

**THE UNCONSCIOUS AT WORK IN A
HISTORICALLY BLACK UNIVERSITY: The (k)not of
relationship between students, lecturers and
management**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Michelle S. May, student number 3091-813-8, declare that the thesis titled:

The unconscious at work in a historically black university: The (k)not of relationship between students, lecturers and management,

is my own work, and that all the sources that I have used or have quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SUMMARY

The historically black and historically white universities in South Africa were shaped by apartheid policies. Within this socio-political context the project started when I, who was a lecturer at a historically black university (HBU), was confronted by violent interactions between lecturers and students, and a perceived passivity on the part of management when lecturers were threatened by students with violence in social and academic settings. Based on socio-historical factors and my personal experiences, I explored the experiences of lecturers at an HBU, i.e. their relationship with students and management, to form an understanding about how the lecturers' experiences influenced the unconscious dynamic processes of the intergroup transactions between themselves and the students and management.

A qualitative research method was chosen because it allowed for the in-depth analysis and interpretation of the lecturers' experiences in a particular HBU. Hermeneutic phenomenology, using the systems psychodynamic perspective, allowed for the description and interpretation of the lecturers' experiences. Data collection entailed hermeneutic conversations with the nine lecturers from an HBU. In the analysis, interpretation and reporting of the findings, the interpretive stance proposed by Shapiro and Carr (1991) was used. This analysis and interpretation entailed a collaborative dimension – the analysed data was sent to the lecturers to ascertain whether the analysis was a reflection of their experiences, as well as to experts in the systems psychodynamic perspective to ascertain whether the interpretations were plausible.

The relationship between students, lecturers and management was contradictory, because it was marked by hope for an effective working relationship and by continuing conflict and violence – resulting in the (k)not of relationship based on the (k)not of achievement apparent in the lecturers' relationship with students, and the (k)not of performance evident in their relationship with management. The intergroup transactions between students, lecturers and management were marked by a reign of terror as threats of violence, or actual physical violence, were directed at lecturers by students with little or no intervention by management. By

integrating the findings with systems psychodynamic literature, several working hypotheses and two research hypotheses regarding the (k)not of relationship between the three stakeholders were generated.

Keywords:

Tertiary education, systems psychodynamics, intergroup, students, lecturers, management, social system, splitting, projections, introjections, projective identification, defense against anxiety, envious attack

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This research project started some time ago, and in becoming more familiar with this project it became obvious that I initiated and stayed with this project for reasons that were not always within my awareness. One of the reasons was to relate the experiences of lecturers at the historically black university (HBU), because I suspected that a research project might enhance the chances of this story being heard by the many stakeholders in tertiary education. This research project also became my way of telling my story of what has happened to me at the HBU through the stories of others – as if I needed to check in the stories of others whether my experiences were real. Given that this research project became historical in nature, the need for dealing with what the HBU, which does not exist anymore, represented in the mind became paramount.

In this chapter, the three reasons for undertaking this research project are discussed, the paradigm perspective is outlined, and the research design and method used to complete the project are discussed.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

In academia there seem to be two prevailing value systems, viz. traditional academic values and market-oriented values. In tertiary education there has been an increase in global pressures for universities to adhere to market-oriented values which demand (economic) efficiency with regard to tuition and research (Davis, 2003; Kraak, 2004; Sehoole, 2004; Subotzky, 1997; Welch, Yang & Wolhuter, 2004). This change towards market-oriented values and its concomitant external pressures and demands challenges lecturers' core assumptions about their work and professional identities (Ylijoki, 2005).

According to authors such as Abdi (2002, 2003), Boughey (2002), Imenda, Kongolo and Grewal (2004), Nkomo (1990a), Sehoole (2004), and Zegeya (2004) to name but a few, education plays a crucial role in the transformation of any country. Given the socio-political history of education in South Africa, South African society and government have many pressing issues to confront through transformational processes (Swartz & Foley, 1996). There is huge demand for well-qualified competent black graduates from companies which adhere to government's legal imperative of ensuring equity within all spheres of the economy (Boughey, 2002; Swartz & Foley, 1996). Therefore, industry and government expect that tertiary education institutions, both the historically black and the historically white, will deliver graduates who have the skills and know-how to make an effective contribution to productivity in the companies who employ them. However, there were concerns about the employability of graduates from historically black universities (HBUs) compared to those graduates from historically white universities (HWUs) because the graduates from HWUs probably had access to better resources and facilities (Imenda et al., 2004; Sehoole, 2004; Welch et al., 2004). This matter is further complicated by issues pertaining to increasing students' successful participation in tertiary education and to reducing the number of students who fail to complete their courses or who underachieve (Smith, 2002). In order to understand the landscape of education in South Africa a brief historical overview of education and its different stakeholders, with an emphasis on tertiary education, in South Africa will be provided.

1.1.1 The South African context: education as a tool of domination and exploitation

The education system existing more than 300 years ago in South Africa was a situationally successful, informal set of programmes of education that were formulated and selectively implemented by the African population to address the

needs of the African population at that time (Abdi, 2003). Keto (1990, pp. 19-20) described the indigenous African endeavours of teaching and learning as follows:

African societies in South Africa had invariably created their own institutions and processes of socialisation and education before the Dutch settlers arrived in 1652. The process of education began by informal learning by the young from family members. They were introduced gradually to the world around them until they reached puberty. At that point a formal intensive learning process lasting up to six months was carried out in the initiation ritual. Lessons in manners, roles, responsibilities, values and history accompanied the physical training and the ability to bear pain.

After 1652 the European settlers brought to South Africa colonial education and in this way impacted on the existing education system (Abdi, 2002, 2003). According to Keto (1990) three distinct phases of (colonial) educational policy and practice can be identified between 1652 and 1880. The first phase was marked by religiously focused educational practice and policies which supported the Dutch East India Company. The second phase of schooling was locally controlled and state aided. The third phase was marked by the centralisation of education under departments of education and/or superintendents of education. Schooling before 1880 demonstrated a link between education, political power, economic growth and resources (Keto, 1990; pp. 25-37).

At first, educational endeavours before 1880 reflected the values and preferences of the Dutch and the commercial concerns of the Dutch East India Company and later on those of the British Empire (Keto, 1990). From 1652 to 1800 the Dutch implemented religiously focused education to educate enslaved Africans and Asians for their economic purposes, as well as Christianise them to accept the superiority of the Dutch and accept their subordinate position within the Dutch empire. Proposals for secular education from 1800 to 1805 allowed for a schooling system which permitted religious instruction, and fell under the auspices of secular

authorities. Thereafter the British used education, from 1806-1838, as a means of anglicisation of black South African and the Afrikaners (primarily descendants from the Dutch). The British attempts at the anglicisation of the Afrikaners had varying degrees of success and influenced the Afrikaners subsequent policies pertaining to diversification and centralisation of education in the different Afrikaner republics from 1839-1880. During this period tertiary education institutions provided advanced education for the white youth with only a few black youth afforded the opportunity to attend these institutions (Abdi, 2002; Keto, 1990).

Thus, colonial education aimed to ensure the colonisers' control over the black South Africans, and entrenched social mechanisms that ensured the misappropriation of resources from black South Africans to Europeans (mainly Dutch and British) and later their descendants, the Afrikaners and other white groups in South Africa. In other words colonial education not only colonised, but also ensured and entrenched the exploitation and subjugation of black South Africans (Abdi, 2002; Gerwel, 1994; Keto, 1990).

From 1940 to 1980 fundamental pedagogics was used by the National Party government and its predecessors to institutionalise apartheid education and ensure the furtherance of Afrikaner nationalism (Evans, 1992; Nkomo, 1990b; Ruth, 2000). Fundamental pedagogics provided a particular discourse in education which inculcated an unquestioning following of and passivity towards white authority, mainly among the white population. It imposed a behavioural understanding of the learning process, where students should passively adapt to the teachings and directives of authority figures. To some extent fundamental pedagogics was also used as a strategy of pacification of black people. The success of the strategy of pacification among white people was due to the fact that their obedience was rewarded by sound employment, the distractions of consumerism and the state's protection from the black population (Cross & Chisholm, 1990; Evans, 1992; Nkomo, 1990b).

Several authors, such as Abdi (2002, 2003), Mabokela (2001), Keto (1990) and Pityana (2005) highlight that because of 300 years of colonisation and 50 years of Afrikaner nationalism as exercised through the apartheid system, black people never determined their own educational system. The educational system provided for black people during apartheid was designed to oppress and ensure that they remained marginalised (Abdi, 2003; Evans, 1992; Mabokela, 2001; Ndebele, 1997; Nkondo, 1976; Swartz & Foley, 1996; Subotzky, 1997). Abdi (2003, p. 91) stated that:

In the subsequent decades and centuries of European colonialism and [decades of apartheid government], education in South Africa deliberately constituted an organised philosophy and practice of domination that continually developed the invading Europeans at the direct expense of the African population.

Education and therefore tertiary education for black people in South Africa was a deliberate programme of educational, economic and socio-cultural underdevelopment for black people by minimizing the allocation of educational resources to them, and maximising resources for white people (Abdi, 2002, 2003; Evans, 1992; Nkomo, 1990a; Ruth, 2000). According to Ruth (1996) education and consequently tertiary education institutions stripped black students of their creativity, innovativeness and ambition and restricted their ability for free enquiry and the exploration of differences – the very things which are urgently required by current government and industry.

The education system also had as its purpose to socialise black students to accept apartheid's social relations, i.e. accept the "superiority" of white people and their own "inferiority". Simultaneously the education system through fundamental pedagogics developed a consciousness and identity among white students about their own "superiority" (Abdi, 2003; Evans, 1992; Nkomo, 1990a).

However, the educational system also became a place where several stakeholders were able to express their dissatisfaction with the oppression and domination they experienced through the education systems in the country (Enslin, 1990; Evans, 1992; Hyslop, 1990; Naidoo, 1990; Nkondo, 1976). This domination and oppression within the education systems obviously could not be separated from the general discrimination and humiliation suffered by black people in the country (Nkondo, 1976). Enslin (1990, p. 77) stated:

If [education] is inescapably political, nowhere is it more starkly so than in South Africa where the educational system is at once a cornerstone of the apartheid system and a primary site of struggle against it.

1.1.2 Tertiary education in South Africa

Education and thus tertiary education was administered under the tricameral constitution of 1983 through three own affairs houses and one general affairs sub-cluster. Consequently, tertiary education was governed though departments of education determined along racial lines. Universities, like all other educational institutions, were administered through different departments of education (Nkomo, 1990a). In 1994 South Africa was divided into nine provinces resulting in the creation of one national ministry and nine provincial departments of education. Within this context, tertiary education became the concern of the national ministry (Sedibe, 1998).

Tertiary education in South Africa had as its main purpose during apartheid to maintain and reproduce through legislative and other measures, apartheid's social order – a social order in which tertiary education was reserved for an elite few (Winburg, 2004). Thus, the HBUs and HWUs were shaped by apartheid policies (Nkondo, 1976; Subotzky, 1997; Swartz & Foley, 1996). As this was engineered by the apartheid government, the political struggle against apartheid was fought

by the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress (Abdi, 2002). Winburg (2004, p. 98) stated that traditional South African university life is inextricably linked with the apartheid past. Based on this, it can be added that current South African university life is inextricably linked with the apartheid past. Ruth (2000, p.18) eloquently illustrated this point when stating that entrenched historical legacies [exist] as undercurrents in the life of [the university] long after persistent efforts at explicit change have won the day.

1.1.2.1 The historically white universities

Before 1960 the white universities were formally divided into two groups, the English language universities and the Afrikaans language universities. The University of South Africa, the only institution providing correspondence education at that time, offered tuition in English and Afrikaans (Nkondo, 1976, Welch et al., 2004). The differences in tuition languages also indicated differences within these universities about the fundamental role of the university. The English language universities emphasised the importance of academic freedom and autonomy, while the Afrikaans language universities followed the ideological policies of the government of the day. However, of the white tertiary institutions only eight provided limited access to black students, i.e. those students not considered to be white (Nkondo, 1976; Robus & Macleod, 2006; Ruth, 2000). In the early part of the 20th century the HWUs were still highly regarded, while the HBUs were considered to be atrocious (Clery, 1995; Zegeye, 2004).

1.1.2.2 The historically black universities

Through extension of the Universities Education Act (No 45 of 1959) the first phase in the establishment of HBUs as separate universities for black students, commenced, as well as restricting the admission of black people to HWUs (Abdi, 2003; Nkondo, 1976; Pityana, 2005; Robus & Macleod, 2006; Ruth, 2000; Subotzky, 1997). Through this Act five university colleges affiliated with the University of South Africa, were established in 1960 (Nkondo, 1976). Importantly

these universities were racially and ethnically divided for eight black ethnic groups, the coloured and Indian groups (Nkondo, 1976):

- University College of Fort Hare (bear in mind that this university was established in 1916 – the Universities Education Act of 1959 changed many things at this university) (for the Xhosas);
- University College of the North (for the North Sotho, South Sotho, Tsonga, Tswana and Venda ethnic units);
- University College of Zululand (for the Zulus);
- University College of Western Cape (for Coloureds); and
- University College of Durban-Westville (for the Indians).

Most of the HBUs were situated in the homelands, but for the four universities earmarked for coloured and Indian students, and two catering for black urban students (Robus & Macleod, 2006; Subotzky, 1997). The universities located in rural areas were near to white towns so that white lecturers, some of whom supported the apartheid ideology, could be employed at these institutions. These lecturers also received an additional incentive (unofficially known as danger or tolerance pay) for working at these HBUs (Robus & Macleod, 2006; Vergnani, 1998, 1999).

The universities located in urban settings had greater access to supportive cultural academic and economic infrastructure and better prospects for recruiting quality staff and students (Subotzky, 1997). Two of these urban universities also served more stable middle class communities and had access to students who had a better primary and secondary schooling (Subotzky, 1997).

Although in 1969 black university colleges were proclaimed autonomous by Acts of parliament, these universities remained white-controlled black universities which formed an integral part of the national framework of separate development (Nkondo, 1976; Ruth, 2000; Starfield, 2002; Tiro, 1976). This obviously points to the paradoxical nature of HBU in which power and authority resided with white

people, while black people occupied advisory and token positions and in so doing maintained the power relations between black and white (Mabokela 2001; Nkondo, 1976). The white management and lecturers were also considered to be collaborating with government, i.e. the South African or independent homeland government (Sumbulu & Boswell, 2003). Ruth (2000, p.16) referred to this status quo as the spectacle of university institutions meant for [black people] but controlled entirely by white people.

According to Subotzky (1997) the main purpose of the HBU was to perpetuate the racially defined divided social order. More specifically their primary function was to educate personnel to work in the civil service structures of the separate homelands, as well as for the small emerging black middle class (Clery, 1995; Evans, 1992; Nkomo, 1990a; Ruth, 2000; Winburg, 2004). Differently put, the policy of separate development adhered to by tertiary educational institutions focused on educating for inequality and inferiority (Ruth, 1996; Swartz & Foley, 1996). Harold Wolpe (quoted in Abdi, 2003, p. 96) stated that the:

[HBUs] were to generate the administrative corps for the black separate development bureaucracies, wean a new generation of students away from nationalist and socialist sentiments, and win them to the separate development project through the appropriate mix of repressive controls and the promises of economic opportunities in the Bantustans and around the social services needs of blacks.

However, the HBU as tools of oppression became one of the many sites of struggle against the apartheid regime (Nkondo, 1976; Ruth, 2000).

1.1.3 Student protest

Abdi (2002) compares the liberation struggle within the South African education system to the big bang theory, where the explosion of anger pent up at systemic

and temporal economic deprivation and unrelenting marginalisation burst to the fore. In the explosion, young black people were willing to die and many actually died in a struggle for socio-political freedom. The liberation struggle emerged from a deteriorating education system and the lack of economic opportunities for young black graduates during the 1970s and 1980s. A significant moment within the liberation struggle for students was marked by the 1976 student resistance against the government policy of Afrikaans as medium of instruction in secondary schools, which was considered to be a perpetuation of efforts to ensure black inferiority and underdevelopment (Abdi, 2002, 2003; Nkomo, 1990b; Nkondo, 1976). The Soweto uprising of 1976 ensured that the educational institutions (high schools and HBUs) became an important site of struggle for the youth over educational, as well as broader political, issues (Cross & Chisholm, 1990; Nkomo, 1990a, 1990b; Nkondo, 1976). Student protest during the 1980s was epitomised by the slogans *liberation now, education later* (Nkomo, 1990b, p. 297) and a pedagogy of *resistance* (Naidoo, 1990; Nkomo, 1990a, p. 5) against apartheid education. This transformed education and HBUs into ungovernable war zones where students, who were mobilised through black student organisations, expressed their dissatisfaction through unruly and at times violent behaviour to which the police and army reacted with military force (Nkondo, 1976; Ruth, 2000).

Student revolt was instrumental in bringing about irrevocable socio-political change in South Africa (Nkomo, 1990a, 1990b). However, this revolt was not only against the apartheid system, but also against the older black generation whom they considered to be passive and accepting of the apartheid system, as well as against those they considered to be informers for the apartheid government (Zegeye, 2004). However, black students through the different student organisations attempted to form alliances with the older generation, the trade unions and other resistance movements in order to prevent disagreements with the older generation, and in so doing ensuring an effective, holistic resistance against the apartheid state during the 1980s (Naidoo, 1990). Freire (2005, p.155)

cautions against ongoing destructiveness on the part of students within an education system that is experienced as oppressive:

If [students] reared in an atmosphere of ... oppression, [students] whose potency has been frustrated, do not manage during their youth to take the path of authentic rebellion, they will either drift into total indifference, alienated from reality by the authorities and the myths the latter have used to shape them; or they may engage in forms of destructive action.

Naidoo (1990) prefers to focus on the students' ability to participate in authentic rebellion and is hopeful about the role of students in the transformation of education, and especially tertiary education.

Abdi (2002) cautions us against forgetting the role of liberal white students, liberal white student organisations and certain white politicians (those in the country and those in exile) who were actively involved and contributed in countless ways in the liberation struggle against the injustices of the apartheid system. Then off course we cannot ignore the efforts of countless lecturers (black and white) at HBUs in contributing to the development of marginalised black youth by providing good-enough educational opportunities in less than optimal circumstances.

1.1.4 Education for liberation in post-apartheid South Africa

According to authors such as Abdi (2002, 2003) Jansen (2002), Kraak (2004), Sehoole (2004) and Vergnani (1998, 2001) to name but a few, current educational policy endeavours to provide a single, co-ordinated system of education and training opportunities for all South Africans, young and old, men and women, those in urban and rural settings. These endeavours, to transform tertiary education, are affected by competing local and global discourses (Boughey, 2002; Kraak, 2004; Sehoole, 2004; Welch et al., 2004). Jansen (2002 p.160) states that:

it is in the twin logics of the transition that the proposal for restructuring of higher education must be understood: the logic of resolving the apartheid legacy in higher education and the logic of incorporating the higher education system within the context of a competitive, globalised economy.

Thus, the main concern of policy makers in post-apartheid education is to redress past injustices and achieve greater equity in the provision of resources and educational opportunities (Boughey, 2002; Clery, 1995; Pityana, 2005; Sehoole, 2004; Welch et al., 2004; Zegeye, 2004).

Merkenstein (n.d.) and Ruth (2000) identified that in 1996 the legacy of apartheid education at the University of the North included the impossibility of an apolitical perspective on the institution and that discrimination along racial and ethnic lines in the institution continued. In an attempt to deal with this legacy in tertiary education, mergers of HBUs and HWUs were implemented. Within the context of this research project it is important to bear in mind that educational and economic inequality for 300 years cannot be totally addressed within the foreseeable future through the single, co-ordinated system of education and training (Abdi, 2002, 2003). Thus, the themes and discourses which come with centuries of marginalisation of black people at the hands of white people serve as the backdrop to the research project about the experiences of a particular group of lecturers at an HBU.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the light of the review of the literature about education in South Africa, the apparent lack of research about the unconscious dynamics within the HBU, as well as my interest in understanding the experiences of the lecturers in the HBU from a systems psychodynamic stance informed my formulation of the problem for this research project. In the following sections I review literature about

relationships in the HBU, some aspects of the current state of tertiary education and my personal experiences of lecturing at an HBU. These discussions were linked to the theoretical underpinnings of the research project in order to formulate the research question. The research question became the guiding light of this research project.

1.2.1 Relationships between the main stakeholders in the HBU

Although the government during the apartheid years envisaged a particular role for HBUs in society, these institutions became centres of political struggle against the apartheid state (Ndebele, 1997). This political struggle formed part of an overall initiative to make the country ungovernable. This policy reduced the capacity of several social organisations in black communities to have an organising and stabilising effect on an increasingly unstable social environment. Thus, the HBUs became progressively unstable as student power grew phenomenally since the early 1970s (Ndebele, 1997). Consequently the managerial, administrative and academic aspects of HBUs were severely affected by the power wielded by black students (Nkondo, 1976; Sumbulu & Boswell, 2003).

Protracted conflict between students and management – which at that time was white, Afrikaners and perceived as the agent of an oppressive state – marked the HBUs (Tiro, 1976). Academic staff, who were primarily white and mainly Afrikaners, with a small number of black staff, became increasingly marginalised. This marginalisation probably resulted from mistrust towards the white lecturers as agents of the oppressive state, which could have been fired by these lecturers seemingly not supporting a cause that threatened their privileged positions. The black lecturers were probably too few to impact on the students and the status quo (Ndebele, 1997).

Simultaneously the administrative staff became more unionised and formed strong alliances with powerful student bodies. Although these alliances were not without tensions, they increased the polarisation between management and the allied sectors. Subsequently the marginalisation of the lecturers increased (Ndebele, 1997).

1.2.2 Personal experiences at an HBU

This research project started in 1997 when I, who at that time was a lecturer at the HBU, was confronted with unresolved experiences with regard to other lecturers' (and my own) interaction with students and management. At that point I was confronted by on the one hand violent interactions between lecturers and students, and a perceived passivity on the part of management when lecturers were threatened by students with violence. I have two poignant examples of such events.

A particular violent event in 1995 was the impetus for this research project, i.e. to explore the experiences of lecturers in an HBU. In March 1995 my colleagues and I were confronted by a situation where we experienced ourselves as unsupported by management and confronted by the demands of students.

Two lecturers (including myself who was the co-ordinator of the course) were responsible for the second year course. A test was planned for the first semester for approximately 750 students who were enrolled for the course. Given the limited resources available we made arrangements for this test long in advance. The week before the test, rumours about a social event, the Ball, which will be held on the date of the test, began circulating. My colleague and I were not overly concerned about these rumours because we foolishly assumed that lectures would not be interrupted and that academic events would have precedence over social ones.

In the week of the tests my colleague and I had several enquiries from second year students who indicated that the Student Representative Council (SRC) said that the Ball would start on the morning of the 15th of March. At this stage my colleague and I still assertively responded that management has not suspended classes and that the test would go ahead. After one of the representatives from the second year class raised his concerns about the rumours that the test would not take place and the need to clarify the situation, we reacted by contacting management and the SRC. At this stage we received conflicting messages. The SRC indicated that they would still have to negotiate about the suspension of lectures with management, but they believed that the Ball would start in the morning. On the other hand, management knew nothing about the rumours and insisted that lectures and tests were going ahead as planned. The answer from management did not satisfy us and I once again contacted the SRC in order to negotiate with them in order to ensure that the test went ahead. A meeting was arranged with the SRC president, the head of the department, my colleague and me, as well as the three representatives for the students. The meeting decided that the test would take place at 09:00 and the Ball would start at 11:00 after the test.

On the 15th of March this test and a test scheduled by another department were disrupted by members of the SRC. Several of my colleagues looked on and tried to defuse the situation. (I was not on campus on this particular day because I had taken leave to attend to another arrangement.) One of my colleagues went to the campus management to ask them to intervene, but they indicated that they were in a meeting and could not come.

Although attempts were made to write the test, the disruption of the test was of such a nature that the test had to be cancelled. The students who wanted to write the test signed their names on sheets of paper to indicate their support. During the disruption two of my colleagues were physically manhandled by students.

Students who wanted to write the test surrounded the lecturers in a gesture to protect them, while chanting slogans against the SRC.

After this event the two departments, supported by the representative of the faculty, demanded disciplinary action against the students who manhandled the lecturers and disrupted the tests. Management did not react to these requests.

The other event occurred in the middle of 1997, when two of my colleagues and a senior administrative officer were taken hostage by a group of students. This incident resulted in eight lecturers (all of whom participated in this study) taking a stay-away action until disciplinary action was taken against the students responsible. However, despite efforts by these lecturers, no disciplinary action was taken against the students.

One of the things that really occupied me at the time of these events was the fact that on both occasions, for legitimate reasons, I was not on campus and thus did not experience any violence directed towards me. Of course my pre-occupation was about why was I spared the violent interactions? Perhaps very narcissistically I, a coloured, black, African woman, felt preserved by the black, African students. However, I also considered the attack on my fellow-colleagues as an attack on me. I also remained aware that the truce that existed between students and lecturers was precarious.

Furthermore, management's unresponsiveness with regard to these attacks on lecturers left me, and I venture to add my colleagues, feeling disregarded and to some extent annihilated by management. Furthermore, my conversations with colleagues at other HBUs included a conversation about how these universities and the work of lecturers at these universities were not particularly valued by the wider academic fraternity. All these experiences enhanced my experience of my work and contribution being disregarded by various stakeholders.

The above events had become (for me) a poignant symbol of many other, but similar, incidents which we as lecturers had to face every day in our workplace. It also vividly illustrates a particular aspect of how lecturers were treated in this HBU. I felt compelled by the above events to explore the experiences of lecturers at this HBU.

1.2.3 Education landscape

The current education policy aims to provide an integrated system of education and training that provide opportunity to all South Africans (Abdi 2003). However, this current integrated system of education could not immediately address the entrenched educational and economic inequality of the last 300 years. One of the stumbling blocks to parity is related to the need for the development of a culture of learning among black students who have been affected by a culture of political struggle marked by non-learning (Abdi, 2003). Furthermore, racialised education during the late 1990s and early 2000s, despite policy efforts to address the status quo, remained a reality (Evans, 1992; Kraak, 2004; Nkomo, 1990a; Ruth, 1996; 2000; Zegeye, 2004).

1.2.4 Theoretical underpinning of the research project

In thinking about what I wanted to research I am challenged by the possibility of exploring the unconscious processes underlying the experiences of the lecturer as part of the *group-as-a-whole* (Wells, 1985), i.e. the experiences of lecturers in a specific department. I found myself hesitating about undertaking such research because of my own anxiety around the findings of such research. Perhaps the most important anxiety I experienced was about discovering how the lecturers' (me included) own unconscious processes and dynamics had contributed to these very unfortunate incidents. In other words, how lecturers (me included), have not

been innocent bystanders of what has happened and (maybe) is still happening to lecturers.

Freud refers to the professions of education, health, government and psychoanalysis that involve some degree of caring as *impossible professions* (Frank, 2001; Obholzer, 1994a; Vanheule & Verhaeghe, 2004; Weiss, 2002b). Thus, the major institutions providing a public service, such as educational institutions, serve to contain the anxieties of society, which have their roots in infancy (Nutkevitch, 1998; Obholzer, 1994b; Weiss, 2002b). Willshire (1999) explicates how impossible societal and interpersonal elements are located within psychiatric institutions – major institutions providing a public service. Frank (2001) and Powell Pruitt and Barber (2004), focus on how impossible societal and interpersonal elements are located in school systems. The impossible interpersonal elements include the obstacles or resistances experienced by learners – and derived from their earlier relationships with their parents or authority figures – and transferred by the learners onto teachers. Through the teachers' countertransference reactions, especially when these reactions clash with the students' transference expectations, the impossible interpersonal elements in the classroom and the school are enhanced. The destructive nature of the impossible interpersonal elements is further affected by whether the transference and countertransference are negative or positive (Salzberger-Wittenberg, Henry & Osborne, 1983; Weiss, 2002a, 2002b).

I propose that these ideas are relevant to any educational system, including tertiary educational institutions. Frank (2001) proposes that contained in educational systems are society's wish that they would be stable, secure organisations in which students can learn and grow. Powell Pruitt and Barber (2004) refer to this as the apparent task of the educational system, and suggest that the primary task of the educational system is to perpetuate the social and political agenda of the time. Given the recent changes within the South African educational system, one may be prone to be optimistic about the South African

educational system. However, the above authors also explore irrational elements linked to the intensification of anxiety, which are located within educational systems when confronted with change.

Of particular interest to this study is exploring what is being contained in tertiary educational institutions and in particular by HBUs in the mind of this country. Obholzer (1994b) proposes that on an unconscious level, tertiary educational institutions are used to negotiate society's anxiety about its ability to raise students who are well-equipped to effectively deal with and survive the many demands of modern-day society and in so doing prevent the society from going under. This fearsome responsibility is then put onto the management, academic and administrative staff of tertiary educational institutions, letting the rest of society off the hook. In order for them to contain and metabolise the anxieties which were projected onto them, there had to be agreement, among the stakeholders, about the institution's primary task and awareness of the nature of the anxieties being projected onto them, as suggested by Baum (2002), Brown (2003), Obholzer (1994a), Powell Pruitt and Barber (2004) and Weiss (2002a, 2002b) to name but a few. The above ideas reverberate into the South African educational landscape, where the tertiary educational system has contained conscious dynamics of domination, oppression, superiority and inferiority across race as well as other diversity characteristics (Abdi, 2002, 2003; Jansen, 2002; Nkomo, 1990a, 1990b; Pityana, 2005).

Using the idea of the organisation-in-the-mind and South African socio-political history, it is proposed that in the South African education-in-the-mind, particular unconscious dynamics are associated with HBUs and HWUs. What is not explored and described more specifically in literature is what was being projected onto the HBU in this country, especially onto the lecturing staff, by society, the immediate communities, management, administrative staff, as well as students. Given that I have been a lecturer at an HBU, I am particularly interested in what fearsome responsibility was put onto the HBU generally, and the lecturers of the

HBU in particular, in the context of having to deal with students who come from disadvantaged communities and a schooling system which had educated them for incompetence. Through such an exploration and description, our awareness of the nature of the anxieties being projected onto lecturers at an HBU, can be developed.

Obviously, lecturers at the HBU form one of the many sub-systems within the university. The above incidents (see 1.2.2) also vividly illustrate how lecturers find themselves ignored and marginalised by other groups (students and management) within the HBU. In order to effectively understand the unconscious dynamics of lecturers as a group, their unconscious dynamics which underlie the above events should be explored as part of an intergroup transaction within that particular HBU. This allowed for understanding the lecturers' unconscious dynamics as part of a larger system, with its own unconscious processes and dynamics.

This would then also add to existing knowledge which aims to understand the tertiary educational institution as an open system. It also hoped that this exploration will add to existing knowledge, which attempts to illustrate that any difficulty in the institution resulted from and influenced the conscious and unconscious dynamic processes in tertiary educational institution. I believe that this would raise greater awareness of how conscious and unconscious dynamics and processes influence the primary task of tertiary educational institutions. This could emphasise the actuality that in the HBU (and dare I say all other tertiary educational institutions), one cannot focus on task at the expense of process and dynamics. I also believe that the exploration of the lecturers' experiences is a way in which I can constructively deal with and integrate what has happened to me at HBUs and HWUs in my role as student and lecturer.

Based on the above discussion the research question explored was: What were the experiences of a particular group of lecturers at an HBU?

1.3 AIMS

In the following section the general aim and specific aims of this research project, based on the research question, will be discussed.

Manning (1999) stated that in qualitative research, questions emerge from sources such as personal experiences or different theoretical traditions with their respective empirical research. My initial research question for this study has come from my own experiences in the university. Thus the aims have been derived from the interplay between my own experiences, informal theories based on my understanding of the underlying processes that I observed, as well as my theoretical interest in the systems psychodynamic perspective.

1.3.1 The general aim of the research project

The general aim of this research project was to form an understanding of lecturers' experiences within a particular HBU by exploring the psychodynamic processes among three subsystems (lecturers, students and management) of the institution.

1.3.2 Specific aims of the literature review

Relevant literature was reviewed for more information about the unconscious dynamics and processes in organisations by exploring the systems psychodynamic perspective in order to apply the relevant theories and concepts to experiences of lecturers in an HBU.

1.3.3 Specific aims of the hermeneutic phenomenology study

Through this research project information was gathered and analysed to explore:

- the extent to which the unconscious dynamics and processes of lecturers is a function of intergroup processes in the particular HBU;
- the extent to which lecturers' experiences influence the unconscious dynamics and processes of the intergroup transactions between students and lecturers in the particular HBU; and
- the extent to which lecturers' experiences influence the unconscious dynamic processes of the intergroup transactions between lecturers and the management of the particular HBU.

1.3.4 Secondary aims

Through the analysis of the data generated by this research project, I aimed to contribute to existing knowledge which attempts to understand the university as an open system. I also hoped to add to knowledge, which attempts to illustrate that any difficulty in the HBU resulted from and influenced the conscious and unconscious dynamic processes within the university. I believed that this would raise greater awareness of how conscious and unconscious dynamic processes influenced the task of South African universities, especially in the context of mergers and incorporations in tertiary education. This could emphasise the need that in the new South African university, the historical role of the HBU should be attended to in order to address the probably unresolved legacy which remains within the recently constituted South African universities.

Although I stated the specific and secondary aims for this study, I was aware that these aims could change during data collection (Manning, 1999).

1.4 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

The paradigm perspective enabled me to demarcate the research and formulate my points of departure for doing the research. Thus, by providing the paradigm

perspective, I determined the boundary around the research indicating the philosophical, theoretical and methodological aspects relevant to the research project (Mouton, 2001).

1.4.1 Disciplinary relationship

Psychology is the scientific study of human behaviour (Muchinsky, 1993). Nicholson and Wall (1982) propose that psychology is a field of study consisting of several disciplines or sub-fields, which are interdisciplinary in nature. Industrial and organisational psychology is one of the disciplines within psychology. Industrial and organisational psychology studies human behaviour (individuals or groups) as it occurs in business, industrial and organisational setting (Lowenberg & Conrad, 1998, p. 2; Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt, 2003).

Lowenberg and Conrad (1998), Muchinsky (1993) and Robbins et al. (2003) indicated that industrial and organisational psychology is a science concerned with creating knowledge about human behaviour in organisational settings. The purpose of scientific study undertaken by industrial-organisational psychologists includes the prediction of human behaviour in the work setting or organisation, or to change the behaviour in order to ensure the effectiveness of the organisation. Therefore, industrial and organisational psychology has as its general purpose the scientific study and application of theoretical knowledge to solve problems and enrich work life development in organisational and work settings (Lowenberg & Conrad, 1998, Muchinsky, 1993; Robbins et al., 2003).

The scientific research and practical application within industrial and organisational psychology focus on the relationship between the individual, group, organisation and the environment or society (Robbins et al., 2003).

Kahn and colleagues (quoted in Nicholson & Wall, 1982, p.7) stated:

Knowledge can be best advanced by research that attempts to deal simultaneously with data at different levels of abstraction – individual, group and organisation. This is a difficult task, and the outcome is not uniformly satisfactory. It is, nevertheless, a core requirement for understanding human organisations. Organisations are reducible to individual acts, yet they are lawful and in part understandable only at the level of collective behaviour.

Furthermore, the behaviour focused on during scientific research and practical application within industrial and organisational psychology is related to features of the organisations, as well as the features of the organisational environment and the links between the two (Drenth, Thierry & de Wolff, 1998). Industrial and organisational psychology studies the extent to which human behaviour is determined by organisational and environmental features. It also studies the extent to which the behaviour of individuals, groups, organisational units and other sets of people influence the organisational and environmental features (Drenth *et al.*, 1998).

Katz and Kahn (quoted in Nicholson & Wall, 1982) stated:

Research is no longer contained within the boundaries of a single organisation but crosses those borders to deal with environmental forces, relationships with other systems, and the effects of organisations on individual members as human beings and members of the larger society. That social psychological principle can be applied to all forms of collective organised effort is now acknowledged in many disciplines. Industrial psychology has moved towards becoming organisational psychology and not only studies behaviour of people in many organisational settings but on occasion recognises organisational or system variables in shaping that behaviour.

Based on the above statement from 1982 it is apparent that the disciplinary relationship focused on is industrial and organisational psychology with organisational psychology as the field of application. I consider the sub-specialities, organisational behaviour and organisational development, the areas important for exploring and understanding the unconscious at work in an HBU. This is based on the fact that organisational behaviour has as its purpose the study of the nature and structure of organisations, as well as showing how organisations influence the behaviour of individuals and groups (Robbins et al., 2003). Although the environment in which the HBU find itself could not be ignored, it was not a main focus of this research project. Rather, the dynamic interaction between the different groups, students, lecturers and management, within the HBU was the primary focus of this research project.

1.4.2 Phenomenological approach

According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004) the positivist, interpretive and constructionist paradigms shape the way in which social scientists do research. Each perspective has a particular set of postulates about how the world works. These postulates are based on the relationship between researcher and participants, the role of the researchers' values, the effect of phenomena on each other, the generalisation and its contribution to knowledge creation (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The qualitative and quantitative research are based on the respective postulates of these perspectives (Creswell, 2003; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Patton, 1991). Through this research project I want to form an in-depth understanding of a particular lived phenomenon, i.e. the (subjective) experiences of lecturers at an HBU. I can achieve this by listening to their stories and interpreting this lived phenomena from a particular theoretical perspective (Durrheim, 2002; Henning *et al.*, 2004; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002; Van Manen, 1990). Qualitative research, informed by the hermeneutic phenomenological paradigm, is best suited to achieve this endeavour (Creswell,

2003;,, 2004; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002). Thus I will not be using quantitative research within this project; therefore I will discuss the postulates of the (hermeneutic) phenomenological paradigm which underpins the qualitative research approach in this project. Then I will explicate the theoretical approach, i.e. systems psychodynamics that I will use to interpret the experiences of the lecturers.

According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994, pp.11-14) the postulates of the phenomenological approach, which undergirds the qualitative research approach of this project, include the following:

- The world consists of interconnected, multiple realities which are socio-psychologically constructed.
- The researcher and participants are interdependent.
- The values of the researcher and the participants mediate and shape the understanding of phenomena.
- Multidirectional relationships can be discovered because events and phenomena are mutually shaped.
- It is only possible to understand phenomena for one time and context, that is, context sensitive.
- The purpose of the approach is to discover and uncover propositions through the careful observation and inspection of patterns, which emerge from data.

According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994) the phenomenological approach includes qualitative research and other areas of inquiry such as ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, hermeneutic inquiry and ethnography, to name but a few. Other authors, such as, Bogdan and Bilken (1998), Manning (1999), Marshall and Rossman (1995), Maykut and Morehouse (1994) and Patton (1991) categorise qualitative research traditions into several approaches, such as phenomenology, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, hermeneutic inquiry and ethnography. This difference in the categorisation of phenomenology probably points to the fact that the postulates of phenomenology formed the roots of

qualitative research, and that many theoretical positions in qualitative research interact with phenomenology.

Several of these approaches focus on understanding how individuals take and make meaning in interactions with others. The emphasis is on the pressures of meaning-making in social organisations (Marshall & Bosman, 1995, p.2). Holistic understanding, meaning-making and interpretation are essential concerns in qualitative research (Patton quoted in Manning, 1999, p.12). It is proposed that through the phenomenological approach, useful insights about the complex issues experienced by the participants in their work context will be obtained. It is believed that through this process I will achieve *verstehen*, i.e. profound insight and comprehension into the experiences of these participants by making the implicit meaning of their experiences explicit (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998; Caputo, 1984 Huysamen, 1994; Kruger, 1988; Manning, 1999). Perhaps I could even form a profound insight into my own experiences as a lecturer from 1994 to 2000 at the HBU.

1.4.2.1 Hermeneutic phenomenology

The particular paradigm I will use to attain the aims of the study is hermeneutic phenomenology (Karlsson, 1995; Van Manen, 1990). Phenomenology is the study of essences (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003; Van Manen, 1990). Thus, the phenomenological approach focuses on understanding the nature or meaning that particular phenomena, for example human relations, have for participants in a research project (Patton, 1991). The methodology is descriptive in nature (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). Hermeneutics is the theory and practice of interpretation (Van Manen, 1990).

This descriptive (phenomenological) method allowed for the study and description of the essence of particular phenomena as they appear in the life world of the participants, as well as the interpretation (hermeneutics) of particular phenomena

(Caputo, 1984; Van Manen, 1990). Thus it allowed access to an interpretative (hermeneutic) methodology, because the underlying assumption of this particular methodology is that there are no uninterpreted phenomena (Caputo, 1984; Van Manen, 1990). The latter becomes evident if one considers that the essence of a particular phenomenon in the life world is always meaningfully (hermeneutically) experienced (Van Manen, 1990, p.181). Additionally, the capturing of phenomena experienced in the life world through language is an interpretative process (Caputo, 1984; Van Manen 1990). The moment we (participants, my promoters, experts in systems psychodynamics, and myself) put into language our experiences in relation to the stories about the phenomena explored, we will inevitably bring our own subjective experiences to the process of interpretation (Caputo, 1984; Cunliffe, 2003).

Karlsson (1995) proposed that the aim of (traditional) hermeneutics has been to retrace or reconstruct the author's intention behind the work. Thus hermeneutics presupposes that the researcher use a theoretical perspective to interpret data – this theoretical perspective should be made explicit to the reader (Cunliffe, 2003; Karlsson 1995). This would enable the reader to understand the theoretical framework from which I will interpret the essence of particular phenomena as they appeared in the life world of the lecturers (see Kidd, 2002; Van Manen, 1990). Additionally, in using the above paradigm I allow myself to explore unknown terrain by using my personal interest in and knowledge of the systems psychodynamic perspective. Furthermore, the hope is expressed that this study will provide a firm theoretical foundation on which other studies in this terrain will be based.

1.4.2.2 Methodical structure of hermeneutic phenomenology

According to Van Manen (1990, pp. 30-31) hermeneutic phenomenology research can be described as the dynamic interaction between the following six activities:

- turning to the phenomenon which seriously interests me and commits me to

- the world;
- investigates experiences as I and the participants live it rather than as we conceptualise it;
 - reflecting on the essential themes which characterise phenomena;
 - describing phenomena through writing and rewriting;
 - maintaining a strong and oriented relation to the phenomena; and
 - balancing the research context by considering the parts and the whole.

The methodical structure of hermeneutic phenomenology guided the research design and methodology which I used in this research project.

1.4.3 The theoretical approach: systems psychodynamics

Systems psychodynamics has as its theoretical underpinnings psycho-analytic roots; it is based on the work of Freud, Klein's object relations theory, Bion's work on groups, Jaques's and Menzies Lyth's work on organisations as social defenses, group relations theory as well as open systems theory (Fraher, 2004). Systems psychodynamics allows for the study and interpretation of collective, interdependent unconscious and conscious individual, group and intergroup processes resulting from the interconnection between different groups and subgroups within a social system (Czander & Eisold, 2003; Miller & Rice, 1975; Neumann, 1999; Roberts, 1999). It also affords us the opportunity to attend to unconscious phenomena within people, the organisational context (tasks, structures, boundaries) and the complex interaction between the two (Amado, 1995; Nutkevich, 1998). In the following sections the different theoretical underpinnings of systems psychodynamics will be explicated.

1.4.3.1 Psycho-analysis

Although Freud is not known as a group theorist, he speculated about group and organisational dynamics (Freud, 1921), which has provided the theoretical

foundation of systems psychodynamics. Bion (1961) proposed that psychoanalytic principles are applied to group phenomena in order to increase insight into dynamic, group processes. According to Amado (1995), Armstrong (1995, 2006), Gabriel (1998), Long (2001a) and Menzies Lyth (1990) psycho-analysis is a method of investigating the dynamic psychological and social processes that occur at both conscious and unconscious levels in different contexts, including groups and organisations. Psycho-analysis has added to our understanding of how people develop and learn by applying psycho-analytic concepts to the conscious and unconscious aspects of the relationship between the students and the lecturers within educational contexts (Coren, 1997; Weiss, 2002a; 2002b). Thus, psycho-analysis assumes that many of the processes within organisations occur on both the conscious and the unconscious level. It further assumes conflict between rational behaviour as defined by the task(s) of the organisation and unconscious individual and group processes (Gabriel, 1998; Miller, 2004; Obholzer, 1999). These unconscious individual and group processes result from three categories of anxieties operating at different levels, viz. primitive anxiety; anxiety arising from the nature of work and personal anxiety (Menzies Lyth, 1990; Obholzer, 1999).

1.4.3.2 Object relations theory

Klein's object relations theory departed from and built upon Freud's theories. Her work demonstrated that adulthood has its roots in infancy by showing that the earliest activities of the ego involved various defense mechanisms such as introjection and projection, to exclude particular anxieties from consciousness (Klein, 1985; Stein, 2000). Klein also demonstrated that early development consists of two distinct, but overlapping, developmental positions, i.e. the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions (Klein, 1985; Likierman, 2001). The paranoid-schizoid position is marked by splitting, introjection, projection and projective identification which ensure that others are perceived as part objects, i.e. either good or bad objects. In the depressive position a person is able to perceive

the other as a whole object that is both good and bad (Brown, 2003; Klein, 1985; Likierman, 2001). Ogden (quoted in Diamond, Allcorn & Stein, 2004) added a third position, the autistic-contiguous mode of experience by which feelings are generated based on the sensations experienced when coming into contact with surfaces. These three positions stand in dialectical relationship with each other in that the positions create, negate and maintain each other (Diamond et al., 2004).

1.4.3.3 *Bion's work on groups*

Freud's ideas and especially ideas based on Klein's object relations theory were applied to adult behaviour in groups by Wilfred Bion (Gould, 1997, 2001; Sorenson, 2005; Young, 1995). Bion made the point that a group is a unity, different from the sum of its parts (Rioch, 1981, p. 669).

(1) Group relations theory

Bion used the assumptions from Lewin and Bertalanffy to form the foundations of group relations theory (Khaleelee & Miller, 1985). Group relations theory was based on the work of Freud, Bion, Lewin, Klein and other theorists. Group relations theory is an interdisciplinary field using psychodynamic principles and experiential learning methods to study and understand the group and as a holistic, social system (French & Vince, 1999). According to Bion (1961) group relations theory:

focuses on the group as a whole in terms of the collective unconscious interactions generated by the groups within the system. It is postulated that in order to understand the conscious functioning of the group(s) ... and the system as a whole... one needs to examine the underlying unconscious assumptions that reinforce the ways in which they relate to one another as individuals and groups.

Thus, through group relations theory the link between unconscious dynamics created within and between individuals and groups, as well as the impact of existing and emerging systemic dynamics, can be explored (French & Vince, 1999).

(2) Basic assumption activity

Several authors, such as Colman (1975), Gould (2001), Lawrence, Bain and Gould (2000), Menzies Lyth (1981), Rioch (1975b) and Stokes (1994a) posit that Bion's central assumption is that in every group two groups are occurring simultaneously, but to varying degrees viz. the work group and the basic assumption group. Bion emphasised that both the work and basic assumption groups exist and both are necessary to ensure a group's activity (Rioch, 1975b; Stokes, 1994a). According to Bion (1975) when group members' activity is related to reality and is rational, the group is involved in workgroup activity – which is similar to Freud's idea of the ego. Workgroup activity is obstructed, diverted and assisted by basic assumption activity (Gould, 2001; Rioch, 1975b). Basic assumption activity is the mental activity of the group that is irrational, primitive and lost in phantasy¹ (Rioch, 1981). The basic assumption activity can be deduced from the behaviour of the group (Rioch, 1975b).

The basic assumption group behave as if it is in a state of temporary psychosis, i.e. it presents a lessening in its contact with reality (Lawrence et al., 2000). The members of the group operating in accordance with basic assumptions mentality show defensive or regressive behaviour marked by primitive splitting and projective identification, depersonalisation and infantile regression, marked by the wish to avoid reality (Lawrence et al., 2000; Menzies Lyth, 1981; Stokes, 1994a). Clearly, Bion used Kleinian concepts to elucidate our understanding of the

¹ Phantasy is spelled with a ph to denote that the phantasy is the mental corollary, the psychic representative of instinct from the unconscious (Klein quoted in Likierman, 2001), whereas fantasy refers to our conscious imaginings (Likierman, 2001; Young, 1995).

functioning of a group (Gould, 1997, 2001). Further, Bion, using Kleinian ideas, saw the basic assumption group as originating in infancy (Gould, 1997, 2001). Bion differentiated basic assumption activity into pairing, flight/fight and dependency. Turquet (1985) added the basic assumption of oneness and Lawrence et al. (2000) the basic assumption of me-ness.

Through unconscious predisposition or valence, an individual has a readiness to enter with other group members into basic assumption activity. Each individual has a valence for all five basic assumptions, but usually a valence for a particular basic assumption predominates within the individual. Society uses individuals' valences for different purposes (Rioch, 1975b; Stokes, 1994a), e.g. it seems that the educator (lecturer) is actively involved in the basic assumption dependency.

(3) The organisation-in-the-mind

According to Armstrong (1995), through Bion's work one can be clearer about the object of attention and interpretation in psycho-analysis in the organisation, i.e. emotional experiences. The author states that in psycho-analysis the investigation is not into the emotional experience of the individual, but focuses on the emotional experiences that occur between the pair (analyst and analysand), the individual and the group, the group and the organisation (Armstrong, 1995; Long, 2004).

Bion also looked at the individual psyche to illuminate group, institutional and social structures (Armstrong, 1995, 2006; Young, 1995). Rosenfeld referred to this as *the gang in the mind*, while Armstrong referred to it as *the organisation-in-the-mind* (Young, 1995). Based on the work about the organisation-in-the-mind, i.e. the relatedness that the person has to an organisation, the stories that the lecturers tell about the HBU, in this theory, denotes the HBU within them. Consequently, in reading their stories, I come in to contact with the HBU within myself. Further ripples would be that when all participants, including you the reader, meet the story as told by the lecturers, each participant as a person in his/her role evokes the HBU in them.

1.4.3.4 *Social systems as a defense against anxiety*

Klein's ideas were later applied to adult behaviour in organisations by Jaques, Menzies Lyth, Miller and Rice (Brown, 2003; Krantz, 2001; Long, 2004; Stein, 2000). Jaques and Menzies Lyth built on the work of Klein, in particular the ideas of primitive anxieties and the defense mechanism mobilised in the paranoid-schizoid and depressive position, to develop social systems as a defense against persecutory and depressive anxiety (Young, 1995). The underlying assumption is that anxiety is specific to and rises from the nature of the work and from one's interpersonal relationships linked to one's position in the organisation (Jaques 1990; Menzies Lyth, 1960, 1990; Neumann, 1999; Obholzer, 1999). The individuals in organisations defend against the anxiety-provoking content and the difficulties of collaborating to accomplish a common task, by organising and using the structure of the organisation in the service of defense-related and not work-related functioning (Amado, 1995; Jaques, 1990; Menzies Lyth, 1990; Obholzer, 1999, Shapiro, 1985). Thus, the organisations are being used by its stakeholders as an anxiety-holding system and to prevent people from experiencing the anxieties generated by their work and interpersonal relationships (Long, 2004; Obholzer, 1999). However, these practices and structures in the organisations could lead to new stressors and anxieties which lead to the development of additional defenses in a deteriorating cycle of fragmentation and persecutory functioning which is not in service of productivity and effectiveness (Khaleelee & Miller, 1985; Krantz, 2001; Long, 2004). On the other hand these practices and structures can be containing and allow for creativity within organisations (Amado, 1995).

Thus, social systems as a defense against anxiety explicate the specific dynamics of an organisation by exploring the parallel between individual defenses and the social defenses used by individuals and groups in a social system. Of critical importance is that the use of projective and introjective processes alleviates persecutory and depressive anxiety experienced within care-giving or

dependency-oriented organisations (Jaques, 1990; Menzies Lyth, 1990; Powell Pruitt & Barber, 2004; Shapiro & Carr, 1991; Young, 1995). In other words members of social systems employ social defenses, separate from conscious behaviour, to deal with work and interpersonal relationships which may be psychologically demanding (Powell Pruitt & Barber, 2004; Young, 1995).

It is important to note that Jaques has recanted his position regarding social systems as defense against anxiety, by proposing that it is poorly designed organisations that evoke psychotic anxieties in employees and management. Jaques (1995b, p. 362) argued that:

it is the existence of hopelessly badly organised managerial institutions that do not only allow for the acting out of these deeper lying psychotic anxieties, but leaves the people involved with no choice to do so.

In other words organisations can have paranoigenic conditions (Amado, 1995, Jaques, 1995a, 1995b). He adds that it is doubtful whether understanding the unconscious dynamics and processes will add to understanding anxieties in organisations (Jaques, 1995a, 1995b). Several authors have taken note of this change in position and it appears that there is no real disagreement with Jaques (1995a, 1995b), i.e. it is indeed poorly designed organisations that will evoke anxieties in employees and management (Amado, 1995; Miller, 2004; Nutkevitch, 1998; Obholzer, 1999). However, these authors also hold that it is in explicating unconscious dynamics and processes in organisations that understanding of psychotic anxieties and their concomitant behaviours can be enhanced (Amado, 1995; Long, 2001a; Obholzer, 2001; Powell Pruitt & Barber, 2004). Nutkevitch (1998), drawing on the work of Armstrong (1995), Bion (1961) and Jaques (1990) suggests a dialectic relationship between open systems theory and the psychodynamic understanding of emotions in organisations.

It is not my intention to argue the merits of the hypothesis that systems are a defense against persecutory and depressive anxiety, but rather to indicate that I

am aware of Jaques's refuting thereof. Based on the work of several authors, I think that this hypothesis cannot be so easily recanted. I think that to understand organisations it is important to focus on the idea that people bring their individual anxieties to the organisations, as well as the idea that organisations are not designed to allow for effective use of human resources. In applying psychodynamic thinking to organisations it is crucial to bear in mind the organisational aspects, as well as paying attention to people and their dynamics in the organisations (Amado, 1995).

1.4.3.5 Open systems theory

Rice, by using the processes and activities of an enterprise, applied the open system theory of organisations to individual and group behaviour (Fraher, 2004; Gertler & Izod, 2004; Khaleelee & Miller, 1985; Miller & Rice, 1975). In other words Rice (Miller & Rice, 1975) proposed that an individual – like the group and the organisation – consists of systems of activity through which the import-conversion-export processes, crucial for its survival, occur. These processes also require a corresponding number of activities, i.e. operating, maintenance and regulatory activities. Operating activities are directly linked to the import-conversion-export processes, while maintenance activities refer to the resources required to complete the maintenance activities. Simultaneously, regulatory activities, consisting of monitoring and boundary control, relate the operating activities to each other, the maintenance activities to the operating activities and all the activities of the enterprise or unit to its environment (Miller & Rice, 1975).

In other words the individual and the group, like the organisation, can be seen as a more complex manifestation of an open system which can only survive through processes of exchange (import-conversion-export processes) across boundaries with its environment. According to Miller and Rice (1975) and Rice (1976) the individual, the small group and the larger group can be described as:

- having an internal world and external environment;
- consisting of systems of activity which have import-conversion-export processes and activities to ensure its survival; and
- a boundary function which controls transactions between the internal world and external environment.

Working within the open systems theoretical framework in the research project (Miller, 1989, 1993), the following relationships were examined:

- the relationship between psycho-social and socio-technical elements of purposeful behaviour (working group and basic assumption group);
- the relationship between the different parts (students and lecturers, lecturers and management) of the (tertiary) institution; and
- to some extent the relationship between the parts (lecturers, management, students) and the whole institution.

Although not within the scope of this research project, further exploration could include:

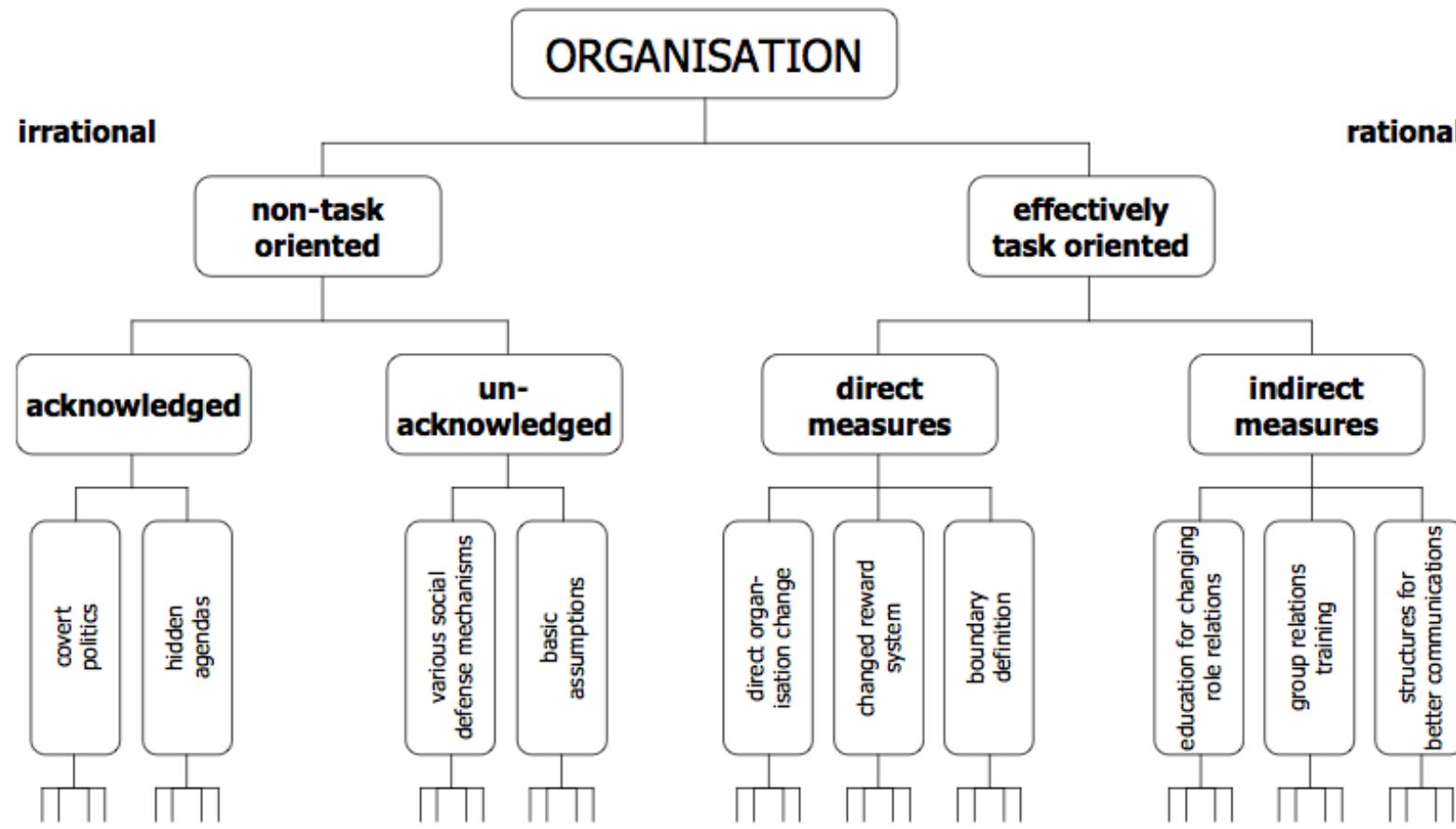
- the whole (tertiary institution) and the immediate environment, i.e. the community as a whole (Khaleelee & Miller, 1985; Miller, 1993); and
- the relationship of organization and community to wider social systems, to society itself (Khaleelee & Miller, 1985; Miller, 1989).

1.4.3.6. The value of systems psychodynamics for this project

As illustrated in the above discussion and in figure 1.1 systems psychodynamics through psycho-analysis, object relations, several aspects of Bion's work, social systems as defenses against anxiety and open system theory, allow exploration of irrational (unconscious) and rational (conscious) behaviour in organisations (Bexton, 1975). Several of the aspects of an organisation as illustrated in figure 1.1 will be explored within this research project. My particular interest in this

research project is the unacknowledged, non-task-oriented unconscious behaviour evident in the relationship between the students, the lecturers and the management and how the unconscious dynamics are affected by organisational structure.

Figure 1.1: The balance between non-task-related and task-related components of an organisation



Source: Bexton (1975)

Psycho-analysis enables one to think about what lies behind psychological and social behaviour, i.e. exploring the unconscious meaning of behaviour. Through psycho-analysis it is possible to explore unconscious structure and dynamics as they emerge in conscious states-of-mind (Long, 2001a, 2001b; Menzies Lyth, 1990). It provides a particular state-of-mind where in dialogue with the other potential space is created in which a *truth* can be grasped (Long, 2001a; 2004). I dare to add that in dialogue between the self and text potential space is created in which *truths* can be emerge.

Thus, systems psychodynamics extended the understanding of unconscious phenomena in one-to-one relationship in the clinical setting to larger, more complex relationships in groups and organisations (Jaques, 1990; Menzies-Lyth, 1990). Importantly, it follows that psycho-analysis, and therefore systems psychodynamics, provides a framework to understand the dynamics in organisations, as well as techniques to analyse data obtained from organisations on the conscious and unconscious level (Long, 2001a; Skogstad 2004). Through the use of psycho-analysis and in particular systems psychodynamics, a potential space, a holding environment, is created in which the overtly told stories of the lecturers can be used to recover or interpret unconscious dynamics in order to understand conscious behaviour.

1.4.4 Tentative theoretical working hypothesis

The tentative theoretical working hypothesis, based on the theoretical perspective and my understanding of the research question, which underpinned this research project, is:

Articulating the experiences of lecturers in an HBU and interpreting these experiences from a systems psychodynamics perspective would enhance understanding of the unconscious dynamic processes prevalent in the relationship between lecturers and students, lecturers and management, as well

as students, lecturers and management specifically in the HBU and generally in the South African university.

Based on hermeneutic phenomenology and the systems psychodynamic approach discussed in this section, the research question and tentative theoretical working hypothesis were researched using a qualitative research design. This research design will be discussed in the next section.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is a strategic framework for the action that serves as a bridge between the research question and execution of the research (Durrheim, 2002). In the following section the research variables, the type of research, the unit of analysis and the methods to ensure reliability and validity are discussed.

1.5.1 Variables

Variables that will be explored within this research project are manifold (Cresswell, 2003) and were determined by the nature of the unconscious dynamic processes underlying the intergroup relationships between the students, lecturers and management within this HBU as inferred from the lecturers' experiences at the HBU.

1.5.2 Type of research

A qualitative research approach was followed (Durrheim, 2002; Kidd, 2002; McGrath & Johnson, 2003). This qualitative research approach was chosen because it allowed me to form and present an in-depth understanding of the (subjective) experiences of lecturers at an HBU (Henning et al., 2004; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002). The study is exploratory, explanatory and descriptive in nature (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). This study is exploratory in nature because it has as its purpose the investigation of little-understood phenomena. It is explanatory because it

attempts to explain the factors which contribute to the phenomena, as well as descriptive because it attempts to document these factors and phenomena clearly (Durrheim, 2002; Marshall & Rossman 1995).

1.5.3 Unit of analysis

Some of the purposes of industrial and organisational psychology include:

- finding and applying solutions to industrial and organisational problems (Muchinsky, 1993);
- improving the fit between workforce and the workplace in order to improve organisational effectiveness in a time of rapid technological change (Lowenberg & Conrad, 1998, Muchinsky 1993); and
- furthering the scientific understanding of human behaviour (Mouton, 2001).

Psychologists working in organisations also focus on problems and solutions, which are based on the systemic characteristics of organisations. According to Schein (quoted in Nicholson & Wall, 1982, p. 8) these problems and solutions regarding the systemic characteristics of organisations deal not so much with the behaviour of individuals as with the behaviour of groups, subsystems and even the total organisation. The behaviour of groups, subsystems, the total organisation and the groups in the environment can be studied through intergroup relations in the organisation (Alderfer & Smith, 1982; Rice, 1970, 1976).

Using ideas from Armstrong (1995, 2006) and Long (2001a), it is evident that by exploring the emotional experiences of the lecturers, insight can be gained into *the emotional experience [within] the organisations that is in them, but not simply of them*. Bion (1961), Koortzen and Cilliers (2002) and Long (2001a) also proposed that underlying structures and dynamics in organisations can be explored through the examination of conscious behaviour and experiences of employees within organisations. The established structure and the dynamics then give rise to further dynamics and their attendant anxieties. Thus, the analysis of the intergroup

dynamics to explore the organisational dynamics and structure forms the basis for the analysis of social systems as a defense against anxiety. Through the analysis of intergroup dynamics, understanding about the relations and the relatedness between groups can be formed, in particular the way in which they co-emerge and constrain each other (Long, 2001a).

Therefore, in this research project the unit of analysis was the experiences of lecturers in an HBU, with specific emphasis on unconscious processes (evident from these experiences) at work in the relationships and relatedness between students, lecturers and management.

1.5.4 Reliability, validity and transferability

Reliability, validity and transferability were discussed by using the conventional terms, as well as the naturalistic terms (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; McGrath & Johnson, 2003; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). Internal validity was discussed as credibility and authenticity, while external validity is seen as transferability. Reliability was discussed as replicability, dependability and audibility.

In order to adhere to the requirements of a sound qualitative study, the research project was framed within an iterative design (Durrheim, 2002) which attempted to present multiple realities based on the viewpoints of the different participants, i.e. the lecturers, the experts, the promoters and myself.

A person derives true meaning from his/her life world and by existing gives meaning to his/her life world (Huysamen, 1994). Due to this interdependence between the researcher and the research project, the researcher, the participants and their work context, the human relations can only be understood within the particular context in which they occur (Huysamen, 1994; McGrath & Johnson, 2003). Thus, this research project was framed within a particular context (McGrath & Johnson, 2003) which was described throughout this report.

A description of the validity, reliability and transferability across the different steps in the research method were provided in order to ensure that the reader has a rich description of the strategies implemented to ensure the validity, reliability and transferability of this research project. I ensured that data collection and data analysis were rigorous by using particular strategies to ensure the reliability and validity thereof. In chapter 3 I attempted to provide the reader with an accurate presentation of data by giving extracts from the data and using explicit procedures of verification. Finally, I attempted to provide an engaging account of the experiences of the lecturers at the HBU in order for the reader to decide about the truth-value of the research project, whether the reader would be able to replicate the research project and whether the reader could transfer the findings to his/her context.

1.6 THE RESEARCH METHOD

The research was conducted in three phases. The relevant steps in phase 1, the hermeneutic phenomenology study, phase 2, the literature review, and phase 3, the continued hermeneutic phenomenology study, will be described in the next sections.

1.6.1 Phase 1: Hermeneutic phenomenological study

Hermeneutic phenomenology (Henning et al., 2004; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002) informed the sampling, as well as the data collection and analysis and interpretation that were used in this research project. The methods used to adhere to the assumptions of the hermeneutic phenomenological assumptions will be discussed in steps one to three.

Step 1: Sampling and participants

Sampling was done in a non-probability manner by using purposive (judgmental) sampling ((Babbie & Mouton, 2000; Brewerton & Millward, 2001; Endacott, 2005), The aim of this research project was not to generalize across large groups of people, but rather to form profound insight and comprehension into the experiences of these lecturers. Interview participants were chosen purposively. Nine lecturers (eight white people and one Sri Lankan, who has permanent South-African residency; three men and six women) from a particular department at an HBU were invited to participate in hermeneutic conversations (Kvale, 2003). The decision to use participants from this HBU is based on the principle that the aim of hermeneutic phenomenological research is to form an in-depth understanding of real lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990).

Step 2: Data collection

The purpose of the data collection was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the lecturers within their work context, namely the university context (Manning, 1999). In order to achieve the aforementioned aim I initiated hermeneutic conversations with the lecturers. The hermeneutic conversations were unstructured and guided by the research question, by ideas raised by the lecturers and by my follow-up questions based on the ideas from the lecturers, and to some extent the theoretical framework used in this project (see Kvale, 2003). The hermeneutic conversations allowed through the collaboration with the lecturers for the exploration, description and interpretation of the phenomena under study (Van Manen, 1990).

Step 3: Data analysis and interpretation

During data analysis, I followed various steps (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002; Kelly, 2002b). Data analyses practically entailed the transcribing of the hermeneutic conversations, familiarising myself with the voluminous data, categorising and coding the data and eliciting themes based on a

reduced data set. This process did not occur as neatly and stepwise as indicated by the aforementioned procedure.

I also developed interpretations about the lecturers' experiences. I based the interpretations on my experiences of different aspects of the lecturers' stories. I attempted to tell the stories of the lecturers by providing interpretations without imposing my theoretical framework, i.e. systems psychodynamics, on the data in order for their stories to be heard. I attempted to read the data without the systems psychodynamics in mind, because I wanted to enter the life world of the lecturers and highlight their understanding of their experiences. Of course I could not totally put this framework aside, but as much as possible I tried for this framework not to affect the interpretations. Obviously, I could not be totally free from the systems psychodynamic stance, and interpretations from this stance appeared sporadically in the analysis.

This analysis also entailed a collaborative dimension (Griffee, 2005; Kvale, 1996) in that the analysed data was sent to certain of the lecturers to ascertain whether my analysis was a reflection of their experience at the HBU. I also sent the data to two experts in the systems psychodynamic perspective to ascertain whether the interpretations were plausible. Furthermore, by receiving supervision from the promoters of this research project, a collaborative conversation about the plausibility of the analysis and interpretation of the data was undertaken.

1.6.2 Phase 2: Literature review

The unconscious dynamics within an organisation, with specific emphasis on the university, were explored from the systems psychodynamic perspective. Exploring literature about object relations theory, aspects of Bion's work, social systems as a defense against anxiety, open systems theory and applying these theories to organisations in general and the university specifically allowed me to form a theoretical understanding of the unconscious dynamics among the stakeholders in a

university. Throughout the literature review I also attempted to apply these theories to the relationship between students and lecturers, lecturers and management, as well as the triad, i.e. students, lecturers and management.

1.6.3 Phase 3: The hermeneutic phenomenological study continued

Through an assumption of hermeneutic phenomenology (Henning *et al.*, 2004), I imposed a theoretical framework onto the data. I used the systems psychodynamic perspective to form a deeper understanding of the experiences of the lecturers in the HBU.

Step 4: Meaning-making for continuous reflection

This step included the interpretation of the lecturers' story through the systems psychodynamic perspective. Interpretation is important in getting to know or understand a phenomenon. In the interpretation and reporting of the findings, I used the interpretive stance as proposed by Shapiro and Carr (1991). Through the interpretative stance the analysed data were integrated with relevant literature to generate working hypotheses. These working hypotheses are about the unconscious processes and dynamics embedded within the data. A working hypothesis is a tentative understanding, from a meta-position, based on evidence from the data, so that it can be explored by others (Erlich-Ginor, 2006; Schafer, 2003; Shapiro & Carr, 1991). Thus, in the last chapter, working hypotheses will be provided for further consideration and reflection. On the basis of the aforementioned reflections, interpretations and working hypotheses, two main research hypotheses, one based on the literature review and one on the empirical study, were generated.

Step 5: Reflexivity

The use of subjectivity to increase objectivity is referred to as reflexivity. In writing this document, specifically the analysis and interpretation of the data, I was confronted by divergent feelings about completing this research project. I was

particularly astonished by the paralysing effect that the data analysis and interpretation had on me – obviously this resulted from my transference and countertransference towards the data. I used my reaction as an indication of the meaning that can be ascribed to the data. However, I was also very aware of not over-analysing the data and imposing insensitive meaning onto it. In other words, as proposed by Cunliffe (2003) and Vince (1995), I was always willing to challenge my understanding of the meaning of the data.

I carried a strong message that I had to be careful when dealing with the reporting of the results. To some extent this cautionary message paralysed me and interfered with my reporting and interpretation of the findings. It also highlighted how difficult it was to write this report in a sensitive, yet honest manner. I also realised that returning to the participants with their transcription and my analysis of the transcription would assist me in writing an honest and sensitive document. Due to time constraints, only the analysis of the reduced data was presented to some of the lecturers.

Step 6: Opportunities

In this research project certain aspects could have been attended to differently, as indicated by the literature reviewed and the outcome of the hermeneutic phenomenology study. These unattended aspects create opportunities for other researchers to learn from and possibly address, should similar research projects be undertaken. Therefore, these opportunities were discussed in the last chapter.

Step 7: Recommendations

Recommendations based on the working hypotheses were provided if they flowed logically from these hypotheses. Based on ideas stated by Powell Pruitt and Barber (2004), these recommendations were provided as an invitation for the reader to participate through reflections on the text, as well as participate in conversations and

action within the reader's context. However, these authors also provide a cautionary note by reminding us that any recommendation could be interpreted as collusion with the unconscious, dynamic status quo.

1.7 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

The chapters were divided as follows:

Chapter 2: The research map – it was not the landscape

In this chapter a discussion of the methodology used to complete the empirical aspect of the research project was presented. Particular characteristics about the lecturers who participated in the project were presented to introduce them to the reader. The data collection was explicated by discussing the nature of the hermeneutic conversations. The steps used to analyse and interpret the data obtained during the hermeneutic conversations were explicated. Finally, the techniques necessary to ensure the rigour and the soundness of the research project were elucidated.

Chapter 3: Re-authoring the lecturers' stories: a thematic account

In chapter three, the stories of the nine lecturers as seen and analysed by me were presented. The telling of the lecturers' stories, i.e. the final analysis and interpretation, were influenced by the comments of three of the lecturers, an expert within systems psychodynamics, and of one of my promoters. The analysis and interpretation of the data obtained through the hermeneutic conversations were presented within four broad categories, viz.

- The relationship between the students and lecturers
- The relationship between lecturers and management
- The relationship between students, lecturers and management
- The new story

Chapter 4: Listening to my co-authors

I explored the different aspects of the university through a systems psychodynamic lens by focusing on Klein's ideas about object relations, Bion's ideas about groups and in particular basic assumptions, Jaques's and Menzies Lyth's ideas about the system as a defense against anxiety, several authors' (such as Miller and Rice) thoughts about the university as an open system, the primary task of the university and the application of Klein's object relations and Bion's theory to the student-lecturer relationship.

Chapter 5: Meaning-making for continuous reflection

The purpose of this chapter was to present a greater depth of understanding and meaning of the lecturers' experiences and in so doing invite the reader to consider whether the reflections can be confirmed or rejected based on the reader's experiences of analysed data. In order to achieve this purpose, working hypotheses based on the integrating the analysed data with relevant literature were presented. Opportunities and recommendations were formulated. In conclusion, two research hypotheses based on the literature and the empirical study were presented.

1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the background and motivation for this research project was formulated. The research problems, the aims of the research, the paradigm perspectives, the research design, and the research methods, were explicated. The discussion of these aspects of the research project serves as an invitation for the reader to accompany me on this journey.

In chapter 2, a map of the research will be presented, but as always this map did not constitute the landscape that I journeyed on as I completed this research project.

CHAPTER 2 THE RESEARCH MAP – IT WAS NOT THE LANDSCAPE

The aim of this chapter was to discuss the hermeneutic phenomenological research that I conducted in order to achieve the aims of the research project. In this chapter the context, the sample, data collection through hermeneutic conversations, and the manner in which the data was analysed and interpreted are discussed. The manner in which I attempted to ensure the scientific rigour of the research project and to follow ethical guidelines, are explained by giving a thick description of the empirical study. A summary of the chapter is provided.

2.1 THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The research project took place at a particular department within an HBU. This university was situated on the periphery of a township, located on the periphery of a city. The university provided tertiary education to many black students from surrounding rural areas. Many of the students were first-generation university students (Bakker *et al.*, 2000). The research was started in 1997, three years after the first democratic elections in 1994. At this time a primarily black, male management replaced the primarily white, male management of the university. With regard to this department, the research took place mainly with white lecturers who lived in the city and drove to the township to earn a living teaching black students, doing research and doing some community work. For ethical reasons I do not want to describe this department in more detail. Due to transformation in tertiary education, the university as a legal entity does not exist anymore. However, this university has merged with an HWU, and given the legacy of education in South Africa, the HBU probably still exists in the mind of tertiary education and perhaps even the country at large.

2.2 THE SAMPLE

In this section, the sampling strategy, the profile of the sample and the scientific rigour of sampling are discussed.

2.2.1 Sampling strategy

Through purposive (judgmental) sampling (Babbie & Mouton, 2000; Brewerton & Millward, 2001; Endacott, 2005; Henning *et al.*, 2004; Huysamen, 1994), nine lecturers from a department at an HBU were invited to participate in conversations about their experiences at that institution. The research design discussed in Chapter 1 determined the number of participants for this research project.

The choice of this sample was informed by the theory underpinning the research question (Babbie & Mouton, 2000; Devers & Frankel, 2000, Miles & Huberman, 1994), i.e. I wanted to explore the intergroup processes within the HBU, which could be done by exploring the experiences of lecturers from a particular department. In using these lecturers as part of the sample I was hypothesising that this group carried different issues (projections) on behalf of the entire organisation (Obholzer & Roberts, 1994; Wells, 1985) and that this would be revealed through the data obtained from the lecturers. In other words, the lecturers from this department were one of the groups within the university, and by studying this group some understanding of the intergroup processes (relations and dynamics among various groups or sub-groups) would be formed (Miller & Rice, 1975). Inviting these lecturers to participate in this research project was theoretically driven, i.e. it was based on my conceptual question, rather than on a concern for representativity (Devers & Frankel, 2000; Endacott, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1980).

The decision to invite these lecturers to participate in the research also flowed from the aim of hermeneutic phenomenological research, i.e. to form an in-depth understanding of real lived experiences (Kvale, 1996; Patton, 1980; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002; Van Manen, 1990). Participants should also be able to provide rich, salient information about their experiences at the HBU (Babbie & Mouton, 2000; Brewerton & Millward, 2001; Devers & Frankel, 2000; Endacott, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In my experience the lecturers were indeed able to provide

rich salient information about their experiences, and therefore were invited to participate.

According to Devers and Frankel (2000) and Miles and Huberman (1994), certain types of cases yield the most information-rich date in purposive sampling. These are typical, *deviant* or extreme, and *negative* or disconfirming cases. Thus, I considered that this group of lecturers was able to provide me with information-rich data typical of the experiences of lecturers at this university. During the data analysis, I also discovered that one of the lecturers who was part of the group could be considered a *deviant* or extreme case, i.e. she was able to present me with information which represented unusual manifestations of the lecturers' real lived experiences. Given the nature of the sampling strategy, *negative* or disconfirming cases were not evident within this particular group. However, an atypical case was identified and explored (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The lecturers also displayed certain characteristics that made them suitable participants for a research project intended to yield a profound insight and comprehension of experiences in order to describe and understand particular phenomena. These characteristics were:

- personal experience of what is being researched (Endacott, 2005; Kelly, 2002a; Stromquist, 2000);
- good communication skills, as indicated by the ability to describe experiences in detail (Griffee, 2005; Kelly, 2002a);
- openness and undefensiveness (Kelly, 2002a); and
- interest in participating and the impression that it may be of value to participate (Griffee, 2005; Kelly, 2002a).

From the above discussion it is clear that the sample was selected using a sampling frame, i.e. particular criteria which were developed from the research questions and pre-specified conceptual framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Thus, as suggested by Henning *et al.* (2004), I chose this group of lecturers because they were available and they fulfilled the criteria of desirable participants for my research project.

2.2.2 Descriptive profile of sample

The sample consisted of nine lecturers (eight white people and one Sri Lankan, who has permanent South African residence; three men and six women) from a particular department at an HBU. The biographical variables of race, gender, position and age are reported in Table 2.1. Table 2.1 provides a descriptive profile of the participants in the research project. By briefly discussing length of service, educational background and position in the following paragraphs, the descriptive profile is expanded.

Table 2.1: Biographical information of the sample

RACE	GENDER	POSITION	AGE
White N=8	Female N=6	Management and senior lecturer N=1 Senior lecturer N=1 Lecturer N=4	Above 40 N=2 Between 30 and 40 N=1 Below 30 N=3
	Male N=2	Senior lecturer N=1 Lecturer N=1	Between 30 and 40 N=1 Below 30 N=1
Black N=1	Male N=1	Lecturer N=1	Below 30 N=1

2.2.2.1 Length of service

Four of the lecturers had worked at the department for one and a half years, two for about three years, and another for four and a half years, while two lecturers had been employed for more than six years. Their length of service was an indication that they had a good understanding of what is being researched.

2.2.2.2 Educational qualification

The nine lecturers all had some form of postgraduate qualification. Two had honours degrees, six had master's degrees, and one had completed her doctorate.

2.2.2.3 Position

The lecturers had different positions within the department, according to their tenure and educational qualifications. Six (four women and two men) were employed at lecturer level, two as senior lecturers (one man and one woman), and one woman, a senior lecturer, also had a managerial position.

2.2.3 Ensuring the scientific rigour of sampling

An appropriate sampling strategy was imperative for ensuring effective sampling and thus the credibility of this research project (Patton, 1999). As suggested by Devers and Frankel (2000), by developing and maintaining good relationships with the lecturers, effective sampling was ensured. Since I had previously worked with these lecturers, we had established good working relationships. My concern about involving them in this project was a fear that I could damage my good working relationship with them. I managed this concern by focusing on my interest in the research project and explaining to them what I hoped to achieve.

The purpose of the above was to maximise information about the lecturers' experiences at the university, not to facilitate generalisation (Mouton & Marais, 1996) or to ensure representativeness of the sample (Henning *et al.*, 2004; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1980). By describing the sampling strategy and sample clearly, I believe that the reader will be assisted in deciding what aspects of this project are transferable to their own context (Henning *et al.*, 2004).

2.3 DATA COLLECTION

In this section, I provide a detailed discussion of how data was collected through hermeneutic conversations with the nine lecturers.

2.3.1 The hermeneutic conversation

Within hermeneutic phenomenology the research interview is a conversation about a particular aspect of human experience (Babbie & Mouton, 2000; Kvale, 1996, p.46; Patton, 1980, p.198). The purpose of the data collection was to obtain rich, salient information (Appleton, 1995; Broom, 2005; Brewerton & Millward, 2001; Manning, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Patton, 1980; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002) from the lecturers about their experiences in their work (at the HBU). Gubrium and Holstein (quoted in Fontana & Frey, 2005) stated that such a conversation is a vehicle for contemporary story-telling during which the research participants, in this case the nine lecturers, provide information about their lived experiences in reaction to particular inquiries. Thus, a hermeneutic conversation allows for the exploration, understanding, description and interpretation of the phenomena under study (Appleton, 1995; Kvale, 1996; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Van Manen, 1990).

In order to obtain and understand the lecturers' stories of their experiences at this university, hermeneutic conversations were initiated. The hermeneutic conversation was used as:

- a means of exploring and collecting *experiential narrative material* about the lecturers' experiences at the university. This material was used to develop a rich and deep understanding of the interactions between the students, lecturers and management (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Fontana & Frey, 2005; Van Manen, 1990, p.98); and
- a means of developing collaborative, conversational relations with the lecturers (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Patton, 1980; Van Manen, 1990, p.98).

2.3.1.1 *The journey of the hermeneutic conversation (administration)*

Through the hermeneutic conversation (Patton, 1991; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002) information about the lecturers' experiences at the university was explored and gathered. Patton (1980) refers to this kind of conversation as an informal conversational interview. The use of the term hermeneutic conversation points to the fact that this is not a *normal* conversation (Kvale, 1996). In a the normal conversation the aim is to be interesting to the other, while in the hermeneutic conversation the aim is to be interested in the experiences of the other (Babbie & Mouton, 2000). As recommended by Patton (1980), I attempted to respectfully and sincerely enter into the lecturers' world through the hermeneutic conversation.

2.3.1.2 *Setting up the conversations*

In 1997 I invited these colleagues to participate in a research project, in an endeavour to form an in-depth understanding of lecturers' experiences at the HBU. This research project was part of a previous qualification in tertiary education. I informed each of the participants of the purpose of the study to encourage their participation. I also informed them about the relevant aspects of the research design, and that I needed to record the conversations that I would have with them. My colleagues agreed to participate. As proposed by Henning *et al.* (2004), then a time and place most convenient for the lecturer was arranged for a hermeneutic conversation. Two of the lecturers preferred to have the hermeneutic conversations at my home, while the other conversations were held at the homes of the lecturers.

I used only three hermeneutic conversations for the first research project. In this doctoral research project, all the data obtained was used. I approached the lecturers once again for permission to continue using the data for this project.

2.3.1.3 *Planning of the conversation*

It was crucial that the hermeneutic conversation should be disciplined by the fundamental questions that prompted the need for the interview in the first place (Van Manen, 1990, p. 98). I ensured that I fulfilled the aforementioned requirement before embarking on a conversational journey with each lecturer, by firmly orienting myself with regard to the research question. This ensured that throughout the hermeneutic conversations I remained as close as possible to the research question, as suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1998), Henning *et al.* (2004) and Van Manen (1990).

2.3.1.4 *The conversation guide*

Each hermeneutic conversation began with a single open-ended question (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002), viz. Please tell me the story of your experiences as a lecturer at this university. For the rest of the conversation I spontaneously generated questions based on what the lecturers were saying. I tried to use truly open-ended questions (Davies, 1997). I cannot be sure that these questions were always neutral or clear, but they were generated from my authentic interest in what the lecturers were telling me. Differently put, I tried to *go with the flow* (Broom, 2005; Patton, 1980) of what the lecturers were saying about their experiences.

Although the interviews were conducted in either Afrikaans or English, each interview commenced by the researcher posing the aforementioned question in English to each lecturer. Each conversation lasted 60 to 90 minutes and was tape recorded.

During the conversation I attempted to:

- Elicit those experiences at this university that stood out for the lecturer;
- Ask the lecturer how he/she felt about these experiences and what he/she

- did about them; and
- Encourage the lecturer to specify those attributes of the situation that contributed to his/her response.

As the conversations continued I recognised that lecturers were structuring their stories in terms of their relationships with students, management, administration and other lecturers. Although I was trying to be open to the experiences of the lecturers, I realised that I had an implicit interview schedule based on the aims of the project. I then began to use these different relationships to structure the conversations by exploring the relationships that lecturers were not referring to. However, I was also aware that the themes that formed my interview schedule would be important for some lecturers and not for others. Thus, I maintained an inductive approach during the hermeneutic conversations (Broom, 2005). To conclude the conversation, I stated that it was almost the end of the conversation in terms of time and asked the participant if there was anything he/she wanted to add in relation to the initial question.

I had no predetermined set of questions, because I had no way of knowing what information the lecturers would present me with and what would be important to explore further with them. According to Babbie and Mouton (2000) this is typical of such a conversation, viz. I establish the general direction of the conversation and then explore the specific issues, related to the initial question, raised by the lecturers. Thus, during the hermeneutic conversation I maintained a flexible approach (Broom, 2005) and relied entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of the conversation (Patton, 1980, pp.198-199). Relying on the spontaneous generation of questions enabled me to ask individualised questions, and in so doing I was able to establish in-depth communication with the lecturers. I am unsure how the questions I asked and my probing influenced what the lecturers included in their stories. The hermeneutic conversations were further enhanced because of my existing relationship with the lecturers.

I was able to conduct hermeneutic conversations because of my training as a psychologist (a consultant using the systems psychodynamic approach), and my relationship with the lecturers. As a psychologist I have received training in interviewing. As a consultant using the systems psychodynamic approach I am able to listen to people in a very particular way, i.e. always trying to hear what is implied, what is not said, and that which is unspeakable. My training as consultant also allowed me to explore sensitive matters in a tentative manner – being ready to give up my line of exploration should the lecturer seem to be uncomfortable with it. I was a lecturer in the same department as the lecturers at the time that the data was collected. This implies that I have my own ideas about the underlying processes present within the HBU, particularly between students, lecturers and management. Because of my relationship with the lecturers I was familiar with the context in which they found themselves. This could have reduced misunderstanding and misinterpretation during the conversations with the participants.

I venture to propose that these conversations at times possibly elicited for the lecturers very personal and often not verbalised or realised essences of their experiences as lecturers at the university. I believe that the existing trust between the lecturers and me, based on work and social relationships, and their stories being heard, enabled them to *deeply* explore their experiences in the work context. Besides being a participant in the hermeneutic conversation, I experienced myself to be a container in which the hermeneutic conversations could occur – this again resulting from my training as a consultant using the systems psychodynamic stance.

It is also proposed that through the hermeneutic conversation the interviewee becomes the co-investigator of the study (Van Manen, 1990, p.98). During the original hermeneutic conversation and subsequent conversations about the research project, it was apparent that the lecturers willingly participated in and showed keen interest in the research question and project. In fact after I presented

the findings of the 1997 research project to the nine lecturers, L4 commented that she could not believe that somebody would be interested in her story as a lecturer at this HBU (my wording). Van Manen (1990) proposes that this participative atmosphere can result from the (collaborative) hermeneutic conversation.

Several of the lecturers asked me whether they were telling me what I was looking for. I responded by saying that I was interested in their experiences as a lecturer at the particular university. Although the stance that I took in this instance might have created uncertainty in the lecturers, the stance enabled me to enter into the lecturers' perspective (Patton, 1980). My stance in the conversation was based on the assumption that the perspective of the other is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit (Patton, 1980, p.196). Although I had some framework for what I wanted to explore about the lecturers' experiences, as suggested by Patton (1980) I had no presupposition about what of importance might be learned from the lecturers with regard to their experiences.

2.3.2 Description of my personal experience of the conversations

Perhaps I could have handled the lecturers' uncertainty differently. I was not sure how to handle their question -- whether they were telling me what I was looking for -- because I was also uncertain about what each lecturer's experiences were at the HBU. My certainty was located in my desire to hear each lecturer's experiences, the initial question I gave to each participant and the tentative research questions that I had formulated at the beginning of the study.

2.3.2.1 Using the self as instrument during the conversations

According to McCormick and White (2000), using the self as an instrument during research means using the emotional, perceptual and cognitive processes that one becomes aware of during the research process. This idea is further emphasised by Babbie and Mouton (2000, p. 273) and Richardson and Adams St Pierre (2005, p. 960) who stated that the researcher is the most important *instrument* in the

research process. During the hermeneutic conversations I used the self as instrument by using my emotional reactions to what the lecturers were saying. I explored my emotional reactions during the conversations, by monitoring and cognitively processing what I was feeling and asking why I was experiencing specific feelings at specific times (McCormick & White, 2000). Based on my varied and pertinent emotional reactions, I formed working hypotheses which I used to explore certain aspects of what the lecturers were telling me. These emotional reactions included, but were not limited to, sheer curiosity, surprise, disappointment, confusion, non-clarity and incomprehensibility. By attending to pertinent feelings I refined my ability to detect subtle or fleeting new ideas that existed as unarticulated feelings, as described by McCormick and White (2000). If I was insensitive to these unarticulated feelings, significant ideas might have disappeared unnoticed and unexplored.

Furthermore, by using myself as instrument during the conversations I reduced my stress and anxiety. By paying attention to my emotional reactions, as suggested by McCormick and White (2000), and using them to form working hypotheses during the conversations, I experienced some distance from them and in so doing reduced the potentially stressful situation of having hermeneutic conversations with my colleagues. This enabled me to concentrate on actively listening (Davies, 1997) to the experiences of each lecturer.

Moreover, throughout the conversations I was guided by a carefulness not to overstep the boundaries that individual lecturers set for what they were willing to share. A working hypothesis that I worked with throughout the interviews pertained to my awareness when lecturers did not want to speak about a specific aspect of their experiences. Of course, this piqued my curiosity, as well as my respect for not intruding on what is personal and private. I reacted to this by providing opportunity, through questions, statements or returning later to the aspect, for the lecturer to speak about this aspect. For example, one lecturer spoke about *terrible things* without ever really naming them. I remember that this bothered me, but at

first I was not able to ask her, because of not wanting to cross into her boundaries of privacy. Guided by my curiosity to know what *these terrible things* were, and as proposed by Patton (1980), I was able to ask her about them late in the interview. The lecturer, to some extent reluctantly, explained *these terrible things*. However, if the lecturers did not use the opportunity to pursue a particular aspect, I did not pursue the matter.

Another way in which I used the self as instrument was by postponing or suspending judgment in order to avoid making premature conclusions during the conversations (McCormick & White, 2000). Importantly, I resisted the temptation of assuming that I understood what the lecturers were speaking about, and tried to explore all aspects of their experiences, especially those that I thought I had an understanding of. I attempted not to use my intimate knowledge of the context by bracketing this knowledge (Davies, 1997; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002) as much as possible.

Of course using myself as instrument involved certain risks. Firstly, my working hypotheses could have been wrong. Secondly, I could have experienced a lack of skills in distinguishing whether my emotional reaction came from the immediate situation or from counter transference. I resolved these possible problems by sharing the working hypotheses as tentative questions or statements (McCormick & White, 2000) and using the lecturers' responses as a guide about the appropriateness of the hypotheses. For example, I used the lecturers' responsiveness to determine the truth value of the working hypotheses I offered.

Thirdly, I adhered to the stance that neutrality during the conversations was not possible (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Through an empathetic approach during the conversations, I took an ethical stance in favour of being interested in the lecturers. Although I was not initially aware of this, as suggested by Carson (1986), I cannot deny the autobiographical roots of my interest in the experiences of the lecturers. I considered it crucial that our story should be told and thus did

exactly that – initiated a research project which enabled me to tell the story of these nine lecturers, as well as my story of being a lecturer at this HBU. I also believed that by telling the story as part of a research project, I used a forum that the academic fraternity would attend to. Thus, I am aware that as I listened to and became familiar with their stories, as Fontana and Frey (2005) suggest, I came to know my story and myself differently.

2.3.2.2 *On interviewing my peers*

Here the question that should be explored as proposed by Stromquist (2000) is how did the lecturers react to me as one of their peers, as well as how I was influenced by them? I share particular characteristics viz. group membership, background knowledge and understanding of the context of the HBU, with my peers, the lecturers (see Platt, 1981). It was my experience that regardless of race, gender, academic, positional and social differences, our shared characteristic, i.e. being lecturers at this HBU, ensured a mostly non-hierarchical relationship during each hermeneutic conversation. However, as suggested by Tang (2002), the power relationship during the different hermeneutic conversations cannot be denied and I adopted several strategies to balance the power relationship, viz.

- I informed the lecturers about the nature of the research project;
- I used my personal connections with them to gain access to this particular aspect of their life world;
- I allowed the lecturers to choose a place and time for our conversation; and
- I remained acutely aware and tried to manage as best possible the discussions about matters that the lecturers considered private.

2.3.3 Transcribing the conversations

In order to capture the data during the conversation, each hermeneutic conversation was recorded and then verbatim transcriptions of the nine audio-tape recordings were made, as suggested by Manning (1999) and Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002). I transcribed three of the nine interviews verbatim from the audio-tape recordings. Different professional transcribers transcribed six of the nine interviews verbatim from the audio-tape recordings. I gave the transcribers careful instructions that I wanted a detailed verbatim transcription of the recording, which meant that pauses, fillers, and repetitions were also transcribed. I went through each transcription as suggested by Kvale (1996) to check the style of transcription and determine the accuracy of the original transcription. In doing this I was able to determine and where necessary enhance the reliability of the transcription, i.e. correct mistakes made by the other transcribers and myself, as recommended by Kvale (1996) and Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002).

In checking the reliability of the transcription I also developed a clearer understanding of each conversation as a whole (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). I wrote a short summary which in my opinion captured the essence of each interview (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In so doing I also developed a clearer understanding of how each conversation formed part of the data-as-a-whole. The clearer understanding that I formed of the data also correlated with my opinion that the transcripts contained rich data that pointed to the lecturers' perspectives about their life world. The richness of the data collected indicated that the hermeneutic conversations were trustworthy and useful (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

2.3.4 Making notes during and after the conversations

Although Terre Blanche and Kelly (2002) and Patton (1980) encourage the making of cryptic notes during and after the interview, I did not make any notes pertaining to the interviews.

I did attempt to make notes during the interviews, but I found that it distracted me from attending to, bonding and establishing trust with the lecturers during the *new* conversation that we were entering into. I did not make process notes after each conversation because I thought that the transcriptions would be adequate, and due to my inexperience (at that time) in using a conversation as a means of collecting data. By not making any process notes after the conversations, I may have lost valuable information. In writing this section I was overly aware of what I have done incorrectly with regards to the data collection. My awareness of my mistakes made it very difficult for me to voice what I intuitively understood: that what I have done was appropriate. Appropriate here means asking the questions I wanted to ask from the people I wanted to ask, without, I hope, imposing on them my need for them to give me the answers I wanted to hear.

2.3.5 Ensuring the scientific rigour of the data collection

Given that the purpose of the study was to uncover and describe the lecturers' experiences as demonstrated through the conceptual framework, the hermeneutic conversations were the only way of collecting data. The purpose of the study was not to make more objective assumptions; therefore the data gathered was not triangulated with data gathered through other methods (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

2.4 DATA PROCESSING

Data processing was done through interpretive analysis, which started with data collection and ended with the final report in which the empirical text and literature were integrated. In the following sections I discuss the interpretive analysis, as well as illustrate how this analysis was done by adhering to the seven canons of the hermeneutic circle.

2.4.1 Interpretive analysis of data: from beginning to end

Nine information-rich interviews were transcribed and analysed in detail. Analysis is the process of bringing order to the data, and organising what is there into patterns, categories and descriptive units (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p.111; Patton, 1980; p.268). According to Kvale (1996) data analysis starts during the conversation. Kvale (1996) proposes six steps of data analysis, which I have formulated as: the description by the lecturers about their lived-world with very little interpretation (using the systems psychodynamic perspective) or explanation by the lecturer or me. This step indicates the link between data collection and data analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Patton, 1980; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002). During the interviews I started to analyse, by forming insights and making interpretations during the interviews, the information which the interviewees gave me, with the purpose of adjusting my questions for a particular lecturer as required, as well as during subsequent interviews. In doing this I became aware of certain patterns relating to the research question within the information that I received. I used these patterns to a greater or lesser extent to adjust my stance in the later conversations, to form new questions, as well as a check or test on my emerging ideas during a hermeneutic conversation and in subsequent conversations (Endacott, 2005; Strauss quoted in Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Walker, 1996). Based on the work of Patton (1980), I understood that the first insights and connections that I made during and from the hermeneutic conversations were important in determining what would be important in subsequent hermeneutic conversations and when organising the data.

This overlapping of data collection and data analysis improved both the quality of the data collected and the quality of data analysis (Endacott, 2005; Patton, 1980; Walker, 1996). However, it was important that I ensured that these initial analysis and interpretations did not bias data collection or subsequent data analysis. Thus, at the end of my data collection I had two sources of information that I used to organise my data, viz. the research question, and the analytic insights and

interpretations that emerged during the data collection. The analytic insights and interpretations included the following:

- (1) Some of the lecturers themselves discovered new relationships during the conversation, i.e. they saw new meaning pertaining to their experiences as a lecturer at that institution. L4 stated towards the end of the interview that *in this conversation, I find it interesting, because I discovered some things that I haven't put into words. I think about them differently now, which is nice and opened some ideas that I haven't thought of yet.*
- (2) During the hermeneutic conversations, when I wanted to explore certain matters further, I condensed and interpreted the meaning of what the lecturers were describing and gave it back to them. In so doing I gave the lecturers the opportunity to elaborate and correct my understanding of what they were trying to explain. To some extent I did this because I wanted to understand the lecturers' experiences in the context. However, I was not interested in achieving one possible interpretation of their experiences as suggested by Kvale (1996). I assumed that lecturers had multiple, and possibly contradictory, understandings about particular aspects of their experiences. I was interested in their multiple understandings about particular aspects of their experiences and attempted to explore them.
- (3) The transcribed hermeneutic conversations were then analysed and interpreted. The way in which I analysed and interpreted the data will be discussed in the subsequent section.
- (4) After the data analysis, follow-up hermeneutic conversations can be conducted during which the analysis and interpretations of data can be given to the interviewees. During such conversations the lecturers are then given the opportunity to respond to the analysis and interpretations, as well as elaborate on their original statements, as suggested by Kvale (1996) and Van

Manen (1990). The follow-up conversations should be conducted as soon as possible after the initial conversations (Van Manen, 1990). Given that the interviews were conducted in 1997 and so many significant changes have occurred in tertiary education, as well as within the particular department, I decided not to conduct follow-up conversations. Stated differently, I propose that these significant changes have influenced interviewees' experiences as lecturers at the particular university which would have changed their original experiences.

- (5) If the interviewees act on their insights gleaned during the hermeneutic conversations, then the continuum of description and interpretation is extended to include action. Given that the aim of the research is to explore, describe and interpret (Kvale, 1996; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Van Manen, 1990), the lecturer's experiences of being a lecturer at the particular university the impact of these conversations on the behaviour of the lecturers were not explored.

2.4.2 Interpretive analysis of the transcribed interviews

Kvale (1996) suggests that interpretation is a dialogue between the text, produced by the hermeneutic conversations, and the researcher, myself. During this conversation with the text, meaning and significance is attached to the analysis, descriptive patterns are explained, and linkages among the descriptive dimensions are sought (Patton, 1980, p.268). According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002, p.140) interpretive analysis can be seen as a back and forth movement between the strange and the familiar, as well as between a number of other dimensions -- description and interpretation, foreground and background, part and whole. Interpretative analysis is an umbrella term for many analytic traditions (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002), including hermeneutic phenomenology. My analysis of the data involved the immersion and crystallisation style which entailed becoming thoroughly familiar with the phenomenon, carefully reflecting on it, and

then writing an interpretation (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002, p.140). I did the interpretive analysis by entering into the hermeneutic circle.

- *The hermeneutic circle*

The process of the interpretation of meaning is characterised by a hermeneutic circle (Bontekoe, 1996; Danner, 2000, p. 106; Kelly, 2002b; Kvale, 1996, p. 47; Parmentier, 2000) which refers to the researcher's understanding of the relationship between the whole and the parts of a text (Danner 2000, p.135; Karlsson, 1993, p.85).

The hermeneutic circle denotes a process used to ascribe meaning to text and in so doing to understand text. This process entails ascribing meaning to separate parts of the text based on the anticipated global meaning of the text (Karlsson, 1993). As the meaning of the separate parts of the text becomes clearer, the original anticipated meaning of the total text could be influenced and changed (Danner, 2000; Kelly, 2002b). The change in the anticipated global meaning of the text would again influence the meaning of the separate parts of the text (Karlsson 1993; Kvale, 1996). The hermeneutic circle is viewed as a *circulus fructuosis* (Kvale, 1996) or a spiral. Through this circularity a continuous deepening of interpretation, with a concomitant deepened understanding of meaning, can be achieved (Kvale, 1996). Furthermore, the hermeneutic circle also allows the interpreter to check the preliminary problem and the pre-understanding expressed therein against the data collected and to repeatedly correct it [the pre-understanding of the problem] accordingly (Danner, 2000, p. 79).

The aforementioned explication of the hermeneutic circle points to an extended process which ends when a sensible, valid, unitary and contradiction-free meaning of the text has been attained (Danner, 2000; Kelly, 2002c; Kvale, 1996). Thus, the analysis of the hermeneutic conversations ended when the meanings of the different themes made sensible patterns and entered into a coherent unity (Kvale, 1996, p. 48).

2.4.3 Steps followed during the interpretive analysis of the data

According to Kelly (2002c) the process of interpretation continues and even accelerates as one writes up the research report. My central goal of interpretive analysis was to discover the regular patterns, i.e. themes, in the data.

Data obtained during a qualitative research project tends to be voluminous (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Patton, 1980). The data obtained through the nine interviews was indeed voluminous, i.e. the data consisted of 177 pages, on average 19 pages per interview (Arial, 12pt, 1.5 spacing). To ensure the anonymity and confidentiality, as proposed by Broom (2005) and Christians (2005), of the lecturers and the organisation they worked for, I did not attach the data as an addendum. To deal with this overwhelming amount of data, I reduced the data through the following phases (Kelly, 2002b; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002; Van Manen, 1990):

- Familiarisation and immersion;
- Inducing themes;
- Coding/categorising into meanings;
- Generating and elaboration of themes and patterns;
- Interpretation and checking; and
- Writing the report.

In the following paragraphs these steps will be discussed in greater detail (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002; Van Manen, 1990). The analysis did not always occur in the orderly manner suggested by the step-wise presentation, but at times in an intuitive manner (Kelly, 2002b; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002, p.140). For example, as I was inducing a theme, some interpretation using the systems psychodynamic perspective could occur.

2.4.3.1 Familiarisation and immersion

In my endeavour to become intimately familiar with the data, I read the transcription of each conversation to get a sense of the information contained within and across interviews. I immersed myself in the data so as to be sensitive to meanings of even the subtlest detail, as suggested by the work of Broom (2005), Kelly (2002b), Kvale (1996), Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002) and Van Manen (1990). The purpose of this (on lines suggested by Kelly, 2002b; Kvale, 1996, Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002; Van Manen, 1990) was to enhance my general understanding of the phenomena as experienced by the lecturers within their life world, as well as to determine possible categories or clusters within the data. As Kelly (2002b) suggests, it was important to develop a sense of the language that the lecturers used. I did this by asking the following questions suggested by Davies (1997), Kelly (2002b) and Miles and Huberman (1994), i.e. which metaphors did they use? What are all the possible meanings of the metaphors? What were they trying to say through the metaphors? Was there any family of metaphors used? I also focused on the critical incidents (Henning *et al.*, 2004) that the lecturers referred to across the conversations.

2.4.3.2 Inducing themes

Following Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002), I organised the voluminous data by determining the principles (themes or categories) which naturally underlie the data. Thus through coding, as well as generating and elaborating on themes or categories in the data, the final system of themes and sub-themes was developed.

2.4.3.3 Coding

Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that coding is analysis. During the process of inducing themes, I coded the data. This entailed marking different sections of data as being instances of, or relevant to, one or more of [my] themes (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002, p.143). I coded the data by breaking it into labelled meaningful

pieces, with a view to clustering the bits under the code heading and analysing it further as a cluster and in relation to other clusters (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002). This was done through the cut-and-paste function of the computerised word processor, using Microsoft Word.

The categorisation of meanings through codes was done by searching through the data for regularities and patterns, both patterns of behaviour and particular topics as related to the research questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002; Van Manen, 1990). I categorised an entire hermeneutic conversation before moving onto the next one, until all the conversations were coded. I indicated which protocol the phrase or statement came from by marking it with the lecturer's number. For example, L4 stated that *[I] worked in the township and [made] contact although not always as much as I would have liked with local issues and that was sort of something which I felt extending which I enjoyed*. This strategy prevented the lecturers' voices *flowing into each other* in my mind (De Wet & Erasmus, 2003), as well as any premature inducing of themes across the transcripts.

In order to uncover the categories of meanings in the conversations, the selective or highlighting approach was used (Van Manen, 1990) to code the data into particular categories. This was done by continuously asking the question: What statement(s) or phrase(s) seem particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or experience described (Van Manen, 1990, p.93)? These statements or phrases were then underlined (Van Manen, 1990). Statements were coded into categories, and later into themes that were relevant to the research aims. The categories were exhaustive and mutually exclusive (Kelly, 2002b; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Van Manen, 1990). These categories and patterns are only fasteners, foci or threads around which the phenomenological description is facilitated (Van Manen, 1990). Through this categorisation I started to structure the extensive and complex hermeneutic conversations in terms of descriptive codes (Kvale, 1996).

An inductive coding technique was used to develop the descriptive codes, i.e. meaningful phrases as codes, for the project (Henning *et al.*, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The original descriptive codes consisted of the relationships between lecturers and students, lecturers and management, and lecturers and other lecturers. These categories were identified according to the research aims and the categories which emerged from the data, as suggested by De Wet and Erasmus (2003) and Miles and Huberman (1994). During the process of using these codes, other descriptive codes were inductively developed. The phrases that were used repeatedly (*in vivo* codes) within the data were used to develop the descriptive codes, and pointed to regularities in the data, e.g. the new story.

To have constant and easy access to the codes, I used the document map function in Microsoft Word. This function also allowed me to move easily within the document while coding and revising the codes. During the analysis I noted my reflective remarks, i.e. memos about ideas pertaining to the relationships between the codes, and issues that I should pursue further when working through the reduced data again.

As the analysis of the data progressed, the codes were changed because some codes decayed and other codes emerged as new insights and new ways of looking at the data became apparent. By continuing with the coding of data, I recognised new relationships within and across categories leading to a new configuration of the categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994). See Table 2.2 for an idea of the categories that emerged during the coding of the data.

Table 2.2: Codes emerging during the analysis of the data

CODES	SUB-CODES
Power and authority of voices of stakeholders on campus	Power
Perceptions of the HBU	<p>Lowering of standards Comparisons with other universities Marginalisation of HBUs The struggle of rewriting the story of marginalisation, the story of the HBU – creating a new label for HBU The anatomy of the prevention of rewriting the story Future role of the HBU in tertiary education Effect of the political issues on campus on the academic programme Disruption of academic programme Location of university in a township</p>
Relationship between lecturers and students	<p>Relationship between lecturers and SRC White lecturers/black students The effect of students' experience of incompetence on the relationship between students and lecturers Factors influencing relationship between students and lecturers Nature of relationship between lecturers and students Marked by separateness Nature of relationship between lecturers and students in the face of accomplishment</p>
Protocol of violence and threat	
Lecturers' perception of administration/management	<p>Relationship between lecturers and management/admin (as perceived by lecturers) Lecturers' perception of admin vs management</p>
Relationship between lecturers, students and management	<p>The triangle expands – other stakeholders Relationship among the stakeholders are marked by a culture of accusations and persecution The blaming game The mythical them – a force influencing interaction – the triangle has become wider Them/They as forces within tertiary education Relationship between lecturers, management and SRC (as representatives of students)</p>

Primary tasks	<p>Primary task of lecturers</p> <p>Lecturer as management Arranging of venues Supportive of colleagues in a conflict situation Withholding of services</p> <p>Primary task of admin/management (as perceived by lecturers)</p> <p>Primary task of students</p> <p>Task of the university</p> <p>Primary task of lecturers with regard to primary task of university – with regard to the disciplining of students Boundary conditions – for lecturers to complete their tasks Boundary condition to complete work: communication Boundary of the task of students, lecturers, administration and management Disciplining of students – whose responsibility? Lecturers' non-participation in the non-disciplining of students (a vicious cycle?)</p>
Relationship between lecturers	<p>Relationship between lecturers Competition among lecturers Conflictual relationship between lecturers Supportive relationship among colleagues in this dept Support from other lecturers on campus Commitment of the lecturer to the system/morale of lecturers within the system Tenure as part of experiencing confidence as lecturer Emotional experience of lecturers at the HBU Disconnecting from the HBU as defense against anxiety Sense of accomplishment within the system HBU as a positive work context Lecturers as targets of frustration vs white people as targets of frustration Conversation that happen through the action of a stay-away by lecturers</p>

2.4.3.4 Generating and elaboration of themes

Several of the strategies I used to generate codes inductively I used in generating the themes from the categorised data. By employing constant comparison I looked for recurring phrases, related comments or common threads in the lecturers' accounts based on the categorised data (Broom, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Through the unpacking of categories, I identified and grouped data that showed thematic similarity (Kelly, 2002b). These themes were obtained through particular strategies. Importantly, I used these strategies throughout the interpretive analysis of the data. It should be remembered that I worked four times through the data viz. coding raw data into categories (see Table 2.2 for codes), generating themes based on coded data, elaborating themes, writing the analysis of the data, and integrating the analysis with relevant literature.

(1) Labelling themes/categories

I used concepts or labels from literature that I was familiar with and the language of the participants to label my themes or categories. One such concept or label from literature was *the (k)not of achievement*. I found this idea very useful because it denotes the absence of achievement, i.e. the not of achievement, and that the absence of achievement in this context was related to the expression of *getting oneself into all kinds of knots* in trying to explain a particular issue. Here the (k)not referred to all kinds of relationship knots and conflicts that connected the lecturers and students. The idea of (k)not was eventually also used to label other themes, i.e. the (k)not of relationships and the (k)not of performance. A label I obtained from literature, i.e. primary task, disappeared towards the end of the analysis. This label was possibly premature and/or based on a presupposition that did not fit the data (Kelly, 2002b). The coded data contained by this label were included within other themes. For example the code, primary task of management, was discussed within the themes and sub-themes included under the category, relationship between lecturers and management. This process meant that events that I initially viewed as unrelated could be grouped together as their interconnectedness became apparent (Broom, 2005).

The labels were also developed from the words and phrases used by the lecturers, viz. management as spineless and authoritarian, disqualification, different voices, the reign of terror, conversation, writing the new story and toyi-toying to the beat of the new story. Through associating I interpreted the data in relation to a broader socio-political and socio-cultural framework, and in so doing generated and elaborated on the themes pertaining to diversity characteristics. Other categories/themes were induced from my interpretation of the lecturers' accounts, e.g. lecturers' mistrusting management and black students/white lecturers/black management.

(2) *Elaboration of themes*

When organising the data I did not merely summarise the content, but rather established the processes, functions, tensions and contradictions in the data. I also identified internal differences in the lecturers' accounts in order to form a higher-level commonality within themes. I was able to work with contradictory information, because from a system psychodynamic stance it is expected to work with contradictions that indicate the multiple understandings that can be formed about the same information. In other words, by understanding contradictions within the data about each theme or category, and dealing with sub-issues and sub-themes that emerged from the data, the complexity of the theme and thus the lecturers' experiences were accentuated, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Terre Blanche and Kelly (2002).

While generating and elaborating on themes, I was left, as Babbie and Mouton (2000) suggest, with data that for several reasons were not integrated in my final report. I cut this data into another document to have a record of the data which I did not include. The main reason for excluding the data was ethical. Using the data would reveal the department and university the lecturers were from. The data focused on the relationships between the lecturers and the data pertaining to stakeholders in the wider context of the HBU, such as government, was excluded. This was done because I considered this data not to fall within the research aims. Given the complexity of the lecturers' experiences at the university, I also had to *let go of* some of the data (Kelly, 2002c) at the point that I felt that I acquired a good-enough understanding of these experiences.

I worked towards finding an optimal level of complexity, i.e. generating an appropriate number of themes that would be useful in forming a holistic understanding of the data, as directed by the research question. It was important to establish the sub-themes within a theme and to see how these sub-themes related to each other. I also explored how the themes related to each other (Terre Blance & Kelly, 2002). Thus, I *played around* with themes and sub-themes in order to establish a system that was useful in forming a holistic understanding of the data as directed by the research question. I guarded against settling for one system too quickly (Henning *et al.*, 2005). I ensured that the identified themes were relevant to the research question, as well as exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Thus, by bearing the research question in mind, I attempted to get a thick description (Terre Blance & Kelly, 2002) of lecturers' experiences at the particular HBU.

Through a continuous back and forth process between the separate parts and text as the whole I analysed the data, ensuring a *circulus fructuosis* during data analysis (Kelly, 2002b; Kvale, 1996). I stopped the analysis and interpretation when it became evident that the *meanings of the different themes make sensible patterns and enter into a coherent unity* (Kvale, 1996, p.48). The rich description of the data I arrived at was influenced by my understanding that no thematic formulation can completely unlock the deep meaning, the full mystery, the enigmatic aspects of the experiential meaning of the (Van Manen, 1991, p.88) lecturers' experiences.

2.4.3.5 Interpretation and checking

Kelly (2002b) indicated that interpretive activity occurs in all the stages of research, but interpretation is highlighted when one starts making sense of the data. I tested the emergent themes against the data by searching for alternative explanations of the data (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). This was done by identifying evidence for hypotheses, then exploring: what does this mean? What does this say about the experiences of the lecturers? Based on this exploration possible explanations were generated. The data was checked for further evidence for the explanation, as well as negative evidence refuting the explanation. Based on this strategy, weighting of evidence, themes and

hypotheses within the themes were formulated and discussed. As discussed by Broom (2005) and Kelly (2002c), I also used extreme cases that emphasised the experiences of the lecturers at this institution. The extreme cases in this data pertained to the violent behaviour on the part of the students, and the lecturers' stay-away action. In the next section, I discuss how I used L9's account as an atypical case to elucidate certain themes

As indicated by Miles and Huberman (1994), I followed up surprises as a method of checking the data. The surprises included that the department was seen as the *Vlakplaas*¹ of the institution and the lecturers' animosity towards students. I expected the lecturers' animosity towards management, as revealed by the data, but not their animosity toward the students. I was also surprised by the depth of their pain and the depth of the anger and rage they experienced with regard to the way they were treated in the institution.

I also checked the truth value of the interpretive analysis of the data before integrating it with literature by asking six of the lecturers for feedback about whether this was a plausible reflection of their experiences (see section 2.4.3.6 for further discussion).

I withdrew from the analysis for periods ranging from a span of hours to weeks, depending on my need. This allowed the ideas to incubate until emerging more clearly in my mind. During the periods of incubation, I reflected on my analysis, as suggested by Mostyn (1985) by considering the rationale for various steps in the analysis and interpretation, and the possibility of any new patterns.

(1) Using the self as instrument

I bracketed as far as possible my pre-conceived ideas (Kelly, 2002b; Van Manen, 1990) about how the relationships between the students, lecturers and management were constituted. In this way I could intuitively identify the patterns emerging from the data rather than imposing my understanding

¹ *Vlakplaas* was the base for death squads of the apartheid government.

about the relationships onto the data (De Wet & Erasmus, 2003; Van Manen, 1990). Regardless of these attempts I was aware that presuppositions influence the nature of the data obtained during the conversations with the lecturers, as well as the meaning ascribed through interpretation to the data by me. Danner (2000, p.139) states that interpretation in any instance is already structured by the interpreter's historicity and the traditions and practical interests that inform the particular interpretation. Therefore, it was crucial that I remained aware of and made explicit my presuppositions, as well as taking them into account during the interpretation of the data (Darren, 2000; Karlsson, 1993; Kvale, 1996).

The data that I did not want to work with was very significant for me. This raised the question: what did I want to avoid or deny about the experiences of the lecturers and myself? I could identify two pertinent experiences of wanting to avoid analysing particular chunks of data. This I discussed with one of my promoters.

The first instance pertains to my irritation with L9's account of her experiences, as well as my reluctance and inability to integrate her experiences into the overall analysis of the data. I was also very aware of being unable to make sense of what she was trying to say. I discussed this matter with my promoter and I realised that what irritated me about her account was her rage at what was happening to her, making it difficult to work with her account. I then realised that she was the only one I had spoken to before the stay-away action of the lecturers. The other eight interviews occurred after the stay-away action. This enabled me to think that she was displaying the rage that probably existed within this group. Furthermore, this rage in the other lecturers was probably tempered by having the experience of saying through their stay-away action: we will not take the violence against us anymore. Although this is all speculative, it enabled me to work seriously with L9's contribution to this research project.

I also found it difficult to work with the lecturers' accounts of their emotional experiences of working in the institution, with specific reference to their

sadness about many aspects of the institution. Again this reluctance to work with their extreme sadness mobilised me to explore in more depth the lecturers' emotional experiences of working in the institution.

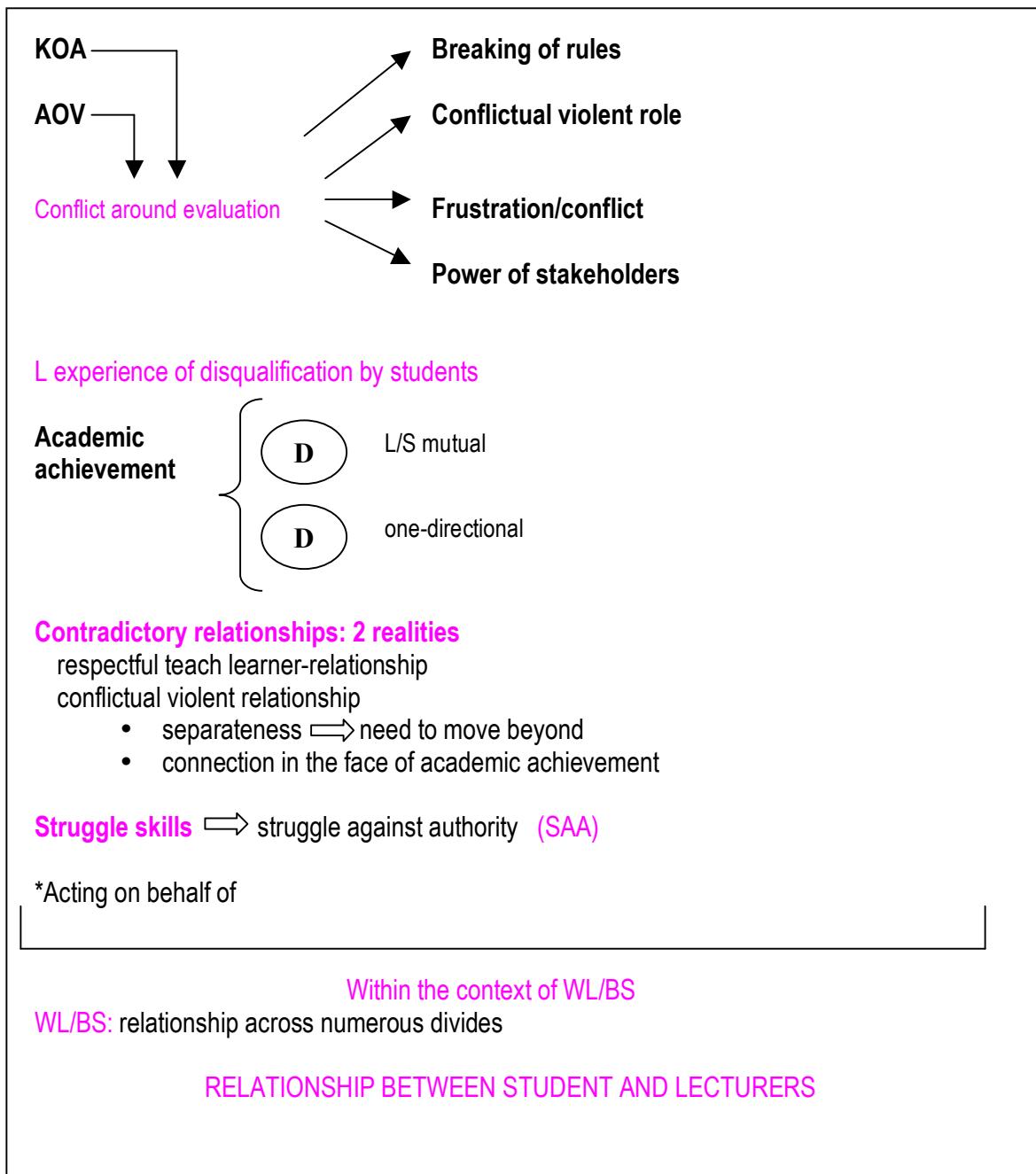
As suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) my willingness to check for my effect on the data, and the data's effect on me in my role as researcher was illustrated by my reluctance to work with the account of L9 and the emotional experiences of the lecturers. The above discussion also points to my willingness to retain the complexity of the lecturers' experiences by working with the atypical case (Broom, 2005; Kelly, 2002c), as well as using the self, and my emotional reactions during the analysis of the data (McCormick & White, 2000).

(2) Network displays

Pattern codes or themes were used to experiment with the relationship between the patterns observed after the categorisation of the data, by mapping the related categories in order to network display the data visually (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For the mapping of the data, the emerging categories were used. From these categories the themes discussed in the re-authoring of the lecturers' stories were crystallised more clearly. These themes, based on the initial categories, were used to structure the discussion of working hypotheses that emerged in the process of meaning making for continuous reflection.

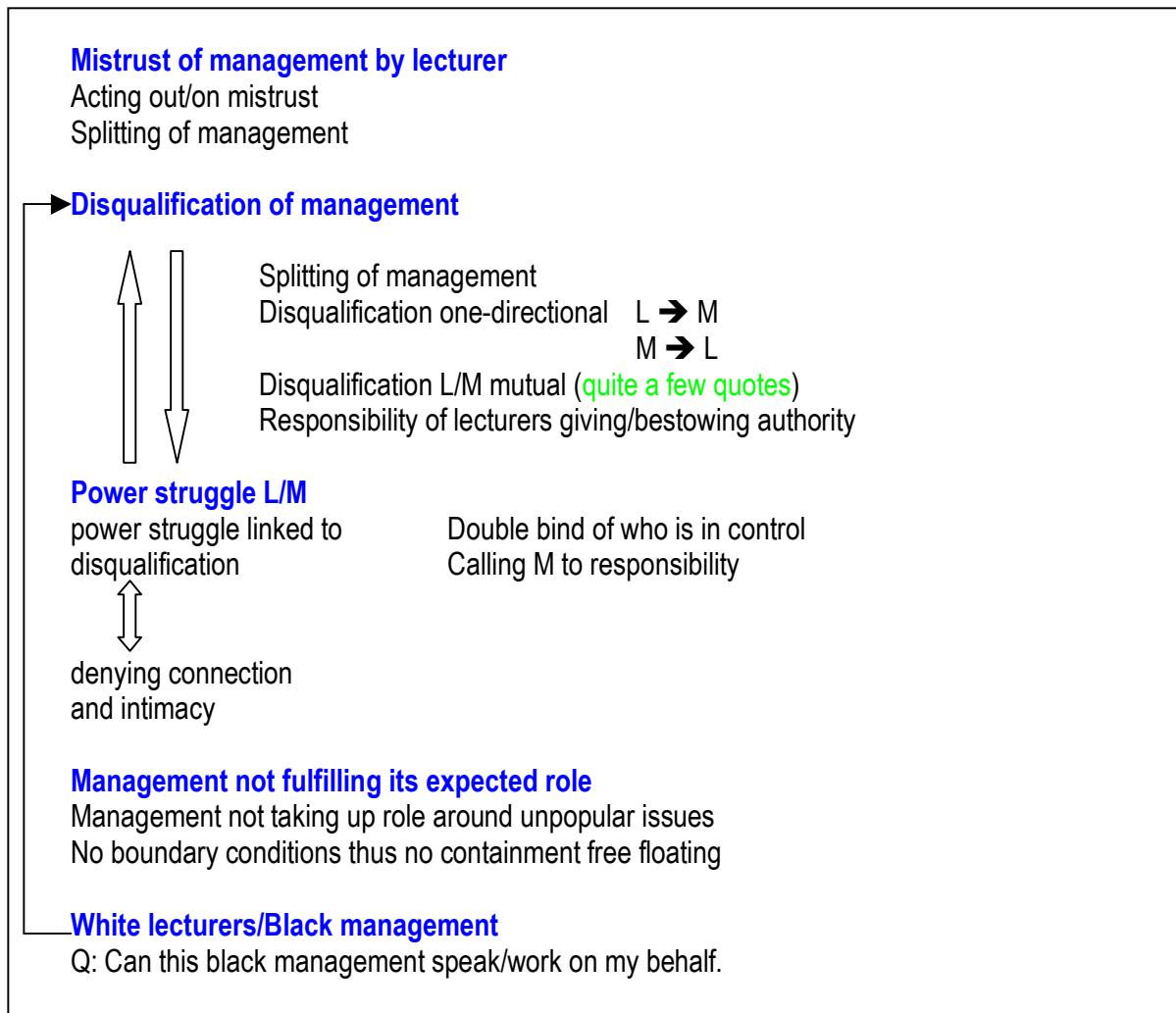
The network display of the relationship between the students and the lecturers and the emerging themes is presented in figure 2.1. The visual representation of the relationship between the students and lecturers based on this network display, as well as the discussion thereof will be presented in chapter 4.

Figure 2.1: Network display of the relationship between the students and lecturers



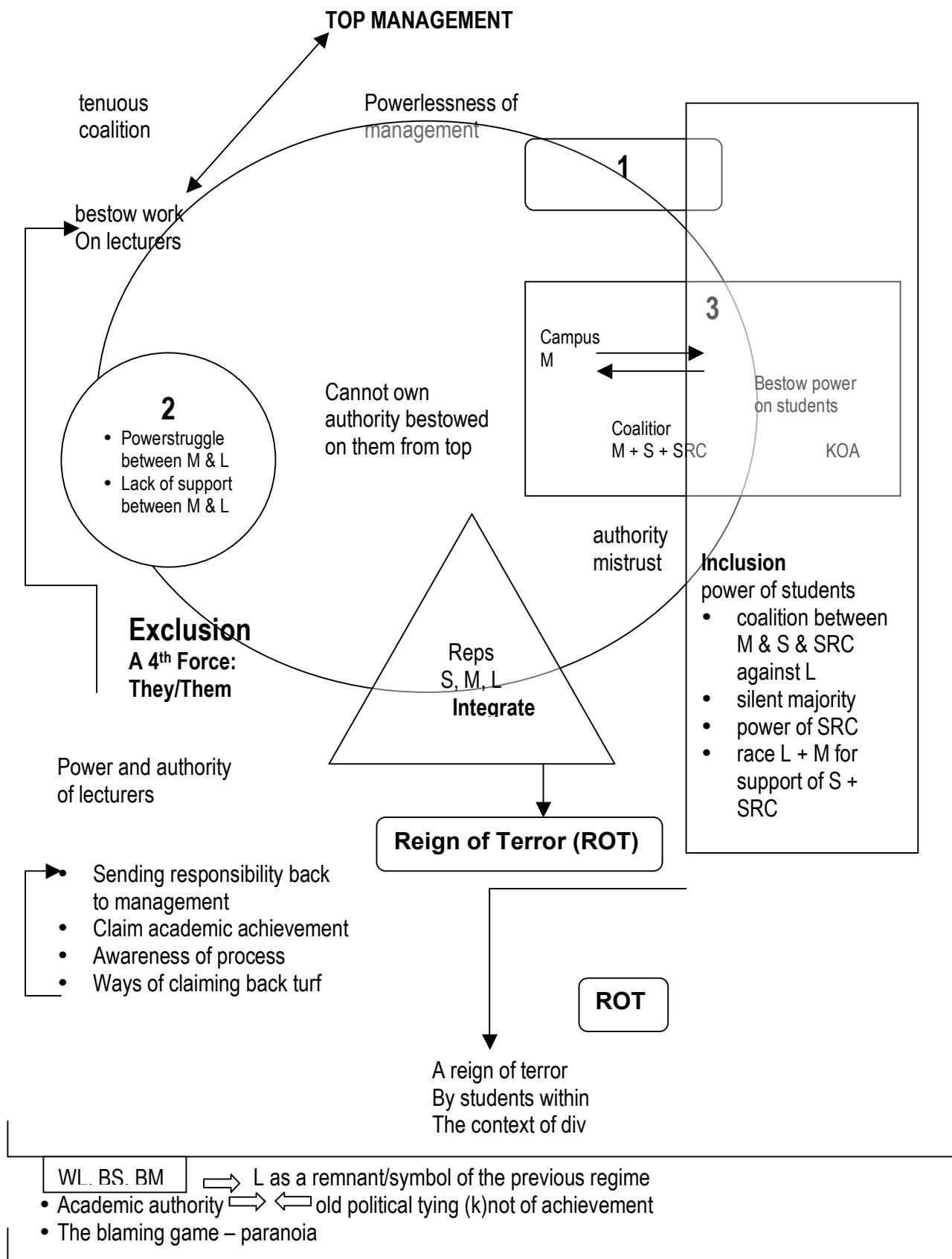
The network display for the broad category, the relationship between the lecturers and management, and its emerging themes is presented in figure 2.2. This network display formed the basis of the visual presentation, presented in chapter 4, for the discussion of the relationship between lecturers and management.

Figure 2.2: Network display of the relationship between the lecturers and management



In order to visually make sense of the relationship between the three stakeholders, a network display for the broad category, the relationship between the students, lecturers and management, and its emerging themes, is presented in figure 2.3. The visual representation of the relationship between the students, lecturers and the management based on this network display, as well as the discussion thereof will be presented in chapter 4.

Figure 2.3: Network display of the relationship between the students, lecturers and management



RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF REIGN OF TERROR

I presented these three network displays to my promoter for his evaluation. He considered the themes to be coherent and relevant to the research questions. These networks were used to guide the writing of the report of the interpretive analysis and for further crystallisation of the themes. I expected that these networks would be confirmed or modified through the writing as a means of inquiry, as suggested by Kelly (2002c) and Richardson and Adams St Pierre (2005).

2.4.3.6 Writing the report

I determined two ways of writing up the data, i.e. in accordance with the themes, or in accordance with the research aims. To me it made more sense to write the final report in accordance with the research aims, that is, themes were discussed for each of the relationships I wanted to explore in the HBU. The final pattern of data based on network 1, 2 and 3 was used in the writing of the research report.

My first writing of the data was to provide a descriptive account of the lecturers' experiences without interpreting the data from a theoretical framework. I wanted to present the lecturers' stories according to my understanding of their stories, before imposing a theoretical framework on them – thus giving a situated account of the lecturers' experiences, as recommended by Kelly (2002b). This situated account was presented to one of my promoters, to two clinical psychologists who know the systems psychodynamic framework, and to six of the lecturers involved in the project. I include the letter in which I asked the six to comment on the extent to which I had understood the group's perception of their experiences at the university (see Addendum 1). Three of the lecturers responded to my request and generally considered this to be a true account of their experiences (see Addendum 2). Two lecturers in particular commented on how aspects of the account were a true reflection of that time, while other aspects were relevant as this HBU became part of an HWU. Only one of the psychologists responding provided feedback about the plausibility of the interpretive analysis of the data (see Addendum 3), and some of her comments were included in the interpretive analysis.

Then I linked the mainly descriptive account to theoretical constructs (Henning *et al.*, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 1995) from the system psychodynamic approach. At this point I presented the analysis to a colleague and one of my promoters for them to comment on whether this is a coherent and plausible account of the lecturers' experiences, as suggested by Kelly (2002c) and Miles and Huberman (1994). Their comments and questions were used in further interpretive analysis.

By writing the report, I was using writing as a method of thinking, analysing, interpreting and discovery as suggested by Richardson and Adams St Pierre (2005). In fact, the process of interpretation was accelerated as I wrote the research report. This became particularly evident as I attempted to make sense of the lecturers' stories in relation to particular aspects of the literature (Kelly, 2002c) within the systems psychodynamic approach. Interpretive analysis can be never-ending, but given the limits of this research project I suspended my interpretive analysis because I thought that the interpretive account answered the questions I wanted to explore, and adequately represented the data I had collected.

It is evident from the above discussion that I worked through the data at different levels of abstraction four times. This enabled me to access the immediate and the unexpected meaning within the data during subsequent interpretive analysis. The latter allowed for the crystallisation of new interrelations in the text, enhancing the understanding of the lecturers' experiences in the university. In doing this I have satisfied the seventh canon of the hermeneutic circle, viz. *Jedes Verstehen ist ein Besser verstehen* -- every understanding is a better understanding (Kvale, 1996, p.50) of the human phenomenon as it is lived in its context (Kelly, 2002b).

2.5 SCIENTIFIC RIGOUR OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

In this section I discuss the scientific rigour of the research project using naturalistic terms to describe the validity, reliability and transferability of the project (Lincoln & Cuba 1985; Twycross & Shields, 2005). I have discussed certain aspects of the scientific rigour of the research project in various sections in this chapter. In this section I reiterate some parts of the discussions already provided, and add new evidence of how I adhered to the requirements for scientific rigour within the project.

2.5.1 Validity of the research project

The validity of a research project can be ensured by discussing the truth value of the project with several parties (Appleton, 1995; Kvale, 1996; Koch, 1994; Saukko, 2005). In this case the parties were the lecturers, my promoters and (neutral) colleagues. The procedures that I used to enter into dialogue with the different parties are discussed in the following sections. Furthermore, by providing a thick description of the empirical study, I invite the reader to judge the validity of this project. I attempt to enhance my credibility as a researcher by providing a thick description, in the following sections, of the procedures used during data collection and interpretative analysis to ensure the truth value of the research project.

2.5.1.1 *Dialoguing the knowledge: communicative validity*

This research is intended to give voice to the experiences of lecturers that I considered to be neglected by mainstream academic fraternity. Based on the description of the project thus far, the research can be viewed in interactive terms in that it occurred in the dialogic space (Saukko, 2005) between me and the world of the lecturers (Saukko, 2005). In this research project I was interested in subjective and inter-subjective knowledge, i.e. the experiences of the lecturers as they are lived in their context. I also did not claim that truth can be universally known (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The plausibility, and thus the truth value, of the conclusions of this research project have been to some

extent negotiated with the lecturers, and with certain colleagues (a neutral colleague and two promoters). Thus, the conversation about the truth of the knowledge also occurred between me and my promoters, me and a (neutral) colleague (Kvale, 1996), and between this text and the reader (Koch, 1994).

I tried to ensure the credibility and therefore the validity of the research project by presenting to the readers of the study my credibility as a researcher, and by describing in detail the research design, the sample, the data collection and data analysis strategies, and the outcome of the project. Thus, the scientific rigour of the research design, the methodology, strategies and outcome of the project can be scrutinised by the reader of this document (Appleton, 1995).

As already discussed I sent the interpretive analysis before its integration with the literature to six of the lecturers for their comments. Three lecturers responded and their comments are attached (see Addendum 2).

Another strategy of dialogue involved one of my promoters who gave feedback throughout several steps in the interpretive analysis, viz. the visual displays of the data, the interpretive analysis without integration with the literature, and the integration of the empirical text and literature from the systems psychodynamic stance.

I also consulted with an informed and, I hope, neutral colleague who is a clinical psychologist. I asked three questions from her: first, given the descriptive codes, network displays and interpretation, can this colleague trace a line from coding to interpretation? Second, given that a line of reasoning between data and conclusions can be discerned, are the conclusions plausible? Importantly, the question was not whether the interpretations were correct, only whether they were plausible. What I asked from her was: did the interpretations make sense? Can the interpretations (following Griffee, 2005) be supported by the evidence at hand? If the interpretations were considered not plausible, I could use this as an opportunity to dialogue with her about the truth and falsity of interpretations on the basis of argued points of view, as well as re-examining the interpretation (Griffee, 2005).

Another question that could have been included was whether she could reach an alternative interpretation based on the same evidence? In the light of the systems psychodynamic stance that was used, and having kept close to the data during the steps of interpretive analysis, I did not include this question, because I expected my colleague to have alternative and similar interpretations based on our knowledge of the systems psychodynamic perspective. Furthermore, I assumed that such a project can generate a plurality of interpretations (Kvale, 1996, p. 203, pp. 209-210) which could explain differences in our interpretations.

In order to determine the communicative validity of the interpretations, conversations were entered into with the lecturers, my promoters and a neutral colleague with the purpose of reaching a consensus about the plausibility of the interpretation and final report of the research project. Another outcome of such a conversation was that I learnt and changed through the dialogue. I hoped that this was also the case for those I dialogued with (Kvale, 1996).

2.5.1.2 Validity as competence and craftsmanship: good qualitative practice

A measure of the credibility of the data can be obtained by the degree of confidence the researcher inspires in us (Henning *et al.*, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I attempted to assure the reader of the credibility of the study through the following (Twycross & Shields, 2005):

- Use of prolonged data collection – the data was collected over a two-month period;
- Verification involved asking six of the lecturers whether the interpretive analysis was an appropriate reflection of their experiences at the HBU. A neutral colleague and the two promoters were asked to comment on the plausibility of my interpretive analysis and integration of this analysis with system psychodynamic theory; and.
- Theoretical verification. The findings of the study were compared to the results of previous studies.

My effects on the data and the data's effect on me could not be denied. Possible criticism against this categorising or thematising are that I have imposed a world of meaning on the data I obtained from the lecturers. Furthermore, this world of meaning better reflects my world than the world under study, as suggested by Patton (1980). Said differently, the interpretive analysis could have involved my projecting my own beliefs and prejudices onto the data and then rediscovering them as findings – the vicious circularity of understanding (Kelly, 2002c). I worked against this, including several checks during the interpretive analysis as discussed in section 2.4.

2.5.2 Reliability of the research project

Qualitative research does not purport to be replicable (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). However, I responded to the traditional scientific concern with replicability through the following steps. Firstly, I asserted that the replicability of qualitative research projects -- due to their nature and the fact that the world changes -- is not possible (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Secondly, the reliability of the data, based on the interviewer reliability, then recording of the hermeneutic conversations and the reliability of the transcriptions of the hermeneutic conversations (Appleton, 1995), was discussed in section 2.3.3. Thirdly, collected data was kept in a well-organised, retrievable form easily available to other researchers who challenge the findings or who wish to re-analyse the data (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Although I have kept the data in a well-organised, retrievable form, I decided not to make it available to other researchers for ethical reasons.

Fourthly, a research project can be judged as auditable (and thus reliable) if the reader can follow the decisions trail or audit trail (Appleton, 1995). Thus, in Chapter 1 and 3 I provided detailed discussion about design and methodological decisions, as well as the rationale behind them, so that my procedures and decisions are available for scrutiny (Appleton, 1995; Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

One of the basic tenets underlying hermeneutics is that I dialogue with the text, as the reader dialogues with my text and we bring our own preconceptions to this dialogue. Thus, the reader of this report would not necessarily agree with my themes and interpretation of the data, but should be able to follow the way in which I came to them (Koch, 1994). Therefore I presented throughout this chapter a discussion of my decisions during sampling, data collection and interpretive analysis.

Through the above strategies, I have attempted to ensure the reliability of the findings. It is important to bear in mind that a strong emphasis on reliability could have affected the innovativeness and creativity inherent to a qualitative research question (Kvale, 1996; Shank & Villella, 2004). Thus I tried to maintain a balance between adhering to the requirements of reliability and allowing for creativity and innovation.

2.5.3 Transferability

The transferability of the account refers to the ability of the account to provide answers in other contexts, and to transferring the answers to other contexts. To ensure the transferability of this research project, I provided as far as possible an accurate description of the research project, so that the reader can decide whether the findings are applicable to other organisations which he or she knows (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Seale, 2001; Twycross & Shields, 2005). In this description I have also attempted to explain the different reasons for choosing particular methods during the research project. Lastly, I provided, as far as ethical considerations allowed, a detailed description of the research situation and context, as suggested by Kelly (2002c) and Kvale (1996).

I also received confirmation of the transferability of the research project from an unexpected source, a colleague who checked the grammar and spelling of the account. He commented that the processes are quite similar to what happens in his organisation – he worked in the automotive industry. He went on to say that in his organisation the lecturers would be the professionals, the students the workers and management the management.

2.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Informed consent required that I caused no harm, did not invade the lecturers' privacy and avoided any imposition to the lecturers, as suggested by Christians (2005), Eisner (1998), Henning *et al.* (2004) and Miles and Huberman (1994). By obtaining informed consent I undertake not to violate the lecturers' rights (Eisner, 1998). Given the iterative nature of qualitative research, absolute informed consent is impossible (Eisner, 1998). Nevertheless, I obtained informed consent by asking whether they cared to participate in this project. I described the project to them. I asked them whether I could use the data from the nine hermeneutic conversations to form an understanding of their experiences through the lens of the systems psychodynamic approach. I also promised that if they wanted, they would receive feedback at the end of the study. I verbally obtained the lecturers' informed consent to use the data they gave me for research, as suggested by Christians (2005), Eisner (1998) and Henning *et al.* (2004).

Doing no harm to the lecturers was another principle that guided me during the hermeneutic conversations, the interpretive analysis, and the writing of the final report. I tried to achieve this by taking a non-judgmental and non-blaming stance towards the experiences of the lecturers. I also focused on giving a rich, detailed description of their experiences and in so doing acknowledging the multiple realities contained in their accounts. However, I was not sure I caused no harm, i.e. I did not know how they were affected by being asked about private and personal experiences. However, I was vigilant in ensuring that I did not overstep the boundaries that I observed during the hermeneutic conversations.

Although Christians (2005) proposed that watertight confidentiality is impossible, I assured the lecturers that I would protect their confidentiality and anonymity as far as possible, as recommended by Eisner (1998). I informed them that the audio-tapes, and transcripts (hard and electronic copies) of the conversations would be safely stored. Besides those who helped me with the transcribing the data, I was the only person who had access to the raw data,

as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). I also discussed issues of confidentiality with those who completed the transcriptions. I protected the lecturers' identities by not including certain revealing aspects of the data, and not including the data as an addendum. I also presented the data behind a shield of anonymity (Christians, 2005, p.145). In order to enhance the confidentiality and anonymity of the lecturers, the Afrikaans quotes were translated into English, as proposed by two of the lecturers.

The accuracy of the data used in research projects of this nature is a cardinal principle of social science ethical codes (Christians, 2005). Therefore, I ensured that the data I included as evidence in the interpretive analysis was an accurate reflection of aspects of the lecturers' accounts. Furthermore, the hermeneutic conversations are a form of self-report and I had to assume that the information provided was accurate, following Appleton (1995).

Given my personal relationship with the lecturers, I did not obtain permission from the gatekeepers in the university to undertake the research. This can be attributed to my inexperience when starting the project and later due to the fact that the university does not exist as a legal entity anymore. I dealt with the basic problem of the identifiability of the university in the preparation and completion of the report, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). I am not convinced that I was successful in ensuring that the university remained anonymous. However, I ensured that the department remained anonymous, by excluding revealing data from the interpretive analysis, and by ensuring the anonymity of information I used.

Thus far I have discussed my ethical obligations towards the lecturers. However, I also had ethical obligations to the wider scientific fraternity (Babbie, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). I exercised these ethical obligations by giving a thick description of the empirical study in which I emphasised how I ensured the scientific rigour of the project, as well as discussing the mistakes I made (Babbie, 1998).

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have provided an overview of the research methodology followed in the research project by describing the sample and the sampling process, discussing the data collection and explaining the interpretive analysis completed during the project. Throughout the chapter and at the end of the chapter a detailed account was given of how I ensured the scientific rigour of this research project.

In the following chapter, I report on the findings of this research project.

CHAPTER 3 RE-AUTHORING THE LECTURERS' STORIES: A THEMATIC ACCOUNT

The aim of this chapter was to analyse the data which were collected through nine hermeneutic conversations in accordance with broad categories, viz. the relationship between students and lecturers, the relationship between lecturers and management and the relationship between all three of these stakeholders in the HBU. Within these three broad categories several themes were identified. These themes will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

In order to facilitate the reading of this chapter, the themes will be discussed in detail in four sections. These sections will be organised with regard to the three categories used to analyse the data, viz.

- Section A: The relationship between students and lecturers
- Section B: The relationship between lecturers and management
- Section C: The relationship between all three stakeholders (The triangle – a tale of three stakeholders)
- Section D: The new story

In writing sections A, B and parts of C, I was aware that I have painted a picture of the lecturers as a disempowered group with few resources to address their situation. However, it was important to hear and write about the disempowering aspect of their experience in order to voice the unknown part of their experience. In some ways this unknown part for me became the unspeakable aspects of their experiences and I became quite filled up with this part of their experience, resulting in my forgetting how empowered this group actually is. In writing the latter part of section C and section D, I once again became aware of how empowered this group is, and how they attempted through many actions to change the status quo of this university in such a way that the needs of the different stakeholders could be addressed more efficiently.

The reader will notice that some of the themes discussed in the three sections may overlap with each other – highlighting how certain issues permeate every aspect of the relationships between students, lecturers and management. So, some of the

discussion could seem repetitive, but I think that the overlap between sections points to the complexity of the relationships between students, lecturers and management.

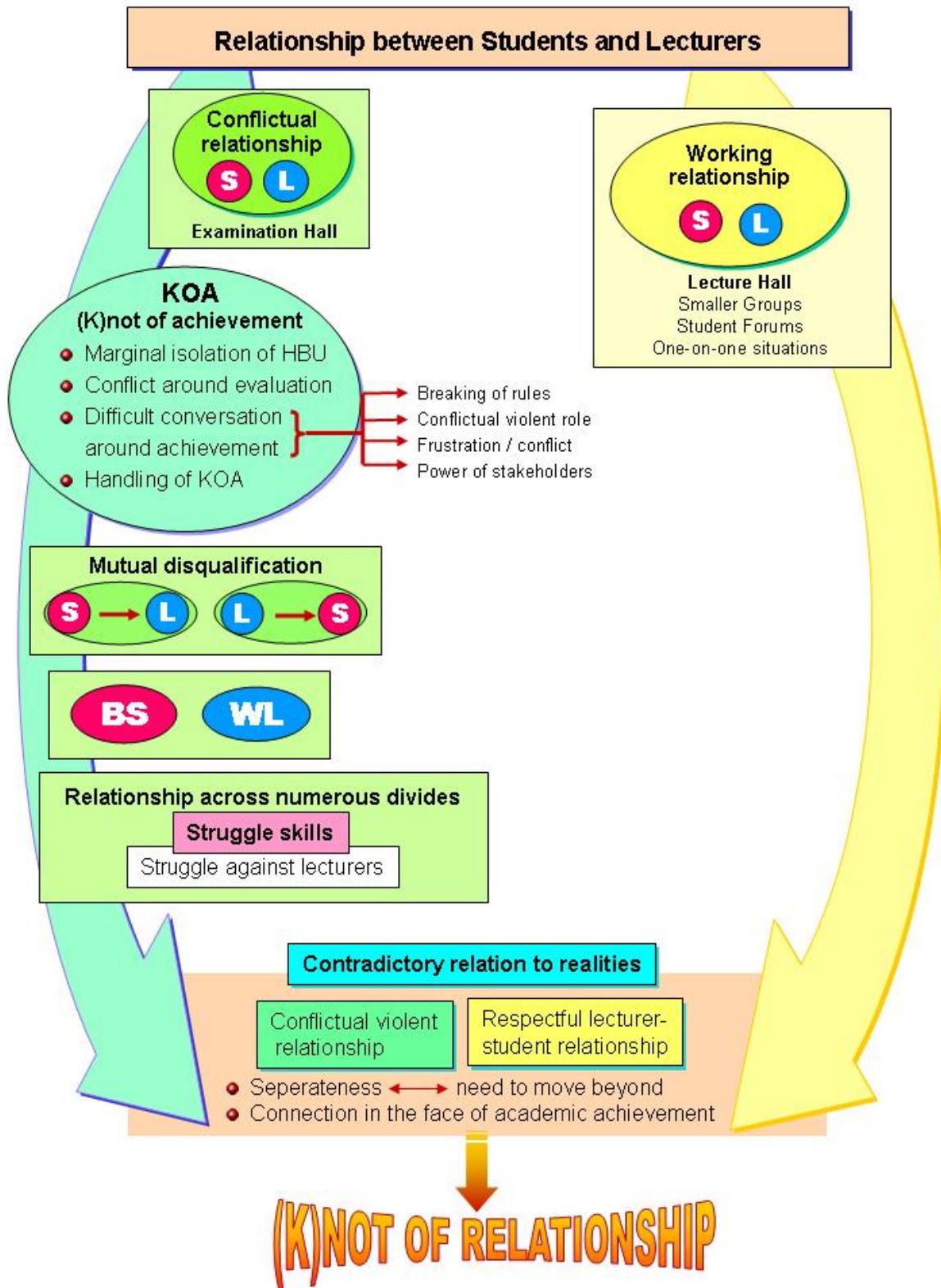
Thus, in my description and analysis of the experiences of the lecturers I attempt to show the complexity of their experiences within the HBU – highlighting how their negative, disempowering experiences within a violent, destructive context were tempered by several courageous ideas and actions on their part to change the status quo, firstly for themselves and secondly for the rest of the stakeholders.

SECTION A: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS AND LECTURERS

In this section I showed how the relationship between students and lecturers consist of contradictory aspects that seemed to be located in students making a positive connection with lecturers or maintaining an adversarial separateness from lecturers. In order to explain the contradictory nature of the relationship between students and lecturers I discussed the nature of

- the working relationship between students and lecturers, which is marked by students being respectful of the lecturers' authority;
- the conflictual relationship between students and lecturers which is caused by students holding the lecturers responsible for their underachievement in the HBU, and in so doing abdicating any responsibility for their educational achievement.

I will also elucidate how this contradictory relationship exists within a socio-political context and is exacerbated by issues pertaining to the lack of academic performance of the students, race (black students/white lecturers) and the positional authority of the lecturers. Additionally, I will show how the contradictory relationship is tempered by the real connection, marked by respect, which exists between students and lecturers primarily in the lecture hall and in the presence of academic achievement. These different aspects of the contradictory relationship between students and lecturers are illustrated in figure 3.1 and will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

Figure 3.1: The relationship between students and lecturers

3.1 A WORKING RELATIONSHIP: THE RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY

From all the lecturers' accounts their interactions with students during lecturing-learning activities was mostly experienced as positive. L7 stated *I got on well with them (the students) – I tried to go to a lot of trouble, make inputs. On the whole I found it a positive experience. I think in general it was a good relationship. I got positive feedback.* L6 indicated she *found [her] interaction with the students very pleasant.* L6 continued *I remember that right from the beginning I was surprised at how much I enjoyed it and to some extent I still feel like that. My interaction with the students is most enjoyable.* L2 through several of his statements highlighted his positive experiences during his different interactions with the students. L2 said that *there were students who came to discuss personal matters with me ... I have good memories, good feelings about students who came to consult me.* Many of the lecturers also voiced that they had made positive contact with students on a one-to-one level.

Two of the lecturers emphasised that they enjoyed learning from the students, and entering into how the students perceived the world. L4 stated *I enjoy interacting with the students I found that it is nice to learn from them, to hear from how they perceive things there, to have access into their ideas, their discussion around issues and so on.* This is reiterated by L2 who voiced *well, I feel that I was learning a lot from the students, the whole time.*

It seems that the relationships between the lecturers and students within the lecture hall when lecturing occurs are marked by respect. This is indicated by a statement made by L6 *that in the classroom there was a normal, fairly good relationship between lecturer and student. And in the classroom I felt that there was respect for me, for me as the lecturer ... when the class were quiet and when they were working I had this positive experience. For me it was pretty much what a lecturer-student relationship should be. .*

In the light of lecturers' positive experiences within the lecture hall it is proposed that the lecture hall situation denotes a particular symbiotic relationship, i.e. each

one's identity is concomitant with the other. Furthermore the huge student numbers require that the lecturers predominantly use didactic lecturing, which to some extent denotes a dependent situation between student and lecturer. That is, the expert (the lecturer) transfers his/her expert knowledge to a seemingly willing, passive and dependent novice (the student). This is highlighted by L6 who spoke of how the positive experience of the lecturer-student relationship is marred by the students' passivity in the classroom. L6 emphasised that *for me it was pretty much what a lecturer-student relationship should be (except that the students were still completely passive)*. A statement by L4 illustrated that even when students initiate a conversation, that conversation is halted in the face of students being challenged with their own agency for their education. L4 voiced that *during the lecture the students will maybe ask me, okay when are we going to get our marks? So I will give an answer to that. But then the conversation won't continue. I would say is there any other questions. What are you going to do about this, is there something to do to help, etc? But it sort of ends there*. Thus, it seems that the normal everyday relationship between lecturers and students in the lecture hall, experienced as positive by the lecturers, is dependent on an active lecturer and passive-dependent students.

The nature of the relationship between lecturers and students in the face of accomplishment seems to be a working relationship marked by mutual respect where students and lecturers seem to have taken up the traditional role required from them in the context of lecturing and learning. This is indicated by the statement of L5, i.e. *at this very moment I still have contact with three old students who have left already but who still phone me, ask my opinion, ask advice, especially in terms of career decisions. I clearly get the message that their experience [at the university] was formative. That they come back to those formative years, to the people who moulded them, they still need us and I think that probably awakens the pedagogue in me*. It seems that where students were able to move from the experience of incompetence or not knowing to being able to complete their degrees influenced the nature of the relationship between students and lecturers positively. The ability to complete their degrees seems to be linked to the development of a working relationship between students and lecturers. L5

stated that *despite the large group of students you deal with [on the campus], there were still those times when you did get through. I find this a lot with honours students because I am in the fortunate position of having worked with them for a long time and having taken students through from their first year in honours to their graduation.* It also seems that the development of a working relationship is marked by intimate interactions, where the lecturers feel that their lecturing efforts have an effect on students and the students feel that their needs have been responded to. L5 indicated that *it is a real encouragement and reward when you have followed a student for a long time and you can see development and growth in the student. Sometimes students come back to you and say things like, that day what you said was really meaningful to me. Your intervention, your contribution and the fact that I knew you changed my life. It gives me a lot of satisfaction to know that there are people whose lives I have had an effect on.* Further accomplishments through the completion of projects, particularly community projects where lecturers enter into the daily reality of the students, enhanced the contact between students because, as L4 accentuated, *you plan with the students you discuss with them.* Furthermore, connection and intimacy are established between lecturers and students in the face of academic endeavour and academic achievement.

The lecturers put in effort to improve their working relationship with students by forming alliances with certain students, i.e. student assistants and honours students. L4 stated that *[the lecturers] have moved beyond that (separateness) in our relationship with the students through the student assistants, through the ZZZ¹ society, through the honours students and so on. But I think that there is a lot of that left still.* Although the lecturer gives evidence of the alliances that have been formed, she also suggests that much more work needs to be done by lecturers to overcome the separateness between them and the majority of students, and form a working relationship with the students. L4 remarked that *[she] had this desperate need to make contact, to make more contact and I think eventually it happened if you start doing projects together, community projects. You plan with the students, you discuss with them.* However, the working connection that the

¹ ZZZ refers to the academic discipline of department the lecturers work for.

lecturers formed with students seems to have particular consequences for these students, i.e. it appears that such students might be ostracised by their fellow students. The latter is highlighted by L3 who remarked that she has picked up from *the ZZZ Association Students ... that the students are starting to feel that student assistants is part of the department, and are cutting off from them.*

Lecturers also feel a connection with students who have *protected* them from any sort of attack from the vocal few rebellious ones. L1 stated *because what happened is that the students that caused the disruption were not really from our class and the students who were in our class protected us from any sort of attack by those other students. ... And that made me feel that there were some sort of good relationship that we had with our students. ... I think it symbolised a connection between the students and me or between us – that is the department and the students.* Through these alliances the lecturers formed a connection with certain students with whom they worked more closely, i.e. the student assistants and the students who are part of the ZZZ Association on campus.

Thus, the non-conflictual relationship is marked by the development of an effective working relationship. It is also marked by an intimate connection between lecturers and students in the face of academic endeavour and achievement, as well as threat and violence from a vocal minority. There is further evidence that the working relationship between students and lecturers can develop into meaningful, intimate relationships. The latter is indicated by L5 who said that *these things (the former students who come back for advice) mean a lot to me because I know that I have contact with people at a really deep level.* It seems that the relationship between students and lecturers can be marked by healthy interdependence.

3.2 A CONFLICTUAL RELATIONSHIP: THE (K)NOT OF RELATIONSHIPS

Judging by the accounts of all the lecturers, students seem to be unable to achieve academically in the university. The extent of the lack of achievement is quite grave and is encapsulated in statements made by L6. She commented that *the biggest shock I got was when we wrote our first test and I got home with that*

enormous pile of test papers. I was shocked rigid by what I saw there. I mean the students' skills and their performance. It was like having a bucket of cold water thrown over me. She went on saying *I had thought that these students come from special circumstances – they come from a different education system and one can expect that there will be problems and so on, but I never really anticipated the extent and nature of those problems.* In the following sections I will elucidate how the lack of academic achievement affects the relationship between lecturers and students and results in the (k)not of relationship between them.

3.2.1 The (k)not of achievement

A conflictual relationship between lecturers and students seems to emerge in the context of the lecturers having to evaluate the academic performance of the students. This conflictual relationship is evident during tests and examinations, as well as at the lack of academic achievement on the part of the students. Most lecturers experienced that the students believed that the white lecturers *actively, productively and intentionally disadvantage the black students academically* (L6). L8 stated that. *from the students' side, and not even among the majority but with a small group of students, I get the feeling that the lecturer is the students' enemy. ... When a lecturer gives a student a bad mark it is not because the student has performed badly [but] because the lecturer is spiteful [or] does not like the student or is a racist.* Lecturers appeared to be surprised by the fact that students ascribe to them the motive of sabotaging the students' academic careers. This is reiterated by L5 who remarked that *they [students] have told me that the reason why I am here is that I actively want to keep them out of the honours group. I was amazed that they could possibly ascribe that motive to me. I really didn't think that at the beginning of their third year they saw me as being actively busy sabotaging their academic careers. I was astonished.* However, lecturers (L1, L2, L3, L5, L6, L7 and L8) assumed that it is easier for the students to believe that the lecturers sabotage them, than to be confronted with their own lack of skill, and even worse their lack of potential within this particular context. L6 remarked that *if one takes the example of a student's failing. He could say, I didn't study hard enough. That's one option. The second option, even more overwhelming, is yes I did study but I*

haven't the skills. The third option would be, I really don't have the potential. But it's easier to say, the lecturer has got it in for us. ... Then I think it's very easy for the student to say it's because she is a racist. She wants to, she's trying to block the progress of black people, you know. L6 further linked this behaviour to society at large, stating that *this is a strategy that we all very easily fall into, not a strategy but a pattern that we fall into in this country. The moment we have problems we fall back on the old frame of reference to explain them ... which says that white people actively, productively, intentionally try to keep black people down.*

3.2.1.1 *The marginalisation of the HBU*

The (k)not of achievement of students and lecturers seem to occur in a context where lecturers (L2, L4, L5, L7, L8) experience themselves as being labelled second-rate academics who teach second-rate students at a *second-rate university*. The marginalisation and alienation experienced by the lecturers is highlighted by L7 who remarked that *I have many contacts at [another HWU] and I know very well that their perception is half oh it's a second-rate university, that kind of thing.* L5 emphasised the marginalisation even more by remarking that the university has the image of *the stepchild of the academic world*. It is surprising that the labelling of this university and its different parts (particularly the students and lecturers) as second-rate is not only done by the wider academic fraternity (L4, L5, L7 and L8), but also by the students at this HBU (L4 and L8), the management of the HBU(L4) and perhaps even by fellow-colleagues at this university (L4 and L6). This underachievement of students and lecturers alike is highlighted by L4 who remarked that *not only [about] the students, [but also about] the staff because there was also some prejudices like it is only the second-rate academics who go work there and it's only the um ja and how did these students get there.* Thus, the marginalisation and denigration from within compound the marginalisation and alienation of this HBU by the wider academic fraternity.

The students and therefore the lecturers do not only underachieve within the HBU itself, but also within the wider academic context. Of particular significance is the idea that L8 through several statements emphasised, that the university is a

current black university and not a historical black university. Unwittingly L8 may be alluding to the unconscious position in which the HBU finds itself within the landscape of South African tertiary education. L4 and L9 also referred to the idea that some of the processes which may seem typical of this HBU, also occur at other universities. L4 highlighted this idea by saying that *it is hard to separate the HBU issue from the university issue because there are certain things that are universal at working at a university.* Students and lecturers within the HBU, as well as others apparently make a comparison between the HBU and HWU.

There also seemed to be a rumour among students and lecturers (in general) that academic standards were lowered at the university to accommodate students and lecturers alike. This rumour was highlighted by L8 who stated that *the lowering of standards to accommodate XXX² students and lecturers – that's a perception that I think goes far wider than our own students and our own academics.* Through another statement L8 emphasised that *first-years asked [a visiting academic] whether standards aren't lowered in the textbook to accommodate the XXX students?*

Several lecturers (L2, L4 and L5) reported that they found themselves actively working to counteract the preconceived ideas about this HBU and HBUs in general in the wider academic fraternity and wider society in order to move from the stereotypical to developing *complexity into the perceptions from outside* (L4). This was accentuated by L2 who stated that *when someone asks me what the standard is like at XXX, then I'd rather try to present the positive side to people out there.*

The perceptions about the lowering of standards are challenged by the statements of L6 who highlighted the ethical stance of lecturers pertaining to the quality of the learning opportunities they offer the students. L6 emphasised that *there's a whole group of people who have a real sense of, oh you know, what about the student and what about the learning process, and the value of this institution, what about the value of the degree, etc, etc, etc.* This idea was further highlighted by all the

² XXX refers to the name of the HBU.

lecturers in this project who referred to their commitment to ensuring quality learning opportunities for students at this university. This was accentuated by L8 who said that *it's my feeling about the courses we present that they're absolutely up to standard. But for some reason or another, this perception is doing the rounds.*

Thus, the (k)not of achievement of students and lecturers occurs in a context which is marked by the university's marginalisation by several stakeholders in the HBU, as well as by the wider academic fraternity.

3.2.1.2 Reasons for the (k)not of achievement

According to lecturers, students experience themselves as incompetent within the lecturing-learning relationship for different reasons. Almost all of the lecturers acknowledged and empathised with students' inability to cope with the demands of a university education, which must be an overwhelming, frustrating and painful experience for them. L5 in particular highlighted the issue that in the university the students are probably confronted by an overwhelming sense of incompetence for which they have very few skills to cope. She stated that *students first have to be confronted by this overwhelming feeling of incompetence, and then they begin to react rather than to address the lack of skills earlier on in their academic career.* The various reasons as proposed by the lecturers for the students' sense of incompetence are discussed in more detail in this section.

The lecturers linked this inability to deal with the academic demands to several reasons. One of the main reasons, cited by most of the lecturers, was the irresponsible admission policy of the HBU (L2 refers to this as the *admit one, admit all policy*) that resulted in huge student numbers without the resources to cope with the number and needs of students. This was compounded by the fact that students had received an inferior schooling, which had ill-prepared them for the demands of the university. L3 captured this sentiment by saying that *definitely [education] is affected by the fact that we have such large numbers of students and the quality of the students that we've got... the responsibility is given to us to now help them through. And I don't think that was fair for them and it's definitely*

not fair for us. L1 echoed this opinion even more by stating that *a few years ago when students were registering other students that were a serious problem because I mean we are seeing the results of that problem now when students are not passing, because they should not have been in the university in the first place.* And *if management had taken over and done something, then we would not have been sitting with a thousand students that should not have been in the university.* An issue which is linked to students' inability to cope with the demands of a university education is the reality that their school system has not prepared them for a university education with regard to knowledge and skills. L5 commented that *I don't think they're incompetent just because they're incompetent and I'd like to say I have a lot of understanding for where they've come from and that when they got to university it was probably the first time they ever walked into a big library. I see a lot of this as [a result of Department of Education and Training schooling].* L2, L5, L6, L8 and L9 raised similar kinds of sentiments. The students' sense of incompetence and lack of achievement was probably also linked to their poor command of academic English. L6 remarked that *I couldn't believe that the students' language was so poor. I thought their language would be poor but I never thought it would be as bad as it is.*

L1 also focused on the issue that if these resources were available to assist students they appeared to be ineffective, i.e. there were structures *which are there to do all that work, to bring students up to scratch in terms of academic development apart from our own content in the department and they don't seem to be achieving that.*

The (k)not of achievement of students also seemed to be located in the difference of understanding of what the roles of students and lecturers should be in the lecturing-learning relationship. There also seemed to be a difference in opinion between students and lecturers about the nature of education and how it should be presented to the students. This is highlighted through a statement made by L3, i.e. *it probably goes back to the system again and their expectations that they come in with a certain expectation of the university and out of the school system, apart from the exceptional students. I mean there are those exceptional students, [but] the majority of them believe that all they've got to do is to remember the stuff,*

memorise it and ... and that is what education is all about full stop. She emphasised this even more by saying *so there's still that basic message there that we're not getting through. It's What is education? What are you doing here?* L1 reiterated this by saying that for *[the students] it is a matter of we must tell them, spoon-feed them really, with information and if they do not absorb it that way, we are still responsible for their education by allowing them to pass without knowing anything.* L4 also commented that academic integrity was always challenged *through this thing of pass one pass all and this test was too difficult and now we want another test.*

Several of the lecturers (L1, L4, L5, L6, L7, L8 and L9) introduced another reason for the students' failure, i.e. their involvement in non-academic activities (political issues) through their *struggle skills* at the expense of attending to academic activities that would ensure their success in the university. According to L8 there seemed to be *an interplay of academic standards and political issues on campus.* It is significant that the students become involved with non-academic, political issues that directly influenced their access to tertiary education and that these activities seemed to demand much of their energy. Apparently their *struggle skills* interfered with their academic activities, resulting in academic failure for several reasons. Firstly, those students who were not competent to achieve a university education were nevertheless admitted to the university and registered. Secondly, that so much energy was put into non-academic activities at the expense of their actual attendance of lectures which resulted in less time being available for lectures, as well as less time spent on academic endeavour outside of formal lectures. L9 emphasised this idea by stating *that while students were still busy with the registration issue of its my personal right to get an education and to get finance, and then suddenly – oh hell, but some academic stuff has been introduced here about which I know nothing, which I can't cope with as a student and so I'm going to be a failure.* Thirdly, students held onto the familiar *struggle skills* at the expense of acquiring new skills required for being successful in the tertiary education context (L4, L5 and L6). L2 highlighted (through several statements) that certain people, this seems to include students, consider the department to be the *Vlakplaas* of the university. He stated that *there are people*

who say we have outside work and our priority is not the university, we couldn't care less about the students, we're the Vlakplaas of the university and we're manipulating the marks. This issue will be discussed in more detail in 3.2.

L9 also vehemently proposed that the students could not achieve academically because of the chaos in the system. She articulated that yes, *I think at the moment the whole system is turning students into failures. Students really do make a big effort at times, I see it, but then they they're thwarted all the time. They are apple pied, apple pied, apple pied. For me the biggest joke is that we take what's familiar, a structure, a foundation away from those people and you put them in the middle of chaos and then you move around in that chaos.* Thus, it appears that the system, mainly consisting of the students, lecturers, management, and the (conscious and unconscious) interaction with each other, was a chaotic context without appropriate structure and limits with catastrophic influence on the academic performance of the students.

3.2.1.3 *The (k)not of achievement: a difficult conversation*

Despite the lecturers understanding and empathising with the reasons for the students' behaviour, most of the lecturers remained concerned that several of the students were not able to cope with the demands of a university education. However for several reasons, the lecturers were unable to address this in a university community forum. The issue of the (black) students' lack of skill appears to be a taboo subject for historical and socio-political reasons, i.e. the taboo of (white) lecturers telling (black) students that they do not have the skill to cope with the demands of a university education. Perhaps the lecturers were silenced by this taboo. This idea is captured by L3 who said that *[she] thinks maybe part of it is that there's a lot of unspoken things because of the past and what's happened, we want to be nice to each other and it's difficult to say things directly because a lot of things are quite painful. Like if we as academics had to say to students, what if you don't belong here. You can't. You can't say that to them. All you can do is go along with what had happened, but in actual fact a lot of them don't belong there.* Nevertheless, it appears that lecturers did find ways of communicating their opinion that the students were unable to cope with the academic demands, mostly

non-verbally and occasionally verbally. Firstly, the non-verbal communication may be located in the lecturers' opinion that the students were unable to cope with the academic demands of the university. Secondly the communication is located in their opinion that several of the students who graduated had not fulfilled the traditional requirements of the university. The following statements illustrate the opinion of two lecturers regarding this:

L7 remarked *I don't feel comfortable about all the honours people I'm sending out, with an honours degree. I can't really take responsibility for all 25 of those people. In my honours class there are five people at most that I'd award an honours degree if it depended on me.*

L8 commented that *it's going a bit far and it's really frightening to think that students like that walked out of the system as graduates ... he's qualified but he's possibly not up to standard and this just reinforces the image of this university in the outside world. It's a vicious circle.*

Occasionally the students' inability to cope was communicated directly to them as reported by L3. L3 stated that *[she] read to them what the external examiner had said [about the students' performance]. There was shocked silence. At the moment I thought I'd done the wrong thing.* Of importance is her account of the students' reaction to the information about their lack of performance. L3 remarked that *one by one the students started talking and they were saying things like This man is saying we are stupid. These people do not believe we are good students. They do not believe that we are capable of it and so on. So that kind of message got through to them, but they interpreted it in different ways.* It appears, from the account of L3, that when lecturers spoke about students' lack of achievement they heard a message, i.e. we are not good-enough as students. Given that this message was delivered in the context of black students/white lecturers, perhaps the students heard that in comparison to the white lecturers they are not good-enough people. So perhaps it was very difficult for these students to hear that these lecturers wanted to create for them an opportunity for academic and personal growth through identifying and addressing their lack of skills in the academic context. Inadvertantly the conversation about explaining and attempting to enhance performance in the lecturer-student relationship became located within

a particular historical, socio-political conversation. This historical, socio-political conversation seems to be about the superiority of white people and the inferiority of black people, as well as the disadvantaging of black people by white people.

3.2.1.4 *Handling the (k)not of achievement*

Thus, a situation seemingly existed in which the students and lecturers felt disempowered. L5 remarked *that students first have to be confronted with this overwhelming sense of incompetence and that they start reacting to it rather than addressing the lack of skills earlier in their academic career*. L3 commented that the lack of achievement by students could lead to students *feeling very vulnerable* and lecturers *feeling very powerless and frustrated in the extreme*.

L2, L3, L4 and L5 especially explored their perception that the students needed to externalise (project) their lack of achievement by blaming lecturers for it, in an attempt to make sense of, explain and handle their lack of achievement. The less students coped academically the more they panicked. Students tended to look for a scapegoat onto whom they could project their incompetence. The students often blamed lecturers for their academic failure. The latter was accentuated by L4 who remarked that *you [as lecturer] are always perceived as being oppressive and almost, a negative way of viewing that is to say that it is an external locus of control*. As discussed earlier the reader should bear in mind that the students also believed that lecturers actively disadvantaged their academic careers (see 3.2.1). L3 stated that *in some ways they are justified in attempting to externalise a lot of their issues, not for all of them, and not for all the issues from their perspective they are extremely frustrated and I understand their frustration and I think it's a lot of it is generalisations of the problem, so that they shift the blame, they shift the responsibility and so on*. L2 echoed this by saying *and because the third year course is a very difficult, and one has to realise that, they try to make sense of their dilemma and the only way to make sense of it is to externalise it ... they have to look for a scapegoat*. L2 went on to say that *a lot of this goes back to projections about their own inability to handle a third-year course. The projection they come up with is that somewhere in the system there has to be something wrong*. A similar idea to this one expressed by L2, was voiced by L5, i.e. *the*

students are overwhelmed by a sense of incompetence and the less they cope the more they experience this incompetence and get panicky and then they look for a scapegoat. They have to put their problems down to something or somebody, which is why the lecturers are so often targeted – they are seen as being not good to the students. I can understand this process. This externalisation may result from the experience of extreme frustration on the part of students who seemed to be unable to cope with a system, which had allowed them access to a university education as stated by all the lecturers. L3 highlighted that *[the] system is not ready for [assisting students who cannot cope with an university education] that, and they were pushed in and left there, dumped there.*

Thus, lecturers (L1, L3 and L5) experienced themselves as being held responsible and accountable for the students' overall achievement, by the students who appear passive in the face of their own learning and achievement. L1 vehemently, and for quite some time, spoke about the way in which students abdicated their responsibility for their learning and projected this responsibility onto the lecturers. The following statement captures his thoughts on this matter, i.e. *one of the major problems here is that students at the university seem to abdicate any responsibility for their own education. They have stripped themselves from any sense of urgency. They feel that lecturers and the university are responsible for giving them an education, but they are not responsible in any way for taking that education ... and I think that goes out into their behaviour towards lecturers where they hold lecturers responsible for their lives really, I think.* A few lecturers (L1, L4, L5 and L7) also remarked on students' sense of entitlement in that it appeared that students wanted an education and wanted to achieve academically without taking up the responsibility of acquiring the knowledge and doing the work required to achieve at university. L7 remarked that *the audacity of the assumption of so many of these students, that they deserve a degree, when I think how much effort I had to put into my degree. In other words I can get so upset about the general attitude of the students ... the way they try to get away with the minimum.* This is reverberated in a statement made by L1, i.e. *[education] is a privilege, and it is not a right really and you have to work for that privilege and I find it very frustrating because I don't know exactly what I can do to change that attitude.*

All the lecturers also expressed that they experienced themselves as making genuine attempts to assist students both academically, as well as with other problems, which could affect the lecturer-student relationship. These attempts are illustrated by the following comments:

- L2 voiced that *there are quite a few things that we have said to the students to let them know that we're on their side, we want to help, we didn't know there was a problem. For two reasons: I'm concerned about the students and I'm concerned about the department.*
- L3 remarked that *[she] thinks it is wonderful that [tutorial] programmes are running ... it is a major step forward.*
- L6 emphasised that *I've tried very hard to use examples, to explain in a way that the students will find easy to understand.*

Simultaneously the lecturers might have experienced that no matter what they offer the students to address the (k)not of achievement and other difficulties, these efforts will never be good-enough. This is captured in a statement by L3, i.e. a *lot of them complained to the Association of Students that [the tutorial programmes] were actually a waste of time, that they wanted more content because they couldn't see how the tutorials were helping them in any way in their studies. They basically want content so that they can answer the questions in an exam paper.* Although the lecturers did not directly speak of not feeling good-enough, L7 did allude to her negative experience when students did not perform, regardless of the educational opportunity she attempted to provide for them. L7 remarked that *it's a bad feeling to get feedback in the examination that people really haven't understood what you've been saying. Or that a lot of people didn't understand what you'd been saying.* L7 went on to say that *it's a bit of a let-down when you get them to do an assignment, and you realise that they still have a long way to go, and they want to do honours next year but they can't even do the most basic things in an assignment.* These sentiments were echoed by L8 who remarked that *despite all your trouble and effort the students still do badly.* Other lecturers also reported feelings of extreme frustration, powerlessness and disempowerment as illustrated by L1 who voiced that *[he] finds [students abdicating all agency for their own learning] very frustrating and [he] does not know what to do about that.*

Thus, it seems that these students who were ill-prepared for an university education, in a desperate attempt to make meaning of their experience of non-achievement not only blamed the lecturers for their non-achievement, but remained invested in their accusations and in so doing nullified any attempts on the part of the lecturers to express their commitment to students' academic and social achievement. L2 stated that *they have to look for a scapegoat. So I don't think they can afford to hear us, because where will they then find answers ... they can't give it up, because if they give it up and listen to us and go along with us they'll lose their only means of expressing their aggression, their only power.* Additionally, the lecturers' experienced that any dissatisfaction on the part of the students was expressed by the students in a manner which escalated the conflictual relationship between themselves and the lecturers. This was emphasised by L2 who stated that *as soon as something goes wrong, then the political issues and the historical issues are dragged in, making it almost impossible to address crises in a responsible way ... the whole time it boils down to, it is made up to be, a conflictual situation.* The mistrust that students seemed to express towards lecturers was illustrated through a statement made by L5, i.e. *it seems to me that our students are very racist and our students really can't believe that there are other people who truly have their interests at heart.* This was echoed by L2 who stated that *I feel that there is very little opportunity for [an empathic learning context] to develop... because there is no trust, there is no trust in the lecturers.* To some extent L2 contradicted himself with regard to the mistrust between lecturers and students through the following statement, *when a guy is frustrated at work. His boss has chewed him up but he can't take it out on his boss. When he gets home, he takes it out on his wife. It's the person closest to you that have to suffer and in a way we're the people closest to them.* In other words, I propose that unconsciously the students trusted lecturers to contain the students' distress for them.

The above discussion raises an interesting question, viz. was it the lecturers' role to contain the distress about non-achievement or to contain the students' experience of incompetence? Intuitively I would think that it would be more effective to contain the students' experience of incompetence, so that students

can hold onto their sense of competence and in so doing interact more confidently and constructively with the academic demands of the HBU. By interacting more confidently and constructively with the academic demands, students could academically experience more success and less distress. This matter will receive further consideration in 3.6.

The students' process of making sense of their lack of achievement, and lecturers' attempts to address the students' lack of achievement, were marked by several highly conflictual interactions between lecturers and students (see section C). These highly confliction interactions seemed to result from the students externalising (projecting) of their non-achievement onto the lecturers and lecturers' attempts to deal with these projections. Furthermore, this externalising occurred within a particular socio-political context, which was marked by issues of mistrust and diversity between lecturers and students, entrenching the conflictual relationship even more.

3.2.2 Mutual disqualification between groups: lecturers and students

It appears that students, in their efforts to deal with the (k)not of their achievement, disqualified lecturers' by inappropriately challenging their authority and skills. Again, L6 was the lecturer who spoke to a great extent about this issue. She articulated that *by disqualifying our authority and our skills or saying that we don't mark well or we haven't got a proper memorandum, then they don't need to say to themselves that perhaps there's something in me that needs to change or that is also contributing*. She also considered this disqualification of lecturers by students as a mechanism that students used to re-authorise themselves and protect themselves against possible feelings of distress and vulnerability in the face of academic failure, primarily in the presence of white people. L6 commented that *it's a qualification and protection, that's all*. Simultaneously she considered that she might tend to disqualify students during their efforts to raise genuine concerns about the academic process. L6 remarked that *the moment that something like that comes up my stereotype is, oh well it's a traditional style of unnecessary protest. The stereotypical idea oh well they're complaining about nothing, you know. Before they begin I disqualify the possibility that there could actually be*

value in what they are saying. She accentuated that perhaps she was not the only lecturer who disqualified students; perhaps most of the lecturers did this and in so doing a vicious cycle of mutual disqualification between lecturers and students was maintained. L6 commented that *I think that it does happen that the students disqualify us and we disqualify them and in this way we keep a nice little cycle going.*

3.2.3 A relationship marked by separateness

One lecturer indicated that in the past at a different HBU the only place where she felt she had contact with the students was in the classroom. L4 stated that *she would look out of the window and I would look at the students walking towards their residences and I realised that the only contact that I had with these students was in that classroom.* However, this contact was sharply contrasted by her sense of separateness from these same students, i.e. L4 *[remembered that] the students used to have lots of protest marches in those days. You would hear the singing coming and then all the staff in the building would stand at the windows and look out like a performance and the students and the students would be down there doing their thing. And it always struck me this, that separateness ... that incredible sort of separateness that you sit up there in your little box and you don't, there is no other connection.* Another lecturer, L6, experienced the lecture hall as emphasising the difference between herself and the students, especially when students struggled in the face of academic endeavour. She also remarked that *our worlds and the students' worlds are so very far apart, and in the lecture room those differences are often magnified. So there's always a um half a spotlight on the differences.* It is important to notice that this lecturer, who previously spoke about the positive lecturer-student relationship in the lecture hall, now reflected on how the *same* lecture hall can be marked by separateness in the face of students' academic struggle.

L4 also spoke of her need, and perhaps that of other lecturers, to move beyond the separateness and make contact with students in the form of an effective working relationship. L4 indicated that *[she] had this desperate need to make more contact ... she would like to go beyond that [separateness] and I think a lot of*

people would like to go beyond [separateness]. Several attempts were made by lecturers to move beyond this separateness from students. However, L3 focused on the difficulty to *get through to the students*, which she considered to be located in the students' disconnection from the lecturers, the students' disconnection from each other and the university's disconnection from the rest of the community. Thus, the very thing that lecturers wanted to change in their relationship with the students was the thing that entrenched the separateness between themselves and the students. Lecturers' separateness/disconnection/difference from students bred even more separateness/disconnection/difference from students. L3 commented on *the tremendous thing of disconnection, ... that they come in, they attend a lecture and get out and that's it. There isn't much of a social life on campus and I think very few of them actually connect outside projects.* [The] fact that the university is disconnected from the rest of the community. Regardless of this, it seems that lecturers are able to move beyond this separateness until the next conflictual incident. This was voiced by L2 who stated that *for long periods I feel that in my lectures and in my consultations and so on I'm really very happy there, but then every time there's another incident [about marks].* Several of the lecturers referred to the separateness in the face of students' academic struggle as adversarial. I propose that the separateness between the lecturers and students is enhanced by the lecturers' apparent emotional disconnection from the university itself. L3 highlighted that *[the academics] drive in there and get out a certain time. It's very clear cut, this is where you come in and work and then you get out. The rest of your life happens out there.* These sentiments of one's life happening somewhere else were vigorously echoed by L7.

Students' disconnection and separateness from lecturers might also have been located in the voicelessness of the silent majority. This silent majority depends on a vocal few who speak on their behalf as if *a lot of them have never been expected to take responsibility, and never been expected to stand up and speak ... take initiative* (L3). The students seem to preserve the apparent silent majority as indicated by L1 who stated that *[he doesn't] think it is all the students, but I do think there is always a vocal minority who tends to take charge. They tend to take over and although many students may not agree with what they are doing, it is*

much less hassle for them not to confront whoever it is who is making all the noise. The not taking responsibility for their own opinion and behaviour resulted in passivity among students with regard to threats and violence against lecturers, as well as no agency with regard to their own academic achievement (L1, L3 and L7). The non-responding, the passivity the voicelessness of the silent majority could point to passive-aggressiveness on the part of the students. Such passive-aggressiveness entrenched a precarious connection between students and lecturers, which was marked by adversarial separateness.

Thus, the relationship between students and lecturers appears to have been marked by a need for contact on the part of the lecturers which was thwarted by a separateness borne from academic underachievement, by students' disconnection from and passivity in the HBU, as well as lecturers' emotional disconnection from the university. This contradictory nature of the relationship between students and lecturers will be discussed in more detail in 3.4.

3.3 BLACK STUDENTS/WHITE LECTURERS

Several lecturers commented that most of the lecturers in this particular department were white and that diversity issues affected their relationships with the (black) students. The following statements illustrate this:

L2 commented on the *accusations that we are Vlakplaas and the perception that we are a predominantly white department.*

L2 also highlighted that *somebody has knowledge, somebody has no knowledge. Eight out of ten people who have knowledge just happen to be white, you know which possibly can amplify it.*

L3 said that *[for the students] I'm just a representative of something of history.*

L4 proclaimed that *someone else is always responsible for your troubles and that person is usually white and that person is usually in a position of authority, that person has the power and you are the victim.*

L4 also stated that *by virtue of an academic institution there is a gap between say student and academic staff. But I think it has always been a bit worse at XXX and other black universities because the academic staff used to be mainly*

white so there was a political thing involved as well.

L5 remarked that *most lecturers in this specific department are white.*

L4 also commented that *the lecturer body is still to a large extent a remnant, not totally it's changed a lot, but it is still in a way a remnant or a symbol of the previous regime.*

L6 referred to *also the historical composition in the sense that many of the lecturers are still white and I think that is um a problem.*

L7 affirmed that *the fact that you are white is an issue, or a potential issue, and everything you say is judged and interpreted from that angle, not you as a person, that's how you feel and that's that.*

L7 also voiced that she *thinks a lot of it is that the academics are still mainly white, perhaps in our department too.*

Several lecturers commented on the idea that the students considered them to be racists, especially in the context of the lack of achievement on the part of the students. In the context of being seen as racist the lecturers also discussed in some detail what they considered the students to be projecting onto them, individually, as a member of a particular race group, and as the department-as-a-whole. L6 stated that *for us [lecturers in the specific department] it was exclusively said [by students], but you're white, and you are actively trying to see that there are no black [professionals from this department] in this country. That is your mission that is why you fail the students on purpose.* This idea was echoed by L2 who voiced that *because we get direct, not even implied, accusations that we are busy disadvantaging the students.* In the same vein L6 continued to voice that *the moment a student plugs a test, the moment there is negative input, the moment there's a blockage, the moment you say no or I say no. Then I think it's very easy for the student to say it's because she's a racist. She wants, she's trying to block the progress of black people, you know.* This was further echoed by L3 who remarked that she was distressed by *the accusation of racism, the perception that we're not committed, we don't care. It's just a job for us, and truly I find that, are very hurtful.* She experienced that a particular, hurtful identity was ascribed to her, i.e. *the identity is that, umm, you know I belong to the historical past, you know, when students look at me all they see is the apartheid era. I'm just a*

representative of something of history. She also considered that certain stakeholders (probably management) in the university reinforce the perceptions of the students. L3 commented that *[students] 've been fed information. I think it's very false information. I think it's information which goes along with the perception of us as uncaring, irresponsible, unconcerned, and so on.* L5 remarked that *the student assistants said that the students complain that we are white, and they can't get over our whiteness or see past it, that on the one hand we are just doing our jobs, and on the other hand we like what we do and we are really there because we want to be there.* L6 referred to experiencing that she was considered to be a representative of the far-right, white Afrikaner group. She stated *I feel that, ... that I'm actually there as a kind of representative of the right-wing Afrikaners who tried to stop black people from getting on in life.*

L2 highlighted (through several statements) that certain people, this seems to include students, considered the department to be the *Vlakplaas* of the university. He stated *that we are compared with Vlakplaas and the old regime and we are a white department, and so on. And there are people, who say we have other work, and our priorities do not lie at the university, we don't care about the students, and we are the Vlakplaas and we manipulate the marks.* The projection that lecturers were the students enemy is also reflected in the statement made by L5, viz. *the accusations of racism – that the lecturers are racist – while the students complain that we are too white are possibly a form of transference. It's definitely transference that they think we have a plot against them to keep them from passing ... yes.* L2 continued by remarking that *the accusations that we are Vlakplaas and the perception that we are overwhelmingly a white department, [how much] of this is internally motivated and how much is projected?* The reader should bear in mind that Vlakplaas was the farm where the death squads of the apartheid security forces were based. Being seen as the *Vlakplaas* of the university could imply that this was the department in which many students *perished* academically. It could also imply that the students considered the university as a battleground, possibly resulting in the lecturers of this department experiencing themselves as the *prime evil* of the academic corps.

It is also very important to recognise that these accusations of the racism of lecturers were experienced most commonly when the students were part of a bigger group. L3 expressed that *[she] sees them individually or in small groups, ..., all that falls away and there's still a real relationship ... that only comes into play when they're en masses and then suddenly even the individual relationships, which I've had with people, and I can see them standing in the crowd. It's a strange phenomena when they're together like that, I realise I'm not [myself] to them.* She continued to reflect that even when in a group situation she gets through to *[the students]*, the students did not deal very effectively with this real connection. L3 voiced, *when I've had to address them on that and I felt very emotional about and I wanted to get through to them, and they listened to me and um, you can almost also kind of feel a silence or a stillness that they're actually taking it, but then they don't respond in an effective way, it's still, it's negated against.* In a conflictual situation – the hostage-taking event – two lecturers attempted to reveal themselves as multifaceted human beings who may have personal experience of the plight of the students. L3 echoed a story of one student who said *what a struggle it had been for him to come so many miles to university, away from home, his parents were struggling to pay.* She responded to this story by telling her story of not going to university immediately after leaving school, and challenging the students' perceptions that *just because we've got white skins or whatever, we come from the past, we haven't necessarily had it easy. [Students] never even responded to the story ... somehow there were no responses.*

Several of the lecturers also referred to the issue that the students *don't see [us] and they're not prepared to see [us] me for who [we are] or what [we] might be going to do, or what [we] might want to bring to them* (L3).

Another issue raised by L2 and L4 was that perhaps issues pertaining to race did not alone influence the lecturer-student relationship, but that issue of power and positional authority also influenced the relationship. L2 stated that *perhaps it is not just about white and black, it's about someone who has power and someone who has no power. Someone has knowledge and someone has no knowledge. As it happens, eight out of ten people who have knowledge are white, you know, and*

what that (question of power and knowledge) could possibly amplify, you know. L4 articulated that *the perception of academic departments is that they are still part of the old system. Mixed up with that (the fact that lecturers are part of the old system) is the thing that [lecturers] have the authority to give marks and somehow these things always get mixed up.* She continued to say that *the academic authority and the old political thing I think are to a large extent still not separate.*

Of importance here is to realise the complexity of the diversity issue that was offered by the two lecturers through these reflections. Another issue could be the language difficulties of the students (raised in other contexts during the hermeneutic conversations), as well as the fact that the students lived in townships and the lecturers lived mostly in more affluent suburbs. Additionally the lecturers may have had different ideas from the students about how individuals at university should behave. The difference between lecturers' and students' understanding of appropriate behaviour was accentuated by L2 and L7. L2 stated that *we (the lecturers) possibly have backgrounds at universities where there was a happy atmosphere and a positive educational relationship with the academic staff. ... for me on the whole there were decency.* It is almost as if the lecturer-student relationship was buried in different layers of difference. On one level this is obvious, but on another level it seems as if all these differences amplified the divide between students and lecturers, resulting in lecturers feeling disempowered, baffled, disqualified by the students, hurt, negated, as if maybe *[the university] is a system to get out of, maybe there's no place for people like me in the institution* (L6). Different lecturers reflected on this through the following statements:

L3 remarked that *well they negate me, sometimes it feel that it actually wouldn't matter whether I didn't do anything at all, whether I played out the role that they saw me as being, you know. I ask myself, well why do I bother? What is the struggle for? Because they're never going to see that I'm trying to make a difference. They will just see me as this historical figure.*

L3 also stated that *they go against my ethics, so to actually realise that people see me in that light is quite hurtful.*

L6 echoed this by saying that *in the first place it makes me feel very powerless.*

Obviously it hurts, you know, because um it's a disqualification of my entire ethic. It's very bad.

Thus, the historical meaning of what it meant, and perhaps still means, to be white in South Africa was projected onto the lecturers, i.e. they were representatives of a far-right Afrikaner group, they were representative of the apartheid era and that they were the *Vlakplaas* of the university. The lecturers experienced that the students, through ascribing these identities onto them, considered them to continue the racism and discrimination of the apartheid regime (through most of their actions) against the (black) students.

3.3.1 Reaction to the projection: racist

Lecturers were perplexed about the racist motives that students ascribed to them, i.e. white lecturers actively prevent the progress of black students. L6 was willing to consider that she may have been unaware of how she through her behaviour contributed to these particular perceptions of the students. L6 remarked *my behaviour towards the students is really not of such a nature that they could say that I think they're stupid and that I'm trying to keep them back etc etc etc. I don't think I act in ways that could justify that. Perhaps I'm unaware of the things I do that could justify it.* L2 considered further his role in the students' perception that lecturers were racist. L2 remarked *on the bigger canvas how many unresolved issues are there in terms of apartheid? I think it's naive to say that we don't carry anything from our past with us. I don't know if we are always aware of the legacy we bring with us.* He continued to say that *we carry things within ourselves, but I think there is also a replay or playing out of patterns established through relationships over all the years. Part of the learning process that still comes from my background, when working with black people on the campus is to challenge the stereotypes that I built up from my past and from my upbringing in a conservative home.* What seems to be important in this statement is the acknowledgement that students and lecturers have developed stereotypes in the past, especially within the apartheid past and that these stereotypes unwittingly influence the (black) students-(white) lecturers relationship. L6 voiced that these

stereotypes are particular prevalent in situations where things go wrong. L6 said *well, the fact that I'm white – in this country we still have very strong stereotypes of each other and I think the moment things go wrong we fall back into our old roles, our old stereotypes we have of each other.*

Furthermore, it also seemed as if lecturers had no recourse to change the perceptions and stereotypes that students might have of them, particularly the stereotype that the white lecturers did not care about the black students. This was encapsulated in a statement by L6, viz. *there's no way that I can prove that I don't have bad intentions. I actually have good intentions, I am dedicated and I have the interests of the students at heart. It feels as if there is no way I can prove this.* Several lecturers also commented on their distress when being accused by students of not caring about them. A few of the lecturers, who spoke about the accusations of not caring about the students, also left in me an awareness of their pain of being disqualified because of one aspect of their identity. I postulate that this pain caused paralysis within several lecturers, because of the words they used to describe their experience of the accusation from students, viz. disempowered, baffled, disqualified by the students, hurt and negated.

A feeling that was not really acknowledged, but which could be disguised as puzzlement and counter accusation on the part of some of the lecturers seemed to be irritability and anger in reaction to students' accusations. For example, L5 voiced that *I don't know what the students think – if we're so white and we have so little time for them, then what do they think we're doing here. I don't understand this business, nobody does. It made me realise that our students see [race] much more than what we for example are seeing it.* I postulate that these conscious feelings experienced by the lecturers in the face of the accusations of racism by students, attest to their sense of being denigrated by the (black) students.

3.3.2 Struggle skills used in the black/white divide

Most of the lecturers also indicated that students tend to use struggle skills from the old political dispensation in the current context. This is stated by:

L6 emphasised that *these people's struggle skills are really well developed, you know. It's a safe and good, easy reality to depend on.*

L5 stated that *they still want to struggle, they want to fight, they want to continue with those old skills that they were so good at. Because what do you do now if after fifteen years you are an excellent intimidator? What do you do? You intimidate lecturers until you get what you actually want.* L5 continued to say that ...*but so many of the students want to cling to the few skills they have, which is to fight. We're going to fight you and we're not going to explore other skills.*

L4 commented that *the person is usually white (the lecturer) and that person is usually in a position of authority, that person has the power. And you are the victim and through the years basically developed a way of challenging this very effectively and somehow it is as though people cannot let go of that. And in some instances I think that they have reason not to let go of it.*

L1 declared that *students [rebel] against authority, merely because it is authority and authority is bad and that is something that has to be changed from much earlier on than university.*

The link between the struggle skills within the struggle culture and the developmental process of rebelling against authority should not be overlooked. The latter is highlighted by L7 who stated *that's what we expect from students – we were like that as well.*

A few lecturers have commented that in the light of the socio-political changes in the country the (black) students have communicated to them that they now have more power than the white lecturers. L7 remarked that *after the election for instance a group of students came to my office with an ANC poster and made accusations, that I was privileged when I was at university and now it's their turn, and they didn't really do anything to make me feel I should phone the police or jump out of the window. But this stuff made me a bit tense. They wanted to know who I had voted for and that kind of thing, and I said it's really got nothing to do with you (laughed). It's a bad question.* L6 reflected that any protest from the lecturers is seen as, *oh you white people just don't want to fit in with the new system; you just don't want to accept that the blacks have the power now.*

Thus, students often challenged lecturers inappropriately, as well as threatening lecturers. The following statements highlight these challenges and/or threats:

L5 remarked that *[students] first said that I should mark very carefully because they didn't want a situation on campus where I wouldn't feel safe to go to the cafeteria, for instance.*

L5 continued to say that *it was about three days of constantly being reminded that if I didn't produce a good pass figure my life would not be completely safe on campus.*

Perhaps what was not being recognised is that the challenge or threat was a way in which black students knew how to interact with white lecturers. This challenge or threat seemed to be most prevalent in the test, examination and evaluation situations. It is proposed that a situation, in which the students' competence is evaluated, is perhaps the moment of black students' most extreme vulnerability and white lecturers' highest level of power and authority. This possibly indicates reciprocal splitting between black students and white lecturers which points to the possibility that the students and lecturers are operating within the paranoid schizoid position (Klein, 1985). The challenge or threat was probably an indication of black students projecting badness onto the white lecturers, resulting in challenge or threat. Thus, attacking the other before the other can attack the Self.

The above explication also raises the question whether the white lecturers had the new skills needed to interact with the black students. Thus, lecturers told the story about the students using old skills, as if the lecturers had the new skills for the situation. The above discussion also points to diversity issues being played out within the context of lecturing and learning, especially the nature of the student-lecturer relationship during lecturing and learning.

3.4 CONTRADICTORY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS AND LECTURERS

In the light of the discussion thus far, the relationship between these nine lecturers and their students seem to be marked by several contradictions. Generally it

seems that lecturers describe their relationship with students as being marked by positive contact in the face of accomplishment or a separateness/difference, which made them feel there was no connection between themselves and students. This contradictory relationship can be illustrated by Figure 3.1 (see page 99) where the contradictory relation on the one hand is marked by a conflictual, violent relationship due to the knot of achievement, mutual disqualification between students and lecturers and the black-white divide. On the other hand a respectful student-lecturer relationship exists in the face of academic achievement.

Thus, the contradictions in the relationship between student and lecturer seem to be located in a positive connection or adversarial separateness as primarily described by L6 and to some extent echoed by L5. L6 continued to describe this contradiction through an incident at Chris Hani's funeral where a young militant black man at one moment shouted in the face of a white woman *kill the boer, kill the farmer*. The next moment he calmly said to her *did you know that I was at school with your boy friend?* L6 voiced that the lecturers-students relationship is marked by *the same thing: one moment it's kill the boer, kill the farmer, the most aggressive, violent interaction you can imagine. And a split second later he tells her, do you know, your boyfriend and I were at school together and he calmly starts chatting.*

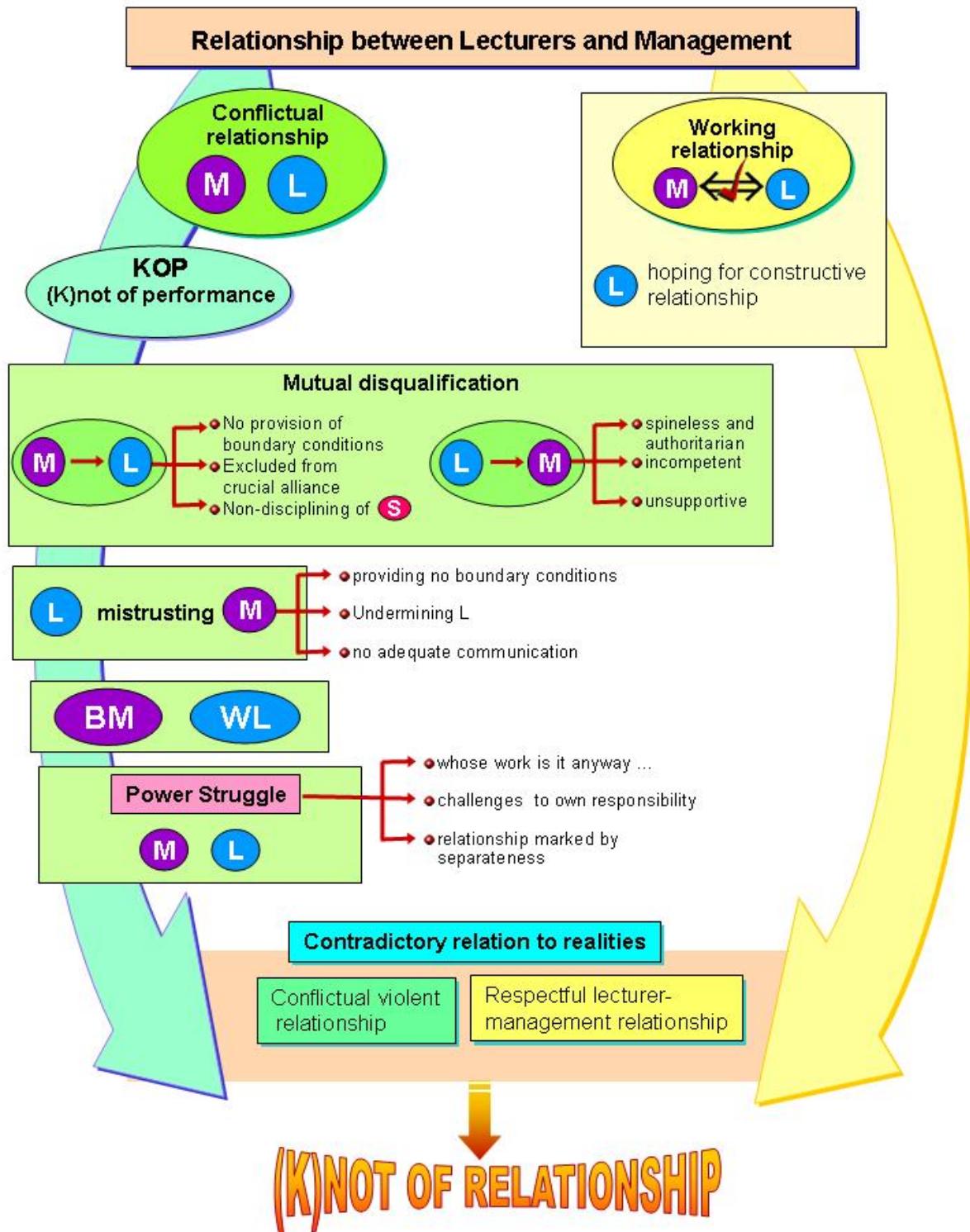
L6 emphasised that *what is incredible to me is the amazing contradictions ... in one context in the lecture hall there is usually a certain way of doing things and interacting*. Here she is referring to a reality or context, which is marked by a calm conversation, focused on lecturing and learning. L6 continued to say that *the moment when politics come into play and protest and things like that come into it, then those same students sitting in front of you with their sweet little faces have a completely different reaction to one*. Here she is referring to a *struggle reality, protest reality* which is triggered by conflict that is experienced as irresolvable and a specific frame of reference, i.e. *a frame of reference that says that white people put black people down, actively, productively, intentionally* (L6). Conflict and threat mark this struggle reality. According to L6 these two realities co-exist and different contexts will trigger either reality. L6 remarked that *it's almost as if these two worlds exist at the same time and the question is just which one will emerge.*

SECTION B: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LECTURERS AND MANAGEMENT

Within this section I will elucidate themes relating to the relationship between lecturers and management. What will be highlighted throughout this section is that all the lecturers reported that management took no responsibility or accepted no accountability for making certain decisions, implementing particular actions or reneging on important tasks and duties. L6 emphasised that *and still the responsibility for things that happen is not taken [by management], there is no ownership in terms of the processes. Because in one way or another in the end they are just not accountable*. I will also illustrate that this reneging on responsibilities and denial of accountability was especially rampant when decisions, actions, tasks and duties were unpopular with the unreasonable, threatening and sometimes violent students. Furthermore, I will show how the relationship between lecturers and management was contradictory in that it was marked by conflict towards management on the one hand and the hope for an effective working relationship with management on the other. This is illustrated by L1 who emphasised that *I find myself in situations like for example the meeting with the [chief executive officer] I find myself being very oppositional really. Where [he] could deal with the situation more sort of calmly and more in terms of balances and negotiations, but it gets to a point where [he] does not want to do that. I just want to sort of fight. I think.* L4, L7, L8 and L9 also referred to the conflictual nature of their interactions with management. While L3 pensively emphasised that *it's another instance where I desperately don't want to alienate the [chief executive officer], I know that I'm almost positively reframing everything for myself. I have to do this at this point [although] he's not taking the stand [against the students] that he should take.*

The different aspects of the contradictory relationship between lecturers and management are illustrated in figure 3.2 and will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

Figure 3.2: The relationship between lecturers and management



3.5 LECTURER'S PERCEPTION OF ADMINISTRATION VERSUS MANAGEMENT

Before discussing the lecturers' perception of management, it is important to explore the way in which lecturers perceived administration and management. In the earlier hermeneutic conversations it seemed that the lecturers used administration and management interchangeably. The following two statements made by L8 where the word administration is used, but management meant, possibly indicate how lecturers use the term administration and management interchangeably, viz.

*no longer, you know, help administration to take decisions or to take action and just say, okay in spite of what's going on we'll just go on with our work.
busy with a process of forcing administration to take action in respect of the present situation where students take lecturers um hostage and where action has to be taken against the students.*

In the later hermeneutic conversations I asked questions which explored whether administration and management are the same. L8 stated *I think management is part of administration*. However there was some understanding that within management there is a certain hierarchy and that administration forms the *grassroots levels* of the managerial hierarchy. This is supported by opinions voiced by L5 *I see management working down to the administration level* and L8 *in that sense that there are different interactions between people at the grassroots level [administration] and people more in the management positions*.

L5 also viewed administration as an extension of management and as providing a support function for management, i.e. administration must perform and complete the administrative decisions that are made by management. L5 stated *I see that administration is a supporting role for management. The [administrative] decisions that management takes regarding the university actually have to be carried out by administration. They have to print the lists, give the exam papers out, that kind of*

thing. So I see administration as an extension of management. Several other lecturers also considered administration as having a supportive role with regards to the academic programme.

Another matter of importance seemed to be the lack of support that administrative personnel experienced with regard to management – in this way lecturers then distinguish between management and administrative staff. L6 stated that *[administration] also don't get the support of top management.* She went on to say that *[despite] the support that is not there, they still do their thing. The instructions they get to carry out and the positions they are sometimes placed in are beyond a joke. The support that [is not] there, in terms of student numbers, in terms of things that just never, not always never. When everything's shuffled around and things change and so on the pressure on those personnel is enormous. They are also totally ignored [by their bosses] and they just have to get on with it.* It seems that this lack of support from management allowed L5, L6 and L8 to acknowledge the similarity between administration and lecturers in that they were the personnel who performed the daily tasks, which kept the HBU running. L6 articulated that *[academic and administrative] personnel will do everything to ensure that the daily running of the institution goes on.* L8 voiced that *[administration] may sometimes feel just as left out as some of the academics, especially the junior academics. I don't know, I just get the feeling.* L6 reiterated this even further by stating that *I regard [administration] in the same light as the academics. The everyday running of the university, because we lecture, evaluate and mark. The people in admin who operate the marks for us and basically keep the university running. It doesn't matter what the students do, it doesn't matter what management do, the personnel, the administrative personnel and lecturers, we keep the show on the road!*

Thus, it seems that at some point those higher up in the administrative staff were seen as part of management and those who perform the daily running tasks of the university were seen as being in the same situation as the lecturers. This possibly

explains why some lecturers at times used the words administration and management interchangeably.

3.6 THE (K)NOT OF PERFORMANCE

The frustration of lecturers pertaining to the difficulties they experienced in performing their core tasks, as well as their frustration with management for not performing core tasks, seems to provide overwhelming evidence for the theme, the (k)not of performance. For the lecturers, management's non-performance was linked to the difficulty of performing the core task of their jobs, i.e. they seem to experience several difficulties in assisting students to pass different subjects and degrees. From the description below it will be evident that lecturers considered their inability to perform their core task – another (k)not of achievement – to be intricately linked to management's inability to provide them with the necessary support and boundary conditions to fulfil their core tasks successfully.

The non-provision of boundary conditions, which is discussed in the following section, seems to have been a big concern for the lecturers and contributed to the (k)not of performance they experienced. It is important to highlight that the non-provision of boundary conditions by management could result in lecturers being uncontained within their work environment, impacting even more on their ability to successfully complete their core tasks. L9 articulated that *I often get the idea that we (lecturers) are in the middle of the storm, we are panic-stricken and we stress and we fight and we struggle*. L9 also proposed that *management actively work towards creating an uncontained working environment for lecturers through the withholding or withdrawal of appropriate boundaries required for their effective functioning*. L9 accentuated that *by taking our power away from us, by taking our communication away from us, all our foundations, all our structures have been stripped away, the rules have been taken away. By constantly making us responsible for the failures, by making it basically impossible for us to do our work*.

The lack of effective and trustworthy communication channels with management, with other lecturers and with students seemed to be a significant difficulty, which contributed to the (k)not of performance for L9.

L9 also experienced being bombarded with issues which interfered with her attention to academic endeavour. She asserted that *while you're busy with this increase story [or the discipline story or the legislation story] the academic issue comes along, and it's moving at a faster pace. Then suddenly, by the time you think you have sorted out the increase situation [or the discipline story or the legislation story], then, oops here's a new academic issue. Already introduced, entrenched, part of the system.* The latter also suggests that the lecturer experienced that management introduced different issues in a way that is experienced as confusing and overwhelming. At the same time, not enough information about issues were communicated to lecturers, which influenced the extent of their informed reaction. The process of confusing or inadequate communication by management to lecturers apparently enlarged the (k)not of performance for management and lecturers alike.

It also seems that a situation was created, perhaps by the interactions between students, lecturers and management, where lecturers experienced that education and learning was not the priority of this HBU. L9 articulated that *people say that the problem in our country is the bunch of half educated people out there who've got no skills and we need to educate them. But it's not a priority. Accordingly, there seems to be a blatant disregard of the core tasks of lecturers amongst management and students alike.* L9 voiced that *our basic thing is to lecture and that's a privilege, it's not a requirement. If you just ask, can I please lecture today then it's as if you're being difficult, what's your problem?* At times this disregard was marked by the taking away of resources needed for the completion of the primary task (the withdrawal of boundary conditions) and using these resources for social occasions or to accommodate examination timetable changes as demanded by the students (L6, L8 and L9). L9 highlighted that *lecturing facilities*

are sometimes take away for social occasions which are so much more important, but if you question this then people look at you as if you're the baboon that's just jumped out of the tree and what's your problem?

Several lecturers emphasised that they found themselves involved in processes other than the core function of the university. This idea was accentuated by L3 who stated that *there isn't enough space for it [education and learning] in the university. We are so busy trying just to sort out relationships and powerplaying and so on, that we never get round to curriculum.* This was echoed by L2 who articulated that *the function I see as a core function is to teach and train people to enter the labour market, not just as a secondary place but far lower down fulfil a function at the university. There's so much politics and power play that it really sabotages this thing of, you know, our wanting to teach people.* L3 further echoed the ideas of L2 by remarking that *[she] never thought that [she] would be working on these, this kind of struggle. To [her] it's a political struggle. [She] never wanted to get involved in political struggles. To her that isn't the arena in which political struggles are sorted out, it's sort of more basic, you know. This is a place for learning, let's deal with learning. Politics, please take them elsewhere and deal with them there.* Thus, these two lecturers proposed that the (k)not of performance was caused by the university's or management's involvement in power play and politics at the expense of the core functions of the HBU. Furthermore, the lecturers found themselves co-opted into the power play and politics. It also seemed that the involvement in politics and power play caused these lecturers quite a bit of distress as heard in the tone of L1, L2, L3, L7 and L9's statements.

Lecturers also referred to their lack of focus with regard to the core function of the university. L1 commented that *at the moment you sort of you are working at two levels. One is just carrying on with the process of educating the way we are doing now and at the same time trying to change the system so that in the next few years we can get to the situation where we want it to be.* Here the lecturer considered himself to be involved in the broader societal change processes.

Several of the lecturers also referred, mostly indirectly, to their involvement in broader societal change processes (L4 and L9). I postulate that the involvement of the lecturers and other stakeholders could be quite intense at an HBU with its particular socio-political history and that this involvement could impact on the performance of the core functions of lecturers and management (and students).

Another issue that possibly contributed to the (k)not of performance is management's accusations that lecturers do not do their work, whether the tasks fall within their responsibility or not. For example, several of the lecturers (L2, L4, L8 and L9) refer to a situation where they were held responsible for the administrative processing of examination marks after they had submitted them to the administrative staff. Several lecturers (L2, L3, L4 and L8) also referred to the command that they received from management to resolve any potentially explosive, violent situation with students so that the academic programme could continue. Should the lecturers be unsuccessful in preventing the violent behaviour of students, then the expectation from management seemed to be that they should resolve the situation to the liking of students and management (L3 and L4).

3.7 MUTUAL DISQUALIFICATION BETWEEN GROUPS: LECTURERS AND MANAGEMENT

L6 introduced the idea of the mutual disqualification of the different groups within the HBU. I have first discussed this theme with regard to the mutual disqualification between students and lecturers. It is important to reflect that in an institution which is concerned with ensuring the qualification of people, the different groups in the university are actively involved in processes that ensure mutual disqualification of the different groups. L5 also described a process of mutual disqualification between lecturers and management. L5 reflected on her perception that management disregarded, and thus disqualified, any issue raised by the lecturers. She considered that *transfer has already taken place because management has accused the ZZZ department of being troublemakers.*

Management's reason is all our letters, because we write letter upon letter. Thus, management transferred or projected onto these lecturers the label of troublemakers which enabled management to disregard any concerns of the lecturers. It is worth reflecting that lecturers to some extent also disregarded students by thinking that they were *troublemakers* and that their issues have no or little value (L6) – a mirroring process in the university. Conversely, she also considered how lecturers disqualified management by projecting incompetence onto management in an attempt to handle their own experience of incompetence. The idea of mutual disqualification between lecturers and management is eloquently captured by L6 who remarked on three occasions during the interview that *I think management disqualify the academics a lot.* On two other occasions during the interview she voiced that *academics actually also disqualify management.* This idea is reverberated by L5 who stated that *we see ourselves as procedurally correct and management as incompetent and we possibly lay the entire incompetence to handle the situation at management's door.* The to and fro disqualification between lecturers and management probably led to the (K)not of performance. In the following two sections (3.7.1 and 3.7.2) I will attempt to elucidate the theme of mutual disqualification between lecturers and management.

3.7.1 Disqualification of management by lecturers

It is important to bear in mind while reading the following section that the intention of the lecturers through their accounts was not necessarily to disqualify management. The lecturers' accounts can to a lesser or greater extent be considered to be a venting of their frustration and perhaps anger with how management managed the HBU. L1 encapsulated lecturers' frustration by stating that *the two words I can give you are frustration and resignation.* However, through the venting of their frustrations, the lecturers provided evidence for this particular sub-theme.

As discussed previously, it appears that management did not provide the resources to ensure a context in which lecturing and learning could occur in the HBU. The latter becomes more evident when considering that management did

not take up the authority in a way, which would allow the development of a climate and culture wherein an appropriate academic programme could take place. L5 irritably stated that *at this stage a very negative experience because I feel the university [management] is not meeting the obligations of an employer. There's also aggression against the university [management] because the university [management] are again not doing their duty, forget about to me as an individual, but the university [management] has certain duties that are just not being done.*

3.7.1.1 *Management experienced as spineless and authoritarian*

Several lecturers referred to management as spineless when it came to making decisions which may lead to conflict with and violent behaviour from students. The following statements indicate several lecturers' opinion that management is spineless:

L7 stated that *I think they (the SRC) got it (power) by threats, by imposing on a spineless management ...*

L8 remarked *and administration [and management] jumps when the students say jump and admin [and management] is half spineless about such practical decisions and the academics always have to stand in for administration [and management's] duties.*

On the other hand lecturers also experienced management as behaving in an authoritarian, arrogant and high-handed manner towards them. This occurred when lecturers needed support from management to complete their academic duties, as well as when they needed to form an alliance with management to deal with the inappropriate demands and violence from the students. L8 related that after writing a letter to the registrar of the university about the non-provision of venues, he received an *almost arrogant letter from the person in question, half challenging in the way he tried to address the situation. [In which] he half challenged me to take the matter further to the [chief executive officer] umm so that we can sort the matter out because I came with certain accusations as to what admin should do and should not do and so on.* L8 went on to say that *[this is]*

a typical example of someone in a bit of a management position who is a bit high powered or thinks he is high powered. Almost like in the army, as soon as someone was wearing high rank on his shoulders he thought he could say whatever he wanted to whomever he wanted. It is important to note that here again a military image is used in the context of the university. This is important with regard to the *Vlakplaas* image, which was used by the students to describe this particular department – only now management is in control. L8 also stated that *people at management level may sometimes have the idea that they [management] run the show, they call the tune and the academics just have to fall in. They [management] play the tune and we [lecturers and administration on grassroots level] just have to jive to it. They say jump and they have the idea – well that's just my assumption – that they are in control because they are management and their word is law.*

Thus, lecturers during their transactions with management, simultaneously experienced management as being disempowered (spineless) and powerful, perhaps even overpowering like an officer in the army (L8). A statement of L7 indicated this, *at that stage Professor X was in an acting capacity, which was pretty bad in my opinion because he was spineless but aggressive.* However, the disqualification of management by lecturers was in lecturers' opinion that management was spineless and did not have the skills to manage the university.

3.7.1.2 Management experienced as incompetent

Judging by the perceived spineless behaviour of management, several of the lecturers did not think that management had the necessary skills to be managers of the HBU:

L4 remarked that *so there it is as though there is this management who is not functioning as a management. And off course then they send all the problems to us, we are lecturers we have to solve the problems. So that the people who make the decisions are basically still the students.*

L5 voiced that *if we look at what happens on our campus, where students register, where students decide that the exam must be postponed. Simply at pragmatic levels like that – they (the students) have taken those decisions actively out of management's hands, out of their heads.*

L7 articulated that *I was in the [registrar's] office a lot and I felt that I was supposed to have respect for someone who didn't deserve it, you understand. I was supposed to explain to him what I was doing and ask permission to do things and I just don't think he is the right person.*

L8 questioned *how important is my work considered to be with people like that in those management positions? Do they realise that academic work is our core business here? I realise that it is people like that who have got the wrong end of the stick and not me. If I can be so arrogant as to say so, he's the one that has the problem, not me.*

The disqualification of management by lecturers is further implied by L6's opinion that most lecturers think that management was incompetent. L6 voiced that *in this respect that there is an opinion among, I think, academics that management is incompetent.* It seems that lecturers may have considered management incompetent to deal with the day to day running of the HBU. L6 declared that *we have already seen the struggle (by management) to cope with the everyday tasks that are supposed to happen, like exam timetables, lecture timetables, umm, examination dates.* However, L6 tempered her opinion of management by stating that *I don't know what the problem is with management, whether it's incompetence or whether they are busy with other things that we know nothing about.* Please bear in mind that L5 has reflected that the fact that lecturers projected or transferred incompetence onto the management could have been part of the lecturers' mechanism to deal with their own experience of incompetence in the university (see 3.7)

Due to the perceived incompetence of management, lecturers often found themselves inappropriately involved in the managerial functions of the university.

L8 stated in several different ways that lecturers had perhaps inappropriately become involved in the daily running of the HBU. He highlighted *that academics are half forced to intervene in administrative [and management] aspects ... academics have taken those kind of measures just to keep the system running, for the sake of the system you know. So that the system is not disrupted as a result of decisions that should have been taken by administration/management um and have not been taken and the whole university is paralysed*. A similar sentiment is echoed in the discussion by L6 where she highlights the work done by academic personnel ensure the daily running of the university. However, here she included administrative personnel (through their commitment to their tasks) as those ensuring the smooth running of the university. These opinions may hold some water, but they disqualify management in that lecturers at times took over management's role.

However, the above issue is further compounded when lecturers received conflictual messages from management about whose task it is to manage particular situations. So not only did the management not provide resources in explosive situations, it also gave conflictual messages about tasks and roles during potentially conflictual situations. Administrative staff also seemed to be doing this. It also seems as if these conflictual messages were given at the moment of potential conflict with students, e.g. giving negative feedback to students about their academic performance. Thus, the relationships between lecturers, administration and management are influenced by the relationships between students, administration and management.

This again was linked to the students' threat of violence against anyone preventing their progress. Lecturers were also extremely frustrated and angry about the fact that in the face of students' threat of violence, management did not take the disciplinary action required not only by the university rules, but also the laws of the country. This idea is accentuated by L1 who vehemently referred to the situation that *we had recently where two lecturers were held hostage where*

management was quite willing to meet with students and with us, when in fact it should not have needed to have anything of the sort. It should have seen the situation and taken action against the students sort of independently and without us having to get involved and without us having to make a stand like we did like staying off campus for our own safety.

Management's incompetence to manage the HBU was also linked to the issue of the non-disciplining of students and wayward members of management. Management was seen as being too afraid to take action against senior staff members who do not do their work and was seen as not taking appropriate disciplining action against threatening, violent students. Again L7 stated that *[a specific chief executive officer] has been rather quick to turn his sails to the wind and was too afraid to take effective action against [senior administrative officers]*. L3 supported L7's sentiments, by stating that *what he [the chief executive officer] really should be doing, is giving very strong instructions to his registrar, because it's the registrar's job to run [institution]. Giving very strong messages to him to terminate this ... and if he doesn't do it, he should be taking the registrar to task. Which he is not doing.*

From the above discussion it is evident that the lecturers perceived management as unable to manage the HBU appropriately. Management's perceived incompetence was linked to their inability to manage the day-to-day running of the university; they are not disciplining the unruly, often violent behaviour of the students, as well as their inability to manage the wayward members of management. The perceived incompetence of management was further entrenched by lecturers reporting that they increasingly had to demand that management should take up their responsibilities as managers of the HBU. Alternatively, lecturers found themselves inadvertently taking up managerial functions. Through the lecturers' accounts it is proposed that the lecturers' need to take over management's role could also disqualify management. It is unclear whether this happened because of incompetence among members of

management, or management skilfully roping lecturers in to do the unpopular tasks on behalf of management. Another reason for this could be that management used lecturers as a buffer between them and the very demanding, threatening and violent students.

3.7.1.3 *Management experienced as unsupportive*

Furthermore lecturers experienced management as unsupportive of them in their efforts to create an optimal learning environment, as well as in their efforts to deal with the emotional and physical attacks of the students. L7 voiced that she was influenced by *the fact that one cannot rely on your registrar to give you back-up*. L6 stated that *I seriously feel that I have been dropped by them. They throw us in at the deep end and say, sink or swim and we flounder around. Nobody ever gives you swimming lessons. Nobody gives you anything to hold on to. There's no supportive relationship between myself and management. They've never been able to accommodate me at any level regarding any need that I had*. L6 and L7 also reflected that management seemed to be a hinderance when dealing with issues raised by students. In other words L7 accentuated that so *I didn't feel that I was getting much support from management. In fact I thought that if one could rather sort things out internally and keep management out of it entirely it would be better*. L3 stated that *[I had] been very disappointed about that and that I definitely would like you to highlight this that there's a tremendous lack of support, um, which still surprises me, to the extent that lack of support is – it's just totally missing, and um they. Ja feel let down, because [I felt] that they [lecturers and management] could be working together*. L2 echoed this even more by saying that *the university as a body doesn't support the academics and there have been a number of incidents ... my experience now, from where I'm standing, with my position and power in the system, is that I have to take an unbelievable amount of responsibility for the students' education and for certain tasks while I am getting no support from the administrative [and management] side*. L5 emphasised that we *felt that we were being given the responsibility for carrying out more and more and*

more responsibilities. Not only was management seen as unsupportive, it was also seen as undermining efforts on the part of lecturers to fulfil their role in the university. L9 stated that *I feel you have to be able to defend yourself, you have to cover yourself, because umm the support structure (management) that is supposed to be there is not a support structure, it's an opposition structure.*

Thus, according to the lecturers management does not provide the support (emotional and structural) which would enable them and possibly the students to be more successful in the university.

3.7.2 Disqualification of lecturers by management

It seems that lecturers were disqualified by management through:

- Management not providing lecturers with boundary conditions to fulfil their roles and complete their tasks within the HBU.
- Management excluding lecturers from a crucial alliance with the students.
- Management, when appropriately requested by the lecturers, not disciplining the students for violent threats or actions directed at different groups within the HBU.

These ways in which management disqualified lecturers will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

3.7.2.1 The non-provision of boundary conditions

It appears that management disqualified lecturers in several ways, which included not providing the boundary conditions in which lecturers could fulfil their core tasks in the HBU. This non-provision of boundary conditions by management was highlighted in the previous section.

Management also did not seem to communicate to lecturers their important decisions pertaining to the daily functioning of the university which influence their planning, as highlighted by the following statement of L6, i.e. *[lecturers] get the message from management that there's going to be a lot of difficulty about giving*

lectures. This means that I'm not going to say anything, here's a crisis and I'm expected to take a decision but I'm not going to. But then you turn up to teach the next day and the doors of the lecture halls are locked and we're under the impression that the students have locked the doors. But we find out much later that the [chief executive officer] you know has had the doors locked. A decision was eventually taken but it hasn't been communicated to anyone and no-one is responsible [for that decision].

3.7.2.2 Lecturers excluded from crucial alliance

It appears that members in management seemed to form an alliance with students against lecturers, especially when students were displaying demanding and threatening behaviour around marks which they have not received from administration. L2 commented that in a meeting between students, two lecturers and management *the [chief executive officer] said we should look at the pass figure that is a problem. We should set up forums and the department should do everything in its power to help the students. I feel he didn't listen to our side. He put everything squarely in the department's court again, as if we were the only people who could do anything about the matter.* L4 also stated that *it's funny those threats from the students were, I do not know why it was so upsetting to me. It was upsetting in the sense that I thought it was unfair. Because they were punishing me for someone else's mistake. But somehow that didn't upset me so much. What really upset me, very badly, was the fact that there was no backup for my position and my integrity from management. That was what really got to me.* This is further highlighted by statements made by L6, viz. *that a member of management at a meeting on the third years said in front of the students, well you say you're doing research but where is the research? You say you attend congresses but I never see you at a congress (L6 and researcher laughed).* Another situation where members of management form an alliance with students by demanding an explanation from lecturers, was when students blamed lecturers for a lack of commitment towards them (the students) and the university-as-a-

whole. L6 articulated that *when the accusation was made [by the students] that we have no interest in our work and we're rushing off to our private practices. Then management's reaction was: what do you say to that? Management's reaction was not: these people are expected to be at office for five hours, that is their contract. We also expect them to do other work.* L9 also commented that *if you happen to be busy with research one day there is a hue and cry after you because you weren't at work.* These sentiments were also echoed by L2 who articulated that *on the question whether our hearts are really in it and whether we are doing other work and so on, we felt that the [chief executive officer] reacted to the accusations. He asked us for an answer without realising where the question came from.* L2 also remarked that *in the end it must be laid at the door of management to support us. Because we get a lot of direct, not even implied, accusations that we are short-changing the students.* It also seems that several lecturers (L3, L4 and L6) felt that management gave false information about the lecturers to the students. L3 commented that *[students] have been fed information [by management]. I think it's very false information. I think it's information which goes along with the perception of us as uncaring, irresponsible, unconcerned, and so on.*

3.7.2.3 Non-disciplining of students

Another area where management did not provide boundary conditions for lecturers to fulfil their task was the non-disciplining of unruly and violent students. L1 and L9 commented that lecturers then found themselves in the unenviable position of attempting to address the flouting of rules by students in the face of management's neglect of their duties. L9 accentuated that *[she] is busy all the time telling students, but listen, there's a rule on this, stick to it. While management won't do this.* According to L1 management seemed to be invested in ensuring that *the regulations of the university are upheld [by] the academic staff, but never by the students.*

All the lecturers in one or other way commented on the non-disciplining of students and its consequences for the relationship between lecturers, students and management, as well as the effective running of the academic programme. The extent of the non-disciplining had become such that lecturers at times found themselves involved in addressing students' flouting of rules and at other times saying that it was the role of management to address students' behaviour. The following statements refer to the non-disciplining of students by management:

L1 expressed that *one of the problems we have dealing with the students academically is the issue of discipline. The students do not know what the rules are and even if they do, they flaunt them quite blatantly.*

L1 responded to one of my questions by saying *who allows the flaunting? I think in a way we are all implicitly involved in it, but I think it is management's responsibility to do something about it and they don't seem to be doing anything about it.*

L8 commented that *there is simply no action taken against the students. Administration, which should be the decision making body in terms of such cases or incidents, um is more or less passive, [half spineless] towards these incidents so that academics have to take over administration's duties.*

L8 went on to say that *possibly academics have been too passive in terms of the spinelessness of failing to take decisions and in that sense we have had a share [in the vicious circle of no discipline].*

L9 remarked that *when there's a dispute and the student has broken the rules I feel that it is the position of management to say to the student, sorry, but you've broken a rule. As a result these are the implications. They don't do it, I have to do it but there are no support structures.*

Accordingly, lecturers might feel unheard and perhaps disqualified by management's lack of action when it came to disciplining unruly and violent students, especially in the face of lecturers' requests to attend to the matter of disciplining students who commit violent acts towards the lecturers. Several lecturers referred to management's inability to discipline students, viz.

L1 articulated that *[he] would like to see students being disciplined for things that they do that are against regulations, but it does not happen, so what do you do?*

L2 voiced that *that the university authorities have not yet looked at [disciplining students who disrupted a test a year ago]. [A lecturer] had been writing letters for a year and six months and followed the correct channels to get some action on what had happened on the 15th March, courteously followed the correct structural channels, but there had been no response.*

L4 stated that *[the lecturer involved in the hostage taking] was called yesterday saying that she must come to campus immediately saying that we must come and solve the problem. So they are still saying that we must come and solve the problem.*

L8 verbalised that *the lecturer who had been involved in the hostage taking has been corresponding with the administration on a decision the administration should really have taken – to expel students from the campus.*

Thus, several lecturers emphasised that individual members of management did not assist lecturers when they were attacked by students. These attacks could be with regard to lecturers' integrity and commitment to the students and the HBU or actual physical, violent attacks against the lecturers. This is captured through a statement made by L6 *when the academics are treated in a certain way, when they're disqualified by the students and abused by the students, and so on. The fact that management does nothing about it, the fact that they just keep quiet [is an] unbelievable disqualification and undermining of the authority of the academics.*

Given that at least three of the lecturers referred to family metaphors, it seems that this mutual disqualification between lecturers and management took on the character of a couple arguing about who does what for the teenagers and who should discipline the teenagers. The use of the family metaphor seems to describe the relationship between the lecturers, students and management. The nature of

the relationship between the three stakeholders will be discussed in more detail in section C.

3.8 LECTURERS HOPING FOR A CONSTRUCTIVE, WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH MANAGEMENT

In the introduction to the 3.7.1, *disqualification of management by lecturers*, I proposed that lecturers' accounts about management may be a venting of their frustrations and anger. On the other hand these accounts could also be considered to be evidence of moments of commitment to management and thus to building a constructive working relationship with management. The evidence for this can be found in the tone of the accounts – several statements are quite angry and filled with exasperation, while other statements hinge on sadness and despair about how things could be with regard to the working relationship with management and in the university as a whole. It is especially the latter type of accounts that can be used as evidence of the lecturers' moments of commitment to forming a constructive working relationship with management. Of course this also points to the dilemma of how the exact same thing can have a multitude of meanings and how I have been able to hear two or more possible meanings, for the same content provided by the lecturers.

The need of the lecturers to form a constructive relationship with management can also be seen in lecturers' trying to preserve certain parts of management by seeing them as being on their side. The following comments illustrate the aforementioned idea:

L3 voiced that *higher up people are saying the right things [about disciplining the students]. I'm very impressed.*

L3 continued to express her uncertainty and yet hoped that management was on the lecturers' side, i.e. *I don't know what his thinking is, but I have to tell myself that he's on our side.*

L6 stated that *I expected management to say to us: Yes, that was a nasty*

incident. For students to hold you hostage was not very nice, but let's try to handle this business in a peaceful way. Go back, do your work and we promise that we'll deal with the students in time. All of which we've heard before, and nothing has ever happened. Nobody has dealt with the students. So I was amazed at the steps management took this past week [in respect of management's position on disciplining the students.]

L7 articulated that *my feeling about the whole story is that the [chief executive officer] actually is on our side, which is a new experience for me. I experienced another [senior person] fairly positively as well.*

Part of this process of preserving certain parts of management was projecting the bad onto the other parts of the management. The bad part of management was seen as not being on the side of the lecturers and going against the disciplinary action of the *good* management. In actual fact the split seemed to be between the activities of the chief executive officer and the registrar. This is illustrated by L7 who said that *[the registrar] did a lot of negotiating with the students without any mandate. Without being present and knowing what the spirit of the meeting was, he suddenly said we should come in and speak to the students about the situation so that it could be resolved. In other word he was derailing the whole process. He was coming in from the side and interfered.* This is further echoed by L1 who voiced that *where one person from management is supposed to be having a disciplinary hearing against students [as we have been asking for], another person in management is demanding that we come and meet with the students and come and solve the problems on campus. When the issue is that we won't go back to campus until the issue has been dealt with.* L3 also voiced that *the registrar is the guy who is responsible for disciplinary hearings and now he's in – well, I know him. He's not very supportive, that I know. And I've only had one contact with him and that was on the telephone but basically what he was saying is, um, well just his attitude ... He obviously didn't understand at all where we were coming from and didn't see that we should have a problem with students locking us up.*

It also appears as if lecturers, worked towards splitting management into good and bad. This is evident from the fact that they found themselves in situations where they demanded from one part of management (usually the chief executive officer) that certain students should be expelled (L5, L7 and L8). Then lecturers seemed to expect the chief executive officer to inform the registrar, whom they considered as reluctant to discipline students and to manage the disciplinary action. Although the lecturers were procedurally correct in their behaviour, the consequence hereof was that the lecturers succeed to split management into members who were on their side and members who were on the students' side.

Nevertheless, it seems that these lecturers were concerned about whether the new status quo of management being on their side would last. This uncertainty was due to their general mistrust (see 3.9) and disqualification (see 3.7.1) of management based on their knowledge of management's apparent inability to manage the university. Secondly, there seemed to be communication problems between the different parts of management that made management open to the influence and threat of students. L1 articulated that *at the moment it seems that they are supposed to be taking action, but they are not. Because what is happening is that the different members of management seem to be doing at cross-purposes of each other and the left hand does not seem to know what the right hand is doing.* L1 continued to say *they (management) seem to have their own communication problems.*

Although lecturers may have hoped for and worked towards a constructive relationship with management, mistrust and other unconscious processes could have interfered with the development of this constructive relationship.

3.9 LECTURERS MISTRUSTING MANAGEMENT

Lecturers experienced mistrust towards management and administration. They experienced management as untrustworthy. This sentiment is expressed by L2

who said that *the university as a body does not support the academics and there have been a number of incidents.* L7 echoed that *I don't get angry about anything they say because in many cases ... mmm ... I think I'll wait and see what is really going to happen. I've learned that their word is not something one can really rely on. I get far less tensed up about what they say. I've learned to take it from whence it comes. I don't believe everything they say anymore. I don't get excited about anything they say because I don't know whether they'll do it or not.*

L9 spoke especially vehemently about her mistrust of management, to the extent that in her statements there were many angry accusations about management's inability to attend to its task in the HBU, as well as management's seemingly purposeful *undermining* of lecturers on a personal, academic and political level. Mistrust between management and lecturers has also developed through a process where management did not adequately communicate their decisions to lecturers (L3, L6, L8 and L9). When management did communicate with lecturers telephonically, electronically or in writing, lecturers were also not sure whether they could trust the communiqué (L3, L6, L7, L8 and L9). Furthermore if they did receive an undertaking from management, they often find that commitments were not honoured (L3, L6, L7, L8 and L9). L9 emphasised that *you can't quote anybody, documentation is no longer valid, even if you receive a letter that letter could change tomorrow. Things like signatures are not valid. We've learned on many occasions that having a telephone conversation with someone and reaching an agreement are not valid because you've no evidence against your name. You must have documentation, you must have a piece of paper to show that I've done it, here it is.*

Management's lack of taking responsibility for decisions resulted in L9 mistrusting management and impeded her constructive responses to decisions made by management. L9's mistrust of management and apparent lack of appropriate responses to management appeared to result from the fact that she could not find somebody to discuss the matters with or that matters changed for no apparent

reason. All of this occurred in a context of rapidly changing decisions, i.e. *then you try to make your point and air your opinion but in the merry go round the moment passes* (L9). This scenario seemingly resulted in a threatening, uncontainable work environment in which management was mistrusted by this lecturer and perhaps by the rest of this group. L9 accentuated this by commenting that *you don't know what you should give attention to, what you should leave, what is the most threatening, what needs the most attention.*

L9 statement also suggested that lecturers' mistrust of management's ability to do its task might impact on their attitudes towards administration. L9 reported incidents where lecturers check whether administrative staff had successfully completed a particular task, i.e. *perhaps we are nosy and meddlesome. For example, I'm thinking about what I and a number of my colleagues do. We would phone up administration and make certain the marks are there and they've been keyed in. While we're just worried that it should be done, these people may perhaps get the message that we don't trust what they are doing and this causes friction.* L9 wondered whether this checking on administrative staff is a reflection of lecturers' own *overcompensations coming across, it's our own issues that are coming to the fore, you know.* Perhaps this reflection of L9 pointed to lecturers' mistrust of management's ability to ensure the speedy, efficient processing of marks by the administrative staff. It could also be linked to issues of control and power on the part of the lecturers. The mistrust that lecturers' experienced towards management obviously influenced the working relationship between lecturers and management.

3.10 WHITE LECTURERS/BBLACK MANAGEMENT

Historically the HBU was managed by a management primarily consisting of white men. The make-up of the management had changed at the time of the hermeneutic conversations, when management primarily consisted of black men. L4 remarked that *management used to be just straight from white government.*

She continued to state that *the old management system was really, not only because of colour but there was lot of problems there and I was unhappy with it.* But the colour change over, to me, was a relief in the first place. L3 echoed this sentiment by saying that *before the new management was put into place, um, it wasn't such a huge issue for me. It was frustrating, we had to deal with them, but I realised that they were not really legitimately there and I could make allowances for the fact that they didn't want to take responsibility when things weren't going smoothly. It was dealing with the day-to-day frustrations.* Once the new management came in, and they were properly appointed, I expected them to take a stronger stand. These statements indicate lecturers' disappointment with the new, black management's poor performance in managing the university.

L7 also referred to how she experienced her race difference from management. She said that *I experienced the students as far more open and really receptive and I didn't feel white. I didn't feel nearly as white when I walked into a class of 300 third-year students as I did in (registrar's) office. That despite the fact that I was far more conspicuous in the big lecture hall.* Thus, it seems that in her interactions with management her racial difference from management was emphasised on an emotional level.

L4 in particular reflected on how the fact that management was now black and lecturers white carried potent historical meaning which influenced the current relationship between management and lecturers. Several lecturers generally also reflected on how the historical meaning of the race group one belongs to provided opportunity for projecting onto individuals the characteristics of that race group. These projected characteristics were then further compounded by their positional authority within the HBU. L4 articulated that *some of these people in the management positions used to be students or junior staff members [or new appointments, mainly AA] and they were part of the struggle against the previous management system. They were embroiled in that, it's a historical thing.* On the other hand she also highlighted that *the perception of academic departments is*

that they are still part of the old system. The lecturer body is still to a large extent, a remnant not totally, it's changed a lot, but it is still in a way a remnant or a symbol of the previous regime.

Perhaps the primarily white lecturers were unconsciously influenced by a question around whether white lecturers can be managed by black management of whom some have either been students in the department or lecturers' junior colleagues or affirmative action appointees. Although management was not asked, it is suggested that perhaps the unconscious question that influenced management was whether they as a black management can manage white lecturers.

3.11 THE POWER STRUGGLE

It appears that embedded in the power struggle between management and lecturers were several questions pertaining to the role of lecturers and management in the HBU. The most important of these questions seem to be:

- Whose work is it anyway...lecturers or administration or management?
- Do members of management have the competencies to manage the university?
- Who can manage the university best – lecturers or management?
- Who is actually in charge of the university – lecturers or management?

In the following section I attempt to elucidate how lecturers unconsciously worked to resolve these questions and in so doing unwittingly became part of and probably entrenched a power struggle between themselves and management.

3.11.1 Whose work is it anyway ... lecturers or administration or management?

It is the nine participants' perception that management was not providing the resources required to maintain the academic programme within the university. The following resources were not provided viz. an adequate examination roster, an

adequate class schedule, suitable venues for lecturing, the speedy, efficient processing of marks and the speedy, timeous publishing of marks, to name but a few. L8 commented that *suddenly to have to scurry around and help to draw up exam timetables and ... um ... now I hear that there are rumours that academics will have to help with the registration of students ... umm ... which is a problem to me because that is an administrative duty*. L8 also remarked that *another thing that academics are taking over is the arrangement of venues and then you have to check up and make sure that it is happening*.

Most of the lecturers were often involved in encouraging administration to fulfil their administrative tasks and management to do their managerial tasks in order to ensure that the academic programme could be completed successfully. L4 described a situation where she *demands* that administration fulfil their administrative task, i.e. *they (administration and management) are now less eager to involve me. There were lot of students since who came to me to complain about late marks or administrative issues. I just take a stand I send them straight to administration and I don't welcome that at all. And I tell them to tell them I sent them and I never get anything back from them (administration and management)*. Lecturers experienced themselves ensuring that the administrative structure was in place and that management completed certain managerial tasks so that the integrity of the academic programme was maintained. L8 stated that *academics are kept so busy with administrative duties that they can't get round to what they should be doing ... academics are so busy seeing that administration are doing their job*. This was echoed by L1, L5 and L9.

Several of the lecturers also stated that they found themselves in situations which demanded from them to take up roles and tasks which fall within the realm of administration and management, especially when the task may be unpopular with the students and lead to confrontation. A statement made by L1 captures this, i.e. *they (management) actually don't seem to be anywhere really. They don't seem to be doing anything in terms of progress in that direction. What they seem to be*

doing is holding the status quo and trying to keep everything as sort of non-confrontational as possible. So they tend to avoid situations where they may be confronted by the students for reasons that I don't know. This process is further described L8 who remarked that *we as a department should tell the [chief executive officer] that it is not our duty as academics to decide what is going to happen to the students. [We simply] have to pass on the facts about what has happened to administration and then it is administration's job to decide what's going to happen.* According to L8 management's reaction to this request was to instruct *the department [to] decide what we are going to do about this and then give him feedback on it, you know.* L3 also remarked that *we're engaged in a struggle and conflict and a major issue on the campus and we've actually said that it's not our issue, it's management (campus management) now that need to sort it out and they still don't do that.* Thus, it appears that the lecturers were working very hard not to take up roles and tasks which fall within the administrative and managerial realm, and in so doing encouraging management to take ownership of their role and tasks in the way that the lecturers expect them to.

Although lecturers attempted to appropriately hand over some responsibilities to management, lecturers also seemed to have no expectation that management would do its work. Several lecturers' experienced management, as shirking their responsibilities and throwing their responsibility around like a ball, especially in the direction of the lecturers. These perceptions are eloquently illustrated through several statements made by different lecturers:

L1 emphasised that *you set your complaint; you know you go to management and they don't do anything. What more can be done then?*

L1 also remarked that *management does it by shirking responsibility and making us responsible in that way, because if anything is going to get done, we have to do it, because management won't do it.*

L3 asserted that *when it comes to the nitty-gritty they don't want to touch their responsibility ... The time now has come for them to take responsibility.*

L6 voiced that *I feel that management is scared to fulfil their responsibilities. There*

is a lot of fear about taking responsibility which we see as passing the buck. It goes back and forth, back and forth. The effect of this is that the responsibility is never taken, in the end no-one is ever responsible for anything.

L6 went on to say *they can throw the responsibility back and forth like a ball. If you speak to [a junior] they throw it up and if you speak to someone at the top they throw it down.*

The consequence of this shirking of responsibility by management is summarised by L5 who stated that *if there's a thing at the top that's ... um ... not being complied with, ... then it's as if the responsibility is passed down all the time until people lower in the hierarchy who are not supposed to carry that responsibility have to cope in the end.* L6 also voiced that *they decide on top, it cascades down.* This seemed to thrust lecturers into situation where they had to attend to the tasks of management, e.g. arranging of venues, upholding rules, disciplining of students. This could lead to role confusion in the university as expressed by L8 *it's the roles that are not clearly spelled out in terms of what should administration be doing and what should the academics do. Where do we draw the line, where would we be trespassing on each other's turf?* L9 also emphasised that *I feel that I'm busy every day telling students, but look here, there's a rule about this, please stick to it, while actually management doesn't do this.* However, all the lecturers reported that they were working hard not to take responsibilities which belong to management. This intention is captured in a statement made by L4, i.e. *for a lot of things they (management) just hand the responsibility to us but we don't take what is not ours.*

Although the lecturers were dissatisfied with management's shirking of responsibilities, there was also some understanding that this is linked to management's reaction to the threat of violence and disruption from students. L6 stated that *the top, the highest level of the hierarchy. Because they've covered up things as well ... like when the students say we'll see to it that exams are not written. Then they [management] say, fine, fine.* Management is also well aware of

the power of the students to be disruptive and behave in a violent manner. L7 commented that *the students succeeded in getting the [chief executive officer] to do a few high jumps at the beginning of the year and he is well aware of the potential power of the students*. According to L1, management shirked its responsibilities and did not exercise their authority because they want *to keep their jobs*. Based on this knowledge management seemed to want to attend to every demand of the students due to their power, but in so doing management disempowered themselves. L7 continued to say *I have a lot of respect for him for coming there and facing the students. But I think he just wants to satisfy both sides and in the process he gets deleted*. Another reason for this apparent shirking of responsibilities was linked to an awareness that management had to balance the several demands of the many stakeholders in the HBU. L1 stated that *[he] understands that management does have a problem in the sense that they are trying to balance what the government wants and the needs of education with [the needs] of our students as well*.

L1 also referred to management abdicating their responsibilities to students instead of taking charge of the university, i.e. he remarked that *somebody has to take charge and management is supposed to take charge ... but they again abdicate all responsibility to the students*. L5 reiterated that *[students have] actively taken that decision-making out of management's hands, out of their heads*. Management abdicating their responsibility was then linked by L1 to management being *very politically orientated, whether it is national politics or internal politics*. According to L1, management's involvement in managing the politics and placating students *tend to bog them down in all sorts of fighting of who is in charge and who is going to do something about it and that is why nothing is ever done*. Perhaps even this statement does not clearly say with whom the *fighting for power* was, but based on the lecturers' attempts to hand responsibilities to management the power struggle of *who is in charge* was not only between students and management, but probably also between lecturers and management.

Thus, the accounts by lecturers that focus on their attempts not to take on the tasks and responsibilities which management tried to give them are evidence for the power struggle between lecturers and management. This process started with lecturers saying to management that certain things were not their responsibility. According to several lecturers this process developed to such an extent that lecturers had embarked on a *process of forcing the administration to take action regarding the present situation where students ... um ... took lecturers hostage and where action has to be taken against them.* (L8). According to L1, L2, L3, L4, L5, L6, L7 and L8, they had after a particular incident when two lecturers were taken hostage, decided not to placate the students and to demand more action from management. L8 accentuated that *department could easily have said, fine we'll get on with the academic programme as we ought to be doing and we will simply withhold these two students' marks or not allow them to write the next test or repeat the course or whatever. And then administration and management will have got off scot-free because it was really their duty to take action in this situation.* However, lecturers had decided not to follow old patterns of behaviour (L4), but rather to stay away from campus until the students had been disciplined for their actions. These old patterns of behaviour refer to the lecturers' willingness, based on their academic principles and perhaps even personal principles, to ensure the smooth running of the academic programme. According to L5 a realisation that *the academic programme, which we see as something sacred and precious, is suffering badly* had mobilised her to participate in a stay-away action to encourage management to appropriately own its authority. L8 highlighted that *lecturers are forcing ... the campus structures to do their job.* This is further echoed by L1 who stated that *we [lecturers] should not have to do things like that [negotiating with students after being attacked by some of them]. It is management that should be doing things like that without being told to do it. It seems that we are telling them what to do and we should not have to do that.*

When reflecting on the above paragraph it is important to bear in mind that the request from the lecturers could be considered to be reasonable requests for

management to provide them with physical safety. However, the words, *forcing management to behave in accordance with the demands of the lecturers and telling management what to do*, probably indicate an underlying power struggle between management and lecturers about who knew best how to manage the HBU.

In the light of the above discussion it is suggested that lecturers seemed to give management the message that they should do their work and deal with the students. Management responded to this instruction by clearly saying that lecturers cannot leave *the thorny issue [the (k)not of the relationship with students]* with management to solve.

3.11.2 Management challenging lecturers to own their authority

L3 reflected on what management wanted lecturers to do about being attacked by students. It seemed as if she was hearing members of management saying that lecturers were perhaps taking responsibility for the wrong issue, i.e. getting management to discipline the students. In actual fact what seemed to be needed was that lecturers should make a stand when they were being attacked. This seems to be reflected in L3's statement that *the penny is starting to drop as to why perhaps he is holding back. May be he wants us take the fight out there*. She went on to compare the behaviour of lecturers to that of the silent majority among the students, in other words the lecturers are *passively waiting for management to address the students' reign of terror*. In actual fact the lecturers were hoping for those students to take up their authority and claim their right to a constructive learning experience. L3 emphasised that *we [the lecturers] were always talking about the silence of the majority of students, and how frustrated we are, they don't say anything because we know it's the majority who are serious about studying and want to get on*. In other words in the relationship between lecturers and management, it seems that L3 is proposing that the lecturers had become the silent majority who *passively waited for management to come and rescue us [from*

the students], we wanted [management] to make decisions. Although L1 does not link lecturers' passivity to a silent majority, he emphasised the lack of commitment to change among the lecturers. L1 articulated that *[he] doesn't think anybody feels strongly enough about principles and taking a stand and sort of doing the right thing and sort of doing what is good for education and so on. I think we believe in it enough to talk about it a lot, but not enough to do that much about it.*

However, the silent majority raised by L3 was further emphasised by most of the lecturers about a silent majority among themselves. Several lecturers referred to two groups, the one group was the lecturers those who care and are responsible about their duties. The other group was considered to be irresponsible with regard to providing the best possible education to the students, in other words this group appeared to be giving in to the demands of the students. L6 commented that *there is a group of lecturers who are really enthusiastic, who really care, who take their academic careers seriously. Almost our whole department are like that. There is also a group of lecturers who see their work as an easy way of getting a pay cheque at the end of the month. In terms of ag man who worries about this (giggles), who stresses (L6 and I both giggle nervously), you know. Those lecturers are dangerous in the sense that they don't take any responsibility in terms of the value of the education they are giving. It is often those lecturers who give retest after retest to push up the marks.* The disregarding of the efforts of fellow-lecturers to instil a culture of adhering to rules and regulations was also echoed by L9 who stated that *I think because there is no consistency between one department and another. As for instance we will stand firm on a rule and another department will let it go. Then they look bad and there's a hostile atmosphere.*

Additionally, lecturers considered several of their fellow-lecturers to be primarily interested in climbing the academic ladder and not rocking the boat by agreeing to the demands of students and perhaps even management. This idea was particularly emphasised by L1 who stated that *it is a sense of, it is not apathy. But*

it is a sense of the status quo is working albeit slowly and my career is progressing and so why rock the boat, but you see the whole student agitation situation is basically part of the boat, you know. That is part of what you have to deal with as a lecturer if you want to get anywhere. So you just accept it and go on. L3, L6, L8 and L9 in particular also referred to certain lecturers being invested in not rocking the boat by actually going with the flow and publicly disregarding the efforts of this group of lecturers in order to merely fit in with the system.

Certain members in management were asking the lecturers to *regain their territory*. L3 highlighted this even more by stating that *perhaps I'm beginning to wonder whether that isn't what management is asking us to do as well. I'm starting to realise that perhaps they want us, you know. The [chief executive officer] often said that we must regain our territory and I'm starting to realise that perhaps this is what he means. That he wants us to take up our own fight and to take back the power and authority, and that he actually can't give it to us. We need to take it.* There was further realisation within L3 that this *will be a very difficult process, a long struggle, a lot of risk involved, a painful struggle* during which she cannot always be certain about the support of the chief executive officer. However, L3 is *prepared now to see that perhaps this is the way you know, we've tried other ways and they're not going to do anything, so maybe this is the way that we have to do it for ourselves.* L3's position, that due to the last hostage-taking incident the lecturers have no option but to take a firm stand, was echoed by the behaviour of the other lecturers. All the lecturers initiated a stay-away from campus until disciplinary action was taken against the students involved in the incident (L1, L2, L4, L5, L6, L7, L8 and L9). Regardless of this stand, L3 still found herself wishing for clear signs from the chief executive officer that he supported her endeavours.

So in some way L3 was unwittingly exploring how a process in the relationship between students and lecturers was mirrored in the relationship between lecturers and management. This mirroring process pertained to the reclaiming of turf, in other words the appropriate owning of authority and power by a particular group in

the HBU in order to complete their core task within the university. Although L3 and her colleagues had embarked on a risky process, she found herself longing for the affirmation of the chief executive officer. She stated that *it is scary and I keep looking for well the fact that the [chief executive officer] said what he said was very encouraging, and then he's so inaccessible in between and I want to hear his word again. I want to be able to go to him and say is this what you meant? How far can I go? Are you going to support me?* The latter question is located within a history of mistrust between lecturers and management, i.e. where management according to L3 has taken a strong stand on the one day, absolutely adamant, you sit there and admire him for his words, and two days later he turns around, with no explanation. ... His words are very supportive and so on, but it remains to be seen what he will do about it. L6 was surprised that management had decided to discipline the particular students. L6 voiced that *that it was said that these guys who behaved like this, unacceptable according to any standards, must be dealt with (was surprising to me). The [chief executive officer] also acknowledged the risk and said if we have to close the campus we'll close the campus. So it was definitely at the back of his head that this thing might blow up.* Obviously the aspect of the mirror process which is different from that of the silent majority among the students is that lecturers have acted on the realisation that they will have to take a firm stand to reclaim their turf. Another realisation embedded in this behaviour may be that lecturers have realised that their old skills, i.e. using their positional authority as lecturers to get things done, do not work in this situation. Perhaps they have also realised the very thing that they ask the management to do, is what they need to do – the owning of their authority within the HBU.

3.11.3 A relationship marked by separateness

Although not much attention is given to the separateness between lecturers and management, much evidence for this separateness is located in the above discussion, which at times focuses on the numerous projections that occur between management and lecturers. Perhaps part of the reason why these

projections can continue is linked to the separateness or lack of connection between lecturers and management. L3 commented that *[she knows] the people are very disconnected. The students are very disconnected from each other, the staff (including lecturers and management) is very disconnected from each other, and the departments is disconnected from each other. I don't know where all this ... this disconnectiveness comes from?* L8 also commented on the separateness between lecturers and management and that it can be ascribed to the fact that they come from different communities. Perhaps the term, *different communities*, is a euphemism for the fact that he is a white man (Afrikaner) and that many of the members of management are black men. L8 voiced that *there is a distance between the academics and management. In terms of the community I come from as well.* L3 also commented on her need to change the disconnection and alienation between herself and management, as well as her perception that at least the chief executive officer also wanted to make connections with the lecturers. L3 articulated that *in the beginning of the interview I was also saying a lot about how I don't want to alienate [the chief executive officer] and so on, because I feel a great need for connections to be made there. [Conversely] I have a feeling or I sense that the [chief executive officer] also want to make connections. It must be extremely isolated there, not having people under him that he can work with.*

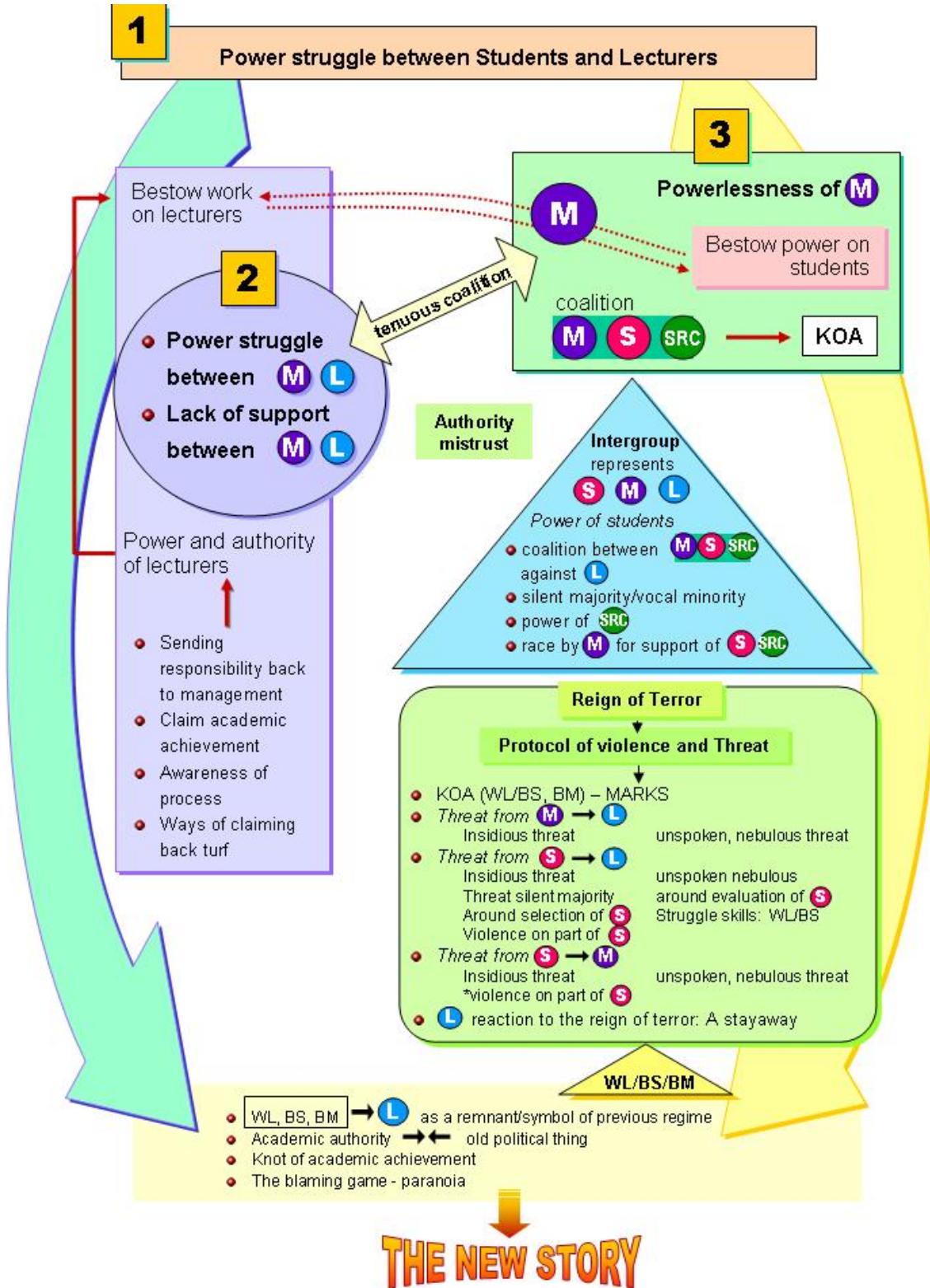
SECTION C: THE TRIANGLE – A TALE OF THREE STAKEHOLDERS

Until now I have primarily been discussing the interaction between students and lecturers and between lecturers and management. Occasionally I had to focus on the relationship between students, lecturers and management to clarify the nature of the relationships in the aforementioned dyads. In this section I will primarily focus on the nature of the relationship in the triad, i.e. students, lecturers and management. These different aspects of the relationship between students, lecturers and management are illustrated in figure 3.3.

L9 through her statements focused on the fact that without these three stakeholders the HBU cannot exist. She articulated that *the idea of the university is that there should be factions (partye), factions (partye) with students, lecturers, administration and management. And the idea of the university is that it should confer degrees. Now they want to maintain this charade and they can't do it without lecturers and they can't do it without students and without administration and management.* However, she vehemently reflected on how the relationship between these stakeholders is marked by a *willingness to preserve the charade but really [the university] is this can of worms that's crawling with the biggest lot of nonsense and nobody is doing anything about it.*

In the subsequent sections I will highlight how this *can of worms* is marked by a power struggle among the three stakeholders and how this power struggle has deteriorated into a reign of terror controlled by the students. Subsequently I will discuss how this reign of terror, primarily by students, have eventually empowered lecturers to challenge the destructive discourses maintained by themselves, students and management.

Figure 3.3: The relationship between students, lecturers and management



3.12 A POWER STRUGGLE RAMPANT IN THE TRIANGLE

Central to the relationship between students, lecturers and management was an apparent power struggle due to several reasons and having several consequences. Several of the lecturers referred to the power struggle in the university. A statement made by L2 eloquently captures the concern of the lecturers, viz. *there's so much politics and power play that they really derail this thing, you know, this ideal we have of teaching people*. This is echoed by L8 who referred to *internal political issues, especially the power struggle [in the university]*. The nature of the power struggle among the three stakeholders will be elucidated in the following sections.

3.12.1 Negotiations among the three stakeholders: the power and authority of their representatives

The tale of the three stakeholders seems to be marked by their representatives being involved in conflictual negotiations. In the accounts of all the lecturers the negotiations were usually around issues pertaining to the marks of the students and students displaying threatening, violent behaviour towards lecturers. L4 commented that *I remember that there was a point during that whole conflict that where I was in a discussion with students, management and another lecturer [about the non releasing of marks] and there was a point where I almost walked out of the door and handed in my resignation*.

L9 introduces an interesting idea about a force that governs the negotiations between the three stakeholders. She postulates that this force had much power and was always present in the university, but even more important present in the negotiation between students, lecturers and management. L9 commented that *when you talk to people in the university or in education ... they use the term, they. You must go back and consult with them*. Although L9 referred to this common force as unknown individuals who seem to control the stakeholders

through fear and anxiety, I postulate that this *common force* (L9) which influenced the interaction among the three stakeholders was the relatedness in the mind among the three stakeholders. The evidence for the relatedness is articulated by L9, viz. *I think that we all see something in the other parties that perhaps isn't there because we are all working from an uncertainty perception; you think the other person is in a better position than you are.* This relatedness could be linked to the perceived power of the three stakeholders in the HBU, which caused fear within the three stakeholders. L9 articulated that *everybody has got their they and in the beginning I thought we all had a different they. I had my management or my structures; the students' association had their structures.* She continued to say that *[the representatives of the stakeholders] are going to feel pushed by a certain force but they don't know exactly who it is but there is a force.* Thus, the mythical they/them is the fourth force present in the negotiations among the three stakeholders of the HBU. It appears as if the negotiations in the intergroup were influenced by the *they/them* in the mind of the representative of the stakeholders. To *they/them* is ascribed power and authority, which apparently influenced the negotiation among the representatives of they/them.

On the other hand, the *they/them* could merely be the constituency of the representatives, which should be asked about a certain matter, as if the representatives or negotiators did not have the authority to speak on behalf of their constituencies. Perhaps the negotiators or representatives had not been appropriately authorised, consequently they had to go back to *they/them* for further input.

3.12.2 The authority of the different voices in the triangle

A central concern of all the lecturers seems to be the power and authority that was afforded the different voices, i.e. students, lecturers and management, in the HBU. L8 commented that *it's as if the university has to decide how much weight they carry at the university, the three big role players we can identify, namely the*

students, the academics and the administration/[management]. It seems that one of the concerns for lecturers about the power struggle was that the students had much more power than the lecturers to influence management. L2 stated that *[management] increasingly made us feel that our voice was not being heard. The students were being listened to and we were increasingly being put in the position of having to defend ourselves in front of the students.* L4 articulated that *the people who make the decisions are basically still the students. Um. Yes, so there it is as though there is this management who is not functioning as a management.*

Several lecturers also considered that the extent to which their voices were heard was a result of a power struggle by management for the support of the students. L8 asserted that *to me it seems as if the management of the university is competing for the support of the students, especially. To some people it seems to be very important to be supported by the students, to be seen as okay and seen as being on their side.* L4 considered that management could not take a stand against students a result of *all kinds of power struggles ... they don't want to lose their friends amongst the students.* Management courting the favour of the students was further emphasised by L8. He commented that *it seems to me it serves as a big motivation not to take action against the students [or the SRC], as a result of this kind of thing, because the one wants to be more popular than the other. You can only be popular if you keep the students happy.*

According to several lecturers it appeared as if management ascribed to the students quite a lot of power to influence the running of the university, while to a great extent ignoring the voice of the lecturers, viz.

L8 commented that *when last year's exam was postponed it was as a result of the demands the students made. And that they don't listen to the voices of the academics – in that sense we're treading on each other's toes.*

L8 went on to say that *the administration/[management] jump when the students say jump.*

L9 articulated that *[lecturers] are questioned at every turn in front of the students;*

the students' decisions rather than ours are taken into account. Umm students' associations are more strongly represented than ours.

L9 went on to say that *you literally have to cover all avenues ummm and umm I think [the reasons why I have to cover myself against the students] because I feel they have the power. I feel again that the students have the power, I think because they've got the numbers behind them.*

L4 discusses management's inability to *own the authority*, which has been afforded to them from above. She considers their inability to own their authority was due to the students not ascribing authority to them, i.e. management was not authorised from below. Additionally management's inability to own their authority from within may have been linked to the power which students wielded over them through intimidation strategies (L4, L5 and L6). L4 stated that *[management] are holding on to that position of no authority, they are not owning it, not yet.* This idea is echoed by L1 who commented that *[management is] not in the position where they can achieve anything unless they decide to do something about it. They have powers, but they don't use them.* What seems to be unclear is how these lecturers influenced management's inability to own their authority.

Two lecturers (L7 and L8) also raised their concern about the amount of power that a certain group of students, the Students' Representative Council (SRC), had in the university. L7 voiced that *[the SRC] think that they will never really have enough power and it's almost like an opposition party in parliament. They have to be against the system. Because they represent a different group.* L7 went on to say that *[the SRC] have far too much power and I'm afraid of the type of power that they have. To phone you about students' marks, I think that's turf where they don't belong.* L8 echoed the discomfort with the amount of power that the SRC had by saying that *they have so much power on the campus that I find it worrying, problematical.* L9 also highlighted the power that the students exerted through the SRC. L9 voiced that *you cover yourself in respect of what you and the student say to each other. Because if you say something to the student then before you know*

it the SRC will come to you with a distorted account that has been fed to them and come and jump down your throat.

The power of students was such that it appeared as if students had effectively taken over the management of the university. Apparently students or at least a small group among them could tell or force management to run the HBU in a particular way. This is accentuated by L5 who remarked that *if we look at what's happened on our campus, where students register, where students decide that the exam should be postponed. Pragmatic levels like that – but [students] have taken the decision-making actively out of the hands of management, out of their heads.* She continued to say that students had probably *hijacked* the power from management through threats and violence. L5 explained that *it seems to me as if the students have hijacked it because they have been running the campus as they wanted it run. You know it seems to me that when management let go of the responsibility it didn't just float around in the air. (The students hijacked it and we are battling to take it back.)* Furthermore, several lecturers referred to students making demands on campus through threatening to disrupt the university's activities.

3.12.3 Students acquiring power in the triangle

There seem to be several means through which students acquired so much power within the HBU. However, there seems to be only one reason for the need for this power, i.e. to influence lecturers and management, in different ways, to ensure that students *get good marks* (L7). Firstly, students obtained their power through illegitimate means. L7 articulated that *I think they (the SRC) got it (power) by illegitimate means ... got it (power) by threats and by imposing on a spineless management that let themselves be imposed on. I think that especially when the management was mainly white the students may have felt that this was the only way they could have any say, that they could describe their interests, and now the management is more representative, transparent and what have you, they are still*

there. They don't back down. Secondly, students obtained their power through threats of violence and actual physical violence towards lecturers and management should their marks and general academic progress not be to their satisfaction. This reign of terror will be explained in more detail in 3.13. L7 also implied through her statements that the SRC also received their power from their constituency, the students who *want good marks*. L7 articulated that *I think it's almost, by definition, like this ... if they are not going to be anti the management, then, in their perception, I'm speculating now, they are not going to represent the students properly, because students want good marks, you know, and want all sorts of things. And management doesn't want to give it to them and the academics don't want to give it to them. [And] that's what the students really want.*

3.12.4 Reasons for the power struggle in the triangle

Of course there were several reasons for power struggles within the university. However, it seems that the primary reason why the power struggle existed was linked to the strategy (unconscious or not) used by students to harness the power and authority of management or lecturers to their advantage, i.e. ensuring they get good marks and progress academically. Thus, it appears that students used the power and authority of these two stakeholders particularly in the context of influencing their performance in tests and examinations. L2 stated that *students would rather go to management, which has power, and which is prepared to use that power to their advantage, rightly or wrongly. Where the lecturers say fine, there are rules, there are certain things that you must know, there is this and that.* L2 went on to say that *students feel that the lecturers' power is not working in their favour so it must be working against them. Perhaps that is a gross generalisation.* This idea was supported by L7 who more than once responded to one of my statements in the following vein; *the path this takes is that students [through the SRC] try to influence management to influence the academics to give them better marks.* Juxtaposed against this, is the idea that students considered that lecturers had the power to influence the actions of management. L1 expressed that *it is the*

students as well, telling us that we have certain responsibilities, which are not in our job descriptions at all. Students do it by actually demanding that it is our responsibility to make sure that management does its job, which is what they did last week (during the hostage-taking that was linked to test marks). The latter was echoed by L2. In potentially conflictual situations between students, lecturers and management, members in management seem to be reinforcing the power of lecturers even more by publicly placing administrative and managerial tasks within the responsibility of the lecturers.

L4 remarked that *of course [management] send all the problems to us, we as lecturers we have to solve the problems. For a lot of things, [management] just hand the responsibility to us, but we don't take what is not ours.* Thus, according to L4, lecturers were able to competently tell management what their responsibilities were. Consequently, it may have happened that students received conflicting message about the level and extent of the authority of lecturers and management. Additionally, students may have been (unconsciously and consciously) aware of the power struggle between management and lecturers and attempted to use it to their advantage.

Furthermore it appears that management attempted to hold onto the support of the students. L8 and L4 have commented on the tendency of management to curry favour with the students. L8 stated that *it seems that management would prefer to be popular with the students than with the lecturers, the academics, because the loyalty of academics is sort of taken for granted.* L8 was uncertain about why management needed to curry favour with the students and whether this need of management was not merely something that he is imagining. Nevertheless, L8 attempted to explain this perceived need of management by saying *[it] could have something to do with the fact that the students come more from the direct community from which management comes. [But] perhaps they (the students and management) do not come from the same community, perhaps management is seeking popularity or support in the community the students*

represent. Perhaps I should put it that way. Perhaps it is because I am a WAM (white Afrikaner male) that I feel like this. So not only did students join with management in certain circumstances, it seems that management was keen to join with students in certain circumstances in order to hold onto their positions. Although this lecturer referred to the basis for this alliance as *the same community*, he alluded that the basis for this alliance between students and management seemed to be race group and that students and management shared the *same socio-political history*. However, this lecturer also introduced the idea that through forming an alliance with the students, management was (inadvertently or intentionally) forming an alliance with the communities from which these students come. It might be that this lecturer did not only feel excluded from the alliance between students and management, but also from the socio-political history which students and management apparently shared. L4 does not merely reflect on her exclusion in the HBU but rather seems to wonder whether she belongs in the university, which is marked by threat and disloyalty from management towards lecturers in the presence of students. She stated that *was the point where I felt for the first time that this is a situation that I can't be in. That was really the first time that I felt doubtful whether I belong there.*

- *Black students/white lecturers/black management*

In the previous discussion, L4 and L8 are highlighting an aspect that seemed to be pivotal to the power struggle between the three stakeholders, i.e. race. The three stakeholders can crudely be divided into particular racial groupings – black students, white lecturers and black management. Although the lecturers did not directly refer to the racial groupings in the HBU, the importance of race in the transactions between students, lecturers and management can be inferred from the lecturers' statements. Of particular importance is that lecturers (who in this group are mainly white) might have experienced themselves to be powerless within the interactions and therefore during the power struggle between the three stakeholders. This idea is eloquently captured by L6 who stated that *in my*

experience it is very difficult for someone with a white skin to voice a protest, because it is not seen as legitimate. If the system does not see you as a legitimate voice it is very difficult to do anything.

Emanating from the process where students sporadically ascribed the power and authority either to lecturers or to management is the idea that the power struggle among the three stakeholders was influenced by the different diversity characteristics and the concomitant power and authority that the students ascribed to the lecturers and management based on these diversity characteristics. These diversity characteristics are positional power and authority in the university, authority and power which came with being black or white, as well as the power and authority which accompany the role of mother and father in a family. It is assumed that through the process where students ascribed the power and authority either to lecturers or management, students were inevitably forming alliances with either lecturers or management. Students sporadically forming alliances with lecturers or management might suggest that students periodically disempowered management and lecturers in the HBU. Based on this discussion it becomes apparent that students not only participated in the power struggle to ensure that they achieve academically, but they did so because they may have been uncertain about who the most powerful stakeholder in the university was that would ensure their academic success. This uncertainty seems to have been linked to the different diversity characteristics that students used at different times to ascribe power and authority to management and lecturers. The question which emerges now and remains unclear, is under which circumstances did the students use which diversity characteristic to ascribe power and authority to lecturers and management?

Certain statements from L4 seem to indicate that in the same situation, different diversity characteristics could be used simultaneously by students and management to form alliances with each other against lecturers. L4 stated that *so what he did is he was joined with the students against me to accuse me of*

something that I wasn't guilty of ... there was this coalition between people in senior positions and the students. Firstly through her statement, she presented evidence for management seeking an alliance with students against lecturers (see 3.7.2.2). L4 continued to say that *then he went further than that and he said to me as a white person I cannot understand; I will never understand how this works. Because from their (black people's) perspective the lecturer is like a mother to the students and she should take responsibility even though it is somebody else's fault.* Clearly the metaphor of the lecturer as a mother and in L4's case possibly the incompetent mother, who does not know how to care for her teenage children in the particular culture, was being used. L4 stated further *that then he said this lovely double bind paradoxical thing to me that I will never understand that because I am white.* Again the accusation from management that white people do not understand black people – consequently the implication could be that white lecturers do not understand the black students and management. Although L4 found this interchange in front of students and another lecturer very hurtful, she was able to respond to the accusations by *giving him answer about the extended family. That it is not only the single mother's responsibility to look after the children. That maybe I do not know anything about African families but I wondered to what extent other people are also responsible.* Thus, she continued to use the family metaphor to illustrate the relationships between and the responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the university. Perhaps in some way L4 was challenging students and management to appropriately own their authority to address the respective challenges they experienced within the university.

The above discussion may also explain L2's experience of powerlessness, while students ascribed quite a bit of power to him and other lecturers. He expressed that *in my experience the really bad part is that on the one hand we feel disempowered and on the other hand the students see us as having far more power than we really have. At this stage we are sitting without any power, but the students think we have all the power, and that makes it almost unbearable, because we feel powerless but we are accused of abusing our power.* It may be

that students ascribed to lecturers the historical power and authority as members of the white race group, whereas the lecturers operated in accordance with their particular positional power and authority within the system. Additionally this particular lecturer could be identifying with the lack of power of the abused mother in a family. Although there is not really evidence for the latter experience among all the lecturers, it could be useful to consider whether most of these lecturers at one time or another have had the experience of the lack of power of the abused mother in a family, which in this instance might be carried by L2 and highlighted by L2 on behalf of the nine lecturers.

Given that at least three of the lecturers referred to family images, it seems that this mutual disqualification between lecturers and management took on the character of a couple arguing about who does what for the teenagers and who should discipline the teenagers. Furthermore, it seems that the teenagers and the mother fight for the attention of the father. (This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5.)

3.12.5 The effect of the power struggle on lecturers

Another reason for the power struggle between the students and the lecturers in the triangle seems to have been the conflict between students and lecturers about who would receive the most support or attention from management for their endeavours. This aspect of the power struggle resulted in several lecturers (L2, L5, L7, L6, L8 and L9) experiencing themselves as disempowered and powerless within this power struggle, particularly with regard to their experience that management paid more attention to the demands of students than to the lecturers' requests. This is evident from the statements from the following lecturers:

L6 emphasised that *my strongest feeling in terms of the institution amounts to powerlessness.*

L7 stated that *[lecturers] don't really count for much.*

L8 questioned whether *[the lecturer] counts for anything. Does his words count,*

does what he has to do count, namely umm teach the students.

L9 voiced that *if you demand to be treated like an ordinary person, you're out of your mind, you must be hallucinating! The general feeling is, if I do my work, so what! If I don't do my work, so what!*

L2, especially, commented on his experience of disempowerment and powerlessness. L2 expressed that *I think that what is difficult in terms of disempowerment is that we as academics really feel that we want to do something and we have been given a very difficult mandate to carry out, because we have ideas about where we want to go.* He went on to say that *I feel that our intentions about what we'd like to do are good but they are interpreted completely differently and this disempowers us totally. We no longer get the support from management that we should get and we are in a system where rules no longer apply. I don't know whether this gives you the idea that I'm feeling very disempowered in the system at the moment.* L2 also links his experience of disempowerment to the fact that it seems that management attends more to the demands of students than to the requests of lecturers. L2 remarked that *the impression was there when we said that we'd like him to come to the department and he didn't really want to come. But when he heard that the students wanted him to come, then he came more quickly. So there is a perception in the department that management is more ready to listen to the students than to the academics. [This is] one of the disempowering themes that I experience.* Importantly, L2 acknowledged that he did not have a permanent sense of powerlessness and disempowerment. L2 declared that *as soon as we think things are going well, then the exams are postponed for two weeks. So these isolated incidents confirm our helplessness every time but I wouldn't say I have a permanent, chronic sense of powerlessness.* The experience of intermittent periods of empowerment and disempowerment was also echoed by L6.

3.13 REIGN OF TERROR

If the power struggle prevalent among the three stakeholders is not resolved to the satisfaction of the students, they issued threats of violence. These threats could result in acts of violence against private and campus property, as well as physical violence against individuals. L7 refers to this particular behaviour of the students as a *reign of terror* through which they demanded a tertiary education, often making unreasonable demands to obtain this tertiary education. L7 emphasised that *I [think] it's also a reign of terror being conducted by the students. I think students are reclaiming their turf so aggressively that it's like this wave rolling towards you – we must have education and we must pass or else ...* In the following sections the reign of terror by the students and its influence on the other two stakeholders will be discussed.

3.13.1 The anatomy of the violent threats and actions

Violence or the threat of violence against property or individuals (students, lecturers and management) seemed to be always present in this HBU. Most of the violent threats and actions seemed to be directed by the students against the lecturers within the context of underachievement. However, management also seemed to direct threats at lecturers when they believed that lecturers did not attend to the demands of the students. But management, like the lecturers, were not free from violent threats and actions from the students. The anatomy of the violent threat and actions will be discussed in more detail.

3.13.1.1 Threat of violence from students towards lecturers

The reign of terror by students was marked by unspoken and nebulous threats, by actual threats of violence, by acts of violence against private and campus property, as well as by acts of physical violence towards individuals. All lecturers spoke of threats of actual physical harm that they received from the students. There seemed to be a very clear threat that should lecturers not behave in

accordance with the wishes of the students they would be forcibly removed from the campus. These threats were encapsulated by a statement made by L5, viz. *Why do they (management and the lecturers) allow this? I think it's because they are threatened with their lives. I think that one fine day you'll arrive at the campus only to be told that you're not welcome here today because the [students] don't like the test you set. You must please go home.* L2 also explained that a student made *threats that if he did not pass lecturers would not come back to the campus the following year.*

These threats and acts of violence were usually linked with issues of not receiving marks from the administrative staff, poor marks and/or poor achievement, which results in threats or actual violence towards the lecturers and/or management. The reasons which encourage the students' reign of terror are accentuated by the following statements:

L2 articulated that *the lecture can't continue because there are still results outstanding and before they (the students) have the results they will prevent classes from continuing.*

L4 reported that *we (students, person from management and herself) were having discussions about marks and so on. And I said that I can't release marks, because I am not allowed to ... then this guy (person from management) said no but the students perceive this as your function. So it's your responsibility.*

L4 also remarked that *then [I go] back to my office and half an hour they come marching in, they want to occupy our offices and they demand to have their marks.*

L5 described *the crisis situation where our students were again dissatisfied with their marks and um made improper demands... in the sense that they accused members of the department that these are false results and they want to see the true results. ... As a result of these poor results they threatened lecturers and held them hostage and they kept repeating their threats and the students ... um ... threatened lecturers' lives.*

L5 at another time during the hermeneutic conversation stated that *it was about*

three days of being constantly reminded that if I didn't produce a good pass figure [if I didn't mark carefully] then my life would not be quite safe on the campus. It happened in this year (1997) while I was lecturing to the third years.

L7 stated that *sometimes during the selection for honours a few students would come and threaten me with repercussions high up in the ANC, that kind of thing you know.*

L7 also remarked that *it [is] such [an] enormously politically sensitive environment and because people have hidden agendas because they can threaten and intimidate others.*

These threats could be translated into actual acts of violence against private and campus property, as well as acts of physical violence towards individuals, especially the lecturers in this department. The following statements illustrate the translation of threats into actual violence:

L1 referred to *the situation that we had recently where two lecturers [and the campus director] were held hostage ...*

L2 mentioned the *incident of 15 March where lecturers were intimidated and manhandled. Where a [second-year] test was disrupted for the sake of a social function at the university.* (Several lecturers referred to this disruption of this second-year test).

L9 voiced that *students almost physically came to blows with us. So you have to cover yourself against them physically.*

Quite a few lecturers (L1, L3, L4, L5 and L6) commented on the presence of threat of violence rather than actual violence directed towards them. These threats made by students were both unspoken and nebulous or actual threats of physical harm. This is particularly illustrated by L6 who said that *although there was very little violence there was the constant threat of violence. Violence in the sense that we are going to disrupt the campus. We aren't going to kill anyone, but we are going to disrupt the campus. We are going to make it impossible for you to hold exams. We're going to flood the lecture halls; we're going to do that kind of thing.*

Several of the lecturers also referred to themselves as the targets of students' dissatisfaction, frustrations, threats and eventual violence (L2, L3, L5 and L7). L5 mentioned that *at this stage the academic staff often became the target of either the students or the administration/[management] or of one or other hiccup in the bigger system for which we were not always directly responsible*. This is further emphasised by:

L1 stated that *every time something went wrong, we were never technically responsible, ... it was not a problem that we had created by our own actions and yet we were held responsible by students and management of these things.*

L2 highlighted that *the chief executive officer of the campus said ... the academics should be a kind of spokesperson for the students or a channel through which the students can air their grievances ... The problem is that this isn't a channel, it's a target. We feel we're a target.*

L3 emphasised that *people like myself and I suppose the other lecturers also, you become targets, you become the dumping ground for all these frustrations ... we embody them [frustrations and lack of achievement].*

L7 stated that *I felt a bit targeted, if the students had to choose whose office to blow up it could be mine, not because I'm me but because I'm the representative, I probably felt like a target.*

3.13.1.2 *The link between students' underachievement and the reign of terror*

There is a very clear link between the students underachievement and the reign of terror that students exercised on campus. Several lecturers (L2, L4, L5 and L7) describe similar process which start with veiled threats about the lecturer's safety should students not perform to their satisfaction. These threats were not translated into actual physical violence when students performed to their satisfaction. The latter is encapsulated by a statement from L5, viz. *for some reason [the students] did not do as badly as they thought they would and the situation was kind of nipped in the bud.* Thus, threats towards lecturers were prevalent near tests and

examinations when students request and demand the postponement of tests and examinations, probably to avoid underachievement.

L2, L4, L5 and L8 described a process where the underachievement of students seemed to result in cycle of reciprocal animosity between lecturers and students. In this vicious cycle students and lecturers appeared to view each other negatively, enhancing the adversarial nature of the relationships between lecturers and students. L5 emphasised that in the context of constantly being threatened by students *an unbelievable amount of frustration is built up and at the same time there is this powerless feeling because what do you do to these people, and that is accompanied by unbelievable anger, um, directed against the students so that afterwards you avoid them. The students' anger towards the lecturers is conveyed overtly, as by threats, locking up, and verbal abuse.* This process was further accentuated by L8 who remarked that *just as the student starts seeing the lecturer as his enemy later on, or as someone who is against him, because look how badly I'm doing at university, in the same way possibly the lecturer – and I don't think possibly, in many cases it is so – the lecturer begins to see the student as an enemy.* It seems that the conflict between lecturers and students at times remained unspoken, but influenced the quality of the relationship and might result in physical violence being directed towards lecturers. L8 emphasised that *there isn't always direct confrontation [or friction] between the lecturer and the student. When a student walks into my office he immediately picks up the fact that I am irritated because he's walked in. Despite the fact that I help him he would pick it up if I were irritated because I had to help him. This can lead to the kind of situation that we sit with, with the students who take lecturers hostage.* According to L8, this animosity developed into an explosive situation and, like a pressure cooker which is not managed appropriately, resulted in the violent behaviour of students. L8 stated *possibly [the violence] is something that builds up. Possibly the [violent incidents] are an explosion from the pressure, the pressure cooker.*

- A vocal minority spearheading the reign of terror

It seems as if threats and violence came from a small group of students, a *vocal minority* (L1 and L2), who were blindly followed and apparently supported by a *silent majority* (L3). L6 stated that *there's an implicit threat of violence that's fiercely bandied about by small groups of students, but I don't think the potential is very great.* L9 commented that *the few speak for many and that's what concerns me. Why don't the majority speak? What is happening that the majority keep quiet?* This small group of students could be the SRC who seemed to have the power to exercise their influence on terrains which did not fall within the ambit of their responsibility (L7). According to a few of the lecturers this small group of unruly students *can also be hooligans.* L7 said that *they (the SRC) have far too much power and I am afraid of the kind of power they have. To phone you about students' marks, I think that's the kind of turf where they (the SRC) don't belong. Perhaps if they allowed me to react as I'd like to react then my car's tyres would be slashed. Now I rather don't react at all.* This influential small group of students could also have been a few vocal students who in different situations appeared as the representatives of the students. L6 stated that *[management would] be inclined to listen to people who make a noise and people who look as if they are really going to take action.* L7 also stated that *[I] would have looked for a lot of reassurance from the silent majority if it had been offered. Then I would have felt less anxious.* L1 also referred to influential small group as *those that are more activists, I suppose, the ones that gets more involved in the student government and so on, the SRC for example and it is basically the squeakiest wheel [who] gets the oil.* Several of the lecturers (L1, L2 and L3) commented that the silent majority apparently blindly followed the vocal minority who seemed to be spearheading the reign of terror. L3 emphasised that *[students] become voiceless and there's one that speaks, so it doesn't matter what that voice says, they accept it as their voice. ... They will go with the voice that is speaking, no matter what it says.*

3.13.1.3 Threat of violence from management towards lecturers

L4 also reported that she also received threats of physical harm from certain members of management. She (L4) said *that was after the same guy threatened me the previous day. He said to me if I do not release the marks he cannot guarantee my safety.* Juxtaposed against the threat of actual physical harm was unspoken and nebulous threat from quite senior management as reported by L7 who stated that *the process isn't proceeding as it should because there are hidden agendas all the time and because you are afraid to cross [the chief administrative officer] because just now it'll be your car's tyres that are slashed and this is an environment in which I don't feel at all at home.*

Thus, it appears that certain members of management joined students and threatened these lecturers. Consequently, these lecturers' story is also a story of threat from certain people in management. It seems that most of the threats of violence from management came in the face of students threatening management about disrupting the smooth running of the HBU. This threat of violence from management towards lecturers could also be much subtler because it could be located in the non-provision of boundary conditions for lecturers. The non-provision of boundary conditions by management is illustrated by all the lecturers who emphasised that the students, especially the vocal minority, were not disciplined by management for breaking rules, for making threats and committing random acts of violence against the lecturers, management and campus property. L1 voiced that *[he is] extremely frustrated and angry with management for not taking action as they were required to do by law, you know and by their own university regulations they have created and they are supposed to uphold. [Management] were supposed to take action against students, [that] physically assault lecturers.* This allowed the vocal minority and the silent majority to continue their reign of terror which could result in students generally feeling uncontained, as if *they are in quicksand* within the university which did not adhere to its own boundaries. L9 emphasised that *[the students] also feel they are in quicksand and they are drowning. I think a rule works in two ways – the guy that*

breaks it feels that he has got nothing more to hold on to ... he knows for future reference I'm screwed, I'm not getting anywhere. The guy who sees the rule being broken also knows that he has nothing more to hold on to.

Most lecturers (L1, L2, L4, L5, L6, L7, L8 and L9) seemed to think that management's inability to provide these necessary boundary conditions and ensure their safety added to the violence and threat within the HBU. Furthermore it seems that a few lecturers (L1 and L7) wondered whether certain members of management could orchestrate violent acts through students against them. L1 commented that *everybody in management seems scared of the students, or they are in cahoots with the students, I don't know.*

3.13.1.4 Management and lecturers threatened by students

It is postulated that management's threats against lecturers were linked to students threatening to management that they would derail the smooth running of the university. The following statements illustrate these threats:

L6 said that *the top, the highest level of the hierarchy. Because they've been just as anxious to paper over the cracks. If the students say, we're going to see that the exam doesn't get written they say, fine, fine.*

L6 pronounced that *if they (management) say we are going to single out the ringleaders and deal with them then you're running the risk of enormous instability on the campus. ... Because it is a big risk, it's a very big risk.*

L6 stated that *people's main aim (referring to management and the lecturers) is really just to see that the university runs smoothly. Because to a large extent, you know, that's the thing we're all concerned with. We can't afford a lot of problems.*

L7 remarked that she thinks that *they (management) are afraid that mud will be slung at them after that time when it (the selection process) wasn't right and all we worry about is right at the expense of productivity, or they are afraid of intimidation or of retaliation if things don't go the way the Groot kokkedore (SRC) want them to.*

L7 also said that *the students succeeded in making (the chief executive officer) jump through a few hoops at the beginning of the year and he is well aware of the potential power of the students. I have a lot of respect for him for coming to face them. But I think he wants to keep both sides happy and in the process he's being deleted.*

However, it appears that management also received threats of physical violence against them and perhaps even their families. The latter is highlighted by L7, i.e. *perhaps we shouldn't underestimate the power of fear. When the [chief executive officer] said to us the other day, We all like families, my stomach churned a little.*

The threat made by students to management was similar to the threat to lecturers, which seemed to be that students would derail the smooth running of the department. Should students disrupt the daily effective functioning of the department, the department would be in disrepute with management, placing pressure on the department to restore a particular kind of status quo. Based on this threat from students, management (from the most senior to people in lower management) covertly or overtly informed these particular lecturers that they were responsible for attending to the requests of the students, so that the smooth running of the university was assured. The following two statements illustrate lecturers' experience that all levels of management expected them to placate the students:

L2 stated that *the [chief executive officer] of the campus says the students can't approach the administration directly, the academics should be a channel through which the students can air their grievances.*

L4 reported that *she was involved in discussions about marks and so on. And I said that I can't release marks, because I am not allowed to – that whole issue. ... Then this guy (person from management or administration) said no but the students perceive this as your function. So it's your responsibility.*

Several lecturers (L1, L2, L5, L6, L7, L8 and L9) stated that management's decisions were aimed at placating the students and preventing student violence at all costs. Thus, it seems that management managed according to the demands

and desires of the students, ignoring the requirements of all other stakeholders. L6 accentuated that *they (administrative personnel) are totally ignored and when a decision is taken at the top no thought is given to the implications for the staff – both academic and administrative. All they think is: What are the implications in terms of violence? What are the implications in terms of unrest?* According to L5 *she's landed with the consequences of whatever decision is made. I have to adapt to many intrigues, um, when it comes to adjusting and the merits of the decisions taken, well I have a problem.* It also seems as if lecturers had no recourse to address the actions and decisions of management. In actual fact, lecturers and administrative personnel found themselves being pressed and even compelled (L6) to attend to the consequences of the actions and decisions of management. L6 highlighted that *the decision is taken at the top, then hands are washed in innocence, and the people at the bottom are struggling to cope with the consequences.*

L6 discussed in detail how the commitment and work ethic of lecturers and administrative personnel *forces* them to deal with the consequences of actions and decisions by management. Juxtaposed against this is L9's opinion that perhaps the lecturers and administrative personnel also respond to the actions and decisions of management because of the reign of terror wielded by the students. L9's position also suggests that lecturers and administration personnel *supporting* management through their commitment and actions may have reinforced the students' reign of terror. It seems that a vicious cycle was created in which students made demands, management gave in to the demands, and the lecturers and administration unwittingly ensured that these decisions and actions of management were implemented. It is proposed that the process where management seemed to attend to the demands of students at the expense of lecturers and administration fed the students' sense of entitlement and power. L9 emphasised that *[students] can get things done and they got so many platforms from which they speak from. Management is afraid of them, we are afraid of them, administration is afraid of them and they know it. They love it, they go with it.*

Conflict arose between lecturers and management due to the seemingly random changing of decisions, which had already been communicated, to lecturers. L9 commented that *you will get a letter from management saying that with reference to such and such a matter such and such are the decisions taken. Then you as a lecturer proceed or act on that decision. In a few days' time you get a terribly aggressive phone call or letter saying what the hell do you think you're doing? Then you say, excuse me but I'm reacting or proceeding on the basis of the previous letter. But what letter? They don't know what you're talking about.* On the other hand conflict was also elicited between lecturers and management because management did not appropriately communicate decisions or changes to decisions to lecturers. L6 commented that *if a decision is taken [by management] it's never very clear who has taken it. If anything goes wrong no one knows where [the decision] came from.* Instead of dealing with the decisions and management's reasoning behind the decisions, the personal issues of trustworthiness and honesty of lecturers and management alike became the content of the conflict. According to L9 this resulted in the educational issue not being addressed and students *getting their way.* She commented that *you are busy having a screaming match with management about who the fool was in this instance and the students get what they wanted in the first place. And that's exactly how they work.* Thus, the students' demands of management seemed to result in irresolvable conflict between management and lecturers, which the students then manipulated to their advantage. This status quo seems to reflect the scenario where children (the students) trigger conflict between their parents (lecturers and management) in order to get their way. Once again the power that the students apparently wielded in this situation could reinforce their entitlement and their reign of terror.

3.13.1.5 *Integration*

In the light of the above discussion it is evident that the threat of violence against property or individuals (students, lecturers and management) was always present in this HBU. The reactions to the threat from the lecturers and management

resulted from lecturers' and management's knowledge that students could and did implement their threats. The lecturers and management remained unsure as to when and how the threat would be realised or not, but the violence appeared when there was not an *appropriate* reaction to the threat or wishes of certain students and certain members of management. Although L6 is very clear that the threat from students existed, she feels that the lecturers and management overestimated these threats. It seems that this overestimation resulted in management and lecturers attempting to pacify students by trying to address their requests – management often giving in to what the students want. L2 describes this as *almost like parents who can't handle tantrums well. A child throws a tantrum and they refuse to give the child sweets until the tantrum gets so bad that they hand over the sweet and I think that in the past this kind of behaviour was reinforced ... that is, rewarded. If they scream for long enough and lie on their backs and kick their feet up in the air, something gets done. So there's a culture of, this is what works.* Once again, the entitlement and power of the students were reinforced.

Thus, these threats of violence from students influenced the interaction between and behaviour of students, lecturers and management. The threat of violence also seems to have maintained the status quo in the HBU, which for the moment could be considered as a reign of terror by the students. L7 emphasised that it *is also a reign of terror which is maintained by the students.* L6 stated that *I think this threat of violence is the organising principle of our institution. And I think the decisions taken at the top are taken in terms of this. It is a very strong aspect.* It appears that an organisational culture had developed which was marked by the reign of terror by the students. Through the reign of terror, which manifested through threats and actual violence, the students managed to keep management and lecturers hostage. They also held the campus and the educational process to ransom. Ironically the students who seemingly wanted to ensure their educational success through threat and violence have successfully ensured that the educational process, which could have assisted them, is nullified. The above discussion seems to be a discussion of dilemmas. Perhaps students felt powerless due to

their persistent failure and they try to achieve success or exercise their power through well-known means, i.e. the struggle reality. It also seems as if the power which came with the reign of terror protected them from the pain which accompanies failure.

3.13.2 Lecturers' reaction to the reign of terror

The lecturers reported that they attempt to attend to the students' dissatisfaction in several ways, especially by attending to the educational needs of the students. The lecturers attempt to negotiate and collaborate with students around their dissatisfaction. L2 expressed his understanding for students' dissatisfaction by saying that *their motivation for their aggression was how could they measure their progress and how could they go and write the next test if they didn't know [their marks] and all that, and I understand and that's why I had empathy with them.* L4 elaborated about lecturers' attempts to collaborate with students by saying *somewhere even though you open a door for collaboration around that when there's an issue and it is a problem then somehow the gap is there again. And they have to join each other against you to solve the problem, which to me is the old story.* However, the lecturers experienced that negotiation and collaboration with students and management had little effect with regard to addressing students' dissatisfaction, as well as their threats and acts of violence. L7 remarked that *if I knew we could go and sit round a table and talk about the thing rationally then I would have felt we had a chance, but there's no question of rationality here. And that's what I know.* The apparent disappointment with the fact that emotionality and irrationality had more effect than reason and debate, which for centuries have been the cornerstone of interaction in the university, was echoed by L2 and L6. L2 emphasised that *at the university where for centuries reason has prevailed, reason, logic, argument, but now uncontrollable emotionality has become the norm instead of reason.*

Lecturers have also attempted to address students' dissatisfaction, as well as threats and acts of violence, through formal structures by involving management.

However, they experienced that management did not attend to their concerns and rather addressed the requests of the students. In fact it seems that certain members of management expected that lecturers should attend to students' threats, as well as take responsibility for administrative and/or managerial mistakes. L4 reports that *he (person from management) said to me as a white person I cannot understand I will never understand how this works because from their perspective the lecturer is like a mother to the students and she should take responsibility even though it is somebody else's fault.*

It also seems that lecturers tolerated students' threats and acts of violence because they, like management, wanted to prevent a situation where police with riot gear entered the campus and in so doing elicit the pain of the apartheid years. L6 stated that *who wants a scene at university, with police cars, riot gear, all that, you know, and students. It's such a painful and negative thing for all of us; it's obviously something we all want to avoid.* Thus, lecturers experienced themselves as wanting to join management and students in finding a solution for the students' concerns, while honouring the educational process and adhering to the rules and regulations of the university. However, L5, L6, L7 and L8 emphatically commented that they often tolerated the unreasonable demands from students and management in order to prevent the (violent) disruption of the HBU by students. In doing this, they found themselves violating the educational process and maintaining a violent system – the opposite of what they intended to do, i.e. honouring the educational process. L5 commented that *to try to prevent that kind of thing, I think lecturers have been tolerant for much longer, more tolerant, and have just thought, oh but you know, let me give in on a principle so that I can get on with my academic programme. And we've reached the point where the two things can no longer be compared. We can't give way on any more principles because the academic programme, which is sacred and precious to all of us, is suffering badly.* It seems that there was some recognition among lecturers that they, as much as the other stakeholders, had contributed to the current status quo, as well as awareness that they could not tolerate the status quo anymore. L8

emphasised that *to a large extent the system is also to blame for what has happened. It's bad for those couple of students who now find themselves in a spot where they are being made an example of.*

However, several lecturers also discussed their anger and irritation towards students in the face of threats and violence from students (L5, L6, L7, L8 and L9). L4 described a similar situation where she was reluctant to deal with a student, on this occasion because of students' threat of physical violence towards her. Thus, it appears that the more threatened lecturers felt, the more rigid they became in their stance towards students, which again could heighten their conflict with the students. L4 stated that *I remember the other day after we had the drama on campus [the taking hostage of three lecturers by students] a student came to me with a test and I sat there and I remember my reluctance to even consider that maybe I marked too strictly. Because just the previous day students said that if I don't pass you don't come onto the campus. And I think that there is a definite connection between the two. So that if these things are threatened you hold onto them even more.* This discussion by L4 is linked to a threat to academic standards or academic behaviour. This raises the question to what extent the protection of academic standards in the face of threat was a replacement for the conversation about her protection in the face of threat. I am alluding to the fact that it might be easier to have a conversation about the threat to academic standards than the threat to one's personal safety.

3.13.2.1 Lecturers owning their authority through a stay-away

It seems that lecturers witnessing the powerlessness of management in the face of violence or threats of violence by students could have further enhanced their experience of powerlessness in the university. Another surprising experience is how powerlessness in the face of violence or threats of violence by students was so easily transformed into emotional vulnerability and a very real threat to physical safety. L3 eloquently captured the aforementioned idea by saying that *the top man on the campus, sitting in the office with us powerless to tell, you know, Mr X, who*

is one of the, probably unskilled labourers on the campus with a bunch of keys. The [chief executive officer] couldn't even tell him not to lock the door and realising that we were in such a vulnerable position. The witnessing of the powerlessness of the chief executive officer in the face of threat from students were also echoed by L2 who said *there sat the [chief executive officer] and the other man who had the key was ignoring [the chief executive officer], I mean, while he was sitting there.* L3 continued to say *I suppose it was almost like a, I don't want to sound dramatic or anything, but really like a life and death situation. It's like staring survival in the face.* Well, it was definitely the most shocking thing that happened, to be locked up like that was very shocking and I realised how vulnerable we all were. And realising how much power the students actually had over us. On a very personal level, it was totally unacceptable.

It appears that the above incident during which two lecturers and the chief executive officer of the campus were taken hostage by students, culminated in a watershed action on the part of this particular group of lecturers, i.e. a stay-away action. L5 accentuated that the hostage-taking incident was the *last straw which broke the camel's back* by saying *to take the drastic route – what made me decide was that it was just too much, just once too often, the last straw.* Through the stay-away action, lecturers were demanding that the students making trouble and committing violence be expelled from the HBU through a disciplinary action. In actual fact they were adamant that they would not return to their duties until the four students were expelled (L1, L5, L7 and L8). L1 accentuated that *the issue is that we won't go back onto campus until the issue has been dealt with.*

Thus, the sense of powerlessness, disempowerment, vulnerability, anger and disappointment with management's lack of action, as well as their frustration and anger with students, had mobilised lecturers to embrace their individual and group authority. L1, L2, L3, L4, L5, L6, L7 and L8's apparent embracing of authority seems to have been motivated by a desire not to work under the threat to their academic integrity, to their physical safety as human beings and not to be at the

whim of students and management alike. The following statements illustrate the lecturers' reasons for undertaking a stay-away action after the hostage-taking incident, viz.

L2 stated that as a result of the threats our safety could not be guaranteed. We did not feel safe on the campus. So, I think safety was the primary reason.

L2 went on to remark that but I think the impetus is really a result of powerlessness. We can't just write another letter because no notice is taken. So I think the powerlessness is really the biggest motivator. We are beginning to get the feeling that perhaps we must also shout; perhaps we must also use the same tactic because it is all that they listen to. A power tactic instead of a negotiation tactic.

L2 also asserted that we also took legal advice because we didn't want to follow a power play outside the rules, so we stayed within our rights. We're within the laws of the country, our constitutional rights and the labour law.

L3 expressed that at no point do I see it as a power play. At some level, I know perhaps one can see it as a power play but to me it's not about a power play. It's about, being able to be responsible for your decisions being able to plan, and to act with integrity. Because while you're acting under interrogation you're not specifically avoiding whatever's coming at you, you're avoiding the threat, you're avoiding the risks. You're just going to be pushed around.

L3 continued to say that [in the light of the stay-away action] the other [stakeholders] would have realised that we're serious, and would take us more seriously. Hopefully give us some respect. We would have gained a lot of ground. Not just as a [department but the whole university].

L4 emphasised whereas in the past we had big drama and people's offices were burnt down and once I was almost held hostage on campus. Somehow it was always a question of we just go on with it and that's the way it goes and you stay out of trouble and they boycotted and so. It is very different now.

L6 voiced twice that I think it's almost a question of (silence) it's almost as if it's getting too much. She went on to say it had to happen; there have been so many similar situations that people are tired of it.

L8 articulated that *academics have taken such measures just to keep the system running, for the sake of the system, you know. Enough of that, um, we are now forcing the campus structures [through the stay-away action] to fill their posts.*

The latter statement was echoed by several lecturers who were quite adamant that their actions were a way of asking management to appropriately own their authority (L1, L4, L5, L6 and L8) by acting responsibly as required of the management of an HBU. L5 and L6 emphasised that due to the socio-political history of the university and the struggle to liberate itself from that socio-political history, as well as a culture of not taking responsibility, management had lost the skills required for managing the university.

L6 voiced that *my feeling is that often it's the result of the history, and perhaps the result of the organisational skills that are often lacking and because people refuse to take responsibility. ... So often we're destroying those opportunities for people.* L5 emphasised through several statements that *the university no longer knows how to keep an ordinary organisation running. It almost seems to me that so much has gone into the struggle that we've forgotten those other things [the organisational manoeuvres].* Therefore L5 considers the stay-away action of the lecturers as an opportunity *to go back to the first step, to the responsibility. The responsibility, actually we're just helping to put the responsibility back in the hands [of management] where it ought to be.* L5 went on to say that *I don't think it's just a definition in our heads that we want to pass on to them. This system works, it used to work and we'd like to give it back to them. I think we're busy demonstrating to them that they can do it.*

L4, L5 and L6 emphasised that the stay-away action was extremely stressful and anxiety provoking, potentially very painful, as well as marked by guilt feelings with regard to the students from whom the learning opportunity was withheld. Juxtaposed against this was a sense of pride as highlighted by L5. She stated that *I think I am also proud of myself because I have been able to say, there are things*

that are precious to me, things that are not negotiable, things that I have a love for. And I'm prepared to protect them.

Although the lecturers have not specifically stated this, it seems that this particular attempt on the part of the lecturers to re-authorise themselves was done to protect them from emotional and physical threat. Simultaneously, they were making a contribution to the process through which all the stakeholders can begin a process of re-authorising themselves against threat, risk and being pushed around by a group of students. It seems that the lecturers have realised that all their attempts at ensuring the smooth running of the university, actually guaranteed the smooth ruining of the university. This realisation mobilised them to act authoritatively: to undertake the stay-away action to protest against the reign of terror of the students and the apparent lack of appropriate action on the part of management. L3 was aware of the possible consequences of their actions; she remarked that *if we go back, if we give in we would go back. It's over we're doomed. We've got to sit it out. If we sit it out, I've got to tell myself that the worst that can happen is the whole campus closes. Possibly we would stay at home for a couple of months. I don't know if the campus would open in January.* However, the realisation that should these lecturers return to campus they would be *doomed* perhaps to work under the reign of terror was the beginning of a new process, mainly described by L4, of writing a new story, which goes *beyond the stale ideologies*. The rewriting of the story of the HBU will be discussed in the following section.

3.13.2.2 *Conversation that happens through the stay-away action of the lecturers*

Several lecturers (L2, L3, L4 and L5) emphasised that through the stay-away action they were having a different and new conversation with management, fellow-colleagues, the vocal minority and the silent majority. The new conversation was an attempt at mobilising the stakeholders to appropriately own their responsibility and role in this HBU and in so doing creating the effective university they desire. The following excerpt by L5 highlights several aspects of this new

conversation entered into by the lecturers:

L5 said *I think I talk to a lot of people. I speak to students. I think I speak to colleagues, I speak to management, and I think I also speak to XXX. By telling XXX we're all grown up now. Let's move past this business of we can't take a stand or the baby will cry. The baby must also take responsibility for himself.*

Researcher: *And what do you say to management?*

L5 answered *please take responsibility for your share. Let the baby cry then. No, you don't need to soothe him every time.*

Researcher: *And what do you tell your colleagues?*

L5 replied *the colleagues mustn't get such a fright every time the baby throws a tantrum. The colleagues mustn't be afraid when the baby starts screaming. Babies grow out of it.*

Researcher: *And the students, what do you say to them?*

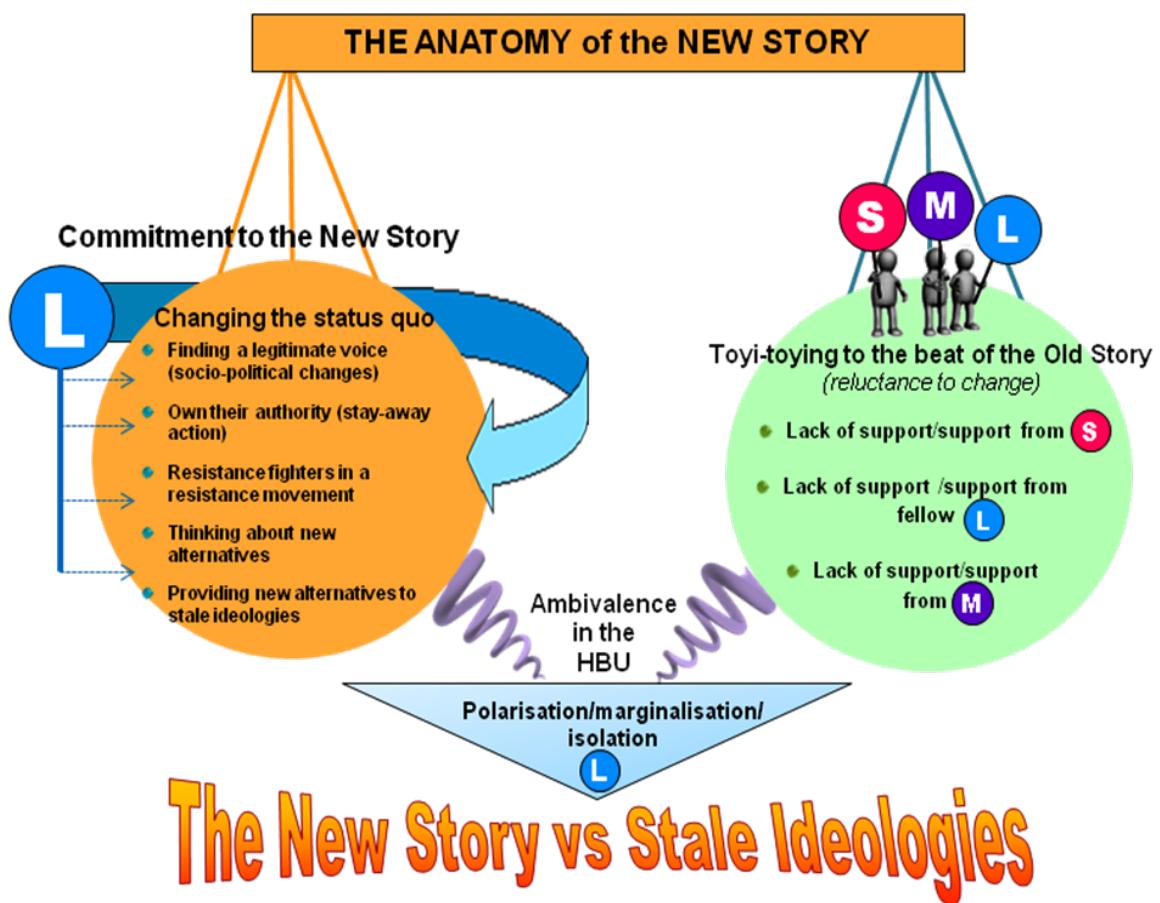
L5 responded *well, I tell the hooligans that there are principles and there are people who like their principles, many of them, and there are other people who would like to enjoy the freedom of the system. To the other students who we suspect are the silent majority, I say, please let your voices be heard. Then I would also like to say that students have to take personal responsibility for their own skills.*

L4 also elucidated that through the stay-away action and in person she had told students that she did not accept *the fact that they can intimidate me and that violence rules*. She also emphasised that her participation in the stay-away action was part of her conviction that *[the students] deserve a better education than this one they are getting. And by saying okay we give in to violence and intimidation you also say yes it is okay with me that you get a second rate education*. I propose that the lecturers were saying through their stay-away action to management and students that there can be no normal education in an abnormal situation.

SECTION D: THE NEW STORY

In this section I show how lecturers through a stay-away action attempted to form new relationships with students, management, the university community and the wider educational fraternity. In the process of writing the new story, they confronted themselves and other stakeholders with the collusion with the old dispensation, while courageously owning their authority in the HBU to write a new story for themselves and others. The anatomy of the new story is illustrated in figure 3.4 and discussed in the following sections.

Figure 3.4: The anatomy of the new story



3.14 THE NEW STORY

The scenario in which lecturers reject the status quo was mainly characterised by the destructive relationship within the triangle has been coined the new story by L4. She discussed the anatomy of the new story in detail and her ideas are reverberated through the statements by several of the other lecturers. L4 referred to the writing of the new story *as a creative thing, as creative in many directions. Creating new courses, creating new research creating new ways of working creating knew ways of interacting with other people in the organisations not just accepting what's there like in that article of ours but writing our story instead of just falling in with the main story.*

It seems that creating the new story involved creating new alternatives for and a new label for the HBU. L4 highlighted that *at this stage I'm very strong in holding on to the defining principles and making clear the new ethics and work on maybe um enlarging a new way of thinking, a new consciousness and creating new realities.* Furthermore, in writing the new story, the need for creating a new label for the HBU was also revealed. L5 accentuated that *this is why we need to do this, so that XXX can outgrow the image of being the stepchild of the academic world. Because it's quite capable of doing this, it's mature enough.* L4 considered the relabelling of the HBU as an ongoing, dynamic process, which continuously challenges them to take the initiative in creating a safe, optimal environment for all stakeholders. L4 stated that *[the relabeling of HBU] is not, I don't want to say flexible, but a dynamic thing is not a stuck thing, we have not put a final label on ourselves. But it is more a question of that we will keep working and developing and take the initiative.*

3.14.1 Socio-political changes propelling the writing of the new story

It is important to note that the writing of the new story also resulted from socio-political changes in the country which have perhaps enabled white people to have

more of a legitimate voice in the HBU. This idea was accentuated by L4 who stated that *I have more of a voice now than what I have felt that I had then. I felt that I had no voice then in the old days and under the old regime. That was part of it I think. But ja, I think it (the socio-political change) was a turning point.* Furthermore, the lecturers may consider the socio-political changes as an opportunity to make a contribution to the country. L9 emphasised that *the important issues that people fought for, died for, things like human rights, freedom of speech, democracy, they must become a reality, not just pretty words on paper. But this must be applied even-handedly and you must not feel that you are being stupid in claiming this.* Through this statement she highlighted her commitment and possibly that of the other lecturers to continue in her way with the socio-political changes that have occurred in the country. L4 echoed that changes in the country had opened up a space that lecturers in this department could fill with new ideas and alternatives to the status quo. She said that *we work with issues that are representative of what is happening in the whole country and we are sort of at the thick of it and that I still enjoy it, it's hard, it's difficult and I still enjoy it.* She continued to say that *I think what has happened in the department is that and I think it has a lot to do with the changes in the society because somehow a space was opened where you could make, which you could fill with the new ideas.*

Additionally, interest from the wider academic fraternity also compelled this group of lecturers to bring about changes in the university, firstly academically and secondly on an interpersonal level. L4 commented that *I think people outside started looking towards people like us and saying oh what have you been doing all this time and what are you going to do in the future?*

From the above discussion it is evident that these lecturers' attempts at writing the new story were driven by changes in the country, in the wider academic fraternity, in the HBU, and (as I will show in 3.14.2) personal changes in the lecturers.

3.14.2 The lecturers' role in writing the new story

There was a realisation among some of the lecturers of their passivity in the face of the destructiveness of students and management's unreasonable demands of them, i.e. for some time they have been *falling in with the main story*. Different lecturers link this passivity to several factors. These factors include being a new lecturer and uncertain of one's power and authority in the HBU, being a white person, being a white woman, a wish to prevent violence in the university to ensure the integrity of the academic process, and understanding students' and management's precarious position in the HBU. The following statements reflect some of these factors:

L4 commented that *maybe historically there is also a call for you to please, to please the students, because what you are an outsider in that community you come in there with your white skin and your ideas that are different. So what do you do, you try to fit in as far as possible.*

L4 continued to say that *as a person that's in me and as a woman that's also, that's expected of me um ja and I have done that in other contexts as well sure so maybe it's part of developing more of an identity of taking a stand as a person.*

L7 emphasised that *I as [a woman] don't like doing unpopular things. That's one of my personal characteristics, I'm a pleaser and I'd like to keep everyone happy, I never want to be the baddy in the story ... and there one just often had to be the baddy. And I found it difficult.*

L8 stated that *I was new to the academic world and new to the department and I sat there half passively wondering what my powers were. And what I was allowed to do or not allowed to do, how far I could go in taking action in such situations. In many situations one stood half passively looking on to see what your powers were as academics – as an academic.*

Juxtaposed against this conversation was the realisation that lecturers should become actively involved in order to bring about constructive changes in the HBU.

This realisation or contemplation seemed to flow from a discussion by several lecturers who acknowledge that they had accepted the destructive status quo in order to prevent violence in the university and an attempt to ensure the smooth running of the academic process. However, they have realised that through their accommodating demeanour they have been actively involved in the smooth ruining of the HBU.

Although the awareness of and need for new story was present for quite some time among the lecturers, most of them considered the stay-away action a crucial action in their attempts to create a new, co-constructed story (by all the stakeholders) of how this HBU should operate. The stay-away action was also a protest against the status quo – taking a stand against unfair practice within the university. L5 emphasised *I believe that there are, there should be, alternative ways, but I feel that this process, [the stay-away action] has gained so much momentum that now there is just one road to take.* I think that lecturers realised that the new story can be negotiated more effectively with the different stakeholders if very clear limits are set for students and management alike. Their attempts at setting very clear limits are discussed in 3.13.2.

Lecturers seemed to feel more empowered within the HBU. Perhaps this was due to a subtle development of an understanding of their role and place within the university, which had culminated in the stay-away action. L4 commented that *I think in the beginning I was more prone to sort of maybe have doubts about things like that and wonder but you know am I a second rate academic because I work at XXX and is it really, shouldn't I sort of doing something more serious.* She continued to say *that through the years I developed a much stronger standpoint on that and a much more positive identity. That I think has a lot to do with our department as well in the way in which we do re-define ourselves, and define ourselves and define our own identity.*

The following discussion highlights some of the changes that lecturers should make or have started to make in order to change the status quo. There was a need for lecturers to appropriately own their authority in the university, especially taking a stand when they realise a principle issue is not handled suitably. This idea is highlighted by L8 who proposed that lecturers *[should] take a firmer stand when things don't go right, you know, in terms of the academic programme or decisions that I have to take to be stricter than in the past*. Another change that is evident was highlighted by L4 who raised the issues of change on a personal level, i.e. *maybe that is part of the personal [growth] that must take place that interacts with how the context is changed. Somehow it is also developing that part of myself which says that somehow I must be able to live with the fact that I am not always pleasing everybody*. It is imperative to realise that the writing of this new story has not only started with the stay-away action. It has been present alongside the more accomodating behaviour of the lecturers. This is highlighted by L4 who commented that *I remember that last year when I sort of challenged these people (management) I couldn't care less what they say or think about me. I definitely was not going to please them*. This idea was also echoed by L7 who stated that in negotiations with the other stakeholders *I didn't want to be the baddy in the story ...and there one often just had to be the baddy*.

L4 compared her role in writing the new story to that of a *resistance fighter participating in a resistance movement*. She stated that *it feels like a resistance movement. A resistance movement against stale ideologies and to me its things – not against persons. It's to do with ideas and I do not know where I have suddenly become so idealistic (laughs) maybe actually idealistic to be a resistance fighter*. L5 considered her role as not just demanding change, but thinking about various alternatives for the status quo. L5 accentuated that *my place is to look just as hard, to keep on looking hard for alternatives*. She went on to say *I question the old rules, I mean do we need to have disciplinary hearings, isn't there an alternative way of doing those things? ... My role in the whole thing is to keep on looking creatively for solutions to other problems*. Furthermore, L5 realised that

although the new story was about creating new alternatives to old stories, the process had to start with a process where boundaries are drawn.

L2 highlighted that in this new story it is imperative that lecturers should be aware of their own stereotypes. They should challenge their old stereotypes in order to generate new alternatives to established ways of operating. L2 commented *to surprise myself because I'm not necessarily acting within it (a stereotype) or to keep asking myself whether I'm acting within a stereotype. If a student makes me angry, I should ask myself whether I would have become just as angry if it had been a white student and I think one must keep on asking yourself that.* Although L2 was focusing on stereotypes pertaining to race, his idea is similar to that of L4 and L5 who seemed to emphasise the need to challenge oneself personally and interpersonally to create *new alternatives to stale ideologies*.

3.14.3 Stakeholders toyi-toying to the beat of the old story

Lecturers discussed throughout the hermeneutic conversations how they wanted to bring about certain changes through their opinions and actions, but their efforts seem to have been unsuccessful thus far. There seem to be many reasons for the difficulty of rewriting the story of this HBU. It seems that the stakeholders, including the lecturers of the university, were invested in holding onto the status quo. L4 accentuated *that lecturers aren't the only voices. Many other people are also singing the old story very loudly and toyi-toying to the beat [of the old story] and so on.* The reluctance of stakeholders to participate in writing the new story could be linked to the fact that people are invested in the old story and as yet have not developed new alternatives to deal with a new status quo. L4 commented that *somewhere I think we are living in a new scenario and we're moving beyond the old scenario and a lot of people are still stuck in the old scenario and I am not blaming them I am wondering to what extent that is inevitable simply because there is no alternative available yet. And somehow I feel in this stage of our development there should be alternatives.*

Additionally stakeholders in this HBU may not have been clear about the nature of the new status quo. The lecturers were clear that they did not want to be exposed to threat and violence and they wanted to create an optimal educational environment for students, but stakeholders (and I think especially the students) were not clear about their power in the new university. Thus, the resistance to change may also be linked to reluctance on the part of the respective stakeholders to change their existing roles and identities within the HBU. L4 discusses in detail her personal reluctance to change her identity as a lecturer. She emphasised that *obviously change is also difficult for us (lecturers). Yes if I think of myself you see there is a danger that you have to give up things that maybe are dear to you. Maybe you have to work in different ways; maybe your role as a lecturer has to be redefined as well. And I am quite attached to my perception of what a lecturer is. It is threatening to think that maybe you have to re-negotiate.*

Another reason for the reluctance may have been that the stakeholders, especially the students, cannot hear that the lecturers wanted to bring about changes in order to enhance their educational experience. The inability of the students to hear the goodwill of the lecturers could be linked to the (k)not of achievement experienced by the students, as well as what lecturers represented for the students. The following interchange between L4 and the researcher highlights this:

L4: *Because obviously you can't forget an old story if you have evidence that the new one is around. And I think part of that is for instance at XXX is this thing that their marks are so poor and I don't know whether it is relevant, but maybe it is, maybe we don't say it loud enough.*

Researcher: *Do you think that lecturers add to the fact that students do not hear the new story?*

L4: *I would absolutely agree with that. It can't be otherwise; otherwise they (students) would hear the new story.*

In the above interchange L4 seems to agree with my suggestion that the lecturers added to students' inability to hear the new story. Although she does not elaborate

on how the lecturers impact on students' ability to the new story, she alludes to the role of the (k)not of achievement preventing students from hearing the new story. Perhaps students cannot hear the good intentions of the lecturers, because lecturers through their new course of action challenged them more clearly with the reality that not everybody can succeed in an academic context. L7 reiterated that *to reflect this verbally and communicate that new academic integrity. In other words, to be fair in giving everyone a proper chance, taking the disadvantages into account. That means not being unnecessarily strict but not compromising on those standards.*

3.14.3.1 Lack of support from fellow-lecturers in writing the new story

The lack of support from other lecturers on campus also seemed to impede the writing of the new story. L3 and L4 referred to fellow-colleagues on campus as behaving like passive bystanders observing Kitty Genovese being attacked on the pavement below. L4 stated that *perhaps it's easy in XXX not to get involved, where it's like that old story of Kitty.* L3 reverberated that *it's a bit like the Kitty story, where they're all looking through the window and watching what's going on but none of them are actually going to say anything.* L3 appeared to be ambivalent about the support or lack thereof she experienced from her fellow-lecturers. Her comments accentuated her ambivalence about the behaviour of fellow-lecturers:

Support from fellow-lecturers: *I think they're kind of watching us with a lot of apprehension, maybe with a bit of awe. You know, where's this is going to go, because it obviously has implications for them. I think that silently a lot of them might be supporting us. There might also be those who don't support us but I think the majority probable do support us.*

Lack of support from fellow-lecturers: *I suppose, well disappointed in them. I'm sure that if it happened to our colleagues, I would want to say something. I would at least want to pick up the phone and say, look I'm supporting you. You know, what's happening? They don't do that. There's a lot of apathy, there is truly a lot of apathy.*

On the one hand it seems that the fellow-lecturers were in awe about the stay-away action of this group of lecturers. Perhaps this awe may indicate some envy on the part of the fellow-lecturers and therefore they did not support the lecturers. On the other hand the lecturers may be invested in a role which seems to be about *not rocking the boat* – hence the observed apathy.

L2 and L6 also spoke about the lack of support they experienced with regard to the stay-away action from other lecturers on the campus. L6 self-consciously mentioned that they were considered by their fellow-lecturers to be suckers for attempting to address the violent behaviour of the students, i.e. *in the end it is the, I can almost say the (laughing) suckers, the suckers that go and um ... (laughing)*. L2 highlighted that the *only place where I get support within the system is from my colleagues within the department*. He continued to say that *the result of this business of the external threat that we as a department are experiencing is the group cohesion within the department, which is far higher than you will get in any department. This is something I experience very positively but naturally it can also be a polarising kind of thing. The perception that we are standing together and we are forming a unit could also be something other people could react against*. Thus, it appears that the lack of support that these lecturers experienced may have increased the cohesion among them, resulting in them becoming even more polarised from the other stakeholders, especially their fellow-lecturers. Simultaneously, the L1, L4 and L6 described their experience of being isolated and marginalised within the HBU.

Another issue that may contribute to the lack of support from fellow-lecturers and consequently the prevention of the writing of the new story is the lack of communication among the lecturers in the university. L9 highlighted that *again that is communication. On one occasion it was said that we must stand together, we must be a unified force. Two days later a meeting was held among a group and it was not communicated to the rest. The unified force is just squashed there and then*. This was echoed by L1 who commented that *[he doesn't] know exactly why*

and there is communication between the departments as to what is happening and so on. But for me personally I am not in contact with a lot of other academics, so I don't really know exactly what is going on there.

Two lecturers said that the lecturers on campus are not a united group and that this could contribute to the lack of support that this particular group of lecturers experience. L6 commented that *another reason is disunity and the lack of interest among a whole lot of people (in doing something about it) because they really don't care.* L9 echoed this idea by saying *I think it's also often true that departments have different orientations, they come from different places and umm I think they don't all have a common vision or idea of what we are trying to achieve.*

Perhaps, due to lecturers' polarisation, marginalisation and isolation, their fellow-lecturers conveniently labelled them a rogue group. Consequently their efforts to constructively change the status quo can be passively observed and actively ignored by these fellow-lecturers.

3.14.3.2 Support or lack thereof from students

Lecturers were concerned about the reaction of the students to their stay-away action as highlighted by the following statements:

L3 *in some ways they there supporting us but I can also understand that they're getting extremely anxious in one way, because their programme is also disrupted.*

L3 *because even if we win this so-called battle, and we go back, we're going to face the students, i.e. the student assistants and students who are members of the association.*

L4 *from the students' side. I can think the type of things they say about me, about us.*

3.14.3.3 Lack of support from management

As discussed with regard to the power struggle, certain part of management spoke a story of support for the lecturers' point of view, while the other part of management could not understand the fuss that the lecturers are making. The opposite positions have resulted in a situation where management seemed to be dragging their feet by not reacting to the demands of lecturers. The following statements highlight this:

L3 emphasised that *we cannot go in and start negotiating with students, because there's nothing to negotiate about, so the ball is totally in [management's] court, as far as I'm concerned, and if he chooses to play it this way, I've got to allow him to play it that way*

L3 went on to say that *if he chooses to play it slowly so that it drags on and on and the programme actually grinds to a halt, and the campus closes down, or whatever happens, happens, that's the way he's chosen to do it.*

L5 stated that *the lecturers ask the university to take action against those students and somewhere between the three there is a very slow process that just doesn't get going, that isn't... umm ... even discipline. A stand is just not taken against such behaviour.*

Lecturers also found management's lack of action very demoralising and depressing as indicated by the following statements:

L4 reported that *yesterday I felt really this thing of holding on and taking a stand and you don't get anywhere actually it is just so demoralising. Then I am thinking that I'll be fighting windmills I'll be fighting lost battles.*

L5 commented that *at the present moment I can't face anything anymore. I feel I have a kind of burnout. This demotivation is the result of the conflict situation, the crisis we are going through.*

Obviously the lecturers found management's behaviour frustrating and disappointing. However, they were willing to hold onto their position in order to say no to the violent behaviour of the students and ask management to own their authority and discipline these students.

3.14.3.4 Lecturers remaining committed to writing the new story

Despite the lack of support received from the different stakeholders, the lecturers were committed to writing the new story by taking a different stand. L4 highlighted that *[the stay-away action] has also exposed me more because issues are more outspoken and there are sometimes more differences and conflict. But it has also improved the positive relations. In a way things are all in all more positive, it's not easy but it is more positive.* Lecturers hoped that by doing something different, they could address the threat and violence in the university in order to interact more effectively with academic endeavour, as several lecturers have vehemently raised on different occasions. L9 accentuated that *I am sick to death of being political, of being money, of being power. I am a lecturer and I love the academic life and I want to spend my time on academic matters.* L7 echoed this by saying *I just want to do my work. I want to sit in my office. I'll work with students, develop courses, and do my studies.*

The lecturers were also very aware that their actions could have disastrous consequences. However, they were prepared to interact with a new outcome to the old story of threat and violence. Regardless of the lack of support and at best the ambivalence experienced from management and other stakeholders, these lecturers were committed to see the stay-away action through. Should this action, at that stage, not end successfully then they have been actively involved in writing the new story for this HBU – writing a significant chapter in their attempts to work with other stakeholders towards transforming the HBU into a safe environment.

3.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have described and analysed the lecturers' experiences in the HBU, by focusing on the relationship between students and lecturers, lecturers and management and among all three stakeholders. At first this story may have seemed to be only a story of violence within an HBU. However, the lecturers also managed to tell a new story marked by the courage of attempting to form new relationships in the presence of old and present conflicts.

In the last chapter, the findings will be integrated with relevant literature in order to present several working hypotheses, as well as two research hypotheses.

CHAPTER 4 LISTENING TO MY CO-AUTHORS: THE SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMICS OF A TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTION

The aim of this chapter was to conceptualise the unconscious processes in a university by using aspects of the systems psychodynamic perspective. I reviewed the literature after completing the data analysis. I considered it important to focus on the unconscious processes involved in the lecturing and learning process, as well as the intergroup processes occurring within the university. In order to do this I presented Kleinian theory and certain sections of Bion's work. Then I used the theory to understand the unconscious processes in the organisation between subgroups (lecturers and students, lecturers and management, as well as within the triad). In this discussion I also relied on the open systems theory to elucidate the unconscious processes in organisation between subgroups. Thirdly, I used Kleinian theory and Bion's work to understand the unconscious processes of the lecturer-student relationship, with specific emphasis on lecturing-thinking-learning processes.

4.1 KLEIN'S THESIS: OUR ADULT WORLD AND ITS ROOTS IN INFANCY

In this section the assumptions underlying object relations theory are discussed. Object relations theory primarily emphasises the importance of an individual's relations with actual (external) and phantasised (internal) objects. Thus, object relations theory presents a theory of unconscious internal object relations in dynamic interplay with current interpersonal (and intergroup) experiences (Ogden, 1983, p. 229). Essentially, object relations theory allows an analysis of the person and his/her relations with internal and external objects (Czander, 1993; Gabbard, 1989; Klein, 1985; Ogden, 1983; Salzberger-Wittenberg, Henry & Osborne, 1983). The term *object* is used because the relations are not only with a person. They can be with a group, an idea, an organisation,

a symbol and in infancy to parts of the body (Czander, 1993, p. 44). The theory postulates that the person is object-seeking in order to address his/her need to be attached, related and connected to other objects such as other people, groups, organisations and work. The importance of the environment, especially the first relationship with the significant other, for the development of a person's internal object relations is particularly emphasised by this theory (Czander, 1993; Gabbard, 1989; Klein, 1985). The internal object relations develop from primitive processes, which the infant uses to defend against primitive, mainly unconscious, anxieties. In adulthood, it is the existence of these primitive anxieties, of a persecutory and depressive nature, that result in the mobilisation of social defense systems, particularly in organisations (Czander, 1993; Gould *et al.*, 2001; Jaques, 1990; Menzies Lyth, 1990; Triest, 1999).

Although the work of several object relations theorists is used in the understanding of unconscious dynamics in organisations, the Kleinian concepts that it is based on, in part, is still the touchstone (Bion, 1961; Gould, Stapley & Stein, 2001, p. 5; Halton, 1994; Klein, 1985; Krantz & Gilmore, 1990). In the following section some of Klein's ideas will be presented.

Freud (1921) has illustrated that the infant's emotions are complex and that the infant experiences serious conflicts. Based on this work, Melanie Klein developed conclusions about the infant's early development and unconscious processes through psycho-analytic play techniques (Likierman, 2001; Segal, 1992). Klein contributed towards our understanding of how the infant perceives his/her external reality. She proposed that the infant perceives the outside world in terms of internal concerns and that one's experiences in the world reinforces some anxieties and diminishes others (Czander, 1993, p. 45). Although these anxieties are diminished, they are never totally resolved and the individual attempts to resolve these anxieties through his/her relationships within the different context of his/her adult life. Of great importance is the idea that the adult's

reactions to his/her experiences have its roots in early emotional experiences and unconscious phantasies (Klein, 1985; Triest, 1999). The latter assumption will be illustrated throughout the following sections.

The infant forms his/her first primal relation to a significant other based on the innate awareness of the primary care-giver. The primary care-giver represents both good and bad forces or objects to the infant, in that the infant experiences both caring behaviour (good or ideal forces) and experiences frustration and pain (bad or terrifyingly persecutory forces) in relation to the primary care-giver (Klein 1985; Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1970, Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.*, 1993; Segal, 1992). Klein proposed that the infant deals with these conflicting experiences (the care-giver as ideal and terrifyingly persecutory) through several primitive processes, such as introjection, projection, splitting, as well as projective and introjective identification (Bion, 1961; Fox, 1996; Gould *et al.*, 2001; Horwitz, 1985; Jaques, 1990; J. Klein, 1987; M. Klein, 1985; Menzies Lyth, 1990; Ogden 1983). Furthermore, the predominance of particular patterns of impulses (libidinal and aggressive), anxieties (persecutory and depressive) and the aforementioned primitive processes indicates two particular early infantile or pre-oedipal phases of development, i.e. the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive position (Diamond & Allcorn, 2003; Halton, 1994; Jaques, 1990; Klein, 1946, 1985; Likierman, 2001; Menzies Lyth, 1990; Salzberger-Wittenberg; 1970; Segal, 1992). The paranoid-schizoid position is present for the first three to four months of development, and the depressive position predominates for the next few months until the end of the first year of life (Jaques, 1990; Likierman, 2001; Segal, 1992). Likierman (2001, p. 89) stated that according to Klein:

the object-world of the child in the first two or three months of its life could be described as consisting of hostile and persecuting, or else of gratifying parts and portions of the object world. Before long the child perceives more and more of the

whole person of the [primary care-giver], and this more realistic perception extends to the world beyond the [primary care-giver].

The two positions and the concomitant anxieties, impulses and defense mechanisms as proposed by Klein will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

4.1.1 Paranoid-schizoid position

The paranoid-schizoid position is associated with the infant splitting off and projecting libidinal and aggressive impulses onto the primary care-giver and introjecting the complementary aspect from the external world, in order to create part objects in his/her internal and external reality (Fox, 1996; Klein, 1946, 1985). The infant through projective identification gets the primary care-giver to behave in accordance with the projection, while the infant through introjective identification behaves in accordance with the introjected aspects of the external reality. Persecutory anxiety, which is centrally experienced within the paranoid-schizoid position, arises from the infant projecting sadistic, aggressive impulses onto the primary care-giver. The infant then introjects these sadistic aggressive impulses again, resulting in the infant being afraid of its own sadistic, aggressive impulses (Likierman, 2001; Segal, 1992). Consequently the infant attempts to protect him/herself from these sadistic, aggressive impulses (Salzberger-Wittenberger, 1970) by splitting all internal objects into good and bad, idealising the good part objects and projecting the bad part objects (Jaques, 1990). Thus, through these impulses, persecutory anxieties and defense mechanisms the infant produces and maintains a state of *illusory goodness and self-idealisation* as a defense against persecutory anxiety (Halton, 1994). However, the internal and external reality, marked by part objects (Armstrong, 1999; Diamond & Allcorn, 2003), is also characterised by a terrifying persecution, against which the self must be protected (Segal, 1992).

4.1.1.1 *Impulses, persecutory anxiety and defense mechanisms*

Introjection and projection are two of the primary processes through which the infant makes emotional relationships with its objects (Jaques, 1990). According to Czander (1993) introjection and projection are used simultaneously through the process of splitting. According to Gabbard (1989), Jaques (1990) and Menzies Lyth (1990) the fundamental source of splitting lies in the idea that the infant's care-giver is both nurturing and frustrating. It allows the infant (and when required allows the adult) to keep the contradictory introjects and affects separated from one another, e.g. pleasure from unpleasure, ideal from terrifyingly persecuting, good from bad, by projecting all his/her unacceptable emotions onto the primary care-giver (Gabbard, 1989; Jaques, 1990; J. Klein, 1987; M. Klein, 1946, 1985; Likierman, 2001; Menzies Lyth, 1990; Segal, 1992).

The processes of introjection and projection based on splitting can take two forms. At the onset of anxiety the object (primary care-giver) is split into good and bad parts by the infant. The infant then forms a relationship with the part-objects, good mother and bad mother (Baum, 2002; Bion, 1959). Depending on the unconscious need of the infant, goodness or badness is projected onto the object (primary care-giver) (Czander, 1993). Through projection the infant experiences relief from the anxieties caused by his/her conflicting needs and emotions, e.g. being dependent on the mother, and needing to separate from the mother (Halton 1994). The infant projects particular feelings into the primary care-giver who is perceived as a good or bad object (Gabbard, 1989; J. Klein, 1987; M. Klein, 1946, 1985; Segal, 1992). Additionally, the external world, especially the complementary aspects of that which was projected onto the primary care-giver, is introjected by the infant. Through the introjection of external factors into the self, the infant's or individual's inner world is to some extent a reflection of his/her external world. In other words, when splitting of the object into ideal and terrifyingly persecutory parts, the infant also splits his/her internal reality into an illusionary ideal part, as well as

terrifyingly, sadistic, and persecutory part, through the introjection of the perceived good and bad primary care-giver (Jaques, 1990).

Given that the introjection now takes place within the paranoid-schizoid position, the infant's internal reality will be split into idealised, larger-than-life, wonderful part object and excessively persecuting, dangerous part object (Segal, 1992). The function of the splitting of good and bad objects is to keep the persecutory (fearful) part-object from damaging the idealised part-objects within the ego (Bion, 1959; Jaques, 1990; Segal, 1992). Persecutory guilt is experienced when the self feels that the good object was spoilt through an envious attack (Klein, 1975; Speziale-Bagliacca, 2004).

Splitting, introjection and projection are part of normal development (Fox, 1996; Gabbard, 1989; Halton, 1994; Klein, 1946, 1985) which allows the infant to organise his/her intra psychic reality (Gabbard, 1989). Although the processes of splitting, introjection and projection becomes modified due to normal development, these processes remains essential to an individual's interaction with his/her external reality throughout life (Gabbard, 1989; Klein, 1946, 1985; Ogden, 1993). Thus, the unconscious phantasies of the infant *capture* the nurturing aspects, as well as the depriving and persecutory aspects of the primary care-giver as perceived by the infant. As the individual grows older, the unconscious phantasies become more complex and can be transferred onto a variety of objects, such as other groups within the organisation (J. Klein, 1987; M. Klein, 1946, 1985). Thus, students can respond to a lecturer, a body of lecturers, and to management as if these groups are primary care-givers.

4.1.1.2 Further defense mechanisms: projective and introjective identification

Gabbard (1989) and Klein (1946; 1985) proposed that splitting and projective identification are two interrelated mechanisms through which the infant and later the

individual organises his/her internal experiences of the external reality. Projective identification refers to an unconscious interpersonal interaction in which the individual splits off and puts part of him/herself into an external object – the recipient of the projection (Apprey, 1993; Bion, 1962; Jaques, 1990; Menzies Lyth, 1990; Ogden, 1993). The recipient of a projection reacts to it in such a way that his/her own feelings are affected, i.e. he/she unconsciously identifies with the projected feelings (Apprey, 1993; Czander, 1993; Gabbard, 1989; Halton, 1994; Jaques, 1990; Klein, 1985; Menzies Lyth, 1960, 1990). Not only does the projector identify with the projected part in the object (feels close to the object), but also attempts to control the object in such a way that the object reacts and behaves in accordance with the projection (Czander, 1993, p.138; Segal quoted in Czander, 1993, p. 27; Fox, 1996; Jaques, 1990). Czander (1993) also proposes that projective identification requires unconscious collusion between the projector and the object or recipient, i.e. willingness on the part of the recipient to accept and behave in accordance with the projections.

Splitting and introjective identification are interrelated mechanisms through which the infant and later the individual organises his/her internal experiences of the external reality. Introjective identification refers to an unconscious interpersonal interaction in which the individual seems to identify with an introjected part or whole object. The infant's or adult's behaviour does not only come from him/herself, but from the internalised other (Cilliers & Koortzen, 1998; Diamond & Allcorn, 2003; Jaques, 1990). It is proposed that the self reacts to an introduction in such a way that his/her own feelings are affected, i.e. he/she unconsciously identifies with the introjected feelings.

This discussion illustrates that through projective and introjective identification an individual's intra-psychic splitting can manifest as interpersonal splitting in his/her personal relationships, such as when he/she functions as a member of a group, as well as when he/she works with other groups in an organisation (Czander, 1993; Gabbard,

1989; Jaques, 1990; Krantz & Gilmore, 1990). Furthermore, Jaques (1990), Menzies Lyth (1960), Miller (1989) and Moylan (1994) also proposed that splitting, introjection, projection, as well as introjective and projective identification, are reactivated in our relations, i.e. between people, group members, between groups in a system or organisation and between organisations.

4.1.2 Depressive position

Klein (1946; 1985) proposed that the excessive use of these primitive processes within interpersonal relationships results in the infant or individual being stuck in the paranoid-schizoid position. The re-owning of projections, as well as reduction in splitting, polarisation and projective identification, results in a shift from the paranoid-schizoid to the depressive position. In this position, the infant moves from interacting with part objects (seeing the primary care-giver as only good or bad), to interacting with whole objects (recognising that it is the same object that is at times both frustrating and nurturing) (Halton, 1994; Jaques, 1990; Klein, 1946, 1985; Krantz, 2001; Menzies Lyth , 1990; Miller, 1989). Thus, the depressive position is an attempt at making whole object relationships (Jaques, 1990). So this points to the integration of opposites. However, Likierman (2001) warns against seeing the theory about the depressive position as Klein's major contribution. Rather it is her explicating of the depressive anxieties and the need to contain these anxieties in order for the infant (the child, the teenager and adult) to deal with them in order to accomplish the required integration, that mark the contribution of the depressive position (Likierman, 2001).

4.1.2.1 Impulses, depressive anxiety and the depressive position

In order for there to be growth in an individual, he/she should experience a shift from the paranoid-schizoid position to the depressive position. Through the depressive position

the infant or individual is able to give up the simplicity of self-idealization and face the complexity of his/her internal and external reality. This results in painful feelings of guilt, sadness and concern for the safety and well-being of the primary care-giver, i.e. experiencing depressive anxiety. Depressive anxiety arises out of the conflict of ambivalence experienced, i.e. the love and hate experienced towards one and the same person. The infant realises due to normal development that the primary care-giver who he/she loves, and the one that he/she attacks in rage, anger and envy, are different aspects of one and the same person (Czander, 1993; Jaques, 1990; Klein, 1946, 1985; Likierman, 2001; Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1970). If the infant realises that the badness of the object is due to his/her aggressiveness, depressive guilt and pain is experienced, as well as relief and hope, making the integration of the bad and good part objects within the self possible. This integration does not occur without the experience of anxiety and guilt (Klein, 1975; Speziale-Bagliacca, 2004).

Applying this idea to the relationship between students and lecturers suggests that the student who experiences depressive anxiety realises that the lecturer who he/she loves and the one who he/she attacks in rage, anger and envy are different aspects of one and the same person. Differently put, the lecturers who experience depressive anxiety realise that the students and management who are possibly loved and attacked in rage, anger and envy are different aspects of one and the same group.

Thus, the relinquishing of the ideal primary care-giver involves, on the part of the infant, an acknowledgement that in reality the good primary care-giver exists and realising that the good primary care-giver is human and imperfect (Segal, 1992). At this point the infant experiences intense emotional pain due to the fear that through his/her destructiveness in reality and phantasy he/she has damaged or will damage or destroy the good mother. Herein lies another difference between the two positions. In the paranoid-schizoid position the infant attempts to ensure his/her own safety from persecutory part objects,

while in the depressive position the infant attempts to ensure the safety of the good primary care-giver from his/her own sadistic, aggressive impulses (Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1970).

Although the infant attempts to control his/her destructive feelings, Salzberger-Wittenberg (1970) states that the infant continues with the aggressive, sadistic attack against the primary care-giver, and *remembers* previous hatred, aggression and sadism directed at the external object. This behaviour of the infant towards the external object results in feelings of sadness, eliciting the wish to repair the damage internally and externally (Halton, 1994; Klein, 1985). According to Czander (1993, p. 51) reparation is largely the result of omnipotent fantasies of the infant that the object will be destroyed or used up. The reparation may take many forms in infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood. For example, in adulthood by engaging in many acts of constructive and creative work in an organisation, attempts at reparation are made (Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1970; Spezzale-Bagliacca, 2004).

4.1.2.2 *Defense mechanisms and the depressive position*

Klein (1985) considers the depressive position as similar to the mourning process. Successful mourning entails working through the experiences of the depressive position and involves deepening of the infant's relationship to his/her inner objects, in that the real, good loved objects in the external reality have been incorporated and reinforced within the internal reality (Czander, 1993; Jaques, 1990; Segal, 1992). On the other hand, unsuccessful mourning entails the experience by the infant that the internal and external good objects are irreparably damaged and lost, and this leads to the experience of depression and despair. The resultant defense mechanisms used by the infant are manic defenses. The manic defenses entail a denial of the psychic reality, denial of the loss of the loved object, as well as an omnipotent control and contempt for the damaged

object as a means of avoiding persecution by the damaged bits. Splitting, reification and idealisation of the original good part of the original whole object, and the concomitant projective identification, accompany the experienced omnipotence. The manic defenses are further reinforced through the regression to the paranoid-schizoid position, during which persecutory anxiety is elicited which could lead to the intensification of omnipotence (Jaques, 1990, p. 423).

It is important to bear in mind that the depressive position cannot be completely maintained, because once the self-esteem is threatened the person in his/her adult life tends to regress to functioning from the paranoid-schizoid position (Halton 1994; Likierman, 2001; Miller, 1989; Segal, 1992). According to Likierman (2001) the infant and adult constantly oscillate between a depressive, intersubjective position of functioning and a more primitive ego-centric paranoid-schizoid position. For example the maintenance of the paranoid-schizoid position suppresses the depressive position (Bion, 1961; Klein, 1946, 1985; Lawrence, 2000; Segal, 1992), while this shift from the paranoid-schizoid position to the depressive position activates and maintains our ability to work and be creative (Brown, 1993; Czander, 1993; Halton, 1994).

4.1.3 Three modes of experiencing the world

Ogden (Diamond, Allcorn & Stein, 2004; Ogden 1989) extended Klein's theory by adding another position, the autistic-contiguous mode of experience. Although this position will not be discussed in detail, it is important to be aware of this position with regard to the understanding of boundaries in section 4.4.6.

The autistic-contiguous is a pre-symbolic, sensory mode in which our sensory perception and surface contiguity develop from our first relationship with the external object world. In the autistic-contiguous mode, feelings are generated through the sensation of surfaces

coming together in either differentiation or merger (Diamond *et al.*, 2004, p. 39). The primary anxiety in this mode is the terror which is generated by the experience of formless dread, i.e. the disruption of continuous sensation. Through the associated defenses the person attempts to re-establish the feeling of continuity and integrity of his/her surface (skin).

Ogden, in contrast to Klein, proposed that the three positions are not developmental phases, but rather processes through which meaning is ascribed to perceptions. It is also suggested that these positions can be understood in terms of four interdependent dimensions, viz. the primary anxiety and associated defense(s), the quality of object relatedness, the degree of subjectivity, and the form of symbolisation. These three positions are also interdependent and in dialectical interplay with each other – simultaneously creating, negating and preserving each other. Thus, the positions cannot exist as pure states, because the positions provide a context for each other and are interdependent (Diamond *et al.*, 2004; Ogden, 1989).

4.1.4 Envy and gratitude

According to Likierman (2001), Klein emphasised a fundamental and conflictual duality in all mental operations. This implies that envy is one side of the coin, while gratitude is the other side. Envy diminishes and gratitude enhances the quality of pleasure. In the following two sections the destructiveness of envy, as well as the creativity flowing from gratitude will be discussed.

4.1.4.1 Envy

According to Czander (1993, p. 48), Hiles (2007) and Likierman (2001) Klein places envy in a dominant position in her theory. By focusing on envy, the interpersonal nature of her theory is enhanced because envy evolves from the dyadic interpersonal relationship

where an individual envies the other through spoiling the thing that is most admired or begrudging the other happiness and pleasure (Czander, 1993; Likierman, 2001; Mouly & Sankaram, 2002; Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1970; Stein 2000). Thus, envy constitutes an essential aspect of human destructiveness (Likierman, 2001; Mouly & Sankaram, 2002; Siltala, 2004) and draws attention to how disturbances can arise in the presence of good-enough experiences (Segal, 1992). Besides envy, Klein also focused on jealousy and greed as aspects of sadistic attack which underpins human destructiveness which contributes to the infant's difficulties in building up the good object (Hiles, 2007; Klein, 1975; Likierman, 2001, p. 174; Mollon, 2002). Envy can appear in the guise of greed. The greedy person wants more than his/her fair share to obtain maximum enjoyment for him/herself. But the envious person wants more because she/he cannot bear the other person's enjoyment and wants to deprive him/her of it by spoiling or destroying the envied aspect (Klein, 1975; Mollon, 2002; Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1970). In jealousy the fear is that the one which is loved was or will be lost to another, while in envy the other (or as stated by Klein the good object) is attacked through spoiling or destroying (Hiles, 2007; Mollon, 2002).

Envy is stimulated in situations where dependency and helplessness are experienced, e.g. situations of disparity in resources, actual deprivation and lack of provision of satisfying experiences (Siltala, 2004; Stein, 2000). A care-giver can also provoke envy by providing too much, i.e. the receiver can experience the care-giver as parading his/her riches and superiority, which can stimulate envy. The latter denotes the gratuitous envy of the good object. However, the latter also denotes the experience of deprivation, in that the offering is experienced as not within the infant's omnipotent control. Differently put, the offering of the other is experienced as abundantly available and yet unattainable (Hiles, 2007; Likierman, 2001). In other words the significant other may in reality not be depriving, but can be perceived by the infant as depriving for various reasons.

Hiles (2007), Salzberger-Wittenberg (1970) and Stein (2000) propose that envy involves a violent, unwarranted attack on something or someone experienced as good in some way, or on someone experienced as withholding, and is not concerned with self-preservation. Thus, envy destroys pleasure, enrichment and creativity in the self and in others (Likierman, 2001; Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1970; Segal, 1992; Stein, 2000). Envy is defended against by confusion, flight from the good object to others, devaluation of the object, devaluation of the self, stirring up envy in others, greed, stifling of love and intensifying of hatred – used to deny or evade the experience of envy. These defenses, which are emotional and cognitive in nature, are generally attempts at contemptuous devaluation of the object so that it can be envied to a lesser extent. However, in this destructive attack on the other, the infant also experiences an inability to enjoy what is offered, a secret desire to destroy the offering and a resulting sense of deprivation (Likierman, 2001).

Klein (quoted in Likierman, 2001, p. 185) proposes that envy on the unconscious level is accompanied by destructive phantasies that lead to an archaic sense that the good object has omnipotently been attacked and damaged. If spoiling envy is experienced against the object during the paranoid-schizoid position, splitting cannot occur and the idealised object cannot be maintained, because the idealised object has been destroyed. If the object cannot be idealised it becomes persecutory and feared, and the rage against the object precipitates guilt (Czander, 1993, p. 49). Furthermore, envy sabotages the ability to introject that which is beneficial or good from the object (Likierman, 2001).

According to Mollon (2002) envy, jealousy and shame are intimately related. Through shame the infant or individual become disconnected and feels inferior, misunderstood or excluded from the other which could lead to the experience of envy and jealousy. Importantly, envy results when the desired other is experienced as separate and unavailable, while jealousy is experienced when we perceive that our desired place with

the other will be or is being occupied by another rival (Klein, 1975). Aloofness towards, contempt for, and devaluation of, the other could be defenses against envy, shame and jealousy (Mollon, 2002).

4.1.4.2 *Gratitude*

Enjoyment flows from gratification and leads to gratitude, resulting in the wish to return gratification and enjoyment. Enjoyment forms the basis of gratitude, while gratitude forms the basis of trust in one's own goodness and the goodness of the other (Hiles, 2007; Klein, 1975). The establishment of the good object, by experiencing the (m)other as generous and sharing, is important for the experience of hope, trust, belief in goodness, admiration and gratitude (Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1970). Through constant interaction with the good (m)other the infant learns to distinguish between the internally attacked and damaged (m)other and the external resilient (m)other. Thus, the infant is able to distinguish between phantasy/internal reality and external reality. Although Klein (1975) purports that the distinction between guilt and gratitude should be understood, she acknowledges that elements of guilt exist within the experience of gratitude.

Gratitude and identification with the fortunes of others can be used to counteract the destructive elements of rage, greed, envy and hatred which arise from (felt) scarcity of attention, honour, love, knowledge or whatever is wanted (Gustafson & Cooper, 1985). According to Klein (1975) envy can be creatively managed by owning envy, working towards experiencing gratitude towards the envied good object, as well as compensating for the destructive attack through reparation. Experiencing admiration towards the previously envied good object denotes a shift from spoiling enviousness to gratitude and admiration (Mouly & Sankaram, 2002; Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1970).

4.1.5 Socially constructed defenses

Thus far, I have been discussing the psychodynamics of the infant. I considered this discussion necessary because it will elucidate the discussion of psychodynamics within organisations. Klein's understanding of the relationship between the (m)other and the infant has been applied to the relationship between the individual and groups (see figure 4.1), as well as between groups in the organisation (Amado, 1995; Baum, 2002; Long, 2004; 1990; Miller, 2004; Obholzer, 2001; Powell Pruitt & Barber, 2004).

Figure 4.1: Parallels between infants with mothers and individuals with groups

Infant's relationship with mother	Individual's relationship with group
<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Struggles with fusing/joining and separating/isolation* Experiences both nurturance and frustration* Experiences strong ambivalent feelings<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Experiences both love and hate simultaneously- Elicits defenses mechanism of splitting and projective identification to cope with ambivalence- Struggles with tension between engulfment and estrangement	

Source: Wells (1985, p.117)

The application of object relations work in organisations had resulted in theorising about social systems as a defense against depressive and paranoid anxieties (Jaques, 1990; Menzies Lyth, 1990). Jaques (1990) also proposes that changes in an organisation, even very small changes, elicit massive anxiety about how paranoid and depressive anxieties will be contained in the *new* organisation. In other words, organisations have unconscious and conscious tasks, which impact on the experience of stress and the efficiency of the organisation (Mosse, 1994).

Powell Pruitt and Barber (2004), using the work of Jaques and Menzies Lyth, suggest that schools and educational system in general, like hospitals, employ a particular set of maladaptive defenses aimed at reducing the persecutory and depressive anxieties of the management, staff and students attending them.

However, Jaques (1995a, 1995b) has refuted his position of organisations being used as social systems against anxieties, stating that it is poorly structured organisations which lead to destructive behaviour. Amado (1995), Miller (2004) and Obholzer (2001) challenged this position, by emphasising that indeed poorly structured organisations, as well as the psychodynamics of the people who work in the organisation, influence the destructive elements in organisations. I agree with the latter position and therefore will use social systems as a defense against depressive and paranoid anxieties within this research project.

Furthermore, Stein (2000) proposes that within systems psychodynamic thinking, social systems as defenses against anxiety have been developed extensively, resulting in the *defense against anxiety* paradigm. A new paradigm, namely the social system as envious attack is being proposed. Although envy and defensiveness may empirically occur together, they are conceptually entirely distinct (Stein, 2000). Thus, it is proposed that social systems are characterised by both envy and defenses against anxiety, simultaneously or at different times, levels and parts (Stein 2000). In the following section the social system as a *defense against anxiety* and as an *envious attack* will be discussed in more detail.

4.1.5.1 Social systems as a defense against anxiety

According to Klein (1985) our adult world and its roots in infancy implies that the relation to early figures keeps reappearing and unresolved problems from childhood are revived

in modified form during adulthood. Klein (1985), Krantz (2001), Lawrence (2000) and Nutkevitch (1998) proposed that splitting, projective identification and idealisation typical of the schizoid-paranoid position are vital to the understanding of the psychodynamics of the relationships between superiors and subordinates (participating in intergroup transactions), especially in regard to negative or destructive elements. According to Halton (1994, p.14), splitting and projections (and introjection and projective identification) of conflicting emotions by an individual and/or group into the different groups of an institution is an inevitable part of institutional processes. In projecting feelings of badness outside the self, the group and/or the organisation produces and maintains a state of *illusory goodness and self-idealisation* (Czander, 1993; Halton, 1994). Should the structures of the organisation maintain these primitive processes, it could result in the organisation getting stuck in a paranoid-schizoid projective system (Baum, 2002; French & Vince, 1999; Halton, 1994; Krantz, 2001; Triest, 1999). Segal (1992) proposes that these anxieties in the paranoid-schizoid position are life and death anxieties. Individuals in the work context who function in this way have a preoccupation with survival and caring for themselves, because they feel that no one else will care for them. In such a work context a paranoid-schizoid atmosphere of distrust and suspicion, *two-face placation* and back-biting, erupting sometimes into open attack, can maintain itself (Segal, 1992, p. 35).

This raises the question how groups uses the organisation as a defense against anxiety. Firstly, in a system the management can use other groups as a blank slate into which they can project their unwanted and undesired parts, cast them into particular roles and behave as if the other group is like the phantasy they have created about them (Kahn & Green, 2004). Through this they are able to locate troubling issues into other groups in the larger system. But even more sinister, through abusing their power they are able to punish a particular group for issues that they are actually responsible for. So instead of working on the troubling issues or dynamics, these are projected onto another, usually

subordinate, group, e.g. management project troubling issues onto employees. These dynamics are projected into another group – the group is then seduced into acting out the dynamics on behalf of management and then even gets punished for doing so. Kahn and Green (2004) further suggest that in doing so management is punishing, abusing and devaluing that part of themselves which they consider to be unacceptable. This situation denotes the corruption of the holding environment resulting in an abusive environment (Miller, 1990; Winnicott, 1965).

4.1.5.2 *Social systems as an envious attack*

Several authors have proposed that envy is a destructive phenomenon in groups, organisations and society (Bion, 1985; Mouly & Sankaram, 2002; Stein, 2000). The conceptualisation of envy assists in focusing on modes of activity that are attacking and not only those which are defensive, in a group, organisation and society (Bion, 1985; Stein, 2000). Czander (1993) proposes that envy underlies all conflict within organisations. According to Mouly and Sankaram, (2002) envy threatens hope in organisations.

4.2 THE BASIC ASSUMPTION GROUPS

The psycho-analyst Wilfred Bion has contributed to the understanding of unconscious processes in groups by providing a framework for understanding and analysing irrational features of unconscious group life (Bion, 1962, 1975; Eisold, 1985; Hirschhorn, 1988; Lawrence *et al.*, 2000; Miller, 1989; 1998; Sher, 2002; Stokes, 1994a). Bion proposes two main opposing tendencies present in the group at the same time:

- the sophisticated work group (W group) who wishes to face and work with reality;
- the basic assumption group (ba groups) where group members have a wish to evade reality when it is painful and/or could cause psychological conflict within

and between themselves (Cilliers & Koortzen, 1998; Jarrett & Kellner, 1996; Lawrence *et al.*, 2000; Miller, 1998; Rioch, 1975b; Stokes, 1994a; Wheelan, 1994).

A tension exists between the sophisticated work group and basic assumption group. The tension is kept in equilibrium by behaviour or psychological structures, i.e. individual defense systems, expectations and group norms (Miller, 1989; Stokes, 1994a). Importantly, the basic assumptions can be temporarily used to further the endeavours of the work group (Lawrence *et al.*, 2000; Miller, 1998).

According to Lawrence *et al.* (2000) the members of the work group are usually engaged with the group's primary task by mobilising sophisticated mental activity, managing the inner and outer and striving to manage themselves in their roles. Members can hold in mind an idea of wholeness and interconnectedness with other systems by using their skill of understanding that the inner world of the group as a system exists in relation to the external reality of the environment. Thus, members functioning as part of a work group can comprehend the psychic, political and spiritual relatedness that they are part of and co-creating. Lawrence *et al.* (2000) propose that the work group can be seen as an open system in which the members can, by thinking, transform experience into insights and understanding.

However, groups that act in such a rational manner are rare and possibly an idealised construct. Rather, groups behave in accordance with a regressive group mentality, i.e. the basic assumption group. Differently stated, in basic assumption groups, members behave collectively in a psychotic manner – this psychotic manner is defined as some degree of regression in the group, marked by some loss of contact with reality (Eisold, 1985; Lawrence *et al.*, 2000; Menzies Lyth, 1990).

4.2.1 Basic assumption mentality

The basic assumption group consists of unconscious wishes, fears, defenses, phantasies impulses and projections (Eisold, 1985). Furthermore the behaviour of the basic assumption group is linked to psychotic anxiety and mechanisms of splitting and projective identification ... characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive position (Bion, 1961, p.164).

Through the basic assumption a group forfeits its ability to problem-solve, has impeded adaptive processes and has insufficient development of the group members and the group (Stokes, 1994a; Turquet, 1985). Consequently, the ineffective functioning of subgroups within a system or organization will impede the functioning of that system or organization (Koortzen & Wrogemann, 2003; Wrogemann, 2002).

The basic assumption group functions according to three covert basic assumptions, i.e. dependence, flight and fight, and pairing (Eisold, 1985; Lipgar, 1998; Miller 1989; Rioch 1975b; Turquet 1985). Turquet (1985) added the basic assumption of oneness, while Lawrence *et al.* (2000) added the basic assumption of me-ness. In the following sections the nature of these basic assumptions will be discussed.

4.2.1.1 *The basic assumption of dependence (baD)*

In this group the members have a need for security and protection from one person, the designated leader. The leader is expected to let the group members feel safe and not to confront them with the demands of the group's real purpose. Thus the leader could become the focus of a symbiotic or parasitical form of dependency, which inhibits growth and development (Bion, 1961; Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000; Stokes, 1994a). In this basic assumption group there is often conflict between the child-like, dependent tendencies of the group members and their individual needs as adults (Rioch, 1975b).

4.2.1.2 *The basic assumption of fight/flight (baF)*

Fighting (attacking) or fleeing from the perceived enemy determines the survival of the group. The group expects the leader to devise a plan of action and the group members merely follow his/her direction. For example, instead of considering how to best organize its work, a department could spend most of its time in meetings worrying about rumours of organizational change and how it will effect the department. This creates a sense of togetherness among group members and allows the group to avoid the painful task of functioning effectively in the system/organization (Bion, 1961; Rioch, 1975b; Stokes, 1994a).

Fight reactions manifest in aggression against self, peers, management and other stakeholders through envious attacks on the other, competition and rivalry, boycotting, fighting for a position in a group, and forming coalitions with authority figures, to name but a few. Alternatively flight reactions manifest in physically or psychologically avoiding others or difficult situations (Cilliers & Koortzen, 1998).

4.2.1.3 *The basic assumption of pairing (baP)*

Through the baP the group members believe that their survival is based on the pairing between two members in the group or the pairing of their leader with a more powerful person outside of the group (the gender of the two individuals is irrelevant) (Adams, 1994). In doing so the pair will reproduce the unborn leader of this group, i.e. the *Messiah*. The *Messiah* will save the group from feelings of hatred, destructiveness and despair among group members and from the environment (Rioch, 1975b). He/she will also save the group and help it to complete its task. The group focuses on its future achievements as a defense against the difficulties of the present (Bion, 1961; Rioch 1975b; Stokes 1994a). Inherent in the baP is splitting where individuals try to split into

smaller groups where they can feel secure. According to Cilliers and Koortzen (2000) pairing also manifests itself in ganging up against the perceived aggressor or authority figures, which can result in intra- and intergroup conflicts.

4.2.1.4 *The basic assumption of oneness (baO)*

The group members want to:

join in a powerful union with an omnipotent force, unobtainably high, to surrender self for passive participation, and thereby to feel existence, well-being and wholeness ...The group member is there to be lost in oceanic feelings of unity or, if the oneness is personified, to be part of a salvationist inclusion (Turquet 1985, p. 76).

The wish for *salvationist inclusion* can operate institutionally, especially in a religious charismatic movement (Lawrence *et al.*, 2000). Differently put, members of a group which operates in accordance with the baO seem to lose their capacity to think and experience themselves as being merged with each other (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2004).

4.2.1.5 *The basic assumption of me-ness (baM)*

According to Lawrence *et al.* (2000, p.100) the baM functions when members work on the tacit, unconscious assumption that the group is to be a non-group. The baM is marked by individual selfishness in which the individual seems to be preoccupied with the protection of his/her own personal boundaries against the incursion of others. The individual becomes more and more preoccupied with his/her inner world, which is experienced as the comfortable place in order to exclude deny and avoid the disturbing reality of the outer world. For individuals operating according to this assumption the idea of *group* does not exist due to its potential of persecuting the individual. Therefore, the

idea of *group* is considered to be contaminating, taboo, impure and represents all that is negative (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002; Lawrence *et al.*, 2000).

4.2.2 The use of the basic assumption mentality

The sophisticated work group is able to mobilize a specific basic assumption group, depending on which assumption would covertly allow the sophisticated work group to effectively complete its overt task. Consequently, if there is any change in the organisation there would be a shift in the basic assumption group (Stokes 1994a; Turquet 1985). For example, too much conflict in the lecture hall impedes effective learning and teaching. A baD and baP are mobilised through consultation between lecturer and students, as well as co-operation between lecturer and class representative. The baD is of no use in the examination situation (Turquet 1985). Thus, the sophisticated work group can constructively use the basic assumption group (Hayden & Molenkamp 2004; Lawrence *et al.*, 2000).

When a group fails to use the basic assumption group effectively then degeneration of group functioning occurs, because group members' action and thought become dominated by the basic assumption's aberrant forms (Stokes, 1994a, pp. 25-26). The particular group cultures for basic assumption dependency, pairing and fight/flight are:

- Aberrant baD produces a *culture of subordination* where authority is based on a person's position in the hierarchy and it requires unquestioning obedience.
- Aberrant baP produces a *culture of collusion*, supporting pairs of members in avoiding, rather than seeking, the truth of their reality. The group may focus on its mission/goals, but not on how to achieve it.
- Aberrant baF produces a *culture of aggressive and paranoid competitiveness*. The group is preoccupied with the enemy within and the external enemy. Much attention is given to rules and regulations in order to control both the internal and external *bad*

objects. The group focuses on procedure and methods to achieve a vague mission or goals (Stokes, 1994a).

There seems to be very little discussion of these aberrant forms of the baD, baF and baP. Furthermore in literature there seems to be no reference to the aberrant forms of the baO and baM.

From a career psychology point of view, it is important to bear in mind that an individual may be drawn to a particular profession because of his/her unconscious predisposition for a specific basic assumption (Stokes, 1994a). Thus a member of a particular profession would be predisposed to function in accordance with a particular basic assumption. It is also tentatively suggested that a particular profession will function in accordance with its particular aberrant basic assumption. This does not mean that individuals in a profession, such as lecturers, will function only according to one basic assumption, but rather they will have a tendency towards using a particular (aberrant) basic assumption. This would certainly predispose them to characteristic behaviour and even a particular group culture in difficult situations, such as the negotiations between a group and its members and other groups with their members.

4.2.3 Complexity at the edge of the basic assumption group

A basic assumption group can be disintegrative (rigid social defenses) or can be in the service of the workgroup. A complexity perspective about organisations suggests that groups in an organisation can work at the edge of bounded instability, i.e. working at the edge of the basic assumption group. When groups in an organisation work at the edge of bounded instability the group could experience the phantasising of the basic assumption group, as well as more transformative processes where it interacts with the possibility of creativity and the unknown thought (Stacey, 2001). Through this complexity perspective Stacey (2001) attempts to explain how creativity can occur at the edge of an

organisation's disintegration – by tolerating uncertainty and dwelling in the presence of the unthought known (Levine, 2002). This idea seems to be quite similar to the idea of negative capability (French, Simpson & Harvey, 2001).

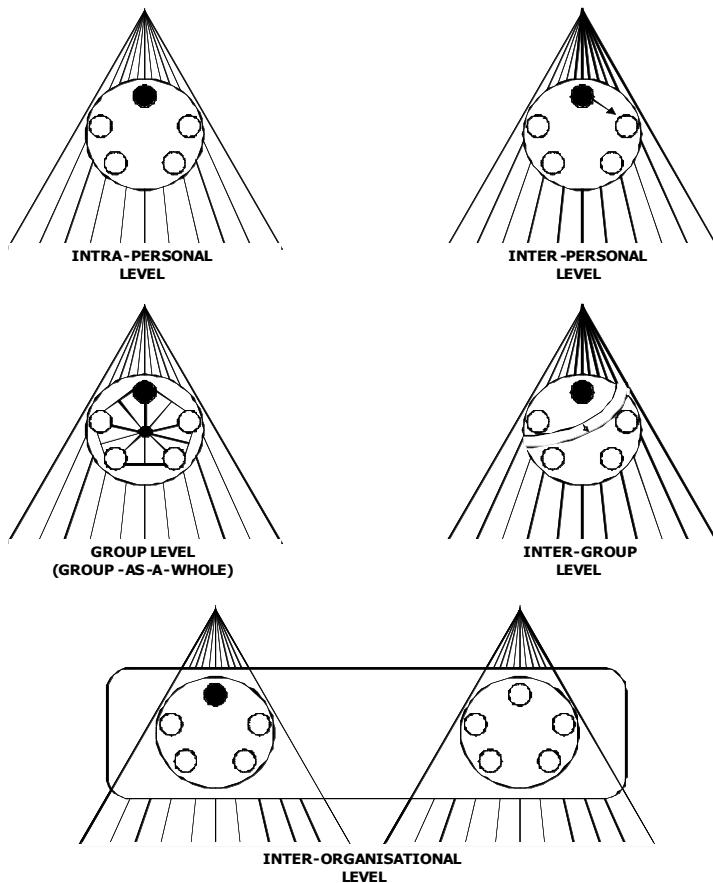
4.3 THE INTERGROUP PROCESS

Alderfer (quoted in Wells, 1985) defines a human group as a collection of individuals:

- who have significantly interdependent relations with each other;
- who perceive themselves as a group by reliably distinguishing members from non-members;
- whose group identity is recognized by non-members;
- who have differentiated roles in the group as a function of expectation from themselves, other members and non-group; and
- who as group members acting alone or in concert have significantly interdependent relations with other groups.

From this definition, it is proposed that group and system processes refer to actual working circumstances, i.e. formal and informal relations, as well as conscious and unconscious dynamics which occur among individuals and groups in organizations (Wells, 1985). Five levels of group processes can be identified (see figure 4.2), viz. the intra-personal level, the inter-personal level, the group level (group-as-a-whole), the intergroup level and the inter-organisational level (Wells, 1985).

Figure 4.2 : Five levels of organisational processes.



Source: Wells (1985, p. 110)

Intergroup processes refer to relations and dynamics among various groups or subgroups in an organisation. Intergroup processes result from differences, e.g. task, hierarchical, positional, racial, age, gender, and ideological differences to name but a few (Wells, 1985). The focus of this study is the intergroup processes and the concomitant dynamics between three groups (lecturers, students and management) in a HBU. I do this for three reasons. Firstly because every relationship – between individuals, within small groups as well as between groups in institutions – has the characteristics of an intergroup transaction (Miller, 1989; Rice, 1976).

Secondly, almost every organisation or institution is a group of groups (Astrachan & Flynn, 1976, p. 62). These groups in the organisation are involved in intergroup relations and dynamics in order to perform its primary task. Public sector organisations, such as an HBU, consist of various groups, viz the public and its consumer representatives (students, their parents and family), the care sub-sector (lecturers providing particular services) and the administrative and managerial sector. Not only do these organisations have to contend with being used as containers for society's anxieties, but they are also influenced by the psychodynamics (discussed in 4.3.6) of intergroup relations (Obholzer, 1994b; Smith, Miller & Kaminstein, 2004). Hence, intergroup relations between the system and its subsystems, marked by intergroup and organisational relatedness and relationship, are familiar tasks of daily organisational life (Astrachan & Flynn, 1976; Erlich, 2001).

Thirdly, the intergroup level will allow me to explore the extent to which the HBU can be unconsciously used as a defense mechanism against psychotic, paranoid and depressive anxiety (Jaques, 1990; Menzies Lyth, 1960, 1990). Lastly the intergroup level allows for moving beyond the assumption that all organisations are breeding grounds for paranoogenesis towards the idea that through the intergroup dynamics, aspects pertaining to creativity can also be explored (Hirschhorn, 1988).

4.3.1 Intergroup transactions

Intergroup processes involve multiple transactions across individual and group boundaries and come from the many group memberships that the representative have and bring to a group, as well as their behaviour toward other groups (Miller & Rice, 1975). The intergroup transaction occurs when a group communicates with another group either in unison or through its representative(s). The implicit task of the representative(s) in the intergroup transaction is twofold. Firstly, to perform the chosen

transaction with the other group(s) in the environment or organisation. Secondly, to communicate explicitly and overtly, as well as implicitly and covertly, the group's mood and attitude about itself and the representative to every part of the environment or organisation, whether he/she has contact with a particular part or not (Rice, 1976). Therefore, the representative can communicate the mood and attitude of his/her group because he/she was chosen based on specific attributes, which would demonstrate the group's mood and attitude. These attributes were *discovered* by the group due to intergroup relations occurring between the intra-psychic groups within the representative and the members of his group. The group's mood and attitude are also communicated by the level of authority afforded the representative, as well as his/her status within the group (Rice, 1976).

The intergroup transaction also influences how the representative views and is viewed, how the representative treats and is treated by others. For example, when a representative behaves in a particular way, it assumed by others he/she is expressing the mood or attitude of the group that he/she represents (Erlich, 2001; Wells, 1985). The phenomenon that the representatives are viewed and treated in relation to their group membership points to relatedness among the different groups in the intergroup process (Erlich, 2001; Miller 1989). The mere fact that a representative is perceived in a particular manner creates intergroup dynamics, which interfere with effective communication and negotiations at group and organisational interfaces (Vince, 2001).

According to Miller and Rice (1975) and Rice (1976) the intergroup transaction contains a complex pattern of processes (relations and dynamics):

- the intra-group processes within the groups who participate in the intergroup transaction;
- the intra-group processes within the representatives who represent the different groups;

- the intra-group processes among the representatives who participate in the newly formed transactional task system;
- the intergroup processes between the groups and their representatives who during the intergroup transaction should progressively form a greater allegiance to the representative group than for the original groups if the negotiations are to be successful; and
- the intergroup processes within the environment which includes the groups participating in the intergroup transaction.

Therefore, the intergroup processes involve several intergroup transactions across multiple and complex boundaries. Boundary control during the intergroup process is very complex because of the number of boundaries, which are crossed, as well as those which are newly formed during the intergroup process (Miller & Rice, 1975). The nature, extent and number of transactions across boundaries could be controlled in that the system/organisation only allows those transactions between the system and its environment which are essential for the performance of the primary task. Consequently, effective boundary control ensures that only those transactions necessary to ensure the effective completion of a primary task for each group participating in the intergroup process, occur (Miller & Rice, 1990).

4.3.2 The complexity of an intergroup transaction

In this section I will elucidate the possible ramifications of the intergroup transaction for the representatives, the groups participating in the transaction and the organisation.

The intergroup transaction presents the members of a group with a dilemma where they have to choose between (Miller & Rice, 1975; Rice, 1976):

- maintaining the safety of the group by preserving its boundaries and allowing no transactions across them; and
- ensuring the survival of the group in its environment or organisation through transactions within the environment or organisation with the concomitant possibility of the group's destruction.

A group must interact (through intergroup transaction) with other groups in the organisation if it is to survive, but simultaneously the group has to protect itself against the possibility of the destruction of its boundaries (because of the intergroup transaction). Thus, each intergroup transaction calls into question the integrity of (the) boundaries across which it takes place and the extent to which the group can maintain control over transactions across them (Rice, 1970). Rice (1976, p. 25) states that:

The effectiveness of every intergroup relationship is determined, so far as its overt purposes are concerned, by the extent to which the groups involved have to defend themselves against uncertainty about the integrity of their boundaries.

Therefore, the intergroup transaction is influenced by the defenses the different groups and perhaps the newly formed transactional system mobilised against the underlying anxiety, that the intergroup transaction will destroy the integrity of existing and newly formed boundaries (Rice quoted in Miller, 1990).

The representatives participating in the intergroup transaction form a new group – the representatives group – with its own boundary. Consequently a boundary is created between the group of representatives and their groups of origin, with the possibility that the representatives will be more committed to the new group than to their original groups, i.e. the newly formed representatives group will have greater sentience than the original group. Thus, the intergroup transactions have destructive characteristics

because the newly formed boundary of the representatives group at best could weaken and at worst could destroy the familiar boundaries of the original groups (Miller & Rice, 1975). Based on the uncertainty of boundary definition due to changes in the known boundaries, the intergroup transaction is also potentially chaotic, as well as fraught with elements of incipient disaster (Rice, 1970) and the possible development of enmity (Erlich, 2001). Thus, the destructive characteristic of the intergroup transaction could destroy or weaken existing boundaries, as well as bring with it the threat of chaos and the fear of disaster (Erlich, 2001; Miller, 1989; Miller & Rice, 1975; Rice, 1976). Conversely, the boundary is also flexible, permeable and a place of creativity and innovation (Erlich, 2001).

The intergroup transaction also challenges the control that a group can exercise over the extent to which its representative(s) act in accordance with the authority that has been given. Consequently the nature and the strengths of the controls are influenced by every intergroup transaction (Rice, 1970). Another issue that could come into play, is that the original group could disown its representative because they suspect that the representative has changed his/her allegiance to the groups they interact with or the representatives group (Miller & Rice, 1975). The disowning could be linked to the original group having difficulties with coming to terms with what is said or done on its behalf – thus, mistrusting the representative(s).

4.3.3 Difficulties of representation during the intergroup transaction

A group's attempts at appropriately authorising its representative to be the voice of the group can be fraught with difficulties. Groups do not always adequately authorise their representatives to speak or act on behalf of the group, negatively affecting the success of the negotiations. For example, a group can allow the representative to merely deliver a message without engaging in dialogue with other groups (Astrachan & Flynn, 1976;

Mosse & Roberts, 1994). This can be due to groups being invested in the failure of the negotiations in order to hold onto their *old roles and fixed, ritual interactions* (Astrachan & Flynn, 1976, p. 63). Secondly, rivalry and competition between the groups can lead to unconscious sabotage of the intergroup transaction and thus each other's task performance (Roberts, 1994b). Thirdly, issues pertaining to the dynamics within the group, as well as competition and rivalry experienced toward the chosen individuals, impede appropriately authorising the representative (Mosse & Roberts, 1994).

On the other hand, a representative should also assess the extent to which he/she has been authorised, i.e. does he/she represent only him/herself, a part of the group or the entire group? Representatives can enter into a negotiation communicating that he/she represents a powerful, united group, while attempting to conceal that he/she is merely representing a chaotic and divided group. In order to be a relevant voice of a group, the representative should ensure that he/she understands the message that must be communicated, as well as reconcile his/her own view with the policy that he/she has to communicate (Astrachan & Flynn, 1976; Miller & Rice, 1975).

Another issue in the intergroup transaction is that the representatives could become more invested in the formed group of representatives than in their original group, i.e. a change in the sentience of the intergroup system (Roberts, 1994b). The success of the intergroup transaction is determined by the extent to which the representatives can manage their dual membership. Excessive commitment to either the representative group or the original group will impede the negotiations (Roberts, 1994b).

4.3.4 Ineffective communication in the intergroup process

Communication in organisations is usually considered as being problematic (Long, 1998). This problem can be located in naïve assumptions that if the communiqué is clear

and occurs through multiple channels there should be no problems. However, a breakdown in communication often occurs. Long (1998) proposes that communication is not simply the crossing of a boundary, but also a renegotiation of the boundary. This renegotiation of the boundary and relationship among the participants in the communication often occurs without all the participants being present during the communication. Alternatively, through engagement with the communiqué, the different participants and representatives in their different organisational roles engaging across boundaries (real or imagined) will generate new information based on their understanding of the communication (Long, 1998; Miller & Rice, 1975; Roberts, 1994b). What becomes evident from this discussion and other discussions in this review is that communication occurs among groups despite the message or in the absence of a conscious message.

4.3.5 Management – another group in the intergroup process

In the organisation, management is one of the groups participating in the intergroup process. The authority afforded management based on their role and position in the organisation, as well as sanction from other groups, lends a particular dynamic to the intergroup process in the organisation (Astrachan & Flynn, 1976; Obholzer, 1994a). According to Astrachan and Flynn (1976, p. 60) other groups wish to replace, destroy or eagerly accept [management's] authority, but they never ignore it.

In the intergroup process, groups can give to management authority beyond their needs, wishes or charge. Simultaneously, groups can ignore their own position, role and authority in the intergroup process. Thus, a group's inability to accept the authority that it can legitimately assume leads to the group searching for external authorities, usually management, to act on its behalf. In so doing management is made responsible for difficult decisions in the organisation, and can be ambivalently admired and despised.

Furthermore, groups can bring to management several demands relating to the redefinition of the primary task that must be attended to. Often these groups are considered to be dissident groups, while they experience their requests as the expression of their loyalty to the organisation. In dealing with demands management should consider many factors. In considering the merit of the demands, management should be committed to review the viability of its understanding of the definition of the primary task, as well as its commitment to function consistently with the definition of the primary task. Alternatively, management can form alliances with other groups to silence or undermine the perceived dissident group (Astrachan & Flynn, 1976).

Besides eagerly accepting and exaggerating management's authority, groups also have a wish to destroy or replace management – the attack on the leadership. Groups, challenging management's authority, can experience complex feelings of anxiety towards and guilt about confronting and possibly destroying management. Furthermore, particular groups can avoid their intra-group conflict by locating conflict in the relationship between itself and the external authority, i.e. management. Thus, management and especially its authority is used in different ways by the groups in the intergroup process (Astrachan & Flynn, 1976; Kahn & Green, 2004).

In section 4.3.6.1 I will discuss how moral violence in an organisation results from the psychodynamics of intergroup processes between management and employees (Diamond, 1997; Diamond & Allcorn, 2004).

4.3.6 The psychodynamics of the intergroup process

In order to understand the psychodynamics of an intergroup process, the unconscious dynamics between infants and care-givers as proposed by Klein (Gabbard, 1989; Higgin & Bridger, 1965; J. Klein, 1987; M. Klein, 1985; Ogden, 1983; Wells, 1985) and the work

about groups by Bion are used (Bion, 1961; Lawrence *et al.*, 2000; Miller, 1998; Rioch, 1975; Stokes, 1994a; Turquet, 1985).

4.3.6.1 *Conflict at the intergroup level*

In the individual, conflict arise from his/her relationships with the self, the other and the group (Erlich, 2001; Lazar, 2004). As proposed by Obholzer (1994b) and Lazar (2004), conflict on intrapersonal level arises from conflicts and anxieties concerned with the preservation of the self or (differently stated) the fear of annihilation resulting in feelings of competition, hatred, envy and inferiority. These anxieties lead to intergroup conflicts where the relationship between the groups at best is marked by tension, and at worse by feelings of suspicion, distrust, prejudice, discrimination, increased hostility and possibly open warfare (Gemmill, 1986). The latter feelings are also elicited in intergroup competition under win-lose conditions (Blake & Mouton, 1960). Conflict also arises when a group experiences itself as or actually in the power and authority another group (Czander, 1993, Lazar, 2004). By being within others' control evokes anxieties pertaining to the preservation or the fear of annihilation of the self, and thus is a fundamental source of human conflict (Lazar, 2004).

In organisations and society, historical conflicts between groups probably impact on current conflicts in the relationship between these groups due to inter-generational excessive projective identification (Asser, 2004; Lazar, 2004; Rogers, 1976). The influence of historical conflicts on current intergroup processes arises from the accusation that a group in the intergroup process benefited from and still adhere to ideas, beliefs and procedures that are profoundly discriminatory (Lazar, 2004). The possibility does exist that in the intergroup process the relatedness pertaining to the historical conflict can change, just to be replaced by different, current conflicts (Erlich, 2001). However, the intergroup process also provides the opportunity for members of

groups to change their relatedness to the other on interpersonal level, i.e. not only to see each other as bad and evil, but also as worthy of regard and co-operation (Erlich, 2001; Lazar, 2004). Thus, the intergroup process in a safe and containing environment provide opportunity for testing phantasy against fact, instead of using assumption and projection as the main source of information about other groups (Lazar, 2004).

During intergroup conflict splitting, projection, projective identification and introjection can be used by groups to project their unacceptable, bad, hostile and evil parts into another group. The latter group can then be seen as the enemy filled with hostility and danger (Diamond & Allcorn, 2004; Moylan, 1994). Erlich (2001) proposes that the enmity contained within the enemy and created on boundary territory is in the service of the intergroup process. It is important to bear in mind that in the boundary territory fringe groups can be found into whom animosity and hatred can be discarded. Leadership or management who easily can be turned into enemies can also be found in the boundary territory. Erlich (2001) describes how the psychotherapist or consultant during transference is at the boundary and can be turned into an enemy towards whom hostility can be directed. I venture that similarly, lecturers during transference also hold a boundary position when they offer learning opportunities to students. Consequently, students can turn lecturers into the enemy, partly explaining the enmity directed at them from the students. As suggested by Diamond and Allcorn (2004) and Singer (2006), in this relationship the enemy can be totally negated and denigrated. This has implications for the negation and denigration of the lecturers, students and management in a university.

Additionally, Erlich (2001) proposes a difference between the pre-oedipal enemy (described above) and the oedipal enemy who is ambivalently experienced when another group is seen as sharing valued aspects, e.g. language, common culture, common humanity. Thus,

the relationship with the [oedipal] enemy is marked by competition, fear and envy, but also with admiration and positive relatedness, and discourse with [the enemy] is felt to be within the realm of psychological and social possibility (Erlich, 2001, p. 129).

According to Diamond and Allcorn (2004) an organisation can be dominated by a culture that is emotionally and psychologically deadening, numbing or brutal. Such an organisational culture can be dominated by managerial acts which bully, threaten, intimidate and publicly humiliate employees and in so doing creating a real sense of dread within the employees. These morally violent, destructive managerial acts are considered to be normal and expected and usually done for the *good of the organisation*. Morally violent acts include, but are not limited to, public humiliation or unplanned, non-participatory decision-making and changes in aspects of the organisation that directly influence the employees. Diamond (1997) and Diamond and Allcorn (2004) propose several theoretical underpinnings, including object relations as proposed by Klein, to understand moral violence in organisations. Generally, organisations are hierarchical in nature marked by superordinate-subordinate relationships (Czander, 1993; Diamond, 1997; Krantz, 2001; Lawrence; 2000; Stacey, 2001). In organisations marked by moral violence and a prevailing dominant-submissive ideology, vertical and horizontal relations are used for excessive splitting, projection, projective identification and introjection that occur within the intergroup processes, mainly between management and employees. These psychodynamics can occur to such an extent that the employees are often dehumanised, and management then acts upon the dehumanised and powerless employees without moral conscience (Diamond, 1997). In an organisation marked by moral violence daily problem solving, due to the concomitant uncertainty, is difficult, flawed and lacks creativity (Diamond, 1997; Kahn & Green, 2004).

In this discussion, I have mainly focused on the relationship between management and employees. However, the extent to which moral violence occurs between other groups

within the intergroup process needs further exploration. I suggest, as proposed by Erlich (2001), that the moral violence between groups during intergroup processes would probably be determined by the power-relations between the groups, as well as the extent to which a group is considered to be an enemy in the intergroup process.

Intergroup conflict could easily be transformed into violence. According to Alford (2002) the aim of violence is not necessarily the destruction of the other, but rather the wish to know and possess the otherness of the other. This wish is thwarted by the fact that the other cannot be totalised. Consequently the otherness in the other cannot be totally possessed and remains unknowable in its totality (Gordon, 2003).

4.3.6.2 The projection-introjection hypothesis

Institutions are divided into sections, departments, divisions, etc., enabling the institution to function effectively. Another division is between those who are in authority, including those who experience that they can influence management's decisions and those who feel that they cannot influence management and consequently organisational processes (Astrachan & Flynn, 1976). These divisions arising from design and authority relationships contribute to the different groups, including management, participating in a process of complex interrelationships which allow for splitting good from bad projecting negative feelings, such as prejudice, paranoia, denigration, from one department/section/subsystem onto another (Astrachan & Flynn, 1976; Lazar, 2004; Neumann, 1999; Treacher & Foster, 2004). Little contact or inappropriate contact with other groups in the institutions enhances the possibility for projecting negative feelings and splitting off parts of themselves into the other groups in the institution (Diamond, 1993; Halton, 1994). This implies that other groups are bound to introject these split-off parts through projective identification (Apprey, 1993; Diamond, 1993; Higgin & Bridger, 1965).

Obviously, in projecting the negative feelings each group produces and maintains *illusory goodness and self-idealisation* (Erlich, 2001; Halton, 1994; Stein, 1982; Wells, 1985). In the intergroup process members' loyalty to their own group and hostility towards the out-group are enhanced (Astrachan & Flynn, 1976; Blake & Mouton, 1960; Miller & Rice, 1975). Additionally, Blake and Mouton (1960) and Vince (2001) suggest that the loyalty of the representatives to their group is at its peak during intergroup competition, impeding communication and enhancing separateness during negotiations. Consequently an institution can find itself, unknowingly, in the paranoid-schizoid projective system (Halton, 1994; Treacher & Foster, 2004). The above could affect the relationships among groups and impede the functioning of the organisation, particularly in relation to tasks which require co-operation or collective change or transformation (Czander, 1993; Halton, 1994).

By directing all aggression and hostilities at the out-group enemy (Gould, Ebers & Clinchy, 1999), the in-group could be avoiding internal tensions and problems (Gemmill, 1986). Gemmill and Elmes (1993) propose that dysfunctional intergroup relations are the result or reflection of dysfunctional within-group relations. Through social defenses the in-group ascribes to itself positive attributes which becomes the social mask (We are ...), while projecting negative attitudes onto the out-group which becomes the group shadow (They are...) (Gemmill, 1986; Gemmill & Elmes, 1993). Thus, when the in-group interacts with the out-group it actually interacts with its own shadow which probably contains the disavowed, unexpressed and undiscussible aspects of the in-group. Stein (quoted in Gemmill & Elmes, 1993, p. 255) stated:

So long as the enemy is seen as wearing the mask, which we have superimposed onto it, we inevitably must see a face we despise when we look upon the enemy. The enemy, in essence, wears our disavowed feature: that is the psychic function of the enemy.

Stein (1982) proposes that the above is a reciprocal process in which groups in the intergroup process project their unacceptable, disavowed, unexpressed and undiscussible aspects into the other groups in order to preserve a good and idealised version of themselves. Thus, each group contributes to and perpetuate the intergroup conflict, as well as seek solutions to the conflict through projective distortions.

As a result of shared psychodynamics, the different groups in the intergroup transactions evolve into a tacit, interdependent, symbolic, unconscious and collusive lattice which gives rise to the [organisations] Gestalt and mentality, i.e. the [organisations] wholeness (Wells, 1985, p. 119). Through this Gestalt and mentality, an organisation can compartmentalise different functions into specific groups. These compartmentalised functions result in role differentiation, role suction and the prevailing quality of organisational relations and culture (Wells, 1985). If the groups in the intergroup process use each other reciprocally as projective targets into which each projects its unacceptable aspects, a model of adversary symbiosis is proposed wherein each group complements the other to preserve the enmity (Stein, 1982).

4.3.6.3 Basic assumptions: the coexistence of anxieties, defenses and work processes

Anxiety can be seen as a double-edged sword which enables individuals to be innovative and creative in their individual and organisational life, or, if excessive, overwhelms them, leading to the experience of despair, destructiveness and even madness (Gutmann, 1993). In organisational life we need to cope with our personal anxiety, as well as the anxiety of others through a continuing process of regulation of the degree and way in which we use defenses, such as projection. In order to ensure the successful use of anxiety (for growth and transformation), it is imperative that the individual or group use several different defenses (from primitive to more mature) and mobilise social systems to use anxiety for growth and development (Gutmann, 1993). Gutmann (1993, p.85) stated that:

The type of [defensive behaviour] used by the individual or group is the outcome of the dialectical struggle which takes place between our urge to keep the unbearable effects of anxiety at bay and our capacity to contain and harness our anxiety as a force for growth and transformation.

Thus, within the intergroup process there exist basic assumptions (dependence, flight/fight, pairing, oneness or me-ness) whether in the particular groups or within the group of representatives. In order to defend against the basic assumption among the groups participating in the intergroup process, one or more of the groups will introject the basic assumption, leaving the other groups sufficiently free from the particular basic assumption to complete the intergroup transaction on behalf of the entire system (Higgin & Bridger, 1965).

Additionally, within the intergroup transaction there are two tasks to carry out (as discussed in 4.2):

- the sophisticated task; and
- containing the basic assumption(s) interfering with the sophisticated task.

The co-existence of the basic assumption/s (anxieties and defenses) and the sophisticated task (the task-oriented work process) is determined by the willingness of the groups in the system to allow the emotional tasks (containing anxieties by using certain defenses) and the work tasks to be carried on concurrently (Higgin & Bridger, 1965). Therefore, in order for the task-oriented work process to take place, the system or organisation as a whole must contain the basic assumption forces sufficiently. Furthermore, the group or groups should have the resilience and the ability to interact with the task-oriented work process regardless of the basic assumption pressures. Alternatively the basic assumptions can dominate the intergroup transaction and consequently interfere with the task-oriented work process (Higgin & Bridger, 1965).

4.3.6.4 *Relationship and relatedness in the intergroup processes*

These relationships imply processes of mutual influence among the different parts of an open system. Miller (1989) uses the term relatedness to refer to these processes of mutual influence. According to Miller (1989) in all the above forms of relatedness there is a potential tension (previously mentioned under the group-as-a-whole). Bion (1961) proposes that the individual needs groups in order to establish his/her identity, to find meaning in his/her existence, and to express aspects of him/herself. Thus the individual in an organisation (or in life) is perpetually moving towards individuation. Simultaneously the group needs the individual member for its own collective purposes – to contribute to the group's (primary) task (see 4.5), as well as to participate in the processes through which the group acquires and maintain its own distinctive identity (Bion quoted in Miller 1989). The individual is perpetually at risk of submergence into and becoming estranged from the group (Erlich, 2001).

Based on the relatedness which exists in an organisation, the individual experiences the tension of individuation (perpetually moving towards but never reaching individual autonomy) and incorporation (submergence into the group). The reader should note that individuation and incorporation are unconscious, dynamic processes. Given this, Miller (1989, pp. 7-8) proposed that relatedness and its associated tension is more appropriately conceptualised as connecting not two entities, individual and group, but two processes - individuation and incorporation.

4.3.6.5 *Containment in intergroup relations*

According to Shapiro and Carr (1991), a holding environment will promote containment and interpretation of experiences which will encourage growth and development. The holding environment is marked by empathic interpretation and the tolerance and containment of anxiety resulting from aggressive and sexual impulses. Under these

circumstances, the one being contained could experience him/herself as *good*, i.e. experiencing self-affirmation, that he/she is understandable and that he/she can be known by others and him/herself. Consequently the contained individual learns that aggressive and sexual impulses does not need to be destructive, but can be mobilised in certain roles and tasks associated with growth and development.

James and Huffington (2004) also suggest that another kind of containment is a structuring function which focuses on the encouragement of exploration and risk-taking, as well as mobilising hope and energy. These authors further propose that two kinds of containment of anxiety, i.e. providing a holding environment and the structuring function, should be present in organisations in an appropriate balance. Thus, in order to provide containment in ever-changing organisations, reflective spaces should be created and systemic aspects of the organisations should be attended to by particular stakeholders in the organisations. The failure of the holding environment will result in or maintain destructive elements among groups in an organisation.

4.3.6.6 Creative and constructive intergroup relations: working towards mutuality

Adversary symbiosis could be transcended by the intention to develop a relationship marked by trust and renegotiating the perceptions groups have of each other (Singer, 2006; Stein, 1982). This allows for each group to face and re-internalise their (projected) unacceptable, disavowed, unexpressed and undiscussible aspects – and in this way rehumanising their enemy (Singer, 2006). Thus, this new relationship will be based on mutuality in which the groups do not need each other to be the enemy, but rather rely on each other for the development of their respective strengths and creativity (Stein, 1982).

4.4 SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY OF ORGANISATIONS: THE UNIVERSITY AS AN OPEN SYSTEM

In the following section I attempt to understand the tertiary institution as an open system by focusing on particular assumptions and aspects of open systems theory and at times applying these assumptions and aspects in general to the university. In order to form a holistic understanding of employees' experiences, and therefore that of lecturers, one cannot only focus on unconscious processes. The focus should also be on organisational structure and design (Gould *et al.*, 1999). Thus, the organisational structural elements that include task, role, boundaries, management and authority should also be explored (James & Huffington, 2004).

4.4.1 The organisation as an open system

The socio-technical systems approach enables researchers to investigate and reconcile the techno-economic and psychosocial aspects of a purposeful organisation (Miller, 1993). Open system theory allows the exploration of the relationships between the technical and social aspects of an organisation, the different parts of the organisation, as well as the organisation and its environment (Miller, 1989; 1993). Additionally it allows for the study of the relations and dynamics between the individual and the group, as well as among different groups or sub-groups in an organisation.

4.4.2 System of activities

An open system, such as an institution or part-institution, exists and can only exist by the exchange of resources, e.g. people, information, ideas, values, phantasies across boundaries with its environment (Gould *et al.*, 2001; Miller & Rice, 1975; Rice, 1970; Roberts, 1994a). Within the open system different configurations of activities and human

resources exist in order to complete a variety of import-conversion-export processes (Miller, 1993; Miller & Rice, 1990; Rice, 1976). Thus, an open system consists of a system of activities during which its imports are converted into exports. The imports into a university are students who assume that the university will enable them to develop particular social and vocational skills that will assist them to be successful in, and contribute to, their specific communities and society in general. Through the conversion processes students are impacted upon by exposing them to teaching, as well as providing them with learning opportunities. Based on the quality of the teaching and the way in which students have interacted with the learning opportunities, students leave the university with varying degrees of skills acquired, or having failed (Miller, 1993; Roberts, 1994a; Rogers, 1976).

Included in the activities of the organisation are operating, maintenance and regulatory activities. A system of activities are the activities which are required [within the organisation] to complete the process of transforming the imports into exports (Rice, 1976, p. 27). According to Miller and Rice (1990, p. 259) “a task system is a system of activities required to complete the process of transforming an intake into an output ... plus the human and physical resources required to perform the activities.” Operating systems are those systems of activities which are central to the dominant import-conversion-export processes, through which the primary task of the organisation is performed. Through maintenance activities, the organisation ensures that the resources, which are necessary for completing the operating activities, are available. The regulating activities relate the operating activities to each other, maintenance activities to operating activities and all internal activities of the organisation to each other, as well as to the organisation’s environment. Thus, the regulating activities ensure that the import-conversion-export processes are related to each other and that the organisation as a whole is related to its environment (Miller & Rice, 1975; Rice, 1970, 1976).

4.4.3 Sentient systems

Employees could be emotionally more invested in the identity of some groups (in or outside the organisation) than in others, i.e. some groups have more sentience for an employee than others (Miller & Rice, 1975). The employee has specific roles and tasks with membership to specific task systems. However, the organisation cannot determine whether an employee will be committed to his/her predetermined tasks or roles or to the other members of the task system, because the individual could have loyalties towards other groups in or even outside the organisation (Rice, 1970). For example, professionals within an organisation are members of professional associations and societies (Miller & Rice, 1990). A sentient system or group is one that demands and receives loyalty from its members (Miller & Rice, 1990, p. 259). Membership of sentient groups is important for effective task performance in that the individual through his/her sentient membership supports or opposes task performance (Rice, 1970). Thus, an effective sentient system or group connects the members of an organisation to each other and to the organisation in a way that ensures effective task performance by appropriately skilled members. Miller and Rice (1990) also proposed that the sentient system or group provides these members with some defense against anxiety. I venture, based on the work of Stein (2000), to propose that the sentient group could also enable members to use the organisation as an envious attack.

4.4.4 Transactional task systems

In the literature, the transactional task system seems to be defined as a transaction across the boundaries of enterprises. Similarly, transactions occur between different groups within the enterprise. Within transactional task systems the terms, control and service, were replaced by regulation and maintenance (Miller & Rice, 1990).

4.4.5 Leadership/management in the organisation

Leadership has a boundary management function, as well as having a vision and strategy for the organisation's future development, while management are those individuals who perform tasks aimed at keeping the organisation functioning effectively and on-task (Obholzer, 1994a; 2001). Furthermore, leadership implies followership, while management does so to a lesser degree (Obholzer, 1994a).

According to Gould *et al.* (2001), Obholzer (1994a) and Miller (1989), the regulatory activities and roles that mediate relations between, inside and outside task systems or organisations are located in the boundary region and performed by leadership and management. These regulatory activities and roles involve task management and management of the organisation. Task management entails the definition of boundaries between task systems, as well as the control of transactions across these defined boundaries (Miller & Rice, 1975, Rice, 1970; 1976). According to Rice (1976) the management of the organisation involves, but is not limited to

- the regulation of task system boundaries, i.e. regulation of the whole enterprise as an import-conversion-export system (a task system and its environment), and regulation of constituent systems of activity;
- the regulation of sentient system boundaries (the boundaries of the group to which the individual belongs), either directly through their roles in systems of activities or indirectly through their consequential role-sets and personal relationships; and
- the regulation of relationships between task and sentient systems.

4.4.6 Boundaries

In the following section, boundaries are discussed with regard to their role in the maintenance of the systemic order of a system, as well as exploring boundaries as a defining feature of the system (Heracleous, 2004). Boundaries are complex, shifting,

socially constructed, negotiated and tested. They fundamentally influence organisations (Heracleous, 2004; Hernes, 2004; James & Huffington, 2004). Boundaries are also areas of tensions which arise from unconscious behaviour within and between groups, as well as an organisation's structure (Gemmill, 1986; Hernes, 2004; James & Huffington, 2004). Therefore, boundaries are inter-subjective because they are constructed and negotiated through the decisions and actions of the members of the organisation (Heracleous, 2004). Boundaries are important in the containment of emotions, such as anxiety (James & Huffington, 2004). Thus boundaries are areas across which exchanges take place in a system, as well as transitional or potential space filled with unconscious dynamics which exists when groups meet.

4.4.6.1 Boundaries as a means of maintaining the systemic order

An open system has a boundary that separates the inside from the outside, i.e. the different parts in the system, the system from its environment. The boundary, which allows for exchanges between a system and its environment, both separates the system from and links it to its environment (Cross, Yan & Louis, 2000; Diamond, Allcorn & Stein, 2004). Furthermore, the boundaries influence the extent to which the organisation can act outwards to exert influence over other organisations (Hernes, 2004). Similarly, the boundary that allows exchanges between the different parts in a system both separates the parts from and links the parts to each other. Thus, the boundary denotes a connection, as well as discontinuity between one role and another, between different areas of authority, the (primary) task of two or more related task systems, task systems and the organisation and two or more related enterprises with which it transacts (James & Huffington, 2004; Miller, 1990; Miller & Rice, 1975; Rice, 1976; Roberts, 1994a).

As already stated, exchanges take place across boundaries between different systems, as well as subgroups within a system, e.g. an HBU, departments in an HBU, and its

environment. These exchanges should be regulated through the management of the boundaries. Miller (1993) also refers to the latter as maintaining the boundary conditions, which presupposes that the management of a system is responsible for creating an environment, by providing necessary resources, which enable the working group to complete their task. Thus management should not control what must be done in a system, but should rather provide the resources to ensure that tasks are completed by the different sub-systems in the system.

Additionally, these boundaries should be managed so that the different parts of the organisation function in a co-ordinated manner in relation to the primary task (Miller & Rice quoted in Roberts, 1994b). Given that the aforementioned relations are usually in a state of flux, and that the behaviour and identity of a system is continually renegotiated and redefined based on internal and external demands, the system boundary is conceptualised as a region and not a line. This region is the location of roles and activities concerned with mediating relations between inside and outside, i.e. the individual and group, group and other groups, a group and organisation, organisation and community, as well as between the organisation with its community and society at large. In organisations and groups the mediation of relations in the boundary region is the function of leadership and management (Miller, 1989; 1990; 1993; Rogers, 1976; Stacey, 2001).

4.4.6.2 *Boundary control functions*

The regulatory activities consist of monitoring and boundary control. Monitoring denotes intra-system regulatory activities which are different from and not directly related to the controls which occur at the boundary of the system (Miller & Rice, 1975).

According to Miller and Rice (1975, p. 48) and Rice (1976, p. 27) the boundary of a system of activities, implies both a discontinuity of activity and the interpolation of the

region of control/regulation. The region of regulation has two boundaries, the one the boundary it forms with the internal activities of system and the other the boundary with the external environment of the system. The regulatory activities occurring within the region of regulation relate the system of activities to its environment and control the system's import and export transactions. The regulatory activities occurring at the boundary of the system of activities is known as the boundary control function (Miller & Rice, 1975). The boundary control function is reinforced by the clear definition of the task, role, time and territorial boundaries of the different task systems and the organisation (Miller & Rice, 1990).

Boundary controls are implemented to protect the task systems, and thus the organisation, from unnecessary and inconsistent demands and interference, while allowing it to consider the opportunities available from its environment (Obholzer, 2001). Through effective boundary controls the organisation enables those transactions that are essential for the completion of the primary task across its boundaries. Thus, the boundary controls exercised by leadership (or management) ensure that the conversion processes in the organisation can occur without interference from the environment, and allow only transactions which are essential for the completion of the primary task from the environment (Miller & Rice, 1990). Simultaneously, this osmotic boundary-keeping function of leadership/management ensures that information about the organisation, such as its values, ideals, products and phantasies, is communicated to its environment (Obholzer, 2001). The health, as well as the survival, of the group or system depends on the boundary between the group or system and its environment not being impermeable (a closed system isolated from its environment) nor highly permeable (unnecessarily susceptible to events and changes in the environment) (Barker, 1986; Miller, 1989).

Open systems should be flexible enough to allow for internal changes in reaction to the demands of the environment, yet stable enough to allow them to complete their dominant

primary task. This has implications for the nature of leadership and management in the boundary region. The leadership and management should influence the system to change appropriately to the demands of the environment, yet it should protect the system and part-systems from unnecessary fluctuation resulting from inconsistent demands from the environment (Miller, 1989; 1990; 1993). This then points to another characteristic of the organisation as an open system, i.e. the organisation spontaneously reorganises towards greater heterogeneity and complexity ... and manage to achieve a steady state while doing work (Emery & Trist quoted in Miller, 1993, p.10). This implies that the organisation reacts to change, through regulation in its boundary region, as demanded from its environment and should be able to make appropriate changes and yet be stable enough to perform its primary task needed to survive. Thus, open systems have a non-linear dynamical nature due to the regulatory function at the permeable boundary region and its self-organising capacity (Stacey, 2001). These regulatory activities and roles of leadership/management in the boundary region have been the focus of study within wider literature applying systems thinking to organisations (Stacey, 2001).

4.4.6.3 Entry into the university: a problem in boundary regulation

Across this boundary, exchanges take place between systems, e.g. between departments in the university, the university and its environment. These exchanges should be regulated through the management of the boundaries. Thus, the boundaries also have a transactional function. Of particular importance is the boundary regulation which occurs when a system regulates the entry process of letting in members – in the university this involves staff members and students. The entry system of the university forms a boundary region with the environment. The boundary and thus the entry system have separating and transactional functions which allows the university to focus on the demands of its internal systems and its environment (Levinson & Astrachan, 1976).

Although Levinson and Astrachan (1976) primarily discuss the entry system of a mental health centre, they acknowledge that their ideas pertain to entry systems of institutions, such as universities, which are concerned with transforming their clients in some way. Thus, as proposed by Levinson and Astrachan (1976), it can be inferred that the entry system of the HBU is concerned with appropriate admission of students, linking the incumbents with the appropriated internal systems and linking the HBU with its community or society.

Ineffective boundary regulation through the entry system includes, but is not limited to, the indiscriminate admission of students in too large numbers or students who are unable to cope with the demands of tertiary education. This indiscriminate admission, probably due to local and larger socio-political pressures, could overwhelm the resources of the internal systems. Even more important are the experiences of the rejected and successful applicants. The rejected applicants could have a damaging, humiliating experience without any containment or referral to other organisations. The successful candidates could experience the organisations as impersonal, insensitive, oppressive or uncaring – experiences, which surely run counter to the stance of the organisations, and could interfere with subsequent relationships in the organisations. In this scenario, management probably does not take a proactive stance in systematically evaluating and redesigning the entry system. Thus, the entry system is not an optimised system in relation to its environment by balancing the demands and opportunities of its external environment (the immediate community and larger society) with the needs, values and wisdom of the internal. Management's inability to optimise the entry system through the regulation of internal and external boundaries affects two crucial tasks (Levinson & Astrachan, 1976), viz.:

- the effectivity of the conversion work of the university – e.g. education of students; and
- the survival, continued growth and creative adaptation [of the university] to the demands of its specific community and society in general.

The above discussion about the entry and exit across [the university's] boundaries, the internal boundaries between different task systems and sentient groups also requires attention. Rice (1970) alerts us to the complexity of entry and exit systems within a university, where there is an entry system to the university, then to departments, between departments, as well as between courses (in the same and different departments). The concomitant exit systems of the aforementioned cannot be ignored. Although the regulation of the boundaries of entry systems falls within the ambit of management and particularly top management, these boundaries should also be negotiated with faculties or colleges and thus departments (Levinson & Astrachan, 1976; Rice, 1970).

Miller (1993) and Roberts (1994a) refer to the regulation of these exchanges across [the university's] boundaries as management maintains the boundary conditions by providing the necessary resources, which enables a system to complete its primary task. Consequently, management should not control what must be done in a system, but should rather provide the resources to ensure that tasks are completed by the different task systems in an organisation. Thus in regulating the exchanges and therefore managing the boundaries, the system can complete its (primary) tasks successfully (Miller, 1993; Roberts, 1994a). As already stated, management must also take cognisance of the multiple external groups and forces, e.g. local political pressures, larger political pressures and societal needs, which affects the entry system (Levinson & Astrachan, 1976).

4.4.6.4 Boundaries as transitional or potential space

Three types (or dimensions) of boundaries can be identified, viz. spatial, temporal and psychological (Diamond *et al.*, 2004; Stapley, 1996). Boundaries are complex, shifting, socially constructed, negotiated and tested. They fundamentally influence organisations

(Heracleous, 2004; Hernes, 2004; James & Huffington, 2004). Boundaries are inter-subjective because they are constructed and negotiated through the decisions and actions of the members of the organisation (Heracleous, 2004). Boundaries can also be considered as transitional or potential space for certain possibilities, such as creativity or destructiveness as a group meets other groups (Erlich, 2001). Boundaries are also areas of tensions which arise from unconscious behaviour within and between groups, as well as an organisation's structure (Gemmill, 1986; Hernes, 2004; James & Huffington, 2004). Boundaries are important in the containment of emotions, such as anxiety and envy (James & Huffington, 2004; Stein, 2000).

4.4.7 Authority

In the literature there are several related definitions of authority in general, as well as definitions of different kinds of authority. Often these definitions and terms are interrelated. In the following section I will give a discussion of some of the definitions of authority to highlight the main ideas about authority.

Obholzer (2001, p. 201) stated that authority is the product of organisation and structure, be it external, as in the organisation's sanction, or internal, as in the inner world of the (individual's) experience. In other words, authority is created in relationships when individuals in a particular organisation work towards common goals through shared tasks (Eisold, 2004; Jarrett & Kellner, 1996). In organisations authority is used in the effective completion of the primary task or shared tasks. Organisational authority is defined as the authority that is delegated to roles and gives the employee or manager the right to work within the boundaries of the role (Gould, 1993; Jarrett & Kellner, 1996). Hirschhorn (1997) suggested that apparent authority is that what is afforded based on one's position in the organisation, while substantive authority results from the ensuring the effective completion of tasks.

Authoritativeness implies a depressive position state of mind in which the person is in contact with the source and sanctioning of his/her authority, as well as the limits of this authority. During authoritarian management, a person operates from the paranoid-schizoid position (Lapierre, 1993).

4.4.7.1 Authority from below, above and within

Authority is awarded from below (subordinates), above (those more senior), from one's peers and from oneself (the authority within). Management is often authorised from below. Thus a group creates the authority of management to represent a particular task. However, the same individual who has endorsed the authority will be relentlessly involved in attacking that authority. The ambivalence experienced by the individual in relation to authority figures points to the difficulty of taking up the follower role in relation to and supporting leaders and managers from below (Eisold, 2004).

Authority from above is considered the formal authority that is derived from an individual's role in a system, and the individual exercises this authority on behalf of the system. Thus, authority from above denotes some system of delegation of authority by authority figures. In organisations, different groups may hold differing views on where authority comes from, where it should come from, to whom it should be delegated and to what extent (Obholzer, 1994a, pp. 39-40). What should also be considered is that authority figures could experience helplessness in the face of particular tasks, which can be considered to be impossible or have unspecified outcomes. Furthermore, centralised or hierarchical forms of authority are handicapped in turbulent circumstances (Eisold, 2004). Then, the impact of an individual's diversity characteristics on the extent and way in which authorisation from above occurs should not be ignored (McCrea, 2004). These factors will then affect the appropriate authorisation within organisations.

An individual's sense of his/her personal authority, i.e. the authority from within, influences the extent to which he/she take up organisational roles, feels authorised to implement initiatives and to accomplish objectives. Although personal authority is shaped by familial relations with regards to parents and siblings, it can also be influenced by subsequent experiences with significant others during development, as well as in organisations and diversity characteristics (Gould, 1993; McRea, 2004).

4.4.7.2 Power and authority

Power and authority are different yet related concepts (Obholzer, 1994a, 2001). Power refers to having and controlling the resources required for enacting and implementing one's decisions (Lapierre, 1993; Obholzer, 2001, Shapiro, 2001). Power can be task or not task-related. When power is not used towards the effective completion of the task, abuse towards individuals is usually present (Shapiro, 2001). Power is usual an attribute of persons rather than of roles, and comes from internal and external sources. External sources of power refer to that which the individual controls, while internal sources of power include the individual's knowledge, experience, strength of personality and their opinion about their role (Lapierre, 1993). An individual's perceived sense of power influence his/her experiences of powerlessness or powerlessness (Obholzer, 1994a).

The exercise of power can be in the form of authority that comes from the task or from the hierarchical structure (Stacey, 2001). Power exercised in a punitive, dictatorial or rigid manner can provoke submission and conformity resulting in stable dynamics, or rage, rebellion and sabotage resulting in dynamics of disintegration (Stacey, 2001). According to Stacey (2001, p.100) power relationships producing stable dynamics could be thought of in terms of basic assumption dependency/pairing behaviour, while those producing disintegrative dynamics might be thought of in terms of basic assumption fight-flight behaviour.

4.5 THE PRIMARY TASK

Open systems help us to understand how work is organised and boundaries managed within organisations. Many of the difficulties experienced by organisations are linked to the definition of the primary task and the managing of boundaries. The primary task is the task which the different groups in the institution and the institution-as-a-whole must perform in order to ensure its survival (Miller, 1993; Miller & Rice, 1976; Rice, 1970; Roberts, 1994b). The primary task determines the nature of the dominant import-conversion-export processes. It is the main element around which operating systems are organised and the chief focus of the institution's maintenance and regulating activities. Different part-systems in the institution have a primary task that has to be performed in relation to the primary task of the institution. Thus, a complex institution consists of a number of related task systems alongside the dominant task system. Each of the task systems is a socio-technical sub-system with its concomitant primary tasks, roles and activities and relationships within the institution as a system (Lawrence, 1985). Hence, through the institution's primary task, the management can prioritise the multiple tasks and activities of the institution (Hunt, 1976; Lawrence, 1985; Miller & Rice, 1975; Roberts, 1994b). According to Lawrence (1985, p. 235) the primary task is a tool for inquiry to understand the realities of the organisation and other social arrangements of [the workforce].

However, in some enterprises no primary task has priority over the other (Miller & Rice, 1975). For example, the university is a multiple-task system (Rice, 1970). Rice (quoted in Cherns & Clark 1976, p. 169) proposes that universities are multiple-task institutions; and each task, though interdependent with other tasks, requires its own characteristic organisation which differs from the organisation required for other tasks and for the whole. The primary tasks of the tertiary institution involve educating students, producing research publications and providing relevant community service (Rogers, 1976).

The different groups in an institution may have differing and possibly conflicting or competing ideas about the definition of the primary task of the institution, as well as how it should be performed (Hunt, 1976; Miller & Rice, 1975; Roberts, 1994b; Rogers, 1976). The institution and its environment could also have different definitions about what the primary task of the institution is – subsequently imposing constraints on the institution definition of the primary task (Miller & Rice, 1975; Rice, 1976; Roberts, 1994b). Furthermore, these different definitions of the different parts and the environment of the institution vary over time (Miler, 1993; Roberts, 1994b). Therefore, the primary task can change temporarily at times of crisis or permanently based on internal or external changes and demands (Roberts, 1994b).

According to Lawrence and Robinson (quoted in Lawrence, 1985); Miller and Rice, (1975) and Roberts (1994b), the members of an institution usually pursue three types of primary tasks, viz:

- the normative primary task is the task that individuals in an institution ought to pursue (usually according to the definition of a superordinate authority);
- the existential primary task is the task which individuals in an institution believe they are carrying out based on the meaning and interpretation they ascribe to their roles and activities; and
- the phenomenal primary task is the task which it is hypothesised that individuals in an institution are engaged in and of which they may not be consciously aware.

4.5.1 Task and anti-task in the institution

The task and anti-task in an institution is aimed at ensuring the survival of the institution. The primary task refers to the sophisticated task of the institution that relates to survival as dictated by the external demands of the environment. The primary task can be performed on both the conscious and unconscious level to fulfil certain social and

psychological needs, as well as for defense against anxieties (Miller, 1993). The anti-task activity of a group or institution denotes work in accordance with basic assumptions, i.e. its internal demands and anxieties regarding its psychological survival. The value of exploring the anti-task behaviour lies in creating awareness about the underlying anxieties, defenses and conflicts in the institution which result from inappropriate task definition and the concomitant dysfunctional boundaries (Roberts, 1994b).

Anti-task behaviour occurs when the primary task is vaguely defined, or lacks feasibility in that it is defined in such a way that it fails to provide authority to one system of activities over another, or fails to relate the institution to its ever-changing environment (Roberts, 1994b). The institution's survival could be threatened if the primary task is defined too narrowly or in accordance with the members' needs or members (students, lecturers and management) of the institution disagree about the definition of the primary task or inadequate appraisal of internal and external demands and forces (Miller & Rice, 1975; Roberts, 1994b). Thus, if the primary task fails to relate the institution to its internal and external environment, at best the effectiveness and at worst the survival of the institution is in jeopardy. Additionally, if the primary task is vaguely defined, or non-feasible, or both, it could result in boundaries having a defensive instead of facilitative function. Consequently the boundaries of the different parts of the institution and/or the institution as a whole could be too rigid or too permeable, with resultant difficulties (Levinson & Astrachan, 1976; Miller & Rice; 1975; Roberts, 1994b).

Furthermore, the primary task and performance is affected by constraints from the external environment and the internal culture (which is imported from the external environment) – employees and clients are an extension of the external environment. These internal constraints refer to the availability of resources. The external constraints result from the social, political, economic and legal conditions of the environment. In multiple-task systems with no appropriate determination of priority of these tasks, the

performance of one task acts as a constraint on the performance of another (Miller & Rice, 1975). It seems that this scenario would increase the competition between task systems to complete a particular task, probably increasing anti-task behaviour.

4.5.2 The educational primary task in the university

The university has three primary tasks, viz. educating students, producing research publications and providing relevant community service (Rogers, 1976). For the purposes of this research project I will focus mainly on the primary task of educating students as relevant to the lecturer-students relationship, as well as the perceived expectations of the students, the immediate community and society in general have of the university. The latter expectations point to the various definitions that the different stakeholders could have of the primary task.

4.5.2.1 The university as a container for society's anxieties

Hutton (1997) proposes that in focusing on the primary task of organisations, it is important to explore what an organisation is being asked to carry on behalf of society in addition to its explicitly stated purpose. The HBU, as a public sector institution, contain certain anxieties for society as a whole (Baum, 2002; Deacon, 2004; Hutton, 1997; Obholzer, 1994b). One of society's anxieties contained in universities is whether it will be able to equip students with skills to survive and face the challenges of life, as well as shielding South African society against the risk of going under (Obholzer, 1994b). Given South Africa's socio-political history, I suggest that the HBU contained society's anxiety about preparing black students, of whom the rumour was that they learn with difficulty, to become members of a competent and successful workforce. This fearsome responsibility is probably conveniently located in the HBU, becoming the responsibility, possibly a terrifying one, for the students, lecturers and management of these universities.

Obholzer (1994b) also suggests that an education system, and in this case by way of representation, the HBU in South Africa, is probably used by society as a forum for and a way of managing competition and rivalry. Perhaps another responsibility or task, which is located in the tertiary institution, is to deal with the aggressive, young black youth, also known as the lost generation (Van Niekerk & Meier, 1995). Thus, the HBU should contain the aggression of a disadvantaged and marginalised youth for society – this is probably a terrifying responsibility or task for the lecturers, administrative staff and management of the HBU. Furthermore, the lecturing-learning relationship takes place in a context of risk and diversity (Price, 2000). Simultaneously, this unconscious task seems to raise the question whether the university should educate students in such a manner that they are colonised into the mainstream society or whether students could be educated to meet the challenges and responsibility of a rapidly changing socio-political society with curiosity, creativity and innovation (Coren, 1997; Price, 2000; Rice, 1970).

According to Rice (1970), society also expects that universities should produce the next generation of leaders for its immediate communities and society in general. This task raises several questions, which include concerns about whether the lecturers have the skill to provide the students with the skills needed to be effective leaders in a rapidly changing socio-political landscape (Rice, 1975). This task adds even more pressure on an already pressurised staff and management. Another task, perhaps mainly expected from society, pertains to providing students with an alternative before entering into (un)employment (Coren, 1997; Rice, 1970). As more pessimistically stated by Coren (1997), the university could be involved with a certification process for (un)employment.

Besides the three primary tasks of education, research and community service, the HBU as a public sector institution also contains certain anxieties for society (Baum, 2002; Deacon, 2004; Price, 2000; Obholzer, 1994b). It would be expected that when lecturers, administrative staff and management are confronted by demands pertaining to the

containment of anxieties from society, it could fill them with a sense of power and contributing to society. On the other hand these terrifying responsibilities could result in lecturers; administrative staff and management experiencing a sense of powerlessness, inadequacy and incompetence (see Obholzer, 1994b). Thus, the HBU has formal conscious tasks for which it has a particular structure and roles. It also has irrational, unconscious tasks for which it has developed a particular structure and roles, which affect the stakeholders' experience of stress and anxiety and the efficiency of the university (Coren, 1997, Mosse, 1994). Freud also refers to the professions that involve some degree of caring as impossible professions. According to Lacan, social relations for the purpose of affecting some change are pivotal in impossible professions (Vanheule & Verhaeghe, 2004). Thus, the impossible professions (which include lecturing) are *hazardous, challenging undertakings*.

Powell Pruitt and Barber (2004) differentiated between the apparent task (teaching as cognitive skill, making citizens) and the actual task (keeping students in a pre-assigned societal niche) of the education system in America. I propose that given the socio-political history of the South African education system, the description of and the tension between the apparent and actual tasks are relevant to education in South Africa. In other words as much as South African education systems are involved in making citizens, the education system may very well be involved in keeping students in their pre-assigned societal niches.

The above discussion points to several tasks that society in general, and perhaps students in particular, have of the HBU and its lecturers, administrative staff and management. In the following discussion I will focus more on the primary tasks of educating students from lecturers' perspectives.

4.5.2.2 Primary task of universities: educating students

According to Rogers (1976) and Rice (1970) the conversion processes with regard to educating students in a university consists of four primary tasks, viz.:

- the dissemination of knowledge;
- the discovery of knowledge;
- the development of the capacity to think clearly about any issue; and
- the development of the capacity to deal with issues of authority and responsibility in a rapidly changing environment.

Differently stated, the lecturers in the university are concerned with providing students with opportunities for learning, thinking, growth and maturation. The generic points of growth and maturity include independence and interdependence, setting limits for themselves, taking responsibility and dealing with diverse ideas and phenomena (Pitts, 2003). Rice (1970) includes the capacity to distinguish between phantasy and reality. Although lecturers can provide these opportunities, it is proposed that this task be performed by another group of employees. According to Pitts (2003) the latter primary task performed by the lecturers is mostly part of the hidden curriculum of an academic department of a university, in that these social and personal aspects of the curriculum are rarely articulated to students. These aspects may be perceived by students in the ethos of the academic department, as well as the personal growth and maturity that they experience in the course of their tertiary education (French & Bazalgette, 1996). Thus, the provision of opportunities for growth and maturation forms part of a *hidden* curriculum that seems to be located in the intentions of teaching and experiences of learning (French & Bazalgette, 1996; Pitts, 2003).

Thus, the university provides students with a transitional space in which they can negotiate several transitions of which the most important is the transition from

adolescence to adulthood and entry into the workforce. Obviously the university and students are exposed to several other transitions, e.g. reacting to changes in knowledge, an ever-changing society, socio-political changes, to name but a few (Coren, 1997; Pitts, 2003; Rosslyn, 2004).

4.5.3 Application of Kleinian theory and Bion's work to the lecture-student relationship

Cognitive models of learning seem to split cognition from emotions and suggest that learning can be rational and managed. According to these models, if emotion exists during learning it must be managed or exploited in order to ensure success (Cummins, 2000). However, literature from a systems psychodynamic perspective suggests that any significant learning, as well as attempts by lecturers to assist students with significant learning, can be experienced as a threatening attack on something to which the students is unconsciously attached. This threatening attack mobilises powerful desires not to learn and not to change – resulting in a disheartening experience for students and lecturers alike. Thus, learning and all attempts to enhance learning involve a degree of disorientation and personal threat (Cummins, 2000; Vince, 1998).

4.5.3.1 The lecturing and learning relationship

When students enter the university they do so as active participants with pre-existing relationship in phantasy to the university and its subgroups, including the lecturers. According to Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.* (1983) the function of the lecturer is that of a container of anxieties and facilitator of thinking. The task of the lecturer can be thought of as resembling the parental function, i.e. to act as a temporary container for the excessive anxiety of his/her students at point of stress (Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.*, 1983, p.60). The lecturing and learning relationship could be described as a form of mothering

marked by a nurturing relationship. Thus, in the interaction between lecturers and students a space can be created in which the lecturer aims at harnessing the students' innate curiosity and spontaneity in the joint project of learning (Coren, 1997).

According to Coren (1997) and Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.* (1983) projective identification is the first mode of communication between infant and mother, i.e. by projecting feelings, sensations into the (m)other, the infant or student communicates something that should be understood by the (m)other. Although admiration can be projected onto lecturers, destructive elements, such as aggression, violence and anxiety, are usually projected onto them. Although learning can result in exciting new insight, any attempt to learn could activate psychotic or primitive mental states (Cummins, 2000). Similar to these primitive mental states is what Bion refers to as the proto-mental, the somato-psychic level of experiences, consisting of emotional entities in the raw, which he names beta elements. These bits of raw sense data are, as it were, *looking for*, or *in search of* a place where they can grow and be transformed into thoughts, dreams, ideas, myths, etc. Beta elements can be transformed into alpha elements through the state of mind of reverie and the process of alpha function (Biran, 2003; Lazar, 2003; Nutkevitch, 1998).

Based in these primitive mental states, or when experiencing beta elements, students are invested in not-learning. In reaction to students' failure to learn, strong feelings such as despair, helplessness, disbelief, contempt and occasionally horrified amusement could be engendered. The aforementioned represent some kind of countertransferrential phenomena in that through the failure and other acts (such as violence) students are communicating back to the lecturers (Chuah & Jakubowicz, 1999; Cummins, 2000). Ward (1993) and Chuah and Jakubowicz (1999) explain what happens when the lecturers are unable to contain the destructive feelings of the students. If the projections from the students onto the lecturers are not worked with, the students may feel that their

experiences and feelings have been scorned and discounted by the lecturers – the lecturers are experienced as rejecting objects. Thus, instead of being experienced as understanding nurturing objects by students, the students experience and identify with a wilfully misunderstanding lecturer-object (Ward, 1993).

In an ideal situation the lecturers should then introject and transform these destructive elements for the students. In other words the (m)other then should attempt to understand the communication, i.e. think about it and in so doing provide containment for the infant or student (Ward, 1993). The (m)other should provide reverie, a calm receptivity towards the communication – a willingness to introject and make sense of the communication (Chuah & Jakubowicz, 1999; Lazar, 2003; Ward, 1993). Bion describes the alpha function as the (m)other's function (Biran, 2003, Lazar 2004). The lecturer has to maintain nurturing in the face of rage, envy, and jealousy that can arise when the students experience frustration, apprehension, fear and loss when they have to learn (French & Bazalgette, 1996; Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.*, 1983). Thus, the lecturers demonstrate to the students that the destructive elements can be understood, thought about and tolerated (Bion, 1962; Chuah & Jakubowicz, 1999). The students internalise this supportive container and hold the internal destructive elements (Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.*, 1983). Through this process the infant or student begins to develop his/her own capacity for reflecting on his/her own state of mind (Bion, 1962; Coren, 1997). In this case the infant introjects and identifies (introjective identification) with the containing object (Bion, 1959).

4.5.3.2 Effect of learning and thinking on the lecturing and learning relationship

Thus, an aspect which makes learning possible, is a secure and safe holding environment (Long & Newton, 1997) in which beta elements are transformed into alpha-function (Lazar, 2003). However, should an unsafe and uncertain environment exist, the

longing to pair or preparing to fight become very real options for relating with the other (Kahn & Green, 2004).

Coren (1997, p.57) suggests that learning and teaching, like parenting and being parented, will involve oscillations between satisfaction and frustration, spontaneous enthusiasm and persistent effort. According to Windland (2003), Bion described the learning process in terms of a cyclical recurrence of the passage between the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive position. This cyclical recurrence is not viewed as pathological, but as part of what has to be endured for learning to occur. In order to understand such cyclical passage or oscillations I will discuss the experience of learning, how this can lead to the denigration or the idealisation of lecturers, as well as understanding that it is the same lecturer who intermittently can be withholding and satisfying (Salberger-Wittenberg *et al.*, 1983).

K is used by Bion to denote knowing and O to denote not-knowing. A tension exists between K and O and learning is the process if withstanding the tension and the concomitant discomfort and frustration (French & Simpson, 2003; Windland, 2003). Learning occurs from working at the edge between knowing and not-knowing (French & Simpson, 1999; French & Simpson, 2003). Subsequently, working on this edge requires dealing with the concomitant tension, discomfort and frustration, as well as adopting a disposition to deal with not-knowing. The disposition of not-knowing entails that due to the pressure of the moment the individual does not know what he/she knows and possibly does not know what he/she is doing, resulting in the experience or state of not-knowing-what-one-is-doing.

The uncertainty at the edge between knowing and not-knowing is unsettling, anxiety-provoking, eliciting incompetence, fear of incompetence and loss of control, as well as destroying all sense of role, identity and of the task at hand (French & Simpson, 1999).

The edge between knowing and not-knowing can be *truly bewildering and terrifying where nothing can be seen, where there are no clear roads as we know them and where there are real dangers to safety and even to life*. Based on this, it follows that in every [lecture hall] there ought to be rather frightened people: the [students and the lecturer] (Bion quoted in French & Simpson, 1999, p. 3). Furthermore, learning and knowledge becomes, due to examination, intrinsically linked with issues to do with competition, rivalry, envy, grandiosity, denigration and contempt (Coren, 1997).

This may seem to be a negative description of learning – but learning can be exciting if we can contain the tension, discomfort and frustration at the edge of knowing and not-knowing. To work, and thus learn, at the edge between knowing and not knowing entails being with uncertainty, which if appropriately contained can become a thought which could lead to learning something new. This happens through truth-in-the-moment – which is imminent but always unachievable, because the moment the truth-in-the-moment is grasped it has become knowledge paving the way for another truth-in-the-moment. This leaves one again at the edge between knowing and not-knowing, dealing with uncertainty and being tantalised by the fact that the desired insight is just out of reach (French & Simpson, 1999; French & Simpson, 2003).

To ensure that one learns it is imperative to stay with and not retreat from truth-in-the-moment. Retreating from this moment constitutes dispersal, i.e. flight from the anxiety elicited by meeting the unknown into explanation, emotion or physical action. It is important to recognise that each individual has a particular valency for dispersal, and to deal with the tendency for dispersal entails being aware of it. Not dealing with truth-in-the-moment can also lead to a dependence on truth-from-moments-past. Consequently, individuals rely on existing knowledge to deal with current situations, addressing only that which is known and controllable, retreating from the influence of a situation and its possibilities (French & Simpson, 1999).

Negative capability can be described as a state in which a person *is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason* (Keats quoted in French *et al.*, 2001). According to French (2000), negative capability describes the capacity to experience emotion, one's own and others', but also to contain these emotions for the relationship between oneself and the other. By doing so, it is possible to learn from and to use emotion to inform one's understanding of a relationship with the other and ultimately the work that needs to be done through the relationship. The negativeness of this capability does not indicate negativity, deficiency or insignificance; it is a measure of the individual's capacity to contain emotion, the ability to hold enough, to be able to hold something for another as well as for oneself. In so doing making sense of the emotions, transforming it and giving it back to the other in a manner that the other can experience the difficult emotion as manageable (French, 2000; French *et al.*, 2001).

Thus, the edge has the potential for both creativity and terror (French & Simpson, 1999). Obviously tests and examinations are two of various ways in which lecturers assess students' retention of knowledge. However, I propose that tests and examinations probably have the potential of confronting students with the edge between knowing and not-knowing (French & Simpson, 2003) which students usually experience as extremely threatening. Tests or examinations probably raise within students anxiety about what they contain, with specific emphasis on shameful and forbidden aspects. Therefore examination and tests can lead to destructive attack from students against lecturers as a way of defending against these shameful and forbidden aspects.

4.5.3.3 Social power relations evident in the student and lecturer relationship

Learning is constructed, shaped and contained by social power relations. Consequently complex and unequal relations around knowledge are constructed between the different

stakeholders as an integral part of the learning process (Vince, 1998, p. 309). In other words in the lecturing and learning relationship, students, lecturers and management are positioned unequally by different stakeholders in the organisation because of the social constructions of their identities. Furthermore, the social construction of identities occurs within and across groups, e.g. different students can be differently positioned within the student group adding to the complexity of social power relations within the learning organisation (Vince, 1998).

Jaques (1990) and Menzies Lyth (1990) have indicated that unconscious defense mechanisms play a significant role in an organisation's inability to manage learning and change, i.e. social systems are used as a response to and defense against anxiety. According to Vince (1998) learning environments in educational institutions are created and designed to mirror the defenses against anxiety and other disturbing emotions of the educational institution. Subsequently, the learning environments, including the learning and lecturing relationship, could hinder the extent and intensity of learning for those involved. It is imperative to work with the threatening emotions underlying learning in order to be aware when they encourage or discourage learning for those involved (Vince, 1998).

It can be easily assumed that experiencing threatening emotions is only the domain of the students. But if we want to move beyond an oppressive education, the lecturers' experience of threatening emotions within the learning and lecturing relationship cannot be ignored (Vince, 1998).

4.5.3.4 The nature of lecturing as part of the lecturing and learning relationship

The mother-infant relations are re-constructed in the lecturing and learning relationship. Learning involves processes of taking in, digesting, absorbing or retaining, as well as

producing and giving back knowledge (Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.*, 1983). In the lecturing/learning relationship the lecturers provide opportunities for the students to take in and retain knowledge through learning. However, the students could experience the latter as a threatening attack on their sense of self.

Aspirations of lecturers probably include passing knowledge and skills to students, fostering personal development of students by enabling them to succeed. Simultaneously, lecturers could experience particular fears, which could include fears of criticism, hostility and losing control. As is evident from the above discussion, due to the nature of learning, frustration and concomitant hostility is inherent in the relationship between students and lecturers. The lecturer can experience this hostility as a personal attack, or alternatively the lecturer can see him/herself as an object of hatred, trusted by the students to understand and deal with their angry feelings (Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.*, 1983).

An aspect that stands out for me in the literature is almost a lack of dealing with the lecturing and learning relationship in a context where the lecturers are dealing with 400 and more students. Therefore, I venture to propose that in the lecture hall an individual student is not necessarily held, but rather subgroups within the lecture are held. With this I am not excluding that the individual student can be held, but rather that when the individual student is held, that student is a representative of a subgroup and by holding this representative, the subgroup is held.

4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, I discussed the social system, e.g. the university, a defense against paranoid and depressive anxieties and as an envious attack. In the discussion the focus was on object relations in the infant and individual in order to form a basis for applying the psychodynamics of the individual to the university. Bion's seminal work on basic

assumption groups and the work group was discussed in detail – again to form the basis of applying his work on groups to the university in particular. The psychodynamics in the university were discussed by focusing on the intergroup level. In order to form a systems psychodynamic perspective of the university, open systems theory was also highlighted. Then Klein and Bion's work were applied to the learning and lecturing relationship.

In the last chapter, relevant literature will be integrated with findings in order to present several working hypotheses, as well as two research hypotheses.

CHAPTER 5 REFLECTION THROUGH CONTINUOUS MEANING-MAKING

The purpose of this chapter is twofold, viz. to integrate the findings with relevant literature as discussed in Chapter 1, and to propose working hypotheses based on this integration. In order to develop the working hypotheses I also use where possible my experiences of the findings and completing the research project as further evidence for the hypotheses. At times it may appear that the hypotheses are contradictory – this will indeed be so. I propose that the reason for this is that in the unconscious more than one hypothesis can be true at the same time. Furthermore, in the context of the analysis of this data, it appears that there are two levels on which interpretations can be made – organisational structure and psychodynamic processes, which occur within and because of the organisational structure (Amado, 1995; Armstrong, 1999; Miller, 2004; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994).

The hypotheses are structured according to the four main relationships identified in the findings. In doing so, the specific aims of the hermeneutic phenomenology study as outlined in Chapter 1 will be addressed. Where relevant, opportunities of this research project are explored, and recommendations are made.

As I offer the following working hypotheses, I acknowledge that these are not the only hypotheses which can be formed about aspects of the data. But these hypotheses seemed most significant at the time (Eisold, 1985). I also invite the reader, to engage with the working hypotheses which at times could be controversial and perhaps even challenging (Powell Pruitt & Barber, 2004) in our roles as lecturers at a South African university or a university anywhere in the world, as well as employees in different organisations.

Then I present a discussion of opportunities for future research based on what I have learned in this project about doing research, as well as recommendations in the light of the literature review and empirical study. I conclude the chapter and

the research project by presenting two research hypotheses, one based on the literature review and the other on the empirical study for further meaning-making through reflection.

5.1 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS AND LECTURERS

Lecturers reported that the relationship with the students were either a constructive, working relationship, or a relationship marred by threat of violence and actual physical violence. The nature of the relationship in the face of accomplishment was marked by a close connection between lecturers and students, while the relationship in the face of failure was marked by threat of and actual physical violence directed at the lecturers by students. In the following sections I attempt to form a deeper understanding of the relationship of the lecturers with the students, by giving interpretations, integrating the ideas with literature and presenting working hypotheses.

5.1.1 A constructive, working relationship

The relationship of lecturers with students in the lecture hall seems to have been a constructive, working relationship marked by respect. This positive relationship was especially evident when students were academically successful, when lecturers interacted closely with students (particularly student forums and smaller honours classes), as well as during one-to-one interactions between students and lecturers. Although some lecturers reported positive experiences in the lecture hall, it was evident that these experiences were marred by passivity and dependence on the part of students in the lecture hall. Some dependence can be expected in the lecture hall (Chuah & Jakubowicz, 1999; Richardson, 1975; Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.*, 1983), but passive-dependence could negatively affect the lecturer-student relationship. But if the passive-dependence on the part of students can be transformed into active-participation on the part of the student

then a constructive, working relationship in which lecturers and student seem to take up appropriate roles and complete the tasks relevant to the primary task of the university arises (see Miller & Rice, 1975; Rice, 1970; Triest, 1999). It is evident that this occurred when lecturers could provide a holding environment for students by forming a positive connection with them in the lecture hall or in the context of smaller groupings of students. As suggested by Gustafson and Cooper (1985) it seems that in the lecture hall lecturers could form an adequate holding environment where students felt safe enough to express their dependence appropriately towards lecturers, and the lecturers felt enabled to deal with the dependence, anxiety and other destructive elements of the students pertaining to their ability to cope with academic demands. In this adequate holding environment, learning may be possible (Long & Newton, 1997; Nutkevitch, 2001; Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.*, 1983) in which beta elements are transformed into alpha-function through reverie (Bion, 1959, 1962; Biran, 2003; Lazar, 2003; Nutkevitch, 1998). Thus, if the lecturers provided the students with a holding environment the relationship of the lecturers with the students could develop into one marked by interdependence, the taking up of relevant roles and the appropriate completion of tasks which is evident from the reports of lecturers' constructive working relationship with the successful students or smaller groupings of students (Biran, 2003; Coren, 1997; Richardson, 1975; Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1970; Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.*, 1983; Ward, 1993).

The passivity on the part of students could be the result of didactic lecturing which occurs when lecturing huge numbers of students. It is important to bear in mind, that this dependence on the part of the black students could be culturally motivated where dependence for the traditional and transitional African is differently experienced than in Western culture (Peltzer, 2002). This passivity could also point to the students' dependence on the lecturers to provide them with knowledge/information which they wished to ingest and just magically understand (Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1970; Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.*, 1983). Another

possible explanation for the observed passive dependence is probably linked to passive aggressiveness based on numerous socio-political and socio-historical reasons. The passive aggressiveness in certain students could appear as active aggressiveness as evident from the reign of terror (ROT) which was maintained by the vocal minority amongst the students. The passive and active aggressiveness experienced by the students could have resulted from their encounters with lecturers in the examination hall or test venues where the lecturers could be experienced (by the students) as withholding from the students knowledge and achievement which the lecturers parade in the lecture-hall (see Hiles, 2007; Klein, 1975; Likierman, 2001; Mouly & Sankaram, 2002). Thus, the lecturers could also be envied for their knowledge which the students have not yet acquired.

Furthermore, the lecturers could by splitting the students into the vocal minority (the bad students) and silent majority (the good students), to preserve a certain number of students so that the lecturers can continue with their primary task. The lecturers were also able to form alliances with certain students (primarily with those who attempted to interact with academic demands), subsequently resulting in the lecturers experiencing a constructive relationship with the students. However, this relationship was sharply contrasted by the separateness from the majority of the students. This could lead to sibling rivalry amongst the students (Shapiro & Carr, 1991).

It is also evident that in the lecture hall where students could express their dependence on the lecturers, the basic assumption of dependence was operating, which probably was in the service of the sophisticated work group (Bion, 1961; Cilliers and Kootzen, 2000; Richardson 1975; Stokes, 1994a), i.e. attending to the task of learning and teaching. Thus a connection is formed with the students in the presence of academic achievement. I postulate that at first the relationship lecturers take up the mother role, while students' remain passively dependent in the child role.

Working hypothesis: the lecture hall is a container for a constructive working relationship between the students and lecturers in the face of academic achievement. In the lecture hall, if the passive-dependence of the students can be transformed, through providing an good-enough holding relationship, into active participation through an intimate working relationship, the lecturers are probably experienced as nurturing objects and an interdependent relationship is developed. The good-enough relationship can be formed because lecturers seem to be able to provide the boundary conditions of space, time and task (positive capability).

If students remained passive-dependent in the lecture-hall a successful lecturing-learning relationship could not be established and the lecturers were probably experienced as withholding and envied objects who paraded (through lecturing) their rich knowledge and information in front of the students, but who did not want to share their rich knowledge and information with students. Perhaps this parading of riches enraged the students, and the passive dependence could be passive aggressiveness which was probably transformed into active aggressiveness within the examination hall.

Working hypothesis: apparently the examination hall is a container for a relationship marked by threats of violence and actual physical violence in the face of failure. This dynamic is possibly further entrenched when the lecturers split the students into the vocal minority (the bad students) and silent majority (the good students), another inherent split within the accounts of the lecturers.

In the following sections, the conflictual relationship, marked by several destructive elements, between the students and lecturers and is explored in more detail.

5.1.2 The (k)not of achievement

However, when an unsafe and uncertain environment existed, the longing to pair or preparing to fight became very real options for relating (Khan & Green, 2004;

Stokes, 1994a, 1994b) between students and lecturers. In preceding section, perhaps the focus is more on the longing on the part of the lecturers to make a connection (to pair) with the students. In the following section, it is evident that the basic assumption of fight/flight operates in the relationship between students and lecturers. I show that the lecturing-learning relationship is marked by the basic assumption of fight/flight due to the nature of the relationship of the lecturers with the students, as well as the psychodynamics of diversity characteristics such as race, position and socio-economic status (see Cilliers & May, 2002; May & Evans, 2004; Skolnick & Green, 2004).

The conflictual relationship between students and lecturers mainly occurred in the context of lecturers evaluating students' academic performance. A lecturer stated that the old frame of reference that she saw in her relationship with the students was that *white people actively, productively, intentionally try to keep black people down*. Furthermore, it appears that the students thought that the lecturers sabotaged their academic careers and consequently their future development. I venture to explore whether this is part of the social-historical contract white and black people have with each other in South Africa. Powell (1998), an African American woman, courageously asked a question about her role in ensuring the underachievement of black students. This position compels me, albeit tentatively, to explore the extent of the lecturers' unconscious involvement in the students' underachievement. I am assisted in this exploration by reminding myself that this unconscious involvement occurs within a dynamic relationship between students and lecturers, a socio-political relationship, a current relationship and a future relationship marked by hope.

Lecturers portrayed themselves as being very understanding of the students' experiences within their communities and in the university. On one level this is caring and nurturing; on another it leaves me suspicious about the lecturers' motives. Based on this contemplation, I propose that in the relationship between students and lecturers, lecturers have introjected and identified with the projection

of the caring, nurturing, in control and rational part of the relationship. This probably left them free from projections pertaining to incompetence (Jaques, 1990; Likierman, 2001; Menzies Lyth, 1960, 1990; Powell, 1998; Skolnick & Green, 2004). On one level it is obvious that the lecturers should be caring, nurturing, in control and rational, but they should also be able to hold, for the students, the destructive elements and overwhelming emotions encountered in the lecturing-learning process. By doing this, the lecturers demonstrate to the students that destructive element can be understood, thought about and tolerated (Coren, 1997; Cummins, 2000; Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.*, 1983; Ward, 1993). Through this students can internalise this supportive container and hold the internal destructive elements. Thus, the students introject and identify (introjective identification) with the containing object (see Bion, 1961; Klein, 1946; Jaques, 1990; Richardson, 1975; Stein, 2004). Perhaps this happened in the lecturer-student relationship that existed in the lecture hall, but this does not seem to have been the case in other scenarios, such as in the test and examination halls, in the HBU. When the lecturers were unable to contain the destructive feelings towards the students, the students may feel that their experiences and feelings have been scorned and discounted by the lecturers – the lecturers were experienced as rejecting objects. Thus, instead of being experienced as understanding nurturing objects by students, the students experienced and identified with a wilfully misunderstanding lecturer-object (suggested by Klein, 1946; Likierman, 2001; Segal, 1992; Ward, 1993). Thus, it seems that the lecturers were unable to provide a containing, learning environment for the students. I propose that one of the reasons for this is that management did not provide a containing working environment for the lecturers (see Miller & Rice, 1975; Nutkевич, 2001). It is important to bear in mind that the lecturing-learning relationship is marked by oscillations between satisfaction and frustration, resulting in a non-pathological cyclical recurrence of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive position (Coren, 1997; Windland, 2004). However, based on the above description, it seems that the lecturing-learning relationship mainly occurred within the paranoid-schizoid position.

In order for learning to occur, as suggested by French and Simpson (2003), students should be able to remain at the edge between knowing and not-knowing which can be truly bewildering and terrifying, but also essentially creative. Perhaps the students experienced learning, tests and examination as a threatening attack on their sense of self. The students' possible experience of an attack on their sense of self was especially evident from the description of a department as the Vlakplaas of the university, as mentioned by some of the lecturers. Furthermore, learning could have been experienced by the students as an attack by the lecturers on their sense of self, due to not-knowing and the unconscious demands of tests and examinations which are intrinsically linked to issues of competition, rivalry, envy, grandiosity, denigration and contempt (Coren, 1997; Klein, 1957; Mollon, 2002; Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1970; Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.*, 1983). It is proposed that these overwhelming feelings experienced by the students could be compounded by the complexities linked to socio-political and socio-historical factors (Abdi, 2002; 2001) and diversity characteristics (Cilliers & May, 2002; May & Cilliers, 2002; May & Evans, 2004; Powell, 1998; Powell Pruitt & Barber, 2004) especially race, inherent in the relationship between students and lecturers. Due to this cauldron of unconscious dynamics, students may have retaliated against their experienced attack from lecturers through threats of, and actual, violent attacks on lecturers.

Working hypothesis: the findings suggest that examinations and tests entrench an aggressive retaliation from students towards lecturers, for an experienced attack against their sense of self. This probably perpetuates a destructive attack from (black) students against (white) lecturers as a way of defending against shameful, forbidden aspects related to failure in relation to (white) lecturers.

Given the nature of learning, tests and examinations, hostility is inherent in the students and lecturers relationship. Lecturers can experience this hostility as a personal attack, alternatively the lecturers can see themselves as an object of hatred – trusted by the students to understand and deal with their angry feelings

(Coren, 1997; Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.*, 1983; Ward, 1993). The lecturers might experience themselves as being blamed and scapegoated by the students who struggle academically, and who seem to abdicate their responsibility and agency in the face of academic endeavour. The students, instead of engaging in the required academic struggle of interacting with course content and attaining academic skills, rather used their struggle skills to threaten and commit acts of violence against the lecturers. The apparent constructive relationship between students and lecturers in the lecture halls has to be juxtaposed against the impact of students' struggle skills – which come to the fore during learning, tests and examinations – on the lecturer-student relationship.

Working hypothesis: the lecture hall and the examination hall are particular containers for the discrepant relationship between the lecturers and the students, viz. a constructive working relationship in the face of academic achievement and a relationship marked by threats of violence and actual physical violence in the face of failure.

Thus, the students' non-achievement or underachievement became a (k)not of achievement, because the processes of learning and lecturing were primarily impacted by destructive psychodynamics – the ricocheting of primarily negative projections back and forth between students and lecturers (Cummins, 2000; Ward, 1993), resulting in the (k)not of relationship between students and lecturers. In this (k)not of relationship lecturers found it difficult to maintain a constructive working relationship with the students. The lecturers probably also feared being overwhelmed by the dread of the students as they experienced overwhelming, negative emotions and perhaps even their own dread linked to their apparent inability to provide an optimal learning-lecturing context for the students.

5.1.2.1 *The marginalisation of the lecturers*

Furthermore, it seems that the conversation about achievement took place in the context where these lecturers experienced themselves as marginalised and

projected on by students, management, their colleagues, and the wider academic fraternity. Within the wider academic fraternity, lecturers experience themselves as carrying the label of underachievers who are unable to succeed in HWUs, i.e. they were second-rate academics. Thus it appears lecturers were living with the rumour of incompetence, and experienced attacks on their competence from the wider academic fraternity, as well as stakeholders in the university (Powell Pruitt & Barber, 2004). This raises the question: what is being projected onto the lecturers and whether the lecturers identify with these projections? At present I do not have clear-cut answers for these questions, but one of the projections could be incompetence. This would have implications for the back and forth ricochetting of projection of incompetence between the students and lecturers. Thus, in the relationship between the students and lecturers, non-achievement and incompetence as highlighted through the students' performance in tests and examinations was probably being thrown around like a hot potato.

5.1.2.2 Reasons for the (k)not of achievement

It is important that the lecturers be able to empathise with students' inability to cope with the demands of a university education, which must be an overwhelming, frustrating and painful experience. The lecturers' empathy for the students occurred in a context riddled with the university's marginalisation by several stakeholders, including the wider academic fraternity. It also seems these lecturers were empathising with themselves, i.e. their inability to cope with the demands made by the students and management of the HBU (see 5.2 and 5.3).

Working hypothesis: I propose that the students mirror on behalf of the lecturers their experiences within the HBU, i.e. inability to cope with the tasks demanded of them by the university, resulting in the lecturers probably being overwhelmed, enraged and experiencing despair.

I propose that in lecturers' descriptions of the students' experiences further projection of these potent emotions onto students occurs. The lecturers seem to project onto the students' feelings of rage, despair, extreme anxiety and de-authorisation. I am not sure that the students had the valence to carry these overwhelming and potent emotions – some of the answers to this question may well be evident in students acting out many of these potent emotions. Through this, students were possibly given a licence for emotionality and irrationality, while the lecturers had the licence of empathy, understanding and rationality (see Jaques, 1990, Menzies Lyth, 1960, 1990; Price, 2000). Differently put, lecturers' projected onto students' overwhelming feelings which they (the lecturers) wanted to be free of, while holding onto thinking, understanding and caring. These dynamics were then entrenched even more, by students who projected onto lecturers the role of nurturer (Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1970; Salzberger-Wittenberg *et al.*, 1983) who should spoon-feed them. Thus, the students probably projected their capacity for thinking, understanding and caring onto lecturers. Based on this, I am not surprised that the students had difficulty in thinking in the lecturing-learning relationship. As suggested by Apprey (1993), Fox (1996), Gould *et al.* (2001), Horwitz (1985) and Salzberger-Wittenberg (1970) it appears that projective identification occurred within the lecturers, enhancing their ability to think, while projective identification occurred within the students, enhancing their experience of irrationality. The projective identification with thinking by the lecturers became even more entrenched through the primary task of the lecturers, i.e. the development of the curriculum to attend to the learning needs of the students. The latter may be another cognitive way of dealing with the overwhelming emotions experienced by the lecturers and expressed by the students on behalf of the HBU.

As we know from object relations theory (Bion, 1959; J. Klein, 1987; M. Klein, 1946, 1985; Likierman, 2001), the lecturers should introject on behalf of the students these overwhelming feelings in order for the students to be free of them and attend to learning. Furthermore, by projecting these overwhelming feelings the lecturers should then metabolise them for the students and give them back in

a more manageable form (Ward, 1993). The apparent inability on the part of the lecturers to contain overwhelming feelings for the students leads to the question whether (white) lecturers can be containers for (black) students in the university? The question pertaining to the white lecturers' ability to be containers for the experiences of black student seems to reverberate to a similar question pertaining to whether black management can be containers for the experiences of white lecturers. In the light of the work by Koortzen and Wrogemann (2003) and Wheelan and Abrahams (1993) I propose that this reverberation seems to be a mirroring of a psychodynamic process in the different relationships. I also think that this is a fundamental question about containment in the HBU, which permeated the relationship among the three stakeholders and essentially influenced the experience of trust for the other group in the intergroup experience.

Working hypothesis: the reverberation of a similar question about containment in the two relationships, i.e. the relationship between the students and lecturers, and the lecturers and management, points to mistrust among the groups and touches on the lecturers' apparent inability to form a constructive working relationship with the other two stakeholders in the university.

Another possible anxiety on the part of the lecturers could be that they were afraid of being engulfed by these overwhelming feelings of the students, which were similar to their own overwhelming feelings, that they defended against these feelings through projecting them onto the other stakeholders, in particular the students. In the light of Bion (1961) the dread that they could have experienced was that once they allow themselves to connect with these overwhelming feelings they would never be able to recover from them.

Perhaps by speaking about and projecting rage, despair and being overwhelmed onto the students (of course in some way this was part of the research question, which now becomes part of my evidence) the lecturers could disconnect in the relationship in order not to be engulfed by the students' dread, and possibly their

own. Perhaps this is an indication of the basic assumption of me-ness as a defense against the basic assumption of dependence (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002; Lawrence *et al.*, 2000)? Additionally, lecturers' attempts to work creatively with students and making connections were difficult to work with because of the mistrust, as well as the apparent and real violence, within their relationship (see Alford, 2002; Diamond, 1997; Diamond & Allcorn, 2004; Lawrence, 1995). This mistrust and violence was even more evident from the slogan, *one settler, one bullet*, which was an expression of violence on the part the students towards the lecturers.

Another aspect, which I did not find to the extent that I expected, is that the lecturers would be very angry with the behaviour of the students (Price, 2000) – this anger was much more expressed towards management. Lecturers tended to be very understanding of the reasons for the students' behaviour. Anger did slip through in the comments of some of the lecturers, whereas and it is most evident for me in the comments of L9, L1, L5 and L8 – with L9 in my opinion expressing anger most vehemently. I am not sure why the lecturers wanted to preserve the students, and denigrated management to a greater extent.

Now the question seems to be: Why are the lecturers so afraid to deal with the overwhelming emotions that they describe in their relationship with the students?

I present several working hypotheses for consideration:

- Lecturers, through their understanding and caring for the students, enable the dependent students to become even more infantilised.
- As adults who have mainly been educated in HWUs, the assumed role of the lecturers seems to be that of a competent, rational and in control adult.
- As a group of mainly white lecturers, their socio-historical collective memory probably compels them to be the competent rational ones in the student-lecturer relationship as impacted by the diversity characteristics of race (white-black) and position (superordinate-subordinate).

- (White) lecturers probably project onto (black) students overwhelming feelings, so that themselves could be free thereof. By doing this they might be complicit in ensuring that students cannot think and therefore cannot learn within the HBU.
- Some of these hypotheses can be tempered by another suggestion: that these hypotheses can be applied to any lecturer-student relationship in any university, given the lack of realisation and processing of the power and authority differences in this relationship.

Thus, through the (k)not of achievement (Powell, 1998), a (k)not of the relationship between students and lecturers was maintained, enhancing an adversarial separateness between themselves and the students. Perhaps lecturers wanted to retain the control in the lecturing-learning relationship and in so doing remain the wise ones, the providers, the knowledgeable ones. Subsequently, the lecturers inadvertently could be stripping the students of their competence, mobility and agency. The apparent stripping of the students of their competence could be experienced by the students as a reciprocal attack on them by the lecturers – possibly resulting in a lack of containment for students from these lecturers. This lack of containment of students by lecturers was also mirrored by the lack of containment of the lecturers by management (See 5.2). However, these black students managed to mobilise themselves, either by taking on the role of students (a constructive relationship with lecturers) or issuing threats and becoming violent toward the lecturers (a conflictual relationship with lecturers).

Working hypothesis: the strategies, i.e. empathy, understanding, care, creating learning and assessment opportunities for students and providing their marks, can be used by the lecturers to provide containment for students. The same strategies can also be experienced by the students and used by the lecturers as a reciprocal attack on the students in the context of violent attacks from students.

This above discussion raises an ongoing rumour and working hypothesis, i.e. lecturers actively, albeit unconsciously, prevent students from progressing within the university (Powell, 1998). This is what surprises me and leaves me with great discomfort, because this is what I really did not want to discover. It leaves me with a sense of speaking negatively about white people in a context where I would like to be involved in trying to build and develop the country. But perhaps this is the unspeakable that needs to be spoken about. I am also relieved to report that this is not the only truth that can be created through the accounts of the conversations. However, for this moment it is the truth that brings me the most discomfort and in the tradition of what I know about using myself as instrument (Long, 2001a; McCormick & White, 2000), this discomfort denotes that which should be written about.

The lecturers were involved in the primary task of the university; however, they seemed to avoid the specific task of the lecturing-learning context – to contain the students by introjecting overwhelming feelings, containing these feelings before presenting them back to the students in a more manageable form (Bion, 1962; Coren, 1997; Klein, 1985; Likierman, 2001; Segal, 1992; Ward, 1993). I think that one should be careful in thinking that making overwhelming feelings manageable for students was only relevant for the time of the project – perhaps this is exactly what is required by students from lecturers currently.

5.1.3 Black students/white lecturers: mutual disqualification and mistrust across race

It is evident that lecturing and learning take place within a context of risk and diversity (French & Simpson, 1999; Price, 2000). Mutual disqualification is about the disregard that the students and lecturers have for each other. It is also about de-authorising each other within their specific roles within the university. I also propose that the students and lecturers might stereotype one another with regard to the race sub-group they belong to, i.e. in the past black people had less of a

voice and white people now have less of a voice. Furthermore, the mutual disqualification which became a vicious cycle can point to the need for students and lecturers to hold on to their idealised parts and find a willing receptacle for their denigrated parts.

5.1.3.1 Black students/white lecturers: a violent conversation

Further evidence of the competition of who will carry the idealised part and who will carry the denigrated part is found in the lecturers experiencing difficulty when having to inform students about their lack of potential in the context of a university. At that time and perhaps even now there is a taboo about white lecturers speaking about the potential and ability of black students. This conversation is marred by suspicion and mistrust, which flows from the socio-historical context which oppressed black people and doubted their ability to make a contribution to society (Abdi, 2003; Nkomo, 1990a, 1990b; Pityana, 2005). What if this suspicion and mistrust is located within the social contract that white and black people have with each other, i.e. the unconscious roles that white and black people have with regard to who carries the idealised part and who carries the denigrated part (Cilliers & May, 2002; Skolnick & Green, 2004)?

Working hypothesis: the mutual disqualification experienced between students and lecturers is a power struggle about who will carry the idealised and denigrated parts within their relationship marked by the relatedness between them.

The previous hypothesis propose that the lecturers projected unacceptable emotions unto the students, the students could have resolved this power struggle by owning and introjecting the projections. However, this is not the case. Given the unconscious collusive lattice as proposed by Wells (1985) in the system, the lecturers were not free of denigrated parts or the overwhelming emotions being projected unto them from different parts in the system, and in particular from the students. It seems important to note that as the to and fro projection of

overwhelming unacceptable emotion and rationality occurred, the to and fro projection of the idealised and denigrated parts probably occurred simultaneously.

Working hypothesis: the current power struggle between (black) students and (white) lecturers seems to be the perpetuation of the socio-historical and socio-political struggle about which race group will carry the idealised and which race group will carry the denigrated parts in South Africa. Consequently, diversity dynamics pertaining to race are superimposed on the psychodynamics of the lecturers-students relationship which is probably marked by the struggle between students and lecturers about who will carry competence/incompetence or achievement/non-achievement in the organisation.

However, within the university it seems that black students were powerful (given their ROT) and white lecturers disempowered (given their inability to effect changes). Based on this, there seems to have been a reversal in roles between the white lecturers and the black students. However, I propose that who would carry “good” and who will carry “bad” was not established, so conflict and the projection of negative aspects occurred in a context where there seem to have been vacancies for who would own the projections of good/bad, competent/incompetent, authorised/de-authorised. In other words the change in the political dispensation did not result in a reversal of projections. Rather it resulted in a power struggle and perhaps a violent conversation about who would carry the projection of good and bad – who would carry the denigrated parts and who would carry the idealised parts (Cilliers & May, 2002; May & Cilliers, 2002; Skolnick & Green, 2004). Given the description in Chapter 4 of the situation in the HBU and the South African society-as-a-whole, I propose that this conversation will continue for some time to come.

5.1.3.2 Struggle skills used in the black/white divide

Struggle skills could also refer to the skills required in the current dispensation to deal with the multiple diversity relationships. Given that the students have struggle skills; these assisted them with the intergroup conflict that occurred between students and lecturers. The socio-political aspect of the conflict between black students and white lecturers are mirrored by and entrenched within the current conflict and the concomitant struggle skills of the students (see Wheelan & Abraham, 1993). Within this conflict, struggle slogans are used, e.g. *one settler, one bullet; admit one, admit all; pass one, pass all*. This allows me to free associate to another slogan, *an injury to one is an injury to all*. These slogans point to the basic assumption of one-ness (Turquet, 1985) among the students which was marked by no boundary in-between being prevalent.

Working hypothesis: the conflict between students and lecturers is a mirror for societal conflict, which occurs with regard to achievement – always within the context of diversity characteristics and in South Africa primarily within the context of race.

5.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LECTURERS AND MANAGEMENT

The relationship between lecturers and management was marked by a power struggle apparently based on diversity characteristics of race and position within the HBU (Merkenstein, n.d.; Ruth, 1996; 2000), as well as attempts on the part of the lecturers to develop a constructive working relationship with management. This power struggle seems to have resulted in the (k)not of performance, the (k)not of relationship, as well as mutual disqualification and mistrust between lecturers and management. In the following sections I attempt to form a deeper understanding of the relationship between the lecturers and management by

providing further interpretations, integrating the ideas with relevant literature and presenting working hypotheses.

5.2.1 The (k)not of performance

The lecturers found themselves drawn into issues which fell outside their core function. There seems to have been ongoing bickering between management and lecturers about how the students must be handled, and how the university should be run. This possibly had to do with issues pertaining to rivalry, competition, envy, power and authority between the lecturers and management. These issues can partly be explained with regard to the socio-technical aspects of the organisation (Miller & Rice, 1975; Rice, 1970), object relations (Klein, 1985; Likierman, 2001; Segal, 1992), a family metaphor (Shapiro & Carr, 1991) and basic assumption behaviour (Bion, 1962, 1975; Lawrence *et al.*, 2000; Miller, 1998; Rioch, 1975; Stokes, 1994; Wheelan, 1994; Wrogemann, 2002) between lecturers and management.

The socio-technical aspects of the organisation, as suggested by Miller and Rice (1975), that affected the relationship between lecturers and management appeared to pertain mainly to the primary task of the HBU, role confusion experienced by the lecturers, the appropriate owning of responsibility, appropriate authorisation, the non-provision of boundary conditions and the withholding of support for lecturers by management.

It seems that the lecturers considered teaching to be the *core function* of the HBU. According to Rice (quoted in Cherns & Clark 1976, p. 169) the university is a multiple task system; and each task, though interdependent with other tasks, requires its own characteristic organisation which differs from the organisation required for other tasks and for the whole. The primary tasks of the tertiary institution involve educating students, producing research publications and providing relevant community service (Rogers, 1976). Based on the

aforementioned it is possible that the stakeholders in the HBU could have differing and conflictual understanding of the university's primary task and how it should be performed (as suggested by Hunt, 1976; Miller & Rice, 1975; Roberts, 1994b; Rogers, 1976).

On one level there seemed to be agreement between the lecturers and management about the three primary tasks of the HBU. However, on another level lecturers find themselves involved in politics, power play, broader societal change processes and in counter accusations and defending themselves against students and management. Due to their involvement in the aforementioned activities, lecturers often found themselves not attending to the appropriate tasks of the HBU. Management did not provide the appropriate support and boundary conditions as required.

Based on this, it is palpable that the relationship between management and lecturers were affected by the impossible task and the anti-task behaviour (Miller, 1993; Miller & Rice, 1976; Roberts, 1994b; Wilshire, 1999) in the HBU. It is hypothesised that the impossible task and the management's inability to determine the priorities of the multiple tasks in the university increased anti-task behaviour (Levinson & Astrachan, 1976; Miller & Rice, 1976). The literature (Freud, 1921; Obholzer, 1994b; Powell Pruitt & Barber, 2004) suggests that the impossible task of the education system is to prepare students as leaders for the country. Given the violence within the HBU, it is evident that lecturers, as demanded by management, should pacify the violent students. Consequently, the societal demand from lecturers and management alike was to pacify and control the violent and threatening students who specifically have acquired struggle skills against the apartheid regime and white people in particular. Through this process, they might well have acquired struggle skills against any authority figures (regardless of their race) that the students perceive as thwarting their progress in society. The overlap between the aforementioned impossible tasks was that while pacifying and containing these students, lecturers and management should

ensure that students gain skills so that they can make some contribution to the South African society.

Working hypothesis: the impossible task in the HBU is for lecturers and management to ensure that the students who have been ill-prepared for tertiary education, who have not been prepared to make a contribution to the broader South African society, and who have acquired struggle skills, are contained and pacified.

The impossibility of the tasks demanded by management from the lecturers has resulted in anti-task behaviour as evident in the lecturers' power struggle with the management.

Working hypothesis: it seems that the impossibility of the task of the HBU enhances the anti-task behaviour by lecturers and management alike, resulting in the (k)not of performance.

In the light of the work by Shapiro and Carr (2001) the family metaphor in the data is very apparent. I hypothesise that management had the role of the father, lecturers the role of mother and students that of unruly teenagers. In this family, the father and teenagers seemed to form an alliance against the mother. Differently put, within this triangle senior management and students formed an alliance against the lecturers. What made this alliance much more sinister is the fact that it occurred in the context of violence. The family metaphor is discussed in more detail in 5.3. At present the focus is on the lecturers and management.

Working hypothesis: the lecturers and management are bickering like a married couple, where management (the father) appear to insist that the lecturers (the mother) should keep the very demanding students (the unruly teenagers) contained and pacified. However, management expects this in a context where very few boundary conditions (Miller, 1993) are provided for the lecturers.

Although the existence of more than one basic assumption within the relationship between lecturers and management is not denied, it is proposed that the main basic assumption (Bion, 1962, Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000; Rioch, 1975b) existing between lecturers and management is the basic assumption fight and flight, given that their relationship is primarily conflictual in nature. As suggested by Higgin and Bridger (1965), Bion (1961), Hayden and Molenkamp (2004) and Lawrence *et al.* (2000) it is evident that within the relationship between lecturers and management the basic assumption fight and flight is not used effectively in the service of the sophisticated work group. A degeneration of lecturers' and management's functioning occurs, as evident from the (k)not of performance. It is noticeable that neither lecturers nor management seem to have had the resilience and ability to move beyond the basic assumption mentality and interact with the work process (Higgin & Bridger, 1965). According to Stokes (1994a, 1994c) such degeneration of functioning could result from their actions and thoughts being dominated by the aberrant basic assumption fight and flight, which produces a culture of paranoia and aggressive competitiveness. Of significance, as suggested by Diamond (1997), Diamond and Allcorn (2004) and Lawrence (1995), is the lecturers' lived experience of management as being the enemy, who commit direct verbal violent acts of humiliating them or withholding resources required by them to complete their task effectively.

Thus, the (k)not of performance seems to be developed by the constant accusations between lecturers and management that each group was not doing their work appropriately. There seemed to be a mutual projection between lecturers and management that the other group was incompetent and did not do their work appropriately. The to and fro movement of projections could result in a situation where at least the lecturer-group may have begun to consider the accusations that they are incompetent and to be blamed for the (k)not of performance in the HBU. L9 vehemently referred to the above situation, viz. *You feel a failure because I think we sit there and blame management and the administration until a point comes when one day a seed sticks in your head and*

you say it can't always be management and the administration's fault. Aren't we doing something wrong? This statement could indicate that as the projections flew to and fro at some point identification with projection took place, to the extent that this lecturer, and perhaps the other lecturers, began to doubt their own competence. L9 continued to say that *and once that seed has been planted in your head it's over and you question every little thing that you do. Everything is done in triplicate because in heaven's name you just want to cover yourself.* *You're so busy covering yourself that afterwards that's all that you do.* The latter statement seems to indicate that once the lecturers identified with the projection of inadequate performance, unconscious energy was used to ensure that the projection did not stick by projecting inadequate performance onto management. This process may also have occurred from management unto lecturers as illustrated mainly by the accounts of lecturers (L2, L3, L4, L6 and L9) that they found themselves in situations where management joined students in accusing lecturers of not performing certain activities successfully, whether these activities fell within their domain of responsibilities or not.

Working hypothesis: there seems to be a to and fro projecting of incompetence and inadequacies (mutual disqualification) as evident in the constant back and forth accusation between management and lecturers about the other not doing their work, in an attempt to get rid of that which is despised within the own group.

The literature, such as Erlich (2001), Roberts (1994c), Singer (2006) and Stein (1982), suggests that what is projected onto the other, the enemy, are denied part of ourselves and thus when looking at the other we see that which we despise within ourselves. These disavowed parts of us are then introjected by the other, the enemy, through projective identification (Diamond, 1993; Fox, 1996; Moylan, 1994). Little contact or inappropriate contact enhances this process of projecting disavowed parts, the enemy introjecting through projective identification and beginning to behave in accordance with the projection (Astrachan & Flynn, 1976; Halton, 1994; Neumann, 1999). Based on ideas form Erlich (2001) and Wells

(1985), the lecturers and management, by projecting incompetence onto the other, made attempts to produce and maintain illusory goodness and self-idealization.

5.2.2 Mutual disqualification between lecturers and management

Mutual disqualification seemed to be a central theme within this the university – whose work it is to qualify individuals. The disqualification of management by lecturers occurred with regard to:

- not managing the day to day smooth running of the university;
- not dealing with members of senior management who do not do their tasks; and
- not disciplining violent students.

The lecturers did not seem to be experiencing a holding environment (see James & Huffington, 2004; Miller & Rice, 1976; Stapley, 1996; Winnicott, 1965) as indicated by the disqualification between management and lecturers, the lack of support from management, the experience of deauthorisation, withholding of boundary conditions from lecturers and the perceived exclusion of lecturers from the alliance between students and management. Furthermore, the lecturers did not trust management.

Based on lecturers' experience that they did not get the required resources, it is evident that management did not provide the boundary conditions required for the day to day functioning of the university (see Miller, 1993; Roberts, 1994c). This may have resulted in the lecturers being frustrated and perhaps even enraged with management. This was not said in so many words, but it is evident from the vehement complaints they had about management.

Lecturers experienced management as either authoritarian (too much power), or spineless (disempowered and deauthorised). The metaphor used to describe management as authoritarian is that of a soldier with a high rank. Again the

military image appears in the data (bear in mind that the students thought of this particular department as the Vlakplaas of the university), which could point to the university as being a war zone. Of significance here is that a lecturer felt that management *play the tune and the lecturers just have to jive to it*. This image again reminds of the pied piper of Hamlin who played a tune and the children followed and disappeared (a lecturer referred to the silent majority as following the *tune* of the vocal minority). Although these two images are not the same, they point to the experience of being under the control of the other at times without any free will. However, in the military image lecturers seem to be forced into obeying the demands of management. Whereas, in the second image they are seduced by beautiful music into following management blindly. Thus, it seems that the lecturers experienced a command that they should obey management without question; probably resulting in the experience that followership was a deauthorised position and therefore a dangerous position (Kahn & Green, 2004; Lazar, 2003) in the university

The danger of followership was further enhanced by the lecturers' experience that management was spineless. I think that these experiences were located within the external reality of these lecturers. However, I hypothesise that the lecturers used this reality to perpetuate the de-authorisation of management and perhaps in so doing maintaining the (k)not of performance and a power struggle with management.

Working hypothesis: by projecting onto management two discrepant labels, i.e. being authoritarian (too much power and authority) or being spineless (too little power or authority), lecturers probably de-authorise management and in this way attack management.

Furthermore, the lecturers in their role as followers of management have also learnt that they do not get support from management. It seems that they experienced themselves as denigrated and shamed by management in the

presence of students. During this public denigration, lecturers were painted as being *uncaring, irresponsible and unconcerned* about students.

Lecturers reported that they got involved in management's tasks for the purposes of ensuring the smooth running of the university. On the one hand lecturers were ambivalent about this involvement because they could probably identify their seduction by management (Khan & Green, 2004). On the other hand, this provides them with an opportunity for a *coup d'état* based on the power struggle between lecturers and management about who actually ran the HBU (see 5.2.4) and this maintained their collusion with the unreasonable demands of management.

Working hypothesis: the turf war, about who actually runs the university, between lecturers and management prevents the lecturers from forming a working alliance with management to deal with the volatile, unruly students as unconsciously requested by management.

The aforementioned hypothesis is evident from:

- Several lecturers' acknowledgement of some involvement in the non-disciplining of students.
- The continuous accusatory stance that lecturers took with regard to management's inability to discipline the students.
- The lecturers' willingness to leave the unpleasant task in the hands of management, even when management, albeit in an unsophisticated manner, implored them for assistance with the unruly students.
- Instead of management and lecturers forming an alliance to deal with the unruly, volatile students, the two groups seemed to perpetuate a rivalrous relationship with each other marked by destructive unconscious elements. Perhaps this aggressive competition was about who would win the favour of these students. Furthermore, this aggressive competition was a result of the

aberrant form of the basic assumption fight and flight evident in the relationship between lecturers and management.

The mutual disqualification was also based on lecturers' opinion that management did not have the skills to manage the university or discipline the students. This preoccupation with management's lack of skill raised the questions whether lecturers had the skill to deal with the emotionally volatile university. Perhaps by disqualifying management, lecturers could dump their incompetence and lack of skill in handling the volatile students onto management.

Working hypothesis: this preoccupation with the lack of skill in management could point to the lecturers' experience of not having the skills to deal with volatile, needy students. Perhaps lecturers experience themselves as deskilled in forming a working relationship and maintaining a constructive connection across multiple differences between themselves and management. Thus, this lack of skill underlies the (k)not of performance, which again results in the (k)not of relationship between management and lecturers.

Lecturers and management's relationship was marked by mutual disqualification – a two-way process. This university was racked by destructiveness in the relationship between management and lecturers. In this relationship lecturers were considered to be troublemakers – this labelling of lecturers as troublemakers allowed management to disqualify the concerns and needs of lecturers. Simultaneously lecturers considered certain students to be troublemakers.

Working hypothesis: the finding that lecturers were considered to be troublemakers by management, points to another moment of mirroring in the HBU, i.e. management considering certain lecturers to be troublemakers is similar to and reflected by lecturers considering certain students to be troublemakers. It appears that the mirroring is positional and cascades from top to bottom.

It is evident that management was not fulfilling its expected role, i.e. taking up its role with regard to unpopular issues, not providing the boundary conditions in which the lecturers could take up their role and complete their primary tasks, as well as undermining lecturers on a personal, academic and political level. Given that lecturers found themselves in a threatening, non-containing work environment, management was not trusted. A lecturer referred to this working environment as a *merry-go-round* referring to the instability in the university.

Working hypothesis: the lecturers cannot trust management, because management is not fulfilling their expected role and through this abdication of their responsibility, they create a threatening, non-containing work environment for the lecturers. Consequently, the lecturers cannot provide students with the containment they need in the lecturing-learning relationship.

5.2.3 White lecturers/black management

Incompetence as a projection was ricocheting back and forth between lecturers and management as indicated by the reported mutual disqualification between lecturers and management. This was further entrenched by the impossibility of the task and the anti-task that the HBU was involved with. Incompetence and competence were linked to conversations about inferiority and superiority which again were linked to conversations about being black or white in the world (Cilliers & May, 2002; May & Cilliers, 2002; Powell, 1998; Powell Pruitt & Barber, 2004; Skolnick & Green, 2004). Incompetence and competence were being projected back and forth between lecturers and management. It is proposed that this projection was probably based on the envy which the lecturers had about the perceived powerful position that the management held – as indicated by the report that management was authoritarian. This possibly resulted in incompetence being projected onto management – management being seen as spineless. This could result in lecturers disempowering and sabotaging any attempts on the part of management to take up their authority – in the findings there is acknowledgement

that lecturers may have contributed to the non-disciplining of students, as well as being involved in the disqualification of management. It is evident that envy existed between lecturers and management. Envy probably underlay all conflict (Czander, 1993; Gutmann *et al.*, 1999; Hiles, 2007; Mouly & Sankaram, 2002; Stein, 2000) within the HBU and allowed for activities that were attacking, and not only defensive, between lecturers and management. Furthermore, the incompetence to manage the impossible task of the HBU tossed to and from between lecturers and management resulted in the (k)not of performance which impacted on the (k)not of relationship between lecturers and management.

The lecturers were working within an organisation in which the culture was emotionally and psychologically deadening, numbing and brutal. This is indicated by the behaviour of management, which was marked by acts of threat, intimidation, public humiliation, ineffective communication and unplanned, non-participatory decision-making and changes in aspects of the organisations that directly influenced the lecturers (see Diamond & Allcorn, 2004; Lawrence, 1995). As suggested by Asser (2004), Cilliers and May (2002), May and Cilliers (2002) and Lazar (2004) the conflict between lecturers and management was probably impacted upon by historical conflicts. Our individual identities are formed in part by the internalisation of our social history, which in South Africa is a history marked by apartheid (Abdi, 2002, 2003; Pityana, 2005; Treacher & Foster, 2004). However as much as a particular political and social history was internalised, these participants were also operating in a new socio-political context (Treacher & Foster, 2004). It is proposed that in the new socio-political context the hierarchical position of the different race groups might be renegotiated (Cilliers & May, 2002).

Factors pertaining to the exclusion of (white) lecturers from the relationship between students and management were prevalent. In this exclusions the lecturers experienced no care, no support and thus not a holding environment. This exclusion also occurred publicly where management reinforced rumours that lecturers were not providing enough for students, probably resulting in lecturers

feeling not-good enough. This served as further evidence that management was not providing a holding environment for lecturers – thus preventing them from providing a holding environment for students (see Alford, 2001; Winnicott, 1965).

Working hypothesis: the theme white lecturers/black management seemed to suggest that to some extent the issues pertaining to race are projected onto the relationship between management and lecturers in an attempt to preserve the lecturers' relationship with the students. The issues pertaining to race seem to be linked to the change in the socio-political scenario where mainly black management have more political and positional power than the white lecturers. It is hypothesised that this new scenario is unfamiliar and leads to particular expectations and disappointments.

According to Gemmill and Elmes (1993) we project onto the other, the enemy, denied part of ourselves and thus when looking at the other we see that which we despise within ourselves. These disavowed parts of us are then introjected by the other, the enemy, through projective identification (Diamond, 1993). Little contact or inappropriate contact enhances this process of projecting disavowed parts, the enemy introjects the disavowed parts, and then through projective identification begins to behave in accordance with the projection (Astrachan & Flynn, 1976; Halton, 1994; Neumann, 1999). The lecturers and management, by projecting incompetence onto the other, were attempting to produce and maintain illusory goodness and self-idealization (Erlich, 2001; Wells, 1985).

5.2.4 The power struggle

A power struggle between the lecturers and management seemed to be linked to who actually managed the university. Therefore this apparent power struggle occurred with regard to task, roles and boundaries as relevant to the relationship between management, lecturers and the university-as-a-whole. It appears that lecturers were constantly agitating management to fulfil their tasks and take up

their role as management of the university in order for the university to operate. On the one hand this may seem to be a positive thing; on another it is proposed that lecturers were seduced (Khan & Green, 2004) to overstep the boundaries of their roles and tasks, especially when roles and tasks were unpopular with students and led to confrontation with students. The power struggle occurred under different circumstances when lecturers rejected these roles and tasks and demanded that management take ownership of their tasks and roles.

When the primary task, as suggested by Levinson and Astrachan (1976) and Miller and Rice (1976) of the HBU is narrowly defined or the priorities of the different multiple tasks are not described there was competition between the different stakeholders about which task should get attention. Another issue in this HBU was which task would get most attention – the primary task, the anti-task or the impossible task? This may be a rhetorical question because in this system the impossible task received the most attention, as indicated by the anti-task behaviour in the university (Cherns & Clark, 1976, Rice, 1970).

Working hypothesis: it appears that the power struggle between lecturers and management which occurs around roles, tasks and boundaries was about currying favour with the students, thus resulting in a conflictual relationship between lecturers and management.

Literature, such as that by James and Huffington (2004), suggests that the task and role boundaries of management and lecturers are unclear, and consequently influencing the containment of anxiety within the university

Working hypothesis: lecturers have difficulty in forming an alliance with management to provide a holding environment for students due to a protracted power struggle between lecturers and management maintained by the relatedness the lecturers experience towards management (and possibly the relatedness management experience towards the lecturers).

Another consequence of this power struggle appears to have been the separateness and alienation that the lecturers experienced towards management, entrenching the relatedness between lecturers and management. This difficulty in forming an alliance with management was further entrenched by the split within the lecturers group, i.e. the silent majority and vocal minority. Given the stay-away action by these lecturers and their attempts to mobilise management, it seems that within that context these nine lecturers were a vocal minority who had the intention of changing the system, but who ended up as management agitators.

By directing aggression and hostilities at management, as the out-group enemy, the lecturers could have been avoiding internal hostilities and tensions and problems among all lecturers (see Gemmill, 1986; Gemmill & Elmes, 1993; Gould *et al.*, 1999). Importantly, these nine lecturers through the exploration of the relationship with management highlighted the conflict among the lecturers in general by splitting the lecturing body in those who remained silent because they *do not want to rock the boat* and others who tried to challenge the status quo by voicing their dissatisfaction with how management handled several matters.

Working hypothesis: the lecturers can be divided into the silent majority and a vocal minority. A silent majority who appear to be invested in maintaining the status quo, possibly for career development and personal safety, i.e. not to rock the boat. While the vocal minority needs to reclaim their territory, in order to do this they have to challenge the status quo, i.e. rock the boat. However, this seems to be two opposite extreme positions, perhaps the middle ground consists of rocking the boat, but not tipping the boat over.

Regardless of this conflictual relationship, the lecturers seemed to preserve some of the members of management in order to form a positive link with management. Given this, it is evident that lecturers projected onto management as either disempowered, autocratic or on their side. By doing this they seem able to have formed a tenuous, constructive relationship with the good management, which is

considered to be on their side. The relationship was tenuous due to the mutual disqualification between lecturers and management and the mistrust in the HBU. It seems that in the university a constructive relationship was marked by the experiences that the other is on their side – which could point to dependency on management to provide authority to the lecturers through an alliance with them.

Working hypothesis: by projecting good and bad on different members of management, management is split into different factions, which probably fragments management and impacts on the effective functioning of management.

What feels significant for me in the data is that the moment that lecturers' actions pointed to constructive involvement in their relationship with management, they also seemed to be involved in destructive activity. It seems that the exact same moment held the potential for constructive and destructive activity. Often it is difficult to acknowledge the existence of destructiveness in the presence of that which is constructive – making it difficult for good people, such as the lecturers (myself and you), to explore their contribution to the destructivity in the relationships among the stakeholders in the HBU.

The above discussion clearly illustrates that the management of the university was not fulfilling their obligations as an employer. I think that these managerial issues should have been addressed. However I think to simplify the resolution of this situation as merely addressing management's shortcomings and addressing the structural issues within the organisation is to ignore the chaos within the system and the psychodynamic processes, which occurred within the boundary region (Amado, 1995; Miller & Rice, 1976; Jaques, 1990) between lecturers and management.

I propose that in the HBU, and perhaps even in South Africa, a mere exchange of power from one race group to another would not resolve the power struggle. What is required in the new dispensation is having a real conversation with each other,

taking up new and appropriate roles and owning our authority appropriately on individual and group level. However, for this to be achieved the power struggle must be worked with towards understanding the different roles of different groups in the new dispensation.

5.3 THE TRIANGLE – A TALE OF THREE STAKEHOLDERS

The dyad that has not been discussed, although it has been alluded to in much detail thus far, is the relationship between the students and management. There was collusion, and thus a pairing, between students and management as a defense against the anxiety that was probably experienced concerning the survival of the HBU. This collusion and pairing thus denoted the basic assumption of pairing at work (Bion, 1961; Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000; Richardson, 1975), which has in its service the basic assumption of fight and flight. I think that in this university the aberrant forms of basic assumption pairing, as well as fight and flight, were evident (Stokes, 1994a). This is evident from the paranoia, the power struggle, as well as the violence in the system. In the following section the violence in the HBU is explicated.

5.3.1 A power struggle rampant in the triad

The relatedness among the three stakeholders was evident in the power struggle rampant in the triad. The power struggle between the three stakeholders is explored in more detail in the following sections.

5.3.1.1 The power of the different voices in the triad

According to several lecturers it appeared as if management ascribed to the students quite a lot of power to influence the running of the university, while to a great extent ignoring the authority/voice of the lecturers. This is apparent from the information that the students' voices and demands carried more weight with

management than the demands and challenges of the lecturers. In actual fact the lecturers' experience that their voice was not seen as legitimate. Based on the work by Obholzer (1994a; 2001) I propose that in the triad the lecturers were involved in a power struggle for authorisation from management – with the lecturers experiencing the students as having the most power and themselves as disempowered in relation to management.

In this power struggle the struggle skills of the students were once again in the foreground. Obviously these struggle skills were remnants of the old political dispensation which were perpetuated within the new dispensation giving rise to a ROT. I propose that this ROT seems to have been a turf war (power struggle) through which the different stakeholders were trying to increase their power in the system. Consequently processes of appropriate authorisation of the different stakeholders to take on their role and complete their tasks fell by the way side. It appears that this power struggle and lack of authorisation to take up their role and fulfil their task (Eisold, 2004; Gould, 1993; Hirschhorn, 1997) seemed to have added to the lecturers' (and other stakeholders') experience of not being contained within the university.

Working hypothesis: the power struggle in the university negatively impacts on the appropriate authorisation of all the stakeholders to take up their role and perform their task in the HBU.

5.3.1.2 Black students/white lecturers/black management

In my opinion a very important aspect that should not be ignored with regard to South Africa's socio-political history is that white and black people share the same socio-political history (obviously), but that they carry different (unconscious) parts of this history (Cilliers & May, 2002; May & Evans, 2002). Of importance in this idea is that by adhering to the rumour that white and black people do not have the same socio-political history, the split between (white) lecturers on the one hand

and (black) students and management on the other hand could be entrenched even more. This is evident from the lecturers who experienced themselves as excluded from the alliance between students and management due to them sharing a particular history (and race) to which the lecturers were not privy. The denial of the lecturers' experiences, especially the negative experiences of the previous political dispensation, reinforced the existing split, based on position, between students, lecturers and management.

Working hypothesis: in the power struggle, power and authority can be sporadically ascribed and taken away during intergroup transactions, based on the significance of particular diversity characteristics (race, position in the HBU, position in the family) for the powerful subgroup in a particular context. This leaves the other subgroups in the intergroup transaction even more vulnerable and entrenches the power of the perceived powerful group in the intergroup transactions.

Evidence for the sporadic ascribing of power is found in two lecturers describing their experiences of intermittent periods of empowerment and disempowerment. What is significant in the data is how the students with the least hierarchical, positional authority wielded such a big amount of power. I think that this power was linked to their role within the historical socio-political struggle (Abdi, 2002; Freire, 2005; Naidoo, 1990; Nkomo, 1990a, 1990b; Nkondo, 1976; Ruth, 2000; Van Niekerk & Meier, 1995) and consequently what was being projected onto them by the two other stakeholders, and perhaps even society.

Working hypothesis: it appears that in this system power is a commodity, which changes hands according to which diversity characteristic is the flavour of the moment.

In other words on one level power was ascribed based on position within the organisation – the management was the more powerful group. Another time race

was being used as the basis for ascribing power and then the (white) lecturers' appeared to be the more powerful group. This was evident from the idea that students at some time harnessed the power of management to their advantage, and at other time used the lecturers to influence the actions of management. An implication of this hypothesis is that in the power struggle diversity characteristics are probably used to ascribe power, but the context of any given situations determines the hierarchy of the diversity characteristics and therefore the power wielded by a specific group within the system.

With regard to the performance of students, lecturers and management, the issue of race becomes much more significant because rumours that the white race group is more competent than the black race group has permeated every part of South African society (Abdi, 2002, 2003; Cilliers & May, 2002; May & Evans, 2004).

I suggest that the students mainly ascribed this power to the different stakeholders through the demand *we want to pass*. While management and lecturers colluded with this ascribing of power because based on the diversity characteristics that were being used, either of the two stakeholders could have been wielding more power in the triangle. This now raises another interesting idea: that management and lecturers were using the students as pawns within their power struggle. This is evident from the data where several lecturers considered that the extent to which their voices were heard was a result of the power struggle on the part of management for the support of the students. However, management must have been having this power struggle with another group and I suggest it was with the lecturers. In this power struggle lecturers experienced themselves without power, being de-authorised and their voices not carrying any legitimacy within the system. The reader should bear in mind that the power struggle also deteriorated into the ROT controlled by the students. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Working hypothesis: the unresolved power struggle between management and lecturers within the system results in power being projected onto the students who incorporate or internalise this power and act on it. Thus, the unresolved power struggle between lecturers and management, mainly contribute to the ROT wielded by the students in the HBU.

Another hypothesis, which I found quite useful, came from the expert who read through the *re-authored stories of lecturers* for me. She hypothesised that *another reason for the power struggles are embedded in the DNA of the university, in its past. Students seemed to be employing the divide and rule tactic of the past to deal with the two groups they perceive as powerful, i.e. lecturers and management. Both these groups have fallen into the trap – by not working with each other they have made themselves more vulnerable to the violent behaviour of the students*. This further entrenches the destructive psychodynamics, i.e. the bounded stability of the destructive elements in the relationship amongst the stakeholders (Stacey, 2001).

5.3.1.3 *The family metaphor*

Several lecturers referred to the family metaphor and others reported that even management on one or two occasions referred to the family metaphor. Management indicated that lecturers were the mother, and as the mother, only they could do certain things for the students. Of importance is that management (the father) could flout the rules, while the lecturers (the mother) had to enforce the rules – resulting in the management being the favoured parent and the lecturers the hated parent in the eyes of the teenagers (students).

Working hypothesis: the family metaphor is evident within the HBU where lecturers carry the role of mother, management the role of father and students the role of unruly teenagers.

A lecturer reported that a manager referred to lecturers as the mother and that as the mother the lecturers should assist the students. Furthermore, the evidence of abuse from management towards lecturers came from the fact that threats of violence were made by management towards lecturers in the presence of students. Based on this, the idea that the lecturers experienced threat and disloyalty from management in front of the students perpetuated the violence from students toward the lecturers, and the threat of and actual violence towards lecturers from students, the aforementioned hypothesis can be expanded as follows:

Working hypothesis: the system is a family where lecturers carry the role of the abused mother, management the role of the abusive, yet fearful, father and students the role of the demanding, violent teenagers.

The moment management made the threats towards lecturers it could be experienced by lecturers as occurring in the context of management forming an alliance with students against them. The moment lecturers asked for resources to provide a lecturing-learning environment for students, this could be experienced by management as lecturers forming an alliance with the students against management. In this family, it seems that the father and teenagers attempted to form an alliance and the mother and the teenagers attempted to form an alliance in order to secure their power in the familial system. Should the mother challenge the teenagers for the attention of the father, the teenagers make more threats or actually perpetuate violence – another reason for the ROT within the HBU.

Working hypothesis: in this family the power of the unruly, violent teenager is entrenched, while the bickering parental couple become more of a target and disempowered in the eyes of some of the teenagers (the vocal minority). Simultaneously, the bickering couple cannot rely on each other for support to manage the unruly, violent teenagers.

Regardless of these psychodynamics, the lecturers at time found themselves empowered enough to demand that the management take up the role of providing resources and disciplining the students (perhaps this resulted from the power that the students and management for different reasons ascribed to the lecturers). Thus, the conflict between lecturers and management about how to run the university and about disciplining the unruly students seems to have taken on the character of a couple arguing about who does what for the teenagers and who should discipline the teenagers. However, being so involved in the argument, the parents could not form an alliance to give the teenagers what they need most, i.e. (emotional) containment. This echoes the same argument as at the end of the previous paragraph and raises the question about the lecturers' responsibility to have provided at least a supportive and at most a holding environment for management in this unstable environment.

This alliance between students and management allowed for perpetuating the abuse against the lecturers and increased the paranoia and mistrust in the system. Further evidence of abuse towards lecturers was apparent when students threatened lecturers without any repercussions, as well as the non-provision of boundary conditions by management (see Gould *et al.*, 2001, Miller, 1989; Miller & Rice, 1975; Rice, 1970, 1976). Additionally, through their alliance students and management directed threats and demands at the lecturers. Lecturers' response to the demands in particular was collusion with the current status quo. The reason for dealing with the demands of students and management in the data is that they did it to ensure the smooth running of the HBU. This was true on a conscious level – on an unconscious level I consider it to have been a defense against their own collusion with the destructive psychodynamics within the HBU.

Working hypothesis: the lecturers defend against their collusion with the destructive psychodynamics in the HBU by claiming that by dealing with the demands of the students and management they show commitment to ensure the smooth running of the HBU.

Thus far, I have been reflecting that the alliances among the different stakeholders were formed to enhance their potential dominance in the power struggle. Another possible reason for the alliances in the intergroup has to do with the need for attention and care within the university and that there was not enough appropriate attention and care for the three stakeholders. Given the nature of the alliances, I propose that through the different alliances the lecturers and students struggled for the attention and/or care of the management, while lecturers and management struggled for the attention and respect of the students. It seems that within this struggle there was the rumour that there was not enough power and authority, as well as not enough attention and care for the stakeholders to share appropriately. This entrenched the destructive elements of rage, greed, envy and hatred which arose from the (felt) scarcity of attention, honour, love, knowledge or whatever was needed (Hiles, 2007; Gustafson & Cooper, 1985; Klein, 1975; Likierman, 2001).

Working hypothesis: the dread of not enough (care, attention, respect, resources, boundaries, authority, power, competence) experienced by the students, lecturers and management, perpetuates the power struggle and its concomitant destructive elements amongst the stakeholders which further entrenches the ROT of the students.

It is interesting that the non-provision of boundary conditions by management (Miller, 1989; 1993; Miller & Rice, 1975; Rice, 1970, 1976) for students and lecturers was considered to create an enormously unstable and dangerous container for the three stakeholders. One of the lecturers referred to this flouting of rules as *being in quicksand* – this seems to be a metaphor for the chaos experienced by all three stakeholders in the HBU. In quicksand one has nothing to stand on and are sucked in and the more one resists the more one gets sucked into the quicksand – in this case the more one gets sucked into the destructive psychodynamics. It is in being quiet and moving slowly that one is able to escape the quicksand. Perhaps taking time to move slowly and getting out of the

quicksand became a metaphor for reflecting on, being thoughtful about and dealing with the instability in the university in order to be less at the mercy of its destructive psychodynamics.

It is evident from the data that lecturers' belief that management's inability to provide boundary conditions and ensure the safety of all stakeholders was one of the reasons for the ROT – I concur with this point. I also propose that it was the lecturers' inability to introject and manage the overwhelming, potent emotions directed at them from students and management that also added to the chaos in the university. Perhaps it was management and lecturers' inability to develop a constructive working relationship across difference that contributed most to the chaos in the HBU.

Working hypothesis: should the lecturers and management work on establishing a constructive working relationship, they (lecturers and management) would be able to deal with the unruly, violent teenagers by giving the teenagers the resources and especially the boundaries that they need to be contained to take up their role and fulfil their task.

Furthermore, the lecturers spoke about how they indigenised the existing courses to enter into the live world of the students and, as is evident from their reports, that of management. I think that a need for understanding the students' life world would influence the interaction in the triad – perhaps another colonisation to some extent happens. The lecturers seemed to be saying *I want to know what you are about, but I do not want to change to such an extent that I own some of the assumptions about behaviour which underpins the life world of the students and management*. I think that this is evident from discussions about the (white) lecturers' role as spokesperson for the (black) students with (black) management. Given that the lecturers do not seem to have access to the cultural importance of the representation of an issue on behalf of the students to management, the value of doing this was apparently not understood by the lecturers. Also the

conversations about the lecturers being like the mother for the students may have referred to the lecturers-in-the-mind of the students and management (Armstrong 1995; Powell Pruitt & Barber, 2004; Young, 1995). This seems to be cultural norm which was not necessarily understood by the lecturers. The dependence of the students on the lecturers in the lecture hall (see Carr, 2001; Erlich, 2004) is another aspect where the lecturers' understanding of dependence and authority within authority relationships are possibly culturally different from that of the students. I am not necessarily aware of the extent and nature of differences in cultural behaviour between students, lecturers and management, but I propose that the fundamental assumptions underpinning behaviour are different and that this would require further and in-depth exploration (see Peltzer, 2002).

Working hypothesis: the lecturers-in-the-mind of students and management is different from that of the lecturers, deepening the (k)not of relationship between students and management on the one hand and the lecturers on the other.

5.3.1.4 Conclusion

I would like to conclude this section with a hypothesis based on the discussion thus far:

Working hypothesis: the power struggle within the triad appears to be a defense against

- not enough resources required by the stakeholders to take up their role and fulfil their task;
- not enough attention and care for the stakeholders in the chaotic system;
- attempting the impossible task (which may be different for the stakeholders); and
- doing the work required to make a real connection between the (black) students, (white) lecturers and (black) management.

Based on the work of Jaques (1990), Menzies Lyth (1960, 1990) and Powell Pruitt and Barber (2004), as well as above discussion it is evident that the three groups within the HBU were employing a particular set of maladaptive social defenses aimed at reducing their anxiety. I propose that among the three groups stable destructive dynamics have developed over time (Stacey, 2001), which have to do with the conflict between the actual and the apparent task of the university (Powell Pruitt & Barber, 2004).

5.3.2 The ROT

Through the ROT the students were holding the management and lecturers emotionally at ransom, hijacking them, taking them hostage. The ROT was primarily linked to the students' academic performance or lack thereof. The threats of violence were intimidation strategies which could be put into action depending on the outcome of the interaction. There was much intimidation and very little action – memory of what students can do. According to the lecturers, the ROT was spearheaded by a vocal minority, who were supported by a silent majority. There was a very clear link between students' underachievement and the ROT.

As suggested by Adams (1994), Bion (1961) and Cilliers and Koortzen (1998, 2000) the relationship between the three stakeholders was marked by basic-assumption behaviour that seems to have been destructive to the primary task of the HBU. Based on the work of Stacey (2001) the (unconscious) relationship between the three stakeholders was marked by dynamics of instability. Stacey (2001) and many other authors proposed that the dynamics of instability at the edge of chaos and disintegrative dynamics can be addressed through positive capability. The relationship between the three stakeholders was marked by rage, rebellion and sabotage (basic assumption of fight and flight and the paranoid-schizoid position), thus primarily displaying the dynamics of disintegration with the work group functioning in the background (Stacey, 2001). Thus, the behavior in the triad primarily illustrates regression in work groups (Diamond & Allcorn, 1987).

It seems that in the tale of these three stakeholders, each group (subsystem) was inducted into specific roles, and that the groups (subsystems) colluded with the subsystems' roles in the HBU, and the concomitant culture marked by the ROT was entrenched into the HBU (see Erlich, 2001; Wells, 1985). Thus, paranoigenesis, i.e. organisational paranoid dynamics, was evident in the HBU. However, in the HBU, the different groups did engage each other, albeit reluctantly or in a threatening fashion – it seems that representatives from the three stakeholders were considered to be an enemy you could speak with. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Erlich (2001) proposed a difference between the pre-oedipal enemy described above and the Oedipal enemy who is ambivalently experienced when another group is seen as sharing valued aspects, e.g. language, common culture, common humanity. Thus:

the relationship with the [oedipal] enemy is marked by competition, fear and envy, but also with admiration and positive relatedness, and discourse with [the enemy] is felt to be within the realm of psychological and social possibility (Erlich, 2001, p. 129).

The triad and specifically the family metaphor form the basis for evidence of the dynamics of the Oedipus complex at work within the HBU. The Kleinian view hold that origins of the Oedipus complex are embedded in the depressive position because it is during this position that the other can be seen as a whole person separate from the self – the other can be represented as a whole object in the psyche (Alford, 2002; Gould, 1997; Lawrence, 1995; Singer, 2006).

Rigid social defenses (Jaques, 1990; Menzies Lyth, 1960, 1990; Stein 2000) resulting in highly stable dynamics (Erlich, 2001) were evident in the HBU as discussed in the reflection on the relationship between students and lecturers, lecturers and management and within the triad. The HBU as a defense against anxiety was marked by maladaptive defenses, such as splitting, projection, introjections and projective identification aimed at reducing the persecutory (fears

of being attacked and annihilated) and depressive (fear of the loss or death if the loved object) anxieties experienced by the students, lecturers and management (Powell Pruitt & Barber, 2004). Evidently the structures (or lack thereof) of the HBU maintained these primitive processes, and consequently the HBU was probably stuck in a paranoid-schizoid projective system as suggested by French and Vince (1999), Halton (1994), Krantz (2001) and Triest (1999).

Based on the work of Mouly and Sankaram (2002) and Stein (2000) I propose that given the level of nebulous threat, actual violence and the ROT among the three stakeholders, the HBU, as a social system, was used as an attack that was primarily envious in nature, but could also include other emotions, such as hatred and greed, that are attacking in nature. According to Stein (2000) this suggestion does not negate the description of the HBU as a social defense against anxiety. As suggested by Stein (2000) envy can be the property of the HBU or the subsystems thereof. The HBU, as a social system, recruited members or subsystems into new roles through which they could enact envious attacks on behalf of the HBU generally, and the three stakeholders specifically. The envious attack results from desiring that which is perceived to be good and desirable. It is important to remember that the social system is a defense against anxiety, but also an envious attack at different times and at different levels (Stein, 2000).

Working hypothesis: the HBU through its subsystems launches

- a violent, envious attack on learning, thinking and creativity;
- a deeply damaging attack on linking between the three stakeholders;
- an envious attack on all forms of leadership;

and in so doing internalises the other (group) as a terrorising object.

5.3.3 Lecturers owning their authority through a stay-away action (understanding the stay-away action)

The stay-away action was a very important strategy on the part of the lecturers as a protest against their experiences within the HBU. Obviously the stay-away action was an attempt on the part of the lecturers to resist the violence and abuse they were experiencing. However, on another level the stay-away action was possibly an attempt by the lecturers *symbolically* to form an alliance with the students, as well as entering into their live world by *becoming like them*.

I think that the stay-away action was a very bold attempt on the part of lecturers to not identify with the projections that the HBU required them to carry and act out within the dyads and triad. This action then increased the anxiety within the system, resulting in the system doing its level best to make the lecturers do the unconscious work required by them. Once again these requests came to the lecturers on a conscious level about their role and task. Obviously the lecturers respond to these requests through their concern for the students, as well as the smooth running of the HBU, by perhaps prematurely ending the stay-away, when their demands had not been met. This might denote that on an unconscious level the lecturers also colluded with the system and could not deal with the anxiety that possibly resulted from them not identifying with their familiar projections; i.e., the stable dynamics based on perverted object relations marked by the ruthless use of the object on an unconscious level in the HBU (see Alford, 2002; Diamond & Allcorn, 1997).

5.4 THE NEW STORY

The new story is a story of hope and creativity, which was poised to disrupt the stable destructive dynamics, entrenched within the HBU. In the following sections, I show how the lecturers interacted with hope and their creativity in their relationship with students, management and the wider university community.

5.4.1 The anatomy of the new story

In the new story is contained the hope for creativity and success within the HBU, marked by constructive relationships among the different stakeholders. The new story is also the way in which the lecturers were trying to address the destructive elements in the relationship among the three stakeholders by standing up against the abuse and violence they experienced within the university. By writing a new story and developing a new label for the HBU, the lecturers were also attempting to re-authorise themselves within the university and the wider academic fraternity. Through the new story the lecturers were also trying to claim their space in the new socio-political dispensation – it seems that the socio-political changes were propelling the writing of the new story. It also became a vehicle through which the lecturers can allow themselves to raise their voices more authoritatively during the conversation among the three stakeholders. Due to the new political dispensation they were contemplating that their voices have legitimacy and can become more constructive in co-constructing a new story for the HBU and perhaps for the wider academic fraternity.

Working hypothesis: the lecturers' attempts at writing a new story is essentially about hope and asking for a new relationship with the different stakeholders within a new socio-political dispensation.

It is interesting that lecturers considered their ability to write a new story to be due to the new socio-political dispensation – this might be so. Much more important, as suggested by Gould (1993) is that somehow each lecturer had found a way of authorising themselves from within, while the group had found a way of authorising each other (authority from their peers) in the face of threat and violence and in the absence of authorisation from above (see Eisold, 2004; Gould, 1993; Obholzer, 1994). Thus with regard to the psychodynamics in the intergroup it seems that for a moment the lecturers moved from the paranoid-schizoid to the depressive position.

Working hypothesis: it seems that by authorising themselves and each other, the lecturers have been able to create a transitional and potential space containing creativity and hope (Coren, 1997; Erlich, 2001) in which they could negotiate their relationships with the students and management.

It is significant that the lecturers had to ask for these new relationships with new identities, new roles, new tasks and new boundaries by taking, through the stay-away action, a clear stance about how they wanted to be treated by the students and management within the new relationships. The stay-away action was mirroring the behaviour of the students – hoping to have their demands met as the students did through their struggle skills. It is also significant that the lecturers attempted to let their voices heard through a method usually used by students and by black people. I believe, and so do the lecturers, that they were truly challenging old roles, old boundaries, and old identities and in this way working towards new relationships in a new HBU. In some way the lecturers for a moment stepped onto a turf which traditionally is not theirs. The lecturers were on uncharted territory, and by doing this propelling themselves and all other stakeholders into a moment of being on uncharted turf where a new story could be co-constructed by all the stakeholders. I propose that the lecturers may not have realised the significance of their action, on a psychodynamic level, for the HBU.

Working hypothesis: in order to form new relationships within the HBU the lecturers through a stay-way action have taken on a denied identity because they have temporarily let go of their identity in terms of being white lecturers, in favour of another identity which usually belonged to black students, black lecturers and perhaps even black management.

Another surprising idea for me is that perhaps through the stay-away action, the lecturers inadvertently provided the longed for reverie in which beta elements could through alpha function be changed into alpha elements – thoughts and experiences which are manageable (Bion, 1962; Biran, 2003). I am not proposing

that in order to provide students with a holding environment, that lecturers should initiate stay-away actions. Rather, I am using this stay-away action as a poignant reminder of the need for lecturers to become more aware of the labels being projected onto them and in so doing not to identify with the usual projections coming their way (see Jaques, 1990; Menzies-Lyth, 1960; Likierman, 2001; Powell Pruitt & Barber, 2004; Salzberger-Wittenberg et al., 1983; Ward, 1993). I propose by not accepting the “usual” projections the lecturers would make dreadful experiences within the lecturing-learning relationship more manageable for students. Perhaps, through the lecturers taking up the struggle, the students could become freer to attend to the task of interacting with their role and task.

Working hypothesis: through the stay-away action the lecturers may also be doing what the students have unconsciously wanted for so long, i.e. working with their own rage, terror and dread and perhaps returning these experiences in a more manageable form to the students. Perhaps for a moment the students may have been “free” from the system’s rage, terror and dread and only needed to take responsibility for their own rage, terror and dread. Simultaneously, the lecturers could be working creatively with their own experiences of being overwhelmed and enraged by the demands of students and management, the education system-as-a-whole and society in general.

It was also behaviour which said that they were at the end of their tether, a very clear way of saying no more violence against them. It seems that this request for new relationships was passively observed and actively ignored by their fellow colleagues, as well as ambivalently experienced by the students and management alike. Furthermore, as suggested by Stacey (2001) I propose that through the stay-away action, the lecturers were working at the edge of the fight/flight basic assumption group within bounded instability. Another way of thinking about the lecturers’ stay-away action is that the power relationships within the HBU had resulted in stable dynamics which were marked by basic assumption dependency and pairing behaviour (see Carr, 2001; Stacey, 2001).

In the light of the work of Diamond et al. (2004) the stay-away action possibly also denoted the dialectic interplay between the paranoid-schizoid and depressive position. Applying this idea to the relationship between students and lecturers suggests that the student who experiences depressive anxiety could realise that the lecturer who she/he loved and the one that she/he attacked in rage, anger and envy were different aspects of one and the same person. Differently put, the lecturers who experienced depressive anxiety realised that the students and management that were loved and attacked in rage, anger and envy were different aspects of one and the same group (see Gabbard, 1989; Halton, 1994; Jaques, 1990; J. Klein, 1987; M. Klein, 1946, 1975, 1985; Likierman, 2001; Menzies Lyth, 1960, 1990; Segal, 1992).

Writing the new story was also anxiety provoking, taking a new role of being the resistance fighters – they were watched as to what they would do with this new role by passive bystanders – the other lecturers who seemingly did not want to get involved in being writers of the new story. The lecturers were also watched by students and management who probably ambivalently observed what would come from the lecturers' stay-away action. By unexpectedly walking onto the turf of the (black) students and management they may have taken the entire HBU by surprise. What they seemed uncertain about is whether this was a worthwhile fight, a real fight or were they like *Don Quixote fighting windmills*. Again a mirror image (Wheelan & Abraham, 1993) i.e. the war image in the HBU, but was this a real or imagined war?

5.4.2 The smooth ruining of the HBU

It seems that in order to start writing this new story, lecturers had to acknowledge that they had for different reasons been part of the mainstream story – *they had been falling in with the main story*. This mainstream story was about all stakeholders colluding to ensure the smooth ruining of the HBU. I propose that the lecturers in actual fact colluded with the mainstream story for different reasons.

They proposed reasons that seem to be reasonable and honourable. I, of course, question to what extent their involvement in the power struggle (discussed in 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3) within the organisation had ensured their involvement in the mainstream story.

Working hypothesis: in an attempt to ensure the smooth running of the university, the lecturers may have realised that they are colluding with the old, destructive status quo and in that way actively involved in the smooth ruining of the HBU.

5.4.3 Stakeholders toyi-toying to the beat of the new story

Through their involvement in holding onto the old, destructive story the lecturers realised that they and the stakeholders were involved in an old dance (a toyi-toyi) where all the stakeholders knew their steps – consequently they were familiar with their roles and anti-task in the dynamics of the intergroup as suggested by Koortzen and Wrogemann (2003) and Roberts (1994b). In this way the old dance (a toyi-toyi) ensured that the defenses, introjection, projection and projective identification (Astrachan & Flynn, 1976; Diamond, 1993; Higgin & Bridger, 1965; Treacher & Foster, 2004) were maintained and fuelled in the intergroup and in this way the adversarial nature of the relationship between the stakeholders was preserved. However, the lecturers also indicated their commitment to writing the new story and in this way introduced through the stay-away action how they and other stakeholders could toyi-toyi to the beat of a new story.

Working hypothesis: the lecturers by understanding their collusion with the old story and their commitment to writing a new story illustrate:

the dialectical struggle which takes place between [their] urge to keep the unbearable effects of anxiety at bay and [their] capacity to contain and harness [their] anxiety as a force for growth and transformation (Gutmann, 1993, p.85).

An issue that I have not discussed in detail is how gender as a diversity characteristic affected the relationships within the triangle. Six out of the nine participants are white women. Although the participants have alluded to their gender throughout the data it is within this section that the women are contemplating how their need as women to please others had affected the extent to which they have challenged the status quo. Furthermore, the lecturers have accepted that for several reasons they have unconsciously colluded with the destructive status quo within the university.

5.4.4 Lecturers remaining committed to writing the new story

It is evident based on the above discussion that the lecturers had become involved in the writing of the new story for different reasons, viz.

- Owning of their authority within the HBU – by doing this they displayed leadership within the HBU.
- Redefining their role more positively within the HBU, as well as the wider academic fraternity.
- The above is linked to the creation of new boundaries within the HBU.
- Personal development with regard to dealing with not always pleasing the other stakeholders.
- Personal development by challenging oneself personally and interpersonally to create *new alternatives to stale ideologies*.
- The aforementioned led to the realisation that all the stakeholders, themselves included, were colluding with the old, destructive status quo – all were singing the old story and toyi-toying to the same old beat.

5.5 OPPORTUNITIES

The opportunities flowing from this research project, based on my learnings about research during the project include, but are not limited to, those discussed in the following sections.

5.5.1 The self as instrument

By using the self as instrument, I allowed myself to do an in-depth analysis of the psychodynamics in the HBU – highlighting constructive and destructive elements that, through our defensiveness, remain outside our conscious awareness. The lecturers through their stories made themselves available to participate in this in-depth analysis and in this way perhaps have seen unconscious aspects of themselves – as they have allowed us to see things about ourselves in universities. Thus, I, through the stories of the lecturers, had in this research project created a potential space in which we could explore the psychodynamics of the HBU in great depth – affirming once again the value of using the self as instrument in research.

5.5.2 Enhancing awareness of psychodynamics in organisations

What is offered to the world of work in general is the opportunity to reflect on the unconscious processes operating in particular organisations, and on how the readers possibly collude with the psychodynamics in their own organisations. Thus the stakeholders in the university, in education in general and in other organisations are confronted with the idea that they are not only involved in their daily (primary) conscious tasks. They are also not innocent bystanders of the conflict, violence and threats of violence in their organisations. They are also actively involved in the systems psychodynamics, which have constructive and destructive elements, of their organisations. What is particularly important and challenging is that this research project has highlighted the need for stakeholders in universities, in education in general and in other organisations in South Africa and globally, to attend urgently to the unconscious, destructive elements in organisations in order to ensure real and meaningful work relationships in the context of appropriately structured organisations.

5.5.3 Duration of the research project

The initial hermeneutic conversations took place in 1997 – I am of the opinion that I have taken longer than necessary to complete this project and this may well be seen as negative by some. However, I believe that the duration of this research project has allowed me to encapsulate myself in the depth and intensity of the case and to give an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the psychodynamics between the students, lecturers and management of the HBU.

5.5.4 Note-taking after the formal conversation

I did not take notes during and after each conversation which would have been a record of my immediate and salient memories of the conversations, and of additional data captured after the formal conversation. Regardless of this lost opportunity, when working on re-authoring the lecturers' stories I worked towards giving an in-depth analysis of the voluminous transcribed data that was available to me. This point serves as a reminder for other researcher to capture information shared after the formal conversation and to record their most salient memories of the conversations soon after.

5.5.5 Ethical considerations

A matter that I did not attend to in the research project is the power relations created by those who are qualified to be lecturers of their discipline (i.e. those who are empowered by the discipline) and those who are seeking entrance into the discipline – i.e. students of the discipline. In other words, the discipline and its concomitant power relations becomes a role player as much as the students, lecturers and management do in the HBU, and subsequently in the research project. I purposefully did not attend to this matter in order to ensure the

anonymity and confidentiality of the lecturers and the HBU. However, this becomes an opportunity for further exploration by other researchers.

5.5.6 Transference and countertransference

My transference and counter transference to the information that I was working with, in the context of my relationship with the lecturers, my relationships with the promoters and my relationship with universities in the South African context influenced the research project. Thus, *the self as instrument* that assisted me in working with the lecturers' experiences, is also the very thing that prevented me from seeing other salient aspects of the lecturers' experiences. However, it also allowed me to enter into the lecturers' life world in a way that I was aware of several projections and how these projections were being used by the lecturers and me. Thus, I as the targeted container of these projections, could discern which projections probably belonged to the lecturers and explored these further during the re-authoring of their stories. I could also determine which projections probably belonged to me, and as far as possible I owned these projections and did not write them into the lecturers' stories. Thus, the willingness of researchers to work with their transference and countertransference, provides an opportunity for in-depth analysis of data – affirming once again the value of working with transference and countertransference in research.

5.5.7 Using the generated working and research hypotheses

The numerous working hypotheses and two research hypotheses also provide further opportunities for research projects (Henning *et al.* 2004; Mouton & Marais, 1996).

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is evident from this research project that the HBU and universities in general offer a disturbing wealth of moments that invite us to consider and confront the tensions and dynamics in our society (Powell Pruitt & Barber, 2004, p.316). Thus these recommendations do not only enable us to deal with the psychodynamics flowing from apartheid, but also with the psychodynamics in organisations functioning in an ever-changing post-apartheid South Africa and the world-as-a-whole. I provide recommendations as an invitation for the reader to use their knowledge of unconscious dynamics to address the tensions and dynamics in their work contexts, and in so doing implement relevant changes to existing relationships and the structure of organisations. I base these recommendations primarily on the recommendations made by Powell Pruitt and Barber (2004) about how to effect change in the American school system.

5.6.1 Recommendations for the field of psychology

As proposed by Powell Pruitt and Barber (2004) it is important to guard against these recommendations becoming a defense against the psychodynamics that are evident from the project, as well as in the reader's organisation. Rather, the recommendations should be used for further conversation, reflection and continuing action in your organisation. In line with the assumptions of systems psychodynamics, the recommendations are made on individual, group and organisational level.

5.6.1.1 *Doing internal work*

It is imperative that lecturers do their own internal work about their unconscious experiences of education, as well as their role as lecturers in particular. In other words what have their educational experiences been and how do these inform

their understanding of their role as lecturers, as well as the role of students and management in the university. Then of course it imperative that lecturers and other stakeholders do their own internal work about their unconscious experiences of being citizens within an apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa to make meaning of their current experiences and interactions with others across difference (Cilliers & May, 2002; May & Cilliers, 2002; May & Evans, 2004). I am sure that lecturers and stakeholders to a lesser or greater degree do internal work with regard to these matters (Bauman, 2005), but the challenge is that they should look below the surface of their experiences and not only to that which is within the reach of their conscious understanding. Thus, it is important that the reader, to reflect (based on what you have read) on the psychodynamics in your context and how you are complicit with them, in an attempt to work continuously with these dynamics.

5.6.1.2 External holding environments for difficult conversations

It is important to create external holding environments for difficult conversations to work through anxiety and concomitant destructive elements in the university – primarily between lecturers and management, among lecturers and among management. This is also an opportunity for psychologists and others to make a contribution. This does not mean that students cannot be involved in these conversations, but given that the lecturers are responsible for containing the students, and management is responsible for containing the lecturers and students (this is an overly simplistic description) it seems important that the lecturers and management urgently start these difficult conversations. By doing this, these stakeholders will be working on resolving the psychodynamics, e.g. splitting, projections, introjections and projective identification, affecting their relationships and their ability to address the challenges within the universities and in education in general. By dealing with the psychodynamics in the university, they will be more able to address difficulties pertaining to the organisational context

(tasks, structures, boundaries). This will afford lecturers and management the opportunity to attend more effectively to the unconscious phenomena within people, the organisational context (tasks, structures and boundaries) and the complex interaction between them (Amado, 1995; Miller, 2004; Nutkevitch, 1998; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). This is also applicable to any other organisation.

5.6.1.3 Creating holding environments for lecturers and management

It is imperative to create and support holding environments for lecturers to deal with the challenges they may face from the different stakeholders, as well as the role and task of lecturers in the current South African context. Some of these holding environments should be developed by psychologists, some by other practitioners, some by lecturers and some by other stakeholders in universities. Often in psychology thought is given to care for the practitioner. In the same way, care for the lecturers should be encouraged by creating spaces where lecturers can work, using a systems psychodynamic perspective, with their experiences and the challenges they face from different stakeholders. Of course these lecturers may discover how they collude with the system's psychodynamics – this could be painful and disturbing, but also liberating and filled with learning (as this research project has been for me). In this way internal holding environments (Alford, 2001; Nutkevitch, 2001) (pertaining to the intra-psychic wellness of the lecturers and to physical spaces in the university) for difficult conversations will be created. As I was writing this I became aware of the possibility of creating holding environments (pertaining to the intra-psychic wellness of management and physical spaces in the university) for management to have difficult conversation with lecturers and among themselves. These will enable management to provide appropriate (emotional) containment for students and lecturers and to manage boundary conditions appropriately in the university as suggested by Alford (2001), Miller and Rice (1990) and Nutkevitch (2001).

5.6.1.4 *Imagining alternatives to the (k)not of relationships*

Based on the findings, it is evident that the power struggle across many diversity characteristics creates stale ideologies which can be challenged through creating new ways of interacting with each other. Through the lecturers' stories it is evident that the lecturers are well aware of finding and creating alternatives to stale ideologies. Thus we need to imagine alternatives to create a new story (Bauman, 2005; Powell Pruitt & Barber, 2004; Singer, 2006) which challenges the stale ideologies in the universities, education and South African organisations. This challenge belongs to all the stakeholders within education, especially universities. Although it seems there is a resistance to interacting in new ways with each other, I propose that as South Africans we simply do not know how to do this (see Cilliers & May, 2002; May & Cilliers, 2002; May & Evans, 2004; Smith *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, by imagining and eventually actioning new alternatives of interacting with each other we will assist the stakeholders in creating a new, hopefully useful, story for education in general, universities in particular and for other South African organisations.

5.6.2 **Recommendations for future research projects**

Through this research project I explored the experiences of the lecturers at an HBU in the late 1990s – I did not ask students and management about their experiences at that time in the HBU. Therefore it is important to ask students and management about their experiences in the university in order to expand on our understanding of the systems psychodynamics operating in South African universities and education. Based on the hypothesis that the psychodynamics in a particular organisation are a microcosm of the psychodynamics of the broader society (Smith *et al.*, 2004), research projects in which one simply asks *What are your experiences in this organisation?* will add to our understanding of the systems psychodynamics in South African organisation, but also to our

understanding of the (k)not of relationships among diverse employees and employers. This understanding can then be used in developing organisations and relationships between employees and management in these organisations.

I also propose that this research project could be used in the formulation of a system psychodynamic theory on the nature of the triad between top management, line management and subordinates or clients by focusing on the oedipal relatedness and unconscious defenses between the three stakeholders. The research project can also be used to further initiatives to develop existing theory about the social system as an envious attack.

As a researcher I offered my own context and personal experiences as openly as possible – even to the extent of painfully realising my own journey, stereotypes, and projections. It is recommended that this journey can serve as an example for students and researchers in qualitative research to use the self as instrument – although painful, it is at the same time very rewarding.

5.7 TWO CENTRAL RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In concluding this research project and in order to make sense of the sometimes overwhelmingly intensely experienced ideas in this chapter, I present two central research hypotheses that flow from the disparate and similar ideas reflected in the working hypotheses. The research hypotheses are also an integration of ideas from the lecturers' stories and my co-authors.

5.7.1 Research hypothesis: literature review

It is important to keep a balance between organisational structure and the psychodynamics of the organisation, to keep both in mind, to make the

organisation work effectively, to transform it, to make it less of an envious attack. This is because in industrial and organisational psychology there seems to be an overemphasis on the socio-technical aspects of the organisation at the expense of the psychodynamics, in particular the destructive elements, with the result that the organisation remains a stormy and uncontained work context for all the stakeholders.

5.7.2 Research hypothesis: empirical study

All kinds of struggles are evident in the relationship between the students, lecturers and management. These struggles may appear to be academic and political in nature. However, the struggle as a metaphor in the relationship between the students, lecturers and management pertains to the struggle of being seen for one's humanness and the need to make real and meaningful connections with the other. It is further proposed that this struggle can be accompanied by terror when one is dehumanised by the other, and the connection with the other at best is experienced as difficult and at worst as impossible.

Ironically, in this struggle in the HBU the different groups see the other as distortions of their previous objects from the apartheid dispensation, not totally alien and different, but familiar and strangely altered. Here I present the painting entitled, *Swans reflecting elephants*, by Salvador Dalí (1937). This painting is a surreal image for further reflection and meaning-making about what the (white) lecturers see when unconsciously looking at the (black) students and (black) management, i.e. distortions of their previous objects, not totally alien and different, but familiar and strangely altered and in this way becoming terrorising objects for the lecturers. In the same way, the students and management see in each other and in the lecturers, distortions of their previous objects. Thus the lecturers probably experience students and management, in the unconscious, as terrorising objects because they are familiar, but strangely altered in the new

dispensation – negatively affecting the struggle of being seen for one's humanness and making real and meaningful connections with the other.



Swans reflecting elephants by Salvador Dalí, 1937. Oil on canvas, 51 x 77 cm.

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ADDENDUM 1: LETTER TO LECTURERS

Dear Lecturer

I appreciate your willingness to comment on this chapter (my reflection on and interpretation of what participants have said during the interviews) from your role as participant in this research.

This chapter is not an interpretation of individual lecturers' experiences, rather it is a reflection and interpretation of the group's experiences of working at this HBU. I would appreciate it if you could read through the chapter with the following questions:

- To what extent is this an appropriate reflection of this group's experiences of the HBU?
- Is there any main reflection that you do not agree with? Why?
- Is there any main reflection you experience as particularly significant? Why?

Please send me at most one page of feedback about whether you consider this chapter to be an appropriate reflection on and interpretation of this group's experiences of the HBU. I will appreciate it if I can receive your comments via email. I will use these comments to evaluate the extent to which I have understood the group's perception of their experiences at the HBU.

Thank you
Michelle

ADDENDUM 2: COMMENTS FROM THREE LECTURERS

Dear Michelle,

COMMENTS ON YOUR CHAPTER

Thank you for letting me in on this momentous piece of work. My first impressions were those of nostalgia and recognition. I feel that it is personally significant that our struggle finally gets documented in an academic work. It serves as an affirmation for the unique, but difficult experience that we shared in XXX in the 90s.

I find the reflections most appropriate in describing our group's experiences during that difficult period in the University's history. Although many different distinctions could be drawn on a rich data set such as yours, the lines along which you organized the data appear to be very useful in coming to an understanding of our experiences. Of course, being in an intense conversation with your text over the past few days, there are many things that warrant further discussion for me, but an elaborate response to content issues is not what you requested.

I did not find any reflections that I disagreed with. You substantiate your reflections very thoroughly through the direct words of the participants. Furthermore, you indicate how the different participants' views are in support of each other. You bravely resist too much interpretation at this point, which gives the text a genuine quality. It would be interesting to see how these reflections are taken further through the particular lenses of systems psychodynamic thinking.

To select particularly significant reflections in the vastness of the text is difficult, but I chose a few that I found worthwhile, especially with the measure of hindsight that we have now.

1. The 'struggle skills' in my mind presented a significant obstacle to education. It may be good to mention that these 'skills' were still being practiced in a post-apartheid South Africa. It is as if it was difficult for the youth to let go of

their struggle identity. Perhaps it was also difficult for us to understand this, coming from our privileged backgrounds.

2. It was enlightening to me to again become aware of how we were situated in the bigger socio-political discourses and how those discourses permeated every interaction that we had. At the time, and being closely involved, it was not always easy or possible to recognize and manage the influence of these discourses in our day-to-day relationships with the students or management. We probably had less control over the processes than we thought even then.
3. Participative management was a strategy of management that was practised on our campus. I felt that it was a strategy for not taking responsibility. Although management sometimes listened to stakeholders' ideas, they failed to realize that decisions and the accompanying responsibility for those decisions rested with management. I remember clearly that one day, in an open staff meeting concerning the problem with the security company, I virtually begged Prof. X to make a decision after hearing what staff had to say. He still deferred the decision for long after the meeting.
4. Although the concept of 'the silent majority' is briefly discussed as an analogy for mobilising the lecturers, the discussion of 'the students' as a party in the triangle seem to suggest that all the students were united behind the few with power. I think a distinction should be made more clearly between the powerful students e.g. the SRC and the poor students who were actually also victims of a conflictual political process.
5. A valuable reflection is that both the students and management shared a similar socio-political history and that that may explain the perception that they were 'ganging up' against the (predominantly white) lecturers in the department. I think we were naïve in thinking that everyone would, after the end of apartheid, just be available for good inter-racial relationships.

Much more can be said, but I've already exceeded my limited space.

Good luck for the rest of your project.

Dear Michelle

Thank you for this opportunity to give feedback on your interpretations of the interviews.

To answer your questions:

1. I feel this is an appropriate reflection of that group's experiences of the HBU *at that time*. I emphasize the time because one of the outstanding features of my experience of working at this (previously) HBU is that processes are continuously changing. The group composition also continuously changed. Maybe the one outstanding feature is the change. The changes remain largely reflections of changes taking place in society at large. What remains is the struggle for renewal. And I guess many of the themes you outline here did carry through to later years, although some less intensely so and in different forms.

One example of a change was in the (k)not performance of the students. Performance improved drastically after the introduction of the revised Psychology curriculum. The quality of student intake also improved. We ended up with fewer, more competent students, and, I believe, a more relevant and context-sensitive curriculum, in Psychology at least. It is ironic that this curriculum has now been 'deleted' by the incorporating institutions who consider it of poor quality (without ever properly evaluating it as far as I know).

2. I did not notice any main reflection that I can say I do not agree with.
3. I thought all the main reflections were significant and insightful. I appreciate your capturing both (or rather multiple) sides of the story – the ambivalences, contradictions, and complexities. I especially loved the part

where you outline our efforts to create a new story for ourselves. I was inspired, yet again, by our insistence on renewal, our resistance movement.

These reflections are especially meaningful to me now as they come at a time where we are in a new kind of struggle – maintaining some of what we had gained through the years, in the face of incorporation into mainstream academia. My current experience is that we, as well as our students, are left unheard in the dominant discourse in our new institutions. Management finally deserted us; sold us out. The triangle, I think, collapsed. But the struggle continues...

Appreciatively

Yours in toyi-toying

Feedback to Michelle May

The unconscious at work in a Historically Black University

- 1) Your first question: To what extent is this an appropriate reflection of this group's experiences of the HBU?

I have worked with this group for four and a half years (1996 – 2000). During this time I got to know the group very well. I fully support all reflections and interpretations made by the researcher in this chapter. The reflections are appropriate.

- 2) Your second question: Is there any main reflection that you do not agree with? Why?

There is no reflection which I do not agree with, only the following observations:

- 2.1 The first paragraph under 4.9.1 on p. 26. In this paragraph it is stated that it were not the intentions of the lecturers to disqualify management. This statement is however not backed with any substance to support it. How does the researcher know that this was not the intention of the lecturers? On what basis is this statement made? Is it possible that the researcher (who was part of the group of lecturers under discussion) is subjective in her interpretation?
- 2.2 In the first sentence of the fourth paragraph under 4.10 on p. 33, it is stated that “lecturers, albeit **unconsciously**, work towards splitting management...”. The “albeit unconsciously” gives the impression that this is not so badly intended and therefore it lessens or even excuses the action by the lecturers. Once again the objectivity of the researcher is in question. Why does the researcher state that this negative action is “unconscious”? What is the basis or support for this claim for “unconscious” acts, as opposed to consciously

and even wilfully splitting management? It can equally be argued that actions by students, administration and management are also “unconscious” (and thus excusable), yet the researcher never states this in describing actions of these groups.

- 2.3 In the last paragraph of 4.13, just before 4.13.1, it is stated again that lecturers work “unconsciously”. Once again the question can be asked: What is the basis or support for stating that lecturers “unconsciously” become part of the powerstruggle? Why “unconsciously”?
- 3) Your third question: Is there any main reflection you experience as particularly significant? Why?

A number of reflections were very significant, but I will particularly point the following out:

- 3.1 The last sentence under 4.3.1.3 on p. 11 encapsulate the crux of the unbearable tension described in this study. The sad reality as reflected on, in this study has its roots deeply imbedded in and is the tragic legacy of a devastating system of “apartheid”, which has indoctrinated the minds of everyone involved in many ways. The tension in a HBU like this was inevitable (a normal reaction in an abnormal system), but what lacked at the time of this study was wisdom and leadership to channel energy in a constructive direction. The result is a destructive spiral.
- 3.2 The last paragraph under 4.4.2 on p. 21 holds an important factor. The blaming game never works. The lecturers showed a shortage of (if not a total lack of) skills for the situation. In retrospect one would expect much more insight from the lecturers into the process that took place in the light of the historical/socio-political background of South Africa. Both students, and especially lecturers (from whom this level of insight should be expected) did not overtly acknowledge or address the effect of the apartheid system on the

process that was unfolding. Lecturers almost expected students to behave as if everything has always been fine, as if there was no history of oppression. In the same time students' expectations of lecturers was largely motivated from the history of oppression. Perhaps something more constructive could result from this if the lecturers under discussion joined efforts to address issues of integration and trust overtly and directly, out in the open. In other words, if they would consciously have made an effort to develop and implement new skills for an old/existing situation.

- 3.3 You give a very good explanation for the confusion between/alternating use of administration and management from the view of certain lecturers. These two bodies are separate but during the time of the interviews they were seen as one and the same in many ways.
- 3.4 Paragraph 6 and 7 under 4.8 on p. 25 once again touch on the crux of the matter. It is this socio-political history which needs to be overtly acknowledged and sensitively addressed – out in the open.
- 3.5 The last paragraph under 4.9.1.2 on p. 29 is a good summary of a number of key aspects.
- 3.6 The irony depicted in the last paragraph under 4.16.1.5 on p. 56, is very true.

Congratulations with an excellent piece of work. Good luck with the completion of the project.

ADDENDUM 3: COMMENTS FROM EXPERT IN SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Comments on the findings

A Working relationship: The respect for authority

I agree that the passivity of the students and the expert lecturer creates a symbiotic relationship based on the mutual fulfilment of complementary needs. (p47)

To the extent that the lecturer wants to 'save' the dependent student, the lecture hall is experienced as positive. Those longing for discourse or a challenge do not experience it as ideal. Maybe an absence of negative but not necessary positive. (p48)

I agree with the separateness experienced by lecturers based also on my experience at an HBU with white lecturers. The separateness was very distinct and it was weird and unexpected to have a lecturer connect with you (even though some did). It could lead to ostracisation. I was quite surprised to see how easily white students connect with lecturers and go to them to seek assistance. (p49)

The marginalization of the HBU

Your reflection feels incomplete to me, as if you need to carry on to make it clearer. (p51. 'Unwittingly L8 may be alluding tertiary education.' What is that unconscious position?

(p52.) I think the (k)not of achievement extends to wider society also (beyond the wider academic fraternity).

Handling the (k)not of achievement

It seems to be that power does truly make a difference in the experience of racism as the lecturers feel disempowered in the face of students they perceive as powerful. (p59)

It seems that in attempting to deal with projections, lecturers experience some projective identification as well judging by their distress over being associated with a 2nd rate university and their helplessness in relation to the underperforming students. (p60)

I strongly agree that the contribution of lecturers towards disqualification of students must be acknowledged. (p60)

A relationship marked by separateness

I think the passivity points not only to passive-aggressiveness but to real fear and helplessness in the face of a militant minority. The fear could be triggered by memories of revolutionary justice – punishing ‘dissenters’ calling them sell-outs. The institutions sounds to me like it is stuck in adversarial ways of relating from apartheid. (p62)

Black students/white lecturers

Agree with differences amplifying the divide and there are many – race, socio-economics, geography, culture, authority and possibly gender, education. (p66)

Reaction to the projection: racist

The lecturers’ willingness to consider how they may be contributing to perceptions of racism are important remarks. (p66)

Struggle skills used in black/white divide

The challenge/threat of black could suggest projective identification. The academic context would easily trigger incompetence against the backdrop of pervasive stereotypes about blacks being stupid. They might thus mobilize primitive defenses such as physical fights as they might not have faith in their academic or intellectual competence to tackle dissatisfaction. I think the recurring passivity is evidence also of their incompetence to ‘fight academically’ (p69). Also the separateness makes it difficult to connect and thus diminish the impact of stereotyping.

I strongly agree that lecturers do not have the new skills especially since they have acknowledged that everyone is playing out past patterns.

The (k)not of achievement

I'm wondering about the extent to which frustrations with management re- politics, power plays are projected onto students. (p76)

The acknowledgement by L3 and L2 that it is a political struggle suggests that they are in it already and despite themselves, they might be acquiring struggle skills. (p76)

Mutual dissatisfaction between groups: lecturers and management

I agree strongly with mirroring reflection - it is as if management treats lecturers the same way as lecturers treat students. (p78)

If the lecturers are the Vlakplaas and the management is the Army who are the students? MK or Apla? And who must be rooted out for the new order to survive at the institution?

Management experienced as incompetent

Lecturers' perceptions are that:

Management is spineless, incompetent and aggressive

Students are incompetent and aggressive

Where is the lecturers' aggression? Have they projected it onto the two groups?

This institution is definitely in a paranoid-schizoid position.

The unacknowledged power and sense of omnipotence of lecturers come through in their comments of how they have to solve problems. (p80)

White lecturers/black management

The underperformance of white managers is easily justified/excused. (p90)

Were expectations raised when a black management team was put in place as a setup?

Things to ponder include:

- To what extent are members of management (AA and former students) authorized by the lecturers? Have they been separated from the role of not knowing, incompetent students in the mind?
- To what extent are these managers still stuck in the struggle role in their symbiosis with students and disregard of lecturers?
- Is an AA management team of former students self-authorized?
- Is there envy from academic staff? They were there first and longer because the old management is gone and now their students are managers. It is clear that even as they reject management and administrative roles they are quite competent in doing them. So practically they can run the institution – if they wanted to.

The power struggle

To the question: Who is actually in charge of the institution – lecturers or management? I would also add or students? They have been a formidable force. (p91)

Reasons for the power struggle in the triangle

I would hypothesize that another reason is that power struggles are embedded in the DNA of the institution, in its past.

Students seem to be employing the divide and rule tactic of the past to deal with the two groups they perceive as powerful and management have fallen into the trap – by not working with the academic staff they have made themselves more vulnerable. (p106)

The anatomy of the threat and violence

The ill-defined roles or role confusion of management and lecturers empowers students. (p111)

The pervasive threats and explosive atmosphere make the university a container of pent-up racial hostilities which are shrouded under a veil of political correctness in broader society. It is as if the university is not an open enough system to learn coping skills from the broader society. (p112)

The communication difficulties between managers and lecturers (lecturers being channels) seem to be symptomatic of their inability to connect. It is as if they cannot understand the other, or the message is not getting through or they are not agreeing with the sentiment or they are philosophically misaligned. (p113)

The link between student's underachievement and the reign of terror

L8 alludes to the possibility that conflict does not only emanate from students demanding good marks but there could be subtle things that lecturers which might escape their attention but could still leave an imprint on the already suspicious student, culminating in these threats. (p114)

Threats of violence from management towards lecturers

It appears that management's overidentification with students contributes to their inability to provide boundary conditions for the lecturers and to uphold their rules. (p115)

By virtue of management's inaction and disregard of own rules, it could be postulated that they are colluding in this reign of terror and thus enabling the anarchy. Maybe pairing to destruct so something new could be born.(p116).

Lecturers' reaction to reign of terror

Could the uncontrolled emotionally (L2) be linked to the need for instant gratification characterizing some PDI's in the new democracy? As if a 'better life' for all meant eradicating all difficulties. (p120)

Maybe it speaks of the deep sense of deprivation and the expectation that needs will be fulfilled as one wishes.