A PSYCHODYNAMIC VIEW OF THE CONSULTING RELATIONSHIP: A CASE STUDY

by

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DECLARATION

I the undersigned, hereby declare that this dissertation titled, "A psychodynamic view of the consulting relationship: A case study", is my own work, and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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ABSTRACT

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The focus of this study was the unconscious dynamics in the consultant-client relationship as industrial and organisational psychologists seek to achieve change in client organisational systems. Twelve psychodynamic themes were used to interpret a journal maintained by the consultant throughout one consulting assignment, in an effort to understand the unconscious processes influencing the effectiveness of the consulting relationship. Analysis found that the client system imported the consultant to carry nurturing and healing on behalf of the system, but projected onto and into him the confusion, pain, hostility and incompetence in the system, stripped him of authority and manipulated him out of his role as change agent. The consultant unconsciously accepted the projections, failed to contain the system's anxiety, gravitated towards the paranoid-schizoid position and was unable to effect meaningful change. Recommendations where made for the use of this form of psychodynamic analysis as a self-evaluative tool in the consulting context.

KEY TERMS
psychodynamics, consulting, consultant-client relationship, anxiety, role, boundary, representivity, basic assumptions, systems, organizational change.

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1CHAPTER 1   SCIENTIFIC BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

This research focuses on the psychodynamic view of the consulting relationship within industrial and organisational psychology. It has as its subject the consultancy role of the Industrial and Organisational Psychologist, which will be abbreviated as I/O psychologist.

This chapter contains the scientific background to the research, the problem statement, the aims, the paradigm perspective, the research design, research method and chapter outline.

1.1   BACKGROUND FOR AND MOTIVATION OF THE RESEARCH

In the late 20th century organisations experienced an unprecedented degree of change. Writing in the early 1990's French and Bell (1993, p. 3) described this in graphic terms: "Today the demands on organizations are so great that ..... organizations are being reinvented; work tasks are being re-engineered; the rules of the marketplace are being rewritten; the fundamental nature of organizations is changing. Indeed, the new state of things will be vastly different from the old state of things".

In coping with substantial change, organisations invested huge amounts of money in "Business Process Re-engineering", "Total Systems Intervention", "Cultural Renewal" and other organisational change endeavours. To support this plethora of change, organisations increasingly employed consultants either as experts on the tools of new organisational functioning - such as integrated computer systems - or to assist with the challenges of managing the change itself. Many of the large consulting firms developed service lines specifically devoted to the latter, focussing on areas such as process re-engineering and change management, with many of these last being drawn from the ranks of I/O psychologists. This study focuses on one such relationship between I/O psychologist and client organisation.

Despite the significant growth of these service lines and the large number of I/O psychologists working as consultants on organisational change projects, the record of successful organisational change has been very poor (Kotter, 1998; Strebel, 1998). In fact, Strebel (ibid,

140) has noted that "change management isn't working as it should. … leading practitioners of radical corporate re-engineering report that success rates in Fortune 1,000 companies are well below 50%; some say they are as low as 20%". In part this is due to natural resistance to change in organisational systems (Maurer, 1996; Strebel, 1998).

1.1.1   Resistance to change

Capra (1982, p. 11) pointed out that individuals and organisations find change elusive because it requires an ability to alter their prevailing paradigms - the "thoughts, perceptions and values that form [their] particular perception of reality". Searight and Openlander (1986) observed that socially constructed realities are self-validating. They suggested that once a particular world view is constructed, the perceptions and interpretations that it generates only serve further to support it. It is precisely the fact that paradigms go unquestioned and untested that makes them so ensnaring.

In addition, one of the chief characteristics of any system is "homeostasis", or the ability to resist change and maintain the status quo (Boverie, 1991; Senge, 1990). Much like a rubber ball resumes its original shape after being squeezed, systems tend to absorb pressure to change, and interactions resume in the "old way" as soon as the pressure is released. (Organisations as systems will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.)

1.1.2   Consultant as therapist

In the role of consultant, the I/O psychologist's function is to recognise and disrupt the typical patterns and connections within the system (Miller, 1993; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). Rather than trying to destroy or dismantle these, the consultant can reflect and expose current patterns and allow for new and different ways of relating to emerge. However, as writers such as Miller (1993), Neumann, Kellner and Dawson-Shepherd (1997) and Stapley (1996) have observed, it is ultimately the individuals in the organisation who choose for themselves whether to operate more effectively or not, despite the facilitation of the helper.

Since change is not something the consultant "does to" the client, but something the client

decides for him/herself as a result of insights gained in the consulting experience, in the consulting role the I/O psychologist acts as organisational therapist. Indeed, Schein (1990, p. 117) has stated that the consultant's role with organisations "is analogous to the process of therapy in individuals". The objective is to enable the organisation to use its own resources to help itself (Boverie, 1991).

1.1.3 The role of the I/O psychologist

Specifically, in his description of the professional role of the I/O psychologist, Cilliers (1997, p. 2) described it as having "apart from the explanation of behaviour ..... to provide practical guidelines towards predicting and controlling behaviour with a view to efficiency and human psychological welfare. These functions include the diagnosis of personnel and other organisational problems with an industrial psychology content, and remedial action with the aid of professional techniques and advice." This implies that the I/O psychologist requires an ability to observe processes in organisations with some understanding, the insight to interpret their significance, and the influence to bring about change through the medium of the consulting relationship. In addition, there is an assumption that the consultant brings to the client relationship a personal detachment from the organisational and interpersonal dynamics currently maintaining the client's organisational system. Boverie (1991) described this role as requiring an understanding of, and intervention in, the wider context of intra- and inter-system interactions.

However, the reality is that many I/O psychologists working as change consultants struggle to "make sense of the nonsense" they encounter in their client organisations (Czander, 1993). Cilliers and Koortzen (2000) have described many change consultants as feeling helpless and ineffective in facilitating change. They have suggested that this is because I/O psychologists generally are trained in behaviourist or humanist paradigms which presume that organisational behaviour is "only conscious, mechanistic, predictable, uncomplicated, and easy to understand" (ibid, p. 59).

1.1.4 The assumption that organisations are mechanistic

Much management literature in the middle of the 20th century portrayed organisations as closed systems; that is, as structural or mechanistic entities. The tasks of management were defined in linear fashion such as planning, leading, organising and controlling (Schein, 1988). Over time the focus shifted to an understanding of organisations as open or "living" systems in dynamic interaction with their environment (Miller, 1993; Schein, 1988).

However, despite the growing recognition of organisations as open systems, much organisational analysis and activity failed to recognise the importance of personal and interpersonal dynamics as determinants of organisational functioning. Miller (1993, p. 8) observed that "classical organization theory had subordinated the human element to technological imperatives (a view that still persists in much contemporary "scientific management")". In this view the individual is seen largely as an item or player on the organisational landscape, rather than as an architect of that landscape through his or her personal and interpersonal dynamics with others. Even when the individual in the system is recognised as impacting on that system, much current thinking still reflects the assumption that individual behaviour is rational, and motivated by the desire to earn money and acquire material possessions (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). This view has been challenged.

1.1.5 Recognition that organisational behaviour is irrational

In the early part of the 20th century, Freud posited alternative motivations for human behaviour in the form of two primary instincts or drives known as the life instinct and the aggressive instinct (Freud, 1940). He suggested that behaviour was driven by the need to resolve conflict between the id, ego and superego. During the latter half of the 20th century, building on the work of Freud, Klein's (1959) work on object relations and Bion's (1961) thinking on group relations, the awareness grew that much individual and group behaviour are irrational. Klein (1959, p. 302) observed that "nothing that ever existed in the unconscious completely loses its influence on the personality", while Jaques (1955) demonstrated that organisational processes, functions, and roles are infiltrated or invested with unconscious mechanisms. In time Lewin proposed the open systems theory of groups that was further developed with Rice's work on socio-technical systems and Miller's work on boundary definitions (Miller, 1993).

The psychodynamic approach is founded on the belief that rational behaviour in organisations is the exception rather than the rule. Rogers (cited in Hitt, 1971, p. 17) observed that "the inner world of the individual appears to have more significant influence upon his behaviour than does the external environmental stimulus", while Hirschhorn (1993, p. 3), suggested that "where anxiety intrudes, rational procedures are distorted by irrational processes". There is a belief that people set up psychological boundaries to contain anxiety and that these boundaries may separate "the organization from its environment, one division from another, and people from the roles they play" (ibid, p. 31).

1.1.6 Justification for the use of the psychodynamic paradigm

Sher (2002, p. 61) observed that "systems psychodynamic consultancy offers the hope of a re-orientation of organisational thinking", and in recent years the application of psychodynamic theory in practical organisational consulting has grown significantly (Neumann et al, 1997). This is reflected in the growing number of books and articles in the field, the stature of established journals such as Human Relations, and an increase in consulting bodies who base their stance on the psychodynamic model. Pre-eminent among these are groups such as the Tavistock Institute in London and the A.K. Rice Institute in the USA. In addition, there exists a growing number of national and international associations focussed on the field, such as ISLA (Institute for the Study of Leadership and Authority) in South Africa and similar associations in Israel, Germany, France and The Netherlands. The International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations (ISPSO) is seen as becoming more influential in this field. It is also notable that the work of authors such as Hirschhorn and Kets de Vries have become part of mainstream management literature, and general psychology texts increasingly devote attention to the psychodynamic view of organisations.

More recently Stapley (1996) and Cilliers (2002) have begun to evolve a synthesis of group relations theory, psychoanalysis and open systems theory from the learning-from-experience model of Eric Miller. Cilliers (2002, p. 1) has described this as "the systems psycho-dynamic'" paradigm, and suggests that this perspective "implies working simultaneously from "the inside out" and "the outside in" with neither perspective being privileged". While the current research was started before Cilliers described this paradigm in so integrated a fashion, and therefore

cannot claim to be undertaken expressly from that paradigm, the articulation of the systems psycho-dynamic stance by Cilliers is further evidence of the growing consolidation of this perspective.

The concepts central to the psychodynamic model (such as conflict, anxiety, boundary management and authority for example), are explained in detail in Chapter 2. The basic position can be stated as follows. Individuals bring to their organisational relationships unconscious and unfulfilled family needs. Events in the organisation elicit the anxiety associated with those needs, and these anxieties, and the coping mechanisms that have been developed to manage them, directly influence the behaviour of both individuals and groups in the present.

1.1.7 Implications for the Consultant - Client relationship

Despite the emergence of these insights, and despite the desire for effective change in organisations, in most change efforts undertaken by organisations almost no attention is paid to the irrational processes and unconscious dynamics that influence the behaviour of those engaged in the change effort. Indeed the large-scale denial of these processes by most parts of the system might be seen as a meta level demonstration of unconscious defence mechanisms in operation.

The psychodynamic view of behaviour outlined above has significant implications for I/O psychologists engaged in organisational consulting as change agents. It suggests that to be effective in their consulting roles I/O psychologists need to manage a wide range of irrational dynamics. Since the psychodynamic view holds that all relationships are profoundly influenced by the underlying unconscious processes at work within and between individuals, it is axiomatic that the consultant-client relationship itself is significantly influenced by these unconscious processes.

1.1.8 Examples of conflict in the consultant-client relationship

An examination of the consultant-client relationship suggests that many elements are likely

to raise boundary and authority issues, and could elicit anxiety for the parties in the relationship. A few are mentioned below.

- Both parties are frequently engaged in activities that fall outside "normal" organisational activity boundaries. This often raises issues of authority, and how both client and consultant understand their relationship (Neumann, 1997).

- The challenge to effect successful change in the client system can induce performance anxiety in the consultant (Czander, 1993; Hirschhorn, 1993).

- The client may need to confront unpleasant perspectives about the dynamics within the organisational system, and be asked to change preferred and entrenched ways of behaving (Gemmill, 1986; Gemmill & Wynkoop, 1990).

- Giving advice to clients that may be necessary but unwelcome may induce anxiety in the consultant (Alderfer, 1980; Shapiro & Carr, 1991). There may even be additional concerns about preserving the consulting relationship and thereby the consultant's source of income (Neumann et al, 1997).

- Large change projects frequently are structured to meet detailed and inflexible time frames. With significant resources committed to projects by both client and consultant organisations, any extensions to the change process can be exceedingly costly. Yet by its very nature change in people and their relationships does not take place within a rigid time frame (Miller, 1993; Schein, 1988).

- While consultants initially are valued for their independence, the very process of working closely with the client system can begin to erode that independence (Alderfer, 1980; Hirschhorn, 1993; Shapiro & Carr, 1991). Keeney has observed that the practitioner is "always a part of the system he attempts to diagnose and help change" (1979, p. 124). The consultant may become less helpful in his or her consulting role to the extent that the consultant unconsciously becomes part of the organisational system (Kahn, 1993; 1995).

- Miller (1993) made the point that, while the individual is part of the organisational system, the individual and the organisation also need to be understood as two systems, with each supplying a role to the other. There can therefore also be conflicts between unconscious dynamics that arise within the consultant himself as an independent subsystem, and those that arise from the nexus of interactions with the client system.

From these examples it can be seen that it is important for the consultant to understand the

unconscious dynamics influencing the consulting relationship.

1.1.9   The need for a self-critique process

The challenge consultants face in their day-to-day consulting role is how to gain an understanding of the unconscious processes that are at work in the consulting relationship, and how these are influencing the effectiveness of that relationship. This is particularly true in complex consulting relationships such as those that frequently occur on large-scale change projects. The idea that these dynamics are unconscious means that the consultant needs a method to surface them in some way in order to interpret them. Consultants seldom have access to a psychodynamically trained supervisor for their work, and frequently work alone as the change specialist on a project. Even when working in a team of consultants other members of the team may not have the time, ability or distance from the system dynamics to play a useful role in surfacing and interpreting unconscious material. I/O psychologists in these situations therefore need a method to conduct this analysis themselves.

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT

I/O psychologists' effectiveness as change agents is significantly impacted by the effectiveness of their consulting relationships with clients. The behaviour of consultant and clients in these relationships are a product of both conscious and unconscious dynamics (Kets de Vries, 1991; Sher, 2002), yet, the latter typically are neither surfaced nor addressed in managing the client-consultant relationship. Because they frequently have no access to effective third party support, to effectively manage these relationships consultants need a method by which they can independently identify and interpret the unconscious processes impacting on their consulting relationships.

These realities pose a number of questions for I/O psychologists working with clients in complex consulting relationships, namely:

- what are the psychodynamic issues that typically emerge in organisations?
- what are the psychodynamic issues that typically characterise the relationship between consultants and their clients?

- what psychodynamics were manifest in the consultant-client relationship in one particular case study?
- can these psychodynamics be identified and interpreted from an analysis of a journal maintained by the consultant in the course of a consulting relationship?

This study examines the potential influence of the unconscious consultant-client dynamics on the consultants' understanding of the client system, and explores the usefulness of analysing a journal maintained by the consultant as a means of identifying these unconscious dynamics.

1.3   AIMS

From the above the following research aims were formulated for this study.

1.3.1   General Aim

The general aim of this research was to use a case study to understand the unconscious psychodynamics of the relationship between consultant and clients on a large-scale organisational transformation project. The further aim was to assess the usefulness of analysing a journal maintained by the consultant as a means of identifying these unconscious dynamics.

1.3.2   Specific aims

The specific aims were to:
- identify the psychodynamic issues that typically emerge in organisations
- identify the psychodynamic issues that typically characterise the relationship between consultants and their clients
- identify the psychodynamics that were manifest in the consultant-client relationship in one particular case study
- assess the usefulness of analysing a journal maintained by the consultant in the course of a consulting relationship as a means of identifying those psychodynamics.

1.4   PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

This research is presented from a psychodynamic perspective of human relationships, and a systemic view of organisations and organisational change (Stapley, 1996). The study is informed by a phenomenological and hermeneutic approach to research and its application in organisational settings (Sher, 2002).

The approach used in this study has its intellectual origins in classic psychoanalysis, group relations theory, and open systems theory. Specifically, it stems from the following:

- Freud's (1933; 1940) work on the unconscious motivations of behaviour
- Klein's (1959; 1964) theory of object relations
- Bion's (1961; 1975) theory of group relations and training
- Lewin's (1947) open systems theory
- Miller's (1993; Miller & Rice, 1967) work on boundary differentiation
- Rice's (1963; 1969) concepts of socio-technical systems and the primary task
- Stapley's (1996) recent conceptualisation of the systems psychodynamic stance towards organisational transformation.

1.5   RESEARCH DESIGN

This was a qualitative and descriptive study (Dooley, 1995), in which the psychodynamic theory of group dynamics is applied to the consultant-client relationship as it unfolded on one particular organisational change project. It is an hypothesis-generating study (ibid), intended to provide useful insights for application in future consulting relationships by this consultant.

1.6   RESEARCH METHOD

The research was conducted in two phases.

1.6.1   Phase 1. Literature review

Step 1. A literature review was undertaken to identify the psychodynamic issues that typically manifest in organisations.
Step 2. A literature review was undertaken to identify the psychodynamic issues that typically characterise the relationship between consultants and their clients.

1.6.2   Phase 2: Case study

The research was conducted on a single case study. The method used was exploratory, and took as its unit of investigation the relationship between one consultant and the major client groups from two organisations that collaborated on one common project. The two primary client groups were the following:

- The client organisation. This was a national beverage company primarily involved in the beer industry. It had brewing facilitates in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, and distribution centres in all sizeable centres around South Africa. The principal client members with whom the consultant interacted were the client project sponsor, the client project director, and various members of the client organisation involved in human resource or organisational development roles.

- Project leadership from the consulting organisation. Although they were not defined as a client of the consultant, members of the consulting organisation who played a leadership

role on the project were implicitly clients in the consultant's role of supporting project team development. While the consultant's primary focus was on the client organisation, he also held responsibility for supporting and optimising the dynamics of the consulting team.

In addition to these two primary client groups, the consultant interacted in a more general way with a project team of about 70 people, drawn from both client and consulting organisations. (Changes over the course of the project meant that numbers varied.)

1.7   CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 2. The psychodynamic view of organisations

This chapter outlines current theory regarding the psychodynamics of organisations. It describes the systemic view of organisations, and then provides an overview of the individual as micro system, the group as meso system, and the organisation as macro system.

Chapter 3. The psychodynamic view of consulting

This chapter identifies the particular psychodynamics that typically manifest in the client-consultant nexus in the course of organisational process consulting. It includes a definition of consulting, a discussion of the objectives of consulting, and an exploration of current research into the psychodynamics of the consultant-client system.

Chapter 4. Case study

This chapter explains the detailed methodology used to conduct the case study. It includes an explanation of the method used to process the data.

Chapter 5. Results and Discussion

This chapter describes those unconscious themes that influenced the relationship between the consultant and client systems at the micro, meso and macro levels. Reasons are advanced for the way in which the relationship between the consultant and the client developed. An attempt is made to understand how those psychodynamics influenced the results of the change process.

Chapter 6. Conclusions, Limitations of the study and Recommendations

Conclusions are drawn regarding the psychodynamics affecting the consulting relationship, the effectiveness of a twelve-item template for interpreting those dynamics, and the value of using a journal maintained by the consultant as source of data about those dynamics. Limits of the research are identified and recommendations are made for the training of I/O psychologists, and for future research.

1.8   INTEGRATION

I/O psychologists working as change consultants on large-scale transformation projects frequently find that their efforts at facilitating change are unsuccessful. In seeking to effect change classical theories of organisation and behaviour often fail them. The work of theorists in the psychodynamic school suggests that this failing stems from the assumption of these traditional (and mechanistic) paradigms that behaviour in organisational settings is rational.

The psychodynamic view holds that much of what happens in organisations is irrational and offers a body of theory to explain these unconscious behaviours. However, consultants need a practical means by which to apply that theory in their day-to-day consulting work. This study proposes one method of doing this and conducted a single case study to explore the usefulness of that method.

This researcher proposed that psychodynamic theory be used to interpret the dynamics that occurred in the consulting relationships of one consultant on one change project. In his role as consultant the researcher maintained a journal of his thoughts and perceptions about his consulting relationships on such a project. In the role of researcher he then created a template of key themes from the psychodynamic theory of organisations and used these to interpret the unconscious dynamics that had occurred in those relationships. The assumption is that the insights this affords would provide clues to how to effect real change in these relationships, and thereby facilitate change in the project system.

1.9   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter contained the scientific background to the research, the problem statement, the aims, the paradigm perspective, the research design, research method and chapter outline.

Chapter 2 will discuss the psychodynamic view of organisations.

CHAPTER 2 THE PSYCHODYNAMIC VIEW OF ORGANISATIONS

This chapter contains a literature review of the psychodynamic view of organisations. It will discuss the organisation as a system, the individual as micro system, the group as meso system, and the organisation as macro system.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the psychodynamic view of organisations and the unconscious dynamics that motivate behaviour in organisations.

2.1 THE ORGANISATION AS A SYSTEM

In the latter part of the last century there was a growing appreciation of the organisation as a system, made up both of tangible and intangible elements in interrelationship with each other. Since the 1940's, more integrated approaches led to the conceptualisation of the organisation as a socio-technical system (Miller & Rice, 1967), and later to the open systems model (Miller, 1993). Indeed Katz and Kahn (1978, p. 20) maintained that "social organisations are flagrantly open systems".

2.1.1 Definition of a system

A system is commonly perceived as "a whole whose elements "hang together" because they continually affect each other over time and operate toward a common purpose" (Senge, Roberts, Ross, Smith & Kleiner, 1994, p. 90). An open system is one in which "the input of energies and the conversion of output into further energic input consist of transactions between the organisation and its environment" (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 20). In fact, open systems exist only by exchanging materials with their environment. The organisation "imports" things from its environment, "converts" these in some way as part of its ongoing work, and then "exports" products, services and waste products. This ongoing work is called the "primary task" of the system (Miller, 1993).

Each system has its own life, which is both conscious and unconscious, and each system has subsystems that relate to and mirror one another (Czander, 1993; Hirschhorn, 1993).

Therefore organisations are both entities in interaction with their environment, and a collection of subsystems that together make up the whole which is understood as an organisation. Behaviours in one part of the system are mirrored in other parts of that system, by similarity, or by contrast.

2.1.2   System boundaries

Each system has boundaries, across which materials flow (Miller, 1993; Miller & Rice, 1967). The boundary delineates what is inside from what is outside, and both separates a system from, and links it with its environment. The system manages its boundary as a means of protecting the integrity of the system's core and to give it the resources necessary to do its work so that it can maintain high standards of efficiency and effectiveness (Czander, 1993; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). Indeed, Czander claimed that organisations survive as a function of their ability to manage their boundaries" (ibid, p. 179).

2.1.3   Characteristics of a system

Katz and Kahn (1978) identified ten characteristics that seem to define all open systems. They explain that open systems:
- import some form of energy from the external environment
- transform the energy available to them
- export some product into the environment, as a result of the work done within the system
- have a cyclic pattern of energy exchange
- are subject to the universal law of entropy in which all forms of organisation move towards disorganisation and death
- derive information selectively from inputs that enable them to adapt to their environment
- maintain a steady state through dynamic homeostasis
- move in the direction of differentiation and elaboration in which diffuse global patterns are replaced by more specialised functions
- exhibit integration and co-ordination
- follow the principal of equifinality.

These characteristics are evident at the micro, meso and macro levels of the organisation. As this chapter will demonstrate, individuals, groups and the organisation itself expend a great deal of effort in managing their boundaries (Czander, 1993; de Board, 1993; Miller & Rice, 1967). To do so they import and transform energy from their contextual environments, and export this again in a cyclical pattern in an effort to maintain a steady state and resist change (Miller, 1993).

2.1.4 The individual as micro system

From a human resources view, the smallest unit in the organisation is the individual. Hutton, Bazalgette and Reed (1997, p. 113) have observed that "organisations are people behaving", and Rice (1969, p. 574) has stated that "an individual may be seen as an open system. He exists and can exist only through processes of exchange with his environment".

2.1.5 The group as meso system

As individuals take up their roles and tasks in organisations, they do so as members of a multiplicity of groups, such as a department, a project team, a selection panel and so on. Just as the individual has a boundary region that mediates and regulates between the inner world and the environmental system with which it interacts, Miller (1993) observed that a group may be understood in similar terms. These groups operate as a subset of the larger organisational entity, and therefore can be understood as meso systems, processing information, materials, resources and ideas to produce outputs.

2.1.6 The organisation as macro system

The organisation is a construct emerging from the collection of individuals and groups of which it is comprised (de Board, 1993; Hirschhorn, 1993). However, it also is a system in and of its own. According to Czander (1993) theorists such as Kets de Vries and Kernberg have argued that organisations take on a character and structure that is an expression of the shared fantasies of its executives, and Stapely (1996) spoke of the organisations as having a personality. Miller (1993) has made the point that the organisational system not only

supplies a role to the individuals within it, but has its own role supplied to it by those individuals. One can therefore speak of the organisation as a macro system with which the micro and meso systems described above interact.

Because of this interrelationship between individuals, groups and the organisation, this chapter will first discuss the psychodynamics of the micro system, and then build on this to examine those of the meso and macro systems. At the end of Chapter 3 these will be integrated with the specific psychodynamics in the relationship between the role players of consultant and client to create a model from which to present and interpret the results.

2.2   THE INDIVIDUAL AS MICRO SYSTEM

As a micro system, the individual is both a source of behaviours manifest at the meso and macro levels, and a reflection of the same. Psychodynamic theory is founded on the belief that "all mental (and physical) behaviour is determined by prior causes" (Ewen, 1998, p. 25). In the individual, these will be considered with regard to the early development of personality.

2.2.1   The structure of personality

From a psychodynamic perspective, the two elements to consider are the levels of consciousness, and the personality constructs or structures.

2.2.1.1   The levels of consciousness (The topographic model)

Psychodynamic theory suggests that the individual operates at three different levels of consciousness (Freud, 1933; 1940). At one end of the spectrum is the unconscious. According to psychodynamic theory, the human personality contains, and is greatly influenced by, an unconscious mind harbouring repressed (forgotten) memories, which determine conscious thoughts and behaviour. Unconscious desires or drives are those thoughts and emotions that are quite inaccessible to an individual. Freud concluded that the vast majority of mental activity is unconscious, and cannot be called to mind even with great effort (Freud, 1933).

At the other end of the spectrum is consciousness. Conscious thoughts are those that are most available to the individual, and can be understood as "those of which the person is immediately aware" (Pervin & John, 1999, p. 58). In between these two is a third level of consciousness, the preconscious, which contains thoughts that may not be conscious at a given moment, but which can readily be brought to consciousness if one attends to them. The preconscious is much closer to the conscious than to the unconscious because it is largely within the individual's control (Freud, 1933).

The psychodynamic proposition is that individuals operate at all these levels (Freud, 1933). By implication, some of an individual's behaviour in an organisational setting is unconscious.

2.2.1.2   The structure of personality (The structural model)

The levels of consciousness described above find expression in the personality through three major constructs or structures, namely, the id, the ego and the superego:
• The id
The id is present at birth and includes all of the instincts, and the total supply of psychic energy (Kline, 1984). The id is entirely unconscious, and represents "the dark, inaccessible part of our personality ..... a chaos, a cauldron full of seething excitations" (Freud, 1933, p. 73). The id transforms biological needs into psychological tension (wishes). According to Freud it operates according to the "pleasure principle", in which its only goal is to gain pleasure by satisfying the instinctual drives and reducing tension. The id is totally illogical and amoral, however, and has no conception of reality or self-preservation. Its only resource is to form mental images of objects that will provide satisfaction, a process called wish-fulfilment.

- The ego

The ego develops in the individual during infancy as a response to experiences that help the infant to differentiate between self and not-self, notably those concerning its own body (Klein, 1959). In the process the child discovers that the environment contains objects that can satisfy the demands of the id. Mental representations of these need-satisfying objects are incorporated in the ego, and the growth of the ego increases the capacity to deal with reality (ibid). Unlike the id, the ego spans the conscious, preconscious and unconscious (Freud, 1933). It is the only component of personality that is able to interact with the environment. Operating on the "reality principle", the ego forms realistic plans of action designed to satisfy the needs of the id, and delays the discharge of tension until a suitable object can be found. This makes it possible to avoid errors or punishment for unacceptable behaviour (Pervin & John, 1999).

- The superego

The superego functions partly in the conscious and partly in the unconscious. Since only the id is present at birth, infants have no sense of right and wrong. Initially parents reward certain behaviours with a reassuring display of their presence and affection, or punish other behaviours by demonstrating that the child has lost their love and "is now at the mercy of an awesome and dangerous environment" (Ewen, 1998, p. 29). Partly to protect itself, and partly because it identifies with the all-powerful parents, the ego begins to internalise or "introject" the parents' standards. This leads to the formation of the superego, a special part of the ego that observes and sits in judgement above the rest (Klein, 1959). The superego includes two components, namely the *ego ideal* rewards desirable behaviour with feelings of self-praise and virtue, while the *conscience* punishes illicit thoughts and actions (Freud, 1940). Much of the superego lies in the unconscious where it is intimately related to the id. The superego condemns the id's illicit impulses as severely as actual misdeeds, but it can directly influence only the ego. Therefore, both forbidden impulses and unacceptable behaviours cause tension to be generated between the superego and the ego, and this is experienced by the ego as guilt or moral anxiety (Ewen, 1998).

Even though the ego may be unaware of the reason for these unpleasant feelings it is obliged to do something about them. It can obtain relief by substituting more acceptable thoughts or actions, or by resorting to defence mechanisms. Thus the ego must always heed the

introjected parental standards (Klein, 1959). As Ewen (1998, p. 38) remarked, "our parents never leave us, even after their death; their rules live on in our superegos". The psychodynamic model suggests that the internal drivers of behaviour arise essentially from the resolution of conflict between these three structures. The id seeks immediate discharge of its tensions while the ego seeks to restrain the id in accordance with reality and the superego in accordance with morality (Ewen, 1998).

2.2.2 The dynamics of personality

As individuals engage with the world around them, these internal forces are impacted by interactional experiences with external objects (Miller, 1993; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). Klein (1959) and others identified the processes by which these experiences construct the inner world of the individual. The core psychoanalytic processes arising from object relations theory are introjection, projection and splitting, which operate from the beginning of post-natal life as some of the earliest activities of the ego.

2.2.2.1 Introjection

In introjection the infant takes into itself the outer world (Klein, 1959, de Board, 1993). Its impact, and the situations the infant lives through, and the objects he or she encounters, become part of the infant's inner life and are not experienced as external. Since the first object the infant experiences in any substantive way is the mother, it is typically she who becomes the first object that the infant makes part of his inner world. According to Klein (ibid, p. 294), where positive identifications occur, the infant's inner world comes to contain predominantly good objects and feelings, and these good objects are experienced by the infant responding to the mother's love. All this contributes to a stable personality and makes it possible to extend sympathy and friendly feelings to other people, not only in infancy and childhood, but also in adulthood.

However, Klein (1959) observed that the infant may experience some aspects of these same external objects as a threat, (for example the Oedipal perception of the father as a rival for the mother's affections), or as hurtful (for example, the mother withholding the breast when the

infant is hungry.) To the extent that this occurs the infant develops a capacity for anxiety which in later life can manifest itself as a sense of persecution, suspicion at the motives of others, or similar "negative" personality traits.

2.2.2.2   Projection

The second primary process by which individuals relate to objects is that of projection (Czander, 1993; de Board, 1993; Klein, 1959). Whereas in introjection, the emphasis lies on acquiring some of the characteristics of the introjected objects, and on being influenced by them, in projecting the identification is based on the individual attributing to the other person part of their own emotions, thoughts or qualities. Klein (ibid) suggests that whether this projection is of a friendly or a hostile nature depends on how balanced or persecuted the individual is.

This projection of part of the individual's impulses and feelings into another person achieves identification with that person. By attributing part of their own feelings to the other person, the individual understands the other person's feelings, needs, and satisfactions (ibid). Through projection the child acquires a capacity to attribute to other people both positive and negative feelings such as love and hate. If projections are predominantly hostile, real empathy and understanding of others is impaired. The character of the projection is, therefore, of great importance in the development of relations with other people (Czander, 1993; Klein, 1959).

As a result of these two processes, an inner world is built up which is partly a reflection of the external one. Klein (1959) observed that introjection and projection go on throughout life. Although they become modified as the individual matures, they never lose their importance in the individual's relation to the external world.

2.2.2.3   Splitting

Since external objects have the capacity to be perceived as both "good" and "bad", the infant is confronted with a need to manage contradictory feelings about individual objects (Klein, 1959). Klein (ibid) explains that "persecutory anxiety" reinforces the need to keep the loved object separate from the dangerous one, and therefore to split love from hate. The theory holds that the young infant's self-preservation depends on its trust in a good mother. By splitting the two aspects and clinging to the good one the infant preserves its belief in a good object and its capacity to love it (Halton, 1994).

The process of splitting changes in form and content as development goes on, but in some ways it is never entirely given up (Klein, 1959). In normal development, the ego becomes increasingly integrated and splitting processes diminish. This results is an increased capacity to comprehend external reality, and to resolve internal conflict, and ultimately leads to more balanced relationships in which, for example, others can be respected despite their faults (Czander, 1993; Halton, 1994).

2.2.3   The individual at work

The psychodynamic view is that work is essentially an attempt to master internal conflicts and their resulting anxiety (Czander, 1993). The hypothesis is that as an adult the individual brings to his/her work situation unresolved personal conflicts, or unfulfilled and unconscious family needs, and that these directly influence the behaviour of the individual within the organisation. This was illustrated by Miller (1993, p. 16) as follows. "The individual, when he engages in adult life with, for example, a new boss, will not simply respond in a rational way to what the boss says and does, but he will bring forward, from his internal repertoire of objects and part-objects, his experience of earlier authority figures, including mother and father. These will underlie the new relationship and so affect his perceptions".

For example, needs for recognition or affection that were unfulfilled by the parents may lead the individual to seek affirmation and support from someone representing authority within the workplace, perhaps a team leader or manager. Since the role of the authority figure generally

precludes some of the parental behaviours the individual seeks - such as love - the individual experiences conflict. Similarly the individual may play out unresolved power relationships with siblings in their interactions with peers, but since these peers are not siblings, the result is often confusion and increased anxiety (Miller, 1976; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994).

This recurrence of infantile anxieties in adulthood is termed regression. The theory holds that individuals will tend to regress when they experience their organisations or work environment as threatening or unsupportive. As Diamond and Allcorn (1987, p. 527) observed, "individual regression is often the consequence of a failure of the "facilitative environment" (whether mother-infant matrix, family, work group, or organisation) to provide security, enjoyment, mastery, self-esteem, and ego-relatedness, a failure to provide for "good enough" self- and other relations".

2.2.4 Anxiety

Failure of the facilitative environment to provide these things leads the individual to experience anxiety. Anxiety can be understood as the negative physical and emotional reactions experienced by the individual in response to perceived danger (de Board, 1993). To the extent that a threat to an individual resides in reality - for example a threatening individual approaching - anxiety is natural and healthy, and is termed *realistic* anxiety. However, the anxiety that arises from unresolved internal conflicts and unfulfilled family needs played out in the workplace is maladaptive and is termed *neurotic* anxiety. Because the earlier trauma is not recalled, neurotic anxiety has a free-floating quality.

The causes of anxiety are unique to each individual, and depend upon how the individual perceives and interprets their situation. In itself anxiety can elicit productive responses and personal growth. An individual faced with a difficult task may feel anxious, but by applying themselves to the task with the appropriate skills may successfully complete it. In doing so they may increase their ability to contain and master anxiety. Another person, however, faced with the same task may experience such anxiety that they are unable to complete the task (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000).

The concept of anxiety is central to all psychoanalytic theory (de Board, 1993) and is accepted as the basis of all organisational behaviour (Menzies, 1993). In a state of "free-floating" anxiety, individuals are unable to relate their state of tension to an external object. The psychodynamic theory of anxiety states that at some point the organism experiences a trauma, an incident of considerable harm or an injury. Anxiety represents a repetition of the earlier traumatic experience, but in a miniature form, so anxiety in the present is related to an earlier danger (Ewen, 1998).

2.2.5 Defence mechanisms

Anxiety is such a painful condition that the individual seeks to avoid it. To cope with anxiety the ego resorts to a variety of defence mechanisms, all of which are unconscious ways to distort reality and thereby avoid feeling anxious. Freud (1933) initially named seven defence mechanisms, being repression, regression, projection, reaction formation, fixation, displacement and sublimation. His daughter Anna Freud and the New Freudians later added further defence mechanisms. Of these defence mechanisms the relevant ones are discussed below:

• Repression

Repression consists of unconsciously eliminating threatening material from awareness and being unable to recall it on demand. Repression is viewed as playing a part in all the other defence mechanisms.

• Denial

Denial refers to the process by which the ego refuses to acknowledge an unpleasant truth. Denial differs from repression in that the threat occurs in the external world, rather than within the psyche.

• Projection

In projection, what is internal and unacceptable is projected out and seen as external. For example, rather than recognising hostility in oneself, one sees others as being hostile. There is in this process "a fluidity of boundaries, or a breakdown in the differentiation between what is self and what is other" (Pervin, 1980, p. 48). As long as the individual is projecting the internal state of the individual remains unaffected.

• Reaction formation

In reaction formation, the individual defends against expression of an unacceptable impulse by only recognising and expressing its opposite. This defence is evident in socially desirable behaviour that is rigid, exaggerated and inappropriate (Pervin, 1980).

• Identification

While some form of identification is healthy - such as a child identifying with their parents and wanting to become like them - identification can also be a defence mechanism. This occurs when the individual alleviates the pain caused by an external object (a person or an animal) by assuming some of their characteristics or behaviour.

• Rationalisation

In the case of rationalisation, the individual uses implausible explanations to justify unacceptable behaviour. Unlike excuses, which are used to persuade someone else, rationalisation is used to reduce anxiety be concealing the truth from the person using it. In this case the action is perceived, but the underlying motive is not. Behaviour is reinterpreted so that it appears reasonable and acceptable. For example, someone who is unsuccessful in a job interview may decide that the interview process was unfair.

• Displacement

The defence mechanism of displacement involves the transfer of feelings or behaviours from a dangerous object to one that is less threatening. A person who is angry with a work superior may avoid expressing that anger, but go home and shout at a family member. Alternatively, aggression towards others may be diverted to the self, leading to self-mutilation or even suicide.

• Sublimation

In sublimation, the original object of gratification is replaced by a higher cultural goal which is "further removed from direct expression of the instinct" (Pervin, 1980, p. 50). In this way an illicit impulse (such as aggression) is diverted into more socially acceptable outlets (such as contact sports).

• Isolation or intellectualisation

A further way to deal with anxiety is to isolate events in memory or to isolate emotion from the content of a memory or impulse. In isolation, the impulse, thought, or act is not denied access to consciousness, but it is isolated from the normal accompanying emotion. The result is intellectualisation, in which thought is emphasised over feeling, and logic-tight compartments are developed (Ewen, 1998, p. 36). In such cases the feelings that do exist may be split.

• Undoing

People who use the defence mechanism of isolation also often use that of undoing. Here the individual unconsciously attempts to undo one act by performing another. "It is a kind of negative magic in which the individual's second act abrogates or nullifies the first, in such a manner that it is as though neither had taken place, whereas in reality both have done so" (Freud 1940, p. 33).

Defences which build on the foregoing, such as projective identification, and the orientation of the individual to the paranoid-schizoid or defensive positions will be discussed in detail at the level of the group.

The primary implication of these concepts for individuals within their work context is that work behaviour is not simply a matter of the individual responding to the environment. Rather it can be understood as significantly mediated by the personal psychodynamic lens the individual brings to the work context, and the individual is unaware of much of that lens since it is unconscious.

It is these micro system dynamics that individuals collectively bring to the organisational groups of which they are a part, and therefore form the foundation for an understanding of the group as meso system.

2.3   THE GROUP AS MESO SYSTEM

A group can be understood as "two or more people who interact in such a way with one another, that mutual influencing takes place" (Cilliers & Koortzen, 1997, p. 33). According to Banet and Hayden (1977, p. 156) a cluster of persons becomes a group "when interaction between members occurs, when members' awareness of their common relationship develops, and when a common group task emerges".

2.3.1   Bion's theory on groups

Bion (1961) developed a comprehensive theory of group working that subsequently became

the foundation of the Tavistock model of group behaviour. The essential premises of this model are were detailed by Czander (1993, pp.36-37) as being:

- Individual psychology is fundamentally group psychology. Behaviour by one member of the group influences, and is influenced by, all the other members.

- The rational working of the group is profoundly affected by the emotions and irrational feelings of its members. The full potential of the group is only released when this fact is recognised and dealt with.

- Administrative and managerial problems are simultaneously personal and interpersonal problems expressed in organizational terms.

- The group develops when it learns by experience in gaining greater contact with reality.

Flowing from these premises Bion (1961) viewed the group as a collective entity, and postulated the existence of a group mentality. He viewed this phenomenon (ibid, p. 42) as "the pool [of members' wishes, opinions, thoughts, and emotions] to which the anonymous contributions are made, through which the impulses and desires implicit in these contributions are gratified. Any contribution to this group mentality must enlist the support of, or be in conformity with the other anonymous contributions of the group".

Psychodynamic theory holds that groups inevitably assume a collective task of survival which, though frequently disguised, becomes a latent motivating force for all group members (Banet & Hayden, 1977; Bion, 1959).

2.3.2   The work group

Bion (1975) posited that every group, however, casual, meets to "do" something, and that since this activity is orientated to a task, it is related to reality, and its methods are rational. He called this facet of mental activity in a group the Work Group, but pointed out that the term embraces only mental activity of a particular kind, not the people who indulge in it".

In its "pure culture" form members of the work group co-operate as separate and discrete individuals, seek truth and knowledge, learn from experience, test their conclusions in a scientific spirit, and constantly question how best to achieve their goal. In the work group

individuals assume a leadership role only as long as their leadership serves the task of the group. The work group is clearly conscious of the passage of time and of its processes of learning and development. In practice a work group is "suffused by, intruded into, and supported by the basic assumption groups" (Rioch, 1975, p. 23).

2.3.3 The basic assumptions group

Bion (1975) held that resistance springs from basic, tacit assumptions common to all groups, and that these "instantaneous, inevitable, and instinctive" (ibid, p. 18) assumptions inform the behaviour of the group so that members act "as if" the assumptions were true. Basic assumption life is orientated inward toward fantasy, and is uncritically and impulsively acted out. Rioch (1975) believed that individuals do not really learn and adapt through experience. She maintained that although they may shift very readily from one basic assumption to another, they actually resist change.

Bion described three distinct emotional states of groups from which one can deduce three basic assumptions. While these assumptions are generally widely accepted within the study of organisational dynamics (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000), two further basic assumptions were added later by Lawrence, Bain and Gould (1996). Since individuals in the group do not own the basic assumptions they can function quite ruthlessly. They are therefore feared, as if they might consume the rational, mature group members themselves. Bion (1961) developed the concept of *valency* to describe an individual's attraction to a particular group culture.

2.3.3.1   Dependency

In this state - the basic assumption dependency group - the group acts as if it is to attain security through, and have its members protected by, one individual. Shaffer and Galinsky (1974) have observed that when this assumption operates, the primary axis of relatedness for each member is between themselves and the leader. Other group members have significance for the individual only within the context of that dominant relationship. The members act as if they know nothing and are inadequate within themselves. By contrast, their behaviour implies that the leader is omnipotent and omniscient (Rioch, 1975).

Since no leader can fulfil the infantile expectations of the group, the leader inevitably arouses feelings of frustration, helplessness and powerlessness within the group, however much these are repressed. These emotions frequently emerge in expressed hostility toward the leader, or in attempts to structure the environment as a defence against anxiety.

In this state group members frequently demonstrate work and emotional immaturity by asking the leader for greater direction, or seeking his/her attention. This projection of insecurity and anxiety can manifest through forming committees or creating additional structure in work relationships. According to Cilliers and Koortzen (2000), this defence against anxiety can also be seen as a manipulation of authority out of its role. For example, they have suggested that a supervisor may be manipulated out of that role into the role of parent, in order to support the fantasy of being cared for. According to Rioch, (1975) in reaction to "failed dependency" or perceived desertion by the leader, group members sometimes develop stronger group cohesion. Under such circumstances Rioch (ibid) maintained that any challenge to this cohesion can be seen as heresy and evoke a strong persecutory reaction.

2.3.3.2   Fight / flight

In this second state - the basic assumption fight / flight group - there is an irrational assumption that the survival of the individual and of the group are synonymous and co-determined. The fantasy is that the group's function is to preserve itself, and that this can be done only by fighting someone or something or by running away from someone or something

(Rioch, 1975). Both fight and flight stem from a motivation to escape into activity for it's own sake. Unlike the dependency culture, which treats the ailing individual with compassion, Shaffer and Galinsky (1974) have maintained that the fight-flight group can be ruthless in sacrificing individuals for the sake of preservation of the group itself.

Fight reactions manifest in aggression against the self, peers or against authority in general. In this state there is frequently intra-group competition, with individuals fighting for position or undermining the effectiveness of peers in order to gain favour with leadership (Bion, 1961). Flight reactions may manifest as physical avoidance of others, being sick or in actually leaving the group or the organisation. Flight reactions can also be psychological avoidance of dealing with here-and-now issues by rationalisation and intellectualisation. For example, in a meeting group members may talk about those not present, or events outside the meeting, and therefore avoid dealing with the implications of their behaviour in the here-and-now (Rioch, 1975).

2.3.3.3   Pairing

In the third state - the basic assumption pairing group - the assumption is that the group has met for the purposes of reproduction, or producing a saviour or Messiah to save the group from feelings of hatred, destructiveness and despair (Shaffer & Galinsky, 1974). The assumption is that anxiety and alienation can be avoided by pairing with individuals or subgroups that are perceived as more powerful. Rioch (1975) noted that in this basic assumption group two people get together on behalf of the group to carry out the task of pairing and creation. She suggested that under this assumption no actual leader needs to be present, but the group, through the pair, lives in the hope of the creation of a new leader. The "unborn leader" is intended to save the group from feelings of hatred, destructiveness and despair. Paradoxically, as Bion observed, the hope must never be fulfilled since, in so far as it succeeds, hope is weakened. "Only by remaining a hope does hope exist" (Bion, 1975, p. 17).

Cilliers and Koortzen (2000, p. 42) observed that "pairing also implies splitting up". They suggested that this happens when anxiety is experienced because of the diversity in the

group. In this situation the individual or group tries to create a sense of belonging and safety by splitting up the larger group into smaller systems. According to these authors splitting is also manifest when individuals gang up against the perceived aggressor or authority figure.

2.3.3.4 Me-ness

Lawrence, Bain and Gould (1996) described two other basic assumptions, the first of which is Me-ness. They maintained that there is a new cultural phenomenon manifesting as an increased preoccupation with "me-ness" which they saw underpinning individual action. In this assumption, the individual denies and attempts to exclude the outer environment by engaging increasingly with his/her own inner reality. The outer, contextual environment is perceived as threatening and there is a loss of faith and trust in any structure that is greater than the individual. As a result the individual seeks refuge internally, and through withdrawal and passive aggression. The tacit and unconscious assumption is that the group does not exist, because acknowledging its existence would require the individual to confront uncomfortable, even persecuting, realities.

In this assumption state the individual relates only to those who are present "because their shared construct in the mind of what the group is about, is of an undifferentiated mass" (Cilliers, 2002, p. 9). Since the notion of "group" requires recognition of its existence with all its demands and potential to contaminate the inner reality of the individual, the members of the group act as if the group does not exist. The individual is therefore aware only of his or her personal boundaries and seeks to protect them. As a means of doing so he/she avoids emotional involvement or attachment with others in the group or team, transactions with others lack affect and behaviour becomes selfish. This resistance to being part of the group or to engage effectively with the task roles and appropriate relationships of organisational life can often negatively affect its performance. Spero (1998, p. 4) observed, that "the implication of these somewhat narcissistic if not schizoid responses makes it very difficult for organisations to meet the challenges demanded of them".

2.3.3.5 We-ness

The fifth basic assumption, described by Lawrence, et al (1996) is the basic assumption We-ness. This assumption is the opposite of me-ness, in that rather than denying the existence of the group, group members experience existence only through their membership of the group. The assumption is that by becoming a passive participant and sublimating the self to the all-embracing union of the group, the individual experiences existence and wholeness. Operating under this basic assumption the group will seek cohesion and synergy in the belief that this cohesion alone will result in successfully overcoming any challenges faced by the group. Koortzen and Cilliers (2002) described this assumption as a wish for salvationist inclusion.

While these basic assumptions form the foundation of the psychodynamic theory of groups, they imply a number of other concepts that are relevant to an understanding of the group as meso system. These are dealt with below.

2.3.4 Anxiety and resistance

At the level of the meso system the psychodynamic model is again based on conflict, the anxiety elicited by that conflict, and the defences mounted to contain it on behalf of the group.

Psychodynamic theory of groups holds that groups continually form resistance to the reality demands of the task-at-hand. The belief is that groups seldom, if ever, consistently function optimally, but employ collective defence mechanisms to contain anxiety on their behalf and to create a safe environment for themselves (Menzies, 1993). One of the chief ways this is achieved is through projection, in which the internal problems of the group are projected onto others (Czander, 1993; Menzies, 1993). Action is therefore based on unreality and facts are distorted. In organisational groups, projection can be seen when the group blames another department for its own shortcomings, or looks to the manager or to the organisation to contain its anxiety about changes in work roles or loss of jobs.

It is also common for the system to create structure and regulations to contain anxiety, in the belief that new organigrams, better job descriptions or improved work processes will repel the perceived threat (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). At the same time, rationalisation and

intellectualisation are used to stay emotionally detached and to feel safe and in control.

In addition there are other more complex defences that are discussed below. As was mentioned at 2.2.5.10 above, where necessary these will be discussed first as they manifest at the individual level, and then explored at the group level.

2.3.5   Projective identification

One of the most complex defences discussed in the literature arises from the Kleinian theories of projection and introjection. This is the concept of projective identification, which Cilliers (2002) has described as an inter-system, object relational interaction and process, where one part of the system (as subject) projects material into the other part (as object), who identifies with the projection (taking it on). This results in change in both parts. Through projective identification the "projecting" part of the system denies or rejects unwanted feelings or elements of itself, and attributes them to the "receiving" part of the system, which is subtly pressured into "thinking, feeling and acting congruently to the received projection" (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000, p. 65). The complicity of the receiving entity in taking on this projected material is what renders this process so powerful. It may be for this reason that Kets de Vries described it not only as a psychological defence against unwanted feelings or fantasies, but as a mode of communication and as a type of human relationship (cited in Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). The end result of the process is that the projecting entity rids itself of the discomfort it would otherwise experience, while the receiving entity now experiences it. The projecting system then discovers what was extruded when the recipient responds (Czander, 1993).

2.3.6   Counter transference

The process of projective identification described above employs the mechanism of counter transference, which can be understood as the state of mind in which other people's feelings are experienced as one's own (Cilliers, 2002). Not only does this mechanism often lead to the recipient acting out the transferred feelings as its own, but the recipient entity may absorb all of the negative emotion, such as anger, depression or guilt, of the one part of the system toward the other. In this way the recipient may be "used" by the system to do painful work on

its behalf. For example, new employees may "receive" the frustrations of existing employees and be used to attack the entrenched power of management, or a tired and depressed colleague may be manipulated into breaking down and leaving. As Cilliers (2002) observes, this process enables the system not only to have its feelings expressed or carried on its behalf, but also to "export" these and not feel it for themselves.

2.3.7   The paranoid-schizoid position

Klein (1959) proposed that in infancy individuals experience persecutory anxiety and project this "badness" onto the available object of the mother's breast. In the process the infant "splits" the object (ie. creates a schism between two parts), getting rid of the "bad" (or paranoid) breast by projecting it outwards, and keeping the "good" breast by introjecting it into the ego (de Board, 1993). From this, Klein (ibid) developed the notion of what she termed the paranoid-schizoid position, which is seen as a normal stage of development, but which can recur throughout life (Cilliers, 2002). In the paranoid-schizoid position the individual splits and projects conflicting emotions onto others, relieving themselves of ownership of those bad parts, and of the anxiety arising from trying to contain conflicting needs and emotions.

In the paranoid-schizoid position at the meso level the system splits and projects conflicting emotions into different individuals or groups in the system. Cilliers (2002) suggests that the projection of feelings of badness across the boundary onto another system assists in creating a false sense of goodness and idealisation, while frequently creating external figures who are both hated and feared. He suggests that the natural boundaries inherent in institutions tend to be fertile ground for splitting and projection to occur. While structural divisions such as departments, disciplines, teams, geographical separation and so on are often necessary for effective functioning, they are also convenient fault lines or boundaries across which negative images can be projected.

When such splitting in groups occurs, the result can be fragmentation in which parts of the system that should be in contact are separated (Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). In the process there is an absence of interchange and dialogue between separated parts (Klein, 1959). Cilliers (2002) has suggested that the group or system becomes deprived of the deeper

understanding of its situation that would emerge from an exchange of conflicting points of view, and a rigid culture can emerge in which growth is stunted.

Splitting and projection are normal behaviours in organisational contexts, since it is difficult for individuals to contain conflicting emotions simultaneously (Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). For example, individuals may project onto one particularly vulnerable individual the tiredness and frustration they feel at a lack of improvement in their working environment. This frees them of these negative emotions, and enables them to enjoy what is positive in their environment, such as long standing relationships with colleagues. However, the individual onto whom the system has projected the negative emotions then carries on behalf of the group the burnout inherent in the system and represents this for the group. The frequency with which this occurs would appear to be substantiated by the emergence in recent management literature of the concept of "toxic handlers" who are defined as people - usually managers - who voluntarily shoulder the sadness, frustration, bitterness, and anger of others so that high-quality work continues to get done in organisations (Frost & Robinson, 1999).

In groups the paranoid schizoid position frequently manifests as competition, hatred, prejudice, denigration and other negative or paranoid emotions (Czander, 1993). The group member or subgroup feels good about itself and critical of others, and there is frequently stereotyping of out-groups, such as "managers are out of touch", "salesmen are prostitutes", or "head office only care about the bottom line".The likelihood of stereotyping of this nature occurring increases with a reduction in contact between the fragmented parts of the group (Cilliers, 2002).

2.3.8   The depressive position

Klein (1959) posited that as the child matures previously separated emotions such as love and hate can be integrated, and the child acquires the ability to perceive the mother as a whole person. De Board (1993) suggests that this implies two aspects of psychic development. First the child is able to relate to the mother as a whole object, and second, the child begins to recognise that both good and bad emanate from one person who is the source for both. This is followed by the realisation that the individual can love and hate the same person, which is

a sobering realisation attended by some sorrow and depression with the fear that the individual has harmed or could in some way harm the loved object. This more mature and integrated view is called the depressive position (Klein, 1959).

As groups mature they become better able to integrate emotions that previously were separated, and to accept that they themselves and others contain both good and bad within them. However, in accepting that conflicting elements such as hope and despair, or acceptance and rejection can go together, groups have to give up the simplistic views which permitted them to be self-idealising and comfortable (Klein, 1959). Just as at the individual level, facing the complexity of both internal and external reality elicits painful feelings such as sadness and guilt (Cilliers, 2002). As they recognise that their previous hatred of others or aggression toward them has been misplaced, there is a desire to make reparations or to undo what was done (Cilliers, 2002; de Board, 1993), and this can be an energising force leading to growth. However, as Cilliers (ibid), Czander (1993), and de Board (1993) have pointed out, groups do not maintain the depressive position permanently once it has been attained. In the face of threats to survival or self-esteem they frequently revert to the paranoid-schizoid position.

2.3.9 Boundaries

Just as ego boundaries distinguish between the individual and the environment, the psychodynamic theory of groups holds that boundaries both contain what is inside the group, and separate it from other group systems outside the boundary (Hirschhorn, 1993). These boundaries perform the function of containing anxiety and making the workplace manageable and pleasant (Bion, 1961; Miller, 1993).

Time, space and task are all frequently cited as examples of boundary management within and between groups (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000; Czander, 1993; Miller, 1993). Time boundaries refer to the time-related parameters groups use to order their interactions in an attempt to create certainty and structure. This includes the starting and finishing times of meetings or of the working day itself, or the duration of particular projects or work events. Space boundaries are the physical parameters groups employ to order the work environment

itself (Miller, 1993; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). These include the building structure, office layout, communal or private spaces for gathering together or working independently and so on. Cilliers and Koortzen (2000) have suggested that open plan offices create anxiety precisely because they lack clear spatial boundaries. Task boundaries refer to those parameters that help groups to be secure about the specifics of the work they are to do (Miller, 1993). Lack of certainty about what one is supposed to do, or how that work will be assessed are frequent causes of anxiety in groups and organisations. The boundaries used to contain this anxiety include structures such as lines of command, organigrams, job descriptions, project groupings and other methods of defining group identity (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994).

2.3.10 Taking up a role / managing oneself in role

Within the organisational context, individuals interact from the basis of a given - or sometimes undefined - role. Taking up a role requires the individual to experience uncertainty and risk, and this produces anxiety (Czander, 1993; Hirschhorn, 1993; Lawrence, 1999). This anxiety may stem both from personal uncertainty about the nature of the task, or the individual's competence in fulfilling it, but it may also represent a genuine threat to the individual's professional identity (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000).

The individual is influenced by the intrapersonal dynamics of the micro system and these conflicts play out in taking up an organisational role. Koortzen and Cilliers (2002) explain that the largely parental internal voices the individual hears criticise or "punish" the individual and can make the individual feel ineffective or "bad", even before the person has actually failed in the new role. They suggest (ibid) that the process of projection and introjection creates an interplay between anxiety created by the real uncertainty the individual feels, and anxiety created by the critical inner voices, and that this can result in "psychological violence" - within the individual. As a result, if the anxiety becomes too great to bear, the person may escape by stepping out of role. Lawrence (1999) further maintains that when behaviour is driven by anxiety, the individual does not experience others as they really are, but as he/she needs them to be, so that the other person can play a role in the individual's internal drama.

2.3.11 Representation

As individuals engage in interaction across the boundary with the external environment, they "represent" themselves or others in that external environment (Miller, 1993; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). At the micro system level this occurs when two people communicate such as when a subordinate asks a manager for a raise (Cilliers, 2002). At the level of the meso system, representation occurs when individuals cross the boundary of the group to communicate with members of another group (Lawrence, 1999; Rice, 1969). This might occur when two departments meet, or when a member of the union attends a management meeting, for example. In these situations the issue of representation refers to the authority given by the members of the group to the person crossing the boundary. Representation therefore is about authority exercised on behalf of others. Cilliers and Koortzen (2000) and Miller (1993) believe that if the authority given by the representative is unclear or ambiguous, representatives can feel anxious in their interactions with the external environment, and become immobilised or disempowered. At the level of the macro system (still to be discussed), the same issues arise when an individual from one organisation meets with members of another organisation system.

2.3.12 Authorisation

The representative who engages across the boundary can do so with varying degrees of authority (Czander, 1993; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). At the lowest level of representation, the individual may be restricted in what sensitive information they are permitted to share across the boundary with the external system. This level of authority is termed representative authority. At the next level, termed delegated authority, the individual exercises greater personal discretion in deciding what to share, but still has clear boundaries to their representation of the internal system. Finally there is plenipotentiary authority which confers on the representative freedom to use their own judgement in sharing information with the external system, and in making decisions on behalf of the internal system.

As with taking up a role, it is the lack of clarity about levels of authority that may be the cause of anxiety for the individual (Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994). Any form

of consultation, negotiation or representation across the boundary of their own system, without clear levels of authority may therefore induce anxiety and undermine the individual's ability to make rational decisions and report back to their colleagues inside the boundary (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). Similarly, Koortzen and Cilliers (2002) suggest that in teams where competition is strong, team members have great difficulty in authorising others to take up roles on their behalf.

2.3.13 Leadership and followership

Boundary management links to issues of leadership and followership. Leadership is the process of managing what is inside the boundary in relationship with what is outside it (Obholzer & Roberts, 1994), while followership is the implied role of those on whose behalf leadership is exercised (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000; Kets de Vries, 2001).

However, leadership does not always have to be exercised on behalf of others. An individual demonstrates personal leadership, for example, in managing their tasks in a manner they decide for themselves, or in challenging their superiors when they want to present an alternative viewpoint to that of the manager. It is also the case that leadership of others - for example by making a decision or negotiating on their behalf - need not necessarily be exercised by the designated leader (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000).

2.3.14 Relationship and relatedness

Shaprio and Carr (1991), Cilliers and Koortzen (2000) make a distinction between relationship and relatedness. The first describes the here-and-now connection between two system members who have direct contact with each other, either telephonically or face-to-face. The latter refers to the often-unconscious connection between two members of the system who are not in direct contact, but whose roles affect each other's behaviour. Cilliers (2002), Shaprio and Carr (1991) have observed that even where no discernible relationship exists there can be significant relatedness. An example of relatedness might be the staff members of separate departments in a university who never meet, but who are affected by university policy and collectively contribute to the culture and climate in that institution. Similarly, while the president of a company and the courier who works in the mail department may not have a direct relationship, they each have ideas and feelings about the enterprise in which they participate, so each is "related to it", and through that, to each other.

While Shapiro and Carr (1991) referred to this as relatedness, Hutton, Bazalgette and Reed (1997) described this as "organisation-in-the-mind" and suggested that this is essentially unconscious. It consists of "what the individual perceives in his or her head of how activities and relations are organised, structured and connected internally ...which gives rise to images, emotions, values and responses in [the individual] - ... and which then influences how [the individual] interacts with the environment" (ibid, p. 113).

Cilliers and Koortzen (2000) believe that the development of this world view stems from the individual's early childhood sense of belonging that emerges from their membership of the family of which they are a part, but the process continues in adulthood. As individuals work in organisations they introject aspects of what is happening to them from people and events to form internal objects and part objects. While these seem real to the individual, and influence the individual's behaviour, they are distinct from "real" people and things in the environment. Simultaneously, exactly the same process is going on in others, each of whom has developed their own unique organisation-in-the-mind (Hutton, Bazalgette & Reed, 1997). As a result, it is these fantasies about the organisation and its parts that drive a great deal of behaviour in the organisational system.

2.3.15 Group as a whole

The systems psychodynamic approach also embraces the notion of collectivism in the concept of the "group as a whole" (Miller, 1993; Wells, 1980). This concept suggests that one part of the system may be seen as carrying emotional energy on behalf of another (Wells, 1980). For example, in an organisation laying off employees, the human resources department may conduct all the termination discussions, while management is free to focus on setting the new vision or building the new team. During this, the former "carry the pain and anger" on behalf of the total system, freeing management to "carry health and optimism".

Cilliers and Koortzen (2000) have offered the alternative explanation, that these two parts of the system manage different organisational boundaries with different rules. The notion of collectivism also implies that no event happens in isolation within the system, and that behaviour within the system is not a matter of coincidence (Kets de Vries, 1991).

2.4   THE ORGANISATION AS MACRO SYSTEM

All of the dynamics described at the level of the group as meso system are found to operate when a multiplicity of groups come together as an organisation (Hirschhorn, 1993, Kets de Vries, 1991). In this context the word organisation can be understood to refer not only to companies, corporations or similar legal entities, but to a collection of groups that combine their energies to collaborate in a common primary task (Schein, 1988). Consequently, an organisation can consist of, for example, members of more than one firm, who combine their efforts on a common project.

However, as Miller (1993, p. 18) pointed out, the roles that individuals and groups bring to the task "belong inside the boundary of the enterprise; the individuals who provide the roles belong outside: they are among the more important elements in the environment with which the enterprise has to interact". One can therefore speak of the organisation as a macro system with which the micro and meso systems described above interact.

The macro system can also be understood to include the broader community in which those

groups operate, and can be represented in the broadest sense by societies, nations and the community of persons who collectively make up the world population. Psychodynamic theory holds that just as there is mirroring of dynamics between the individual and group levels, so subgroups and individuals frequently mirror within them dynamics occurring in the society of which they are a part (Miller, 1993).

2.5   INTEGRATION

Organisations can be viewed as macro systems containing meso systems (groups) and micro systems (individuals) all in dynamic interaction with each other. Each subsystem has its own life, which is both conscious and unconscious, and which relates to and mirrors the others. The micro system in the organisation is represented by the individual, whose personality has been formed through the resolution of internal conflict between the id, ego and superego and whose inner representation of the world has been formed since infancy by the processes of introjection, projection and splitting. The individual brings to his/her organisational roles unresolved personal conflicts or unfulfilled and unconscious family needs. In the course of carrying out work tasks, anxiety related to these unfulfilled needs is elicited, and the individual's organisational behaviour is then driven by an attempt to manage that anxiety through a variety of defence mechanisms such as repression, denial, displacement, rationalisation, and reaction formation.

When individuals combine at both the meso level as groups, or at the macro level as an organisation, psychodynamic theory holds that they develop a group mentality that inevitably assumes a collective task of survival and that becomes a latent motivating force for all group members. Organisational challenges such as taking up a role, representation or unclear boundaries frequently induce anxiety that results in resistance to the reality demands of the task-at-hand and the employment of defence mechanisms such as projective identification to contain that anxiety. The belief is that groups frequently adopt a basic assumption of dependency, fight/flight, pairing, me-ness or we-ness, with individuals shifting very readily from one basic assumption to another.

The result is that system members frequently adopt the paranoid-schizoid position in which

one part of the system splits and projects conflicting emotions into different individuals or groups in the system. This often occurs along the natural divisions between departments or organisational divisions, resulting in a false sense of goodness and idealisation and frequently creating hated or feared external figures. With maturity individuals may be able to accept that they and others contain both good and bad within them and assume the depressive position, but this acceptance elicits painful feelings of sadness or guilt and is sometimes accompanied by a desire to make reparations or to undo what was done.

2.6   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter contained a literature review of the psychodynamic view of organisations. It discussed the organisation as a system, the individual as micro system, the group as meso system, and the organisation as macro system.

The aim of this chapter was to identify the unconscious dynamics that motivate behaviour in organisations. This was considered as context for the dynamics that occur within the more specific instance of the consulting relationship that are explored in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3   THE PSYCHODYNAMIC VIEW OF CONSULTING

This chapter contains a literature review of the psychodynamic view of consulting. It includes a definition of consulting, a discussion of the objectives of consulting, and an exploration of typical dynamics in the consultant-client system. It concludes with an integrated psychodynamic view of the consulting relationship.

The aim of this chapter is to identify the particular psychodynamics, which manifest in the client-consultant nexus in the course of organisational process consulting, and then to integrate those with the psychodynamics of organisations discussed in Chapter 2. The intent is to arrive at an integrated psychodynamic view of what typically transpires in consulting relationships. Based on this view a template is identified that can be applied to the consultant's journal to assess the psychodynamics that occurred in the client-consultant nexus that forms the focus of this research.

3.1   THE CONSULTING TASK

While there is a significant body of literature devoted to the psychodynamic theory of organisations as outlined in Chapter 2, the literature pertaining to the psychodynamics of the consulting relationship is far less extensive, even Spartan. In addition, much of it is in the form of hypothetical constructs, rather than established theory.

For the purposes of this research it must be understood that the focus is on the function of the consultant as an I/O psychologist engaged in the role of organisational change agent. The premise throughout is that the consulting role being considered is that aimed at improving intra- and inter-group functioning in the service of organisational change rather than, for example, advising on accounting procedures or implementing a new software package.

3.1.1   Definition of consulting

The Oxford English Reference Dictionary (Pearsall & Trumble, 1996) provides the following definitions:

- Consult. 1. seek information or advice from … a person, 2. refer to a person for advice, an opinion etc, 3. seek permission or approval from (a person) for a proposed action.
- Consultant. 1. a person providing professional advice etc, especially for a fee.

These definitions appear to confer on the consultant the role of advice-giver or the person with the answers. However, much of the literature illustrates a tension between the role of consultant-as-facilitator and consultant-as-collaborator or participant (Harrison, 1995). For example, Schein (1988), Koorten and Cilliers (2002) have distinguished between three very different roles in describing the consulting process, namely providing expert information, diagnosing organisational problems and prescribing remedies, and the process consultant whose aim is to help clients to help themselves. The therapeutic orientation of the psychodynamic model would appear to locate the consultant at the facilitator end of the spectrum (Boverie, 1991; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994; Rioch, 1975). From this perspective consulting implies a role in which clients are guided to a deeper understanding of their problems, and ultimately to the development of their own solutions. Change is not something the consultant "does to" the client, but something the client decides for him/herself as a result of insights gained in the consulting process.

While these broadly different views of consulting exist, Neumann (1997) has pointed out that it is not uncommon for consultant and client to fail to clarify their expectations of the consulting relationship, with much attendant confusion and misunderstanding as that relationship unfolds. Writing about the problems of establishing the parameters of the relationship she has stated: "They naively imagine that entry and contracting is a short, straightforward business deal and not the more complex social-political interaction that it is" (ibid, p. 8). Part of the challenge for those engaged in client-consultant relationships is that the nature of the relationship is open to interpretation, yet is frequently not overtly discussed or agreed by the participants (Neumann, 1997).

3.1.2   Objective of the consulting relationship

Organisations employ consultants to assist them to achieve objectives that for one or other reason they are unable, or unwilling to achieve by themselves (Harrison, 1995). Given that systems have both conscious and unconscious drivers for their actions (Kets de Vries, 1991; Miller, 1993), it can plausibly be asserted that the same is true for the objectives of organisations using consultants. For example, Cilliers (2002) has suggested that organisations sometimes "import" a consultant to carry the hurtful feelings of their organisational system on their behalf.

The rational objectives that clients articulate for using consultants are many and varied. Sometimes the task the organisation is engaged in is unfamiliar and the client seeks the assistance of an outsider with a track record of success or experience with similar tasks (Neumann et al, 1997). Sometimes the client may believe that, while capable of completing the task independently, the organisation will benefit from a different perspective provided by an outsider. Alternatively, some consultants are engaged because the work to be done is best undertaken by someone who is, or is perceived by others to be, outside the system boundary (Miller, 1993).

Whatever the reason for engaging the services of a change consultant, writers from the psychodynamic paradigm (Miller, 1993; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994, Sher, 2002) have some fairly strong views about how consultants actually help their clients.

3.1.2.1   Creation of a holding environment

Diamond and Allcorn (1987), Kahn (1993), Shapiro and Carr (1991) have described how the consultant creates a "holding environment" in which system members can safely explore and take back their projections about one another. Kahn (1993) suggested that adults who are undergoing processes of change regress and need to be "held". Klein (1959), Miller (1993), Obholzer and Roberts (1994) and Neumann (1997) refer to the concept of "containment". When change agents create holding environments, they absorb and manage potentially disruptive stimuli, protecting clients from feeling overwhelmed by internal affect or external

disruptions. That is, they contain anxiety - their own and that of their clients - rather than leaking or spilling it (Kahn, 1993, p.33).

As described by Kahn (1993), this role of containing anxiety on behalf of the client system would appear to be ideally a conscious one. However, as mentioned above, in his discussion of counter transference, Cilliers (2002) observes that organisations sometimes use consultants to carry negative emotional material on behalf of the client system. Where consultants carry this pain as counter transference, it would seem likely that this may lead to hostility on the part of consultants, and undermine their ability to create an effective holding environment.

3.1.2.2   Breaking patterned ways of perceiving and behaving

Kahn (1993), Shapiro and Carr (1991) have suggested that the role of the consultant is to assist client members to maintain their task focus and to collaborate effectively in developing their own change strategies. In response to the anxiety of work, client system members frequently become stuck in patterns of relationships marked by automatic, repetitious, and unyielding perceptions and behaviours (Kahn, 1993). Kahn observed that organisation members frequently perceive one another in particular ways that are not "open for inspection" and suggested that by so doing they lock one another into particular roles that allow for some behaviours and deny others (ibid, p. 33). He maintained that this dynamic works through the joint mechanisms of splitting and projection: "System members internally split various emotions and project them onto one another, such that each emphasises one rather than all of the dimensions of the ambivalence they collectively, often unconsciously share" (ibid, p. 33).

Hirschhorn (1993) suggested that the ability to collaborate successfully on work tasks depends on members jointly negotiating authority and influence based on the demands of tasks rather than on unyielding perceptions. However, the ability of system members to do this is inhibited by the anxiety they feel and the defence mechanisms they adopt. (These are outlined in Chapter 2.)

Shapiro and Carr (1991) suggested that the consultant's task is to help pry system members loose from their "pathological certainty" about one another, or to counteract their automatic ways of perceiving and acting that lead to the loss of task focus and collaboration. They believed that this means helping members to see and discuss their limiting patterns, to understand their causes, and to learn new ways of perceiving and acting in relation to one another.

3.1.2.3   Consultant as trigger for unexpressed thoughts

Sher (2002) observed that the mere presence of the consultant in the client organisation acts as a trigger for thoughts that are present in the organisation's life, but have previously not found expression. Bollas (cited in Sher, 2002) defined these as the "unthought known" and Sher described them as "thoughts that are inchoate and pre-conscious that everyone is thinking, but won't acknowledge publicly" (ibid, p. 61). By implication this process makes available to be worked with issues that previously were not open for exploration, and has the potential to tap into the wisdom that is inherently present within the organisational system.

3.2   THE CLIENT-CONSULTANT RELATIONSHIP

Since the perceptions and behaviours of individuals are automatic, repetitious and unyielding (Kahn, 1995; Shapiro & Carr, 1991) they bring these to the consulting relationship. Just as the client system develops patterned ways of behaving, so too does the consultant system develop patterned ways of dealing with clients (Lundberg, 1994). These patterned ways of behaving then infuse the consulting relationship, and as client and consultant interact the client-consultant nexus becomes its own total system, subject to the same system realities as any other. This raises a fundamental dilemma in the consulting relationship, namely, while client systems reach outside their boundary for consulting support, the very process of engaging that support draws the consultant inside the boundary of a new consultant-client system and makes external objectivity an illusion (Kahn, 1993; Sher, 2002).

3.2.1   The challenge of joining the system

This "becoming part of the system" points to one of the central challenges of the client-consultant relationship, since part of the ability of the consultant to "diagnose" and offer guidance to the client is derived from his/her ability to stand outside the client system. Many authors (Alderfer, 1980; Hirschhorn, 1993; Shapiro & Carr, 1991) have described the balancing act consultants face to simultaneous join with and remain apart from system members and their dynamics. In fact Kahn (1993, p. 32) has gone so far as to claim that it is not possible to understand a social system, without joining its members and immersing oneself into that system's dynamics. Yet he observed that in doing so, one is "taken in" by system dynamics and this distorts the external perspective needed to conduct effective diagnoses and interventions.

3.2.2 Entry into the relationship and taking up a role

As they enter into the consulting relationship both clients and consultants take up roles. These are attended by uncertainty and risk, and therefore generate anxiety for both parties (Czander, 1993; Hirschhorn, 1993). Kets de Vries (1991) contended that the consulting relationship inevitably produces projective identification but he has suggested that this is not yet well understood by consultants in general. He believed it plays a big role in the splitting that occurs when external consultants work with organisations. Czander (1993) explained that the experience of a new and strange situation precipitates this projective identification and that upon entering a new system individuals experience regression as a method to reduce anxiety.

This anxiety arises from the experience when both consultant and client are entering into new relationships, facing new tasks, and establishing new processes. Hirschhorn (1993) has suggested that this occurs because they are more aware of the choices they face and are more in tune with the dynamics of their own feelings of anxiety and aggression than when they are continuing old relationships. He observed that consultants "must consciously define their relationships … and so come in touch with the feelings and thoughts that shape the way they take up or violate the consultant role" (ibid, pp. 38-9).

3.2.3 Organisation-in-the-mind

As consultant and client take up those roles, they introject aspects of what is happening to them from each other, and from other people and events to form internal objects and part objects (Hutton, Bazalgette & Reed, 1997). These become the symbols of the external world that each uses to think about their environment and the task in which they are engaged. They form the organisation-in-the-mind, and while they are real for both client and consultant, they are not the same as 'real' people and things in the environment. Some of these objects are pleasurable, and therefore are kept in front of the role players consciously, while others, the participants try to forget and suppress into unconsciousness.

Hutton, Bazalgette and Reed (1997) have noted that the parties suppress many experiences in organisational life because they each have their own needs, desires, fears and anxieties through which the experiences of the consulting relationship are filtered. Each therefore monitors consciously and unconsciously what they will "allow" themselves to know and perceive "for the sake of the organisation, for [their] own survival's sake, or for ambition's sake, or for other reasons" (ibid, p. 117).

These authors explained that in making decisions about the task at hand and about the relationship, both parties try to make sense of everything, which they are conscious of inside themselves. In this interaction they are taken by surprise when they encounter elements that are both unconscious but active and powerful. Hutton et al (1997) suggested this may result in the parties experiencing sudden emotion without knowing why, or in triggering unexpected reactions in others, which may be constructive or destructive.

3.2.4   Masks and Shadows

Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990) suggested that in relating to each other both consultant and client respectively have a mask (portion of themselves they consciously attempt to conceal) and shadow (portion of themselves that is unconscious and hidden from themselves):

•   Masks

The consultant's "mask" consists of interpersonal and group processes of which the consultant or consulting group are aware, but which they attempt to conceal from the client group. Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990) labelled this the "mask of competence" and suggested

that the mask is the attempt by the consulting group to hide flaws they experience in themselves and in their own group from the client group. The fear is that revelation and expression of such flaws would undermine the consultant's "professional" appearance and would potentially result in failure with the client group. The client's "mask" consists of interpersonal and group processes within the client system of which they are aware, but which they attempt to conceal from the consulting group. Gemmill and Wynkoop (ibid) labelled this the "mask of helplessness", since it is an attempt by the client group to "de-skill" themselves and present themselves as totally incompetent to identify and work on their real issues.

• Shadows

Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990) suggest that the "system shadow" consists of layers of increasingly darker inaccessible emotional forces at work within the relationship. The system shadow consists of those denied elements within either the client or consulting group that they experience as belonging to the other group. Gemmill (1986) views the system shadow as a container for the emotional issues occurring within and between members of a system. The shadow system operates outside the immediate awareness of either group. As the client-consultant relationship unfolds these denied issues often remain unexpressed, inaccessible and un-discussable.

Through these masks and shadows Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990) suggested that both client and consultant groups act as a "container" for the other group into which disowned emotions and issues are deposited. The client-consultant nexus consists of the unconscious emotional and intellectual links existing between the client group and the consulting group. They suggested that this is often most clearly reflected when the consulting group covertly forces their own wants, needs, and experiences onto the client group. For example, by asking the clients what they want from the consultants, and how they want to work with the consultants, "the consulting group can avoid dealing with its own confusion, apprehension, and anxiety over being in the consulting role" (ibid, p. 131).

Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990) contended that the extent to which one group is able to push back its group mask, determines the extent to which the other group is able to push back its own mask. As each group unmasks there is a corresponding revelation of interpersonal and group issues buried in the shadow. They asserted that the level of system learning about

interpersonal and group behaviour depends on the extent to which each group is able to learn about its own mask and shadow.

3.3 TYPICAL DYNAMICS IN THE CLIENT-CONSULTANT NEXUS

Within the literature, a number of assumptions, fantasies and dynamics are discussed as typically being evident within the client-consultant relationship. Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990, p. 130) have suggested that specific rituals and themes occur when a process consulting group enters a client system, and maintain that "the rituals and themes reflect general social system characteristics that are relatively independent of the particular content of the presenting issue of the client group".

3.3.1 Resistance and hostility

According to Gemmill (1986), Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990), a common and widespread psychodynamic theme manifest in the consultant-client nexus is the expression of resistance and hostility toward the other group. They aver that both parties tend to cast each other into the role of an enemy group. Keen (cited in Gemmill & Wynkoop, 1990, p. 131) vividly described this adversarial framing as "enemies dumping their (unconscious) psychological wastes in each other's backyards".

In the process what is despised by one party about itself is attributed to the other party, and vice versa. Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990) suggested that this is a symbiotic relationship in which each party "needs" the other to dispose of their accumulated, disowned, psychological toxins. The two form an adversarial symbiosis or an integrated system that ensures that neither of them will be faced with their own shadow.

3.3.2 Defensive response by consultants

Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990) observed that inexperienced process consultants are often surprised by the degree of resistance and hostility they encounter from the client organisation. They suggested that consultants therefore often feel manipulated by their clients, believe that

they are failing as consultants, and consequently often act defensively. They suggested (ibid, p. 131) that one consequence of this is that the consultant often "seems unable to grasp the positive work that is occurring within the client group".

3.3.3 Clients as helpless / Consultants as experts

A number of writers have suggested that the client-consultant relationship frequently has an overt character in which the client is framed as "weak" and needing assistance, and the consultant is framed as "strong" and able to help (Gemmill & Wynkoop, 1990; Lundberg, 1994; Rogers, 1989). Critchley (1997) has observed that this approach, while still fairly prevalent in client-consulting relationships, is based on what can prove to be two spurious assumptions.

3.3.3.1 Assumption that organisations correctly identify their problems

Firstly, there is the assumption that organisations work in a linear fashion, and therefore that cause-effect relationships can be objectively ascertained, and hence problems correctly identified. The themes elaborated in the previous chapter suggest that in fact organisational behaviour is strongly mediated by unconscious processes that lead to potentially frequent and significant mis-attribution of cause and effect. Critchley (1997) noted that this shared assumption serves merely to sustain the myth of certainty and predictability in an essentially unpredictable or chaotic world.

Rogers (1989) has pointed out that if the problem as stated by the client is accepted at face value, consultant and client together may work on what turns out to be only a symptom of more basic issues or disturbances that may not be immediately apparent.

3.3.3.2 Assumption that the consultants are experts

The second shared assumption is that the consultant brings to the relationship the expertise that is necessary to "solve the client's problem". This is patently not always the case. Neumann, Kellner and Dawson-Shepherd (1997, p. xvi) have observed that organisational consultants "are notoriously isolated and often under-prepared for the work they do". They

suggest that many consultants barely have basic training in consulting and often feel compelled to present themselves as competent to potential and current clients in order to make a living. Critchley (1997) suggested that clients often collude with this assumption of expertise because they would like a "solution to the problem" which they think they have identified.

3.3.4 Unconscious rules of behaviour in the client-consultant system

Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990) identified some basic rules that appear to operate behind the masks within the client-consultant system, and which are attributed to the consulting group. These would be a natural result of the client as helpless / consultant as expert dichotomy outlined above:

• The consultant does not reveal his ignorance

The first rule is that consultants should not reveal their ignorance to the client. They should not reveal "that they do not know what to do; be defensive; show emotions; feel helpless; feel confused; be resistant; express irritation, anger or rage; be competitive, have any defences denials or projections; interrupt the client; or talk about their own processes in front of the client" (Gemmill & Wynkoop, 1990, pp. 137-8).

• The clients must reveal their ignorance

On the other hand, the opposite rule applies to the client group. It is assumed that the client should reveal that they do not know what to do; be defensive; show emotions; feel helpless; feel confused; be resistant; express irritation, anger or rage; be competitive, have any defences, denials or projections; listen to the consultants; and talk about their own processes in front of the consultants (ibid).

In summary, the symbiotic nature of the client-consultant nexus creates a shared set of assumptions and behaviour rules that militate against effective resolution of the client's difficulties.

The covert function of the masks is to split off and externalise disowned elements within one group onto the other group (Hirschhorn, 1993). The other group becomes a container for disowned flaws and emotions. According to Gemmill and Wynkoop, (1990, p. 138), "the

consulting group's mask of competence acts to absorb the emotions and actions pertaining to issues of competence within the system. Alternatively, the client group's mask of helplessness acts to absorb the emotions and actions reflecting the denied issues of helplessness and flaws within the system".

The contention is that the consulting group members, being in the authority position, accept the assumption that they must be perfect, without flaws, and thus hide their flaws behind a mask of competence. The client group accepts the assumption that they must be imperfect, and so present themselves as helpless, as a defence against showing their real skills which they assume will be flawed in relation to the skills of the consulting group. Both groups are drawn to their respective masks as well as pushed to accept that mask by the other group. The pathology of this arrangement, however, prevents any meaningful work on interpersonal and group issues until each side begins to own some of their projected attributes.

3.3.5   Relationship fantasies

The point of entry into the client-consulting relationship is a point of high anxiety for both parties (Neumann et al, 1997). Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990, p.132) have described the period of entry by the consultants into the client organisation as a period of "emotional panic", and suggested two "magical fantasies" that they believe often lurk beneath the surface interactions of both groups:
* The first of these fantasies is that if clients can articulate their issue or problem simply, the consultants can dispense an appropriate solution. Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990) observed that client groups often experience guilt about not being able to make their issues and difficulties clear enough for the consultants to resolve.
* The second fantasy is that if enough questions are asked, the client's issues will be resolved without any messiness, difficulties or struggles between the client and consultant groups: "It is as if the consultants are magically only a question away from "successfully" resolving the client groups' difficulties or issues" (ibid, p. 132).

3.3.6   Flawless consulting - hiding from emotions

Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990) and Neumann (1997) have all alluded to the fact that the early establishment of a working alliance in the client-consultant system may be undermined by the consulting group becoming locked into a false image of itself while enacting the consultant role. The initial anxiety and panic experienced by the consulting group pushes its members away from contact with their own emotions, the emotions in the client group, and the emotions in the client-consultant system. When this occurs the consultant takes refuge behind the guise of a "professional" who asks questions concerning emotions, self-disclosure and processes without questioning their own emotions, concerns and processes.

As Gemmill and Wynkoop (ibid, p.132) noted, "it is this distorted image of "flawless" consulting that is communicated, not the messiness of their real experience as consultants; their confusion about their role; their anxiety over not being able to be useful; their confusion over what they want from the client; their confusion over their own processes as a group; and their apprehensions over failing. Such emotions typically remain un-discussable without a rational examination of the basis for the taboo by the client-consultant system".

3.4   CONSULTANT COMPETENCE IN MANAGING THESE DYNAMICS

The dynamics discussed above undermine the ability of the client and consulting group to do work that realistically often takes a long time and more often than not is a messy, confusing, anxiety-ridden process marked by open expressions of hostility and negativity.

Effective client-consultant relationships, therefore, require that the consultant be aware of, and work actively to manage these dynamics. Shapiro and Carr (1991) believed that organisational change agents are effective when system members feel held and contained when the consultant remains open and curious (rather than pathologically certain) about client system members, and thereby contains their affect and anxiety. They suggested that consultants are effective when they offer interpretations that connect client's experiences to system dynamics.

Kahn (1993) observed that consultants undermine holding environments when they intrude on or abandon the client. He believed that when people are either impinged on or dropped,

they lose the cocoon-like safety that enables them to voice, examine, and take back projections. For example, "when change agents either intrude on or abandon those they purport to help, they step away from their roles (either completely or by substituting another role, eg. that of system member) and from the task of facilitating system members' explorations. Change agents tend to do so when holding the role is experienced with too much anxiety. The failure of the holding environment is thus partly the failure of the change agent to contain and manage anxiety" (Kahn, 1993, p. 34).

Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990) maintained that deep level learning about interpersonal and group processes occurs within a client-consultant system when each group ceases to use the other group to manage their shared anxiety. "The extent that each group takes back its split-off part (emotions around "competence" carried by the consulting group and emotions around "helplessness" carried by the client group) determines the extent to which a client-consultant system can overcome the adversarial nature of the nexus in such a way that work on real interpersonal and group issues within the system can be accomplished" (Gemmill & Wynkoop, 1990, p. 138).

3.5   INTEGRATION

From the literature reviewed in this and the preceding chapter the following integrated view of psychodynamics that typically manifest in the consulting relationship is presented.

3.5.1   An integrated psychodynamic view of the consulting relationship

Organisations engage consultants as experts from outside their system boundary to help change aspects of the system within that boundary. In this process, consultants join the very systems they are asked to change, and the client-consultant relationship becomes the primary means by which the consultant can influence that system. The consulting subsystem has its own life which is both conscious and unconscious, and which relates to and mirrors the systems with which it is in interaction.

The consulting relationship can be understood as a meso system that contains micro systems represented by the individuals who make up the client-consultant interface; interacts with other meso systems represented by the various groups (project teams, client or consultant sub-teams etc) who fall within the ambit of the consulting interaction is part of the larger macro systems of the respective client and consulting organisations and their broader context, of which client and consultant are a part.

Client and consultant bring to the consulting relationship unfulfilled and unconscious family needs - such as needs for recognition or affection - which they endeavour to fulfil through the consulting relationship. As they engage with the consulting environment they add to their existing mental paradigms introjected material from the consulting context that comes to form a new "internal reality" or organisation-in-the-mind that governs their behaviour.

Many of the demands of the consulting relationship, such as taking up a role, the responsibility of representation, unclear authority, demonstrating their "flawlessness" as consultant or "helplessness" as client, induce anxiety in the participants. The mechanisms that they use to contain this anxiety are derived from coping mechanisms that they developed in infancy and that have continued throughout adulthood, such as introjection, projection, splitting and

projective identification. As a result, system members frequently resist engaging in the task the consulting relationship has been created to address, but gravitate toward one or more of the basic assumptions groups. For example they may behave collaboratively as if they are helpless and dependent on the leader, or become either hostile or withdrawn as if the here-and-now is threatening and to be fought or fled.

In relating to each other both client and consultant consciously "mask" aspects of themselves from each other. Typically consultants employ a mask of competence to hide flaws they experience in themselves and in their own group from the client group, while clients frequently employ a mask of helplessness to "de-skill" themselves and present themselves as incompetent to identify and work on their issues themselves.

In contrast to these masks, both client and consultant are unaware of other "shadow" aspects of themselves. Typically, in the early phases of the consulting relationship clients and consultants exploit the natural boundary between them and split what is good and what is bad about themselves, projecting onto each other what is bad. As a result they frequently assume the paranoid-schizoid position in which they view themselves in an idealised way, and establish the other as hated or feared. Through the mechanism of counter-transference, each experiences these projected feelings as their own. The consulting system shadow consists of those denied elements within either the client or consulting group that they experience as belonging to the other group and which remain unexpressed, inaccessible and un-discussable. As a result of these processes consultants frequently experience clients as hostile, and as resistant to change.

The process of projective identification enables members of the consulting system to use each other, or others in the consulting system to contain anxiety on their behalf. In addition, parts of the system are often used by the consulting system members to carry particular, and often toxic, material or functions on behalf of the group-as-a-whole.

Over time, if they feel sufficiently "held" and contained by the system, and are able to recognise their own imperfections, client and consultant may "take back" previously projected material about themselves, and move toward the depressive position. In the process both

client and consultant may find themselves seeking to make reparations for the aggression they have introduced into the relationship.

Deep level learning occurs when the wisdom within the system is accessed, and when each group ceases to use the other group to manage their shared anxiety. Effective consulting relationships are facilitated when the consultant is aware of the unconscious dynamics at work in the client-consultant system; able to remain open and curious (rather than pathologically certain) about client system members, and thereby able to contain their affect and anxiety; able actively to manage the system dynamics so that system members feel held; able to offer interpretations that connect client's experiences to system dynamics.

3.5.2 The key processes

From the above integrated view, the following twelve key processes are presented that need to be examined in assessing what transpired in the consulting relationship that is the focus of this research. They appear to touch on the key psychodynamics that can be distilled from the literature as pertaining to the process of interaction between consultant and client. These are drawn largely from the material presented in Chapter 2 and are substantially based on the writing of Cilliers and Koortzen (2000) and Cilliers (2002) about the application of the psychodynamic model in organisations:

1   the presence of anxiety in the system
2   the degree to which boundaries are managed effectively
3   how roles are taken up
4   the clarity with which authority is given for the task at hand and for representation across boundaries
5   how leadership and followership are exercised
6   orientation to the basic assumption of Dependency
7   orientation to the basic assumption of Fight-flight
8   orientation to the basic assumption of Pairing-splitting
9   orientation to the basic assumption of Me-ness
10 orientation to the basic assumption of We-ness
11 what relationships the participants in the consulting relationship demonstrate with each

other, and what organisation-in-the-mind or relatedness is revealed from their interactions

12   the degree to which behaviour represents a collective or group-as-a-whole notion within the consulting relationship.

However, in the process of assessing these themes, issues raised in Chapter 3 were also dealt with, such as the presence of masks and shadows, and the degree of hostility between consultant and client.

3.6   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter contained a literature review of the psychodynamic view of consulting. It included a definition of consulting, a discussion of the objectives of consulting, and an exploration of typical dynamics in the consultant-client system. It concluded with an integrated psychodynamic view of the consulting relationship.

The aim of this chapter was to identify the particular psychodynamics that manifest in the client-consultant nexus in the course of organisational process consulting, and then to integrate those with the psychodynamics of organisations discussed in Chapter 2. The purpose was to arrive at an integrated psychodynamic view of what typically transpires in consulting relationships. Based on this integrated view a twelve-item template was identified that was applied to the consultant's journal to assess the psychodynamics that occurred in the client-consultant nexus that forms the focus of this research.

CHAPTER 4   CASE STUDY

This chapter explains the detailed methodology used to conduct the case study. It includes a description of the client organisation, an explanation of the measurement process by which data was obtained, an explanation of the method used to process the data, and a discussion of the reliability and validity of the method used.

The aim of this chapter is to describe the method by which this study was conducted.

4.1   THE ORGANISATION

The organisation chosen for this research was a South African owned, multinational brewery involved both in the manufacture and distribution of a wide range of beverages, of which beer was the primary product.

4.1.1   Choice of the organisation

In his role as consultant the researcher was assigned to a new work project with this client organisation just as he was ready to begin his research. He chose to begin recording his journal immediately, and the particular client was therefore chosen by default as the client that became available at the appropriate moment. As a result, the consultant was able to maintain a record of his experiences and actions from the point of beginning the consulting relationship until after its termination.

4.1.2   Characteristics of the organisation

The client organisation had a staff of over 80 000 people, spread across 4 major divisions and geographic locations and covering both South Africa and other territories in Africa and Europe.

At the time of the research the client organisation held a largely monopolistic position in its South African markets. In its years of market dominance, the client organisation had grown to be one of the largest companies in South Africa. As it grew it developed a bureaucratic

culture in which management of the myriad subdivisions was achieved largely through established and formalised policies and standard operating procedures. The organisation demonstrated highly ritualistic modes of operating, with detailed and specified methods for managing people and accomplishing tasks. It had become largely inwardly focussed since changes to the competitive landscape were minimal and profits were largely assured.

However, in the years immediately preceding the project, competition in its traditional markets from other international breweries had become increasingly likely. Indeed a small number of the organization's employees had themselves left to form an independent brewery. At the time there was a strong likelihood that this new entity would establish a relationship with a major US brewing company and offer some real threat to the client's monopoly in the South African market. This challenge, along with the organisation's desire for greater control of its operations had resulted in a decision to install an enterprise-wide computer system with the assistance of a team of consultants from the consulting firm.

The project team's task was to install an SAP system to centralise and manage most of the client organisation's sophisticated operational, financial, and human resources processes. (SAP is an abbreviated acronym for "Systeme, Anwendungen, Produkte in der Datenverarbeitung" which translates as Systems, Applications & Products in Data Processing. SAP is an integrated strategic software system that links all areas of an enterprise together.) It was to be the largest installation of an SAP system in Africa to that point, and the budget for the project was many millions of Rands. This project would affect all major divisions of the organisation in all its operational and service centres throughout South Africa. It would result in changes to the organisation's business processes, to the way some people did their jobs, and to current and future job opportunities within the organization.

4.2   MEASUREMENT

The research took the form of participant observation (Dooley, 1995) of events on the project, and recording these in the consultant's journal. (Because of the voluminous nature of the journal and because the information in the journal is personal and may expose individuals, the journal is referred to, but is not attached as an appendix.)

The focus of the measurement was the nexus of relationships established between one consultant and the primary groups with which he interacted: the client organisation members involved with the project, the consulting firm project leaders, and the project team as a whole. The measurement took the following form:

- The researcher in his role as consultant maintained a journal of his thoughts and experiences during one consulting project.

- The journal was then analysed using a twelve-item template of psychodynamic themes to identify the psychodynamic processes that had played out in the client-consultant relationship during that project.

4.2.1 Rationale

The reasons for the selection of this research and measurement are the following.

4.2.1.1 Choice of the case study method

The case study method was selected as the most appropriate to generate hypotheses regarding the dynamics that had occurred in the consulting relationship. Garmezy (1982) has suggested that single cases are useful for generating new ideas and hypotheses and for suggesting potential areas for future research, while Yin (1994, p. 10) noted that both case studies and experiments "are generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes". In this sense, Yin (ibid) claimed that a case study is not intended to represent a "sample", and the investigator's goal is not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalisation), but to expand and generalise theories (analytic generalisation).

Keen (1975) believed that the value of analysis of single, unique events is that they can help towards understanding other events. He has made the point that such investigations are not explicitly comparative. However, he did not view this as a drawback, since in his view comparison necessarily reduces a phenomenon to its commonalities with other phenomena and fails to reveal its uniqueness.

Further reasons for the choice of a case study were the facts that this study is descriptive and

explanatory in nature, focuses on contemporary events, and required no manipulation of behaviour. Yin (1994) has demonstrated the value of the case study under such circumstances. He pointed out that explanatory research, "deals with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than frequencies or incidence" (ibid, p. 6), and asserted that "the case study is preferred in examining contemporary events, but when the relevant behaviours cannot be manipulated" (ibid, p. 8).

Finally, the psychodynamic paradigm within which this research was conducted presumed as one of its tenets that the context in which behaviour occurs influences that behaviour. In defining a case study Yin (1994, p. 13) clarified that a case study is an empirical enquiry that "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident".

4.2.1.2   Rationale for interpreting texts

The value of interpreting organisational texts as a means to understanding organisations and organisational relationships has been highlighted by authors such as Kets de Vries and Miller (1987), Zaleznick and Kets de Vries (1984). Indeed, Kets, de Vries and Miller (1987) have observed that interpretation is at the centre of organizational work and advocate an analysis of organisational writings, statements and observable behaviour as a means to interpret organisational behaviour. In particular they maintain that such an approach is consistent with a psychodynamic interpretation of experience: "Freud developed a theory aimed at revealing the messages hidden in manifest statements and the desires implicit in these messages - in the psychoanalytic setting, a hermeneutic analysis strives to recreate or re-experience the thought of the creator of the text. A major device for understanding the meaning of text in a psychoanalytic setting is the interpretation of transference" (ibid, pp. 236-237).

4.2.1.3   Choice of a journal as the text to be interpreted

A journal maintained by the consultant during the project was chosen as the text to be interpreted since it provided an almost immediate, subjective reporting of the consulting relationship as experienced by one particular consultant in one unique context. The contents

provided the researcher with access to both conscious and unconscious material related to the nature of the consulting relationship, and lent itself to a hermeneutic analysis of the kind advocated by Kets de Vries and Miller (1987).

It is interesting to note that Sher (2002) recently reported using a diary of his subjective experiences on a consulting project to interpret psychodynamic themes in the consulting interaction in just this fashion. He stated that "keeping track of all available evidence, including the consultant's own emotional state and how it is affected by the work, serves the psychoanalytically-oriented consultancy" (ibid, p. 62). Justification for this approach is found in the work of Lana (1976, p. 59) who explained that "immediate experience is the starting point of understanding - a description of simple perceptual processes as they occur must first be made, since this immediate experience of the world epistemologically precedes essence".

The researcher therefore used his own consulting experience as it occurred in the here-and-now to generate a case study at the point that the research project began.

A journal had the following practical advantages:

- It was unobtrusive, since apart from the consultant himself, members of the client-consultant system were unaware that their action and behaviours were being recorded and analysed (Dooley, 1995).
- It was non-reactive, in that the other system members did not change their behaviour in response to the data collection process (ibid).
- It provided a method of collecting a great amount of data about one consulting relationship, by allowing the consultant to "flow with the … currents of the setting" (ibid, p. 260).
- It could be maintained for the duration of an entire consulting relationship.
- The consulting focus would be that of organisational change agent, which was precisely the area of interest to the researcher.
- The existence of multiple groups as clients on the project would facilitate a study of object relations in a complex consulting relationship
- The research would have practical value since the insights gained from the research would provide personal learning for the consultant and could be applied in his future

consulting relationships.

The procedure therefore took the form of a self-report by the consultant, which was subsequently analysed and interpreted by the same person in the role of researcher. This method clearly is open to criticism on a number of grounds, among them lack of objectivity on the part of the researcher, and the difficulties of replicability. (These and other limitations of the study are discussed in Chapter 6.) Nevertheless this design was chosen deliberately as it provided both a means for a consultant to analyse the psychodynamics of his consulting relationships without the assistance of a third party, and an opportunity to determine the value of doing this type of self-analysis.

4.2.2   Aim

The aim of this procedure was to identify and interpret the conscious and, more importantly, the unconscious dynamics that occurred in the relationships between the consultant and the various groups with whom he interacted on one consulting assignment.

4.2.3   Dimensions

For a diagram of the relationships on this project, see Figure 4.1 on the next page. The dimensions in this study included the consultant himself (highlighted in yellow in Figure 4.1), the consulting organisation (red loop on left), the client organisation (red loop on right), project leadership (purple loop), the project team (light blue loop), change management (green loop) and the consulting organisation change management practice (dotted green loop plus green loop).

Figure 4.1. Diagram of consulting relationships

4.2.3.1   The consultant

The consultant was a 38-year-old, English-speaking, Caucasian male who had been with the consulting firm for 14 months when the research began. He was married, with a son of three and his wife was pregnant with their second child whom they knew would be a daughter. The consultant had just completed the first year of his master's degree studies in I/O psychology at the University of South Africa. During his time with the firm prior to this project he had been engaged as a change management consultant on three other projects. This, however, was his first involvement in a systems implementation project.

As a member of the change management team the consultant's role on the project embraced two major areas: project team development, and facilitating readiness for, and acceptance of the new system at one of the roll out sites. Initially the focus was on working with the project leadership to develop a culture of cooperation on the project team. Largely this role focussed on facilitating relationship building between project team members, designing and facilitating team-building activities, and working for the creation of a common project vision that all team members could support.

As the project progressed the expectation was that the consultant's role would shift to preparing for rollout at one of the sites. Essentially this would consist of proactively managing the expectations of the people who would be using the system after implementation. As events transpired, the consultant left the project when this latter role was only just beginning.

4.2.3.2   The consulting organisation

The consulting firm was one of the major multinational consulting firms which had developed with varying degrees of independence from their parent companies, all of which were auditing and accounting firms. At the time these firms were collectively known in consulting circles as "the big six". With a head office in the United States, this firm had recently begun a globalization programme to establish financial and service integration between all its offices in more than 70 countries. The South African firm was completing the integration process at the time the research was conducted.

At the time of the research the South African firm was the largest of the big six practices nationally, and had some 250 consultants operating from offices in Johannesburg and Pretoria. In the preceding 18 months the Cape Town and Durban offices had been closed and the staff centralised in these Gauteng-based offices. The firm was divided into a series of service lines in which practitioners were grouped according to their areas of expertise. One of these was the change management group, which specialised in organisational development and change management.

The consulting firm's role was to provide guidance to the project based on previous experience of similar projects with other clients, and to provide manpower in those areas where the client organisation lacked people with the necessary skills and experience.

4.2.3.3   The client organisation

This was discussed in 4.1.2. One element of the client organisation not discussed in that section that becomes applicable here was the Human Resource division of the organisation. It included a Human Resources Executive team that wielded a great deal of influence in the organisation. Ostensibly this team had an oversight role to play regarding human resource impacts that might result from the project, and the consultant expected to interact with this team on these matters. In practice the consultant never met them, and the only people from human resources with whom he had any dealings were the Organisation Development Manager and a workshop facilitator.

4.2.3.4   Project leadership

This consisted of leaders from both the consulting and client organisations. The consultants were led by a project director in the person of the partner holding national responsibility for the Systems Integration service line of the firm, and by a senior and internationally experienced project manager. The project director was responsible for selling and directing the project, and for maintaining the overall client relationship. The project manager was responsible for day-to-day management of the project, and leadership of the team of consultants. The clients were led by a senior manager in the Beer Division of the client

organisation, who had been appointed by the executive as the project sponsor, and by a newly hired project manager, who had previously been a consultant with one of the other-"big six" auditing firms. The project sponsor was answerable to the client firm executive team for the success of the project and for maintaining the overall relationship with the consulting firm. The project manager was responsible for the well being of client project team members and shared responsibility for day-to-day management of the project with the consulting project manager.

4.2.3.5   The change management team

The change management team's role was to ensure that a culture of co-operation was developed on the project team, and to pro-actively manage the expectations of the people who would be using the system after implementation. Apart from the consultant, all members of the team were Caucasian, female, between 28 and 39 years old, and had no children. All members of this group had an academic background in the social sciences. The change management roles were divided as follows (See Figure 4.1):

• Change management practice leader

This role was largely external to the project and was the point of reporting and support for members of the change management team in the roles within the consulting firm.

• Change management project leader

A senior member of the change management division of the consulting firm performed this role.

• Consultant 1

Change management and communications facilitator. A member of the change management division who had been with the project since its inception performed this role.

• Consultant 2

Change management and team development facilitator. It is this role which forms the focus of this research.

• Consultant 3

Change management and team development facilitator. This person replaced consultant 2 when he left the project.

• Consultant 4

Communications Coordinator. This role was performed by a junior consultant on the team.

4.2.3.6 The project team

The project team consisted of members of both the client organisation and the consulting firm. As the project had gathered momentum in the months preceding the research, the project team had grown to a total of some 70 people, consisting of 45 client employees and 25 consultants. Client members were drawn from around the country and represented all major departments of the business. Their role on the project was primarily that of providing detailed knowledge of the client's business operations. The consultants' role on the project was primarily that of providing expertise in the computer systems to be installed, and in the mechanics of reengineering business systems. The team was almost exclusively Caucasian and largely male. It was only in the area of change management that the client and consulting firms had women in positions of leadership.

This mixture of client and consultant organisation members reflected the collaborative nature of the project in which risks were to some degree shared between the parties. The consulting organisation had agreed to make significant penalty payments if certain agreed savings were not achieved by the client organisation within prescribed time frames.

The project had started in September 1997, and was due to run until "well into 1999", although no end date had been set. The client staff had all relinquished their existing positions in order to transfer to the project. This project therefore represented a significant career risk for client team members, and as an incentive to join the project team they had been promised salary increases and interesting opportunities at the conclusion of the project.

From the consulting firm's perspective the project represented a considerable opportunity to build a strong relationship with a high profile client. Since the project required a large deployment of consultants, it also represented the opportunity to make a significant profit, but also considerable risk due to penalty clauses if the project was delayed or unsuccessful. Both parties therefore had considerable material and psychological investment in the success of the joint venture.

While the head offices of both the client firm and the consulting firm were located in Johannesburg and Sandton respectively, the project team was located in offices at the site of the regional distribution centre in Isando to the east of Johannesburg. On the project this location was known as Site A. The location of the project team at site A was in part determined by the availability of office space. It also facilitated testing of the new systems which were initially to be rolled out in both site A and in site B to the west of Johannesburg. Toward the end of the consultant's involvement in the project the project team relocated to separate offices near the client organisation's head office in northern Johannesburg.

4.3   DATA COLLECTION

The consultant maintained a daily journal on his computer on a daily basis from Sunday 16th November 1997 when he first learned that he would join the project, to Friday 13th March 1998 when his involvement in the project ceased. In addition he recorded one entry on the 28th March 1998 in the form of a postscript. The journal was a record of his thoughts and feelings about his daily activities, experiences and perceptions as a change management consultant on the project, and included material related to all aspects of his life, both personal and professional. Journal entries were written as self-report without overt awareness of psychodynamic influences and without any attempt formally to assess or comment on those dynamics.

During each day on the project, as the consultant had experiences he thought relevant he jotted down brief notes of what had transpired or what he had been thinking. In some cases this included rough transcripts of dialogue which he attempted to record verbatim. Journal entries were subsequently recorded by the consultant at the end of each day on his computer at home, except for two or three occasions when the consultant recorded events and feelings retrospectively for a period of three or four days. These were during periods when the consultant was not actively engaged in the project, such as time spent on vacation.

In making journal entries, the date was noted, and then the consultant recorded whatever occurred to him to include. Much of this related to the project, but a good deal of it related to his personal life (e.g. the impending birth of his second child, the possibility that he would

shortly be immigrating to Canada, and other significant events that were occurring at the time). Some self-censorship was an inevitable part of the procedure, and some rewriting at the time of making an entry did occur. However, the material was essentially recorded in one stream of thought, and no material was changed on a later date.

It should be noted that recall of past events by witnesses is notoriously fallible; the choice of material to include is entirely subjective; and the data collection process is influenced by some of the very micro system psychodynamics it is intended to assess, such as repression, denial, isolation or intellectualisation. However, alternative data collection methods - such as the tape recording of all interactions - would have been impractical. While open to the criticisms mentioned, the method was adaptable to the project realities, was practical, and was unobtrusive to the client and therefore did not itself impinge on the client-consultant dynamics.

4.4   DATA PROCESSING

The method by which the data was processed involved the following steps.

4.4.1   Developing the interpretation template

Having read the literature discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 the researcher developed a template of 12 key themes that would be used to conduct an interpretation of the data in the journal. This was outlined at the end of Chapter 3.

4.4.2   Delay in interpretation

While it was not part of the planned method, a period of over four years elapsed between the writing of the journal and the interpretation of its contents. During this time the literature review was largely completed, and the template determined, but no interpretation had begun.

Given all that has been said in the preceding chapters about anxiety and the defence mechanisms that typically are mounted in response to those anxieties, it can be argued that the delays and interruptions in completing the data processing may have contaminated its

results. For example, these delays and interruptions are strong evidence of anxiety on the part of the researcher, and of his resistance to engage with the research task. By implication therefore, it is likely that the data processing was contaminated by defences of which the researcher himself was unconscious.

Despite this valid criticism, it can equally be argued that the delay was beneficial to the interpretive procedure. It may have meant that the dynamics that this individual brought to the role of researcher were less contaminated by the dynamics he recorded or demonstrated in his journal while engaged in the project itself in the role of consultant. It can also reasonably be argued that *any* individual engaged in the psychodynamic interpretation of texts must bring to that interpretation their own unfulfilled needs and defences, and that the researcher in this instance should be permitted the same human latitude! (This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.)

A further methodological criticism that can be levelled against this research is the fact that the consultant being analysed, and the researcher doing the analysis were one and the same person. This approach was an explicit part of the strategy to assess the value of consultants independently interpreting their own journals as a means to understand the psychodynamics affecting their consulting relationships.

4.4.3   Interpretation

The method used to interpret the material in the journal was based on the guidelines suggested by Kets de Vries and Miller (1987) developed from key themes in the literature on interpretation of organisational texts. The guidelines are described below, but were followed as a framework by this researcher.

4.4.3.1   Search for central themes

Initially the researcher read the journal through, looking for themes central to the consulting relationship. Kets de Vries and Miller (1987, p. 237) described this as a search for "patterns, ideas or sentiments that surface recurrently [and] often appear to explain many consequences". They described the notions of compression and underlying structure - the idea that "much surface complexity can be explained by an underlying organizing theme that is more basic and fundamental and that serves to organize the surface phenomena" (ibid, pp. 237-8).

4.4.3.2   Searching for centrality and significance

This was followed by an analysis of affective components that appeared to be motivating the consultant in recording his account of the consulting experience. Kets de Vries and Miller (1987, p. 238) described this as a search for "elements that have not only logical centrality, but deep, perhaps unconscious, emotional significance". In this way historical information about the consultant, the consulting firm, the client organisation, and even the macro environment was considered for any insight it might provide into key aspirations, goals and fears that might explain the behaviour and attitudes recounted in the journal. Kets de Vries and Miller (1987, p. 238) observed that "the affective components motivating a text may be crucial to its decoding".

4.4.3.3   The process of discovery

Having generated some initial and tentative insights and hypotheses using the procedures above, the researcher then attempted to determine whether they could explain other parts of the text. As a result a number of modifications were made and a final interpretation arrived at. While this final interpretation is presented here, it must be acknowledged that "interpretation is a dynamic, iterative and interactive phenomenon that may bring insights, but rarely provides any final "unitary solutions" (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1987, p. 238).

4.4.4   Interpretation

The data gathered from reading the journal was interpreted from a psychodynamic paradigm. Based on the work of Cilliers and Koortzen (2000), the mentioned twelve key themes were identified and used as a template by which to interpret the journal contents and to generate hypotheses about the unconscious psychodynamics of the relationship between the consultant and his clients during the course of the project.

In making interpretations the researcher was influenced by four tentative rules for interpretation proposed by Kets de Vries and Miller (1987). The first of these is *thematic unity* which they describe as "communality among the various themes" or a shaping of different observations into "an inter-connected, cohesive unit" (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1987, p. 245).

The second rule is *pattern matching* or the presence of revealing repetition. In this case the researcher was searching for parallels between present-day events and earlier incidents in the history of the consultant or client entities. This is similar to the notion of transference, and is described as "misunderstand[ing] the present in terms of the past and reliv[ing] it through our actions" (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1987, p. 245).

Thirdly, the interpretation of the journal was influenced by the rule of *psychological urgency*. (The assumption behind this rule is that it is possible to identify somewhere in the text the most pressing problem or problems.) In seeking evidence for psychological urgency Kets de Vries and Miller (1987, p. 246) have advised paying attention to "the persistence, enthusiasm,

regularity, pervasiveness, and emotion surrounding decisions, interactions and pronouncements".

Finally, attention was paid to the rule of *multiple function*, since "depending on the psychological urgency of the matter at hand, a part of the text can have more than one meaning and can be looked at from many different points of view" (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1987, p. 246). This necessitated seeking out meaning at multiple levels, and looking for multiple roots and consequences of behaviours and perceptions.

The results of this interpretive process are outlined in Chapter 5.

4.5   RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Given the methods of data collection and data processing described above, a number of statements can be made about the reliability and validity of this study.

4.5.1   Reliability

A number of the steps outlined above were followed specifically to maximise the reliability of this study. The following observations can be made about the reliability of the method by which the data was both collected and interpreted:

1. The principle that reliable interpretation of unconscious motivation can be obtained from an analysis of texts is well established in psychodynamic theory and practice. The psychodynamic model is by definition an interpretive science. Indeed, Kets de Vries and Miller, (1987, p. 237) cited evidence for psychoanalysis being "the exemplary model of hermeneutics". An analysis of the consultant's journal in order to understand the underlying psychodynamics of the consulting relationship is therefore in keeping with the accepted reliability of interpreting texts that forms the cornerstone of psychodynamic theory and practice.

2. The data collection procedure was open to the criticisms outlined in 4.3 above. Nevertheless, the accuracy of the record was increased by the fact that the data was recorded within hours of the events it described. In addition, because the journal covered a period of

more than three months, a significant amount of material was available from which to extract recurring themes.

3. Since its author undertook the interpretation of the journal, no claim of objectivity can be made about the interpretation. However, the psychodynamic model presupposes that no interpretation could be entirely objective since no researcher is free of unconscious motivations (Kahn, 1995). Nevertheless, the reliability of the interpretations made was enhanced by the fact that these followed the comprehensive method detailed by Kets de Vries and Miller (1987) and explained above in 4.4.

4.5.2 Validity

The psychoanalytic and psychodynamic schools of thought have established a significant body of literature in the last 75 years, and their constructs are widely used in clinical practice. To that end Chapters 2 and 3 can be viewed as evidence for the construct validity of the psychodynamic model. While it is perhaps only in the last 20 years or so that these concepts have begun to be more widely applied in organisational settings (Neumann et al, 1997), there exist a number of respected institutions, societies and journals that advance the application of these constructs in the field of I/O psychology. Therefore a strong case can be made for the construct validity of the psychodynamic model used in this research.

While the method used was that of a single case study, this does not invalidate the findings of the research. Conners and Wells's (1982) have made the point that single subject methodology is useful in answering questions regarding a single subject, while Garmezy (1982, p. 16) has observed that "single cases are useful for ..... generating new ideas and hypotheses ..... and for demonstrating dramatically possible areas for future research".

There was also no attempt in this study to enumerate frequencies or suggest statistical generalisation. While no claim can be made that the results of this study are in any way replicable, Yin (1994, p. 10) notes that both case studies and experiments "are generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes". The object of concern in this study is the individual consultant whose journal is being interpreted, rather than the population of consultants at large. There is no intention to extrapolate the findings to other settings. The

value of the research lies entirely in the insights it seeks to provide regarding this particular consultant and his interactions as an I/O psychologist in future consulting relationships.

The larger question of validity is the extent to which the psychodynamics being measured in this study are likely to replicate themselves in future consulting relationships established by this consultant. The model for interpretation that was developed at the end of Chapter 3 was based on a body of psychodynamic theory that has been demonstrated to apply to individuals in all organisational settings. It can, therefore, be expected with confidence to manifest itself in consulting relationships undertaken by this consultant in future.

4.6   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter explained the detailed methodology used to conduct the case study. It included a description of the client organisation, an explanation of the measurement process by which data was obtained, an explanation of the method used to process the data, and a discussion of the reliability and validity of the method used.

The aim of this chapter was to describe the method by which this study was conducted.

CHAPTER 5   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter describes those unconscious themes that influenced the relationship between the consultant and client systems at the micro, meso and macro levels. Reasons are advanced for the way in which the relationship between the consultant and the client developed. An attempt is made to understand how those psychodynamics influenced the results of the change process.

The aim of this chapter is to describe the dominant psychodynamic themes that emerged in the relationship between the consultant and his clients, namely the members of both the client, and consulting organisations that together comprised the project team. The objective is to understand how these themes affected the consulting relationship, and ultimately the consultant's effectiveness as a change agent on the project.

An analysis was conducted to examine in what ways each of the twelve key themes identified at the end of Chapter 3 was manifest in the consultant's journal. These are reported separately in sections 5.1 to 5.12, followed in each case by a brief discussion of these findings. All the above is then integrated in sections 5.13 and 5.14 to describe what happened in the consulting relationship as a totality. It is not suggested that the findings presented are exhaustive. So much potential material was available in the journal that the findings presented can be illustrative only of the dominant themes that emerged in the consulting relationship. To avoid repetition, findings that support more than one psychodynamic theme are explained in detail in the first section in which they are mentioned, and then cross-referenced in subsequent sections.

5.1   ANXIETY

The journal provides significant evidence of anxiety throughout the consulting system.

5.1.1   Findings

Many journal entries reflected resistance, projection, and a need for structure, all of which are typical manifestations of anxiety. Examples of these are detailed below.

5.1.1.1   The consultant's resistance to engaging in the project

From the opening sentences of the journal, the consultant demonstrates his own anxiety related to taking up a consulting role, and to the project itself:

- *"I am to go onto [the project] ..... The reality of re-entering the working world hits me after two weeks sheltered in the bubble of UNISA exams. ..... I'd hoped for a bit of a rest after the exams, but it looks like I'm going back into the deep end"* (Journal, p. 1).

The language frames the project, and consulting generally, as a hostile environment that the consultant finds threatening. This was demonstrated in the first few pages, for example:

- *"The executive think they are the experts on OD and culture change, and are not going to have outsiders messing in their patch"* (Journal, p. 1).
- *"It's a bit worrying that [the change management project manager] has basically been driven to ill-health by ..... the] stress of the project. ..... we have to be careful about not being pushed into a similar situation"* (Journal, p. 2).
- *"..... not wanting to get sucked into the franticness that already seems to be permeating the project"* (Journal, p. 2).

5.1.1.2   Performance anxiety on the part of the consultant

There is evidence of performance anxiety in statements such as:

- *"I feel like I'm on a tightrope wire. On the one hand I have to stay balanced in order to perform. On the other I have to do the tricks that are expected of me"* (Journal, p.10).
- *"I apologise on the phone to [the colleague replacing me on the project]..... for my non-delivery on the project at the moment. ..... The project will be far better off for her input than mine"* (Journal, p. 85).
- *"I am impressed with the way [a colleague] draws on the here-and-now ..... I realise how*

much I have to learn" (Journal, p. 100).

5.1.1.3   Evidence of client organisation resistance

There is evidence of performance anxiety in statements such as:

- To accepting the impact of the project - despite evidence that installing SAP changes organisation's cultures *"[the client leadership] insist the project is merely a systems implementation"* (Journal, p. 1).

- To the role of change management - the client project sponsor and project manager tell the consultant that they see change management as *"a support function to the real work"* (Journal, p. 62). They also fail to provide the change management consultants with physical project space (Journal, p. 5), frequently fail to attend meetings (Journal, pp. 9; 16; 33; 35; 58; 74), or return phone calls (Journal, pp. 43; 60; 61) and demonstrate clear resistance to authorising change management work on the project through delaying signing the contract and, at one point, planning to cut the change management team from the project (Journal, p. 62).

- To engaging in a meaningful relationship - the leaders of both client and consulting organisations met as a group only twice during the consultant's tenure on the project (Journal, p. 103), and each of these occurred in the face of significant resistance from both parties that is detailed throughout the Journal, p.. During the consultant's tenure they failed to agree a contract for the project (Journal, p. 104).

5.1.1.4   Projections by the consultant

A number of journal entries demonstrate projection by the consultant onto other system members, for example:

- Throughout the journal the consultant fails to challenge the client effectively, yet he writes: *"the leadership of the change management practice in [the consulting organisation] is too frightened to challenge the values and practices of the organisation"* (Journal, p. 36).

- The consultant complains throughout the journal of others' lack of respect for time boundaries, but misses critical meetings himself (see 5.2.1.1) and voices the following projection onto a colleague: *"[The junior change management consultant] is …*

extraordinarily willing to oblige, so she goes along with all sorts of demands from [the client project sponsor]… I've told her she has to start setting boundaries more firmly" (Journal, p. 27).

- Despite his anxiety about his own inadequacy (see 5.1.1.2) and the fact that he often is uncertain of himself, the consultant frequently projects incompetence onto others: *"Why is it that clients always seem to get anxious, and that [the consulting firm] always seems to be running around like a chicken without a head?"* (Journal, p. 3).
- There is evidence that the consultant projects onto the consulting organisation a split between the Johannesburg and Pretoria practices (see 5.8.1.6 below).

There is evidence that the consultant displaces anger and fear from the dangerous object of the consulting relationship and projects it onto more acceptable objects in the environment, such as South Africa's roads, or the consulting firm's buildings:

- Driving on the roads is consistently portrayed as threatening: *"On the way to Isando … there was an accident in which two minibuses were involved"* (Journal, p. 33); *"The idiots on the N3 who were determined to add their names (and ours I feared) to the disaster that passes for our national road death statistics"* (Journal, p. 39); *"… some idiot comes rushing past and nearly collects me from behind as he weaves between lanes and out of sight"* (Journal, p. 66); *"The car behind us coming onto the highway collides with a car in the main flow of traffic: an almighty crash, bits of car flying and the two vehicles careening off the road. This is getting ridiculous. I feel like I'm driving in a collision derby these days, and that we take our life in our hands when we get behind the wheel"* (Journal, p. 67); *"…a breakdown truck almost runs me off the road as it races down the emergency lane on the left. Four near misses in less than ten days, this it getting crazy! … symptomatic of the state of aggression and conflict in society: people bumping into each other"* (Journal, p. 71).
- The consultant has a surprisingly strong response to a mundane problem with a security card, overtly picking up on his sense of exclusion: *"On arrival at work I couldn't get into the building as the security door from the parking area wouldn't accept my card. Now even the building is conspiring against me?!"* (Journal, p. 42).

Taken as a metaphor for how the consultant experiences the project and his consulting role,

these provide strong evidence of his high level of anxiety.

5.1.1.5   The need for structure and detail

One of the themes evident in the journal is the need for structure and detail. A prime example is the nit-picking that occurred in trying to finalise the change plan (Journal, pp. 4; 5; 7; 21; 22; 26; 31; 43; 59) and exemplified by the journal entry: *"The client organisation project sponsor] labours through the whole document line by line and wants extra columns added to identify the exact method by which every line item will be achieved and how the feedback loops will work"* (Journal, p. 4).

The consultant's recognition that this attention to detail is a defence against engaging in real work is evident in the following entry: *"The whole process of signing this document seems to me like an act or ritual which has superseded its meaning. The obsession with having every 't' crossed suggests that once the document is signed everything will proceed without any variation from what has been agreed. This is completely naive ..... Not only does the process suggest a collaborative pretence by both parties, but it involves endless iterations that have almost replaced the act of delivery in the amount of time and energy they consume"* (Journal, p. 22).

Elsewhere there are references to *"a dreadfully boring discussion of every line item on the 500 line roll out plan"* (Journal, p. 35), and *"8 hours of wading through slide after slide outlining the elements of an SAP implementation"* (Journal, p. 61).

There is one interesting commentary on the degree of defensiveness in the change management group, and by implication, the extent to which anxiety is present in this system. An individual approached to facilitate a process for the change management team to address internal dynamics *"suggests [another person] as a facilitator, joking that a group like ours will be too good at 'smoke and mirrors' for someone like him!"* (Journal, p. 58).

5.1.2   Discussion: Anxiety

These findings demonstrate that a significant amount of anxiety was present in the work of the project, and inhibited the development of an effective consulting relationship. They are consistent with the psychodynamic view that effective work requires mastery of internal conflicts and their resulting anxiety (Czander, 1993).

The client organisation's focus on detail and resistance to engaging with the task-in-hand are common defence mechanisms used to contain anxiety (Bion, 1961). The comprehensive and irrational projections of the consultant point to the fact that he is at times basing his actions on a distorted view of reality (de Board, 1993). Consistent with Klein's (1959) conception that projections are designed to export the "bad" in order to facilitate coping, the consultant projected the anxiety he experienced in ways that made him more able to function in the project environment. For example, his projection that the road was inhabited by "idiots" made it possible for the project to be inhabited by "clever people". Equally, the fact that 'death' was framed as occurring on the roads made "growth" more possible in the project context.

There is also evidence that the consultant is identifying with system projections of performance anxiety and interpreting all this anxiety as his own responsibility (Czander, 1993). The consultant's personal situation (as a novice change consultant seeking to "make a difference", and a prospective emigrant soon to leave the system) appear to have increased his valence to this projected identification.

In this process the journal itself appears to have played a cathartic psychological role as a container for the consultant's anxiety (Czander, 1993; Menzies, 1993). In effect it seems to have functioned as the superego to which the consultant could "confess his failings" and from which, as arbiter of wisdom and morality, absolution could be received.

The consultant's performance anxiety would appear to be evidence of introjected parental standards (Ewen, 1998) that he brings to his work relationships, and that Cilliers and Koortzen (2000) suggest can make individuals feel ineffective or bad, even before they have failed in a new task. The consultant's projections would appear designed to cast himself in a positive light and to place responsibility for "bad" elements in the relationship onto the client (Klein, 1959), and contribute to the organisation-in-the-mind he develops about the project (Hutton,

Bazalgette & Reed, 1997). These projections can be seen as examples of the consultant mask of competence that he creates in an attempt to hide flaws he experiences in himself (Gemmill & Wynkoop, 1990).

The consultant appears to be surprised by the degree of resistance and hostility he encounters from the client organisation, which Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990) suggest is typical of new consultants. As these authors suggest, the consultant appears to feel manipulated by his clients and to believe that he is failing as a consultant. As they predict, he therefore often acts defensively, and "seems unable to grasp the positive work that is occurring within the client group" (ibid, p. 131).

From the above discussion of anxiety, it seems as if the consultant is containing performance anxiety and the need for urgency and making progress on behalf of the system, as well as morality. It is as if the consultant is trying to clear impediments and toxicity out of the way so that the system can do "good enough" work.

5.2   BOUNDARIES

The journal provides evidence of boundary management issues arising in the course of the consulting relationship.

5.2.1   Findings

There is evidence of time, space and task boundaries breaking down on the project, as well as confusion arising around identity.

5.2.1.1   Violations of time boundaries

From his first meeting with client leadership - for which he was late (Journal, p. 3) - to his final meeting with the client organisation - which he forgets and misses (Journal, p. 93) - the consultant records time boundary violations by all parts of the system:

- *"I get a message from [the project sponsor's secretary] that the meeting has been*

postponed to 2.00, but when I get to his office both he and [his secretary] have left for the day. Is there some subtle message here?" (Journal, p. 58).

- *"I discover that the leadership team has not met once since the last meeting I ran. Apparently they all changed the arrangement for the first meeting, and thereafter it never got back on track. At the second meeting [the client leaders] simply never arrived."* (Journal, p. 104).

5.2.1.2 Space boundaries creating separation

The journal explains that the project team - including the client project manager - was based at one site in Isando. However, the client project sponsor was based at the company head office in Rosebank, while the consultant project director, project manager and change management team were based at the consulting head office in Sandton. The following journal entry indicates that the consultant experienced anxiety about the impact of this on effective working relationships on the project: *"Again the issue of our visibility to the project teams comes up, but without any space to work in, and all offices overcrowded already, it is a bit of a circular argument. I feel guilty because I know I am responsible for project team development and I hardly know who is on the teams!"* (Journal, p. 56).

Later he mentions the new venue to which the project team was moving: *"If this space had been available from the beginning I think it would have profoundly improved the team's ability to deliver and to bond. Coming now in the middle of the last phase of design, it seems to be more disruptive than anything else"* (Journal, p. 96).

5.2.1.3   Unclear task and role boundaries

There are indications that task boundaries were not effectively managed in the consulting relationship. This can be seen in the ongoing failure to agree on the scope of the change management plan (see 5.1.1.5 above), and failure to agree a contract with the client organisation. The concern this caused the consultant and the consulting firm is indicated in the following entry: *"Unfortunately [the consulting project director] is still trying to get the project contract signed by the client, and doesn't want to do anything that would jeopardise the relationship at this stage"* (Journal, p. 46).

While the consultant wants clear boundaries, he is explicit about not wanting these over-structured: *"My attitude is: lets agree a rough outline of what needs to be done and who will be responsible, but lets leave ourselves room to flex this and respond to dynamics as the project unfolds. My fear is that we are going to end up doing pieces of work to tick off on the plan, rather than address the issues of the moment"* (Journal, p. 9).

The journal details a number of instances in which the consultant is uncomfortable with the role he is required to play on the project, for example:

* *"Despite our strongly expressed protestations it looks like there is no one else available to run the workshop other than [two colleagues] and myself. We should be participants not facilitators since we are part of the team, but as usual these 'small' issues don't receive much tolerance"* (Journal, p. 4).
* *"I frame the outline of the day, and my role, and get muted response to the latter. Clearly - at least as far as [the client leadership] are concerned - I am merely a functionary, and they have no intention of me facilitating anything*" (Journal, p. 83).

5.2.1.4   Unclear identity boundaries

There are instances where confusion about identity boundaries become obvious:

* At his first major project function the consultant *"had to ask [a colleague] to point out [the consulting firm project director] to me, which was less embarrassing than what happened to [another colleague], who asked one of the clients who he was, and got a rather*

astounded look in response" (Journal, p. 15).

• On another occasion he is concerned that a member of the consulting firm is making hiring decisions on behalf of the client: *"I ask 'What if there is a problem with any of the appointments? If they don't work out will it be [the consultants'] fault?' There is an embarrassed and awkward pause around the room. His puzzled expression gets through to me: He's from the client! He says facetiously: 'Of course. The consultant is always responsible for everything'"* (Journal, p. 65).

• At another point in the project the consultant learns of a strong rumour that a senior female consultant on the project is having an affair with someone in the client organisation, and comments *"I am immediately struck by what this means in terms of boundaries between [consultant and client firms]"* (Journal, p. 46).

5.2.2   Discussion: Boundaries

The lack of effective time, space, task and identity boundary management on the project can be understood both as a symptom of, and a contributor to the anxiety experienced by system members during the project. To some extent these were a mirror of the very vague time boundaries which provided a context for the entire project which is described in the journal as lasting "well into 1999" (Journal, p. 4). There is role ambiguity and role confusion (Lawrence, 1999), and the consultant is at times manipulated out of his role (Kahn, 1995; Lawrence, 1999).

It seemed that it was important for the consultant that these boundaries be properly managed in order for him to contain his anxiety (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000; Czander, 1993; Miller, 1993). In addition, the consultant's confusion regarding which team member belonged to which organisation would have detracted from his ability to establish a clear identity, and added to his anxiety in taking up his new role (Czander, 1993).

Certainly the fact that the consulting group worked without a clear contract would have significantly undermined their ability to understand what was expected of them, to plan the work, and to feel confident in delivering it. Neumann (1997) observes that consultants frequently agree to undertake work for which they and the client do not feel properly prepared,

and about which they "do not feel sufficiently influential" (ibid, p. 27). It would appear that this is precisely what happened here.

It is interesting to observe that the consultant consistently reacts to boundary violations in terms of how they impact his effectiveness. This appears to reflect an awareness by the consultant of the implications of these boundary issues for doing effective or "good enough" work on the project (Klein, 1959; Lawrence, 1999). For example, in response to the rumoured affair between consultant and client project members the consultant notes: *"One also wonders what the impact on the project might be if the relationship between these two were to turn sour? It's not really a situation that one can influence, but it has some potentially far-reaching consequences"* (Journal, p. 47).

From the above discussion it seems as if the lack of clear boundaries facilitated a "them" and "me" split between consultant and clients, and between change management and the rest of the consulting firm. In the process the consultant was used to carry the confusion of the system. Again there is the sense of the superego being contained within the consultant's journal, on behalf of both consultant and perhaps of the project system.

5.3   TAKING UP A ROLE

The anxiety that accompanies taking up a new role is clearly evident in the consultant's journal.

5.3.1   Findings

This anxiety is evident in a number of different areas.

5.3.1.1   Uncertainty about the nature of the task.

This is discussed in section 5.2.1.3 above.

5.3.1.2   Consultant anxiety about his own competence

Section 5.1.1.1 above presented evidence for the anxiety that the consultant experienced on entering the project. There are a number of early references to the consultant's sense of inadequacy in taking on the consulting task. He avoids a meeting with process team leaders on his first day on the project, saying *"I don't feel capable of giving a coherent picture [of the change management plan]"* (Journal, p. 2), and refers to his own lack of SAP experience and his concern about providing value (Journal, p. 5). The consultant's questioning of his own competence is exemplified in a parallel he draws between himself and the national cricket team's struggle to win against Australia: *"How wise am I as a consultant?: quite naive I think. Will I be the Australian consultant and pull a rabbit out of the hat, or will I be the SA choker?"* (Journal, p. 72). This anxiety suggests a strong need for approval and to get things "right" that pervades much of the consultant's interactions on the project.

5.3.1.3   Threat to professional identity

The journal contains a number of entries where the consultant wonders about the value placed on the work of the change management team by their own consulting firm leadership. This threat to their professional identity is finally confirmed: *"[The project director] openly admits to undermining us with the client, acknowledging that he still doesn't really understand what we do or how we do it"* (Journal, p. 79).

5.3.1.4   Mirrors in the consultant's personal life

Apart from the project role, the consultant was in the process of taking up other roles in his personal life at the time the project began. His daughter was about to be born, and there is frequent reference in the journal to the challenge of becoming a parent again: *"It is going to be a huge change in our lives, and everyone tells us that the lifestyle impact of a second child*

is significantly greater than that caused by a first child. I find this terrifying and hard to believe" (Journal, p. 28). At the same time, this appears to be evidence of a contrast existing between the 'creativity' within the consultant's home life, and the 'sterility' of the project and the affair in the project team.

He was also wrestling with his impending emigration to Canada and the challenges this would present*: "[The consultant's wife] and I are both a little frazzled - beginning to sense for the first time the enormity of what it will be like in Canada, with no support systems and two small children"* (ibid, p. 73).

5.3.1.5   Taking up role challenges of other project members

There is evidence of other system members experiencing difficulty in taking up roles on the project:

• The client project sponsor

Commenting on the client project manager's desire not to have the consultant take over from the previous project change management leader in dealing with project team issues, the consultant notes: *"It is probably that typical client desire to keep working with the person they have built a relationship with, but also I think [the project sponsor] wants as much help as possible as he figures out his role"* (Journal, p. 3). The comment appears to suggest a "them and me" split in that the project manager's struggle with his role by implication undermines the ability of the consultant to take up his own role himself.

• The client project manager

In preparing for a team building workshop early in the life of the project the consultant notes: *"When I tell [the client project manager] that I have asked [the client project sponsor] to attend the workshop he sounds anxious and says something about not confusing the team by having too many leaders there"* (Journal, p. 6). This appears to be an expression of anxiety at the perceived threat to his own role as leader.

• Other change management consultants

Due to his impending emigration the consultant needed to replace himself on the project. However, because the contract had not been signed his superiors did not want him to explain to the client that the person joining the project was intended to be his own replacement. This

led to situations such as the following occasion when the consultant had a meeting with the process teams: *"Because [my replacement] doesn't officially 'exist' yet, I had to introduce her as being a colleague who was 'getting a sense of the work we are doing"* (Journal, p. 56). Inevitably this situation would have created challenges for the new consultant in taking up her role.

In a letter to a senior partner that forms an appendix to the journal, the consultant discusses a change practice concern about the difficulty their consultants are experiencing by constantly being brought onto projects after they have started: *"We often spend the rest of the project using up enormous amounts of time and energy justifying ourselves to our colleagues. Also, from a change management perspective the initial relationship-building stages of a project are critical in laying the groundwork for how one goes forward"* (Journal, p. 130). This appears to be a cry for changes that would facilitate taking up the role of change management consultant in future, and an indication of how hard it has been previously.

5.3.2   Discussion: Taking up a role

As suggested by Czander (1993) and Hirschhorn (1993), the process of taking up a role appears to have been a source of anxiety for all participants in the consulting relationship. While there is evidence that client system members experience role ambiguity, there is also evidence of a tendency to project this onto the consultant. The consultant's acknowledged inexperience with SAP illustrates his valence to this projective identification, and the system appears to take advantage of this. The combination of projection, introjection and projective identification results in an interplay between the anxiety created by the real uncertainty he feels, and anxiety created by his critical inner voices (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000). The result appears to be the internal "psychological violence" that these authors describe.

To some extent this can be seen as a less acute mirroring of the illness his colleague experiences (see 5.7.1.4) and would appear to be evidence of the struggle Hirshhorn (1993) and Kahn (1993) describe consultants as experiencing in joining with the system and becoming part of its dynamics. The system appears to have split competence and incompetence, and used the change management group to carry incompetence on its behalf.

On joining the system the consultant's existing performance anxiety led him to join with the paranoia of the change management group and gravitate to the paranoid schizoid position (Czander, 1993; Klein, 1959).

It is also apparent that there is a conflict between what the consultant and his change management colleagues understand as their task, and the role expected of them by project leadership. Roberts (1994) differentiated between 3 types of roles or tasks. The first is the *normative primary task*, which she defined as the formal or official task that operationalises the broad aims of the organisation. The second, the *existential primary task*, is the task that individuals believe they are carrying out or the interpretation they put on their roles and activities. Finally there is the *phenomenal primary task*, which is the task that can be inferred from people's behaviour, and of which they may not be consciously aware. It seems clear that the consultant conceived his (existential) task as one of influencing the thinking of leadership, facilitating a closer relationship between the leaders of the two organisations and having project leaders establish a more nurturing relationship with project team members. However, the journal provides evidence that the (normative) task expected of him by project leadership was one of providing "*a support function to the real work*" (Journal, p. 62) through coordinating meetings and other non-influencing activities (see 5.2.1.3). Consequently the consultant's activities (his phenomenal tasks) were experienced by project leadership as inappropriate - at best an irritant, but more likely getting in the way of the project's work. It would appear that this was a significant contributor to the anxiety the consultant experienced in taking up his role.

The negation of professional relevance and value by all leaders, but particularly by the consulting project director can be seen as a real threat to the professional identity of the consultant and his change management peers (Cillliers & Koortzen, 2000), which further added to their anxiety and retreat into psychological defensiveness. That the consultant believes this happens more broadly in the firm would only have provided further context to this and further undermined the ability of the consultant to engage effectively with the task in hand. This can be seen in his comment when talking about induction into the consulting organisation: *"[the firm] hires people for their track record of performance, then proceeds to place no value on any experience gained outside the organisation"* (Journal, p. 101).

While there is substantial evidence of the consultant adopting the mask of competence discussed by Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990), there is little apparent evidence of clients adopting the reciprocal mask of helplessness (though see 5.5.2 below for an alternative interpretation). In fact, a significant part of the difficulty the consultant experienced in taking up his role appears to stem from the fact that his clients "refused to play the game" and adopt this reciprocal role. The following journal entries point to the consultant's recognition of, and frustration with this situation:

- At the very outset the consultant notes *"we have a client who is arrogant about their ability to go it alone"* (Journal, p. 1).

- A colleague reports that *"[the organisation development manager] said to me the other day that [the client organisation] are arrogant, and consultants are arrogant. So we are automatically going to bump heads"* (Journal, p. 63).

From the above discussion of taking up a role, it seems as if the system, experienced confusion and inadequacy and, through the agency of the change management group, selected the consultant to fulfil the role of "saviour". However, it then used the consultant to carry uncertainty and confusion on behalf of the system, stripped him of authority and projected the system's incompetence onto him. This, in turn, freed other system members from their own confusion, enabling them to do work themselves.

Whereas the consultant, through the agency of his journal, seems to have sat in judgement and carried the superego in the relationship, there are suggestions that client leadership carried the id in the relationship, seeking immediate gratification of its desires, with consulting leadership, perhaps as ego, trying to find reasonable ways to satisfy these desires.

5.4 AUTHORITY

Issues of authority and representation in the consulting relationship emerge as prominent themes in the journal.

5.4.1 Findings

Experienced authority for the project was unclear, and specific authority for the work of the consultant and his change management colleagues was lacking at every level of the project.

5.4.1.1 Lack of authority for the project

The journal provides indications that, while the project had formal authority within the client organisation, the impact it would have on the organisation was being hidden from client organisation members: *"From the start there have been different agendas within [the client organisation]. [The senior client executive responsible for the decision to implement SAP] sees SAP as an opportunity to pull control to the centre. But he's never been overt with this to the project team or the business. So we are constantly caught in the middle: Is this culture change or systems implementation?"* (Journal, p. 77).

5.4.1.2 Lack of authority for the consulting firm

In the absence of a contract with the client the consulting firm as a whole was operating without clear authority (see section 5.2.1.3 above).

5.4.1.3 Lack of authority for the consultant's work

More specifically for the consultant and his change management colleagues, with the change plan constantly being questioned, they were operating without clear boundary parameters for their work (see section 5.1.1.5). Their authority was further undermined by the failure of their own leadership to support them directly or in interaction with the client (see section 5.3.1.3).

Reference to the anxiety the consultant experiences due to this lack of authority are found throughout the journal:

- *"[The new] plan [by the organisational development manager] … seems to make any form of [consulting firm] change management redundant"* (Journal, p. 59).
- The consultant reports the following dialogue between his change management colleagues:

A: "We are not seen as SAP implementers, either by the client or by our colleagues. We're not seen to have technical insight or a broader understanding of SAP, so we're not valued".

B: "Absolutely. You know the problem you've had getting their agreement to the leadership workshop? [A colleague] said to me yesterday: "If you're still trying to get that workshop through, you'd best get [the consulting project director] on sides. He's already discounted it to [the client project sponsor!]" (Oh great! Our own project leader is undermining our work with the client!)" (Journal, p. 64).

- The consulting project director indicates that *"he intends to remove Change Management from the fixed contract in order to buy more leverage. … This makes [the consultant's change management colleagues] and I very nervous, but he is immovable on the issue"* (Journal, p. 66).

In summary, the project was positioned in a manner that meant the consultant and his change management colleagues lacked any real authority for their work. The anxiety this created was manifest in many of the other dynamics explored in the remainder of this chapter.

5.4.1.4   Consultant unwilling to challenge the client

The most significant outcome of this lack of authority was that the consultant and his change management colleagues consistently failed to challenge the client or their own project leadership on process and relationship issues that were inhibiting the effectiveness of the project, frequently rationalising this to themselves. For example:

- *"Am I prevaricating or making excuses for not confronting them yet? Part of me feels I should jump in boots and all, but part of me believes I can only win them over if they feel I am on the same side as them"* (Journal, p. 10).
- *"I fear I am not being sufficiently strong in confronting these issues, but I also constantly*

feel that confrontation is facilitated by time and a sound relationship" (Journal, p. 31).

- *"I don't feel comfortable to challenge or question [the client project sponsor] too far without knowing the nature of the discussion which he's had with [the consulting project director], and the position [the consulting project director] has taken"* (Journal, p. 63).

- *"I miss the opportunity to confront him about the way he addresses me, and his assumptions about the relationship, and curse myself later"* (Journal, p. 85).

5.4.1.5   Lack of representation for Change Management in the consulting firm

The lack of authority experienced by the consultant on the project is mirrored in dynamics between the Change Management service line generally and the consulting firm. A thread running through the journal is the failure of the consulting firm leadership both to promote a leader for this group to partnership level and to hire other senior staff. In a letter to a member of the consulting firm executive that forms an appendix to the journal, the consultant states *"The firm needs to understand the depth of the message that is communicated to Change Management staff when people who are esteemed by their change leadership peers … are hired to lead the service line, given the responsibility and pressures of driving the success of the division, but are excluded from the privileges and influence of partnership"* (Journal, p. 108).

5.4.2   Discussion: Authority

The anxiety the consultant describes arising from lack of clear authority at multiple levels reflects the contention in psychodynamic theory that lack of clear authority diminishes the ability of individuals to perform (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000; Miller, 1993). As Cilliers and Koortzen (ibid) suggest, lack of "a clear indication of level of authority … creates anxiety which hinders rational decision making" (ibid, p. 64).

The split between rational and irrational seen in section 5.3 is again evident here, with the system projecting weakness and discomfort onto the consultant, and the consultant identifying with that projection and experiencing himself as ineffective. Certainly it can reasonably be claimed that in the context of this project, the role of change management was not only to

smooth the change experience for client organisation and project team members (ie. to comfort the afflicted), but also to confront the assumptions of leaders and to challenge them to establish a more effective working alliance (ie. to afflict the comfortable). There appears to be an inherent paradox in the consultant's behaviour on this project, in that he seems constantly to have sought permission to challenge or confront leadership. While such authority might have been obtained in principle - but wasn't forthcoming in this instance - it was inherently not going to occur in the here-and-now events of the moment. The consultant seemingly failed to appreciate that his role required him to authorise this for himself. In addition, the language describing his unwillingness to challenge suggests his desire for approval and to be liked, and to do the "right" or "good" thing (Klein, 1959).

Cilliers and Koortzen (2000, p. 63) have maintained that "if the individual's anxiety is too great or too difficult to bear, the person may escape by stepping out of role". It would appear therefore that the consultant's inexperience and anxiety meant that he failed to understand the degree to which his role required him to authorise himself to challenge others, or at least was not comfortable doing so. He therefore could be said to have stepped out of the role required of him, by failing to demonstrate the personal leadership required of his role.

As described in 5.3, the impression was that the client system de-authorised the consultant, which Kahn (1995) and Miller (1993) have described as a common phenomenon in client-consultant relationships. This was perhaps an attempt to render the consultant unable to change the dynamics that the system had a vested interest in maintaining.

From the above discussion on authority, it seemed as if the consultant's fantasy was that he was the puppeteer brought in to pull the clients' strings, yet he was frustrated because they will not pull the strings that permitted him to begin. While he described leadership as immovable, he was himself paralysed. To draw on another "performance" metaphor from the journal, he was caught in the middle of a tightrope, unable to move forwards or back, and sought to keep his balance between the rational (that appointed him as change agent) and the irrational, (that put incompetence into him and manipulated him out of his role).

5.5   LEADERSHIP / FOLLOWERSHIP

Leadership dynamics also impacted the effectiveness of the client-consulting relationship.

5.5.1   Findings

The journal provided evidence of a failure of leadership to manage boundaries effectively, or to exercise personal leadership.

5.5.1.1   Lack of project leadership

Failure to manage boundaries effectively manifested in the leaders of the consulting and client organisations who failed to structure effective work procedures within the leadership team (see 5.1.1.3), they failed to agree project scope and parameters (see 5.4.1.2) and failed to establish an effective project space (see 5.2.1.2). This was reflected in the results of a survey on team attitudes toward leadership, conducted by the consultant. *"Lack of visibility [by leadership]; non-resolution of terms and conditions of project employment; lack of big picture vision-sharing etc"* (Journal, p. 48).

5.5.1.2   Lack of personal leadership by project leaders

This lack of leadership was reflected in the personal behaviour of leaders from both organisations:

- During an afternoon of experiential team-building activities the consultant notes, *"[the client project sponsor] managed to avoid the entire activity by flying to Bloemfontein to do a presentation"* (ibid, p. 15); *"[the consulting project director] arrived late, after the [main activity] was over"* (ibid, p. 16); *"when it came to the debriefing of [the main activity] [the consulting project director] wandered off in private discussion with [the client project sponsor]. He seems quite unaware of the symbolic signals he sends, but the message seems to be: 'I'm not really a part of this process or team. I'm separate and different'"* (ibid, p. 17).
- The consultant notes: *"The goal setting session was a sad revelation. Of all the groups, the project management team seemed to struggle the most to articulate their goals"* (Journal, p. 18).

Another significant issue was the failure to resolve key concerns related to compensation and future career prospects. When finally it was confirmed that promises made to team members to get them to join the project would not be lived up to, the journal revealed the following: *"[One of the team leaders] was furious. The team leaders then stated that they expected so much anger on this issue that they did not wish to be the ones to inform their team members"* (Journal, p. 89). The client project leaders then abdicated this responsibility themselves and delegated it to the organisation development manager, and the consultant observed: *"It would have been naive to expect [the client project sponsor] and [client project director] to stand up and be counted at this point I suppose"* (Journal, p. 89).

5.5.1.3   Followership by mirroring or filling leadership gaps

The failure to manage boundaries effectively appears to have been mirrored by project team members. This is evident in the violation of boundaries by team members by missing meetings (Journal, pp. 3; 9; 16; 24; 33; 35; 58; 62; 74; 88) or actions such as the affair across the client-consultant boundary (see 5.2.1.4). It could be seen as a refusal by team members to follow formal lines of reporting: *"Many on the project respect [one of the process team leaders] a great deal, and believe he should be the project manager. Apparently he has little time for [the project manager], and refuses to report in to him. He reports directly to [the project sponsor]"* (Journal, p. 17).

The organisation development manager also mirrored this failure to exercise personal leadership. Although it was agreed that she attended each team's team meeting to tell them the bad news about their promised salary and promotions, she failed to so, and informed them all by e-mail, causing great anger and distress (Journal, p. 92).

There was evidence that in the absence of effective leadership, team members sought to contain their anxiety by focussing on non-task activity such as the discussion of the human resource issues or endless iterations of planning (see 5.1.1.5). There is also evidence of followers stepping in and filling the leadership vacuum. This could be seen in the behaviour of the consultant himself:

- The consultant describes an opening address by the client project manager at the team-building workshop as *"apparently unprepared, completely un-inspirational, and a shambling apology for being here on a Sunday. It gave no support to our reason for being here, and in no way placed the project in a higher context or conveyed the organisation's commitment to the work of the people in the room. In my own opening I tried to lighten the mood and give some sense of what we hoped to achieve"* (Journal, p. 15).

- The consultant appeared to be attempting to compensate for the leader's lack of caring, which reflected an anima/animus split, as detailed in 5.8. This was evident again in a later journal entry in which the consultant recorded the closing address by the client project manager: *"When finally he sat down there was still no clear signal that people could go, so I jumped up and thanked people for their energies over the last three days and wished them a safe trip home"* (Journal, p. 20).

5.5.1.4   Exercise of personal leadership by the consultant

While there was ample evidence in the journal of the consultant's failure effectively to challenge his superiors on the project and in the consulting firm (see section 5.4.1.4), there were a number of indications that he did try to demonstrate personal leadership at times. Illustrative examples include the following:

- Writing of the client project manager's failure to prepare for a session during the same event the consultant noted: *"[a colleague] and I decided that if the session is not ready to run tomorrow we shall not try to rescue him too much, but let him cope with the consequences of his (in)actions"* (Journal, p. 17).

- Preparing for this event the consultant mentioned a tension between the client workshop facilitator and himself regarding how the workshop would have been presented. He commented: *"The difficulty for [the client resource] is that she just has to accept that she must go along with the way I am framing the workshop. I try to listen to her views, and to give them due consideration, but ultimately my neck is on the block on this one and we will do it my way"* (Journal, p. 14). It seemed as if the larger conflict between client and consulting organisations was playing out at the individual client-consultant level.

- Later in the journal the consultant recorded: *"I finish off my e-mail to [a member of the consulting firm executive] outlining what I see as some of the key shortcomings of the firm*

that are preventing us building a strong change leadership practice, and send it off to him. On reading it [the consultant's wife] comments that she hopes he is big enough to hear what I'm saying, and that she doesn't think many managers would be. Oh well, I'm going anyway, so it wouldn't be worth the effort to fire me!" (Journal, p. 109).

5.5.2   Discussion: Leadership / followership

The failure of leadership to manage boundaries effectively appeared to have created a project culture or personality (Stapely, 1996) that was fragmented and alienating, and promoted boundary violation by project members. In this case there appeared to be a deep-rooted culture in which individual worth was valued in financial rather than human terms.

Czander (1993) argued that organisations take on a character and structure that is a reflection of its executives' fantasies. In this case it seemed that leadership shared a fantasy that it could exercise control by being absent (not meeting, missing team-building sessions etc.) and creating a vacuum (see references to flight in 5.7.1.4). Many of the followership actions of project members, such as the consultants attempts to compensate for the lack of caring he perceived around him, could then be understood either as mirroring of this behaviour, or as attempts to fill that vacuum.

Some of the quoted journal entries conveyed the strong sense of disappointment felt by the consultant and other system members when leadership is not exercised effectively on the project. There was a sense of being cheated. In some cases, when system members perceived their own needs not being met, they engaged in what the systems psychodynamic model describes as "anti-task behaviour" - interpreted as an unconscious means of jeopardising the system (Miller, 1993).

It could be interpreted that the failure to exercise leadership occurred not by chance, but represented a desire by system members to avoid responsibility. At a deeper level (and despite the statements in 5.2.2 above) it may have represented the mask of helplessness described by Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990) that the consultant failed to observe in the client organisation. Certainly there is evidence that the absence of leadership in project leaders

elicited the reciprocal mask of competence these authors describe (ibid) in the consultant, who at times tried to fill the leadership vacuum himself. The consultant's orientation to this mask of competence can be seen in his comment about his colleague's reported affair: *"What does concern me is that the maintenance of professional confidentiality may be at risk"* (Journal, p. 47).

From the above discussion on leadership / followership, it seems as if all these actions, whether the attempts of leadership to lead by absence or of followership to compensate and fill the leadership void, are battles for power (Miller, 1993). They appear to be a project-level mirroring of a larger battles being played out between the client and consulting firms.

From the foregoing it seems that the project environment reflected poor management of boundaries, unclear authority and lack of effective leadership, all of which contributed to the already high levels of anxiety existing in the consulting system, as a result of the system members taking up their roles in a new consulting relationship. The sections that follow explore the presence of basic assumption group behaviour as a means of containing this anxiety.

5.6   DEPENDENCY

Dependency behaviour was manifest in many aspects of the system.

5.6.1   Findings

Evidence of dependency was found in journal references to powerlessness, the need for approval and hostility toward leadership, all typical manifestations of this basic assumption.

5.6.1.1   Consultant dependency

The consultant's dependency can be seen in the following:

- Journal entries reflected his perceived inadequacy or powerlessness, such as his communication with leadership about the absence of a change leader partner in 5.4.1.5 above.

- Entries in which the consultant suggested that he needed seniors to protect him: *"Fortunately [the change practice head] will attend. She's very level-headed and won't let them push us around"* (Journal, p. 3).

- Hostility expressed towards leadership of the project. At one point the consultant described an interaction between himself and the client project sponsor and project manager as follows: *"I feel like a dog being thrown the odd bone to keep him happy, and all the bones not being particularly palatable"* (Journal, p. 63). Later the consultant reported a dream in which he concealed information from the client project manager that would cause the project manager anxiety, and comments: *"It was interesting to sense my latent subversion, and perhaps aggression toward the project leader, and the client organisation"* (Journal, p. 42).

- Hostility expressed towards leadership of the consulting organisation. The consultant complained on a number of occasions of the separation that existed between partners (senior staff) and consultants (junior staff) in the consulting firm. In one passage his hostility was most evident: *"This adherence to the concept of the world consisting of partners and almost-people (i.e. almost capable of sentient, human activity) is really getting nauseating. … One would think that Partners had never been 'ordinary people'"* (Journal, p. 35).

5.6.1.2   Dependency in the Change Management team

There was evidence that the consultant's dependency was a mirror of dependency that existed in the Change Management division as a whole:

- *"As [a colleague] observes: "it is exactly the "look for eagles and ask them to fly in formation" problem we discussed at the workshop"* (Journal, p. 88).

- Following a meeting of the service line, the consultant noted in his journal: *"There is a looming crisis in the business with lack of new work coming in … [The change management practice leader] assures me it's not really our job [to find work]. It's the responsibility of the partners. (As [a colleague] points out: "We have no partner in Change Management; only partners bring in work; we have no work coming in. Hello - this doesn't seem too difficult to decipher!)"* (Journal, p. 57).

5.6.1.3   Dependency in the client organisation

Evidence of dependency in the client system can be seen in the following:

- The client leaders' focus on minute detail in the change management plan (see 5.1.1.5).

- Hostility from client project team members toward their own project leadership over the failure of this group to resolve issues related to their compensation and future job opportunities. As described in 5.5.1.2 above, there was great anger when promises were made to team members in order to get them to join the project were not lived up to (Journal, p. 89). Some months later the journal recorded: *"[The client project team members] sound off quite vocally about … the HR issues … They confirm for me that … it is the way it has been handled that has got everyone's blood boiling. Apparently some project members have already left as a result, and more are to follow"* (Journal, p. 92).

- The client project manager's behaviour, for example: *"When I tell him that I have asked [the client project sponsor] to attend the workshop he sounds anxious and says something about not confusing the team by having too many leaders there"* (Journal, p. 6).

5.6.2   Discussion: Dependency

The findings appeared to depict the consultant in particular, and the change management team in general, as feeling inadequate or powerless. The desire for a new leader was emblematic of Klein's (1959) concept of the desire for a "good parent", and appeared to be an example of what Cilliers and Koortzen (2000) described as manipulation of leaders out of their roles into that of a parent. Consistent with this basic assumption described by Rioch (1975), there appeared to be a fantasy that this leader will derive omnipotence from elevation to partnership status in the consulting firm, and thereby rescued the consultant and his colleagues.

Despite project leadership's failure to lead effectively from the beginning of the project, the consultant and other project members appeared to continue hoping that leadership will "step up and be accountable", and rescued them from their anxiety. This is consistent with de Board's (1993) description of dependent groups vacillating between deifying the leader, and denigrating them for failed performance. As suggested by Bion (1961), the failure of leadership to rescue team members aroused hostility toward them, and, in the case of the change management group, appeared to lead to greater cohesiveness among group members (Rioch, 1975).

From the above discussion of dependency, it seemed as if the consultant was wrestling with conflicting needs of dependency and counter dependency that were foreshadowed in the discussion (in 5.4.2) regarding the consultant "waiting for authorisation to challenge". He appeared torn between the need for approval and to be liked, and the role demand of challenging what he sees as a toxic and alienating project environment. In turn, this conflict appeared to mirror a wider struggle for legitimacy (resources, leadership, recognition of impact on the organisation's culture) experienced by the project within the context of the client organisation.

5.7   FIGHT / FLIGHT

Many of the instances mentioned previously point to the presence of fight / flight in the consulting relationship system.

5.7.1   Findings

Of all the psychodynamic themes manifested in the journal, perhaps the most dominant was that of hostility between consultant and client.

5.7.1.1   Consultant hostility toward the client

Throughout the journal, language and images were used that convey an attitude of hostility toward the client. Examples of this from the beginning of the project included the following:

- *"[The change management practice leader] won't let them push us around"* (Journal, p. 3).
- After a very early encounter with the client project manager the consultant observed: *"Going to have an uphill battle to get him to focus on the intangibles. ...... Let battle commence!"* (Journal, p. 6).
- Commenting on the client project sponsor's attitude to a colleague he writes: *"there is a pattern of 'consultant abuse' that appears to be slipping in"* (Journal, p. 27).

Later this attitude was present in entries such as:

- An image of gunslingers in a shootout: *"[The client project sponsor] apologises for the missed meeting on Thursday, but the regret doesn't reach his eyes"* (Journal, p. 62).
- A description of a colleague who was believed to be having a relationship with a senior client team member as *"sleeping with the enemy"* (Journal, p. 65).

5.7.1.2   Competition between change management and client

There was explicit evidence of competition existing between the consulting change management team and the client's internal organisational development resources. This

occurred on three levels, namely:

1 Competition with the Human Resources Executive (HRE)

- From the outset the consultant detailed the battle for influence with the HRE: *"They insist the project is merely a systems implementation. We know that it introduces significant changes in the way the business is managed. Unfortunately [the HRE] think they are the experts on OD and culture change, and are not going to have outsiders messing in their patch"* (Journal, p. 1).

- *"It seems like a number of the HRE noses are out of joint about the project"* (Journal, p. 6).

It was evident that by the end of the consultant's involvement in the project, he never did meet any members of the HRE.

2 Competition with the client organisational development manager

- *"[The organisational development manager] has informed them that our Change Management plan 'will never be signed off' by the powers that be as it is too steeped in 'consultant speak'. She has written an entirely new version, and requested our feedback within 24 hours"* (Journal, p. 59).

- *"[The organisational development manager] is comfortable that she can handle the change management needs with one other person"* (Journal, p. 62).

3 Competition with the client's workshop facilitator at the team-building workshop

- *"[the workshop facilitator]… just has to accept that she must go along with the way I am framing the workshop. … ultimately my neck is on the block on this one and we will do it my way"* (Journal, p. 12).

5.7.1.3 Consultant hostility toward consulting leadership

Evidence has been presented detailing the consultant's hostility toward the consulting firm's leadership arising from the undermining of change management work on the project (see 5.3.1.3) and the failure to appoint a change management partner in the firm (see 5.4.1.5). Other journal entries also point to this theme, namely:

- Reflecting on the closeness he feels to a change management colleague, the consultant suggests: *"We share a common suspicion of the corporate, profit driven environment of which we are a part"* (Journal, p. 28).

- On another occasion he reflects: *"I got the distinct impression that [a colleague] has been "won over" to the profit-is-the-only-standard-we-care-about doctrine of the rest of the firm"* (Journal, p. 37).
- *I have already established that [the consulting firm] is about private fiefdom's, and this must be a manifestation of [the CEO's]"* (Journal, p. 103).

There was evidence that the consultant perceives the leadership of the consulting organisation as a threat to the continued existence of the change management group. On their failure to appoint consultants to replace those leaving the consultant wrote: *"They don't want change management to succeed do they?!"* (Journal, p. 50).

5.7.1.4   Physical manifestations of flight throughout the client - consultant system

Further evidence of orientation to this basic assumption can be seen in the prevalence of flight behaviour throughout the client - consultant system. At the physical level this was evident in for example:

- Avoidance of others

Events were poorly attended (Journal, pp. 92; 96); people arrived late or missed meetings (Journal, pp. 3; 9; 16; 24; 33; 35; 58; 62; 74; 88); phone calls were not returned (Journal, pp. 43; 60; 61); despite numerous attempts the consultant never met the Human Resources Executive (HRE) team of the client (Journal, pp. 1; 6; 31; 43; 93); the client project sponsor and consulting project director missed key parts of the team building workshop (Journal, p. 17). This physical avoidance was exemplified by the project leadership group, who consistently fail to meet: *"I was … appalled to hear that the session yesterday afternoon was the first time the project leadership had met as a group in the same room - three months into the project!"* (Journal, p. 21), and they did so only twice throughout the consultant's tenure. In addition, although there was a lot of discussion of her intended involvement in the project, the change management project leader was never actually involved in the project during the consultant's tenure (Journal, pp. 1; 2; 57; 63; 74; 75; 76; 77; 89).

- Illness

From the outset the consultant drew a connection between the illness of the change management project leader and the toxicity of the project: *"It's a bit worrying that [the change*

management project leader] has basically been driven to ill-health by her workload, and it sounds like a good deal of that has been the worry and stress of the project" (Journal, p. 2). Her illness became an ongoing background theme throughout the rest of the project (Journal, pp. 74; 89). There was evidence of mirroring occurring between illness on the project and in the contextual environment. On the day his daughter was born, the consultant wrote: *"Just before we reached our house [his son] said "Daddy I feel sick all over" and then threw up quite violently all over himself and the back seat of the car!"*.

- Leaving

Many entries dealt with the issue of people leaving both the project and the consulting firm: *"Apparently some project members have already left as a result, and more are to follow"* (Journal, p. 93). The project team has "flown" its on-site location in Isando and moved to Rosebank, where it is completely disconnected from any other element of the client organisation (Journal, p. 92). There are numerous references to change management staff who left the change management practice of the consulting firm, in many cases because they were emigrating (Journal, pp. 2; 11; 36; 44; 49; 78; 80; 102). This included 5 of the 6 change management consultants active on this project. The journal recorded names and numbers, observing that *"of 30 people [in the practice in mid 1997] … in 18 months the service line will have been depleted by: 1 Partner, 2 Senior Managers, 4 Managers, 5 Senior Consultants, 5 Consultants, 2 Business Analysts and 2 support staff"* (Journal, p. 78).

5.7.1.5   Psychological avoidance of here-and-now issues

A number of journal entries pointed to psychological avoidance of here-and-now issues through repression or rationalisation:

- *"[a colleague] … got a message that [the consulting and client project managers] urgently wanted to speak to her about the change management plan. … However, when she tried to get hold of him he didn't return her messages. In the end when she spoke to him he couldn't recall that he'd wanted to see her"* (Journal, p. 43).
- The journal recorded many occasions when the consultant rationalised not addressing here-and-now conflict (see 5.4.1.4).
- After many weeks the consultant finally got leadership agreement for the leadership workshop, then repressed that he is running it: *"I phone [his dissertation supervisor] to set*

up an appointment to see him next Wednesday, then phone him back when I realise I am conducting the workshop that day. He observes that this is interesting. I agree: it clearly demonstrates my subconscious desire not to conduct the workshop" (Journal, p. 78).

While there was some evidence of the consultant's willingness to deal with here-and-now material and to hold others to this, this was subverted by denial within the system:

- *"I suggested that discussing [the tension between Johannesburg and Pretoria] was a sign of health, and that we were dealing with real stuff by doing so, but ...... [the change management practice leader in Pretoria] … seemed adamant that the very topic … should be verboten"* (Journal, p. 36).

- When the change management practice leader announced her departure from the consulting firm, the consultant wrote: *"… the CEO repeatedly says "The one thing I don't want is people feeling down about this and saying to themselves 'Not another one going!' I don't want to see that." It strikes me that this is a good reflection of his management style: Tell people what you want them to feel and the bad will go away. [A colleague] voices my thoughts: "It's kind of difficult not to feel that"* (Journal, p. 80).

5.7.2 Discussion: Fight / Flight

The reciprocal hostility that emerged is consistent with what Gemmill (1986) and Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990) describe as typically manifesting in the client-consultant relationship. It was evidence of both projection and projective identification, with each side assuming the adversarial role supplied to it by the other. References to not "let[ting] them push us around" (Journal, p. 3) appeared to support Gemmill and Wynkoop's (1993) contention that consultants frequently feel manipulated by their clients. The manifestation of illness in the consulting group appears to be evidence of the consultant and his change colleagues carrying negative emotional energy on behalf of the system (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000).

Neumann (1997) speaks of the critical importance of identifying primary clients and establishing their objectives and motives. Therefore the consultant never once met with one of his de facto primary client groups (the Human Resource Executive), represented flight by both parties on a singularly significant scale, and was a further example of the "control through

absence" culture detailed in 5.5.2.

It is important to note that the valence of system members to the basic assumption of fight / flight may to some extent have been a mirror of the strong fight / flight themes that were occurring in South African society at the time. There were six separate references in the journal to incidents in which friends of the consultant are attacked or highjacked, and many references to the high level of emigration. There was every likelihood that the dominance of these themes in the contextual environment contributed to their dominance on the project. Further evidence of this mirroring was contained in a journal reference to consultants who were not only leaving the South African practice, but the Vancouver office to which the consultant was leaving. A colleague in Vancouver stated that "the rats are leaving the ship" (Journal, p. 44).

The hostility the consulting organisation as a whole exhibited toward the client appeared to point to a failure of the consultant and his colleagues to contain anxiety (Klein, 1959; Obholzer & Roberts, 1994), or create the necessary holding environment described by Kahn (1993), Shapiro and Carr (1991). Rather, they appeared to leak this anxiety and in the process become ineffective in enabling change in the client organisation. The degree of flight behaviour exhibited by leadership was evidence of the leadership fantasy of "control by absence" discussed in 5.5.2.

From the above discussion of fight / flight it seemed as if there was a rational / irrational split in which all levels of the system colluded. At the rational level the relationship was framed as a joint project in which client and consulting organisations collaborated as partners. At the irrational level the relationship was conducted as a competition or battle, in which both organisations avoided each other, and used each other to export the toxicity within their own organisations. However, in order to get work done, the system imported a common "enemy" in the form of the consultant and his change management colleagues. These were then used by the system to carry the hurtful feelings and ineffectiveness engendered by this battle (Cilliers, 2002) (see also 5.12 below.)

5.8   PAIRING / SPLITTING

There was strong evidence that system members engaged in splitting, and gravitated at times to the defence of pairing. Examples of splitting on the part of the consultant were also indicative of his orientation to the paranoid-schizoid position.

5.8.1   Findings

Generally, the consultant perceived others as "bad", and himself as "good", clearly splitting good and bad within himself and projecting the latter onto the client organisation and his own consulting firm leadership.

5.8.1.1   Consultant pairing of leadership

The consultant worked very hard throughout the project to pair the leaders of both consulting and client organisations into one effective "good parent". This was evident from his constant attempts to bring them together in meetings, and to have them clarify their relationship together (Journal, pp. 21; 27; 46; 47; 48; 57; 58; 61; 62; 64; 69; 70; 83). His desire to achieve this pairing was clear in for example: *"I can see this is heading for a disaster - neither [the consulting project director] or [the client project sponsor] will even discuss the workshop with me face to face"* (Journal, p. 61). He appeared unable to grasp that the need was his and not theirs, despite the following (and other) clear opposition: *"I launch into an explanation of my intentions for the leadership workshop. They listen for about 5 minutes, then proceed to make it quite plain that they see no value whatsoever in any of the activities I have outlined. They feel spending time exploring the partnership relationship between [the two organisations] is pointless"* (Journal, p. 62).

5.8.1.2   Splitting by the consultant

Many journal references provided evidence of the consultant splitting the consulting firm into us (change management) and them (leadership, and anyone not part of change management). In the process the consultant projects onto these others much that is bad, and creates an illusory idealised image of the change management group. Examples include:

• The assumption by the consultant that his own view of how the change plan should be

structured was correct (see 5.1.1.5) and that all concerns from the client's side were misplaced.

- *"It is crazy! I think this organisation totally undervalues the skills of its people. [A change management colleague] is a very confident, competent person and - in my opinion - -quite capable of functioning at the senior consultant level - whatever that may be!"* (Journal, p. 9).

- *"This adherence to the concept of the world consisting of partners and almost - people (ie almost capable of sentient, human activity) is really getting nauseating. … One would think that Partners had never been "ordinary people" "* (Journal, p. 3).

5.8.1.3   Change management pairing with new leadership

This split was extended into identification or pairing with change management leadership. The journal was full of entries dealing with the desire of those in the change management group to find a replacement for their departing practice leader and other change leaders (Journal, pp. 2; 11; 49; 50; 57; 74; 77; 78; 79; 80; 101; 107). This theme was further developed by the desire to have the change management leader "paired" with firm leadership by being elevated to partnership status (Journal, pp. 35; 57; 58; 87; 88; 107; see also 5.4.1.5). This pointed to the assumption that salvation for the group lies with an "unborn leader".

5.8.1.4   Change management split off by project leadership

The client organisation failed to provide physical space for change management at the project site (see 5.2.1.2), and strongly resisted authorising their role by delaying approving the plan for their work (see 5.1.1.5). This, together with the attempt by consulting firm leadership to exclude change management from the scope of the project contract (see 5.4.1.3), were indications of a splitting off of change management by both these groups. In effect leadership projected onto change management a sense of not existing or not being visible.

The consultant and his colleagues then exhibited strong counter transference and identification with this projected notion of invisibility:

- The change management team had to run the team-building workshop because they were

not seen as part of the team (Journal, p. 4). (This also served as evidence of allowing themselves to be manipulated out of their role.)

- In a sarcastic comment the consultant implied that the change management's value is invisible to the consulting project director: *"Everyone says that [the project director] is very indifferent about change management, and generally sees it as an unnecessary expense on SAP projects. What it is to be recognised for one's contribution!!"* (Journal, p. 19).

- *"An e-mail message from [consulting firm partner] announces the farewell function for [two change management colleagues on the project] and myself on the 19th. I point out to [another colleague] that both [one of the departing consultants] and I will have left by then - a fact that could have been ascertained if anyone had consulted us"* (Journal, p. 97).

- After he had left the project the consultant encounters the consulting project director who asked him to get the consulting and client leadership team members together again: *"Clearly there is no recognition that I am no longer on the project (not having been visible when I was on the project means that my departure is unnoticed!)"* (Journal, p. 104).

5.8.1.5   Change management as abused female

There was evidence that the splitting off of change management reflects a deeper split between male (animus) and female (anima) on the project, and a discounting of the value of the female in an all-male organisational context:

- The consulting project director thanked *"Graham and the change chicks"* at the end of the team-building event, and by the use of this derogatory epithet, *"in one sentence … undermined any professional standing of the female facilitators in the eyes of the rest of the team!"* (Journal, p. 20).

- The consultant noted that, despite there had been only one other woman on the project, almost no one danced with the change management women at a dance organised for the project.

- The theme of change management as abused female was conveyed when the consultant recorded a concern that a senior client team member was making advances to a change management colleague: *"She is increasingly being asked to attend meetings at the drop of a hat, and a number of these have been alone with [him] in his office after hours"* (Journal, p. 27).

- This theme of the abuse of the female was perhaps most cruelly explicit in the rumour that the one female consultant who was not on the change management team, was being "screwed" by a senior client team member (Journal, p. 46; see also 5.2.1.4).

5.8.1.6   Splitting of Pretoria and Johannesburg

There was evidence of the consultant engaging in a multi-faceted splitting between Pretoria and Johannesburg that echoes major themes on the national political landscape. In the consultant's fantasy, Pretoria appeared to be characterised as safe, black, an outsider, and a force for liberation or political struggle. In the process it was associated with all that was good, and while the consultant was based in Johannesburg he clearly identified with Pretoria. By contrast, Johannesburg was characterised as dangerous, white, the seat of power to be resisted, and was associated with evil. The following journal entries gave some of this flavour:

- In contrast to the Johannesburg building that was described as "keeping the consultant out" (see 5.1.1.4), the consultant notes *"It was good to … see the rest of the Pretoria team again, and to see their lovely new building"* (Journal, p. 13).

- *"Strange to see [the Pretoria consulting firm] office with no one in it at 5.30 in the afternoon. I've arrived at the Jo'burg office at 7.00 am on a Sunday to find a row of cars in the parking lot. I think Pretoria must be doing something right*!" (Journal, p. 14).

- The warmest relationship the consultant described was with a "coloured" Pretoria colleague whom he described as *"a bosom-buddy"* with whom he had *"a number of ANC "struggle" friendships in common"* (Journal, p. 27).

- Of one meeting he wrote, *"I noticed that all the Pretoria staff were sitting on one side of the table and the Johannesburgers on the other"* (Journal, p. 35).

- A senior Pretoria-based black member of the client organisation told the consultant that he too thought of emigrating due to multiple attacks on himself and his family members. The consultant wrote: *"I am sad to see him facing the same issues of crime, but also in a strange way feel reassured that our decision to go is less 'racist' if a black man is thinking of leaving. Ridiculous, but there it is"* (Journal, p. 93).

There was an interesting sub text in the journal that contributed to the consultant's potential valence to a Pretoria / Johannesburg split. Many journal entries dealt with the difficulty the

consultant had in obtaining documentation for his immigration to Canada and that he constantly had to go to Pretoria to visit various bureaucratic structures that will "authorise" his departure to Canada. These included the Canadian High Commission (Journal, pp. 46; 68; 79; 87), the British High Commission (pp. 68; 87), the Department of Home Affairs (p. 87) and the South African Police (p. 85). The sense of Pretoria as the "good parent" was very powerful in these. This hypothesis was supported further by the consultant's comments in the very first paragraph of the journal. He framed UNISA (and by association Pretoria) as a haven of safety from the "threat" of work: *"The reality of re-entering the working world hits me after two weeks sheltered in the bubble of UNISA exams. It's strange how much the Masters programme has almost become my comfort zone that takes me away from the pressures of work"* (Journal, p. 1).

5.8.2 Discussion: Pairing / Splitting

The pairing and splitting documented above occurred along what Cilliers (2002) described as the "fertile ground" of the natural boundaries in the system, namely organisational, departmental and geographic divisions. The splitting documented consistently reflected projections of feelings of badness across system boundaries and the creation of an idealised self on the part of the system doing the projecting. As suggested by Cilliers (2002) this assisted in creating a false sense of goodness and idealisation, while in each case above creating external figures who were either devalued and discounted, or hated and feared.

It was interesting to note that apart from the consultant himself, everyone involved with change management on the project were female. The six other consultants on the project, the change management practice leader, the organisational development manager, and the client's workshop facilitator were all female, while there was only one other female on the project. This, together with the projections the consultant and his change management colleagues appear to have accepted from the rest of the project, may have contributed to the impotence and effective emasculation the consultant struggled with throughout the project.

There was evidence that this gender split (and to some extent the race split referred to regarding "Johannesburg as white") may have been an extension of the client organisation's

position as a symbol of white male dominance in South African society. Through its products it was aligned with divisions between gender and race groups within South African society:

- The division implementing SAP was known as the "Beer Division" - a drink strongly identified with men in South African society.

- The client was a major national sponsor of traditionally male sports, such as rugby, cricket and soccer. (This might be seen as a sublimation of the aggression within the organisation system).

- White beer consumers generally drank "lager", whereas Black consumers generally drank "sorgum" beer. "Lager" was phonically the same as the Afrikaans word "laager" - a term identified in the minds of all South Africans with the physical and psychological withdrawing, or "circling of the wagons" by white Afrikaners (generally males) to protect themselves when faced with a threat.

In this context, the rumoured affair between male client and female consultant could be seen to exemplify male domination of the female more than pairing for the purpose of creation.

It was interesting to note that the system being installed to provide centralised control was known only by its acronym, "SAP". For most South Africans (including the consultant) the initials "SAP" were associated with the South African Police, a traditionally and symbolically masculine organisation that had enforced the racially discriminatory policies of the previous government. It was also an extreme example of an organisation exhibiting the bureaucratic and compulsive behaviours outlined in 5.11 below. While the name of the system was perhaps not a matter for which the client organisation was responsible, they had chosen this system over a number of alternatives.

It was also relevant that the consultant had for some time prior to the project described his work as a consultant as a "protest" activity; language clearly suggestive of the political "protest" activity of the late apartheid years in South Africa. His pairing with a colleague whom he described as a "struggle" ally, and with the Pretoria practice as a whole was evidence of a fantasy of continuing the broader political struggle within the work context. This could be characterised as a fight against the "bad" white Johannesburg client who was entrenching apartheid through the "SAP" and the "bad" white Johannesburg consulting practice and its

leadership who practised apartheid by denying change management equal status with the rest of the practice. This scenario demonstrated that the consultant had adopted the paranoid-schizoid position (Cilliers, 2002; de Board, 1993; Klein, 1959). It also appeared to demonstrate Cilliers and Koortzen's (2000, p. 44) point that, "When anxiety mobilizes behaviour, the individual experiences other people not as they are, but as the person needs them to be, so that the other person can play a role in the individual's drama".

It was important to note that the pairing processes discussed above were unsuccessful. The project leaders did not come together to create an effective leadership team, a change management leader was not appointed, no change person was elevated to partnership, the change management team did not leave the project and the consultant was not black or engaged in a political struggle. This is consistent with the hopefulness that is intrinsic to this basic assumption (Bion, 1975). The function of these pairing and splitting processes would therefore appear to have been to create hope for the person splitting or projecting, as a means of containing anxiety associated with the unpleasant reality they faced.

These splits ultimately resulted in a lack of contact previously described - the missed meetings (see 5.2.1.1), the different physical locations (see 5.2.1.2) and the culture of "control by absence" (see 5.5.2). This demonstrates Cilliers' (2002) contention that contact is avoided to preserve self-idealisation based on these projections. As a result, information was not shared, no deep understanding of the true nature of the project emerged and a rigid culture was created in which growth was stunted (ibid). The consultant's "pathological certainty" (Shapiro & Carr, 1991) about the client also made it impossible for him to hold the projections and splitting of the rest of the system in order to support them until they were able to take these back.

From the above discussion on pairing / splitting, it seemed as if the project system used splitting to ensure that effective inter-organisational collaboration and partnering could not occur. For example, the task of creation that is associated with pairing was strongly negated by the split that occurred along gender lines. It is almost as if the client and consultant organisation systems wished to deny the blurring of their organisational boundaries that was required if the act of creation (the birthing of the new system) was to take place. In this context

the appointment of a male consultant to an all-female team could be understood as an attempt by the system to "stifle" life in that unconscious competition among the female team members and may result in them "killing each other off" in an attempt to partner with the "endangered" male. Simultaneously it incapacitated the "traitorous" nurturing male, who could not give attention to any one female without alienating the others.

5.9   ME-NESS

The journal provides evidence of orientation to the basic assumption Me-ness on the part of the consultant. However, it is not possible from the journal to determine the degree to which others in the consulting relationship operated under this basic assumption.

5.9.1   Findings

There is evidence that the consultant does not at times identify with either the project or his consulting firm, and attempts to exclude the outer environment and engage with his own inner reality. This can be seen in his preoccupation with personal boundaries, and in his lack of emotional involvement or attachment with others and with the project, both of which are consistent with an orientation to the basic assumption Me-ness. It can be assumed that these are partly a natural result of the threat the consultant perceived in his external environment (see 5.1.1.4) and his documented lack of faith in both his leaders and in the values and structures of the organisations partnered on the project (5.6.1.1).

5.9.1.1   Preoccupation with personal boundaries

Many journal entries point to the consultant's selfish focus on personal boundaries to the exclusion of others. For example, he rationalises his decision not to attend the very first team meeting to which he is called on the project: *"I only found out about the meeting today, and with [the consultant's wife] away I have to collect [the consultant's son]. Of course I could make a plan to have [the nanny] collect him, but I don't want to be sucked into that whirlpool of jumping to everyone's wishes and whims]"* (Journal, p. 2).

The consultant's internal focus is so strong that at times he is conscious of how he is not engaging meaningfully with his external environment: *"I am beginning to get a sense of how much of my work goes on in my own head, and how little of it in interactions with others. I fear that this may reflect insecurity on my part, and that what I need to do far more of is voice and act on my concerns rather than masticate them. Surely consulting is about engaging, not chewing the cud?!"* (Journal, p. 23).

5.9.1.2   Lack of emotional involvement or attachment

Evidence of orientation to the basic assumption Me-ness can be seen in the consultant's lack of emotional investment in the consulting relationship and in the project as a whole:

- *"For the last few days I had consciously been putting work out of my mind, but had a sense of it closing in. I'm not sure why I feel so unenthusiastic about work at the moment. I have a sense of going through the motions at [work], rather than being personally caught up in what I am doing"* (Journal, p. 42).

- *"I find myself reflecting on the project, my role in it, and my life generally. I have never felt so much at arms length and so uninvolved with a project or client before. No doubt this is significantly increased by the other events in my life at the moment, but ever since coming on the project I feel like I've been involved in no substantial consulting work. I haven't actually done anything. It's been all rehearsal and no performance"* (Journal, p. 56).

- *"To Isando for a meeting with [a process leader's] team. Again I feel like an outsider and feel like I'm going through the motions. [The consultant's replacement] has swiftly taken over most of my drive on this project. I go through the motions, but my heart is not in any of this project"* (Journal, p. 69).

This detachment is mirrored in the consultant's personal life, as can be seen from the following entries:

- Commenting on a crisis facing the health care system in which his wife is employed the consultant writes: *"The degree to which [the consultant's wife] and I have already started to detach ourselves is illustrated by our reaction of 'Oh well, we won't have to live with this situation for more than a month or so'"* (Journal, p. 32).

- Reflecting on the difference between the imminent birth of his second child, and the birth of his first child the consultant observes: *"On the way [to the hospital] we remarked how different things were going for a planned Caesarean - less traumatic and anxious, but also more surreal"* (Journal, p. 52).

5.9.1.3   Characterisation of the project as an undifferentiated mass

Observations earlier in this chapter indicate that the consultant at times views the leadership of his own firm and that of the client organisation as all part of one undistinguished mass, all of whom are seen as the enemy (see 5.7). Equally, the members of the project are essentially one amorphous mass in the journal. Apart from the fact that he sometimes is confused whether project members belong to the consulting or client firms (see 5.2.1.4) a feature of the journal is the almost complete lack of reference to any individuals on the project by name or in any way that acknowledges their individuality.

5.9.2   Discussion: Me-ness

The consultant clearly had significant events going on in his life outside the project including the impending birth of his daughter, sale of his house and emigration to Canada. While these would account for him being distracted from the project, the fact that he characterises attending a normal project meeting as "jumping to everyone's wishes and whims" indicates a dysfunctional degree of detachment from his task. This, together with his emotional disinvestment, and the evidence that he views the project team as an undifferentiated mass as described by Cilliers (2002), Koortzen and Cilliers (2002), suggests an unconscious assumption that the group does not exist for him in any real sense.

The consultant's comment that *"I fear that this may reflect insecurity on my part"* suggests that he is aware of, but unwilling to confront the "comforting simplicity of self-idealisation" (Cilliers, 2002, p. 3) as outlined in 5.8 above. The consultant's resistance to being part of the group can be seen both as withdrawal and passive aggression which Lawrence, Bain and Gould (1996) suggest characterise the basic assumption Me-ness, and, as Spero (1998) suggests, undoubtedly undermines the consultant's ability to fulfil his role on the project and therefore

the effectiveness of the group.

At the same time, it raises the question of what it was in the system that contributed to the consultant's orientation to the basic assumption Me-ness (Czander, 1993; Miller, 1993). Why was *this* consultant chosen for *this* role? From the above discussion of Me-ness, it seems as if the system may have selected the consultant in part because he was male, and in part because he was moving out of the consulting organisation, the project and the South African context. It is as if there was an unconscious script that the system could disown or discount its "badness" by projecting this onto the "enemy within" or traitor and then, with his departure, export system failures, so making the system safe.

5.10   WE-NESS

Of all the basic assumption positions, system orientation to the basic assumption We-ness was weakest. However, there appears to be some valence to this position in journal entries related to the change management team as a whole.

5.10.1 Findings

Despite the sense conveyed in the journal that the change management group is not valued by clients or the consulting firm, there is strong identification with the group among its members. There appears to be a fantasy within this group that maintaining the cohesion of the group will enable individuals within it to withstand the threat they perceive in their environment.

To some extent this is reflected in journal depictions of change management team members supplanting one another on the project, almost as if they are interchangeable and devoid of individual characteristics. For example:
- the consultant is replaced on the project, but this is done gradually without the knowledge of the client, and
- one member of the change management team is described as supplanting another as the person the client project manager *"likes to hate"* (Journal, p. 8).

Other journal entries appear to suggest a sense of the group as the source of recognition and identity:

- *"[The Pretoria change management practice leader] had mentioned again how the rest of the organisation sees the SA [change management] practice as the pace-setter. A colleague observed that if this was the case, and valued as such, we should not be constrained by existing parameters, but have the courage to challenge the status quo"* (Journal, p. 36).

- *"There is a lot of talk that the South African coterie that is now spread around the world 'must stand together and support each other'. There seems to be a desire to preserve the group and it's ethos and approach to change management around the world, and to influence the thinking around the world"* (Journal, p. 45).

Equally, threat to the group is perceived as a threat to personal existence. At a meeting at which the change management practice leader announces her departure she is reported by the consultant as *"saying that half of us are psychic and everyone has been phoning her since the announcement [of the meeting] to find out what's happening"*, implying that the group has instinctively known that she is leaving (Journal, p. 80). He goes on to comment that *"Her news is met with absolute silence. … I say nothing, acutely aware that I am part of the group leaving, and therefore to some extent immune from the depression I sense around me"* (ibid, p. 80).

The journal also demonstrates orientation to this basic assumption on the part of the consultant, who voices the desire to recreate the current change management team in Canada: *"I was very happy to hear that [the change management practice leader] might be [immigrating to] Vancouver, and of course we shared all sorts of fantasies about creating our own boutique consultancy in Vancouver with [a former senior practice member], [the change management practice leader], myself and one or two other friends"* (Journal, p. 50).

5.10.2 Discussion: We-ness

The minimal evidence for valence to the basic assumption We-ness may reflect that this was

not a dominant dynamic in the consulting relationship. However, it may also suggest that this is a theme more deeply repressed by the consultant than the other dynamics, or that it was present in the journal but not picked up by the researcher, or both of these.

Lawrence, Bain and Gould (1996) describe group members under this basic assumption as experiencing existence only through their membership of the group. This assumption can be inferred collectively from the image of change management team members being interchangeable, the sense that members of this group perceive the fragmentation of the group as a personal threat (rather than a career opportunity, for example) and the articulated fantasy of keeping the group together after it has fragmented.

From the above discussion of we-ness, it seems as if the consultant and his change colleagues took refuge in their collective identity, almost as compensation for their inability to establish an identity within the consulting organisation or project environments. Invisible to others, their collective identity provided proof of their existence and worth to each other.

5.11   RELATIONSHIP AND RELATEDNESS

It becomes clear from reading the journal that the client organisation, consulting organisation and change management consultants were working with very different conceptions of their relationship and relatedness.

5.11.1 Findings: Client organisation's "organisation-in-the-mind"

The following image emerges of the organisation-in-the-mind held by client project team members.

5.11.1.1   Leaders as superior and separate

The project was characterised by a lack of trust and a culture of deception from the outset. The real purpose for installing SAP, which was more effective and centralised control of the organisation's operations and costs, was hidden from employees behind a facade of

efficiencies and competitive strategy (see 5.4.1.1). On the project itself, team members were misled about their salary and career prospects if they joined the project (see 5.5.1.2). These actions convey a belief by client leadership that project team and organisational members are inferior and that the relationship with them requires no honesty or accountability on the part of leadership.

5.11.1.2   Consultants are competitors

Although the language of the relationship was that of a partnership, in truth the client organisation viewed the consulting firm as competitors. Rather than combining forces and distributing the project leadership roles across one unified group, each organisation appointed its own project leader (consulting project director or client project sponsor) and project manager. The client leaders then maintained control by not meeting with consulting leadership (see 5.7.1.4) by not making themselves available to project members (see 5.5.2) and by not properly authorising the consultants' work (not signing the contract), thereby undermining the ability of the consultants to do their work (see 5.1.1.3). They also consistently placed their own change management expertise in opposition to that of the consulting firm (see 5.7.1.2).

5.11.1.3   A bureaucratic mind set

The client's leadership style on the project was characterised by a high focus on detailed planning, and a need to micro-manage the project through pre-approval of meeting agendas or re-writing of work plans (see 5.1.1.5). There was a rigid insistence on applying client organisation procedures to the project. For example: *"[The client project manager] is determined to have us include … a session on goal setting that has to be done according to the [client organisation] goal-setting method …. [This] is supposed to be followed very rigorously"* (Journal, p. 8). The client's firmness on this is apparent from repeated reference to the issue (Journal, pp. 9;12;16;17;18). The view appears to be that relationships are structured through procedures and documents rather than through personal interaction.

5.11.1.4   Change management as submissive female

The most explicit framing of the client perception of change management is provided in the following journal entry: *"They proceed pretty much to ignore me and to dictate to each other (with me there as secretary?) ..... eventually challenge them on what they understand my role and that of change leadership on the project to be. The essence of their answer is 'a support function to the real work', which as far as I can interpret, means producing information for them, organising meetings etc."* (Journal, p. 62). This entry supports the hypothesis outlined in 5.8.1.3 that the client frames change management as female and inferior, and not part of the "real" project.

5.11.2 Findings: Consulting organisation's "organisation-in-the-mind"

The perception of project relationships in the mind of the consulting organisation's leaders appears to demonstrate counter transference of much of the client's view outlined above, sometimes providing the counterfoil to the client's view, and sometimes mirroring it.

5.11.2.1   The client is in charge … but a competitor

The journal portrays consulting firm leadership as behaving in a subservient manner to client leaders, as if fearful of antagonising them. For example, describing the contract negotiation the consultant states *"anything [the client project sponsor] demands [the consulting project director] will accede to"* (Journal, p. 84). As a consequence they sometimes engage in behaviour that mirrors the client's culture of deception. For example, because they do not want to *"raise [the client's] ire"* (Journal, p. 29) by announcing that the consultant and a colleague will be leaving the project, they have a replacement consultant begin attending meetings without acknowledging her role: *"I had to introduce her as being a colleague who was 'getting a sense of the work we are doing'"* (Journal, p. 47). Once again, despite the facade of partnership, a clearly hierarchical relationship is evident.

At the same time, the consulting firm collaborates with the client firm in setting up a parallel rather than a unified project leadership structure, and competes with the client to staff the project with its own people rather than theirs (Journal, pp. 4; 29; 46; 59; 76; 82). At one point the consultant observes *"the difference that occurs in the language of all participants*

whenever the discussion shifts from contract to project issues. The language (and attitude) immediately becomes more adversarial … when in negotiation. I suggest that in the interests of the long term success of the project they may wish to get this contract signed as rapidly as possible" (Journal, p. 84).

5.11.2.2   Change management as female and "in the way"

As outlined earlier there are strong indications that the consulting organisation's project leadership perceives change management as female (see 5.8.1.5), and as unnecessary (see 5.4.1.3). The fact that the project director overtly discounts change management to the clients and tries to separate them from the main project by removing them from the contract is an indication that they are seen as extraneous and in the way. These actions are also an indication that the consulting leaders use their mutual disregard of change management to ally themselves with their client counterparts.

5.11.3 Findings: Consultant's "organisation-in-the-mind"

The consultant's perception of project relationships is clearly different.

5.11.3.1   Change management as an influential insider

Both client and consulting leaders evidently perceive change management as separate to themselves, as represented in Figure 4.1 by the separation between the purple and green loops. However, there is much evidence that from the outset the consultant believes himself to be one of the inner circle, with a position of influence on the project:
"My main goal for the next few weeks is to get close to [the four leaders] so that I can start to impact their thinking around the softer issues" (Journal, p. 4).
"At this point my major concern is how to build a relationship of trust and influence with [the client project manager] (and the rest of the management team) that will allow me to say the things I think they need to hear" (Journal, p. 9).

Together with so much other evidence in the preceding pages, Figure 4.1 would appear to

demonstrate that the consultant's view is significantly at variance with that of his clients.

5.11.3.2 Interaction in the mind

During the project the consultant becomes aware that much of his relationship with his clients occurs more in his head than in direct interface with them:

- *"I am beginning to get a sense of how much of my work goes on in my own head, and how little of it in interactions with others. I fear that this may reflect insecurity on my part, and that what I need to do far more of is voice and act on my concerns rather than masticate them. Surely consulting is about engaging, not chewing the cud?!"* (Journal, p. 23).

This would appear to be evidence that he perceives his clients as threatening, a typical manifestation of the paranoid-schizoid position he has adopted.

5.11.3.3 Consultant as outsider

Despite his perception of his role as making him a member of the inner circle, the consultant simultaneously desires to be outside the project and his consulting firm. This is evident in his pairing with Pretoria and his view of himself as engaged in a liberation struggle (see 5.8.1.6), and his general flight behaviour (see 5.7.1.5). There is a strong sense that the consultant is going through the process of detaching himself from the project, his consulting firm and his life in South Africa (Journal, pp. 27; 39; 67; 74; 93; 97; 100; 102). On a number of occasions he reflects on this, at one point commenting that he is *"Saying goodbye in small bite-size chunks"* (Journal, p. 76), and it is clear that he perceives himself as an outsider.

5.11.4 Discussion: Relationship and Relatedness

These differing conceptions of the relationships and relatedness between the participants are clearly in conflict, and since they strongly influenced much of what happened in the consulting relationship (Shapiro & Carr, 1991), they explain a good deal of the conflict between the system members. They also appear to have exerted their influence largely outside the consciousness of the participants (Hutton, Bazalgette & Reed, 1997; Shapiro & Carr, 1991),

yet clearly seemed real to the participants within the project setting (Cilliers, 2002). The formation of these organisations-in-the-mind was derived partly from introjection of aspects of what was happening to the participants during their project experiences. However, a case can also be made that these were strongly influenced by the internal objects and part objects the participants brought to the consulting relationship from their existing organisational contexts.

The culture of the project was essentially an extension of the culture that pervaded the client organisation as a whole. At the time of the project the client organisation held almost monopolistic control of its market in South Africa and management of the myriad subdivisions was achieved largely through established and formalised policies and standard operating procedures. The organisation demonstrated highly ritualistic modes of operating, with detailed and specified methods for managing people and accomplishing tasks. It had become largely inwardly focussed since changes to the competitive landscape were minimal and profits were largely assured.

The client organisation's secretiveness and deception is consistent with a compulsive organisation which Kets de Vries and Miller (1991) describe as having a high degree of mistrust between leader and subordinates, and "overtones of suspicion and manipulation and a constant preoccupation with losing control" (ibid, p. 256). At the same time the micro-management and need for control are suggestive of a bureaucratic group culture which Kets de Vries and Miller (1991, p. 256) characterise as "depersonalised and rigid", and "permeated by top management's preoccupation with control". They suggest that in bureaucratic organisations leaders "manage by rules rather than through personal guidance or directives. They want to avoid surprises and to determine what is happening throughout the firm" (ibid, p. 256).

Similarly, the struggle the consulting leaders had with taking up an equal role on the project was a mirror of dynamics occurring in the consulting organisation at the time. It was in the process of disengaging from its "parent" auditing organisation, and of moving from a regional to a global structure with a new logo and name. These changes would have contributed to a culture high in anxiety and dependency (Obholzer & Roberts, 1994).

The sense of competitiveness was likewise a mirror of events in the broader context. A recent merger between two of the "big six" consulting firms had created a climate of significant competition or threat for the consulting firm. Indeed the leaders of the firm had recently defined their vision as becoming "one of the top three firms internationally" in the near future. In itself this vision was evidence of an organisation that defined itself in terms of a battle for supremacy.

There is evidence in the journal that this single-minded competitive stance had led to the development of a culture of suspicion and mistrust of others in which information was treated as a source of power, and often not shared across boundaries. Kets de Vries and Miller (1991, p. 247) describe such a culture as exemplified by "hypersensitivity to any challenge to authority, and to hyper-alertness for any potential threat to the supremacy of the organisation or its leaders". According to these authors, this persecutory preoccupation manifests as a paranoid organisational culture, or what Bion (1961) called a fight-flight culture. In such a culture executives are "overly concerned with hidden motives and special meanings: … the actions of others are easily misread and distorted; minor slights become magnified" (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1991, p. 247). In this context it is likely that the consulting project leaders experienced the consultant's drive to create a unified project structure as threatening and unwelcome.

From the above discussion, it seems as if the fantasies about their relatedness held by system members prevented them from engaging in effective relationships. While system members engaged in deception, they deceived themselves regarding how they were working together. As a consequence, a project designed to bring effectiveness into the client system foundered because the project system itself lacked effective relationships. It is as if the project relationships undermined the "immune system" of the project, and prevented the 'injections of health' (whether in the form of SAP, or in the role of the consultant) from "taking effect".

5.12   GROUP AS A WHOLE

Collectivist dynamics can be observed in the project system.

5.12.1 Findings

Evidence for collectivist dynamics can be found in the way certain individuals and groups were used by the system to carry particular emotional energy or to do work on behalf of other system members (see 5.1.2, 5.2.2, 5.3.2, 5.4.2, 5.7.2, 5.9.2). In addition, there were numerous indications of mirroring between system members and other indications that behaviour within the consulting relationship was not a matter of coincidence.

5.12.1.1   Change management carrying nurturing and absorbing toxicity

Much evidence has been presented that the change management group was used to carry the feminine characteristics of nurturing and caring on behalf of the system (see 5.8, 5.11). This freed the rest of the system to disregard "soft" process issues and focus on "hard" task issues and "male" competitiveness. In the process change management was also used to absorb the toxicity and stress generated by the unhealthy relationships in the project system. The prime example of this is the fact that the change management project leader became so ill that she never engaged in the project in any meaningful way throughout the consultant's tenure (see 5.7.1.4).

A graphic image of this role is provided in the following journal entry: *"While waiting for [a member of the HRE] the fire alarm in [the client head office] goes off, but no one reacts at all- a warning system that everyone wants, but is not willing to use. I have the sense that change management is being viewed that way by [the client and consulting firms]"* (Journal, p. 83).

5.12.1.2   Consultant carrying male concern for non-task issues

As a subset of this, the consultant is used as the male representative of the system to carry femaleness and a concern for the process issues discussed above on behalf of the other males. It is interesting to note that right near the end of his involvement in the project the client organisational development manager is explicit that the consultant has *"been scapegoated on the project"* (Journal, p. 93).

5.12.1.3   Mirroring

The sense of group as a whole is also conveyed by the degree to which parts of the system mirror behaviours in other parts of the system. Apart from those mentioned in the preceding pages, the following examples are illustrative:

• Section 5.5.1.3 mentions a client team process leader refusing to report to the client project manager. This is mirrored in the change management group where the change management project leader refuses to report to the change management practice leader (Journal, p. 75).

• The consulting group begins to mirror the client organisation's failure to communicate: *"Yet again we cannot even communicate internally. We mirror the Client's pathology, only better!"* (Journal, p. 88).

• The client's Isando Human Resources officer misses a meeting with the consultant because his wife goes into labour at the same clinic where the consultant's wife has just given birth. The consultant is so conscious of mirroring between client and consulting organisation systems that he comments: *"It immediately crosses my mind that [the consultant's supervisor at UNISA] would have some apt comment to make about the degree to which mirroring takes place in the consultant-client relationship!"* (Journal, p. 55).

5.12.2 Discussion: Group as a whole

The fact that both consulting and client groups collaborated in the projection of change management as abused female, and that the consultant and his colleagues accepted and behaved according to that projection is a striking example of group as a whole behaviour as described by Wells (1980). The mirroring is a strong reflection of Cilliers and Koortzen's (2000) belief that events do not happen in isolation, or as Cilliers (2002, p. 4) states: "that there is no co-incidence but rather synchronicity in the behaviour of the group".

From the above discussion of group as a whole, it seems as if the project system used the change management group to carry the "badness" in the system, and then sacrificed this group, and the consultant in particular, for the sake of the preservation of the project group.

5.13　　　HYPOTHESES

From the preceding twelve psychodynamic themes a number of hypotheses were offered regarding what was happening at the unconscious level of the consulting relationship. From a synthesis of the primary themes that emerged, it seems as if:

- the unconscious purpose of implementing the SAP system (and therefore of the project) was not to increase effectiveness in the client system through a collaborative partnership, but to contain client leadership anxiety by creating tighter control over their environment;

- the client and consulting firms competed with each other, became hostile toward each other, and engaged in a battle for power in which each projected onto the other the toxicity in its own organisation;

- the client system imported the consultant to carry nurturing and healing and contain anxiety on behalf of the system;

- through recording his thoughts, and as a result of introjected parental standards, the consultant carried the superego in the relationship. In contrast, it seems as if client leadership carried the id in the relationship, since it was present at the birth of the project, was driven to implement the project by the wish for total control (the pleasure principle), and appeared to have no conception of reality (the fact that installing the system represented a culture change). Similarly leadership of the consulting firm appears to have carried the ego in the relationship, seeking ways to satisfy the demands of the id (client leadership) and operating on the reality principle that the consultant in fact was not in a position to influence the client in any real way (see 5.11);

- this particular consultant was selected because he was male (and the system fantasy was that he would pair with the female change management team to "create" a working system), and because he was soon to leave the country, (making him available to export the failures of the system with his departure);

- the consultant and his clients developed very different organisations-in-the-mind that mitigated against the development of an effective consulting relationship;

- the system projected onto the consultant the confusion, pain, hostility and incompetence in the system, stripped him of authority and manipulated him out of his role as change agent;

- because of his own anxieties and inexperience the consultant accepted the projections,

gravitating to the paranoid schizoid position;

- the consultant was unable effectively to contain the anxiety in the system, was therefore largely ineffective in his designated role of change agent, and ultimately was sacrificed on behalf of the project system.

5.14   INTEGRATION

The plethora of examples quoted throughout this chapter illustrate that the consultant's journal yielded substantial evidence of all twelve psychodynamic themes being present in the relationship between the consultant and his clients. Critical discussion of these themes linked to the theory has been covered in sections 5.1 to 5.12 above followed by hypotheses about the consulting relationship in 5.13. This final section will therefore integrate the twelve themes by "telling the story" of the psychodynamics that manifested in this particular consulting relationship. The story is an extended hypothesis using the interpretations detailed above. It is presented as a fantasy.

A PSYCHODYNAMIC VIEW OF THE CONSULTING RELATIONSHIP: A STORY

Once upon a time there was a land where all was white and male and well with the world …

1   In the "old" South Africa white males ruled the world. They decided all the rules that structured the society and ensured their own continued supremacy.

2   In this environment, organisations that mirrored white male dominance and resistance to change flourished. Over time they developed bureaucratic and compulsive cultures with rigid structures, complex rules and an appetite for control over all aspects of their functioning.

3   One of these was the client organisation, which, in keeping with its role as a brewer, reflected the intoxication of power that was evident in the ruling regime which it mirrored. This organisation established itself as a bastion of male dominance and circled the "la(a)ger" whenever a threat to its hegemony raised anxiety in the organisation. As a reflection of its self-image (its organisation-in-the-mind) it sponsored lots of sports that showcased (sublimated)

male aggression in the form of competitive sport.

4   In the mid-1990's political transformation brought about a radical change to the contextual environment in which the client organisation operated. Traditional authority figures and patterns of male dominance (the apartheid regime and its symbols and instruments) were under threat, and long-standing boundaries were breaking down. With this came potential threat to the client organisation's dominance of its markets (its world view or sense of relatedness with its environment).

5   The leaders of this organisation were anxious about these changes and their potential impact on their organisation's relationships (its markets) and its role in the world. As a defence against this anxiety they decided - among other things - to tighten their control over their environment by implementing a centralised information system that would allow them to know as much as possible about what was happening everywhere in their organisation.

6   Consistent with their compulsive culture they did not trust their subordinates enough to reveal this purpose to them, but promoted the system on the grounds that it would improve organisational efficiency. In seeking gratification of their need for control, and by behaving amorally, client leadership represented the id in the consulting relationship.

7   The culture of deception was mirrored by the appointed (male) project leaders who attracted (almost exclusively male) client members onto the project with promises of salary increases and promotions that subsequently were not met.

8   They selected a system whose name (SAP) was a symbol of what they most wished to hold on to in their world: white male authority and dominance.

9   As the consulting organisation to help them implement the system they chose a paranoid organisation that in a highly competitive market had defined its mission as 'beating' its competitors, who in turn appointed (almost exclusively male) consultants to the project. Operating on the reality principle - that included recognising the need to begin the project without a contract - the consulting organisation formed realistic plans to satisfy the needs of

the client organisation (the id). It therefore carried the ego in the consulting relationship.

10 While the arrangement between the client and consulting organisations was framed as a partnership, in reality it was conducted as a contest (like a sports event). Rather than playing as one team and combining forces by distributing the project leadership roles across one unified group, each organisation appointed its own captains (the consulting project director and client project sponsor, and respective project managers) and fought over whose team members could play in the game.

11 Because of the suspicious cultures that characterised both organisations, although theoretically paired in the creative act of giving birth to the new information system, leaders of both teams collaborated to avoid this primary task by physically locating themselves in different places and not meeting as a group.

12 In keeping with its bureaucratic and compulsive culture the client organisation then avoided ceding control to the consulting organisation and maintained rigid control of all facets of the project. It achieved this by insisting the competitive game be played by its own rules (client organisation processes and policies), by not authorising the other team to play (not signing the contract), and by insisting on detailed work plans which it consistently failed to sign off.

13 In the process the leaders conspired to maintain an adversarial relationship (a fight / flight culture), and members of the project system developed we/they (split) views (sense of relatedness) that exploited the natural fault lines between organisations and between leaders and their team members. Each characterised itself as good, and projected onto the other the bad parts of itself, creating a project culture of hostility and reflecting the paranoid schizoid position. This toxic project culture became the personality of the project system and was an expression of the fantasies of the system's leaders.

14 This toxic culture was experienced by system members as alienating, and dependency needs for nurturing began to surface on the project. To avoid changing its behaviour and dealing with these, and to maintain a focus on the "real" (hard) project issues, project

leadership appointed a team of female change management consultants from the consulting firm, ostensibly (consciously) to handle change readiness issues related to the system roll out. In reality (unconsciously) they split off this group and projected onto them the alienation and illness in the project system. By means of projective identification this group absorbed the toxicity in the project system, and carried both illness and the nurturing (female) role on behalf of the project.

15 However, since the project leaders did not value the nurturing role of change management they would not authorise it (agree its change plan) to challenge the way the project was conducted. However, the change management team members thought (their organisation in the mind) that was exactly what they were there to do. Therefore, with what little voice they had change management tried to alter the competitive and adversarial (male) model on which the client-consultant relationship was predicated.

16 This entrenched project leaders' resistance to change management, and change management team members were increasingly experienced as irritants and outsiders. The consulting project leaders used their mutual discounting of the change management role to pair more effectively with the stronger client organisation. They therefore colluded with them to exclude change management from effective membership of the (male) club (the project), to the extent that change management felt abandoned and became virtually invisible. In the process the change management project leader was sacrificed by the project system, becoming so ill that she was unable to play an active role on the project.

17 The boundary between change management and the project made it impossible for the change management team to do their work. The female members of the change leadership group therefore asked a male colleague (the consultant) to join their team, in the fantasy that by pairing with a male consultant an effective and healthy project might be given birth.

18 The consultant brought with him to the relationship unfulfilled and unconscious needs that directly influenced his behaviour on the project. These included anxiety about the new role of parenting two children, dependency issues such as the need for parental approval and the desire to be liked, fight/flight issues (which were currently taking the form of emigration to

Canada) and a fantasy about his role as a change consultant being an extension of the political struggle against apartheid.

19 In the process of joining the project these internal dynamics limited what the consultant allowed himself to know and understand about the consulting relationship with his clients. Consequently the consultant introjected the hostility in the system and his change management colleagues' anxiety and sense of exclusion, and failed to recognise these as projections and counter transference. The introjected objects and part objects elicited his personal anxieties and sense of inadequacy derived from introjected parental standards, and he experienced failure even before he had failed in the role.

20 Being new to the role of change agent the consultant was surprised by the degree of hostility he experienced from the client system. He was thrown by the fact that the clients appeared to eschew the "appropriate" mask of helplessness, making it difficult for him to understand his own role. He therefore found the process of taking up his role one of "psychological violence". In his anxiety he felt inadequate, took physical flight from project relationships by violating boundaries (eg. missing meetings), demonstrated a need to structure his role as carefully as possible, and waited for his clients to authorise him to play his role.

21 In the process he simply joined with the existing dynamics on the project and mirrored the anxiety and sense of alienation of the other change management project members. Like them, to defend against the anxiety he felt he projected many of his own failings onto others, assuming the paranoid-schizoid position and viewing project leadership and their organisations with hostility, and perceiving them (organisation-in-the-mind) as being a threat. As the only male member of the change management team he also felt emasculated and therefore unable to engage in the (male) role of challenging leadership.

22 Despite this, and to cope with his anxiety, the consultant adopted a mask of competence, and began to set about fixing things. In this he carried morality and superego on behalf of the project, and unloaded it onto the journal by confessing his project "sins" or failings.

23 It was clear to him (pathological certainty) that what was needed was for the leaders of both organisations to come together (pair) and play the proper leadership (parent) role of looking after their followers. Like the child of separated parents he did everything in his power to manipulate them out of their role as leaders and bring them together as good parents. In the process he was confused by their resistance to this because he did not understand that he was working with his own needs and not theirs.

24 On occasion (such as at the team building workshop when he "filled the gap" created by leaders failure to lead) he stepped out of role himself and tried to role model for them how to be good parents.

25 In order to cope with this irritating consultant who didn't understand that he was a "secretary" to the project and not in a position of influence, the client organisation on two separate occasions appointed female staff to teach him his role. First they appointed a client workshop facilitator to represent them in designing and conducting the team-building workshop, and later they asked their organisation development manager to restructure the change plan. However, on both occasions these women ultimately identified with the need for nurturing in the project system and failed to "get rid" of the irritant. The organisation development manager later reflected that she perceived the consultant as having been used as a scapegoat by the client organisation.

26 Although he did not give up on his strategy of uniting the two leadership groups, the consultant began to look elsewhere for an effective parent to make everything all right. He therefore focussed on the lack of a change management partner within the consulting organisation as a source for a potential parent. He became convinced that if a new change management leader could be appointed and paired with the partners of the consulting firm, this person could convince the consulting project leader of the importance of change management and his influence on the project would increase.

27 When both these strategies failed the consultant displaced the positive feelings he had for his recent unthreatening learning environment in Pretoria and identified with the Pretoria practice as a source of comfort. He therefore split Pretoria from Johannesburg in his mind and

related to the Pretoria practice. This enabled him to live out his fantasy that he was engaged in a struggle for liberation with the apartheid forces of both his Johannesburg-based client groups who respectively were installing SAP (a symbol of white male domination) and denying change management team members access to positions of influence.

28 As these processes unfolded the consultant became increasingly inwardly focussed and began to conduct his relationship with his clients more in his head than in actual interaction with them. He withdrew emotionally from the project and failed to differentiate team members, seeing them as an undifferentiated mass (orientation to the basic assumption Me-ness).

29 The client-consultant relationship had therefore become established as one in which each side deposited its emotional toxic waste in the other's back yard. In effect, the project continued to use change management to carry the abuse prevalent in the project relationships between client and consulting organisation and between leadership and followers. At the same time, the consultant had abandoned his clients and failed to provide a holding environment for the anxiety in the project system. The consultant was unable to remove his own mask of competence, and it was therefore not possible for the clients to engage in any reciprocal unmasking of their own. Participants to the consulting relationship therefore remained locked in the paranoid-schizoid position, and no movement toward the depressive position occurred in which participants were able to take back their projections. As a result, there was no growth in the relationship.

30 Over time, the client organisation's hostility to change management reached the point that their project leaders threatened to remove the consultant change management team from the project. At the same time, the consulting organisation's project leaders wanted to remove change management from the contract it was attempting to conclude with the client (and thereby sacrifice change management to preserve the project group). Neither of these events actually happened as the project was reaching the "roll out" phase and the need for change management support in areas other than team building became acute. It was also at this point that the consultant left the project.

31 In leaving the project the consultant forgot his final meeting with the client system and did

not even say goodbye to most system members. In addition, his farewell function from the consulting organisation was initially scheduled for a date after he would have departed. These are evidence of the degree to which the consultant had accepted the counter transference of invisibility from his clients, and of his own emotional disinvestment from the project.

32 On meeting the consulting project director after he had left the project, the director requested the consultant to help facilitate a meeting between himself and the client project leaders. This was both confirmation of the failure of the consulting relationship, but also perhaps a small symbol of reparation for the violence done to change management by the project system.

5.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter described those unconscious themes that influenced the relationship between the consultant and client systems at the micro, meso and macro levels. Reasons were advanced for the way in which the relationship between the consultant and the client developed. An attempt was made to understand how those psychodynamics influenced the results of the change process.

The aim of this chapter was to describe the dominant psychodynamic themes that emerged in the relationship between the consultant and his clients, namely the members of both the client, and consulting organisations that together comprised the project team. The objective was to understand how these themes affected the consulting relationship, and ultimately the consultant's effectiveness as a change agent on the project.

CHAPTER 6   CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains the conclusions the researcher has drawn regarding the psychodynamics affecting the consulting relationship, the effectiveness of the 12 item template for interpreting those dynamics, and the value of using a journal maintained by the consultant as source of data about those dynamics. Limits of the research are identified and recommendations are made for the training of I/O psychologists, and for future research.

The aim of this chapter is to present the conclusions reached by the researcher, to examine the limitations of the study, and to make recommendations for the future.

6.1   CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions drawn from this study are outlined below.

6.1.1   Insights into client dynamics affecting the client - consulting relationship

It seems that the overwhelming majority of material in the journal provides insights into the unconscious dynamics of the consultant himself and his organisation-in-the-mind. While some insight into the unconscious dynamics of other parts of the client-consultant system can be obtained, these have to be inferred from interactions the consultant chooses to report in the journal. Not only is there far less of this material in the journal, making interpretations about the motivations of others necessarily more speculative, but the consultant's selection of what to report about others itself acts as a filter between the researcher and direct interpretation of their behaviour.

Nevertheless, it was possible to identify powerful unconscious dynamics that appeared to be at work in the client-consultant nexus, and these were described in Chapter 5. These provide support for the psychodynamic presumption that unconscious processes substantially motivate behaviour. In addition, there was evidence that dynamics manifested in the consulting interaction had at least part of their genesis in dynamics playing out in both the

client and consulting organisations, or in the macro environment. This lends credence to the contention of Cilliers and Koortzen (2000) and Hirshhorn (1993) that dynamics at one level of a system are mirrored in other levels of that system.

6.1.2 Insights into the role of the consultant in the client–consulting relationship

The process of analysing the journal provided the researcher with insight into many dynamics that had been hidden from him in his role of consultant. The reality is that many of these hidden dynamics, such as the consultant's projections, his splitting and his counter transference of client projections occurred outside the awareness of the consultant. More importantly, these dynamics appear to have undermined the creation of an effective consulting relationship and inhibited the consultant's ability to facilitate change.

Consistent with the suggestions of many authors (Czander, 1993; de Board, 1993; Hirshhorn, 1993; Miller, 1993) it can be concluded that much of the consultant's energy and effort on the project was expended in attempting to contain his own anxiety, rather than in effective work on his project tasks. The case study provided the researcher with evidence that he had indeed brought to his consulting relationship unfulfilled personal needs that had intruded on the client-consultant relationship (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000; Kahn, 1993; Miller, 1993). The implication is that the consultant operated as a naive change agent on this project. While Czander (1993) recommended a position of naivete for consultants he described this as "licensed stupidity", or the freedom to ask very naive and sometimes childlike questions in exploring the possible unconscious meaning of organisational events. However this is not the naivete displayed by this consultant. The conclusion is rather that he was simply not "alive to the idea that there is an "organisation-in-the-mind" ..... and that this is informing and influencing his … behaviour in his role" (Hutton, Bazalgette & Reed, 1997, p. 124). Nor does he appear to have effectively made "connections between apparently unrelated pieces of data by thinking systemically" (ibid, p. 125).

The consultant was clearly aware of his hostility toward his clients. However, his unwillingness to acknowledge openly this and other flaws as suggested by Allcorn (1989) and Kahn (1993)

meant that he missed the opportunity to unmask himself to his clients. Consequently there was little likelihood of reciprocal unmasking by the client that might have led to the taking back of projections and mutual growth (Gemmill & Wynkoop, 1990).

The researcher came to appreciate that the process of the consultant getting himself and others unstuck from their pathological certainty about each other (Shapiro & Carr, 1991), required that the consultant use himself as a container for system anxiety rather than leaking or spilling it (Bion, 1961). It became apparent that by giving in to his own anxiety in his role as change agent the consultant had effectively abandoned his clients and undermined the creation of the necessary holding environment that might have enabled system members to voice, examine or take back their own projections (Kahn, 1993). It can be concluded that if the consultant had been able to use his hostility toward his clients as a source of insight, he may have been better able to move to a position of understanding in which he could empower his clients. In the process the researcher came to support Kahn's hypothesis that it is difficult for a consultant to help people toward whom he is hostile, and not "willing to give space" (ibid, 52).

6.1.3 Conclusions about the consulting relationship

A meta-analysis of this case study led the researcher to many conclusions about what might have made the consulting relationships in this case study more effective.

6.1.3.1 More effective structuring and framing of the relationship

Given the fact that taking up a role is accepted as a risky process that induces anxiety, the consultant could have invested more energy in clarifying client expectations of his role (Gemmill & Wynkoop, 1990; Kahn, 1993; Neumann, 1997). In the given circumstances it appears unlikely that leadership of either organisation would have authorised the role of influence the consultant sought, but at the very least this would have made that fact explicit. Failure to do this was a significant contributor to the ongoing anxiety experienced by the consultant.

6.1.3.2   Working at the meta level

Assuming a role of influence was authorised, rather than joining the system and working at the direct level at which issues occurred, it may be concluded that the consultant should have worked more at the meta level. For example, rather than continuing to work in an unauthorised environment, or to deal with the hostility arising from unresolved human resource issues, it may have been helpful to provide for leaders a more clear framing of the impact that these issues were having on completion of project tasks (Kahn, 1995).

6.1.3.3   Modelling an open relationship

The consultant could also have modelled an open or less defended relationship with both his own organisation's leadership, and with the client organisation. This could have been achieved through making explicit the competitiveness in the client-consultant relationship (Gemmill & Wynkoop, 1990). By doing so the consultant might have made the adversarial nature of the relationship discussable. Initially this might have led to joint exploration of tangible issues such as the project team structure or the physical location of team members. In time it might also have permitted team members to identify and work through the flaws that were covertly forcing the maintenance of their respective masks.

The consultant could also have managed his own boundaries more effectively to serve as a model for others, and over time begun to surface boundary management violations more directly with others when they occurred (Kahn, 1995).

6.1.3.4   Empowering the client

In Chapter 1 it was asserted that the relationship with the client is the essential tool that the consultant has to effect change in client systems. The implication is that the consultant should have used his relationship with clients to empower them to be more effective in the relationship too. In addition to modelling an open relationship, the consultant could have demonstrated faith in the abilities of individual clients to perform, rather than "rescuing" them.

For example, the consultant pushed strongly for a leadership workshop in which he hoped to persuade leaders to define their roles and relationship more clearly and to clarify their boundaries and structures. This merely led to intensified resistance and collusion between leaders of both organisations to "get rid of" change management. A more effective approach might have been to invite leaders to consider the data that pointed to the need for clearer roles and relationships, and allow them to make their own interpretations. This would be consistent with Kahn's (1995) recommendation that consultants lead people through the data from which they develop their hypotheses. It would also have "pushed" some of the competence back onto the clients by not doing for them what they were capable of doing for themselves, thereby reducing "the general tendency of clients to de-skill themselves" (Gemmill & Wynkoop, 1990, p. 139).

In the process this might have contributed to leaders improving their skill at reflection and interpretation, and begun to turn them into more effective change agents themselves. It might also perhaps have contributed to project members developing greater faith in their leadership.

6.1.3.5   Exercising courage

All the forgoing implies a need by the consultant to exercise courage in the consulting relationship (Clarkson, 1997; Kahn, 1995; Neumann, 1997). As mentioned in 5.4.2 the consultant constantly waited for others to authorise him in the role of change agent. One clear conclusion from the consultant behaviours suggested above is that the role of change agent requires the exercise of courage: the courage to authorise oneself in the role, to make interpretations, and to share them with others. It also implies having the courage to be wrong in one's interpretations. Kahn has made the point that consultants need to learn that "there is not one truth but multiple truths" (1995, p. 511).

An analysis of the consultant's behaviour on the project demonstrates a consistent desire to be liked (see 5.4.2) and a wish for immediate resolution of the things that concern him. Kahn (1995) suggested that the role of change agent requires the courage to be disliked and to resist the desire for immediate results. This is in essence the demand made of consultants if they are to contain anxiety and provide the necessary holding environment for growth and

change to occur.

6.1.3.6   Developing competence

While the consultant's journal shows evidence of superficial awareness of the unconscious dynamics at work in his relationships with clients, he is clearly a naive consultant in terms of interpreting and working with unconscious dynamics. It is therefore not surprising that the consultant in this study failed to contain anxiety and to provide the necessary holding environment or secure base described by Bion (1961) and Kahn (1995).

However, the consultant was new to the consulting role, and as Cilliers and Koortzen (2000) and Gemmill (1986) have pointed out, the ability to understand unconscious dynamics and by implication to support change effectively requires training in psychodynamic theory and practice. More specifically Kahn (1993, p. 37) has suggested that "to do this work, consultants need particular skills that enable them to move back and forth between hypotheses and data, to develop concepts of intervention strategies, to structure and facilitate conversations among system members, and to work with system members to own their change processes".

For the consultant to improve his consulting relationships and his ability to consult effectively it would therefore be important for him to study further in this field. Allcorn (1989) has suggested that such training should include developing an approach to interpretation and Kahn (1993) has observed that knowing how to make interpretations reduces anxiety. The undertaking of this research was intended as a step in that direction. Thereafter, as Gemmill and Wynkoop (1990) recommended, consulting from this stance needs extensive practice.

Finally, particularly in complex project environments such as that in this study there would be distinct advantages for this consultant to work with others trained in the psychodynamic approach. Not only would this provide him with an objective assessment of the dynamics of which he is a part, it would minimise the anxiety he will likely continue to feel as he further develops his insights and skills.

6.1.4   Observations on the self-critique process

At a meta level some useful insights emerged. The researcher was surprised by the richness of data that was evident once he began to dig beneath the surface of the journal material. He also came to appreciate how difficult it is to arrive at interpretations of unconscious processes with any confidence. These reactions alone are an indication that the consultant would benefit from deeper training in psychodynamic interpretation. In addition, the consultant should be encouraged to look more closely at those areas in Chapter 5 where he most struggled to find evidence, or to accept the implications of the evidence he encountered, since this could in itself be further evidence of defensiveness.

From the psychodynamic perspective one might observe that the ability of the consultant-as-researcher to conduct self-interpretation of this nature requires an ability to move to the depressive position and engage in the painful process of recognising and taking back his projections as consultant. The researcher learned how painful this process could be. Apart from his personal experience of this, the fact that it was almost five years before he was either able or willing to engage in interpretation of the material in the journal can itself be seen as evidence of resistance! It would seem that this is an important insight if the consultant is to assist others to do the same on future projects.

6.1.5   Value of the psychodynamic template

The interpretations derived from use of the psychodynamic template in Chapter 5, together with the conclusions drawn above suggest that the researcher has found considerable value in applying this template to the journal he maintained on the project in his role as consultant. It is apparent that the use of a psychodynamic template in this way enabled the consultant to step back from his consulting situation and - in the role of researcher - to examine more intimately and transparently what was happening in the consulting relationship.

The value of the psychodynamic approach generally, and the template in particular, was that it provided him with a filter through which to sift his project experiences, and in the process to "make sense of nonsense" (Czander, 1993). In effect it provided him with a tool to engage in critical self-analysis without the benefit of a third party. While the limitations of this approach are discussed in 6.2 below, the reality is that consultants frequently find themselves working

alone, and need some means to understand what is happening to them, and how effective they are being. While in this instance the analysis was conducted almost five years after the consulting relationship occurred, the potential of this approach is that it could be undertaken in the midst of the consulting relationship, providing immediate feedback to the consultant. As Lundberg (1994, p. 4) has observed, this is useful as it "provides a way of looking at our experience - to better understand how we have behaved. And it gives us a way to contract more appropriately and to understand our consultancy relationships while they occur".

6.1.6   Knowing what to focus on as a change agent

At the very least the benefit of the template, and of the psychodynamic paradigm is that it provides significant direction to the consultant regarding what he should focus on in future consulting relationships. By implication, if the consultant can be aware of, and work more adeptly with the following, it is likely that he will be of greater value to his clients in future:

- identity, roles, tasks, space, time, and structures as boundaries and the management thereof in coping with anxiety
- the defences mounted by individuals and groups to contain that anxiety, and their valence to the basic assumption groups
- leadership behaviour and management of boundaries
- the way in which individuals and groups exercise authority
- relationships between individuals and subsystems
- the sense of relatedness or organisations-in-the-mind that emerge from the above, and their implications for the effectiveness of the system
- the degree to which collective dynamics emerges, and which individuals or groups are being used by the system to carry certain emotional energy on behalf of the system.

If he can further learn to use his own emotions and anxieties as clues to what is happening in the consulting system (Sher, 2002), he may be able to use these insights to empower rather than de-skill himself and his clients.

6.1.7   Were the research aims achieved?

This research began with four specific aims. The degree to which these were achieved is discussed below:

- Identify the psychodynamic issues that typically emerge in organisations

Chapter 2 provided a review of the literature on this subject. The body of potential literature is extensive, and the researcher focussed on trying to pick out the dominant issues from what has been written. However, the degree to which the researcher was able to evaluate issues missing from this literature had some limitations.

- Identify the psychodynamic issues that typically characterise the relationship between consultants and their clients

Chapter 3 provided a review of issues pertaining to the consulting relationship that are identified in the literature. It was noted that the literature on the consulting relationship that is written from a psychodynamic paradigm is relatively sparse, so this aim has perhaps not been met as fully as it might.

- Identify the psychodynamics that were manifest in the consultant-client relationship in one particular case study

This has been presented in great Chapter 5. While there is no one "correct" interpretation of these to be made, the study did not afford the opportunity for the consultant to test these in the here-and-now with others in the client-consultant system.

- Assess the usefulness of analysing a journal maintained by the consultant in the course of a consulting relationship as a means of identifying those psychodynamics

This was discussed in 6.1.4 to 6.1.6 above. The researcher found the journal a rich and useful source of insight into unconscious dynamics in the consulting relationship.

6.2   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study are outlined below.

6.2.1   Research method

The participant observation method used is open to a number of criticisms. Tranfield (1983, p. 514) has observed that "the nature of research concerning psychodynamics is fraught with methodological problems ..... Much of this critique centres upon the problem of inference".

However, this research is phenomenological in nature, and is focussed not on understanding objective reality, but on understanding the subject's point of view of what is happening (Dooley, 1995). In one sense this study can be seen as a form of symbolic internationalism which presumes that "(1) human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them, (2) these meanings are a product of social interaction in human society, and (3) these meanings are modified and handled through an interpretive process that is used by each person in dealing with the things he/she encounters" (Meltzer, Petras & Reynolds, as cited in Dooley, 1995, p. 263). None of these assumptions would be inconsistent with the psychodynamic paradigm that informs this research.

6.2.2 Generalisation of results

The study is exploratory in nature, and as such it does not set out to test pre-existing hypotheses, but to generate them for the purpose of deepening understanding about what happened in this consulting relationship (Dooley, 1995; Tranfield, 1983). As Kets de Vries and Miller (1987, p. 238) have observed, "interpretation is a dynamic, iterative and interactive phenomenon that may bring insights, but rarely provides any final "unitary" solutions".

By implication therefore, it is not the intention of this study to arrive at generalisations about consulting relationships in other settings or for other consultants, but rather to examine this one relationship in miniature (Dooley, 1995).

6.2.3 Participant observation

The following issues related to participant observation need to be considered.

6.2.3.1 Problems of selective observation

This research is limited by what the consultant was able to observe, and the significance he placed on these observations. Therefore from the outset what the research is able to discover is a function of what the consultant was responding to in the consulting context. Certainly the focus of this study itself shows that the consultant's actions - and therefore his observations -

were influenced by dynamics of which he was himself often unaware.

Psychodynamic theory would argue however, that it is precisely what the consultant chose to notice and record that provides clues to the unconscious processes at work in the system (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1987). As stated above, the objective of this field study is not an understanding of objective reality, but an understanding of the subject's point of view.

6.2.3.2   Problems of self-censorship

Precisely the same arguments can be made about the potential problem of contamination by self-censorship in the writing of the journal. On the one hand it can reasonably be claimed that, knowing that the journal would be subject to a detailed content and process analysis, the consultant may have censored what he recorded and how he recorded it. On the other hand, the psychodynamic view is not that Journaling is a reliable or unfiltered activity, but rather that it provides something of a spotlight for identifying some of the unconscious dynamics that were the object of this research. The assumption is that over time, the patterns that emerge reveal much about the dynamics at work beneath the surface (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1987).

6.2.4   Inter-rater reliability

One of the strongest criticisms to which this research is vulnerable, is that all observations were made by the consultant and that there was no attempt to compare his perceptions with those of either the client or an objective outsider. As a result of this lack of data triangulation (Dooley, 1995), there is no opportunity for alternative observations or interpretations to be made. This is a valid criticism to the extent that the consultant may have been grossly misinformed about what was happening around him, or that other observers may have observed something entirely different. However, the phenomenological stance would presume that no objective reality is observable (ibid), that we are always working with individual interpretations, and that other observers would bring their own, not necessarily more valid, interpretations of what has transpired.

One other defence can perhaps be made regarding triangulation in this study. It can be

argued that observations of the same system were made repeatedly over a period of approximately three months by one observer, and that this provides some opportunity to test interpretations over a range of different observations. Kets de Vries and Miller (1987, p. 237) described this as a search for "patterns, ideas or sentiments that surface recurrently [and] often appear to explain many consequences".

6.2.5   Researcher bias

The study is vulnerable to researcher bias in a number of ways.

6.2.5.1   Researcher expectancy

The research presented here is clearly open to the criticism of researcher expectancy, for example, that the researcher found in the journal what he expected to find. However, the detailed method used to surface and analyse the journal themes (described in Chapter 4), plus the lengthy gap between the writing of the journal and its interpretation would both have mitigated this to some extent. That the researcher was surprised by many of the findings (see 6.1.5) is another purely subjective indicator that researcher expectancy was not entirely responsible for the findings.

6.2.5.2   Consistency pressures

It can also be claimed that the researcher may have given in to pressures to make sense, find the logic and find consistency in his interpretation of the data. To some extent this is an inherent risk of psychodynamic interpretation, but it is also the reason why the interpretations in Chapter 5 are offered as hypotheses.

6.2.5.3   No separation between consultant and researcher

As noted in Chapter 4, one of the strongest methodological criticisms that can be levelled against this research is the fact that subject and researcher were one and the same person. It is likely therefore that biases or expectations that the consultant brought to the process of

data collection were not detected by the researcher in the process of interpretation, since he would bring to both roles the same biases and expectations. In fact, the presence of those same biases and expectations in both processes may simply have compounded them.

One may equally ask, however, whether the alternative method of having the interpretation done by an objective third party would in any way make the interpretations more "accurate"? Any individual will bring to their interpretations their own psychodynamic issues that must necessarily create a filter between research data and interpretation. Who is to determine which filter is less contaminating than another? The assumption of the psychodynamic paradigm that no event happens in isolation (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000) would imply that it is not possible to engage in psychodynamic interpretation that is free of researcher-bias. It is the very phenomenological nature of this interpretation that makes it valuable.

It can also be argued that since one of the aims of this research was to explore the degree to which the template used here was helpful as a tool for consultant self-analysis on change projects, interpretation necessarily had to be undertaken by the consultant. Finally, the value of the consultant making his own interpretations is that he is immersed in the data and "living it". This is a necessary precondition for working with here-and-now material, which is part of the skill set being explored by this research.

6.2.6   Construct validity

The study is open to criticism on the grounds of lack of construct validity. While psychodynamic theory is open to criticism from alternative schools of thought, a substantial body of literature that has broad credibility supports the constructs used in the research. This was presented in Chapters 2 and 3. It is an evolving theory, as evidenced by the recent addition of Me-ness and We-ness as basic assumptions, but is used on an increasing basis by I/O psychologists in many parts of the world.

It can, however, be argued that a coherent psychodynamic view of the consulting relationship does not yet exist. This is apparent from the relative paucity of literature that focuses on this topic. However, all twelve of the themes used to analyse the journal were taken from the

broader field of theory regarding organisations as a whole. In addition, as explained in Chapter 3 the set of themes selected to make up the template was based very closely on the work of researchers such as Cilliers and Koortzen (Cilliers & Koortzen, 2000; Koortzen & Cilliers, 2002) working at the cutting edge of the field.

6.2.7 Contamination of the behaviours being observed

While the study was non-reactive as far as other system members were concerned, it can be criticised on the grounds that the consultant may have behaved differently in the interaction with his clients because of the data collection process, and thereby altered what happened in the interactions being observed. However, in this instance it is precisely the degree to which the consultant was aware of the dynamics at play in the consultant-client interaction, and his ability to use that awareness effectively to facilitate change that is the focus of study. In effect, the exploration of "contamination" in the client consultant relationships was the objective of the research!

6.2.8 Lack of data about the client

One very real shortcoming in the data collection process became apparent only at the point of analysis, but might have been predicted by a more experienced researcher skilled in psychodynamic interpretation. Since the consultant wrote the journal, it reports the actions of others only as perceived by the consultant, and contains no information on their thought processes. Consequently the unconscious dynamics of other parts of the client-consultant system have to be inferred from interactions the consultant chooses to report in the journal. It is apparent from Chapter 5 therefore that the analysis is necessarily strongly consultant-centric. It yielded not so much an interpretation of the client-consultant relationship, as an interpretation of the *consultant's unconscious paradigm* about that relationship.

6.2.9 The problem of researcher sophistication

The issue above raises the problem of researcher sophistication in conducting research of this nature. Dooley (1995, p. 110) has observed that "because they require so much time to

develop, to train [people] in their use, and to apply, process and content analytic procedures have not multiplied". The implication is that the type of analysis undertaken in this study requires a certain level of researcher sophistication if the inferences and interpretations made are to have any credibility. Given the lack of sophistication of the researcher in this study, the interpretations in this study are readily open to the criticism that they are largely naive and potentially inaccurate in many respects.

While this criticism is valid, attempting to make inferences is the only process by which researchers can exercise their interpretive muscles (Allcorn, 1989; Gemmill & Wynkoop, 1990) and this study is intended as part of that process for this consultant. In addition, it can be argued that the reader of this study will contrast the interpretations presented here against their own interpretations of the results presented and arrive at their own subjective view of their validity.

6.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this research, a number of recommendations can be made.

6.3.1   Recommendations for training of I/O psychologists

The findings in this study would appear to support the contention made in Chapter 1 that behaviour in consulting relationships is significantly motivated by the unconscious processes of participants in that relationship. It also provides support for the observation of Cilliers and Koortzen (2000) that students struggle to make meaning of the dynamic contexts they encounter in their organisations, and that training in psychodynamic interpretation and consulting is an important element in the training of I/O psychologists. It is therefore suggested that the psychodynamic approach to understanding of organisational behaviour be taught in all institutions training I/O psychologists. (In fact Koortzen and Cilliers (2002) report that the Society of Consulting Psychology of the American Psychological Association recently expressed this recommendation.) The purpose would be to facilitate learning about individual, group and organisational dynamics and to equip these intern psychologists to become more effective organisational consultants. In this way the field of I/O psychology will be empowered with, one hopes, concomitant benefits for the clients of these consultants.

6.3.2   Recommendations for further research

The criticisms to which this study is vulnerable might be overcome by future research with a more sophisticated research design.

6.3.2.1   Third party analysis of journals

One obvious alternative avenue for research would be to have the interpretation of the journal conducted by one or more third parties. These interpretations could then be contrasted with that of the consultant. One advantage of this approach would be that the third party interpretations will be free of the personal defensiveness that must necessarily influence the interpretation conducted by the consultant. Comparison of the different interpretations could

contribute to the learning of all participants.

6.3.2.2 Refine the template

The current research produced results in which the findings under one theme frequently occurred again under another theme. There could be value in seeking to refine the psychodynamic template used here to fewer than twelve items. While this runs the risk of reducing the sharpness (and perhaps even the usefulness) of the interpretations made, consultants looking for a simple way to make sense of their consulting relationships would benefit from something simpler than that used in this study. Koortzen and Cilliers (2002) have mentioned six dimensions represented by the pneumonic CIBART (Conflict, Identity, Boundaries, Authorisation, Role and Task) that might be considered as a useful starting point.

6.3.2.3 Analyse shorter texts, and use "find" tools in a word processing package

The interpretation of a journal of the size of that used in this study (over 100 pages) requires considerable time - something usually in short supply on complex change projects. A further variation might be to interpret a few sections of a couple of pages, and then to scan the rest of the document for anything that disproves the hypotheses made. During the current study the researcher was struck by the richness of material in even one page of text, and the extent to which themes that were woven throughout the text recurred constantly. He was also surprised how effective it was to use the 'find' tool in his word processing package to scan the journal for the use of particular words or phrases. This also has the advantage of "confronting" the individual with the extent to which these recur.

6.3.2.4   Analyse journals maintained by both client and consultant

This research presents material gleaned only from the consultant's side of the consulting relationship. Research that analysed journals maintained by all participants to the relationship would enable a comparison of different perspectives on one common relationship, and permit interpretations from one journal to be tested against those emerging in the other journals. It would therefore be less subject to the construct validity problems discussed previously.

6.3.2.5   Have clients interpret the journals

A further development of the method used here would be to have the journal (or journals as in the previous point) interpreted by both clients and consultants. This would provide many points of contrast and comparison and lead to a richer understanding of the full dynamics at work in the consulting relationship. Since acceptance of the irrationality of their behaviour can be predicted to induce anxiety, one can anticipate some resistance to this approach among clients. In addition, the issue of interpreter sophistication raised earlier would clearly be a concern. Nevertheless, with sophisticated clients who were open to this approach, the opportunity for joint learning and client empowerment would be considerable. For example, Sher (2002, p. 62) reported sharing his own diary with members of the client organisation to form "the tableau of dialogue between myself and client organisation".

It is apparent that a number of the above suggestions could conceivably be combined in one research project. While this would present a great richness of material it would likely make for a considerably complex study!

6.3.2.6   Take the research to the next step

The recommendations above are suggestions that would bring the researcher by a slightly different route to the same point as the current study: hypotheses about what was occurring in the consulting relationship. However, all of these assume that the value of arriving at useful hypotheses is that they will permit change in that relationship, and as a by-product, facilitate change in the client organisation.

There would be real value in conducting research designed to test that assumption. For example, does unmasking by the consultant facilitate reciprocal unmasking by the client? And does that reciprocal unmasking overcome the adversarial nature of the nexus in such a way that work on real interpersonal and group issues within the system can be accomplished? (Gemmill & Wynkoop, 1990).

REMARK

The researcher chose to undertake this research in part because he had come to conceive his consulting role as a form of "protest activity" against what he saw as the alienation of individuals in his own and his client organisations. In his book "From dependency to autonomy: Studies in organization and change", Miller (1993, p. 261) noted a conclusion from meetings of OPUS (Organization for Promoting Understanding of Society) in 1981 that had become something of a mantra for this researcher in his role as consultant: "It is becoming more difficult to put the work and the being together. So the person I am and the aspirations I have are not being recognized and met in the way that they were; there is a gap between what I think I am and what I get. Institutions do not make space inside them for people".

The experience of conducting this research brought the researcher to the conclusion that the institutions that deny people space are a product of interpersonal relationships based in significant part on unconscious dynamics. It seems clear that a hostile attitude toward organisations and their leaders is merely a reflection of the researcher's "unfinished business", and that those he previously saw as the cause of alienation in organisations are as much prisoners of these unconscious dynamics as those he sought to rescue. It would seem that some of the strategies for becoming a more effective consultant discussed in this chapter might be more effective than mere protest in enabling people - including this researcher - to take back space for themselves.

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