is worth noting that in addition to federal inquiries, that each state and territory within Australia have separate inquires. For example in the state of Queensland since 2000 there have been 10 public inquiries into systemic corruption, misconduct and misadministration. In this, the Racing Industry has been investigated twice within a decade.

[71] In 2000, Australia was ranked 13th out of 180 countries and territories on Transparency Internationals 'Corruption Perceptions Index' Ranking. The ranking is based on 'perceived levels of public sector corruption, according to experts and business people'. https://www.transparency.org/cpi2019. In 2010, Australia's ranked increased to 8th out 180 and in 2020 slid back to 13th. Of interest, the Liberal Party was in power during 2000 and 2020 (economic liberalism ideology), compared to 2010 when the ranking was at its peak, at this time the country was led by the Labor Party (democratic socialist ideology).

wrongful dismissals or defamation cases. In principle, these costly terminations could perhaps have been prevented through honest appraisal, using organisational performance process as it is intended to be used. The findings of the study assist in understanding barriers to an 'in principle' aspiration toward using such pre-existing organisational structures and processes that support ethical behaviour.

This research highlights how not enough attention is given to the manner in which organisations shame employees, objectifying and mutilating them in the process. Nor is enough attention given to the impacts of these shaming strategies on the lives of people psychologically damaged or scarred. This painful truth is denied, concealed and avoided.

11.2.1: Research Findings

The research set out to address these questions:

- What are the elements of the lived experience of individuals within organisations where an overtly known workplace transgression had occurred?
- How can those experiences be understood at an individual and system level?

The study is resolutely established within the conceptual and theoretical traditions of socio-analysis. These traditions evolve through the work of international scholars for whom the more mainstream theories fail to provide adequate explanations about why maladaptive behaviours in organisations occur and are so difficult to redress. The application of socio-analytic theory and methodology in this research enables consideration of the interface of the individual, groupings and the organisation as a whole. Located within interpretative philosophical paradigms this framework has allowed for a cohesive in-depth consideration of the research questions. The aptness of this framework to the research questions is a welcome finding of this study.

A comprehensive review of the literature indicates that discussions of the experience and impacts of shame are largely absent in management and organisation studies disciplines. Specific to what the findings of this research may contribute, there is an absence of how unacknowledged or unconscious/hidden shame might play out in shaping organisational behaviour in the aftermath of workplace transgression. Though theory on shame has continued to advance relating to personality development within psychology disciplines, the range of conceptions on group and system behaviour is limited. This conceivably indicates the

challenges within the field of socio-analysis and systems psychodynamics to define and describe shame more articulately within system contexts.

This study attends to some of these gaps by adding to the existing and evolving literature on shame dynamics in organisations. It attends to these gaps through examining individual and organisational blind spots relating to the characteristics of shame present in the aftermath of a transgression. It also addresses the impact of overtly known workplace transgressions on group relations. This impact being unacknowledged shame.

At the outset, the difficulty experienced in gaining entry to organisations, produced a finding of, at the very least, organisations wishing to close their doors and distance themselves from exposure. Once individual interviews became the method of study, those who came forward gave graphic accounts of serious impacts on them, for both their physical and mental health. Many had left their organisations. Some told of the debilitating consequences that included but not limited to suffering from insomnia, nightmares, depression, self-doubt and paranoia. These behaviours are interpreted in this study as responses to trauma.

The use of socio-analytic method enabled in depth engagement with the data that evocatively illuminates the ways in which the participants and their organisations are affected. The nuanced findings enabled by these methods includes discovery that those who are in the surrounds of the transgression, through the impact of subtle and powerful organisation dynamics, are seriously affected and themselves became victims of what I have called the 'shame spiral'.

Other scholars have noted organisational shame is motivated by envy and dehumanises its employees (Asser 2004; Kane 2012; May 2017). At the individual level, the impacts are felt as traumatising and morally injurious, in which they find themselves rejected and abandoned by leadership and peers, isolated and ignored. This experience decreases their sense of self; their self-worth diminished and they can be effectively killed off by the system. The battle scars of moral advocacy run deep from carrying the organisations burden of shame, shame which is projected into these individuals. This human cost is denied and unspoken of, and seldom the topic of empirical research. Though there is voluminous research on whistle blowers, little investigation has taken place to consider the epidemic of organisational violence towards moral advocates following transgression. This research has begun to address this gap.

At the system level, organisations manifest into a battlefield akin to a hostile siege, where unacknowledged shame and the intolerable anxieties associated with fallings, are unconsciously projected onto others (gazing eye of the other). Organisations infected by the contagion of shame are fuelled by splits and conflict that perpetuate individualism and alienation, thereby reducing social cohesion. In their strivings for perfection and power, any social threat that may attempt to negatively expose organisational/leadership reputation, rank or role triggers a threat defence response. The shame defense strategies or mechanisms deployed in response to these threats are often motivated by moral injury that stems from historical transgressions. Systemic shame self-perpetuates and spirals. Shame regulation in these systems is successful in ensuring awareness and feelings of shame are out of consciousness. The system consciously and/or unconsciously works to control exposure of failings and vulnerability (both implicitly and explicitly) through abusive relations that denigrate and invalidate those that challenge and speak truth of wrongdoings. Moreover, when truth of injustice is intolerable, this triggers more shame and further defences are employed to conceal, as well as deny organisational and leadership failings. The operation of shame requires much serious thought, research and discussion. In answer to the research questions, this study concludes that shame, ubiquitous in its presence, is unrecognisable and fiercely defended against. As expanded in Chapters 10 and 11, the impact of shame is of deleterious psychological damage caused by the system and extent of manipulations employed by organisations to live with perverse systemic adjustments. This in order to maintain a perception of justifiable functionality and reputational status. These are the powerful findings/learnings from this study, learnings that I will endeavour overtime to translate into action to support organisations in managing the aftermath of workplace transgression.

11.3: Limitations of this Research

11.3.1: Access to a Case Study Organisation

Of interest is the level of rejection I experienced from organisations not wanting to participate as a research partner. From the onset of the research journey, the topic of workplace transgression was anxiety provoking for organisations. Though I endeavoured to ‘language’ my exploration in palatable terms, I still experienced rejection, thus altering the course of my study. There is much sensitivity required in the approach to potential case study organisations. On reflection countertransference phenomenon was ominously present in each of my dealings with the various organisational leaders. Though unrecognisable at the time, I was often left with residue feelings of obfuscation and in one most poignant meeting with a religious organisation I felt ‘crazy’, ‘hysterical’ and ‘dazed’. I was completely blindsided by their subtle

defensive behaviour of charm as I was literally ushered to the door (symbolic of their avoidance). Upon reflection, I now realise how masterfully manipulative the defences employed by this system were and the deep sense of shame that I had been caught in, unconsciously identifying with these projections. In this early phase of the research process I was not attuned to working with the dissociative symptoms and had little to no understanding about their power to obfuscate. This countertransference phenomenon was I believe a contributing factor to the blockages in gaining access to a research organisation. My advice for researchers, who experience this phenomenon, is, if it is at all possible, to be mindful of such matters. This is primarily so as not to get caught in shame and/ over identifying with the individuals you are researching. To know shame, is to be aware of one's own proneness and in doing so, ensure appropriate boundaries are in place to prevent enactments (self) and inadvertently shaming participants. This would strengthen containment for this difficult work.

Figure 32: Rejection
Source: Author

11.3.2: Time Constraints

A key frustration of this study was the time required to undertake deep immersion into the data and to surface an understanding of unacknowledged shame. This part of the research process itself took about three years. In retrospect this is where the essence of the research emerged. The need to undertake deep exploration of the concept of shame slowed the analytical phase. This was particularly in relation to understanding the concepts of narcissism, dissociation and trauma. My learning was actively emergent through the research journey. The benefit of this approach is that I fulfilled the interpretivist aim in attaining deeper understanding and knowledge of the complexities surrounding the phenomena of shame in an organisational environment (Pham 2018).

I have come to realise that shame cannot be discovered in a rapid or pressured timeframe. Here lies a significant dilemma for organisations in working with this dynamic, particularly as

most ‘culture change’ programs centre on time and money. These constraints become oppositional to working with the phenomenon experientially. How does one pitch to an organisation that it may take quite some time to surface unacknowledged shame and remedy long standing (perhaps decades long) unresolved issues of internal conflict? As a researcher/consultant, this is a huge challenge when most organisations flee from working with emotion, especially when it means exposing failures, faults and flaws. Here lies an opportunity for future (socio-analytically oriented action) research to consider.

11.3.3: Shame Proneness – Researcher & Participant

Figure 33: Vulnerable
Source: Author

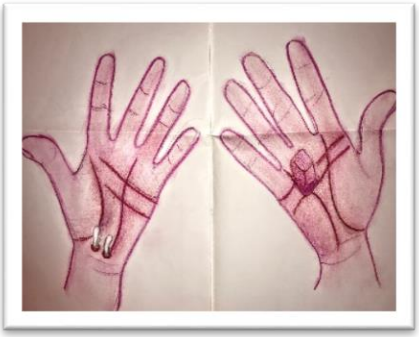


Figure 34: 'Dis-eased'
Source: Author

Figure 35: Depressed
Source: Author

There were significant periods throughout this research journey during where I agonised over what I was producing, struggled with uncertainty of not knowing, and often paralysed by shame as I felt my vulnerabilities become further exposed (refer Figure 33). This further triggered more shame of my perceived inferiorities and in turn, added to the rawness of my monstrous inner critic that tormented me about my incompetency as a researcher (as symbolised in Figure 34). I was frequently anguished and fearful of miscarrying the research, of it being killed in gestation and having to birth it in stillborn form (as reflected in Figure 35). I carried the burden of shamefully feeling as though I was being perceived by ‘others’ (supervisors, peers, friends, family) as a not good enough researcher/mother, incapable of producing/giving life to this thesis (baby). I realise now that unconsciously I was driven to explore the dynamic of shame, but did not recognise or perhaps denied my shame proneness. As mentioned in Chapter 9, I was all too easily caught in over identifying with the material that in many ways hindered my progress. I do recognise this as a limitation to the research; however the useful aspect of this, is that it illuminated the experience of coming to know the language of shame more intimately and experientially. The parallel process to the lived experience of the participants has significantly deepened the study. And after all this reflexivity is what socio-analytic work is about.

Shame proneness, I believe is worthy of due consideration as a potential limitation for anyone considering to embark on studying shame. In delving into this topic, the potential for participants and oneself as researcher to unknowingly re-live a traumatic experience and trigger shame is probable. This can contaminate relations between the researcher, participants and arguably supervisors; the researcher may project onto them, the intolerable anxieties in working with the material, including one's own shame. These dynamics can inhibit the capture and analysis of valuable data, as well as the potential triggering of shame within and between the relations. Furthermore, the participant may both consciously and unconsciously perceive the researcher as a source of shame, as the evaluating 'gaze of the other'. From my experience these dynamics, if not reflected on and worked through with an appropriate support network, may infect critical relations and stifle rich opportunities of learning and discovery. However, when able to be worked with these dynamics are the vehicles for enabling true socio-analytic insight.

11.4: Suggestions for Further Research

11.4.1: Education on Language of Shame

Shame, particularly unacknowledged shame is an under researched area in organisations, with the gaps in literature attesting to this. Creating greater awareness of shame dynamics is critical in curbing inhumane and unethical practices in organisations. From the perspective of a working concept, this study has illuminated opportunities which exist to extend the rich work by Lewis (1971), Retzinger (1991b), Retzinger (1995) Scheff and Retzinger (2001) in deciphering shame in dialogue. I found gaps in contemporary research and systems psychoanalytic theory, especially on identifying nonverbal cues of shame in an organisational context.

Another opportunity relates to research about deciphering colour in the use of drawings. This is about connecting image to associated emotion. Though the table (refer Table 3, 'Emotional Connections') I developed is rudimentary, it was an invaluable tool in providing containment for the participant to help elicit felt experience and articulate emotions, without being too anxiety provoking. An opportunity for future research is to devise a topology of emotion in relation to shame. Perhaps this could be an extension to the glossary of emotions commonly conveyed by participants that I developed, based on their interpretation of drawings using my 'Emotional Connections' table. In this I matched emotion with corresponding colour and used

this as an analytic guide. The applications for this as a working concept could be quite broad and particularly useful in organisational consultancy work where drawing is used.

I would also like to reiterate the significance of education of paralinguistic cues as a working concept for organisational application by organisational consultants, HR practitioners and leaders. The chaotic pace which organisations operate in today has meant much language is abbreviated, simplified or defended against. This is influenced by the use of digital platforms that in themselves have the potential to mobilise defences, in turn impacting, perhaps even decoupling relations. Research to understand how these platforms of communication heighten emotion or the felt experience of shame would be valuable here.

Due to the high likelihood that the researcher risks being caught in the shame dynamics in organisations, I highly recommend that future researchers on shame pay close attention to educating self on the language of shame, ahead of any contact with participants or organisations. In doing so, there is much to learn in this valuable information, including some knowledge of what cannot be spoken of. This should assist in the task of making shame more visible. Being attuned to hidden shame, the researcher can receptively experience the transmission of others' (participant/client/employee) unconscious material. Though this thesis may affirm the existing though limited body of knowledge on the concept of shame in an organisational context, I hope that it can contribute to addressing the practical issues of coming to know the language of shame. For the uninitiated as I was, it has been an acutely steep, yet enriching learning process. I feel I have only just scratched the surface on this often hidden and complex emotion. I still have much to learn.

11.4.2: Working with Countertransference & Somatic Countertransference Phenomenon in the Workplace

Countertransference and somatic countertransference is a live phenomenon: these dynamics were present in my relations with participants, and my analysis showed how they emerged and illuminated hidden shame. The utilisation of these concepts was instrumental in heightening my understanding of hidden shame. This study validates what is conceptualised and typically explored in a therapeutic setting using these phenomena. It opened up my thinking on the possibility of experientially educating organisations on the various guises of unacknowledged shame and how it may be conveyed in preverbal/nonverbal form and worked with to prevent maladaptive behaviour. The intent is restorative action and to facilitate means of system reintegration. This presents opportunity for further research and practice.

11.4.3: Fostering Environments of Mindfulness

Though I did not explore shame's adaptive functions in this study, it does warrant signposting this aspect of shame for future research. I refer particularly to creating awareness of shame in change interventions; more specifically, the provision of holding environments. The process may be helpful in understanding leadership/group's shame proneness, but more importantly creating shame awareness, in the form of intervention, in which a researcher/consultant can assist the organisation in taking responsibility for acknowledging their shame. Such considerations could include the need to correct wrongdoings with restorative practices in change programs, rather than defensive and psychologically debilitating interventions, such as the 'restructure' efforts that were apparent in this study. The latter, as this study suggests, can serve to induce trauma, fear and anxiety. Further, opportunity abounds in the exploration on how organisations can build resilience in relation to saying what they know is the truth, in terms of acknowledging failures, inferiorities and flaws. Likewise, opportunities exist to assist leaders/groups to reflect on what it is that disturbs relations that cannot be voiced in relation to a system's shame, as well as, educate groups on how to stay with the intolerable. This includes mindfulness of the connection between shame and anger and any other behaviour that may indicate withdrawal or denial. As this study has found, there is real need for organisations to listen and tolerate those questions that normally cannot be asked and which can be projected on moral agents (whistle-blowers/moral advocates) who carry the burden on behalf of the system. While these interventions can be seen as generally part of organisational consultancies, greater focus needs to be tuned in to dealing with shame. I may be altruistic in my hopes for organisations to be more empathic, however a tiny shift may be enough of a ripple for change.

As with any change initiative, the biggest consideration is how to address with organisations, the issues of time and cost in launching a sustainable program over a longer period. Repairing ruptured bonds in an organisation, particularly enduring trauma, as studies show, is a long and slow process. Possibilities exist for restorative change programs, but more importantly, that leaders learn awareness of their shame proneness and the debilitating consequences shame has when it permeates cultures. These programs do require time and are not quick fixes to change culture; as such, restorative practice should be recommended to unfold in the fullness of time with appropriately qualified practitioners. The danger of shame being in the hands of the ill equipped differs little to being re-shamed by a shaming authority. I recognise this is a challenge for organisations that are structured for rapid response. However clinical research shows that to recover from shame is a slow process and worthy of investment. Here stands a great opportunity for further research.

11.4.4: Investigate External Projections of Humiliated Rage

A recent development that was brought to my attention and worthy of further exploration, is of external stakeholders shaming an organisation in the aftermath of an overtly known transgression. This was beyond the scope of my study, however, there is no doubt that social media, and other media and social vigilante groups, engage in projections of humiliated rage to shame organisations. This raises another gap in the literature, as well as in empirical research on this issue. It would be worth exploring shame and shaming from a community wide level on organisational functioning. Oscar's case study in Chapter 6 touches briefly on this problem; of the institution having to deal with societal unconscious hatred of its failings through its need to incarcerate its youth. How do organisations deal with the impact of an overtly known transgression from the perspective of harsh external evaluations? These are just some questions that come to mind, with the rapid rise of human resource management systems that can psychologise a worker into an objectified human resource that is quantifiable and more easily manipulable, as well as artificial intelligences that are dehumanising the workforce. I wonder about the new ways organisations can objectify the workforce, and the unconscious connotations this has on shaming our civilisation.

11.5: Conclusion

This study has illuminated moral injury sustained through destructive and deeply harmful social defence mechanisms, employed by systems to protect against the anxiety of shame, particularly unacknowledged shame. This has serious implications for how individuals who have fallen victim to systemic abuses are affected in the short and long term. Additional concerns pertain to the extent of concealment, denial and objectification that is occurring; this despite various equal rights policies in place to mitigate effects of the aftermath of overtly know workplace transgressions. The study indicates that equality in a number of Australian workplaces, indiscriminate of sector, once exposed for leadership moral wrongdoings regress in treatment of employees, This leaves a level of scepticism about the authenticity of organisations espousing to be good corporate citizens. I am drawn to my second year of this study in which I co-authored a book chapter on the 'dark side' of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). At the time, I was unsure about whether I would draw on this work in the research and interestingly now, at the conclusion, a viewpoint expressed in the book chapter is reverberating;

> The headiness of consumerism is an addiction, endemic on a globalised scale. Facilitating collusive relationships….the ideology and doctrines of CSR give society the illusion of hope for

> the future – that is society can 'right corporation wrongs', that we can control corporations and that capitalism is egalitarian…. society unconsciously uses CSR to relieve itself of the guilt and shame in being seduced by greed and a willingness to be deceived (McMurray 2015, p. 193)

I extend this notion now to say that unacknowledged shame is endemic across our organisations with systems engaging in denial, abuse and addictions to relieve themselves of their shame in having workplace transgressions exposed. In closing, I add that greed (for power, status, control, as well as being fuelled by consumerism) and the systems willingness to be deceived (and our own willingness) constitutes a malignant contagion coursing deeply through the lymph nodes of our organisations, and our society.

Appendix 1: Information Consent Statement for Individual Participant Interviews

Project Title: 'A Socio-analytic Study of the Effects of Overtly Known Workplace Transgression'

Investigators: Susan Mravlek, Student Investigator
Associate Professor Melanie Bryant, Chief Investigator, School of Business
Dr Patricia Buckley, Associate Investigator, School of Business
Dr Wendy Harding, Associate Investigator, School of Business

Dear Priscilla,

You are invited to participate in a research project being undertaken by Susan Mravlek, as part of her doctoral studies at Swinburne University. The research has been approved by the Swinburne Human Research Ethics Committee and will be supervised by Associate Professor Melanie Bryant. Please read this information sheet carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate.

Research Participation
You are being invited to contribute to this study because of your individual experience of and/or exposure to a workplace transgression. For the purposes of this study, a transgression is an act of wrongdoing or misconduct that violates legal, ethical or social boundaries. By overtly, I mean an incident that has public awareness; be it through internal and/or external intervention, media awareness and/or prosecution.

Your involvement would be voluntary and you will be able to withdraw at any time. If you agree to participate you will be asked to meet in person with Susan for a one-to-one interview of approximately ninety minutes duration. In some cases, you may also be invited to participate in a follow up interview.

The interview sessions will usually be held on campus at Swinburne University (specific meeting location to be determined once consent is given), during normal working hours, but can also be conducted at a time and at an alternative appropriate location or via Skype for regional or interstate based participants, if this is more convenient.

Research Intent
This research will explore how organisation members are affected by an overtly known workplace transgression and how stakeholders deal with tensions of preserving the identity of the team/group/function, in the aftermath. This will build knowledge to better understand and deal with the impact of workplace transgressions within organisations.

Ethics & Confidentiality
Data will be treated in ways that respect and protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants involved in the study. Individual participants and organisations will not be identified in any reports arising from the research. Data collected in the interviews will only be reported in a non-identifiable form using pseudonyms or codes and summaries of key themes.

Prior to involvement in an interview, you will be asked to sign an informed consent form (copy attached), as part of the ethics requirement for this research.

It is preferred that interviews be audio-recorded, with the knowledge and consent of participants. Audio recording can be ceased at any stage on request. Audio recordings are useful, as they provide an accurate and comprehensive data source to use as the basis for later analysis.

Use of Information
The research will be written up as part of a PhD thesis and disseminated in the Swinburne University Repository, which is a publicly accessible online library of research papers. In addition to this, results may also be written in other academic papers, such as conference and journal publications. Data will be treated in ways that respect and protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants involved in the study. No personal information or identifying data will be used in the presentation of the thesis or other publications relating to this research.

A summary report will also be available upon request. Additionally, personal contributions that you provide in the interview can be made available to you upon request. The data will be kept securely at Swinburne University for a period of 5 years after completion.

Potential Benefits & Risks
Participants in this research will contribute to the development of theory and practice related to the effects of overtly known workplace transgression. Other than the opportunity to talk about your workplace experiences there may be no personal benefit to participants, however you will contribute to the development of understanding of critical issues and ways to support organisations in the aftermath of an overtly known workplace transgression.

There are no perceived risks to participants beyond normal day-to-day activities. Participants will have the right to: withdraw from participation at any time; request that any audio recording cease; have any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed (provided it can be reliably identified); and have any questions answered about research participation.

Participation Consent
If you are interested in participating in an interview and/or would like to refer this invitation to a suitable member from your professional network, please contact Susan by email or telephone, she will then liaise with you directly to arrange an interview time and answer any questions you may have. At the interview, you will be asked to sign a consent form. A copy is attached for your information. Should you require any further details about the research before deciding whether you will be able to participate please don't hesitate to contact Susan in the first instance, however, you can also contact Susan's Swinburne supervisor, Associate Professor Melanie Bryant. Our contact details are listed below.

Yours sincerely

SUSAN MRAVLEK, MAppSc
Doctoral Candidate
Faculty of Business and Law, Swinburne University
Cnr Wakefield and William Streets, Hawthorn VIC 3122
Tel: 04.....
Email: smravlek@swin.edu.au

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR MELANIE BRYANT, PhD
Research Supervisor
Faculty of Business and Law, Swinburne University
Cnr Wakefield and William Streets, Hawthorn VIC 3122
Tel: +61 3 9.....
Email: mjbryant@swin.edu.au

This project has been approved by or on behalf of Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) in line with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this project, you can contact:

Research Ethics Officer, Swinburne Research (H68),
Swinburne University of Technology, P O Box 218, HAWTHORN VIC 3122.
Tel (03) 9214 5218 or +61 3 9214 5218 or resethics@swin.edu.au

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

Project Title: 'A Socio-analytic Study of the Effects of Overtly Known Workplace Transgression'.

Doctoral Candidate: Susan Mravlek

Research Supervisors: Associate Professor Melanie Bryant, Chief Investigator, Faculty of Business and Law
Dr Patricia Buckley, Associate Research Supervisor, Faculty of Business and Law
Dr Wendy Harding, Associate Research Supervisor, Faculty of Business and Law

CONSENT FORM

1. I consent to participate in the project named above. I have been provided a copy of the project consent information statement to which this consent form relates and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. In relation to this project, please circle your response to the following:

   - I agree to be interviewed by the researcher Yes No
   - I agree to allow the interview to be recorded by electronic device Yes No
   - I agree to make myself available for further information if required Yes No

3. I acknowledge that:

   (a) my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation;

   (b) the Swinburne University project is for the purpose of research and not for profit;

   (c) any identifiable information about me which is gathered in the course of and as the result of my participating in this project will be (i) collected and retained for the purpose of this project and (ii) accessed and analysed by the researcher(s) for the purpose of conducting this project;

   (d) my anonymity is preserved and I will not be identified in publications or otherwise without my express written consent.

By signing this document I agree to participate in this project.

Name of Participant: ……

Signature & Date: ……

Appendix 3: Informed Consent Form for Skype

Project Title: 'A Socio-analytic Study of the Effects of Overtly Known Workplace Transgression'.

Doctoral Candidate: Susan Mravlek

Research Supervisors: Associate Professor Melanie Bryant, Chief Investigator, Faculty of Business and Law
Dr Patricia Buckley, Associate Research Supervisor, Faculty of Business and Law
Dr Wendy Harding, Associate Research Supervisor, Faculty of Business and Law

CONSENT FORM

1. I consent to participate in the project named above. I have been provided a copy of the project consent information statement to which this consent form relates and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. In relation to this project, please circle your response to the following:

   - I agree to be interviewed (via Skype) by the researcher Yes No
   - I agree to allow the interview to be recorded by electronic device Yes No
   - I agree to make myself available for further information if required Yes No

3. I acknowledge that:

   (a) my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation;

   (b) the Swinburne University project is for the purpose of research and not for profit;

   (c) any identifiable information about me which is gathered in the course of and as the result of my participating in this project will be (i) collected and retained for the purpose of this project and (ii) accessed and analysed by the researcher(s) for the purpose of conducting this project;

   (d) my anonymity is preserved and I will not be identified in publications or otherwise without my express written consent.

By signing this document I agree to participate in this project.

Name of Participant: ……

Signature & Date: ……

Appendix 4: Semi Structured Interview Questions

5 mins **INTRODUCTION -** Outline the purpose and style of the interview

- Before we begin, can you please confirm for me that you consent, both verbally & in writing, to participate in this interview. Yes / No
- Furthermore, I would like to assure that I will maintain confidentiality & anonymity. All names will be de-identified in any reports I produce, by using codes or pseudonyms.
- As you may be aware that aims of the interview is to enable the exploration of organisational phenomenon that occurs in the aftermath of an overtly known workplace & expand the understanding of the impacts this has on organisational behaviour
- The interview will 90 minutes in duration
- The questions are semi structured to allow for more free flowing dialogue
- The use of drawing is to help elicit a deeper understanding of your experience
- As well as, aid in surfacing any hidden aspects that may not have been considered previously
- Do you have any questions regarding the process before we commence?

ROLE, ROLE RELATEDNESS AND ENVIRONMENT

30mins **SITUATION** - To help me gain a deeper understanding of the context of the situation and your exposure to an overtly known workplace transgression:

1. Can you tell me about the situation you experienced & what that was like for you?
    - Can you provide some details about the type of company,
    - What the how many people were employed?
    - What was its geographic spread?– ie. National, Regional, Global
    - What was the hierarchical structure – matrix, top down, agile
    - What type transgression was made? Was it at an individual level or did it involve others?
    - When did the transgression occur?
    - To what level /extent was the impact of the workplace transgression known and felt across the organisation?
    - Delving into your involvement, can you tell me about the situation you experienced & what that was like for you?

20 mins DRAWING & ROLE RELATIONS

2. Could you please tell me about your drawing?
   - What stood out about the experience:
     i.e. events, language, behaviour and emotions expressed by stakeholders/board members/organisational members?
3. Can you please describe the sphere of your hierarchal relationships?
4. In your experience, how would you describe the tensions, if any, between your role and others?
5. From your observations, what coping mechanisms, if any, were employed by organisational members to try to maintain performance?

30 mins CULTURE

6. How did the transgression shape the behaviours and experience of organisational members? What was your experience like?
7. From your observation, how did authority and leadership consequently get taken up within the organisation by its members?
8. In your opinion, what impact did this workplace transgression have on the organisational culture?
9. Is there a metaphor related to family that's reflected in roles taken up by members/stakeholders? Talk me through why you think this?

g. Father/Absent	j. Grandmother/Grandfather
h. Mother	k. Aunt/Uncle
i. Sister/Brother	l. Infantilised relations

10. Is there a particular stakeholder(s) who stands out in your experience and why?
11. What family role did you play?

5 mins CONCLUSION

13. Is there anything further that you'd like to share?
14. Now we're at the end, what would you change in the drawing?

Appendix 5: Demographic Data of Participants

Demographic data collected included participation response rates, leadership level, gender and industry sector in which their experience was based. The following tables provides a summation of the overall responses.

Table 18: Interview Response Rates

	Reponses Rates					Total Invitees
	Agreed	Initially agreed, but withdrew	Declined, referred on	Declined No referral	No Response	
Professional Network Contact	17	2	17	1	13	**50**
Referrals	2	1	1	0	0	**4**
						54

Table 19: Participant Demographics

Leadership Level	Number of Participants	Gender				Sector			
		Female	%	Male	%	Private	%	Public	%
Non-Executive Director (Board)	**2**	1	50%	1	50%	2	100%	0	0%
CEO	**1**	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
Executive Director	**2**	1	50%	1	50%	2	100%	0	0%
Functional Leader	**5**	4	80%	1	20%	2	40%	3	60%
Operational Leader	**4**	2	50%	2	50%	2	50%	2	50%
Individual Contributor	**4**	4	100%	0	0%	3	75%	1	25%
Total	**18**	**13**		**5**		**11**		**7**	

Table 20: Leadership Level

Table 21: Gender

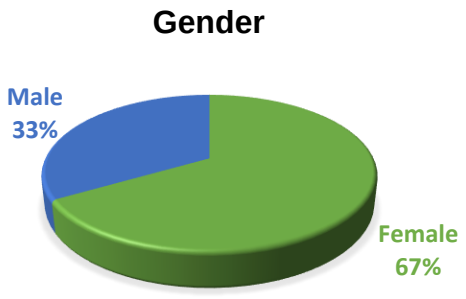


Table 22: Sector

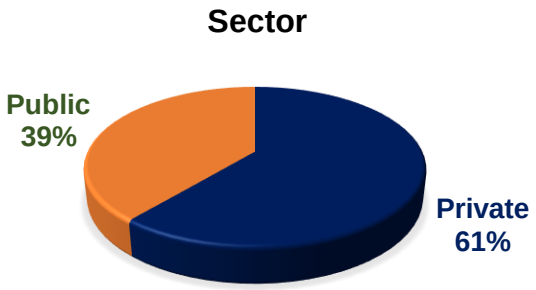
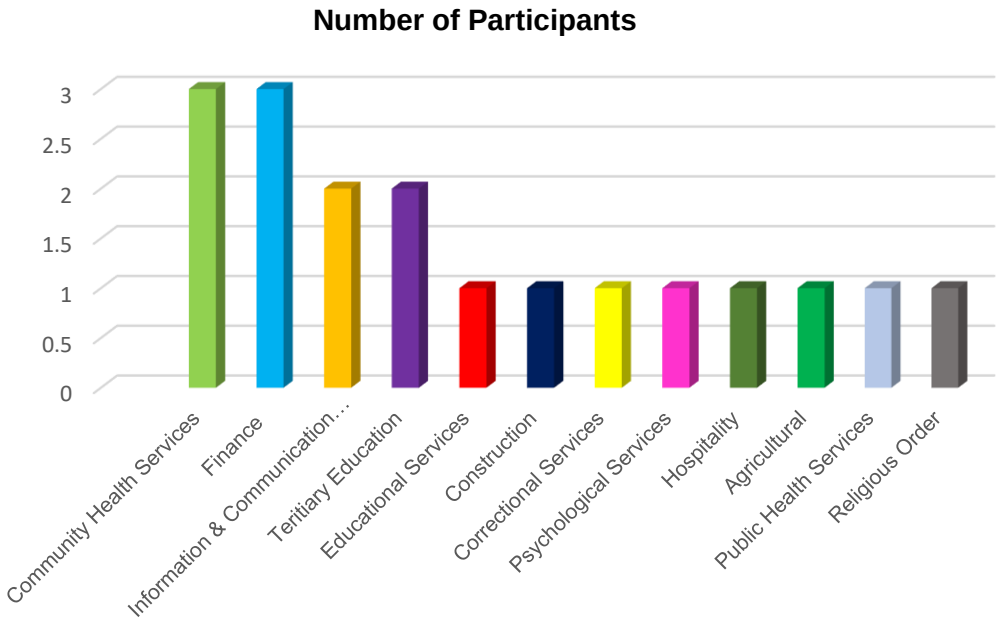


Table 23: Industry



Appendix 6: Typology of Shame Affect (Negative Emotions)

Distress	***Apprehension***	***Hubris/Pride***		
CONFUSION	**DOUBT**	**ARROGANCE**		
Provocation				
ANGER	**INDIGNATION**	**RESENTMENT**		
Agitation			***Antipathy***	
ANNOYANCE	**DISSATISFACTION**	**FRUSTRATION**	**CONTEMPT**	**HATE**
Repulsion	***Social Failing***			
DISGUST	**EMBARRASSMENT**			
Domination				
OPPRESSED				
Misfortune			***Unmotivated***	
SADNESS	**DISAPPOINTMENT**	**PITY**	**BOREDOM**	**APATHY**
Social Hurt				
LONELINESS	**REJECTION**	**HUMILIATION**		
Painful Desire			***Remorse***	
LONGING	**ENVY**	**JEALOUSY**	**GUILT**	**REGRET**
Ambiguous Threat		***Concrete Threat***		
ANXIETY	**DISTRUST**	**FEAR**	**WORRY**	**TERROR**
Uncertainty of Action				
DOUBT	**NERVOUSNESS**	**INSECURITY**		
Helplessness				
DISTRESS	**DESPERATION**			
Affliction				
Envy	**INFECTED**			
Tarnished		***Overwhelm***		
DIS-EASED	**VULNERABLE**	**CONFUSION**	**SHOCK**	

Appendix 7: System Drawings

Case 1: The Token Female

Source: Max

Case 2: They Need People Like Us

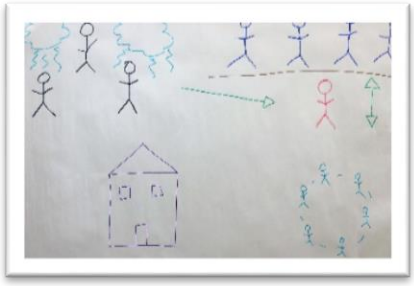
Source: Claudia

Case 3: Emotional Conditioning

Source: Tania

Case 4: Samson & Delilah

Source: Patrick



Case 5: Denying the Deniable

Source: Abigail

Case 6: Masking Excess with Success

Source: Fleur

Case 7: Retreat

Source: Emily

Case 8: Swept Under the Rug

Source: Stuart

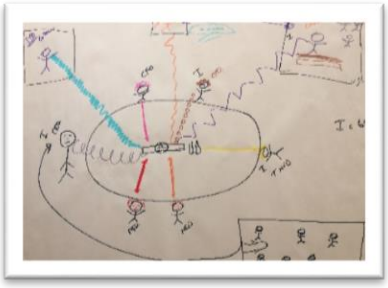
Case 9: Barely Visible

Source: Madeline

APPENDIX 7: System Drawings continued

Case 10: Frozen with Terror

Source: Haley



Case11: The Playing Field

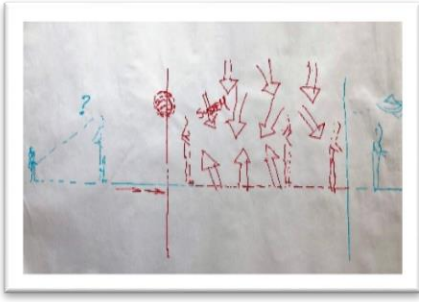
Source: Valencia

Case 12: Mutilation

Source: Poppy

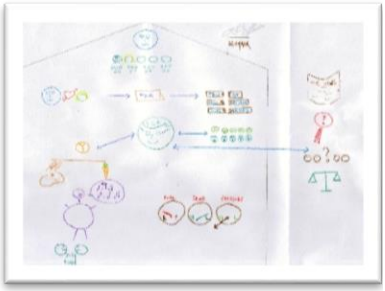
Case 13: Sea of Uncertainty

Source: Dior



Case 14: A Few Good Men

Source: Oscar



Case 15: The Factory

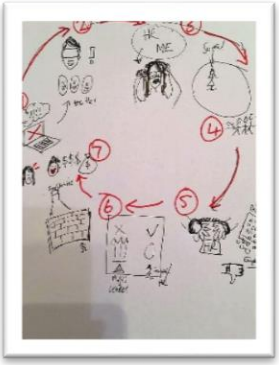
Source: Harry

Case 16: Love Hate

Source: Jasmine

Case17: The Shaming Gaze of the Puppeteer

Source: Bronte



Case 18: You're My Only Hope

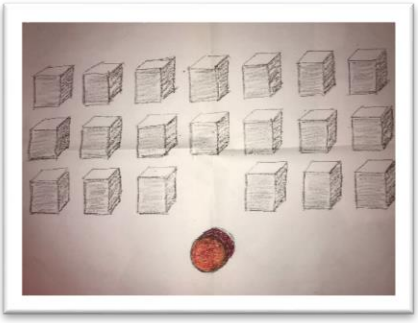
Source: Holly

Appendix 8: Shame Affect – The Parallel Experience of My Research Journey

Drawing 1: Ruptured

Drawing 2: Vulnerable/Exposed

Drawing 3: Rejected



Drawing 4: Alienated

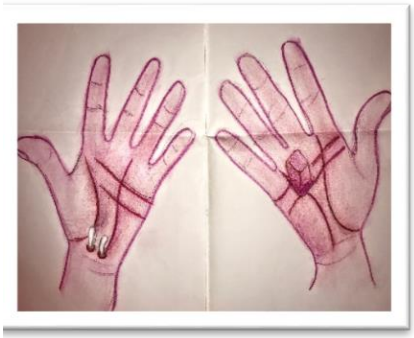
Drawing 5: Excluded

Drawing 6: Isolated

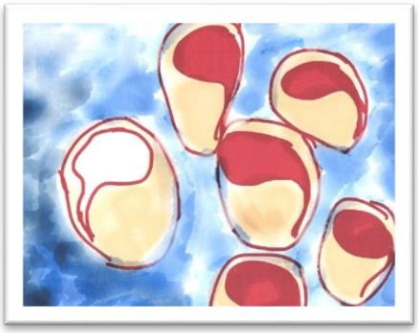
Drawing 7: Helplessness

Drawing 8: Confused

Drawing 9: Silenced



Drawing 10: Dis-eased



Drawing 11: Incapacity to Think

Drawing 12: Terminated

Source: Researcher

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