TRANSMOGRIFICATION AT A SOUTH AFRICAN GROUP RELATIONS CONFERENCE: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE ORGANISATION?

by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The RIDE

ABSTRACT

Transmogrification at a South African Group Relations Conference: What Does This Mean for The Individual and the Organisation?

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Group Relations Conferences provide adult learners opportunities to study above and below the surface dynamics of organisational and community life. An effective pedagogy in developing complex world views when exploring challenges of managing different social systems. Yet the literature suggested there is a hatred of learning by experience and lack of faith in such learning. The focus of this research is on a group relations conference named the Robben Island diversity experience (RIDE) held annually in South Africa. What prompted this research was the paucity of research on members experiences of group relations conferences.

An emerging qualitative approach was applied within an interpretive framework in the meta theoretical post-positivistic paradigm of Critical Realism. The research strategy leads an inquiry into the RIDE participants experiences of transmogrification within Hermeneutic Phenomenology. A non-probability sampling strategy, of eight individuals enabled a multi-method research strategy of face-to-face interviews and a focus group. Data were analysed by means of Braun and Clarke six-step thematic data analysis method, applying a Systems Psychodynamic lens.

Manifesting themes of a five-day revolution, the dangerous and delirious zero-sub game, a new dawn one of those with vampires and keep moving safety first no fires on the ship, indicate that the RIDE was a complex system containing individual differences of an inner struggle to preserve, transform and to transmogrify. While experiencing a

five-day revolution, described as a tale of the vampires, excuse me but your teeth are in my neck.

A new concept of preservation and transmogrification was conceptualised to extend the body of knowledge of what transformation may look like at group relations conferences. Leveraging participants and researcher as defended subjects enabled describing the RIDE participants experience of the group relations conference, despite meaning making being difficult for themselves. The rationalised myth in the literature that these events cannot be researched was tested. The value of group relations conferences as an intervention tool was confirmed.

KEY TERMS: Group Relations Conference, Systems Psychodynamics, Experiential Learning, Transformation, Transmogrification, Preservation, Basic assumption mentality, Work group mentality, Interactive Qualitative Analysis, Free Association Narrative Interview.

SAMEVATTING

Gedaanteverandering by 'n Suid-Afrikaanse groepbetrekkingskonferensie: Wat beteken dit vir die individu en die organisasie?

<div align="center">deur</div>

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Groepbetrekkingskonferensies bied volwasse leerders die geleentheid om bo en onder die oppervlakdinamika van organisasie- en gemeenskapslewe te studeer. Dit is 'n doeltreffende pedagogie om komplekse wêreldbeskouings te ontwikkel wanneer die uitdagings om verskillende sosiale stelsels te bestuur, ondersoek word. Nogtans gee die literatuur te kenne dat daar haat én 'n gebrek aan vertroue bestaan om deur ervaring te leer. Die fokus van hierdie navorsing is 'n groepbetrekkingskonferensie, die Robbeneiland-diversiteitservaring (RIDE) genoem, wat jaarliks in Suid-Afrika gehou word. Die skaarste aan navorsing oor lede se ervarings van groepbetrekkings-konferensies het aanleiding tot hierdie navorsing gegee.

'n Ontluikende, kwalitatiewe benadering is binne 'n verklarende raamwerk in die metateoretiese, postpositivistiese paradigma van Kritiese realisme gebruik. Die navorsingstrategie lei 'n ondersoek na die RIDE-deelnemers se ervarings van gedaanteverandering binne Hermeneutiese fenomenologie. 'n Onwaarskynlike steek-proefstrategie van agt individue het 'n multimetode navorsingstrategie van aangesig tot aangesig onderhoude en 'n fokusgroep moontlik gemaak. Data is deur middel van Braun en Clarke se sesstap, tematiese data-ontledingsmetode ontleed met gebruik van 'n Psigodinamikasisteem-lens.

Duidelike temas van 'n vyfdagrevolusie, die gevaarlike en deurmekaar zero-sub spel – 'n nuwe daeraad een van daardie met vampiere en bly aan die beweeg veiligheid eerste geen vure op die skip – dui aan dat die RIDE 'n komplekse stelsel is wat individuele verskille van 'n innerlike stryd om te bewaar, transformeer en van gedaante te verander, insluit. 'n Vyfdagrevolusie word beleef en as 'n storie van vampiere beskryf – verskoon my maar jou tande is in my nek.

'n Nuwe begrip van bewaring en gedaanteverandering is gekonseptualiseer om die gesamentlike kennis van hoe transformasie by groepbetrekkingskonferensies mag lyk, uit te brei. Deur die deelnemers en navorser as beskermde persone te bemagtig, is die geleentheid gebied om RIDE-deelnemers se ervaring van die groepbetrekkings-konferensies te beskryf, hoewel dat dit vir hulle moeilik is om te verstaan. Die rasionele mite in die literatuur dat hierdie gebeure nie nagevors kan word nie, is getoets. Die waarde van groepbetrekkingskonferensies as ingrypingsinstrument is bevestig.

SLEUTELTERME: Groepbetrekkingskonferensie, Psigodinamikasisteem, Ervaringsleer, Transformasie, Gedaanteverandering, Bewaring, Basiese veronderstellingsmentaliteit, Werkgroepmentaliteit, Interaktiewe kwalitatiewe ontleding, Vrye assosiëring, Narratiewe onderhoud.

ABSTRACT

Transemorgrifikheišene mo go Khonferense ya Group Relašene ya Afrika Borwa: Na se se šupa eng mo go botee le mokgahlo?

<div align="center">ka</div>

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Dikhonferetshe tša ditlemagano tša dihlopha di fa baithuti ba bagolo menyetla go ithuta godimo le ka fase ga diphetogo tša maemo a mokgahlo le bophelo bja setšhaba. Thuto ye maatla mo go tšweletšong ya dikgopolo tše bothata tša lefase ge go fatišišwa dikgwehlo tša go swaragana le sistemo tša go fapana tša leago. Le ge go le bjalo dipuku di šišintše gore go na le lehloyo la go ithuta ka tsebo yeo o nago le yona le go hloka tshepho go ithuteng moo. Ntlha tebelelo ya diphatišišo e mo go conferentshe ya dikgokagano tša dihlopha tšeo di bitšwago tsebo yeo e phatlaletšego ya sehlakahlaka sa Robben (RIDE) yeo e swarwago ngwaga ka ngwaga ya Afrika Borwa. Seo se hlohleleditšego diphatišišong tše e be e le tlhokego ya diphatišišo tše mo go maloko ya maitemogelo a dikgokagano tša dihlopha tša dikhonferentse.

Go tšweletšwa ga lemanoga la khwaitetive e ile ya dirišwa ka gare ga frameworke ya go hlatholla mo go meta paradigm ya teori ya post-positive ya Critical Ralism. Mokgwa wo wa diphatišišo o iša go potšišo mo go ba šea karolo (RIDE) ba ditsebo tša transemogrifike ka gare ga Phenomonogy ya Hermeneutiki. Sampling setrategy sa go se kgonege, batho ba seswai e kgontšhiše setrategy sa mokgwa wa go lekola e kgontštiše mokgwa wa go lekola ka bontši wa go botšišago ka mokgwa wa dipotšišo go lebelelwane thwii le sehlopha lebantšhwa. Tshedimošo yeo e lekolotšwego ka mokgwa wa Braun le Clarke wa dikgato tše tshela tša mokgwa wa go sekaseka tshedimo, le go diriša Disistemo tša leihlo la Pshychodynamic.

Go laetša dithema tša diphetogo tša matšatši a mahlano, tše kotse le zero-sub game ya godimo, e tee e ntshwa e thomago ya divempire tšeo gape le go sepediša polokego pele go sego gwa swanelwa ga mello sekepeng tša phetogo di laetša gore RIDE e be e le sisitimo e thata yeo e nago le go se swane ga batho mo go dithulano tša ka gare tšeo di lwelago go lotwa, go fetolwa le go transemografiwa. Ge go dutšwe go lemogwa

phetogo ya matšatši phetogo, ao a hlalošwago bjalo ka nonwane ya divampire, ntshwarele e fela meno a gago a ka gare ga molala waka.

Kgopolo ye mpsha ya go lota le transemografikheišene e ile ya dirwa kgopolo go otlolla mmele wa tsebo wa seo phetogo e ka bago yona e ka bonagala bjalo ka dikhonferentshe tša ditlemagano tša sehlopha.

Go lekanyetša batšea karolo le mofatišiši bjalo ka bašireletši ba badiri ba kgonne go hlaloša boitemogelo bja batšea karolo ba khonferentshe ya dikgokagano tša sehlopa, ntle le go dira tlhalošo ya seo se lego bothata mo go bona. Go se be nnete go filwe mabaka ke dingwalo gore ditiragalo tšeo di ka se fatolwego di lekotšwe. Bohlokwa bja dikhonferentshe tša ditlemagano tša sehlopha bjalo ka setlabakanelo sa botsenelelo bo kgonthišitšwe.

DINTLHAKEMO: Khomferentshe ya Ditlemagano tša Sehlopha, Sistemo ya Psychodynamics, Go ithuta ka tsebo ya gago, Phetogo, Transemogrifikheišene, Leloto, Mogopolo wa motheo wa go akanya, Mogopolo wa go Šoma ka sehlopha, Tekolo ya go Hlakanya ke Khwaliti, Potšišo kanego ka kgokagano ya bolokologi.

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CHAPTER 1: CONTAINING THE RESEARCH PROJECT, ESTABLISHING RESEARCH BOUNDARIES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The research boundaries are set out in this chapter to orientate the reader in the way in which the research was conducted, the paradigm and theory were applied and how the research was designed (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Trafford & Leshem, 2008). It begins with a background and motivation, the problem statement, and the aims for the research project. Thereafter I describe the ontological and epistemological stance which informed the paradigm perspective. The methodological approach is described as it informs the strategy followed and the research method applied to reach the aims. Proposed conclusions, recommendations, and limitations are briefly discussed. Lastly, an overview and summary of the eight chapters which comprise this thesis are provided.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

The research is partly based on a hypothesis of the work of influential social scientist Kurt Lewin and colleagues, developed in 1946. They stated that adults learn more effectively through interactive experiences, shared in experiential learning environments, than through traditional lectures or seminars (Dimitrov, 2008). Experiential learning is understood as the use of a mixture of content and process pedagogy, placing value on a learner's relationship with the content (Heinrich et al., 2015). Experiential learning theory further developed by Kolb (1984) according to Heinrich et al. (2015) was understood through a model which progresses through a cycle of four stages. The stages are, having a concrete experience followed by observation and reflection of that experience; this leads to the formation of abstract concepts and conclusions; and lastly, based on the conclusions, it is possible to test hypotheses in future situations, resulting in new experiences (McLeod, 2017). This is a robust and effective pedagogy, according to Heinrich et al. (2015), for developing complex worldviews for approaching environmental problems which have a mix of causes and effect with uncertain solutions. This is true at an individual, group or organisational level according to Stein (2018).

The focus of this research is on a particular method of experiential learning which goes further than the experiential learning theories described above (Stein, 2018) namely, Group Relations Conferences. In these, members[1] are not passive members who absorb learning from convenors and subject matter experts, but rather conference members jointly experiencing learning within the boundaries of the conference and the task at hand. A method of experiential learning developed in 1957 by the Tavistock Institute at the University of Leicester (Miller, 1989), applies the group relations method to learning in an environment conducive to learning by experience, shifting attention to a more studied focus on people and their connectedness with each other (Stein, 2018). This enables members to explore intense challenges when managing differences in social systems (McCullum, 2008; Stein, 2018).

Sources extracted from literature and practice (Aram, 2010; Armstrong, 2007; Wallach, 2019), propose that: members attending Group Relations Conferences transform, as they learn how to function as members of a temporary organisation. Thereafter, members transfer that learning back to their respective organisations (Aram, 2010; Armstrong, 2007). In my experience, attending several Group Relations Conferences, my curiosity was piqued about what kind of learning was transferred back to organisations, hence this doctoral study about transmogrification and what it may mean for the individual and the organisation.

Identifying gaps in practice and the literature about Group Relations Conferences made this research distinctive as these knowledge gaps exist even though Group Relations Conferences have been in existence since 1957 (Miller, 1989; Wallach, 2014). At a time when a need for such experiential learning events was born out of the need to understand organisations as complex interactive systems, highlighting the human aspect of industry (Dimitrov, 2008; Hirschhorn & Horowitz, 2015), it enabled members to understand and develop awareness, of behavioural dynamics in organisations (Brunner et al*.,* 2006).

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[1] Members are the participants of group relations conferences in general and not necessarily experiences of the participants of this research.

1.2.1 Group Relations Conferences: An Introduction

The first Group Relations Conference was held by the University of Leicester and the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in the United Kingdom. It was presented by the then Head of Department of Adult Education at the University of Leicester and Chairman of the planning committee of the conference, the late Professor Allaway introduced the conference as "the first full-scale experiment in Britain with the laboratory method of training in group relations" including Eric Trist as the conference director (Armstrong, 2007; Erlich-Ginor, 2006; Miller, 1990; Sher, 2012). In 1962 Kenneth Rice took over the leadership of conferences and designed the conferences in the manner many are presented today (Miller, 1990). Eventually the so-called Leicester model emerged according to the structure subsequent events followed (Armstrong, 2007; Erlich-Ginor, 2006; Miller, 1990; Sher, 2012).

In essence the Group Relations Conference is a dynamic experiential learning laboratory during which both staff and members co-create a temporary institution with a beginning and an end (Wallach, 2010). The temporary learning institution allows for opportunities to study above and below the surface dynamics of organisational and community life (Wallach, 2010) while members simultaneously experience the behavioural dynamics as they happen in the here and now. Psychoanalytic, Group Relations and Systems theory are applied to understand members experiences and to explore tensions inherent in group life (Armstrong, 2010; Cilliers et al., 2004; Pretorius, et al., 2012).

The participant-observer effect allows for the generation of data as members find themselves in relationship with, and in relatedness to themselves and other group members. As this happens emotional states may be used to provide fresh insights about understanding underlying processes in the temporary organisation (Wallach, 2010). The group relations method allows members to focus on going beneath the surface of personal and interpersonal tensions and conflicts, for deeper fears and aspirations to be worked on, and worked through (Aram, 2010). At such a time learning by experience creates transformation as members learn to exercise personal authority, and respect the task and boundaries set during the conference (Armstrong, 2007; Erlich-Ginor, 2006; Fraher, 2004b; Miller, 1990; Sher, 2012; Stokoe, 2010). The systemic view of group relations conferences lends itself to the improvement of insight

and the provision of opportunities for learning so that quality of conversation and engagement across organisations and their communities may be improved (Aram, 2010).

The body of theoretical knowledge, in its application of the three epistemological traditions namely, systems theory, psychoanalysis and group relations thinking (Cilliers et al., 2004) (the conceptual origins of Systems Psychodynamics) allows for a consultative stance focusing on the group-as-a whole (Brunner et al., 2006; Aram, 2010). The design of the conference is a unique combination of elements such as the structure, the flow, and, the stance of the staff, forming a good container for the primary task of the conference. This design allows for further extrapolation by members to organisations and the society in which they reside.

Group Relations Conferences across the world propose to explore and learn about a well-defined range of systemic concepts such as boundaries, authority, role, task, leadership, followership, and organisational dynamics (Khaleelee & White, 2014; Shapiro & Carr, 2012). Over the years, the influence of global events and, issues around nation issues and nation differences (Khaleelee & White, 2014) met with minor changes in the design of these conferences.

In response to the nation specific issue of diversity in South Africa, the RIDE was designed to study diversity dynamics as those manifested at the conference. The aim was to allow members to learn about diversity relationships and underlying processes, to assist organisations with the appropriate management of diversity (Pretorius et al., 2006). The RIDE members then not only learnt about the systemic concepts of boundaries, authority, role, task, leadership, and followership as described by Khaleelee and White (2014) and Shapiro and Carr (2012), but also about the salience of racial and cultural identities (McRae & Short, 2010) of individuals and the group which created additional tensions to the learning experience.

The focus of this research is on RIDE. Held annually on Robben Island, over 15 years between 2000 and 2015. For its duration private individuals and/or employees from different organisations nationally and internationally, met to learn about diversity dynamics post-apartheid.

1.2.2 The Robben Island Diversity Experience (RIDE)

South African conversations about establishing a group relations organisation began in 1989. These conversations culminated in the formation of the Institute for the study of Leadership and Authority in South Africa (ISLA) between 1989 and 2004. The first event was sponsored by the Family and Marriage Society of SA (FAMSA) national council. In later years an international group relations event took place directed by Lorna Brown and staff including Carl Mack (USA) and Mannie Sher (UK). Frans Cilliers and Pieter Koortzen introduced group relations work at the University of South Africa in 1990. To date of the work continues in the field at both the University and organisations such as the Institute for Leadership and Transformation (TILT) in South Africa.

Robben Island was a significant context in which to present a Group Relations Conference, not only for its connection to the history of South Africa but also for its symbolism as a container of diversity dynamics. The venue was chosen for its historical and symbolic significance in the study of South African diversity dynamics as a phenomenon (Pretorius et al*.,* 2012). In the same year as conversations about establishing a group relations organisation started, the first of the long-term political prisoners held, in the specially built prison on Robben Island, were released. In April 1994 South Africa held its first non-racial democratic elections. On 10 May 1994 Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as the first democratically elected black president of South Africa (SAHO, 2019a). In 1999 the island became a World Heritage site (SAHO, 2019b). Following these events, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in 1996 to address past injustices of the apartheid government. In 1998 the democratically elected government passed the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (EE) to fulfil the constitutional mandate to veto discrimination in the workplace (Bendix, 2010).

Changes to the constitution and labour laws at that time led to diversity forums being created in organisations to ensure that employees were consulted on diversity matters by creating awareness and understanding of employment equity (Prince, 2006). However, organisations driving diversity programmes soon began to realise that diversity was a double-edged sword (Pretorius, et al., 2012). Organisations realised diversity did not lead to a competitive advantage and, if not skilfully wielded had major

cost implications (Pretorius, et al., 2012). Applying rational and cognitive approaches to diversity often failed because of inadequate understanding of the concept of the unconscious behavioural dynamics of diversity (Pretorius, et al., 2012).

Within this context, the first RIDE was presented on Robben Island in 2000, nine years after all the political prisoners were released from the island itself. During the 15 years it was presented, the RIDE consisted of a group of heterogeneous members with a population size +- 400 members. Some years saw more than 50 members attending and, at other times ~30 members attending. Membership of the event was open to individuals, managers, consultants, and employees of both public and private sectors across South Africa and other nations, both on the African continent and elsewhere.

The theme of the RIDE was to study the core concepts of diversity as it happens in the here-and-now. According to the RIDE conference brochure, Pretorius et al. (2006):

> *"RIDE's mission is to provide opportunities to study diversity at a deeper level – enhancing our understanding and insight into the dynamics that drive group behaviour. Although RIDE's structure, methodology, process, and assumptions are based on the systems psychodynamic approach, we value the fact that RIDE is a learning system that grows organically through the inputs of consultants and delegates alike" (p .1).*

Therefore, even though the South African group relations conference title traded in diversity it was a temporary training institution set up to explore the tensions inherent in group life using experiential learning as a method (Stokoe, 2010). The RIDE developed its own dynamics, rituals, and ways of working within its own structures (Pretorius, 2003; Pretorius et al., 2006). It provided an opportunity for learning and understanding of how individuals and groups perceive, interpret and act towards individual and collective diversity (Pretorius, et al., 2012). Such learning was presumed to be transferred back to the members' respective organisations and the society in which they found themselves (Aram, 2010; Dimitrov, 2008; Stokoe, 2010). This aim was similar to other group relations conferences presented across the world (Aram, 2010; Brunner et al., 2006; Stokoe, 2010). Members of the temporary organisation could feel they could add value to their organisations based on their learning

experiences which enabled more ownership of their organisations and communities (Fraher, 2004b; Stokoe, 2010).

The primary goal of any system is survival, albeit a temporary organisation such as the RIDE. Such survival necessitates transformation (van Reekum, 2017). The literature is clear (Armstrong, 2007; Erlich-Ginor, 2006; Fraher, 2004b; Miller, 1990; Sher, 2012; Stokoe, 2010) that transformation does take place at Group Relations Conferences. However, the literature seemed scant about what that transformation looked like and what was transferred to members' organisations after attending such events. Based on that gap in the literature the focus of this research was on what transformation was experienced at the RIDE by the participants[2] in this research. Questions asked were, "How was transformation experienced and why may transformation have been experienced at the RIDE?"

A preliminary literature review produced the thought-provoking concept of *transmogrification*. This increasingly emerged as a key element to the kind of transformation members of Group Relations Conferences may experience.

1.2.3 Transmogrification

As indicated Systems Psychodynamics is a consultancy stance of organisational diagnosis and change applied during Group Relations Conferences (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010; Mowles, 2017). Outside of the boundaries of group relations conferences organisations employ consultants or management scholars to study organisational effectiveness. The consultancy stance of applying systems psychodynamic perspectives is one of several change models which exist to help identify areas of resistance to change. The consultancy stance enables consultants to inform organisations how to implement the appropriate strategies to eliminate resistance to change before change is implemented. The uniqueness of Systems Psychodynamics is its focus on unconscious processes in organisations. It is in

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[2] Participants refer to the eight participants sampled from the member population of the RIDE. The term participant also refers to participants of this and other research projects cited.

contrast to the often-mechanical view of organisational life (Dimitrov, 2008) some other change models provide.

The mechanical focus on the rational and observable content structures and processes within a system (Naik, 2014) may result in miniscule change in comparison to the large investment of, time and energy organisations put into managing change and its sustainability (Dimitrov, 2008). The mental/calculative manner of thinking mostly employed to understand problems, solve them, deal with situations and, take actions to move forward (Dalle Pezze, 2006; Heidegger, 1945/2010) enables mastering a particular situation to meet performance standards. Focusing on the mechanical, observable, and rational content alone, however, enables organisations to avoid confronting often painful, political, and confrontational issues within their systems (Petriglieri, 2020).

Dalle Pezze (2006) and Heidegger (1945/2010) point out that change or transformation is possible when focusing on surface phenomena but rushing towards an outcome without considering the meaning of thinking and actions, individuals and organisations keep themselves in the familiar, and risk thoughtlessness or flight from thinking (Bion, 1961/2004). A mental/calculative manner of thinking affects the degree of possible change. Changes of degree are considered in Finn's (1999) research on constitutional change.

Critiquing the Ackerman (1998) model of change as cited in Finn (1999), Finn argued that the Ackerman model of change, was vague about "when and why constitutional change achieves revolutionary standing" (Finn, 1999, p. 355). It was Finn (1999) opinion that transformation might change something within a political context and bring about a desired change, however that change, or transformation would not challenge the existing order of things. In that instance change or transformation could be more about maintaining the status quo. As Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa (1958) cited in Petriglieri (2020) stated, "everything must change so that everything can stay the same" in a political context at that time. For Finn (1999) change or transformation that challenges the existing order of things on the other hand is equal to changes that transmogrify.

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Finn (1999) described transmogrification in his use of a comic strip named "Calvin and Hobbs" to describe the phenomenon. The comic strip was about a six-year-old boy named Calvin who excitedly enters his cardboard box, the transmogrification machine, as seen in Figure 1.1. After entering the box, Calvin comes out as, something else altogether, such as an elephant or tiger (Finn, 1999). From a vulnerable child with little agency Calvin can transform himself into a creature of size and strength. The author states that in polity these changes are similar, where people enter the box (polity) as six-year-olds and are transmogrified exiting it as someone or something else. When the members of the polity in South Africa challenged the 1948 to 1992 order of things, namely apartheid, they entered a "transmogrifier" by asking "who we the people are" (Finn, 1999, p. 358). In their thinking and attitudes, they emerged as political beings who were citizens of a democratic landscape. Politically the landscape was not only transformed but transmogrified because it had metamorphosed completely and was strange and new in a history of oppression and inequality for at least four hundred years. Transmogrification then is differentiated from transformation in that transmogrification occurs when the very principles of the context are challenged and transformed (Finn, 1999).

Figure 1.1

The Transmogrifier

Outside of a political context, transmogrification is differentiated from transformation, in terms of the origin of the word transmogrify/transmogrification. While the concept is not often used in the social sciences, the word was first used in the 17th century by England's first female professional writer, Aphra Behn, in her 1671 comic play "The Amorous Prince" who wrote about love transmogrifying a maiden (Merriam-Webster on-line Dictionary, n.d.). A century later a Scottish poet Robert Burns used the word again, when he wrote "Social life and Glee sit down, …Till, quite transmugr'fy'd, t'ey're grown Debauchery and Drink"ng" – a scurrilous, satirical use of the word in line with Bu'ns's social criticism. According to the online dictionary the definition of transmogrification is, "To change or alter greatly and often with grotesque or humorous effect" (Meriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.). Synonymously, the words transform, metamorphosis, transmute, convert, and transfigure abound and relate to transmogrify, implying a major change in form, nature, or function. Several dictionaries such as the online Cambridge dictionary (n.d.), online Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d.) and the Oxford Living Dictionaries online (n.d.) use similar definitions.

In the context of this research transmogrification is defined as a "form of abrupt change, a transformation to a higher element or thing and a change for something new or different". It implies a major change in the form, the nature, and the function but in essence it maintains an original form (Finn, 1999). For this kind of transformation to be effected a different kind of learning that transcends the study of organisational effectiveness, with a mechanical view of life in mind, (Dimitrov, 2008; Petriglieri, 2020) may then be required. McCallum (2008) observed that organisations have called for transformational learning. Those are understood as the ability of members of organisations to critically examine assumptions and biases which guide behaviour. This is a kind of learning usually associated with the educative process.

In conclusion addressing primitive and destructive defences against change is often viewed as too time consuming (Brunner et al., 2006). The preferred state of investigation is the mechanical view of life. Addressing primitive and destructive defences against change are typically viewed with some suspicion (Armstrong & Rustin, 2015) as these are difficult. In addition, suspicion could be a defensive

mechanism to avoid explanations of institutional behaviour as consequences of unconscious mental processes. Applying Systems Psychodynamics in understanding and addressing resistance to organisational change by focusing on the unconscious processes in organisations instead of defending against those, leads to the problem statement of this research.

1.3   THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

Group Relations Conferences apply group relations methods which acknowledge that adults learn more effectively through interacting and sharing in learning experiences (Dimitrov, 2008). As indicated in the afore mentioned, there is a plethora of research about group relations conferences and their unique focus on the group or system (Beck & Visholm, 2014; Fraher, 2014a; Sher, 2003) as a unit of analysis (McCallum, 2008; Sapochnik, 2020). However, organisations are hesitant to apply the method to explain unconscious mental processes as indicators of resistance to change (Armstrong & Rustin, 2015). The literature review chapter will explore the phenomenon in more detail. For purposes of the problem statement a brief literature review indicates that organisations readily employ consultants or management scholars who restrict themselves to the mechanical view of life. Dalle Pezze (2006) and Heidegger (1945/2010) believed this could be a flight away from thinking and, transforming within the status quo (Finn, 1999, Petriglieri, 2020).

Flight away from thinking (Bion, 1961/2004), so avoiding unconscious mental processes as indicators of resistance to change, does not challenge the existing order of things (Finn, 1999). Change and transformation are then "more of the same" and unsustainable (Finn, 1999, Petriglieri, 2020). A defence against such reality could mean that the organisation and individuals within them become defenceless and perplexed victims at the mercy of their situation (Dalle Pezze, 2006; Heidegger, 1945/2010).

Organisations are robbed of the chance to identify old assumptions which enables them to reframe and reform towards a discriminating explanation as well as to integrate new perspectives to act upon, when rationalisation occurs (McCallum, 2008; Willerman, 2014). If they rationalise those unconscious mental processes are difficult to observe, account for and are hidden from everyday view (Armstrong & Rustin, 2015)

in a bid to avoid conflict they are trapped. This way of avoiding change ensures that the chances to challenge leadership (Petriglieri, 2020) are lost. Adopting the defence of not changing may become untenable as advanced economies of the western world realise that organisations, in turbulent settings, cannot rely on inherited assumptions or practices that once made organisations successful (Hirschhorn & Horowitz, 2015). This is particularly evident in the unprecedented 2019 novel Coronavirus outbreak (Durodié, 2020) and its repercussions for the future. Looking at ready-made models to address the worldwide pandemic creates confusion about more adaptive responses that reflect the uncertain and ambiguous context (Durodié, 2020) of a worldwide pandemic.

Ignoring psychological factors of individuals or viewing employees as one-dimensional entities within organisations in effect dehumanizes employees (Petriglieri, 2020) and could put organisational investment at risk, according to Dimitrov, (2008) and Kets de Vries and Cheak, (2014). Change could be misunderstood, events misinterpreted, consequences of change incorrectly predicted, or leverage for change misdirected when unconscious dynamics in organisations are ignored (Dimitrov, 2008).

Within the South African context, Pretorius et.al. (2012) suggested that true understanding and awareness develop when organisations take into consideration both conscious and unconscious processes in behavioural dynamics. The authors further stated that there is a need for a deeper understanding of underlying forces that influence organisations, in terms of conflicts, defensive behaviours, tensions and anxieties. The consequences of denying this shows up in organisational situations or unconscious processes which surface as dysfunctional leadership, interpersonal conflicts, collusive relationships, ineffective team processes and other similar disturbing organisational phenomena (Dimitrov, 2008; Kets de Vries & Cheak, 2014).

Group Relations Conferences according to Straub (2014) are steeped in insights into the role and impact of unconscious processes of anxiety and the defences against such anxiety, on organisational, group and personal life. According to the author Group Relations Conferences are well positioned to explore unconscious dynamics manifesting in individuals and groups. Enabling dynamic leaders and managers to understand and be aware of the importance of addressing group dynamics in the

current period of formative change and the future which is open and unknown (Straub, 2014). On the one hand, while learning at Group Relations Conferences still holds true nearly six decades later and is not at risk of becoming obsolete (Straub, 2014), Waddell (2015) on the other hand acknowledged that many organisational consultants steeped in organisational and psychoanalytical thought were beginning to question the original paradigm of Group Relations Conferences.

In my studies on members' experiences of group relations conferences, Wallach (2014) found that while learning does occur at group relations conferences it might be more personal than systemic – a peculiar contradiction as Group Relations Theory and method are about systems, and the primary task of any group relations conference is to understand unconscious processes in groups and organisations (Wallach, 2014). Even when individuals report learning about systems there was little evidence of the impact conference learning may have had on the organisations. Wallach (2014), questioned the impact of individual conference learning, alluding to some negative and inappropriate transporting of group relations learning to organisations.

Outside of the conference territory Stokoe (2010) noted that people do not often ask themselves what the nature of the work-group function (Bion,1961/2004) was, and what the meaning of the psychic reality (an inner struggle of experiences held) was. Stokoe (2010) argued that not asking these questions could lead to overemphasising the pathological or reading it as a separate, self-contained domain thereby missing what the author calls the "shadow of development" understood as a communication of an inner struggle that is both organisational and personal. Stokoe (2010) then advised caution when learning experienced at group relations conferences is transferred outside these confines into organisational settings. The author stated that no matter how valuable and deepening an experience, group relations conferences may be, they are a prelude to application.

As indicated, the literature is vast in describing Group Relations Theory, the conference model, and its application (Miller, 1990; Sapochnik, 2020; Wallach, 2019). However, over the years research has mostly been from the view of the staff and consultants of these events (Abrahams, 2019; Wallach, 2014). There appears to be a paucity in research into members experiences of group relations conferences. A

possible reason for the paucity could be that there is a difficulty in measuring experiential learning (Bartle, 2015; Miller 1990). Research on members' experience usually contains self-report measures which prove problematic as members often find it difficult to describe their experiences at these events. In addition, some experiencees may not be available, residing in the unconscious and be hard to describe (Bartle, 2015).

Variations in meaning making of the same shared experience and measuring that experience also proves difficult (Bartle, 2015, McCallum, 2008). McCallum (2008) investigated the gap in existing literature about the Tavistock model of experiential learning paying attention to many forms of social diversity, however, not recognising the many ways people make meaning of their experiences based on diverse ways of knowing (McCullum, 2008) is troublesome. The evolving meaning making capacity determines the degree to which adults make sense of and manage challenges such as conflict and uncertainty (McCallum, 2008). The author contests that the lack of attention to how members of Group Relations Conferences make sense of and manage conflict and uncertainty affects the way adults learn in these settings. McCallum (2008) states that this also affects the way that the model succeeds or fails in developing individuals who can navigate and master complex organisational and social challenges.

Organisational consultants may be justified in their concern about whether the paradigm has risked becoming obsolete (Waddell, 2015) as organisations are increasingly requiring leaders and employees to critically examine assumptions and biases that guide behaviour (McCallum, 2008). If the benefits of group relations conferences are to improve strategic thinking, understand how organizational culture works, create more effective management based on understanding people in context of individuals, members of groups, organisations, and wider society, increase capacity to lead and manage in a rapidly changing environment and, how to apply conference learning back to the organisation (Tavistock Institute, 2016) it is then important to address the paucity of research. It is necessary to examine members' experiences of group relations conferences, which are primarily educational events (Wallach, 2014).

Stokoe (2010) asks two questions to understand why the impact of conference learning is currently being questioned and what the nature of the work-group function is at conferences, why are these are overlooked by members. Wallach (2014) asks what the overemphasis on the pathological means. She wonders whether we are running the risk that organisational change is misunderstood by members who may be, transporting negative and inappropriate learning into organisations. Dimitrov, (2008) and Kets de Vries and Cheak (2014) want to know whether theory and method about systems is interpreted more personally than systemically. The aims of this research are to gain some understanding of why these kinds of questions are found in the literature and practice about Group Relations Conferences.

1.4   AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

1.4.1 General aim of this research

The general aim of this research is to explore how members of group relations conferences transmogrify and what this means for the individual and the organisation.

1.4.2 Specific literature aims of this research

- Conceptualise Systems Psychodynamics.
- Conceptualise Group Relations Conferences.
- Conceptualise Group Relations Conference learning.

1.4.3 Specific empirical aims of this research

- Explore whether members of group relations conferences transmogrify and what this may mean for the individual and the organisation.
- Explore the learning processes of individuals attending group relations conferences.
- Describe members' experiences during and after attending group relations conferences.
- Explore the value of group relations conferences as an intervention tool.
- Add to the body of knowledge about the impact of Group Relations Conferences on the individual and the organisation.

1.5   A PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE

The choice of paradigm into which the research was conducted was dependant on my *ontological position.* What each of us believes constitutes our social reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Grix, 2010). There are multiple views of reality and different ways of being, all connected to our understanding of things (Kakkori, 2009). My *epistemological assumptions*, how reality is perceived (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Grix, 2010) depends on the internal reality of our subjective experience, known through empathy and observer subjectivity, as well as through interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Terre Blanche et.al., 2006). My ontological and epistemological assumptions and an initial review of the literature (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Grix, 2010; Ron, 2010; Terre Blanche et al., 2006) provided evidence that an interpretive framework would be a best fit for this research.

A meta-theoretical paradigm, Critical Realism, situated between positivism and interpretivism, traced back to the work of Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, and others (Grix, 2010; Owens, 2011) was the preferred choice.

1.5.1   Critical realism

The meta-theoretical paradigm of Critical Realism attempts to combine the how (understanding) and the why (explanation) linked to the interpretivist and positivist approaches by bridging the gap between the two streams of positivism and interpretivism (Grix, 2010). It is out of the scope of this research to go into a detailed description of what constitutes the key paradigms of positivism and interpretivism other than to describe the core concepts of these paradigms as they relate to the choice of a post-positivism framework for this research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Grix, 2010).

Three broad paradigms in the philosophy of social and human sciences could be placed on a continuum moving from explanation to understanding of social reality (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Grix, 2010). These are positivist, post-positive and interpretivist research paradigms. Most *positivists* assume there is no dichotomy between what is seen and how things are. The world is real, neither mediated by our senses nor socially constructed (Grix, 2010). The emphasis is on empirical theory in the production of knowledge. Social science can be value free; rules and laws are

sought to render the social world understandable (Grix, 2010). The belief in causal statements is shared by realists but is in contrast with interpretivists.

Interpretivism is an umbrella term for a wide range of perspectives in the human sciences in response to the dominance of positivism (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Grix, 2010). The interpretivists are concerned with subjectivity, understanding and agency, in how people construct their social worlds (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Grix, 2010). This involves complexities which involve elements of uncertainty. There is a possibility of contradictions and internal inconsistencies which arise as part of the explanations that interpretivists produce. This contrasts with the scientific search for universal laws or the certainty about how things work (Grix, 2010).

Critical realism is positioned on the continuum between positivism and interpretivism (post-positivism) drawing on the tenets of realism critical realists attempt to combine the how (understanding of interpretivism) and the *why* (explanation of positivism). Critical realism attempts to bridge the gap between these two approaches as seen in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Bridging the Gap between Critical Realism and Interpretivism

Critical Realism	Interpretivism
Foundationalist epistemology	Anti-foundationalist epistemology
Double Hermeneutics	Double Hermeneutics
Depth ontology	Socially constructed world
Combine understanding and explanation	Social world studied within
Interpretation	Emphasis on meaning
Pre-existing structures affect and are affected by actors	Not detached from subject understudy
Explain and understand the social world	Understanding
Identify casual mechanisms	Constructing causal relationships may be possible
	Objective study not possible

The assumption is that in addition to the empirical domain where events are witnessed, the world also contains a further domain, beyond the scope of human experience. Here, *the actual*, an interaction of causal structures, which cause observable events takes place. In addition, a further unobservable domain, *the real*, exists in which the underlying potential but 18nactualized causal structures are located (Grix, 2010; Owens, 2011). It is important to note that there are distinct differences between causes from the critical realism perspective and the perspective of positivists' causes. Critical realism identifies causal mechanisms in how they work and discover whether they have been activated and under what conditions (Grix, 2010; Owens, 2011; Ron, 2010). Within this post-positivist framework, a social science theoretical lens is employed by recognising that all cause and effect is a probability that may or may not occur (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Critical realism acknowledges that we need to look beyond the surface of a structured reality and apply a depth ontology in the way we interpret causal links which may not always be observable (Grix, 2010).

Based on my ontological and epistemological assumptions critical realism as a meta-theoretical paradigm appeared to be a good fit for this research enabling the exploration of multiple perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018) of the participants' experiences of the RIDE. In addition, the critical realism meta-theoretical paradigm fits with the analytic data analysis steps in phenomenology (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Phenomenology as a school of thought emphasises the phenomenon to be explored, discussions with individuals and groups about lived experiences and how subjective and objective experiences are shared with other people (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). These tenets seemed to fit with my assumptions about reality and how it could be studied.

1.5.2 Phenomenology

The typical features of phenomenological research (Creswell & Poth, 2018) initially drew me into this research. Phenomenology emphasises the exploration of a phenomenon common to a group of people who share a mutual experience of that phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018) such as the RIDE.

In phenomenological studies, data collection procedures usually involve interviews with people; however, the interviews do not preclude other modes of data collection (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data analysis can move from narrow units of analysis to broader units and on to detailed descriptions which summarise the two elements of what the individuals have experienced and how they have experienced it (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). In addition, Creswell (2013) states that the researcher brackets themselves out of the study by identifying and discussing personal experiences of the phenomenon. According to the author, bracketing researcher experiences is ideal as the readers can judge for themselves whether the researcher focused solely on the participants' experiences or how much of the researcher's experience influenced the study. A phenomenological study would conclude with a descriptive passage in which there would be a discussion of the essence of the experience of the individuals.

However, Phenomenology does not emphasise the why of experience, in contrast to the meta-theoretical paradigm of critical realism, which does not emphasise the what of the experience. For purposes of this research, I was not only interested in what and how of members' experiences of the RIDE but why they would have experienced the RIDE as they had. Of interest also the possibility of answering questions pertaining to the general and specific aims of this research.

Phenomenology as a school of thought alone, would then not allow me to achieve an answer to the "why" aim of this research. From the perspective of Critical realism studying society as an object that can have causal powers would entail a distinct kind of hermeneutics (Ron, 2010). Through a literature review it was found that hermeneutics would enable me to access the human experience of the RIDE and find the essence of those experiences (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kafle, 2013).

There are two approaches to phenomenology – hermeneutic phenomenology and psychological phenomenology (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The focus of psychological phenomenology is on the experiences of the participants and less on interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I discarded the psychological phenomenology approach as

interpretations of participants experiences were deemed important in this research context. Hermeneutic phenomenology was then considered for this research.

The school of thought derived from phenomenology called Hermeneutic Phenomenology emerged from the writings of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) applies a distinctive kind of hermeneutics to investigate the *why* of experience. This was an important distinction as I was interested in gaining an understanding of both conscious and unconscious cultural meanings mediated by both the minds of myself and the participants (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009).

1.5.3 Hermeneutic phenomenology

Hermeneutic phenomenology rejects the idea of suspending personal opinions (Kafle, 2013). It puts forward that the reduction and the acceptance of endless interpretations is impossible. The belief is that interpretations are all we have and description itself is an interpretive process (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Fossey et al., 2002). Hermeneutics assumes that much of the world is accessible to the confessor (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). It is however hidden in the transference and counter transference between respondent and the researcher and becomes a way in which the hidden world reveals itself (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009).

Kafle (2013) identifies those common characteristics which are shared between Phenomenology and Hermeneutic Phenomenology. These include description, reduction, essences, and intentionality (Kafle, 2013). Hermeneutic Phenomenology is orientated towards lived experience and interpreting the texts of life, such as experiences in peoples' work lives and social worlds, (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Fossey et al., 2002). Typically, what, how and why of experience is considered. It is an art of interpretation proposed by Ricoeur (1980) and defined by Kakkori (2009) as the task of unearthing the symbolic meaning of communication successfully.

The risks of not including the why, of the participants' RIDE experience may have led to dehumanising and objectifying (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009) participants' experiences. Hermeneutic Phenomenology allows for the "value add" of understanding participants' experiences of the RIDE. Developing an understanding of the phenomenon is viewed as an intrinsic quality of scientific reflection in the domain of qualitative research. As this happens the researcher needs to be aware of the power dimensions of the

interplay of interpretations, as well as the critical reflectivity on the part of the researcher (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009).

Other than the research paradigm of critical realism and hermeneutic phenomenology other boundary conditions for the research were set. These were the disciplinary perspective of Industrial and Organisational Psychology and the theoretical perspective of Systems Psychodynamics.

1.5.4   The disciplinary perspective: Industrial and Organisational Psychology

Industrial and Organisational Psychology is the disciplinary field in which I work, and it is a speciality which focuses on "deriving principles of individual, group, and organisational behaviour and applying this knowledge to the solution of problems at work" (American Psychological Association, 2021, para. 1). Schreuder and Coetzee (2010) define it as the scientific study of people within their work context, which includes the application of psychological principles, theory, and research in work settings.

The purpose is to understand the nature and structure of organisations and how organisations influence the behaviour of individuals and groups (May, 2010). Individuals, groups, and organisations are observed as systems with clear but permeable boundaries. Systems are understood to receive inputs, transform those, and provide outputs to the environment. This results in a connection, an interaction and an interdependency between systems and subsystems within systems (Geldenhuys et al., 2012).

1.5.5   The theoretical perspective: Systems Psychodynamics

The central principle of the systems psychodynamic perspective is contained in the conjunction of its two terms, (Cilliers & Stone, 2006). Systems Psychodynamics deals with complexity and relationships, on a systemic, dynamic, and psychological level (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). It is a theoretical perspective with methods of study which "develop truthful, useful and generalisable insights from a field that one is part of" (Petriglieri, 2020, p. 3).

Methods of study include three epistemologies of Systems theory, Psychoanalysis, and Group Relations Theory (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012) are:

(1) Systems theory not only recognises a system as a whole but, a system comprised of other systems which include individuals as systems in their own right (Shongwe, 2014).

(2) Psychoanalysis which recognises the role of the unconscious mind in the construction of social realities (Beck & Visholm, 2014).

(3) Group Relations Theory wrestles for an understanding of how groups affect individual members for good or ill, how the group succeeds or fails in carrying out its task and how entire groups relate to each other (Garland, 2010).

The theoretical perspective of Systems Psychodynamics is therefore well suited to explore members' experiences of the RIDE, as it integrates social, cultural, and historical factors at a conscious level, yielding information about unconscious motivations and defences (van Eeden, 2010), revealing the function of dysfunction (Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2015). The focus is on the interplay between psychological and social forces that shape organisations and the experiences of people within them, taking phantasies seriously as products of unconscious wishes which open the possibility of an alternative to conformity and resistance (Petriglieri, 2020).

In conclusion, my ontological and epistemological assumptions informed the meta-theoretical paradigm (critical realism) chosen in which to situate this research. The meta-theoretical paradigm in turn informed the school of thought (Hermeneutic Phenomenology) best suited to reach the aims of this research. These in turn were bound to my disciplinary field of expertise (Industrial and Organisational Psychology) and the theoretical perspective of Systems Psychodynamics which contained the methods of study required to fulfil the aims of this research (see Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2

Boundaries of the Research
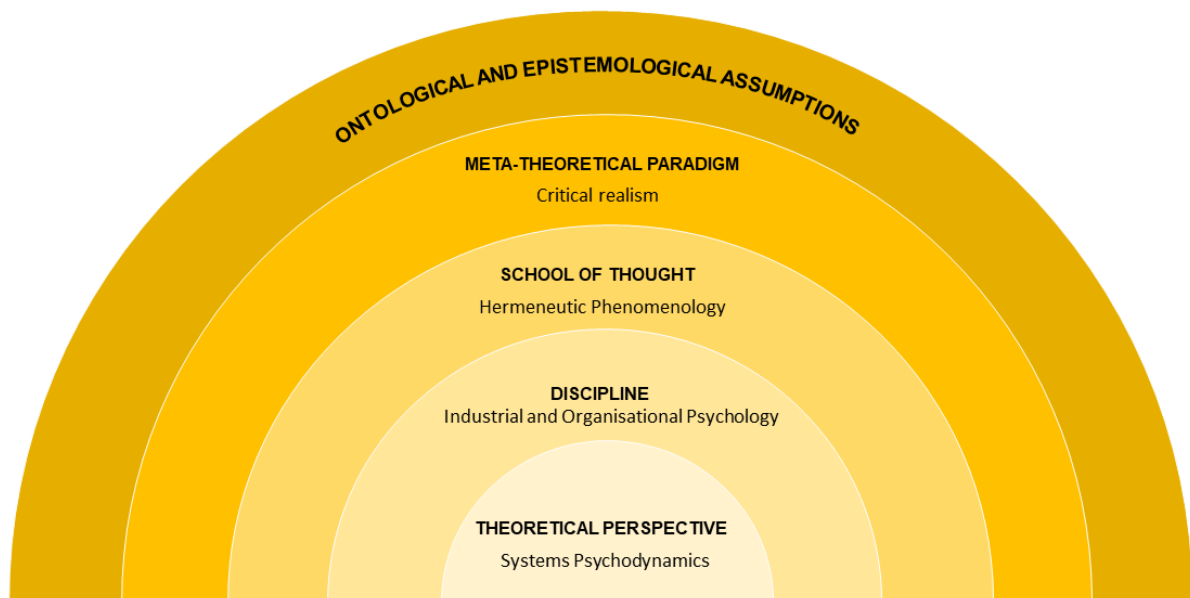
Note. Own work.

My choice of which research methodology to apply to attain the general and specific aims of this research are briefly described next. A full description of the process is described in chapter 3 elaborating on how the philosophy of this study was linked to the methodology (Vagle, 2014).

1.6   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section provides a brief description of the systemic way in which the research aims were planned, executed, and investigated. The approach to the collection measurement, and analysis of the data is provided. In addition, how care was taken towards proper investigation and validation of the research problem is discussed (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hassan & Ghauri, 2014; University of Southern California, 2021).

1.6.1   Research approach

The holistic approach of qualitative research was undertaken to study the whole phenomenon, understood as a complex system of more than the sum of its parts (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The descriptive study outlined the participants' experiences of the RIDE (Bernard et al., 2017; Grix, 2010) through an

inductive immersion into the details and specifics of the data. In conducting a preliminary investigation into a relatively unknown field of research (Terre Blanche et al., 2006) such as members' experiences of group relations conferences I was able to discover important categories and interrelationships in the data (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

1.6.2 Research strategy

The research strategy employed was to lead an inquiry into the phenomenon with rigorous qualitative data collection and analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018) exemplified in the data analysis steps of Phenomenology. To find out what was really at stake in the participants' lived experiences of the RIDE, in line with the Critical Realism approach, a multimethod approach was decided upon (Mik-meyer, 2020). A qualitative multi-method research strategy, which includes more than one method of collecting and analysing qualitative data was employed (Reis et al., 2017). A multidisciplinary research tool has been developed for triangulation and complementary purposes in the social sciences (Reis et al., 2017) and has developed into an established branch of empirical social research and methodology (Knappertsbusch et al., 2021).

1.6.3 Research method

In this section the research setting is described as well as my role as the researcher and how permission was gained to conduct this research from both the organisation which presented the RIDE and, the RIDE members themselves. Secondly there is a description of the qualitative sampling strategy used to satisfy the principle of congruency (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Grix, 2010; Ron, 2010; Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The methods used to record the data on paper and digitally are presented. Finally, the ethical decisions which were taken in terms of storing, sharing, and analysing the data are described. A full description of these methods is found in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

1.6.3.1   Research setting

The participants for this research were drawn from those individuals who had attended the RIDE on Robben Island between 2000 and 2015. Members of these 15 Group Relations Conferences were from all walks of life. They were professionals and managers at different levels in both the private and public sectors, entrepreneurs,

employed and unemployed citizens and non-citizens, residing in and outside of South African borders. The sample was therefore a heterogeneous group of people in terms of race, age, and gender.

1.6.3.2 *Establishing researcher roles*

My experience with group relations conferences in attending non-residential three-day events and as a member and staff, five-day residential events similar to the RIDE as well as online group relations conferences, pre and post the RIDE, enabled this research. The experiences of the RIDE were shared with the participants of this research as I had attended the 2014 RIDE. I was a member of RIDE and worked on the primary task of the RIDE which was to study the core concepts of diversity dynamics as they manifested in the here-and-now, not as an objective researcher outside of the RIDE looking in, but as an active participant in the experiential learning event.

1.6.3.3 *Sampling*

According to the literature (Creswell & Poth, 2018) there are three factors to consider when sampling. First the *sampling* strategy, which is about who to select as participants and the size of the sample. To attain the aims of this research a non-probability sampling strategy (Terre Blanche et al., 2006) was chosen by means of a purposive sample (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This strategy enabled me to intentionally sample a group of people who could best inform me about members' experiences at group relations conferences (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The inclusion criterion was:

• Members of the RIDE who had attended at least one of the conferences.

The exclusion criteria were:

• Members of the 2014 RIDE for ethical purposes as I had attended that conference: and

• Members who had been part of staff as the interest lay in members' experiences only.

The RIDE presented a population size of about 400 members over the 15 years the RIDE was presented. I obtained a sample size of eight participants suitable for attaining

the aims of this research. A detailed description of the sampling strategy is found in section 3.4.2 of Chapter 3.

1.6.3.4 Data collection methods and recording of data

In choosing what data collection methods would be used I gave precedence to those which allow immersion in the data (Bernard et al., 2017; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Grix, 2010). These data collection methods also needed to provide conditions for an interpretive account of participants' experiences of the RIDE, as the meaning of what may be going on in the participants' lived experiences was explored (Mik-meyer, 2020; Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Narrative-type descriptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Terre Blanche et al., 2006) such as face-to-face interviews and a focus group seemed to be the most plausible. In the literature search on data collection methods (Bauer, 1996; Bernard et al., 2017; Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Grix, 2010; Hollway & Jefferson, 2008; Morgan, 1997; Terre Blanche et al., 2006; Welman et al., 2012), narrative descriptions of participants experiences fitted in the boundaries of the paradigms and theoretical perspective of this research.

Even though there are several criticisms about the qualitative interview processes (Bauer, 1996; Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hollway & Jefferson, 2008; Welman et al., 2012), the literature review highlighted several ways in which to conduct interviews in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Based on the diverse views of the qualitative interview processes it was decided face-to-face interviews applying a methodology known as Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI), developed by Hollway and Jefferson (2008), for the one-on-one face-to-face interview was suitable for three reasons:

- The FANI borrows from the psychoanalytic principle of free association aligning with the theoretical perspective of this research.
- The FANI allows for looking at unconscious communication present in the interview relationship (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009).
- The four principles of the FANI (expanded upon in chapter 3, section 3.5.1) allowed for addressing participants' meanings of their lived experience by posing one question during the interview.

The data collection strategy revolving around the tenets of Systems Psychodynamics which includes systems, Group Relations Theory, and psychoanalytic principles (Cilliers et al., 2004) suggested that conducting a focus group to explore the participants' experiences of the RIDE as a group would be useful (Bion, 1961/2004). In addition, a revised application of a method known as Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA), developed by Northcutt and McCoy (2004), was chosen because:

- IQA applies a systems approach to qualitative research (Jackson & Suizzo, 2015).

- The emphasis is understanding the system from the participants' perspective.

- The IQA methodology aligned with the Critical Realism paradigm of this research in that the IQA methodology allowed me to examine the perceived relationships participants identified, between various experiences of the RIDE.

Both these methods of data collection aligned with the Hermeneutic Phenomenological framework of this research, The FANI and IQA were deemed best to answer the research questions and satisfy the aims of this research. Both forms of data were audio recorded and transcribed into text.

1.6.3.5 Data analysis

Data analysis is not off the shelf custom built but rather evolves by doing (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data collection, data analysis and report writing are interrelated and go on simultaneously throughout the research project. The multimethod approach to the data collection and analysis (Knappertsbusch et al., 2021; Mik-meyer, 2020; Reis et al., 2017) in this research, allowed me as a qualitative data analyst, to apply the three "I's" as described in Creswell and Poth (2018) in the data analysis strategy such as insight, intuition, and impression, conforming to the data analysis spiral to analyse the data of both the FANI and the IQA.

- Managing and organising the data: preparing files and units.

- Reading and memoing emergent ideas: taking notes while reading, reflective thinking, summarising field notes.

- Describing and classifying codes into themes: working with words, identifying codes, applying codes, reducing codes to themes.

- Developing and accessing interpretations: relating categories/themes/families towards contextual understanding and analytic framework in literature; and

- Representing and visualising the data: creating a point of view, displaying, and reporting the data.

The data analysis method chosen was the 6-step thematic data analysis method of Braun and Clarke (2006) which fitted the research design and methodology of this research. There were two deviations from this process which will be elaborated on in chapter 3, section 3.6. In sum:

- As indicated, I used a revised method of the IQA which excluded interviews after the focus group - a strategy Northcutt and McCoy (2004) state does not affect the rigour of the methodology.

- IQA protocol was followed during the focus group and thereafter in the generation of the Systems Influence Diagram (SID) which is a visual representation of participants' experiences during the RIDE.

- It was envisioned that the visual representation of the RIDE system might provide a situation of "co-analysis" (Mik-meyer, 2020) for an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences with themes that might or might not come up during the FANI. Hence the multimethod qualitative method of data collection and analysis.

In all other instances the Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019) 6-step thematic data analysis were applied to both sets of data. Those included four forms of data in my possession after the data collection process. Field notes, transcripts from both the FANI and focus group interviews, documents such as the flip chart generated during the focus group and additional material participants sent to me after the interviews were used. Lastly photographs of different phases of the IQA during the focus group were valuable aides in the data analysis.

The data analysis method allowed for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within both sets of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2016) - a method of data analysis in which coding occurs at two levels, semantic-manifest meaning, and latent implicit meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2019). For purposes of presenting the data analysis

of participants' experiences of the RIDE, the semantic level of analysis is presented in chapter 3 and the latent level of analysis in chapter 4.

1.6.3.6 Representing and visualising the data

At the outset of this research the most important thing for me was to have the participants voices heard. I tried to keep my voice in the background as far as possible which may have influenced me in taking up my own authority initially. Based on my ontological and epistemological assumptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Grix, 2010) everything about this research hinges on hearing the participants voices. It is the reason for this research project, and it informed my chosen research design and methodology.

A curious dynamic emerged after I had sent the work to the language editor who had co-opted others to edit some chapters. Some who could be identified as old school changed my first-person voice to third person voice. At first, I was confused then intrigued that the work sounded "scientific, objective and professional". At the same time, I was suspicious of why I would be hooked by a seemingly scientific objective and professional piece of work as if all that I had worked on these past six years was not scientific, objective, and professional. I wondered if this dynamic was not a last ditch at not hearing the participants and my voices about our subjective experiences of the RIDE and what about these voices would be difficult to hear. By using the third person voice both myself and the participants were seemingly silenced (Gilgun, 2005).

Rationalisation about writing in the first-person voice can be found in the literature see Gilgun, (2005); Henning et al., (2005); Magnusson and Maracek, (2015); Midgley and Holmes, (2018). However, recognising and acting on this dynamic I have opted to maintain my first-person voice throughout this research project as I come to conclusions no matter how tentative about my observations and provide evidence for my observations (Gilgun, 2005). Representing the participants and their experiences to the best of my ability so their experiences of the RIDE may be heard. In this manner my conclusions are explicit theoretical statements and subjective experiences (Gilgun, 2005) which fit with my philosophy of science and the focus of my research.

1.6.3.7   The Rigour of the study: Validation, reliability, and transferability

Many perspectives exist, on the importance of validation in qualitative research, as qualitative research has been criticized for its failure to adhere to the requirements of reliability and validation (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Modern positivist science is founded on an objective version of realism, taking for granted the existence of reality independent of the observer but with the possibility for objective representation of reality in the knowing mind (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). From this perspective, the notion of validity pertains to whether the investigation does investigate what it is meant to and to what extent it ensures the data gathered is a true reflection of the phenomenon. The postmodern perspective, and hermeneutic tradition challenge the very idea of scientific knowledge as a true representation of reality attained, via systematic research procedures (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). Knowledge from this perspective is seen as a human construction, an open domain of incoherent contradictory and contestable discourses, tensely coexisting and occasionally exchanging positions with one another.

In this research I considered "validation" or "credibility" as it is referred to by Lincoln and Guba (1985), who say it is an attempt to assess the accuracy of the findings best described by me and the participants to answer the questions after the study. What has to be established is whether I "got it right" or whether the wrong account was published. As Creswell (2013) suggests validation emphasises a process rather than verification which has quantitative overtones. A distinct strength of qualitative research in that the account made through extensive time spent in the field, the detailed thick description, and the closeness of the researcher to the participants in the study all add value to the accuracy of the study (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Multi-vocal discourses provide insight into the validation and evaluation of the qualitative narrative according to Creswell and Poth (2018).

a   Validation strategy

Results of a study are considered valid when other researchers feel they are trustworthy enough to rely on them in their own work (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). Creswell and Poth (2018) note that trustworthiness entails consistency, validity, and solidity. To this end I relied on triangulation, a term that generally describes multiple and/or different sources, methods, investigators, and theories which provide

corroborating evidence (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to determine credibility. In this research a methodological triangulation which is defined as more than one method used to collect data was applied (Reis et al., 2017). A within-method of triangulation distinguished from between-methods triangulation, which refers to the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Mik-meyer, 2020; Reis et al., 2017).

Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest five questions researchers may ask themselves to judge the quality of a phenomenological study. These can be asked of this Hermeneutic Phenomenology study (sharing the characteristics of a Phenomenological study) (Kafle, 2013).

(1) Does the author convey an understanding of the philosophical tenets of hermeneutic phenomenology?
(2) Does the author have a clear phenomenon to study?
(3) Does the author use procedures of data analysis in the chosen paradigm?
(4)   Does the author convey the essence of the experience of the participants?
(5)   Is the author reflective throughout?

In this research any interpretations which were supported by other evidence in the research material (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009) could be considered after reading the research.

b   Dependability and Confirmability
Reliability of the research refers to dependability and confirmability. Reliability was enhanced by obtaining multiple sources of data such as: field notes, live recordings of interviews and a focus group, my own account of the here-and-now experiences of the participants and myself. Through detailed field notes and good quality audio recordings and transcription of those recordings (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018), I considered the trivial, often crucial pauses and overlaps, which could be verified through an audit trail of the documentation. In addition, circulation of affect and positioning dynamics were accounted for (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009) as the data were analysed. To this end I relied on thick descriptions as explained by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as describing the phenomenon in sufficient detail to begin to evaluate and draw conclusions.

c   Intentionality

Whether there could be alternatives to the conclusions drawn by the researcher is a valid question. In addition, the question of how intentionality affected validation, transferability, and reliability must be asked. Lather (1993) suggests that it is not necessarily a matter of looking more closely but rather "seeing what frames, our seeing" (Lather, 1993 p. 675). The author's view made sense as I found my own intentionality emerging in the data collection and analysis phase of this research. Firstly, in the manner in which I decided to collect the data, the way it was coded, and themes were created as I immersed myself in the data to gain an understanding of the essence of participants' experiences of the RIDE. Secondly it was apparent in the way the data were interpreted, where meanings were always in motion and circulation, as I entered a dialogue with these rather than describing an essence. Moving in a hermeneutic spiral towards contexts, situations and the partial (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Vagle, 2014). Linking philosophy to methodology throughout this chapter was then relevant to justify that, while stable intentionality was resisted, intentionality, as a way of being, runs through the research exemplified in the human relations with the participants, myself as the researcher and the world at large (Vagle, 2014). In addition, I remained aware of wild analysis which did emerge at times (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). To guard against wild analysis, I engaged with the data analysis spiral and used discussions with my supervisor to elicit meaning from the data while being alert to own projections and own mutated interpretations of the data. These were the steps taken to mitigate wild analysis and look at the data from different vantage points (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

d   Rigour

Rigour is a description of the capacity of the researcher to contain a diversity of perspectives so that the data can be approached from different vantage points (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). I collected data with the FANIs (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008), the IQA and from the focus group focus group transcripts (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). Triangulating different forms of data provided validity for the findings (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

These forms of data collection and analysis methods allowed for a textural description of what and how participants experienced the RIDE (see the findings chapter 6). The

analysis of the data enabled me to provide a structural description of why participants experienced the RIDE as they had. Moreover, a composite description towards an in-depth account of the participants' experiences was presented in the form of hypotheses that specify the relationship among categories of information as suggested by Creswell (2013). These included verbatim examples of participants' experiences. In addition to a visual representation of the RIDE system describing in situ, I worked with the context of this research.

The intention of the research was not to generalise but rather to elucidate the particular and the specific of the RIDE participants' experiences. It could be asked whether the RIDE participants' experiences would not generally hold for other situations as well (Creswell, 2013)? This question may be answered through the rich, thick description of the data, enabling readers to make decisions about transferability (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and determine whether the findings may be transferred because of shared characteristics. Terre Blanche et al. (2006) state that it is important to create a foundation for transferability of findings to other contexts to address the issue of representativeness. To this end an accurate description of the research process, an explanation of the arguments for different choices and methods and detailed description of the research situation and context is necessary.

Finally, confirmability which relates to external audits (in the form of external examiners of the doctoral thesis) will allow that an auditor who has no connection to the study can examine whether the findings, interpretations, and conclusions are supported by the data (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

1.6.3.8   Ethical research principles
Ethical principles were considered throughout the different phases of this research project (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Most of these principles are mentioned throughout the research as they pertain to specific areas of the research. The ethical principles upheld by me were further strengthened by my role as an Industrial and Organisational Psychologist practising under the auspices of the Professional Board of Psychology in South Africa. This body maintains and applies fair standards of professional conduct and practice to effectively protect the interests of the public (HPCSA, 2021). All data in my possession was held securely in accordance with

the ethical rules of conduct for practitioners registered under the Health Professions Act of 1974 (HPCSA, 2007). These included all rules concerning confidentiality, privacy, security, and dissemination of records amongst others. Ethical principles are further elaborated on in the methodology chapters.

In reporting on and publishing, care was taken not to plagiarise and to avoid disclosing information that could harm the participants; no falsification of the evidence, data, findings, or conclusions formed part of this research project or will be part of future published works using this research data.

1.7 SCHOLARSHIP REVIEW AND FINDINGS

A literature review enables a review in the field of study in terms of what has been theorised, conceptualised, and empirically found by scholars (Mouton, 2011). I was concerned that my own bias and reviewed literature would cloud my judgement had the literature review commenced before the analysis of the data. To mitigate this the literature review was conducted after the data analysis and reporting on the findings. This method suited the purpose of this research as it enabled me to focus on the dynamics present in the data. Within the context of this research, interpretation required giving up memory, desire and understanding (Bion,1962) to sufficiently engage with the psychic reality of participants, based on the seminal work of Bion (1962).

1.8 CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Chapter 7 integrates the findings of the research, from which conclusions are then drawn. Limitations are presented and recommendations are made for future research on Group Relations conferences, Industrial and Organisational Psychology and Systems Psychodynamics in the final chapter 8.

1.9 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The chapter layout will follow a somewhat unconventional approach to fit with the study while still adhering to the conventions of thesis writing (Mouton, 2011). The strict chronological sequence of chapters usually found in theses is disrupted due to how the research and my own learning progressed. This chapter (1) is an overview of what follows in subsequent chapters (2-8). Chapter 1 serves as a general introduction to the

contents of the thesis. I have "exploited" the literature review as Trafford and Leshem (2008) suggest by dividing the literature review into two chapters (Chapter 2 & Chapter 5) to enhance the text. Chapter 2 is a review of the corpus of published works and the extended literature in the field of Systems Psychodynamics. Chapters 3 and 4 cover the research design and methodology. Chapter 3 describes the analytic work at a semantic level of thematic data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Chapter 4 describes the analytic work at the intersection of data, analytic process, and subjectivity. Chapter 5 is a conceptualisation of group relations conferences and group relations conference learning. Chapter 5 provides some context for the findings laid out in chapter 6; an exploration of the participants' experiences of the RIDE, based on the thematic analysis of the data in four themes. These themes explore both the conscious and unconscious dynamics of participants experiences of the RIDE as they worked on the task of studying diversity dynamics in the here-and-now. The findings and literature are integrated in Chapter 7 towards an exploration and understanding of transmogrification at a Group Relations Conference such as the RIDE and what it may mean for the participant and the organisation. Conclusions and limitations of this research are presented in Chapter 8. The conclusion makes recommendations for future research and practice.

1.10   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter is a brief introduction to the significance of studying members of group relations conferences experiences of transmogrification and what this may mean for the individual and the organisation. The research on Group Relations Conferences revealed gaps in knowledge of members' experiences at Group Relations Conferences because of the difficulty in researching them. What appears in the rest of the study is alluded to in this introductory chapter in accordance with academic requirements for a thesis.

CHAPTER 2: A SCHOLARSHIP REVIEW OF THE CORPUS OF PUBLISHED WORKS

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is to present a review of scholarly work (in support of the literature aim of this research) on Systems Psychodynamics. This serves to orientate the reader to the theoretical constructs that inform the research. As explained in chapter 1 the review of the scholarly literature on Systems Psychodynamics was performed after the data analysis of the research and reported on the findings so as to align it with an interpretation of group dynamics (Bion, 1962). The theoretical perspective of this research provides intellectual boundaries for the research which supports the research design, methodology, analysis of the data as well as the conclusions that were drawn (Trafford & Leshem, 2008).

2.2   A REVIEW OF THE SCHOLARLY LITERATURE

My interest lay in wanting to learn from other scholars, how they had theorised and conceptualised the concepts I was investigating, what was found empirically, what instruments were used and to what effect (Mouton, 2011). In effect I conducted a scholarship review as defined by Mouton (2011) of the most recent credible and relevant scholarship in the field of group relations and Group Relations Conferences. There is a plethora of research on group relations and Group Relations Conferences (Beck & Visholm, 2014; Fraher, 2004a; Sher, 2003) however, mostly from the point of view of researchers in group relations and staff and consultants of Group Relations Conferences (Wallach, 2014). At the outset of this research there was minimal research on members' experiences because of the difficulty of researching these events (Lawrence, 1979; Miller, 1990; Bartle, 2015). This has led to the paucity of published research in this field (Wallach, 2014; Hills, 2018). During the review of the scholarly literature, newer research on members' experiences had emerged (Abrahams, 2019).

The aims of the literature review were related to the specific body of accumulated literature about Systems Psychodynamics, Group Relations Conferences, and experiential learning at those conferences. There was a necessity to know what

scholars in the field had theorised, conceptualised, and empirically found in terms of this field of study (Mouton, 2011). Knowing that there was little research from an initial review of the literature in terms of members' experiences of Group Relations Conferences I chose to conduct the literature review after concluding the findings.

During the findings phase of the research, I was fully engaged in the psychic reality of the participants' experiences of the RIDE without being biased towards what other researchers may have found. Conducting the literature review in this way also aligned to the theoretical perspective of this research and consultants' engagements with group relations work when interpreting group dynamics. Interpreting these dynamics requires a semblance of not knowing as well as giving up memory, desire and understanding to sufficiently engage with the psychic reality of participants, based on the seminal work of Bion (1962). Giving up the literature review in this way till after the findings phase was meant to enhance my interpretations of the participants' experiences of the RIDE.

In addition to accessing the accumulated body of knowledge about Group Relations Conferences, the literature review provided clues and suggestions of literature outside of the field which could be investigated with reference to other and lead to a better understanding of the phenomenon (Mouton, 2011). Permeable boundaries between what is known within the theoretical perspective of the phenomenon and what might be known about the phenomenon outside of the boundary of the theory were created adding to the body of knowledge about Group Relations Conferences.

Beginning with a review of seminal works (Bion, 1961/2004,1963/2018, 1965/2018; Freud, 1922/1949) the literature review revealed that there was a shift in ideas and methods about how to study groups between 1927 and 1932 (Fraher, 2004a). During that time, several theorists, such as, Sigmund Freud (1925/1955), Kurt Lewin (1952) and Wilfred Bion (1961/2004), amongst others, studied group relations (Fraher, 2004a).

2.3 THE STUDY ABOUT GROUPS TO THE STUDY ABOUT GROUP RELATIONS

The French sociologist Gustav Le Bon as cited in Freud (1922/1949) argued that when an individual joins a particular large group, that individual sacrifices a part of their individuality becoming more easily susceptible to influence and suggestion (Fraher, 2004b). Freud (1922/1949) and several theorists at that stage disputed Le Bon's work arguing that his negative view of groups was linked to his fear of the masses in line with most Frenchmen of that time (Fraher, 2004a). William McDougall as cited in Fraher (2004a) a British born American expanded on Le Bon's theories. He believed that unorganised groups were impulsive, emotional, and suggestible. However, in organised groups the intensification of emotions in individuals could be harnessed effectively for positive group achievement (Fraher, 2004a). While Freud is not well known for his contribution to group theory, he did question what groups were (Freud, 1922/1949). How groups exercised influence over the mind of an individual and what these mental changes were. He theorised group influences were forced on an individual in such circumstances.

The Hawthorn experiments are an example of new methods of group study in the early 20th century according to Fraher (2004a). Lewin, a foundational contributor to group study, provided theories to study tensions between individuals and groups by theorising that the group to which an individual belongs is the ground for their feelings, perceptions, and actions (Fraher, 2004b). Lewin and his associates experimented with the hypothesis that adults learn more effectively through experiential experiences and developed the T- group (Highhouse, 2002) and laboratory method of learning (Beck & Visholm, 2014; Fraher, 2004a).

The T-groups were in high demand in the USA between 1964 and 1979 after which they seemed to lose some traction (Highhouse, 2002). The T-group methodology was to find better ways of changing people's attitudes and provide them with greater insight into their own attitudes and values according to Highhouse (2002). In the author's research on the history of the T-group movement he states that the major method used to accomplish change to people's attitudes by the trainers of those groups were group discussions and role play. That is in line with Lewin's concept of the individual-change process involving unfreezing the current situation, changing attitudes, and refreezing

the new behaviour (Highhouse, 2002). Lewin's views, however, were influenced by the Tavistock Institute and members of the group at that time, most notably Eric Trist and Bion (Highhouse, 2002). Members of the Tavistock Institute were known for their experimentation with group therapy techniques at that time. While there were various reasons for the apparent demise of the T-Group the argument that drew the most attention according to Highhouse (2002) was the damaging effects of T-Groups on their members. These appeared to be the group dynamics which were contemplated by Bion.

Bion's focus was on group attitudes in contrast to the T-Group focus on individual attitude, based on his theory of the will of the group (Bion, 1961/2004). Bion believed as gregarious animals' humans are always part of one or another group even though individuals were unaware of how they contributed to the group mentality. Observing the tensions in groups, Bion acknowledged the primitive state of an individual in a group who wished for everything to revert to the status quo as being a barrier to learning, but nevertheless an opportunity for an onlooker to gain insight into groups (Bion, 1961/2004; Sher, 2003).

Observations such as these allowed for a shift away from the study of *groups* towards the study of *group relations*. This came about as Bion (1961/2004) observed and felt transferences from individuals in groups he found himself in. He felt these transferences as the group's attitude towards himself, or other members of the group (Bion, 1961/2004; Sher, 2003). He also observed that other members of the group would state that they felt that the group had an attitude towards themselves. However, he did not remain an observer alone. He also expanded on the purpose of the attitude that may have been adopted at a certain time, which implied a perception of a group observer attitude to other groups and the group's behaviour, based on its thinking of what the other group's attitude towards itself was (Bion, 1961/2004; Sher, 2003). Observing the group's attitudes to itself and others led to the recognition of unconscious social processes in groups which had not been identified before. The complex emotional episodes in groups suggested the presence of the "other" in group life as much as it is present in the emotional life of the individual (Bion, 1961/2004; Sher, 2003). It was this understanding of group dynamics and Lewin's theories that

strongly influenced the early Tavistock group work in the United Kingdom and the advent of Group Relations Conferences (Miller, 1990).

Systems Psychodynamics seemed to evolve between 1967 and 1999 during the time of the rise of the T-group and Bion's observations of groups. A term which was explicitly discussed in a scholarly publication in 1999 (Fraher, 2004a; Neumann, 1999) referred to collective psychological behaviour within and between groups and organisations (Fraher, 2004a).

2.4   SYSTEMS PSYCHODYNAMICS

Systems Psychodynamics is conceived as a systems theory through which one understands the universe as a hierarchy of systems (Cilliers & Henning, 2014). Systems Psychodynamics is a consultancy stance related to organisational diagnosis and change which is applied during Group Relations Conferences (Brunner et al., 2006; Aram, 2010). It deals with complexity and relationships on a systemic, dynamic, and psychological level (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). As such it is a useful theoretical perspective to develop truthful and generalisable insights (Petriglieri, 2020) in a field one is both part of and researching/consulting to, with a unique focus on unconscious processes in organisations (Dimitrov, 2008).

2.4.1 Systems theory

The notion of system is an old one (Klir, 1972) dating as far back as the Aristotelian world; Aristotle himself said that the whole is more than the sum of its parts (Klir, 1972). The concept of general system theory is relatively new and suggested by Von Bertalanffy just before World War II (1939 - 1945) but gained popularity in the 1950s (Klir, 1972). Von Bertalanffy presented a model of intake, conversion and output which connected a system to its environment – a model which von Bertalanffy (Klir, 1972) and social scientists such as Rice (1953) recognised as a model applicable to human behaviour in organisational contexts (Stokoe, 2010).

Expanding on the idea, Miller, and Rice (1967) distinguish between closed and open systems. Closed systems would contain stringent control measures to protect the intake, conversion, and output process, not requiring much interrelatedness with other systems. Open systems, however, would contain permeable boundaries maintaining a

balance between what is in the group and what is outside of it (van Eeden & Cilliers, 2019). In an open system interrelatedness of the system with other systems would be paramount to the system's survival (Miller & Rice, 1967).

Relatedness between individuals and their organisations has changed over the years (Stapley, 2006) because of the changing global environment (Gertler, 2019) in which uncertainty and technical advances predominate. Turbulent environments now contain referent organisations "focused on interorganisational behaviours within an ecosystem of organisations with differing interests" (Boxer, 2014 p. 130) which exist without boundaries. Organisations "without boundaries" must then be approached not as hierarchical systems according to the author but as a composite of technological and sentient systems between which it must collectively sustain horizontal as well as vertical relations (Boxer, 2014).

Boundaries provide people with a sense of control and safety (Wallach, 2014; Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). Containing anxiety and collaboration between systems in continuous mutual transactions (Miller & Rice, 1967; van Eeden & Cilliers, 2019) is the ideal. Boundary management therefore is a primary activity in all organisations and Group Relations Conferences (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). Boundaries are in place to enable us to relate to one another (Stapley, 2006). If there are no boundaries, we become lost in each other, lost in organisation, and lost in society according to Lawrence (1979). Boundaries help us make sense of the world; without these the here-and now becomes chaotic and intolerable (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012).

Boundaryless networked societies have emerged and appear to have several liberating consequences (Visholm & Sandager, 2020). In such societies there is no hierarchy, all is equal, everyone is connected, even to powerful national and world leaders (Visholm & Sandager, 2020). The network society appears to be safe where all are lost in the fragmented postmodern society. Value creation is addressed (Boxer, 2014) and all can be saved and feel connected (Visholm & Sandager, 2020). Everyone can join as there are no demands, and we are set free from responsibility, leaders, authorities, and differences (Visholm & Sandager, 2020). No one knows who is in and who is out. No one knows the proportions or the boundaries of the whole network (Visholm & Sandager, 2020).

The freedom of the network is a kind of blindness with new threats and hidden power structures shaping what on the surface seems to be free democratic interaction (Visholm & Sandager, 2020). Boundaries now seem to be interpreted as limitations to freedom and development or as protection against intruders not as meeting points or identity statements that can lead to exchange or interaction (Visholm & Sandager, 2020).

Changes associated with the post-modern work environment, in addition to the changes brought about with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, facilitate heightened levels of anxiety because of the changes in psychological boundaries within and between systems (van Eeden & Cilliers, 2019). Not only have emotional experiences become split off from formal structures according to Shongwe (2014), but it has also been left to many informal structures of the organisation to manage. Formal and informal structures which need to contend with fears and anxiety in an unprecedented time of global and national uncertainty compels individuals to search for meaning making amid suffering (Durodié, 2020).

Without viewing the boundary society as something old but rather to try to work out the dialectics between the polarisations of a boundary society and networked society in a postmodern system (Visholm & Sandager, 2020) it is then essential to understand the non-rational and often unconscious emotional elements that operate in groups and systems (Wallach, 2014) both containing boundaries or boundaryless-ness.

2.4.1.1   The concept of boundaries

Boundaries which contain conscious physical boundaries and unconscious psychological boundaries of time, authority, task, role, and identity, together with the management of those, are the responsibility of the Director and staff of Group Relations Conferences (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). Boundary management happens between people and in the minds of people (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). This can be from individual or shared experiences of boundaries. Boundaries could be seen as the container which holds the task (Green & Molenkamp, 2005). If the container is inadequate, it will not support the task according to Green and Molenkamp (2005). Winnicott (1971/2005) however believed a good enough container would hold the task. Later research by Weinberg (2016) found that the task held quite well in what he termed a leaky container

with porous boundaries. In any event, if boundaries are unclear, too small, or too big, people can feel excluded from boundaries. There may then be a need to break boundaries and/ or push against them which is not always in service of a task (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). Boundaries can also be socially deconstructed, unlearned and re-negotiated (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012).

There are five key differentiating constructs that define boundaries in the minds of individuals and organisations according to Struwig and Cilliers (2012). They are boundaries, authority, role, task, and identity. These constructs as an acronym – BART are a key system to understanding learning that comes through group relations work, but they are not all that learning entails (Green & Molenkamp, 2005). People, groups, and organisations use these constructs to answer the question, "Who am I?', "Who am I not?" and "Who is us?" and "Who is not us?" (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). Group Relations Conferences aim to allow members to exercise personal authority, respect task and boundaries, knowing transformation might happen because of learning from experience (Brunner et al*.,* 2006; Lawrence, 1979; Miller, 1989). The constructs of authority, role, task, and identity are conceptualised next.

a   Authority

Authority is about the right to do the work (Green & Molenkamp, 2005) contained within the assigned role, differentiated from power which is the capacity to influence others and projected into a role (Stapley, 2006). There are different types of authority:

- Organisational authority is formal or delegated authority. It is top down from a board of directors down the hierarchical structure. This authority must be clearly defined, taken up accordingly and accompanied by the tools to exercise it (Green & Molenkamp, 2005). An individual takes up personal authority as delegated and executes that authority.

- Authority from below both formal or informal given by subordinates i.e., authority that can be sanctioned or withheld from below (Hazell & Kiel, 2017).

- Personal authority is influenced by individual psychological make up, social identity and cultural background. An individual can take up own authority formally or informally (Hazell & Kiel, 2017).

Group Relations Conferences provides a set of experiences for members to take up their own authority for learning (Lawrence, 1979; Miller, 1989). One of those learnings which can be experienced is how issues of authority are handled in groups and ways in which it is lost or established (Hazell & Kiel, 2017). Members may also learn that over- authoritarianism could lead to role-lock, that is taking up familiar roles in which they feel comfortable, thereby maintaining homeostasis (Kiel, 2017).

b   Roles

Roles can be achieved, acquired assigned and/or ascribed to people (Green & Molenkamp, 2005; Hirschhorn, 2017). Roles can span a lifetime or mere moments. Depending on the fit, roles can be reflections of or equated with our identity. There are two types of roles according to the authors, a formal role, and an informal role (Green & Molenkamp, 2005; Hirschhorn, 2017). The former is much like a job description. It defines certain duties that are performed within that role. Role is intricately connected to boundaries and authority and therefore it is important that roles are clearly defined (Green & Molenkamp, 2005; Hirschhorn, 2017). Role shifts can occur as people move between different roles or occupy multiple roles. Informal roles are those roles not found in job descriptions etc. Individuals at times take up these roles that serve to cover gaps of authority and abandoned tasks. These roles can range from simple to complicated (Green & Molenkamp, 2005; Hirschhorn, 2017). Both formal and informal roles are linked to our valences according to the authors.

c   Task

Task in a group relations context is the end toward which work is directed (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002; Mathur, 2020). A distinction is made between three different tasks, the primary task, survival task and process task (Green & Molenkamp, 2005). The primary task corresponds with the mission of an organisation. Most organisations face multiple tasks all vying to be accomplished in service of the primary task. When a group works on a task, members of the group unconsciously have the survival (van Reekum, 2017) of the group in mind. Green and Molenkamp (2005) name this action the *survival task*. The authors state that the primary task and the survival task co-exist. However, the survival task conflicts with the primary task. Survival as a group becomes the primary preoccupation and latent motivating force for all group members (Green & Molenkamp, 2005). A third task is the *process task*. The purpose of the process task

is to give attention to the survival task without necessarily acting it out (Green & Molenkamp, 2005). The process task provides the opportunity for a group to try to understand the meaning behind the behaviour of the group.

d   Identity

Open systems, boundaries, and connections between systems (Stokoe, 2010), including the individual as a system (Shongwe, 2014) are in constant relatedness (Stapley, 2006) with the individual, the team, the organisation, and the system as a whole. The primary task is essentially the identity of any organisation according to Stokoe (2020). In essence identity can be seen as the fingerprint of the team according to Cilliers and Koortzen (2005). When individuals become members of groups their behaviour changes and a collective identity emerges (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002).

How influence is used amongst individuals and groups, the processes by which individuals and groups establish their identity and find meaning and expression of the self and become part of the group are constructs in the mind (Kelly & Gangjee, 2019). These are ideas about us, realising differences while at the same time realising that we are part of the group according to the authors. How the individual is involved in these dynamics is a central question of Group Relations Conferences (Kelly & Gangjee, 2019).

Individuals' sense of identity provides a form of containment according to Hayden and Molenkamp (2002); however, identity is complex (Wallach, 2012). Its nature is fragmented, insecure and shifting (Fournier & Smith, 2006). Just as valences shift over time and context and are not a perpetual aspect of an individual's identity (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002), some individuals could be ambivalent about their identities or to being put into a position to represent a particular identity group (Wallach, 2012). Giving up identity can be truly terrifying (Wallach, 2012). Group Relations Conferences however enable members to experience the fragility of identity in a group and the need to preserve such identity (Sapochnik, 2020).

The constructs of authority, roles, task, and identity are essentially psychological (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). Psychological boundaries result in physical boundaries or barriers and vice versa (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). Individuals who identify with one

another will most likely see themselves as a group in some way or another like language, dress, or proximity. If individuals create a physical boundary or around others, they will often respond to it psychologically (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012).

Thinking systemically then is essential as it accounts for behaviour at every level of the system, macro, micro and meso levels, individual, group and organisational as systems need to adapt and renew to survive (Beck & Visholm, 2014; Shongwe, 2014) in the post-modern work environment (Gertler, 2019; van Eeden & Cilliers, 2019). What occurs on one level of the system has repercussions on another level (Noumair et al., 2017). Systems thinking then provides the framework for understanding the relatedness of everything (Shongwe, 2014) while holding a complex interdependent view of organisational life in mind (Noumair et al., 2017).

As indicated earlier the BART model for understanding dynamics in organisations and Group Relations Conferences is not all that there is to understand those dynamics. Even if the model may no longer be relevant in certain environments such as knowledge work as Hirschhorn (2017) suggest. In addition to systems theory, psychoanalytic theory is applied to explore tensions inherent in group life at Group Relations Conferences and in organisations (Armstrong, 2010; Cilliers et al., 2004; Pretorius, et al., 2012) aiding in our understanding of systems. This second epistemological lens of Systems Psychodynamics is conceptualised next.

2.4.2 Psychoanalytic theory - An evolution

Even though the epistemologies of Systems Psychodynamics have been successful in studying organisations over several years (Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2015), a question posed in the literature is whether the original paradigm of Group Relations Conferences is not becoming obsolete (Waddell, 2015). Authors such as Boag et al. (2015) state that psychoanalytic theory makes bold claims about the significance of unconscious mental processes of the mind, especially in the light of unconscious mentality being questioned of late. Boag et al. (2015) wonder whether in the advances in science and psychology generally Freud's anachronistic, early twentieth century thinking has been overtaken and whether the major concepts of psychoanalysis such as *unconscious mental processes* need to be rethought. The authors together with Hume (2010) do concede that Bion's contribution to the field of Group Relations Theory

is unrivalled by any after Freud. Yet Bion himself (Bion, 1961/2004) said that Freud's view of the dynamics of the group seem to require supplementation rather than correction. Of his own theories he said,

There remains the question of what therapeutic value is to be attached to the procedure I have tried to describe. I do not think that the time has come to give a definite opinion and I believe that there may be room for fully qualified psychoanalysts to carry on research into its value. Possibly with groups composed of individual's who themselves are having or have had psychoanalysis. As a description of group dynamics, everyone is able to decide for himself whether the theories I have adumbrated give meaning to the phenomena which he, during his daily life as a member of a group, can witness. (Bion, 1961/2004, p. 190).

Carrying on research as Bion (1961/2004) suggested, psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic group theory (Garland, 2010; Sher, 2003) became differentiated over time, particularly within the epistemological lens of Systems Psychodynamics. A comparison of psychoanalytical group therapy and individual psychoanalysis was made by Garland (2010) in her search for what these two constructs might have in common, in which ways they link and in what ways, they may differ.

2.4.2.1   Psychoanalysis and the psychoanalytic group

Individuals are a social species (Bion 1961/2004). Our perceptions, and passions are the means through which we engage with and make sense of our relationships with others (Garland, 2010). Engaging with our objects (Klein, 1959; Ogden, 1986), not only creates us, but informs us, letting us know that we ourselves are. Individuals then become, develop, grow and flourish only in relation to the bodies and minds of others, often within groups (Garland, 2010). Psychoanalysis and the psychoanalytic group share these underlying assumptions, belief structures and goals according to Garland (2010).

The aim of psychoanalysis is to learn, to investigate and to a greater extent understand one's thoughts and feelings while in action in various situations (Beck & Visholm, 2014). Understanding patterns of reaction in similar situations, could mitigate becoming captive to those in different situations (Beck & Visholm, 2014). In psychoanalysis the patient and therapist are alone 'keeping a secret" in the room. The

third-party present is the patient's projections and phantasies onto the therapist while personal interpretations are provided between the therapist and patient (Beck & Visholm, 2014).

Psychoanalysis does not operate within a sharp divide between those who are ill and those who are healthy (Beck & Visholm, 2014). Projections, phantasies, and transferences are some unconscious processes formed by repressed conflicts in childhood, which establish themselves separately from thinking and consciousness; they break through a person's psyche, without further consideration in any situation (Beck & Visholm, 2014). These and other unconscious processes may be addressed in both the personal lives and work context of individuals.

The theoretical trajectory of psychoanalysis was originally followed by Bion. His theory on group processes was original and initially described as a "psych-social" view of groups according to Hume (2010). Before the Kleinian approach to groups, Bion's major contribution was to show that the psychoanalytic approach to the individual and group are two approaches, providing a binocular vision of the group (Bion, 1961/2004). The first key concept is that when the phenomenon is examined using the individual method, it centres on the oedipal situation, the struggle over power and dominance (Sher, 2015) related to group pairing (Bion, 1961/2004). The second key concept is that when examined by the group method, it is centred on the sphinx, where the groups' purpose is learning, accepting difference, and tolerating weakness without withdrawing from group processes (Sher, 2015). That is related to problems of knowledge and scientific method (Bion, 1961/2004; Sher, 2003). Two key conceptual elements to understanding Group Relations Conference dynamics which are often ignored according to Sher (2015).

During the time Bion was developing his theories, Foulkes was developing a theory of group functioning (Hume, 2010). Both the theories of Foulkes and Bion originated in Europe (Hinshelwood, 2007). However, while both theories viewed the group as-a-whole, Foulkes viewed the individual as primary to the group, embedded in the group and with the group (Hume, 2010). Bion on the other hand saw individuals secondary to the group; he did not differentiate between therapy groups and others either (Hume, 2010). Bion's approach was for the leader to make interpretations of the phenomenon

in the group as these developed. He then avoided any reference to individual psychopathology, seeing it as destructive to the experience of the basic group (Hume, 2010). Based on these different views of the role of the individual in the group, a split evolved between the two views in later years in the macrosystem between the American and European perspectives on how to study a group.

2.4.2.2   The split

The question about "how individual cognitions and interactions give rise to society", for the North Americans, was different to the European question of "how is society represented through individuals" (Abrams & Hogg, 2017, p.562). The focus of this research follows the line of the European question of how society is represented through individuals and the seminal theories of Bion while not dismissing the North American perspectives, rather keeping those in mind from a systems perspective. The North American perspectives on groups focused on realistic conflict and psychodynamic/motivational accounts, towards a social-cognitive account of individual decision making, stereotyping and prejudice and a formal modelling approach, to capture group decisions and processes (Abrams & Hogg, 2017). This focus underpins the theory and methods of Lewin's T-Groups as discussed previously.

Bion's focus was on group dynamics and not the individual. He concentrated on what happens in the group as the group's responsibility, not the individual's (Hume, 2010; Sher, 2003). Bion believed therapy would not necessarily have a positive outcome for an individual. However, by not telling a patient what to do, he hoped an interpretation would stimulate a patient to do something (Sher, 2003). He became convinced of the importance of Kleinian theories of projective identification and the interplay between the paranoid-schizoid splitting of the good and bad objects (Klein, 1959) and depressive positions where aggression is managed (Klein, 1959). When others are experienced as whole bringing together the good and bad object, which is an essential part of relatedness (Sher, 2015).

These perspectives deepened Bion's understanding of group dynamics (Hume, 2010). In his summary in *Experiences in groups and other papers* (Bion,1961/2004) states the importance of the Kleinian theories as perhaps a supplementation to Freud's view of group dynamics, rather than a correction. Similar to Boag et al. (2015) call for

incorporation of advances in the sciences post Freud, which at the time of Bion, were the theories of Melanie Klein in understanding group dynamics. Bion's view was that:

> *All groups stimulate and at the same time frustrate the individuals composing them; for the individual is impelled to seek the satisfaction of his needs in his group and is at the same time inhibited in his aim by primitive fears that the group arouses.* (Bion, 1961/2004, p. 187).

In her paper *Our adult world and its roots in infancy* (Klein, 1959) stated that groups whether large or small consist of individuals in a relationship to one another. Klein (1959) believed that to understand the behaviour of people in their social surroundings it is important to understand how an individual develops from infancy into adulthood. The author put forward a hypothesis that a new-born experiences "anxiety of a persecutory nature". This means that without an intellectual ability the infant feels every discomfort unconsciously as though it was inflicted on him/her by hostile forces. The child would associate the breast as, a good or bad breast if the child feels milk is forthcoming or withheld. If the child, then experiences comfort, it is felt to come from good forces. In this way the infant experiences emotions towards an object, not the mother per se, as Klein (1959) states, but rather the infant has an "innate unconscious awareness of the existence of the mother". The infant has an instinctual knowledge of the mother, the primal relation to his/her mother is established at only a few weeks old.

2.4.2.3 *Advances in the science: Kleinian theory*

Object relations theory according to Klein concerns itself with the infant splitting the developing ego into good and bad objects (Bartle, 2015; Klein, 1959; Long, 2011). Identification evolves with the breast when it is seen as the first "part-object" the infant has an emotional tie with and internalised into the infant psyche (Freud, 1925/1955; Klein, 1959). The breast and the infant's experiences associated with the breast are incorporated into the developing infant's mind where the breast is linked to primitive and instinctual urges often in a regressive way (Freud, 1925/1955; Klein, 1959; Long, 2011). Both love and a sense of persecution have deep roots in the infant's earliest mental processes and are focused on the mother. The infant is dependent on the mother for life or death (Klein, 1959). These emotions still operate in later life and are projected towards anybody who elicits these primitive responses in adulthood.

When individuals develop the psychological capacity to relate to external and internal objects in later years which include people, organisations, groups, ideas, and symbols (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2012), innate aggressiveness is bound to be increased by unfavourable external circumstances according to Klein (1959). However internal factors also need to be considered. Destructive impulses vary from individual to individual and are an integral part of mental life. Klein (1959) notes that the ego which is the organised part of the self is constantly being influenced by instinctual impulses but keep these under control through repression. The ego also has the important task of defending itself from anxiety from internal and external influences (Klein, 1959).

Should an individual have unfulfilled attachment needs and phantasies, they could experience conflict and frustration, resulting in anxiety, which in turn could mobilise regression into infantile coping defences, such as paranoid-schizoid behaviour. The paranoid-schizoid position is a position all individuals may resort to in the face of self-threatening occurrences. Adopting such a position enables us to believe in the good objects we can rely on, uncontaminated by bad threats, which have been split off and are located elsewhere (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008; Armstrong & Rustin, 2015).

Greed and envy are singled out by Melanie Klein as very disturbing factors of destructive feelings. Klein (1959) notes that an infant greedy for love and attention is insecure about its own capacity for love. Anxieties reinforce greed which remains fundamental throughout life. If the child feels the mother is deliberately withholding, suspicion becomes the basis of envy. A disturbed relationship to the mother then exists. The urge in later life is to possess and destroy others' enjoyment of the object which tends to spoil the object itself and later other people because nothing can be fully enjoyed. That which is desired is then already spoilt by envy. If envy is strong, good cannot be assimilated or become part of inner self and give rise to gratitude.

Experience of gratitude towards others, influence strongly both the character and relations with other people (Klein, 1959). With the growing integration of the ego in normal development splitting processes diminish and the increased capacity to understand reality to bring together contradictory impulses leads to a greater synthesis of the good and bad aspects of the object (Klein, 1959). This state is viewed as the depressive position in which aggression is managed by the super ego, which controls

dangerous impulses. If envy and greed get out of hand guilt may create an equilibrium. In normal development with growing integration of the ego, splitting processes diminish and the increased capacity to understand external reality brings together some contradictory impulses leading to a greater synthesis of the good and bad aspects of the object such as love despite faults (Klein, 1959).

Within the theory of object relations, splitting, projection and projective identification are psychoanalytic concepts used to understand unconscious functioning in groups, as well as to describe defence mechanisms individuals use in interpersonal relationships and in groups to alleviate feelings of overwhelming anxiety (Klein, 1959; May, 2010; McCallum, 2008; McRae & Short, 2010). These concepts are conceptualised next.

2.4.2.4   Object relations theory

Insights from object relations theory are critical contributions to Group Relations Theory and learning that takes place at Group Relations Conferences (McCallum, 2008; Sapochnik, 2015). Object relations theory describes the individual's internal world (Garland, 2010). It is an internal world in which human behaviour is fundamentally caused by humans' biological and instinctual nature (Koortzen & Wrogemann, 2003) and the individual's relations with her/his internalised objects.

The way in which internalised objects are organised in relation to each other, is lived out in relations with the external world. Individuals are in a state of conflict between unconscious sexual and aggressive instincts (id) and social demands (superego) and maintaining a balance (ego) between the id and superego (Koortzen & Wrogemann, 2003). This conflict takes place in the mind of the individual and is termed "psychodynamic" which describes the constant conflict of control over the person's behaviour (Koortzen & Wrogemann, 2003). However, systems theory and the psychoanalytic view of how individuals manage their relatedness towards the self and others within groups (Garland, 2010) does not paint the full picture of how groups function.

It has been suggested that Bion found a way of integrating the structure of the mind (according to Freud and the content of primitive anxieties according to Klein) to

accommodate, primitive processes with their contents (Hume, 2010). Processes which are studied in psychoanalytic groups where there are several others present not only a "single other" (Garland, 2010). In a group, individuals are committed to learn, hate to learn, want to know all and experience pain in development (Bion, 1961/2004). According to Bion (1962), there are three instincts individuals possess in a group, Love, Hate and Knowledge (L+H+K), a process that individuals follow in the attainment of (K)nowledge. These processes fuel increased splitting, projection introjection and introjective identification when individuals find themselves in groups and organisations outside of the family group (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2012).

a   Splitting

Persecutory anxiety reinforces the need to keep the loved object separate from the dangerous one, split love from hate (Klein, 1959). By splitting the bad from the good, the belief in the good remains for the individual which is a primal activity of the ego according to Klein (1959). The author states that the tendency to split off the ego is because the early ego largely lacks coherence.

The infant must believe in the good object the mother on which his/her survival relies. Just considering some of the bad feelings would overwhelm the infant creating an internal hostile world. The process of splitting changes in form and content as development goes on but is not entirely given up. As indicated in the previous sub-theme, Klein (1959) viewed omnipotent destructive impulses, persecutory anxiety and splitting as predominant in the first months of an infant's life which she termed the paranoid-schizoid position. These unconscious processes of introjection (taking in) and projection (putting out) of mental objects which results in splitting the good from the bad is the basis for the paranoid-schizoid position (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008).

b   Introjection

The psychological concept of introjection according to Freud (1925/1955) is about the influence and the demands the external environment makes on the ego. These demands the ego cannot always rise to, as described in the theory of Klein. It is a process in which an infant may experience real or emotional loss of a loved object (Klein, 1959). The objects include the breast, the penis; then whole objects such as the mother, the father, and the parental couple according to Bartle (2015). The

characteristic of the "lost object" is a cruel self-depreciation of the ego, combined with relentless self-criticism and bitter self-reproaches that represent the ego's revenge upon it. The ego is therefore divided and rages against the lost object, which has been altered, by the introjection. The ego that rages is the ego-ideal which contains the conscience, which takes up a critical attitude to the ego (Freud,1925/1955). Through self-observation, moral conscience and censoring of dreams, it is the chief influence in repression. The earlier the introjection, the more fantastic the objects, that are introjected and distorted by what has been projected onto the individual (Bartle, 2015). The amount of distance between the ego and the ego ideal becomes a variable and differs from individual to individual (Freud,1925/1955).

c   Projection

Projection occurs simultaneously with introjection during which the child has the capacity to attribute to others feelings of various kinds, predominantly love and hate (Klein, 1959). In this process there is identification with the other when projecting oneself or part of self, impulses, and feelings into another person and in this way attributing to the other person some of one's own qualities (Klein, 1959).

The repercussions of projection are that our own emotions and thoughts according to our own balanced or persecuted nature will depend on whether the projection is friendly or hostile. By putting part of our feelings in another we understand their feelings, needs and satisfactions (Klein, 1959). If projection is hostile, empathy and understanding of others is impaired. Within the context of this research, it is important to note that projection tied to race and culture within groups is intricately tied to societal attitudes, expectations, prejudice, and stereotypes in service of maintaining power and privilege (McRae & Short, 2010). McRae and Short (2010) state that individuals of colour can receive stereotypical assumptions and phantasies about race and projections about leadership, power, and authority. As well as who represents the group with more power in society in terms of skin colour gender and language fluency (McRae & Short, 2010). Projection identification on a group level in a racial cultural context is often a microcosm of what occurs in society.

The character of the projection is then particularly important. If the interplay between the introjection and projection is not dominated by hostility or over dependence, but

well balanced, the inner world is enriched and the relations with the external world are improved (Klein, 1959). Introjection and projection contribute to the interaction between external and internal factors throughout every stage of life but become modified through the course of life without losing importance (Klein, 1959). Individual's judgement of reality is then never quite free from this internal world of unconscious phantasies according to Klein (1959). Phantasies hold the content of urges and feelings such as wishes, fears, anxieties, triumphs, love, and sorrow (Klein, 1959).

d   Introjective identification

The psychological phenomenon of the self's characteristics ascribed to an object is extended to the object's characteristics and is known as introjective identification (Henning, 2009). The object's characteristics are ascribed to the self and the individual would identify with a group or organisation to such an extent that it becomes an important part of the individual's overall identity (Henning, 2009). The object's characteristics applied to the self is a result of development in which the reality-sense operates more fully, and internal objects approximate real people in the external world more closely (Bartle, 2015).

2.4.3 Group Relations Theory

Being a group animal goes to the very heart of what it is to be human whether individuals acknowledge that they belong to groups or not (Bion, 1961/2004; Hume, 2010). The individual is at war with both the group and with those aspects of the self that constitute "groupishness" (Bion, 1961/2004). No one can be considered as standing outside of the group or not being part of group psychology (Armstrong, 2010; Hume, 2010).

Freud's (1922/1949) observation of groups on the one hand was to suggest that groups never search for the truth but demand and rely on illusions. Bion (1961/2004) on the other hand stated that no matter how rudimentary the workgroup would employ methods of science to do its work as it is concerned with reality. Armstrong (2010) agreed with Bion's view of groups, in contradiction to Freud's view, as he is of the opinion that should a group only operate and rely on illusion, it would not need the structure of the group, which is the *work group*, a term co-opted by members Bion was

working with at that time. Bion said *work group* best describes important phenomena he observed in groups (Bion,1961/2004).

There are two reasons that groups of people would come together. Firstly, the group comes together for the task, to carry out work and to ensure that the purpose or task is achieved (Garland 2010, Kou & Stewart, 2018). Following the recognition of the task the group then develops a structure, if it is to operate effectively. This begins with a boundary of who is in, who is out and who is allowed in and who not (van Eeden & Cilliers, 2019) according to systems theory.

Secondly, people come together in a group to preserve the group (Bion, 1961/2004). The main objective is the survival of the group which could at times conflict with rational thought (Geldenhuys et al., 2012). These tensions or emotional situations in groups are always charged with feelings of confusion, frustration, and boredom according to Bion (1961/2004) and are relieved only through outbursts of exasperation between members of the group.

Large groups differ substantially from small groups according to Garland (2010) and Lawrence (1979). Individuals' capacity for reflection, thought, problem solving and decision-making, which are important elements of identity, may be overwhelmed and subsumed by a large group (Garland, 2010). A study (Tobin et al., 2017) on the effects of ostracism and inclusion of individuals in a large group found that larger groups exacerbated the negative effects of ostracism and did little to enhance the positive effects of inclusion. Groups can go wrong and become a crowd or mob. In a mob the voice of reality or reason would be difficult to hear. Mob passions render innocence irrelevant according to Garland (2010). A group in such a primitive state will find or recruit a primitive leader who will serve its purpose and if a suitable enemy cannot be found one will be created (Garland, 2010).

Rationality does not extend to all groups (Garland, 2010). Some groups work and others do not according to French and Simpson (2010). No groups work optimally all the time, yet neither is any group entirely dysfunctional (French & Simpson, 2010). Some groups may be aware of purpose and concerned with the real (Hume, 2010) recognising skill among one another and cooperating as separate individuals who

recognise themselves and the leader while working on the task of the group (Bion, 1961/2004, Hume, 2010). Others would have no interest in learning and listening and understanding their own processes (Garland, 2010). Each kind of group and every individual group will have its own character since each method of creating a group and running a group for a specific purpose will be unique to the interactions between the personalities of the organiser and those of the group members (Garland, 2010).

Bion did agree in part with Freud about the psychological disadvantages of group formation, recognising the often-chaotic drives which manifest in groups in their efforts to contain destructiveness and destructive forces. Bion (1961/2004) stated that if a group is unorganised it would lead to the emergence of the basic assumption mentality which he called valency. Valency is defined as a "spontaneous, unconscious function of the gregarious quality in the personality of man" (Bion, 1961/2004 p.135). However, Bion believed that the work group mentality, the counterpart of the basic assumption mentality, has the function of manipulating the basic assumption mentality (Bion, 1961/2004) to prevent its obstruction of the work group function. In that case group organisation would give stability and permanence to the work group function. If the group is unorganised it would lead to the emergence of the basic assumption mentality. According to Bion (1961/2004) "organisation and structure are weapons of the work group" (p. 135). This is the product of the work group mentality which demands cooperation.

Basic assumption mentality was classified as three distinct patterns by Bion (1961/2004). Presented next in no order these are the basic assumption mentality of dependency (baD), the basic assumption mentality of pairing (baP) and the basic assumption mentality of fight/flight (baF).

2.4.3.1   The basic assumption mentality of a group

Basic assumption mentality within a group determines whether and how a group functions if at all (Bion, 1961/2004). When a group functions in the basic assumption mentality, everyone does not necessarily behave in a sensible fashion or purely work on the task. What happens is that individuals in the group and the group itself, develop attitudes towards each other and the group (Bion, 1961/2004) and methods that are not necessarily in the service of the task (Hume, 2010). Basic assumption mentality of

groups creates the push and pull between constructive and destructive forces in groups as individuals in groups work on the task (Hume, 2010). How the group works on the task is then at times obstructed and at other times assisted by the powerful emotional drives in the group. This is the basic assumption mentality of the group (Bion, 1961/2004; Hume, 2010).

When the primary occupation of a group becomes the survival task (Green & Molenkamp, 2005) aimed at the survival and preservation of the group, the group uses two techniques only, according to Bion (1961/2004), namely, fight or flight to deal with all the groups' problems. The author observed that the groups' preoccupation with fight or flight would lead the group to ignore all other activities, suppress them, or run away from them, to preserve the group. In addition, while there are only two techniques the group uses, the basic assumption mentality in a group about a group conflict with other views of what a group can do.

a   Basic assumption of Fight/flight (baF)

Irrespective of the size of the group all groups have their internal dynamics, which can hinder or help carrying out the task (Garland, 2010). Sometimes tensions generated within groups are dealt with by the group agreeing upon a common enemy outside its boundaries (Bion, 1961/2004). When the group finds itself in the basic assumption mentality of fight/flight, there is a collective and unconscious belief that there is an enemy and a danger that must either be attacked or fled from (Dal Forno & Merlone, 2013; Hume, 2010), including a fight/flight from the work (Bion, 1961/2004).

Fight/flight provides a sense of togetherness and supports avoiding or facing the difficulties of the primary task (Dal Forno & Merlone, 2013). Cooperation within the group may be bought at the cost of conflict between that group and others. Where automatic obedience to a leader is called for, followers are at risk of all kinds of projective and introjective processes, engendered by large groups (Garland, 2010). The choice of leader or the valency of an individual to take up this position (Bion,1961/2004) will then be dependent on his or her ability to mobilise the group in fight or flight (Hume, 2010). In this way the group would operate from a basic assumption mentality of dependency.

According to Bion (1961/2004) if all the group can then do is to fight/flight, it would need and enemy to fight or flee from, such as the perceived leader of the group. Creating the basic assumption mentality of dependence (baD).

b   *Basic assumption of Dependency (baD)*

Regardless of whether a group understands that they have come together as individuals to study groups, as one entity, with no specific leadership role assigned to a particular person, the group would act as if they had met together to obtain security from one individual on whom to depend (Bion, 1961/2004). This basic assumption is often evidenced at Group Relations Conferences in members' relatedness to the consultants and director (Pretorius et al., 2006; Sher, 2015).

In this way the group then operates within the unconscious phantasy that they have come together to find security and protection in one individual alone, usually the group leader (Bion, 1961/2004; Dal Forno & Merlone, 2013). The group's basic assumption is that the perceived leader possesses all the wisdom and solutions. Group members then behave as if they know nothing and are devoid of resources and capacities (Bion, 1961/2004). Remaining in the phantasy about the leader, the incongruence in the mind and what the group finds is then bewildering (Bion, 1961/2004).

The group often structures itself around a dependent group mentality to avoid emotional experiences peculiar to the fight/flight mentality (Bion, 1961/2004). The group can then restrict itself to the experience of flight. Flighting away from the problem and leaving the perceived leadership to address the problem the group is flighting away from can happen (Bion, 1961/2004). This serves to protect the group from experiencing certain aspects of group life they do not feel prepared for (Bion, 1961/2004).

In the basic assumption mentality of dependency, the group feels it can only learn from the leader and no other group member. Sitting back and waiting to learn from the leader as if by some magic on the part of the leader (Bion, 1961/2004). According to Bion (1961/2004) individuals in the dependent group are quite capable of doing the work however the group, as a group, is opposed to the idea that they met for the purpose of doing the work and acts as if an important principle would be infringed upon if they did the work (Bion, 1961/2004). The group would further sabotage the leader in keeping

silent to deny the leader any form of material for scientific investigation (Bion, 1961/2004). This is a way of retaining the illusion of the magician and the security of being in the hands of a magician. According to Bion (1961/2004) this group behaviour cannot be ascribed to resistance of the group but rather that the group feels a hostile attack to their "religious beliefs" (Bion, 1961/2004).

Operating within the basic assumption mentality of dependence means the individual is greedy, demanding more than their fair share (Bion, 1961/2004). A sharp clash between the basic assumption mentality of the group and the needs of the individual as an adult arise (Bion, 1961/2004). Resentment in being in this position is as much in evidence as is relief. Anger and jealousy are much more easily expressed in the basic assumption mentality of dependency; however, these do not evoke as much fear as they do in the basic assumption mentality of fight/flight (Bion, 1961/2004). The phantasy is maintained that a being would come to the rescue and protect the group. In the fight/flight basic assumption mentality there are none of these reassurances. However, in the absence of a perceived being watching over the group there is relief and freedom to express emotions. A conflict then arises between the freedom of expression in this way and the desire to be mature (Bion, 1961/2004).

The frequent phenomenon of a group embroiled in baD is the emergence of guilt about greed (Bion, 1961/2004). The dependent group would initially conform to strict discipline, conversation would be limited to that which is unimportant (Bion,1961/2004). The group establishes a sense that the structure and situation is familiar and unchanging. Only the perceived leader is regarded in this instance (Bion, 1961/2004). The behaviour in the group however contradicts this as the group shows the leader does not know their job. If the leader in an authoritative role feels the need to claim authority it shows that it is not only the group that requires the familiar situation but the leader him/herself. Such a structure and situation teeter precariously, according to Bion (1961/2004).

In the bewilderment of not getting a leader as expected, alternative leaders arise and are discarded. Attempts may be made at sabotaging the group in denial of accepting what the leadership represents in such a group (Bion, 1961/2004). Failing at creating an alternative leader or sabotaging the group, the group may be dominated by the

basic assumption mentality of unity, for the purpose of fight/flight (Bion, 1961/2004). A group in the basic assumption mentality of flight culture of pairing represents for the individual an attitude which does not go further than the survival of the group.

Not taking up personal responsibility for the task but remaining in flight from the task to satisfy the emotional needs of the group and avoid anxiety, the group after its disappointment with its current perceived leadership, will come together for the purpose of reproducing a group saviour. Two members of the group are "set up" as its chosen couple and it is believed they will one day come together to create a solution (Hume, 2010). An air of hopefulness permeates the group, and the group finds itself in the basic assumption mentality of pairing.

c   Basic assumption of Pairing (baP)

The phantasy of a group leader to do the work on behalf of the group, to defend against the difficulties of the present such as individual alienation, anxiety and loneliness remains in the basic assumption mentality of pairing (Dal Forno & Merlone, 2013). The focus in a group with the basic assumption of pairing is not on the future event itself but rather an unintelligent feeling of unfocused hope that characterises pairing within a group (Bion, 1961/2004). It is important to note that the groups "set up" of two individuals in the basic assumption mentality of pairing is based on the innate tendency of individuals to respond to group pressure in their own specific ways (Dal Forno & Merlone, 2013). Bion (1961/2004) refers to this as valency which is the capacity of an individual, for spontaneous instinctive cooperation in the group's basic assumption mentality.

For hope to be sustained it is essential that the leader should remain unborn (Bion, 1961/2004). Sustaining hope provides an escape for the group from feelings of its own or another group's hatred, destructiveness, and despair (Bion, 1961/2004; Hume, 2010). The problem with a group stuck in the mentality of the basic assumption pairing is that there could be an excess of zeal which could interfere with creative work (Bion, 1961/2004) or the group could prevent any development in its striving to liquidate and re-create the Messiah continuously (Bion, 1961/2004).

Basic assumption mentality of pairing is not necessarily a pairing between male and female the pairing can be between any two individuals in a group. If hope is kept alive,

it means that a leader will not emerge at that instant (Bion, 1961/2004). Not having a leader in the present means that the group is not focused on the future, but rather the present which is the escape from a leader to emerge. Although anger and jealousy are easier to express when a group is in this mental state, pairing is used as an escape from own feelings of hatred, destructiveness, and despair or that of another group (Bion, 1961/2004).

Recent developments according to Hopper (2009) suggest that there are two variants of the basic assumption pairing mentality. One concerns the conception and birth of the new and desirable and another a "perverse pairing" which concerns the use of pain in the guise of pleasure leading to infertility and stasis. In addition to these basic assumption mentalities manifesting in groups, later researchers identified additional basic assumptions, building on the work of Bion.

2.4.3.2 *Basic assumption mentality – later contributions*
An article by De Felice et al. (2018), *Group, basic assumptions and complexity science* reviewed all the Bionian developments concerning basic assumptions from its inception with the theories of Bion until 2018. De Felice et al. (2018) analysed five main basic assumptions and five subsets of those developed post-Bion.

a *Basic Assumption of One-ness (baO)*
Reviewing basic assumption mentality of one-ness, De Felice et al. (2018) and scholars after Turquet (1974) state that a group in the basic assumption mentality of one-ness abandons itself to the unity of the group and results in passive participation. Individuals feel existence, welfare, and integrity only in unification with the group (de Felice et al., 2018). They are lost in oceanic union and preserved in inclusion. When a group is dominated by oneness mentality the possibility of gaining new insight is not welcomed as it is perceived to be disruptive to internal harmony or groupishness (Tchelebi, 2017). The group is then cohesive and intolerant of divergence from broad generalisations and clichés held by the group as-a-whole. A group in the baO mentality may feel omnipotent, unified, and supreme (Tchelebi, 2017). Time is infinite and space collapses into the emotional dimension (de Felice et al., 2018). The ability to think independently is lost (Abrahams, 2019; Tchelebi, 2017). The group believes all problems will be solved by the unified force of the group. This is a stage of regression,

not a state of dependency but rather about the existence of the self, according to Abrahams (2019).

b   Basic assumption of Me-ness (baM)

The basic assumption mentality of me-ness is at the opposite end of baO mentality (de Felice et al., 2018). A group in the basic assumption me-ness mentality operates from an implicit, latent unconscious agreement to be a non-group (Lawrence et al., 1996). The members behave as if the group does not exist (de Felice et al., 2018) because if the group did exist it would be conceived as extremely persecutory. The group is seen as impure, contaminated, and harmful (de Felice et al., 2018)

c   Basic assumption of Conspiracy of Silence (baCoS)

Romano (1997) as cited in de Felice et al. (2018) referred to a basic assumption mentality in which the group felt a need to keep a secret. When the group finds itself in this basic assumption mentality the secret is split from the consciousness. It is not a behaviour geared to will, decision, or a need to hide something. The motivation is unconscious. The manifestation of the basic assumption mentality is not necessarily in silence it could also be achieved with a great deal of talk to denounce the secret giving the impression that people are talking about something else. New members to the group are treated with suspicion and as spies. The main emotions of the baCoS group are suspicion, guilt, and latent anger (de Felice et. al., 2018).

d   Basic assumption Hallucinosis of exclusion and membership (baH)

A group in the basic assumption hallucinosis of exclusion and membership mentality is characterised by the idea of being "at the top" (de Felice et.al., 2018; Sandler, 2018) linked to the illusion of fame and immortality. At the top there is 'A' hallucination of membership and the object excluded is the out-of-A (de Felice et.al., 2018; Sandler, 2018). The group manifests the paranoid idea of superiority and a second level represented by the group manifestation is of sadistic exclusion. The main emotions in this group are hatred and contempt (de Felice et.al., 2018; Sandler, 2018).

e   Basic assumption of Arrogance (baA)

Analysing an institution functioning as a mental health centre (Sarno, 1999, as cited in de Felice et. al., 2018) developed the basic assumption mentality of arrogance. The

theory was developed by observing a group of medical practitioners overestimating the purposes and means of medical care. The purpose becomes imposed unilaterally and the means no longer contracted with the patients (de Felice et. al., 2018). Medical care becomes the most straightforward way to relieve symptoms while there is never time to treat the patient as a person. If arrogance prevails it leads to an exaltation of theoretical references such as psychodynamics or some similar thing (de Felice et. al., 2018). The clinical scene is then seen from a greater distance, aiming at goodness without worrying about wellbeing (de Felice et. al., 2018). The main emotions are arrogance and a sense of superiority and impotence and anger for the other (de Felice et. al., 2018).

f   Basic assumption Cowardice (baC)

Referring to the medical institution (Sarno, 1999, as cited in de Felice et. al., 2018) stated that a group in this basic assumption mentality would be characterised by an atmosphere of suspicion in which the clinical history becomes the aim and not the means, a permanent alibi for each project that will not succeed. The "hospital company" must spend as little money as possible (cowardice) selling it as medical care (arrogance) (Sarno, 1999, as cited in de Felice et. al., 2018). The idea of effectiveness and efficiency is borrowed from the economic field and applied to a context which has to do with the care of human beings (Sarno, 1999, as cited in de Felice et. al., 2018).

g   Basic assumption of Incohesion: Aggregation/Massification (ba) I: A/M

The basic assumption of Incohesion: Aggregation/Massification mentality is important in addressing the dynamics of psychotic anxiety of annihilation according to de Felice et.al. (2018) and Hopper (2009). Annihilation which involves a threat to psychic survival which is experienced as a present danger and/or anticipation of an imminent catastrophe (Hurvich, 2005). The tenets of group analysis founded by Foulkes (1975) are a basis for this basic assumption. Examples are "Failed dependency, traumatic experience, helplessness and the fear of annihilation" (Hopper, 2009, p.217). Foulkes referred to these states as failed unit cohesion and equivalence which is a form of collective transference (Hopper, 2009). Equivalence is of special interest when people have been unable to work through traumatic experience because it is likely to be repeated. Based on these tenets and others Hopper (2009) states that he has built a

bridge between Bion and Turquet to conceptualise this basic assumption mentality in the unconscious life of groups.

Moving on from the Kleinian model of the mind being the only model of the mind Hopper (2009) states no matter how important it is to study envy it is more important to study helplessness, shame, and traumatic experience within the context of interpersonal relationships. In the model of the mind Hopper (2009) proposes envy does not only rise from the death instinct but is also a defensive or protective development against fear of annihilation. The intention is of spoiling the resources of people who are perceived as potentially helpful but who do not actually help. Such as members of group relations conferences questioning the legitimacy of the director and staff (de Gooijer, 2019) who are perceived to help in a basic assumption mentality of dependence and do not take up the role the members expect. Members may then act out murderous phantasies (de Gooijer, 2019) spoiling development for the group.

Each of the three basic assumptions conceptualised by Bion (1961/2004) is a source of Incohesion in groups according to Hopper (2009). The basic assumption mentality of (ba) I: A/M is that the group is not really a group but either an aggregate or a mass. A mass seems more cohesive than an aggregate. Incohesion is caused by trauma and traumatogenic processes (Hopper, 2009). Group trauma may occur through management failures which causes members to feel profoundly unsafe. Members of a group share a history of specific kinds of trauma. Particularly at the RIDE where members shared the trauma of the apartheid system (Nwoye, 2017). Processes of equivalence occur through which traumatic events of the group are imported and then enacted (Hopper, 2009). Massive social trauma involves social and cultural regression.

Trauma provokes and activates fear of annihilation (Hopper, 2009). As summarised in de Felice et al. (2018)

> *The phenomenology of the fear of annihilation involves psychic paralysis and the death of psychic vitality, characterized by fission and fragmentation (i.e., what the author calls the dynamic of group 'aggregation') and then fusion and confusion (i.e., what the author calls the dynamic of group 'massification') of what is left of the self with what can be found in the object. Fusion and confusion are a defence against fission and fragmentation and vice versa. For example, the fear of falling*

apart and of petrification is associated with fission and fragmentation; the fear of suffocation and of being swallowed up is associated with fusion and confusion; but the former offers protection against the latter and vice versa. Each psychic pole is associated with both its own characteristic psychotic anxieties and its own characteristic modes of defence against them, including the shift to those associated with the opposite poles. Thus, when present in a group in response to the fear of annihilation of thought and identity, these co-occurring and oscillating dynamics are summarized as a basic assumption of 'Incohesion: Aggregation/Massification' or 'ba I: A/M' (De Felice et al., 2018, pp. 7-8).

Threats are posed to personal and group identity while a group finds itself in this basic assumption mentality (Hopper, 2009). The basic assumption mentality can also be read as 'I am' according to Hopper (2009) which is an assertion of personal identity under threat. It is closely related to the assertion of 'I am not' - becoming aware of what is not me. In that sense a person becomes aware of being both subject and object simultaneously (Bollas, 2018; Hopper, 2009). Regression in this phase of development involves the experience that identity is threatened, associated with too much we-ness and too much not-me-ness or too much we-ness and us-ness (Hopper, 2009). There is then a clear boundary for who is inside who is outside and who should be included or excluded. Hopper (2009) states that these processes can be conceptualised as basic assumption mentality. People who have regressed because their group is under threat enact their phantasy that they are not a group but an aggregate or a mass both of which are states of collective being that offer protection from extreme anxieties.

h   Basic assumption purity/pollution (baPu)

A basic assumption mentality not included in de Felice et al. (2018) study is the basic assumption mentality purity/pollution of Chattopadhyay (2018). The author states, numbering this the sixth basic assumption, that the structure and functioning of a group in this mentality behave as if their survival depends on establishing unquestionable forms of hierarchy based on the idea of purity and pollution. What Chattopadhyay (2018) proposes is that aristocracy (specifically referring to the British monarchy) holds on the behalf of society the basic assumption of purity/pollution and marriage as an institution holds pairing on behalf of society, pairing being sanctified by religion. The purity of the blood of the aristocracy is kept alive long after countries have abolished

these institutions. baPu is kept alive in casteless societies through various means. Individuals deemed aristocratic keep these roles throughout their lifetimes and tend to marry strictly within their own group to retain purity of blood.

Religion also pays its part in upholding baPu according to the author. As far back as the 15th century the Doctrine of Discovery (which the Catholic church no longer supports) by the popes of that era decreed that any geographical area not occupied by Christians was to be known as unoccupied land to be discovered and settled upon by those Christians (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, 2021). That created a pure group of white Christians opposed to non-whites of various "impure" shades (Chattopadhyay, 2018). Colonisation such as this to establish the superiority of one group over the other is not the only form of colonisation according to the author. Chattopadhyay (2018) refers to colonised people such as the stateless people, asylum seekers, indigenous people dominated by colonising imperialists, masses under control of organised religion, masculine power over women, homosexuals delegitimised by heterosexuals and children abused by parental power where the struggle to find a voice is damaged by submergence under a colonising force. In the international space there are scenarios such as the brutalising and killing of dark-skinned people in the USA. White skinned Europeans who take up citizenship in Australia become Australians but not dark-skinned Europeans who are referred to as Asians. In addition, black skinned Americans are referred to as African American (Chattopadhyay, 2018). The constructed hierarchy based on purity and pollution work when it comes to language as well as location (Chattopadhyay, 2018).

How the notions of superior, purer, and even purist are kept alive can be described in the psychoanalytic terms of projection, introjection and projective identification combined with colonising processes by a dominant group that damages the identity of the colonised according to the author. Not one human group owns all the purity compared to the other. All groups hold unacceptable socio-cultural traits (Chattopadhyay, 2018). These unacceptable traits are projected onto and into other groups which may or may not introject those. The boundary of purity is guarded in different ways in different cultures. If the Aristocrat marries out of the boundary they could be ostracised and/or disinherited. The boundary around the myth of purity must be guarded anyhow, states Chattopadhyay (2018).

2.4.3.3   Characteristics common to all basic assumption mentalities

Bion (1961/2004) believed providing interpretations on the basic assumptions' mentality of a group (which are active at any given point in the group) allows for higher order intellectual activity of the group bringing about an awareness of the emotions of the basic assumption mentality, rather than evading them (Hume, 2010) To understand the group Bion (1961/2004) recommended that attention should be drawn to the fear of the basic assumption mentality.

Basic assumption mentalities may be found in any groups including at Group Relations Conferences. These would manifest differently in different groups. Participation in basic assumption mentality requires no training experience or mental development according to Bion (1961/2004). Basic assumption mentality is dependent of members of groups valences. This is a term Bion borrowed from physicists to express "a capacity for instantaneous involuntary combination of one individual with another for sharing and acting on a basic assumption" (Bion, 1961/2004, p. 153).

The basic assumption mentality can last a few hours or months or change a few times in an hour, depending on the group in which it manifests, though the workgroup mentality remains unaltered. Emotions associated with basic assumptions mentality such as fear, love hate etc can be described in the usual terms (Bion,1961/2004). However, emotions such as those prevalent in any basic assumption are subtly affected as if they were held in a combination peculiar to a specific basic assumption mentality (Bion, 1961/2004).

All basic assumptions include the existence of a leader. In the pairing group the leader may be non-existent (unborn), not identified. According to Bion (1961/2004) the leader does not necessarily need to be a person it could be an idea or an inanimate object. In the dependent group the leader could also be the history of the group. A history recorded can act as if it were *the bible* of the group. The group refers to this "bible" if the group feels threatened with a new idea which could entail development or if the leader does not conform to the idea of the leader. When the fight/flight mentality is active a struggle takes place to suppress the new idea as the new idea could threaten the status quo. In the dependent group the idea can be seen to threaten the dependent

leader. The same is true of the pairing group in which the unborn genius must remain unborn to fulfil the pairing group function (Bion, 1961/2004).

Time is of no consequence in basic assumption mentality according to Bion (1961/2004). Activities that require an awareness of time tend to arouse feelings of persecution and are imperfectly comprehended and lay bare a disturbed relationship to time (Bion, 1961/2004). Tensions can increase in the group and one basic assumption mentality might feel threatened by an extraneous mentality such as the pressure of a pairing group leader exemplified as a Messianic hope. Methods to resort to bible making might prove inadequate and the threat can be averted by provoking another mentality. In evoking the different mentality, the crux of the matter revolves around the threat of the new idea for development and the inability of the persons holding basic assumption mentalities to tolerate development (Bion, 1961/2004).

There is no process of development during basic assumption mentality because any stimuli to development will be met with hostility (Bion, 1961/2004). If a group wishes to avoid development it only needs itself to be overwhelmed by a basic assumption mentality (Bion, 1961/2004). The compensation would be an increase in the pleasurable feeling of vitality. When a group finds itself in basic assumption mentality with a feeling of purpose and vitality, pleasure is sought in defence of the pain of learning (Bion, 1961/2004; French & Simpson, 2010). The pseudo vitality is an illusion as the purpose and energy does not match the actual outcomes. The underlying motivation is to avoid pain in development (Bion, 1961/2004; French & Simpson, 2010).

In addition, schisms, particularly in the basic assumption pairing mentality, afford the group an opportunity to at once be seemingly opposed to a new idea while in fact promoting the same end (Bion, 1961/2004). For example, one group adheres to the dependent mentality and its "bible" denying any new idea and the painful effort development may bring. The mentality then becomes stabilized and dogmatic. The reciprocal mentality supposedly supporting the new idea becomes over exacting in its demands. Both mentalities then avoid the painful bringing together of the primitive and the sophisticated, the essence of the developmental conflict (Bion, 1961/2004).

Despite the basic assumption mentality active in any group which resists any form of development, individuals are inherently orientated towards development according to Bion (1961/2004) as they connect with reality and search for truth. This gives rise to the workgroup mentality according to Bion (1961/2004). The work group mentality uses the mentality of the basic assumption process in the service of its work. Hopper (2009) states that the basic assumption mentality is in essence both pathological and pathogenic and is expressed unconsciously in terms of the various basic assumptions as described by Bion (1961/2004).

2.4.3.4   *The workgroup mentality*

The work-group mentality always contains a single basic assumption mentality at any given point in time according to Bion (1961/2004). Dependent on the structure of the group, each group would be unique and the interactions between the group members too would be unique (Garland, 2010).

Both basic assumption mentality and workgroup mentality co-exist in human interaction, but one tends to dominate at any moment according to Bion (1961/2004). There is no work group mentality without some basic assumption group mentality (French & Simpson, 2010). However, Armstrong (2010) believed that the workgroup mentality has been taken for granted in recent times. Ten years later van Reekum (2020) states that with few exceptions hardly any effort has been made to invest in Bion's ideas of work group mentality. Despite the influence of the basic assumption mentality, the work group mentality triumphs in the long run and not the basic assumption mentality of the group according (Bion, 1961/2004). Armstrong (2010) stated that neglect of the idea has limited and distorted both understanding and practice. This is an under development which could lead to difficulties in taking cognizance of the full measure of the unconscious at work in groups and organisational behaviour and how they successfully support productive purposes (van Reekum, 2020).

While the two concepts of basic assumption mentality and workgroup mentality seem two separate concepts, there is no such thing (Armstrong, 2010; Bion, 1961/2004). Armstrong (2010) argues that when Bion referred to the individual as a group animal and the *groupishness* this creates, it qualified both work group mentality and basic

assumption mentality, not only basic assumption mentality. Armstrong (2010) argues that there is a tendency to distinguish between the work group and basic assumption group from the perspective of work group equals conscious processes and the basic assumption processes equal unconscious processes. This is not entirely true. The confusion may lie in the literature (French & Simpson, 2010), in Bion's writings and his expression of groups, though Bion (1961/2004) was at pains to describe that basic assumption group and work group do not signify people but two group mentalities (French & Simpson, 2010).

Through their work in organisations French and Simpson (2010) have presented a framework intended to highlight the three elements in how individuals interact as they do by pairing (P), by leading and depending on (D) as well as by fighting with and running away from (F). According to the authors Bion's insights allow for recognition of these elements which can manifest in both the basic assumption mentality and the work group mentality. By recognising similar elements in both the workgroup mentality and the basic assumption mentality additional insight into a particular group may then be gained by observing the interaction between the work group mentality and the basic assumption mentality. Just as important is trying to ascertain which mentality is dominant (French & Simpson, 2010).

2.4.3.5   Co-existence and tension between work group mentality and basic assumption mentality

Work group mentality and the basic assumption group mentality are manifestations of group psychology, in which individuals are fated to experience the tension between the two, here, now, and always, anything else is an illusion according to Armstrong (2010). Mental activity is on the borderline between somatic and psychic life (Armstrong, 2010). In the inner world of individuals two separate poles do not exist, rather each pole operates as the silent unconscious complement to the other (Armstrong, 2010). Therefore, the workgroup mentality acts as the silent unconscious of the basic assumption group mentality and vice versa. There are two hypothetical breasts - the bad breast does not exist without the good breast according to Sapochnik (2015). Basic assumption mentality and work group mentality are only separable in theory according to French and Simpson (2010). Each of these mentalities is co-dependent operating in silent unconscious complement of one another (French & Simpson, 2010).

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The basis for the differences of the work group mentality and basic assumptions mentality lies in the group's relationship with reality (French & Simpson, 2010). The work group mentality is based on reality-based group tasks and objectives (Bion, 1961/2004; Lim et al., 2020). The basic assumption group mentality serves to ease the group's anxieties and avoid the pain or emotions further work may bring (Lim et al., 2020). Work group mentality tests itself against reality, postponing pleasure and accepting pain (French & Simpson, 2010), necessitating the capacity for understanding according to Bion, (1961/2004). Basic assumption mentality rejects reality, rejects learning from experience, has no faith in that kind of learning, is threatened by new ideas and intolerant of development (Bion, 1961/2004). This is in contrast to work group mentality which strives for development (Bion, 1961/2004, French & Simpson, 2010).

The work group functioning is not always obstructed or diverted by basic assumption mentality (French & Simpson, 2010). Some institutions such as the military would have a dysfunctional group culture if they did not embrace the basic assumption mentality of dependence. Any other basic assumption would interfere with the task (French & Simpson, 2010). This means that basic assumption mentality does not need to get rid of because it aids in the work group mentality, yet the fear that drives the mentality of the basic assumptions needs to be attended to (Bion, 1961/2004). Fears for the structure of the workgroup mentality are expressions of ignorance of the forces with which the work group must contend according to (Bion, 1961/2004).

The capacity to engage with both dimensions of reality, reality of action and psychic reality of the group life, is a key defining characteristic of work group mentality (French & Simpson, 2010). The dynamics of any group is determined by the capacity of the members to negotiate, consciously and unconsciously, the tensions between the two opposed tendencies (French & Simpson, 2010). Work group mentality therefore provides the space for thoughts (Bion, 1967/2018) to be formed. Basic assumption mentality in contrast, is resistant to thinking in such a way that an individual may find themselves unable to think (Bion, 1961/2004; French & Simpson, 2010).

Fear drives the basic assumptions mentality in the group (Bion, 1961/2004). Not one basic assumption mentality allays the fear in the group satisfactorily (Bion, 1961/2004)

or else there would be no need for the constant shifting between basic assumption mentality and the work group mentality. The group uses the fight/flight mentality as a technique to pressurise the group according to Bion (1961/2004) about feelings of degradation, envy and inequality inflicted as if from the outside. When a group is in this mental state it ignores all other activities to preserve the group at all costs (Bion, 1961/2004). A group in a mental state of basic assumptions works with individuals' valences and emotional drives (Bion, 1961/2004).

A group functioning in basic assumption mentality uses rationale for prejudice, power, and abuse in relation to differences (Carlyle, 2010; McRae & Short, 2010). When individuals then disown the group's aggression or victimhood, it is devastating for the group. Scapegoats and ostracization become the norm (Carlyle, 2010; McRae & Short, 2010). Cruelty and dependence can then be negotiated if felt outside of the individual (Carlyle, 2010). Groups may turn to the basic assumption mentality of dependence when security is sought in leadership (Bion, 1961/2004). The group works as though it has no individual capacity, and it will always be disappointed in whichever leader is elected/emerges (Bion, 1961/2004). Understanding the co-existence and tension between basic assumption and work group mentalities of groups is important for meaning making (Boxer, 2014). The application of Bion's conceptualisation of thinking, container-contained, maternal reverie, and the development of thinking through alpha function is applicable to meaning making of group dynamics (Boxer, 2014).

2.4.4 Working with tensions between work group mentality and basic assumption mentality

In the object relations theory of Klein (1959), which added to Freud's theory of the superego, there is a difference between anxieties caused by external dangers and anxiety of an unconscious origin. Anxiety from an unconscious origin Freud termed *neurotic anxiety* (Klein, 1948; Rustin, 2015). Developing her theory of the paranoid-schizoid position Klein (1948) stated that anxieties strongly arose from destructive impulses within the self. According to Klein (1948) infantile aggressive and destructive impulses were projected by the infant into its loved object as a form of defence (Armstrong & Rustin, 2015; Klein, 1948), leading to both positive and negative feelings - love, hate directed to part objects often split between them. Such impulses could also give rise to anxiety about the well-being of the other through realisation that the loved

object could be damaged through own self-destruction resulting in a state of depressive anxiety (Klein, 1948; Armstrong & Rustin, 2015).

Anxiety according to Klein is a state of fear arising from the self's relations with its objects (Klein, 1948; Rustin, 2015). The degree and disturbing forces of anxiety are related to the strength of the aggressive and destructive impulses in relation to those of love (Klein, 1948; Rustin, 2015).

2.4.4.1   *Maternal reverie*

Bion believed a mind capable of processing emotions can only develop if infantile projections into the mother are sufficiently contained (Bion, 1962,1965/2018). The mother's capacity for maternal reverie (Bion, 1962) is the capacity of the primary object to love and think about the infant, allowing the infant to gradually internalise a parent who can think, optimally absorb the experience for the infant's feelings to be modified, understood, and related to (Brady et al., 2012). According to Brown (2012), Bion stresses the shared experience of mutual emotional growth in both the container and the contained; the container is that into which an object is projected (Bion, 1962). The "object that can be projected into the container" (Bion, 1962, p. 89) is the contained. Tolerance of projective identifications from the infant into the mother and, her ability to process the beta elements to alpha elements into manageable psychic events (Brown, 2012), leads to the development of shared mutual growth. A process which requires a milieu of tolerated doubt (Bion, 1962; Brown, 2012) between mother and infant so as to provide for the apparatus of learning by experience.

2.4.4.2   *Container-contained*

Containment assumes a mental model within which what-is-going-on can be contained (Bion, 1970; Boxer, 2014) enabling unconscious processes to be given consciousness. To elucidate this process Bion (1962) developed the terms alpha-elements and beta-elements to designate fundamental mental experiences (Bion, 1962; Brown, 2012). Beta elements are the raw sensory data and unprocessed emotions. These are transformed into alpha elements which are units of meaningful experience which can be thought, linked, and remembered (Brown, 2012). The container-contained is a factor of the alpha function (Brown, 2012).

Primitive emotion is dependent on its being contained by a container which would "detoxicate" it. According to Bion (1965/2018) to enlist the aid of the container the emotion must be exaggerated on the one hand. The container could then be the good breast, internal or external, which could then detoxify the emotion (Bion, 1965/2018). On the other hand, the container might not be able to tolerate the emotion and the contained emotion may not be able to tolerate neglect.

The emotion that cannot tolerate neglect then grows in intensity and is exaggerated to ensure the container reacts by more and more evacuation. There remains a state of increasing force of emotion with increasing force of evacuation. Bion (1965/2018) stated it was not important which emotion was expressed but rather that the emotion would depend on whether the hyperbolic expression was idealised or degenerating. Even so, Bion believed containment was important if the infant could internalise the idea of a mind capable of thinking (Bion, 1962; Rustin, 2015).

2.4.4.3   The development of thinking

The link germane to learning by experience is K, which is knowledge, involving an effort to get to know and to be receptive to what is true of an experience according to Bion (1962). This is not static knowledge which the term often refers to. "The sense of inside and outside, internal and external objects, introjection and projection container and contained, are all associated with K" (Bion,1965/2018. p. 151).

The three instincts of love, hate and knowledge in groups (Bion, 1962; Rustin 2015) that individuals follow in their desire for understanding and knowledge may be attacked, to ward off the ability to think so individuals may exist without the capacity to think (Bion, 1962; Brady et al., 2012). Individuals then destroy rather than promote knowledge. Not knowing is a form of survival and preferable to knowing which goes beyond envy as a motivating force of not knowing according to Schneider (2005). This dynamic equates to the wish to psychically kill and harbour incestuous wishes of young children towards their parents, before becoming sufficiently mature to make peace with these human truths (Schneider, 2005).

Bion (1965/2018) stated that using K as a vertex, the point at which Love and Hate meet, to understand what is happening in groups is then valuable (Bion, 1965/2018;

Rustin, 2015). Bion described three kinds of relationships between the container and contained (Bion, 1970/2018; Weinberg, 2016):

(1) The contents are so vibrant and explosive that the whole container explodes with an uncontained result.

(2) The container could be so rigid that it does not allow for any real expression of its contents. These are then simply moulded into the container.

(3) Both the container and the contents adapt and mould in response to one another for both to develop and grow.

Not all authors agreed with Bion's concept of the container-contained. Post-Kleinian and post-Bionian analysts and researchers such as Winnicott (1971/2005) concept of a container was of a holding environment where the death drive was not the focus. (Brady et al., 2012; Ribas, 2015).

2.4.5 Post-Kleinian and Post-Bion views of container-contained

According to Winnicott (1971/2005) holding supports environmental factors that enable K. Containing which then optimally leads to the actualisation of K (Brady et al., 2012). Containment may be either positive or negative.

Winnicott saw pre-programmed in all individuals a picture of growth and development which could be carried out if the environment was facilitating (Ribas, 2015). Being oneself and tolerating loss implies going from the subjective object, that which is related to one's thought (Ribas, 2015), t*he object not yet acknowledged as not being me,* to the objective object acknowledged as being *another subject* enabling it to be used (Ribas, 2015). The gradual and delicate phase this entails can only exist if the illusion of having created the object has been experienced. This process which could be lifelong takes place step by step through disillusionments an individual is able to tolerate (Ribas, 2015).

A task accomplished through the destruction in phantasy of the object while seeing, in reality it still exists, is not retaliating and can be made use of (Ribas, 2015). Some degree of internal development is then possible in the possibility of having access to representation, differentiating it from the object in the external reality and in so doing strengthening the individual-as-subject, as a self (Ribas, 2015). According to Ogden

(2004) Winnicott's concept of holding can be seen as a precursor to the depressive position which involves holding for oneself an emotional situation over time.

Once the infant achieves a unit status according to Winnicott, the child is an individual with an inside and an outside (Ogden, 2004). Before this the child becomes aware that he/she has been feeding off the mother, depleting the mother while the mother is holding the situation in time. The infant recognises the toll on the mother (Ogden, 2004). This takes time and the infant awaits the outcome passively surrendering to what is going on inside. In the depressive position holding involves the mother's recognition of the infant's unit status (Ogden, 2004). The child coming into being as a separate person and the mother being able to tolerate the separateness.

In the depressive position holding the child becomes the subject in his/her own right (Ogden, 2004). The child recognises that people cannot be moved faster than they will move and during that time own needs must be put on hold (Ogden, 2004). In the depressive position holding sustains the individual's experience of a form of being that is continuously transforming itself: "an experience of remaining oneself overtime and emotional flux in an act of becoming oneself in a form previously unknown, but somehow vaguely sensed" (Ogden, 2004, p.1354).

Understanding how individuals' function in groups would lead us to understand the productivity or lack of it in groups. Stokoe (2010) states that small groups of a self-reflexive type can provide an effective setting in which to study group processes and members own processes and functioning. To this end Group Relations Conferences have been created as a means of studying how individuals' function in groups and in a collection of groups (Stokoe, 2010). These concepts will be discussed in Chapter 5.

2.5   CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I discussed the theoretical perspective of Systems Psychodynamics exploring and conceptualising the concept from the corpus and extended writings in the literature (Trafford & Leshem, 2008) about the theoretical lens applied at Group Relations Conferences, consulting, and research (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). Applied in the study of conscious and unconscious dynamics in groups. A literature review which extended the concept to included further studies about basic assumption mentalities

and work group mentalities post Bion. In addition to the post-Kleinian and post-Bion views of the container-contained.

In the following chapter I present the research design and methodology chosen to study the participants sampled from the RIDE population, in an effort to gain an understanding of their experiences. The chapter includes the data analysis on a semantic level (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The research methodology is split into two chapters to better present the research process I followed to achieve the aims of the research as discussed in Chapter 1. Initially the research approach, the research setting, and the research method are described. Thereafter the data collection and data analysis process are described. The Braun and Clarke (2006) 6-step thematic analysis as the organising framework was applied to analyse the data set. In this chapter the data analysis is presented at a semantic or manifest meaning level of meaning making (Braun & Clarke, 2016). In Chapter 4, the latent or implicit meaning level of thematic data analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2006) 6-step model is described.

Presenting the research design and methodology in this manner is for presentation purposes only. The data were engaged with holistically. Rather the analysis of data was a conscious, deliberate, and artful creation in a data analysis spiral (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Vagle, 2014) to persuade the audience of the plausibility of the argument and avoid an unconvincing analysis as regards the rigour of this study (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.2   THE RESEARCH APPROACH

The scientific approach to research within the interpretive framework was taken thereby, lending itself to qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018), grounded in the meta-theoretical post-positivistic paradigm of critical realism (Grix, 2010; Owens, 2011; Ron, 2010; Terre Blanche et al., 2006) as discussed in Chapter 1. I borrow from and apply the definition of qualitative research from Creswell (2013) who states that qualitative research is ever-changing in its nature from social construction, to interpretivism to social justice in the world.

For the qualitive research, I began with assumptions and the use of an interpretive framework which informed the study of the research problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This was done to address the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena in the social world (Beck & Visholm, 2014; Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2015). An emerging qualitative

approach to inquiry (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Creswell, 2013; Hollway & Jefferson, 2008), was applied and the collection of data in a natural setting met the needs of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data analysis was both inductive and deductive for the purpose of establishing patterns and themes of the participants' experiences of the RIDE (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). The final written report included the voices of the participants and the reflection required of myself as the researcher, together with a complex description and interpretation of the phenomena and its contribution to the literature (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Because of the detail and specifics of qualitative research, I worked methodologically with particulars, before generalisations, describing in detail the context of the study (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Creswell, 2013; Hollway & Jefferson, 2008).

3.3   RESEARCH SETTING

Group Relations Conferences are universal (Garland, 2010; Khaleelee & White, 2014; Sapochnik, 2017). The RIDE as a group relations conference, was presented over six days, during October, on Robben Island in South Africa between, 2000-2015. This was the month chosen for having the least likelihood that members could be trapped on the island due to adverse weather conditions. The venue was chosen for its historical and symbolic significance in the study of South African diversity dynamics as a phenomenon (Cilliers & May, 2012; Pretorius et al*.,* 2012). It was designed according to the traditional model for group relations conferences known as the Leicester Conference presented annually in London in the United Kingdom (Armstrong, 2007; Erlich-Ginor, 2006; Sher, 2012; Tavistock Institute, 2016). The RIDE deviated from the usual task of studying leadership, as is common at the Leicester event, to studying diversity dynamics. This was a deviation on the theme, which is not uncommon to group relations conferences presented across the globe (Khaleelee & White, 2014). The aim of the RIDE, as with all group relations conferences, was that the experiential learning event would allow for learning obtained at the conference to be extrapolated to the outside world (Fraher, 2004b; Stokoe, 2010; Tavistock Institute, 2016).

3.4   THE RESEARCH METHOD

This section will describe my role as researcher, the sampling strategy I followed, and the scientific rigour of that strategy, as introduced in Chapter 1. The research method entailed collecting data from a sample of the RIDE population which enabled me to

reach the aims of this research. I considered extracting a big enough sample from the population while considering manageability of the data and optimal focus group size (Bion, 1961/2004; Northcutt and McCoy, 2004; Welman et al., 2012) and reaching a point of data saturation (Morgan, 1997).

3.4.1 My role as a researcher of the RIDE

I share in the participants experiences of the RIDE having attended in 2014. In addition to the RIDE, I have been part of other group relations conferences over the years. Whether presented as residential, non-residential, and/or online group relations conferences as both a member and staff.

At one such group relations conference there was an argument between me and a member during a Large Study Group (LSG) event where members including myself were exploring age as a dynamic. I felt I was receiving several projections. After the event the member apologised to me about our altercation in a bathroom where I looked at her in the mirror as she stood behind me. After the apology, I wondered what members of group relations take with them after attending these events. I clearly carried the interaction with this member for quite some time as it has culminated in this research. After the group relations conference, I contacted two staff members indicating my interest in researching group relations conferences as a topic for a thesis.

As the researcher, I bracket myself within the research by being part of this research and knowing about the phenomenon (Reiners, 2012). Bracketing serves as identifying personal experiences with the phenomenon, according to Creswell and Poth (2018). This means that I do not forget these experiences but do not let past knowledge be engaged while determining experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Impartiality is impossible as I am enmeshed in the experience and agree with Reiners (2012), that as I begin to understand, my and the participants experiences of the RIDE, I am involved and as I am involved, I understand (Reiners, 2012). In addition, the depth involvement of the researcher would confirm credibility according to the author. This is in line with the depth ontology of critical realism (Grix, 2010; Owens, 2011; Ron, 2010; Terre Blanche et al., 2006) discussed in chapter 1.

3.4.2 Sampling the RIDE population

Criterion sampling (Creswell, 2013) allowed me to purposefully sample from the population of the RIDE (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Welman et al., 2012; Terre Blanche et.al., 2006). I needed to make decisions about who to select, the strategy to use, and the size of the sample (Creswell & Poth, 2018) described next.

3.4.2.1   Who to select - Inclusion and exclusion criteria

A shared experience was being researched (Sanchez, 2007) which meant that the sample had to consist of members of the RIDE who had attended one or more RIDE conferences. These individuals according to Sanchez (2007), would then reflect on, and be willing to, participate as experiential experts, with the phenomenon. The inclusion and exclusion criteria for the sample, as indicated in Chapter 1 section 1.6.3.3, meant that I had eight participants who could share their experiences as members of the RIDE to investigate the gap in the literature (Miller, 1989; Hills, 2018; Wallach, 2014) about members experiences at group relations conferences.

3.4.2.2   Sampling strategy

A purposive sample enabled me to study the phenomenon in depth. It is also the most preferred sampling method in qualitative studies (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). According to Welman et al. (2012), there are some concerns when using purposeful sampling strategies in research. However, the authors state that using purposeful sampling means researchers rely on their experience, ingenuity and/or previous research findings to deliberately obtain a sample that can be viewed as representative of the relevant population. Welman et al. (2012) assumes that the problem with this kind of sampling is that researchers may proceed in different ways to obtain the sample. As a result, it may be difficult to evaluate the extent to which the sample is relevant to the population.

Purposeful sampling is useful in testing theories of processes that are considered universal according to Terre Blanche et.al, (2006). The only predetermined criterion (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2001) of the utmost importance to the study was that participants had to have attended at least one RIDE and not have been a 2014 RIDE member. In addition, for manageability of the research and to avoid unnecessary travel costs, I purposefully sampled those members closest to my place of residence, except

for one participant who resided in the Western Cape. Access to this participant was through Skype, which mitigated travel and time costs for both me and the participant. I therefore did not rely on experience, ingenuity, or previous research findings to obtain the sample of this research, but rational decision making informed by literature which would consider both my own and participants' anxiety without compromising the scientific rigour.

3.4.2.3 *Selecting the sample size*

When addressing the issue of representativeness, Creswell (2013) and Creswell and Poth (2018) argues that the sample size question is important in qualitative research where the norm is to study a few individuals at a time. To ensure the rigour of the research, it was imperative to collect extensive detail about members experiences of the RIDE (Creswell, 2013) and reach the point of saturation where additional data no longer generated new data (Morgan, 1997). After an extensive search over several weeks, eight participants signed consent forms to participate in this research. The participants understood that data would be collected with face-to-face interviews and a focus group. I anticipated that the data from the eight participants would satisfy saturation in terms of the face-to-face interviews. However, I had to consider the impact of the number of participants on the focus group data I intended to collect.

For the focus group to be optimal, I considered how many participants would be needed by consulting the literature. I first turned to the theoretical perspective of this research of what constitutes a group. From a systems perspective, the focus group itself would be a system within the larger system (Smit & Cilliers, 2006) of the RIDE, which would reflect the dynamics of the larger system providing additional data about participants experiences. Keeping these dynamics in mind, I consulted the seminal literature of Bion (1961/2004). The author states that a group of three people would be considered a group. According to Bion (1961/2004) two members have a personal relationship. With three, there is a change in the quality of the relationship because it becomes an interpersonal relationship manifesting group dynamics.

For the focus group to be manageable, Welman et al. (2012) suggests that a focus group should not exceed ten participants. My intention for the focus group was to use a form of data collection and analysis known IQA developed by Northcutt and McCoy

(2004) as indicated in chapter 1. The authors suggest a focus group of no fewer than 12 participants when applying this method. The reason for this is that having fewer than 12 participants could skew the data collection process. However, the authors noted that including less than 12 participants would not significantly influence the data analysis process.

Returning once more to the literature, I sought studies which included the IQA method of data collection and analysis for an indication of how many participants were included into these focus groups. Different studies used different numbers of participants (Ananth & Maistry, 2020; Burgers, 2018; Coetzee & Bester, 2010; DeRemer (2002); Vermooten et al., 2020). Some studies included more than the recommended numbers into the focus group, as suggested by Northcutt and McCoy (2004) and some studies included fewer.

Given that eight participants consented to participate in this research, I decided that these eight participants would provide data to reach saturation with both the face-to-face interview and the focus group. Eight participants constitute what is considered a group within the theoretical perspective of systems psychodynamics. These eight participants meant that the focus group would be manageable. Including eight participants would not significantly skew the data during data collection or analysis according to Northcutt and McCoy (2004).

3.4.2.4   *Descriptive profile of the sample*

I did not search according to which years the participants attended the RIDE. The result was that there were some overlaps in the years of attendance. In addition, not all the years the RIDE was presented were represented. Also, I had to rely on participants to tell me when they attended as I did not have these dates in hand, officially. Three participants had attended in 2002 and three in 2015. One participant attended in 2001 and one in 2012. Of the 14 RIDE events four were included in this research. Participants had attended one to five group relations conferences each as seen in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Descriptive Profile of the Sample of Participants

Year attended	Code name of participant	Race	Age at the time of the interview	Gender	Number of GRC attended	Home language	Highest qualification	Employment industry
2001	Mr. Een	C	44	M	2	Afrikaans	Honours	Public
2002	Mr. Seven	W	72	M	2	English	Degree	Retired/Public
2002	Ms. Vier	W	57	F	5	Afrikaans	Masters	OD Consultant Coach
2002	Mr. Drie	W	65	M	1	Afrikaans	Degree	Retired/Banking
2012	Ms. Tlhano	B	51	F	2	Tswana	Masters	Managing Director
2015	Ms. Mbini	B	34	F	1	Xhosa	Degree	Human Resources
2015	Ms. Ses	W	44	F	1	Afrikaans	Doctorate	Management Consulting
2015	Mr. Seswai	B	28	M	1	Sotho	Degree	Engineering

Note. Racial demographics in South Africa are categorised as: C – Coloured; W – White; B – Black. GRC – Group Relations Conference

Most South African race groups were represented in the sample. The mean age was 49 years. Gender was represented equally 50% male and 50% female. Five of the 11 official languages of South Africa were represented. All participants had tertiary education qualifications. Participants were mainly professionals in their various field from both public and private industries in South Africa.

For the purposes of this research and to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, I gave each participant a code name in no order. Applying a numbering system from one to eight, I coded each participant according to their spoken home language. Seswai in the Sotho language means eight. In the Afrikaans language Ses is Six; Drie is three; Vier is four and Een is one. Two in isiXhosa is Mbini and Tlhano is five in Tswana. The only English language speaker was Mr. Seven.

3.4.3 Ensuring the scientific rigour in the sample

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) the reader of this research systematically determines whether the conclusions of the study are trustworthy. An audit trail was important for the criterion of dependability (see appendix C and appendix E at the end of the thesis). As the research progressed, I would ensure that validation of this study emerges throughout, by providing an extensive and thick description of the procedures, and evidence of attentiveness to the research process in practice and not as a mere afterthought (Greckhamer et al., 2014).

The systematic detailed description of the sampling process in the attempts to address consistency in my sampling approach and questions about whether my sampling process was trustworthy. Did I get it right? Are my methods valid? And by whose standards? (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln& Guba, 1985). Selecting the eight participants as described allowed for transferability of the findings to other group relations conferences and the fittingness of the participants to the research. Readers may identify with the participants stories as I focused on the specifics and particulars of the RIDE (Castro et al., 2011).

To further justify knowledge claims as suggested by Grix (2010), in the sections to follow I will elaborate on the forms of data I collected, what data I collected, as well as how I recorded and stored both the hard and digital copies. The issues around ethics that I anticipated and addressed in line with Creswell (2013) and Creswell and Poth (2018) caution that data collection involves much more than just focusing on the data and procedures for gathering it.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible to the observer (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this regard, Creswell and Poth (2018) talk about turning the world into a series of representations including field notes, conversations, photographs, recordings memos and interviews. There are also several ways to interview participants (Creswell, 2013) and several criticisms about the qualitative interview processes (Creswell, 2013; Hollway & Jefferson, 2008; Mik-meyer, 2020; Welman et al., 2012).

When deciding on interview questions, Creswell (2013) and Creswell and Poth (2018) notes that there are several ways to conduct interviews. Some authors prefer logical sequences of events while others view the sequence as not fixed, thereby changing interview questions, should the need arise (Creswell, 2013; Welman et al., 2012). In addition, Clarke and Hoggett (2009), state that it appears as if some researchers are happy to stay on the discursive level, as if participants were fully knowledgeable actors, with no unconscious defences, making it difficult to share their stories. Hollway and Jefferson (2008) on the other hand state that all research produces its answers by the frame through which the questions are set. There can be no guarantee that different people will share the same meanings when making sense of participants' story. This means that no frame is ever neutral, and no interviewer is ever entirely objective.

My data collection strategy revolved around those tenets, and the tenets of Systems Psychodynamics and its epistemologies of, psychoanalysis, systems theory, and Group Relations Theory (Cilliers et al., 2004). Firstly, in the multimethod approach to this research I decided upon the FANI data collection method developed by Hollway and Jefferson (2008) with its psychoanalytic principles for the one-on-one, face-to-face interviews. Thereafter I decided upon the IQA method of data collection developed by Northcutt and McCoy (2004), which applies a systems approach to qualitative research (Jackson & Suizzo, 2015) as the data collection method of the focus group.

The main purpose of combining these data collection methods were for triangulation and complementarity. The former which seeks convergence, corroborating and correspondence of results from the different methods. The later which seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration (Reis et al., 2017) of both sets of data. It was not my intention to clarify the results from one method with the results from the other method rather that one may compliment the other. Even at the risk of obtaining contradictory findings (Reis et al., 2017) which in themselves would be data for further investigation.

Based on my multi-method approach (Knappertsbusch et al., 2021; Mik-meyer, 2020 Reis et al., 2017) to the data collection and analysis, it must be noted that I deviated from the IQA process in that I decided to conduct the interview before the focus group which is not in line with the usual IQA protocol. The deviation however is allowed for

by Northcutt and McCoy (2004) who note that that useful research can be had by excluding interviews after the focus group. In addition, the focus group size of eight participants would not significantly affect the data collection and analysis phases of the IQA (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004) by excluding interviews after the focus group.

My reason for using the IQA as such meant that participants could free associate their individual experiences of the RIDE (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008) outside of any group dynamics of a focus group. My concern was that had I applied the IQA methodology alone to this research it could have skewed the findings. I envisioned a risk that the participants would reflect on the dynamics during the focus group and not the dynamics of the RIDE itself. Applying the lens of Systems Psychodynamics to my data collection and analysis strategy I did not want to run the risk that group dynamics (Smit & Cilliers, 2006) would "interfere" with the participants recollection of their RIDE experiences.

These data collection methods afforded me the opportunity to connect method to methodology and explore participants' subjective and intersubjective experiences in-depth. The data collection strategy I followed is seen in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1

Data Collection Strategy
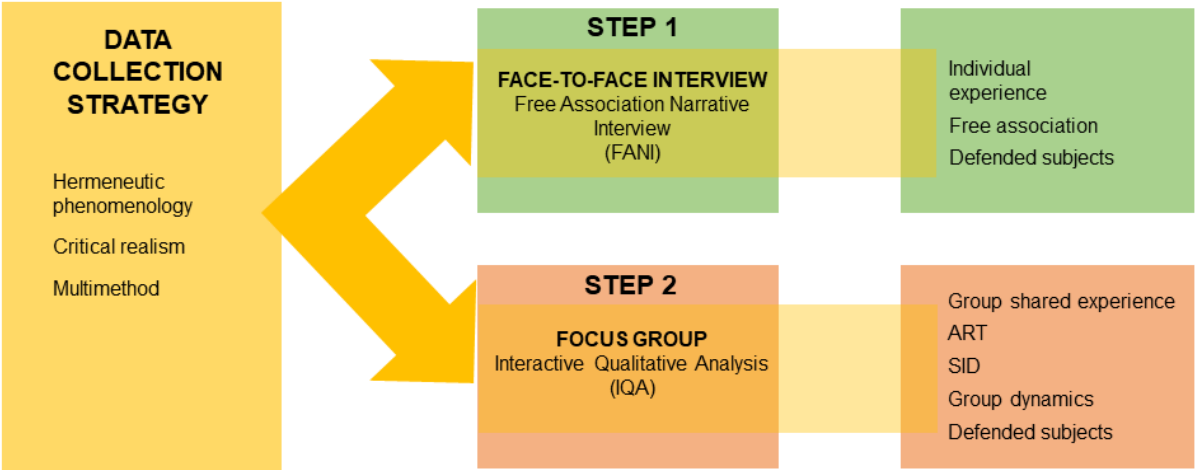
Note. Own work.

In this section I will elaborate on my choice of the data collection methods, beginning with the face-to-face interviews followed by the focus group. I will also describe access

and report to the participants, and how the data of both the face-to-face interview and focus group were recorded. In conclusion, I will describe the forms of data I had in my possession after the data collection process as well as how the data were stored securely to protect the participants' confidentiality.

3.5.1 Face-to-face interview: Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI)

Criticisms of the qualitative interview processes led me to choose the FANI as a data collection strategy for several reasons. I wondered about Hollway and Jefferson (2008) statement about meaning making of the experiences of the RIDE and what impact that would have on this research. Consequently, if meaning is then constructed between me and the participant in the context of the interview itself, the question could be asked: How reliable is this method? Some qualitative researchers, such as Bauer (1996), take the position that the narrative itself, is narrative analysis. The stories the participants share is a means of getting to understand the participants better. Hollway and Jefferson (2008) state that the stories may not provide a transparent account of the truth, however. Storytelling ultimately stays closer to life events, than would be the case when we as researchers try to elicit explanations from individuals which may result in defences to contain anxiety (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). These different views are not uncommon to hermeneutic approaches (Creswell 2013; Hollway & Jefferson 2008). Researchers generally assume, however, that there is shared meaning attached to words (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). This statement of the authors brings me to the first reason, why I chose the FANI as a method of data collection.

Firstly, the development of the FANI borrows from the psychoanalytic principle of free association by turning to language in the social sciences and emphasising the importance of meaning and context (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). Participants use their own expressions to convey the context of events they recall. Participants are not assumed to necessarily tell it like it is, because what is remembered may not be transparent to them, on account of defences against anxiety (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). These dynamics then raise issues of our understanding of people's subjectivities and our ability of preserving the whole account of the narrative rather than breaking it down into parts (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). The authors note from the theoretical perspective of psychoanalysis, that if memories of events are too anxiety provoking, these events would either be forgotten or recalled in an acceptably

modified way, to defend against such anxiety. Such defences will affect how meanings are conveyed in context to the researcher where both the researcher and participant could be identified as "defended subjects" and co-producers of meaning making (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Hollway & Jefferson, 2008).

Secondly, my preference towards the FANI allowed me to seek further evidence of emerging hunches or hypothesis by looking at the unconscious communication in the defence against anxiety in terms of transference, countertransference, and projective identification present in the interview relationship (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). Exploring why participants told certain parts of the story, and what form of response the participant may have been trying to elicit from myself, thereby minimised the risk of making premature judgements and interpretations during the research encounter (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009).

Lastly, the four principles of FANI, namely open-ended questions, elicitation of a story, avoiding why questions, and using participants, ordering, and phrasing, allowed me to address how the participant's meanings are related to their circumstances by posing one question during the face-to-face interviews. Participants were asked "tell me about your experience of the RIDE". The question allowed the participant to freely associate and share their subjective experiences of the RIDE with me, whatever it may be (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). Posing this single question then allowed for the participants to tell me their story as it had meaning for themselves, remaining close to what they felt they experienced at the RIDE. How stories and meanings were then conveyed during the face-to-face interview process was particularly relevant as it would impact the credibility of the findings (Creswell 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Yet, this research also had specific theoretical and empirical aims, a structure that could not be ignored (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). "Why" questions were avoided as part of the FANI and only one narrative question was asked to elicit an infinite number of themes. There were specific research questions I had in mind as seen in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Matching Empirical Aims and Specific Research Questions

Specific empirical aim	Specific research questions
Explore whether members of group relations conferences transmogrify and what this means for the individual and the organisation.	If the objective of group relations conferences is to apply experiential learning back into the organisation with the aim for people to feel they are adding value and have more ownership in their organisations and communities, why is the impact of conference learning being questioned?
Explore the learning processes of individuals attending group relations conferences.	Why is the nature of the work-group function in conferences overlooked by members?
Describe member's experiences after attending group relations conferences	What does this overemphasis on the pathological mean?
Explore the value of group relations conferences as an intervention tool.	Are we running the risk that, organisational change, is misunderstood, by members, who may be, transporting negative, and inappropriate learning, into organisations?
Add to the body of knowledge about the impact of Group Relations Conferences on the individual and the organisation.	Why is a theory and method about systems interpreted more personal than systemic?

An interview guide was then developed with the following eight questions.

(1) What comes to mind when you think of your learning before, during and after the event?

(2) What turning points, if any, did you notice in yourself during and after attending RIDE?

(3) In your opinion, what would you say you carried with you immediately after the event? How did that make you feel?

(4) Where do you think, you could apply what you learnt at RIDE more effectively, in your personal life or in the organisation? Please elaborate.

(5) Considering the institutional event (IE), how does this fit with how your organisation does things?

(6) Can you recall any situations where you applied your learning back to the organisation, please elaborate? What was the outcome?

(7) If there are no situations where you applied your learning back to the organisation, were there situations in the organisation that reminded you of RIDE? Could you have applied your learning, what made you hesitant to do so?

(8) What words would you use to describe the RIDE event you participated in?

This is how I elicited participants' stories as they experienced the RIDE, first through free association, and thereafter by asking questions for the purpose of achieving the empirical aims of this research which might not have been as clearly answered when the participants free associated. The FANI then allowed for an exploration of participants' subjective and intersubjective experiences of the RIDE (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). As a data collection strategy, it enabled me to generate common themes from the data analysis process, of participants' experiences, for achieving the empirical aims of the research.

As indicated, I had decided on a focus group as a data collection strategy. In the section to follow, I elaborate on my choices for this type of data collection strategy.

3.5.2 The focus group: Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA)

When interviewing groups, we can gain access to understanding differences between people whom we may at first considered as a homogeneous group (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Technically focus groups are located between in-depth observation and participant observation (Smit & Cilliers, 2006). The authors define focus groups as carefully planned and organised discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment by a selected group of participants sharing and responding to views, experiences, ideas, feelings, and perceptions. While it is important when working with groups that we are constantly aware of commonality and difference between individuals (Terre Blanche et al., 2006) a literature review highlighted several criticisms to take into consideration when selecting a focus group as a data collection method.

A disadvantage of a focus group as identified by Welman et al. (2012) was that some respondents may feel inhibited in responding, as they may not be able to express their feelings freely because they may feel intimidated by the presence of other respondents in the focus group. From a Systems Psychodynamic perspective, these feelings are an indication of group dynamics manifesting in a group. There must then be an awareness of unconscious behavioural manifestations in groups (Smit & Cilliers, 2006). Observing at a content level only and not being aware of the social unconscious in a focus group could mean that findings could be constrained, thereby not reaching a deeper meaning of group experience (Smit & Cilliers, 2006).

The dynamics which could be found in groups revolve around rational task performance (Bion, 1961/2004) and behaviours geared towards emotional needs and anxieties (Bion, 1961/2004; Van Eeden, 2010). These dynamics are found in all groups (Bion, 1961/2004) including focus groups (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Smit & Cilliers, 2006). Considering these dynamics, a discussion with colleagues at the department I lecture at, and a literature review identified Interactive Qualitative Analysis (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004) as a method of data collection and analysis which could be suited to this research and could address some of the criticisms of focus groups (Bion, 1961/2004; Smit & Cilliers, 2006; Van Eeden, 2010; Welman et al., 2012).

3.5.2.1   *Pros and cons of the IQA as a method of data collection*

Northcutt et al. (1998) developed IQA which applies a systems approach to qualitative research (Jackson & Suizzo, 2015). The ontological perspective of IQA presumes that knowledge and power are largely dependent (Bargate, 2014), thereby challenging the traditional assumption of qualitative research, that the role of the participant is to generate data and the role of the researcher is to analyse the data.

Epistemologically, IQA insists that both deduction and induction are necessary to investigate meaning making of the participants themselves (Bargate, 2014; Northcutt, 2004). Categories of meaning are socially constructed, by participants through induction and further defined and refined through deduction and induction (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). The final step being a deductive exploration by participants about relationships between constructs which borrow from the positivistic language of cause and effect, (Northcutt & McCoy,2004).

As I wanted to explore both individual and group realities of the RIDE, of particular interest was IQA's emphasis on understanding a system from the participant's perspective (Jackson & Suizzo, 2015). As well as putting the power of discovering themes in the hands of the participants rather than that of the researcher (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). In addition, borrowing from the positivistic language in qualitative research is not seen as a problem from an open systems perspective, where there is continuous interaction with the environment, and individuals and groups are interdependent (Miller & Rice, 1967).

The critical realism framework in which this research is situated also attempts to bridge the gap between positivism and interpretivism (Grix, 2010). Exploring the causal mechanisms within the RIDE, how they work, discovering if they have been activated, and under what conditions (Grix, 2010; Owens, 2011; Ron, 2010) is not outside the scope of qualitative research. As Northcutt and McCoy (2004) state that people do not think about or construct their reality in a jumble of unrelated consequences, but rather construct these in terms of influence (cause) and effect related to consequences of actions. The outcome of the IQA is a SID between constructs influencing the system and the effects of those influences, as identified by a group, who created their own interpretive meaning through a set of rules for rationalisation (Bargate, 2014; Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

In terms of group dynamics, the IQA attends to the content level of group dynamics through rules and rationalisation (Bargate, 2014; Northcutt & McCoy, 2004), such as those that Welman et al. (2012) identify, in that some respondents may feel inhibited in responding, while feeling intimidated in the presence of others. The IQA attends to this issue with a silent nominal phase during which the focus group initially generate their data in silence.

Returning to my concerns about conducting the IQA as my only data collection method or conducting the face-to-face interviews after the focus group. Relatedness was a concern in terms of a typical research flow of the IQA. Stapley (2006) attests that individual are always linked to others in a state of relatedness which affects their contemplation. Northcutt and McCoy (2004) state that individuals do not construct their realities in a jumble of unrelated consequences. All things being equal, returning to Hollway and Jefferson's (2008) statement that all research produces its answers by the frame through which it is set, I was wary of what the participants would be reflecting on if I followed the typical IQA research flow. It could mean that the focus of the participants could shift to the dynamics of the focus group instead of the RIDE itself or, at the very least, cloud participants' experiences of the RIDE. While the participants would be working on the IQA task during the focus group, the latent aspect of the focus group needed to be accounted for (van Eeden, 2010) as it would have implications for the credibility of the findings.

The participants' relationship with the IQA task, the dynamics of the focus group in terms of anxiety (Bion, 1961/2004; Tchelebi, 2017), the emotional and survival needs of the group (Beck & Visholm, 2014; Bion, 1961/2004; Stokoe, 2010), and how meaning was constructed between myself and the participants (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008) needed to be considered and separated from those same dynamics of the RIDE that I wanted to explore. Hence my diversion from the typical IQA protocol of conducting a focus group first then the face-to-face interviews.

Adjusting the IQA research flow to face-to-face interviews first then the focus group afforded me the opportunity to explore unconscious behavioural manifestations within the focus group as Smit and Cilliers (2006) suggest. The behaviour in the focus group was understood not only from a content level but also from a systems psychodynamic perspective, to gain insight into the social unconscious where the focus group itself was a system, within the system reflecting the dynamics, which were present in the larger system, the RIDE. Adding richness and complexity to this research, I could then move towards more meaningful interpretations (Mik-meyer, 2020) of the participants experiences of the RIDE, on both an individual and group level. Applying the multimethod approach, I could infer the internal logic of the SID, my observations of the focus group as they worked on the IQA task and the data of the FANI towards triangulation and complementarity (Mik-meyer, 2020; Northcutt & McCoy, 2004; Reis et al., 2017) and use that knowledge reflectively in the process of analysis (Mik-meyer, 2020).

Collecting the data in this manner added to the depth ontology of this research where the multiple sources within different contexts allowed for corroborating evidence for the hypotheses (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Knappertsbusch et al., 2021; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Adding the IQA as a new method of data collection and analysis to psychological research according to Jackson and Suizzo (2015) enabled me to reach the aims of this research while addressing the problem statement (Terre Blanche et al., 2006; Welman et al., 2012).

3.5.3 Access and Rapport

As indicated in chapter 1 I had obtained permission to contact members of the RIDE from the organisation which hosted the group relations conference (see Appendix A).

Ethical clearance involving negligible risk for participants were obtained from the University of South Africa (UNISA) (see Appendix B).

3.5.3.1   *Researcher-Researched rapport*

At the outset, the research was going according to plan. However, when I contacted the person assigned by the organisation to give me contact details of the members of RIDE, the person could no longer do so, as the laptop on which the data was stored had been stolen. The 2015 list of members was all that could be shared. That development had implications for my research strategy in terms of representativeness trustworthiness, triangulation, and credibility (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) if I could only sample from that year.

In consultation with my supervisor, we decided to contact the consultants of the RIDE who may have kept their attendance lists of members attending the RIDE. On contacting the various consultants, I found they were interested in the research and freely shared their lists with me or recommended members they knew who had attended the RIDE. I proceeded by contacting members of the RIDE by e-mail, introducing them to the study by including the participant information sheet.

Initially no one responded to the call. Next, I contacted the members I e-mailed by phone. Not many were interested. However, I forwarded the participant information sheet to those who indicated interest, and the written consent form together with the participant information form by e-mail. Confidentiality was stressed. Participants understood that personal information would not be shared. The limits to confidentiality in the IQA focus group was explained as it could not be guaranteed. Participants were informed of any foreseeable risks participating in the research, which were negligible. Participants signed the consent form before the face-to-face interviews and the focus group commenced. I left it to the participant to set a time, date, and place convenient to them to conduct the face-to-face interviews. The venues chosen by participants were their place of work, home, a coffee shop, and Skype.

There was an unintended consequence to the sampling strategy. Even though the members on the 2015 list initially did not respond to the call to the research, I had three participants who had attended the 2015 event after the phone calls, two of which

worked in the same organisation. I set up appointments to interview these two participants at their place of work on the same day, and Ms. Mbini was the first person I interviewed on that day. After our interview Ms. Mbini took me to the second participant's office for the second interview. At that time, it became evident that he and I had been part of the 2014 RIDE excluded from this research. Ms. Mbini then offered to ask one of her sub-ordinates who had attended with her (2015) if he would like to participate in the research, and he agreed.

While I am aware of the power relationship that might have existed between Ms. Mbini and Mr. Seswai, to participate in the research, the participant was still part of the list of members of the RIDE. To mitigate the power relationship, I was careful to explain to Mr. Seswai that he did not have to go through with the interview. Mr. Seswai did not seem to mind and seemed receptive to the process. He signed the consent form after I explained the process to him before we proceeded with the interview.

3.5.3.2   *Researcher-Researched rapport*

Confidentiality presumes a certain amount of trust between me and the participants. According to Yang (2015) actively building rapport with the participants is positively related to trust. On the other hand, Saad (2014) cautions that while rapport is useful, it is also important that the researcher guard against familiarity to avoid bias, which is a common criticism against qualitative research (Koopman, 2012). However, I would agree with Clarke and Hoggett (2009) that while it is important to present as neutral an image of myself as possible during the data collection process, it was important to me, to present, react and, respond more like the real me, rather than a clinical objective researcher, as well as to honour the participants, even while at times revealing intensely personal information about their lives.

The importance of an authentic approach to respond to participants' uncertainties of whether I was interested in what they had to say became evident. Participants also seemed concerned about whether what they were telling me was what I wanted. There was evidence of possible interviewer and interview anxiety (Creswell, 2013; Welman et al., 2012). An authentic approach on my part was then to prevent us from becoming defended subjects in the process in terms of how I and the participants unconsciously related to one another in the context of, "me as object/idea" and "you as object/idea"

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during the face-to-face interviews and the focus group. Not being aware of researcher/participant as defended subjects would not have been conducive to the research process.

Managing the interview process in this manner created quite a bit of role-strain on my part (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). As the data were collected and analysed, I had to work with projections and counter projections between myself and the participants. While conducting the face-to-face interviews, I had a distinct feeling of unease with two participants. In both these instances I felt that I may not be as welcome as originally thought. As indicated, the date, time and, venue of the FANI was arranged by the participants, however with one participant I waited outside the gate for a long time. In another instance, there was a long wait at a participant's place of work as they had not yet arrived. This created some anxiety for me and a fair amount of grounding within myself to settle my feelings of unease and objectively commence with the interview. Anxiety which was also present in the first interview I conducted. I felt myself clinging to specific questions in the interview guide despite the FANI process. I kept ticking off in my mind which questions the participant had answered and which not. Therefore, I was not as present as I should have been in that interview.

Also, I related more to some participants than others. I had to check my own projections, counter-projections, and biases in these instances. My own preconceived ideas of what I thought I might find during the research needed to be checked, especially when I felt these fit perfectly, creating a space for collusion and not objectivity. In addition, there were times when I wondered whether truth was being told. In another instance, I felt a participant was perhaps competing as there was a significant amount of reference to what I must know and the knowledge I was perceived to hold.

These experiences left me wondering about our (participants and myself) defences during the face-to-face interview and what that was all about. In addition, I had to keep the boundaries of the research in place and keep the conversation on the RIDE while very personal stories were being shared. What the participants were sharing were very emotional for some and required empathy on my part, I had to allow these emotions to

surface and remain in a silence at times, as participants reflected on their experiences of the RIDE during the face-to-face interviews and the focus group.

During the focus group, I remained as neutral and objective as possible. I was conscious of the fact that I had no stake in the outcome of the focus group and did not interfere in the content. However, I was active in the process and the management thereof (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). I did not adhere strictly to the IQA protocol but let the process run as it would while participants worked on their content. At that time, I was not too directive, relying on my skills as a competent group facilitator, using good judgement and discretion, as Northcutt and McCoy (2004) suggest. Applying my skills of organising, listening, observation, analysis, systems thinking and discretion, I allowed people to be people without adding too much of me. Yet upon reflection, it was evident that below the surface I was very much part of the process/dynamics and not immune to the process/dynamics itself.

3.5.4 Recording the data

The recording of the data commenced in two distinct stages, as described in section 3.5.1 and 3.5.2 of this chapter. First the face-to-face interviews applying the FANI as method for data collection was performed. The focus group applying the IQA as a method of data collection followed. The subsequent sections will describe these processes.

3.5.4.1 Recording the face-to-face interviews

Interviews were one hour in length. I welcomed the participant to the interview and conducted the FANI using interview procedures both Creswell (2013) and Clarke and Hoggett (2009) suggest. I opened the face-to-face interview applying the FANI with the first question, "Tell me about your experience of the RIDE". Participants then free associated (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008) about their experience of the RIDE. When a participant required more structure, I asked the eight questions in the interview guide. Question 5 ("Considering the IE, how these fits with how your organisation does things?"), needed to be asked from most participants. For consistency across the FANI I made sure all participants had some answer to these questions, either through free association or by me asking the questions directly (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008).

Time boundaries were important. I kept to the time agreed for the face-to-face interview. Careful listening (Creswell, 2013) involved a personal transformation between being highly visible, in my questioning, to being an invisible facilitating catalyst, and an empathetic listener, all the while sharing some parts of myself during the interview process. During the data collection phase, I realised that I too was a participant of the process, and emotionally involved with the process, and the affective relationship, with the participants as Clarke and Hoggett (2009) suggested.

The FANI data was accurately audio recorded on my cell phone (Creswell, 2013). After the interview, I thanked the participants for participating and informed each participant that I would contact him or her once more, for the focus group. There was time for the participants for questions or reflections regarding the interview process. Thereafter, I once again ensured the participants of the confidentiality of their responses and the limitations to these in the IQA focus group.

The audio recordings of the FANI data were sent for transcription after all face-to-face interviews had been finalised.

3.5.4.2 *Recording the focus group data*

Once the face-to-face interviews had been finalised, I contacted the participants by e-mail informing them of the next step in the research, namely the focus group. I suggested three Saturday mornings. Co-incidentally it was during the month of October, the same month the RIDE was usually presented and, in the first year it was not presented. Participants were asked to choose one of the Saturdays that suited them. Participants were informed that the focus group would take place at a university, which was also my place of employment.

The date I chose for the focus group was the date on which seven of the participants indicated their attendance. One participant (Mr. Seswai) could not attend the IQA focus group on that date and excused himself from the process. At a later stage a participant (Ms. Tlhano) said her religious beliefs prevented her from attending on a Saturday. One participant (Mr. Seven) phoned me on the morning of the focus group and said that he would withdraw, and another did not arrive (Ms. Mbini). The participant phoned

and apologised for her absence on the following Monday morning. On the day of the focus group, the four participants attended the focus group were as seen in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Demographics of the Focus Group Participants

Year attended	Code name of participant	Race	Age at time of interview	Gender	Number of GRC attended	Home language	Highest qualification	Employment industry
2001	Mr. Een	C	44	M	2	Afrikaans	Honours	Public
2002	Ms. Vier	W	57	F	5	Afrikaans	Masters	OD Consultant Coach
2002	Mr. Drie	W	65	M	1	Afrikaans	Degree	Retired/Banking
2015	Ms. Ses	W	44	F	1	Afrikaans	Doctorate	Management Consulting

The four participants who attended the focus group were 50% of the sample. The focus group sample was 50% male and 50% female. Only the coloured and white race group were represented. None of the black race group attended. All participants' home language was Afrikaans. None of the other languages were represented in the focus group sample.

The number of participants satisfied the criteria for what constitutes a group according to the theoretical perspective (Bion, 1961/2004) of this research. In addition, as the literature indicated no congruency in the amount of focus group participants applying the IQA methodology, the focus group went ahead with the four participants. The limitations of a specific cultural group and only 50% of the sample attending the focus group will be discussed in Chapter 8.

The audio recordings from my cell phone of the focus group data were sent for transcription after the focus group had been finalised. In the next subsection I describe how the focus group generated their own data (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004; Vermooten et al., 2020) of their experiences of the RIDE while working on the task of the IQA, which was audio recorded by myself throughout. I also took photos of different phases of the IQA.

3.5.4.3   Recording the IQA data

There are several pre-requisites a researcher needs to attend to before facilitating the IQA according to Northcutt and McCoy (2004). Those are:

- The length of time to spend on the IQA: I opted for two hours as the participants were professionals with limited time on their hands, giving up some time on a Saturday.

- An information pack for each participant was made containing the consent forms, a definition of transmogrification, and the issue statement, in the form of a printed PowerPoint slide as a visual representation of Robben Island, and the building in which the RIDE was presented.

- The information pack included a "quick and dirty" Affinity Relationship Table (ART). A phrase Northcutt and McCoy (2004) used to describe the table participants use to describe possible relationships of 12 or less relationships. I did not anticipate that participants would identify any more than those in the time available.

- The boardroom was set up with eight chairs around a long table to represent the eight participants irrespective of whether they were part of the focus group or not. Cards in numerous colours and sizes, marking pens and Prestik were put in the centre of the table for ease of access to the participants.

- Based on the training I received prior to conducting the IQA the time allocated to each phase is seen as in Table 3.4

Table 3.4

Phases of the IQA

Starting time	Finish	Phase	IQA TASK
10:00	10:05	Orientation	Introduction to the IQA task.
10:05	10:15	Phase 1	Generate data - silent nominal process.
10:15	10:25	Phase 2	Paste data generated in phase 1 randomly to the wall.
10:25	10:45	Phase 3	Verbal clarification/meaning making of data.
10:45	11:15	Phase 4	Identify commonality of data and cluster together to the wall.
11:15	11:45	Phase 5	Refine clusters and name affinities.
11:45	12:00	Phase 6	Develop individual ART.

Like the FANI which uses one question for free association (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008), the IQA starts with an issue statement (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). The issue statement enables the participants to reflect on the issue at hand (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004) during the focus group. I decided to use the initial title of my research: *Group Relations Conferences members' experiences of transmogrification: what does this mean for the individual and the organisation* as the issue statement for the focus group for two reasons. The participants were familiar with the statement as it was on the documents, I sent informing them about the research. There was congruency between the issue statement and the opening interview question of the face-to-face interviews. There was no need for an icebreaker as is the norm for an IQA as the participants had taken part in the FANI prior to the focus group. The RIDE was in the minds of the participants as evidenced when Ms Ses said she had been thinking about her experiences of the RIDE since the interview.

In my primary role as the facilitator of the IQA, I served as a process guide and kept the group on task which included exploring their experiences of the RIDE (Northcutt & McCoy,2004). I set the brainstorming agenda with the issue statement. I managed the time boundaries as in my experience with group relations conferences, throughout the different phases of the IQA. Participants appeared comfortable with these boundaries most probably because of their experiences of the RIDE. At no time were the time

boundaries questioned or ignored. A detailed audit trail of phase 1 and phase 2 can be found in Appendix C. In sum:

- Phase 1: The participants engaged in 10 minutes of silent reflection. Then they recorded individual responses on post-it cards, in the form of a word or experience per card.

- Phase 2: The participants pasted their cards randomly to the wall for 10 minutes. These cards are seen in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2

Focus Group Participants' Data

Note. The focus group participants generated their own data (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004), concluding with 48 cards pasted to the wall, in a spiral formation. Each card had one or two words written on it.

3.5.5 Forms of Data

After the data collection process, I typically gathered the four basic types of information for a multimethod qualitative study (Creswell, 2013; Knappertsbusch et al., 2021; Mikmeyer, 2020; Reis et al., 2017), such as observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual material as seen in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

Forms of Data

Data collection approach	Forms of data
Observations	Field notes in the form of audio recording of the FANI individual interviews.
	Field notes in the form of audio recording of the IQA focus group.
Interviews	Transcripts of the FANI individual interviews.
	Transcript of the IQA focus group Audio recording of the interview
Documents	IQA focus group participants ART's
	IQA focus group cards removed from the wall
	Flip chart of the affinities in alphabetical order.
	Additional documentation (e mail) shared with me by some participants after the interview processes.
Audio visual material	Photographs of the different phases of the IQA by the focus group participants.

The final stage of the data collection process was to store the data according to the Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act no. 56 of 1974) ethical rules of conduct for practitioners registered under the Health Professions Act, 1974, such as myself. It involves the maintenance, dissemination and keeping of records.

3.5.6 Data storing

I adhered to the ethical rules of the HPCSA by removing audio recordings from the phone I used to record those. The high-quality audio recordings (Creswell, 2013) were sent to the transcriber to transcribe from an encrypted file on my personal computer. All the data I had collected for the research were stored in that file, thereby ensuring the confidentiality of the data. A backup was stored in an encrypted file on a hard drive to ensure that the data would not be lost and be easily accessible to me at any time. No one had access to the password for these files except me. Any hardcopies that I or

the focus group had generated were reverted to electronic copy and stored on my PC and hard drive. The hard copies were filed in a file folder and stored in a safe place at my home.

3.6   PRESENTING THE ANALTIC WORK AT A SEMANTIC LEVEL OF DATA ANALYSIS

In this section the semantic level of data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) is described. As I conducted the data analysis, I became aware of my own conscious decision-making processes as I began to generate themes. These included rational, deliberate, analytic, and inferential analysis of what lay before me (Betsch, 2008, Stephens & Boland, 2014) as I thought about and processed the different forms of data. Conducting the thematic analysis in this manner meant that the data analysis was not confined to any single phase of the data collecting, analysing or interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2016).

3.6.1   Engaging with data analysis: thoughts and reflections

Engaging with the data on a semantic level of theme generation, I observed surface meanings of the data. At that level, I did not look beyond what the participants had consciously communicated (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition, I found myself in an intuitive mode, processing the data automatically associatively and holistically in a non-verbal fashion (Betsch, 2008). At a latent level of data analysis, I looked beyond what was said, where I started to examine underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations informed by the semantic content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

These two parallel processes represented both conscious and unconscious ways of thinking about the data (Betsch, 2008). This meant that I approached the data not just sequentially. I also considered multiple pieces of information simultaneously, which could not be accessed by introspection or be verbalised (Betsch, 2008). In effect I found myself applying the fully qualitative logic and procedures of organic thematic analysis while coding and developing themes which involved active creative and reflexive researcher engagement as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2016).

This intuitive (Betsch, 2008) and iterative (Braun & Clarke, 2016; Creswell, 2013), way of processing the data, is differentiated from the basic level of the unconscious thinking. The basic level of unconscious thinking is instinctive or primitive, involving basic information-processing functions, devoid of meaning, affect or interpretation (Hogarth, 2010). The intuitive mode of thinking I found myself involved in, is a sophisticated unconscious way of thinking. I was interpreting the data through meaning and, effect of experience, shaped by my learning processes, as I engaged and re-engaged with the data multiple times. The "felt knowledge about patterns and holistic associations" (Stephens & Boland, 2014, p. 223) then not only included my affective dimension of feelings, but also my cognitive processes of feeling, such as the feeling of knowing (Betsch, 2008). In addition to tolerating the frustration and uncertainties around not-knowing, it was also to discover the truth as far as it could be known (Bion, 1967/2018). In essence I entered a reflective conversation where intuition and rationality were synthesized (Micheli et al., 2018) towards the rigour of this research.

The way I approached the thematic data analysis was in line with Braun and Clarke (2019) reflexive thematic analysis which is not about following procedures "correctly" or about "accurate" and "reliable coding" but about my reflective and thoughtful engagement with the data and my reflective and thoughtful engagement with the analytic process.

To this end:
- My theoretical assumptions informed the use of a step-by-step process of qualitative data analysis.
- While engaging with the data, I understood and knew I needed to make decisions around the analysis. At those times, I reported on my decisions, consistently, coherently, and transparently.
- There was a continuous bending back on myself as I coded the data, querying assumptions while interpreting and coding.
- The themes I finally generated were developed from creative labour of the coding, reflecting the analytic work at the intersection of data, analytic process, and subjectivity.

Analysing the data as I had, patterns emerged, and themes were generated (Braun & Clarke, 2019) as, I immersed myself in the data by, thinking about the data holistically and creating links. In addition, the ontological perspective of IQA (Northcutt and McCoy, 2004), fit the theoretical perspective of systems thinking of this research, enabling me to understand the complexity that lay before me, comprehend it abstractly, and think symbolically. I could then make the necessary connections between the participants, and their relatedness to the RIDE (Kiel, 2017; Shongwe, 2014) while maintaining an interdependent view of participants experiences of the RIDE.

3.6.2 Braun and Clarke 6-step thematic data analysis

The multimethod approach to this research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Knappertsbusch et al., 2021; Mik-meyer, 2020; Reis et al., 2017) meant that I gathered multiple forms of data with two distinct methods, that of the FANI and IQA. Thereafter all the data was then reviewed to make sense of it and organise it into categories/themes which cut across all the data sources (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

There were two deviations due to the protocols of the IQA method (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004):

(1) The focus group generated their own data in the form of the cards to the wall and the ART.

(2) I followed IQA protocols when analysing the data of the ART in generating the SID.

The four forms of data (see Table 3.5) I then had in my possession after analysing the IQA data of the focus group were analysed with Braun and Clarke (2006) 6-Step thematic data analysis, that being:

(1) Become familiar with the data: Transcribing data reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.

(2) Generate initial codes: Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.

(3) Generate themes: Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.

(4)   Review themes: Checking in the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic "map" of the analysis.

(5)   Define and naming themes: Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

(6)   Write-up: The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating the analysis back to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Each of these steps will form a sub-section in this chapter and in Chapter 4. In this chapter I describe the first three steps of Braun and Clarke (2006) 6-step thematic analysis I applied to the data at a semantic level of data analysis. Chapter 4 will describe and conclude with the last three steps at a latent level of data analysis.

I will begin with the data analysis of the IQA of the participants which were generated from the deviations of the IQA as discussed. I followed IQA protocols of Northcutt and McCoy (2004) in my analysis of these towards the generation of the SID. Thereafter the IQA data formed part of the 6 step thematic data analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006) once these two deviations in the data analysis strategy had been concluded.

3.6.3   Northcutt and McCoy Interactive Qualitative data analysis

The first part of the data analysis was for the participants of the focus group to analyse their own data they had generated in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the IQA of the RIDE which resulted in 48 cards (see Figure 3.2) pasted randomly to the wall as described in the data collection section of this chapter.

3.6.3.1   Focus group participants analysis of own data

What followed was the participants' own abstractions of their data they engaged in through inductive and deductive thinking towards meaning making (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004) during the focus group. The focus group participants coded their data in three successive and recursive steps (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004) in three phases (Phase 3, Phase 4, and Phase 5) as seen in Table 3.4. I had no input other than to facilitate the process of the IQA (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

a   *Phase 3: adopting a shared meaning*

It was at the start of this phase of the IQA that, I audio recorded the focus group as they worked on the IQA task. The transcript of which I analysed using Braun and Clarke (2006) 6-step thematic data analysis technique. Authorising myself to read out the words on the cards for clarification purposes (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004), phase 3 of the IQA commenced.

The purpose of this phase of the IQA according to Northcutt and McCoy (2004), Sanchez (2007) and, Jackson and Suizzo (2015), is to allow for a socially constructed, shared meaning of each card amongst the participants. In this manner any vagueness or ambiguity associated with the meaning of the words is reduced. While the data had been generated individually during Phase 1, no one card/word belonged to a particular participant, but to the group. During Phase 3 of the IQA, any one participant could offer an opinion on what the card meant for themselves. Participants could add more reflections and thoughts to the existing cards to ensure that responses reflected the individual and shared experiences of the group members, in a way that was relevant to the issue statement (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

Where some uncertainties arose to the meanings of the words, clarification was needed. The participant who wrote the word would acknowledge that it belonged to them and clarified to the rest of the group what they meant with the word. Participants further queried where they were uncertain as to the meaning, resulting in a discussion of the word in question. Keeping to the time boundaries, not all cards were read out, however, towards the last minutes, participants were asked to identify which words were not clear. I was very active during this phase and called for clarification of one or two cards myself such as "birth" and "group power".

b   *Phase 4: grouping cards into groups of similar meaning*

This phase of the IQA is similar to what Braun and Clarke (2019) call domain summaries which are "summaries of the range of meaning in the data related to a particular topic or 'domain' of discussion" (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 592). The task of phase 4 was for the focus group participants to arrange cards with similar meanings into groups through a method of inductive coding (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). At that stage the challenge was for the Skype participant (Ms. Ses) to see the cards on the

wall which proved difficult for her. Ms. Ses asked the participants and me, to move the cards for her as the need arose. All the participants arranged and rearranged cards irrespective of whether the cards belonged to them or not until they were satisfied with the different clusters that had been generated. From this point forward, I became less involved as the focus group participants took ownership of their process.

The result at the end of Phase four was five clusters of cards posted to the wall. Each cluster of cards included one of the 48 cards the participants of the focus group had generated during Phase 1 as seen in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6

Clustering or Domain Summaries

Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5
Dangerous	Birth	Anxiety	Awareness	Calling
Grotesque	Clean and unclean	Deep(er)	Free(dom)	Destiny
Group Power	Clearing	Freshness	Illuminate	Letting go
Judgement	Container	Gain	Integration	Long-lasting
Powerful force	Dark to Light	Loss	Undeniable	OD "light" (entertainment)
Shock	Dawn	Not funny	Understanding	Purpose
Shocking	Eros and Thanos	Paradigm shifting		
Ugly	Fun	Regression		
	Fussy and unfussy	Surprising		
	Mirror	Transform		
	Real			
	Safety			
	Stereotypes			
	Uncertainty			
	Unmasking			
	Pain			

c   Phase 5: creating meaning

The fifth phase of the IQA, was the affinity naming stage (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). During this phase of the IQA, groups of cards are critiqued by the focus group in context

of other groupings, which Northcutt and McCoy (2004) call *affinities*. The purpose of the affinity analysis is to categorise and refine the generated data into dimensions or themes (Sanchez, 2007). Participants themselves then perform the first steps of analysis by organising their discourse into categories of meaning called affinities (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). This is similar to the categories of Wright (2016) or domain summaries of Braun and Clarke (2019). In this research affinities are seen as domain summaries as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) based on the shared understanding that themes create meaning to data (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Creswell, 2013; DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000; Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). At this point there was no meaning to the affinities across the whole data set.

As seen in Table 3.6, the focus group participants categorised their data (cards) into five clusters. To enable the focus group participants to freely express their views on what to name the clusters, I used discretion in my observation of the focus group and allowed the participants to name the clusters as they needed. A process allowed for by IQA as Northcutt and McCoy (2004) note there are no official laundry lists of procedures or rules for the IQA facilitator to follow to guarantee success of the process.

In my discretion of observing the focus group, the result was well identified affinities despite the small sample size (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). The focus group named the clusters as follows:
(1)   Apprehension and Trepidation
(2)   Dusk and Dawn
(3)   Movement
(4)   Shedding Light
(5)   Consequence or Outcome

According to IQA protocol, the affinities were then characterised by:
- Affinity names which were not named after people, a place, or a physical thing.
- Each affinity described the constructs in the cluster.
- Topics were not mixed there was one concept alone.
- Participants were able to easily define their affinities.
- A range of meanings were evident.

- Affinity descriptions did not depend on definitions that point to other affinities in the system.

Concluding the analysis of their data the focus group participants moved into phase 6 of the IQA of the RIDE to generate their individual affinity relationship table in which they identified relationships between the different affinities (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

d   Phase 6: Affinity Relationship Table (ART)

In this last phase of the IQA for the participants, the aim is for the focus group participants to consider the nature of the relationship between all possible pairs of affinities individually and indicate these as such in the ART (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). Phase 6 of the IQA has much in common with second order hermeneutics (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009) allowing for the focus group participants to individually interpret their own interpretations of the data they generated during the focus group. On a sematic level of data analysis, the focus group participants proceeded to list the affinities in alphabetical order, numbering them numerically onto a flip chart. In this way, no affinity took precedence over another. The focus group participants then referred to the affinities in numerical order and indicated whether 1 directly influenced 2 with a right arrow or, if 2 directly influenced 1, with a left arrow. If it was felt that there was no influence, no arrows were indicated on their individual ART – see Appendix D.

After completing the individual ART, the focus group participants handed their individual ART to me. Ms. Ses e-mailed her copy to me the day after the focus group. There was some time left for a discussion of the day's events and participants were further debriefed on what would happen next in terms of the research and their access to the final product.

The next step of the IQA was for me to analyse the data of the ART according to the IQA protocols (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004) towards the SID.

3.6.3.2   Developing the Systems Influence Diagram (SID)

The purpose of the IQA (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004), is a SID which helps in understanding a system such as the RIDE from the participant's perspective (Jackson & Suizzo, 2015). In this section, I will briefly describe the IQA protocols I followed to

reach the visual representation of the RIDE according to the focus group participants. In the context of this research, the visualisation of the RIDE (SID) includes 50% of the sample as not all the participants attended the focus group.

The ART the focus group participants had completed in the last phase of the IQA were their individual perceived cause-and-effect relationships among the affinities in the RIDE system (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). Developing an Interrelationship Diagram (IRD) provided a group perspective of the relationships between affinities the IQA focus group had identified (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

a   Rationalising the system

Developing the IRD was the first step towards rationalising the system (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). This meant that the affinities and the relationships among them, were treated as abstract symbols, structured according to a set of rules which had no meaning in themselves (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). The formal protocol helped me determine whether there were direct influences between every possible pair of affinities in the system and the directionality of that influence (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). Table 3.7 provides an overview of the relationships between different affinities as indicated by the participants drawn from their individual ART.

Table 3.7

The IRD Matrix

Affinity relationship pair			Number of votes for a direct relationship between pairs				Total
			Mr Een	Mr Drie	Ms Vier	Ms Ses	
1	→	2	1		1		2
1	←	2		1			1
1	→	3	1		1		2
1	←	3					0
1	→	4	1	1	1		3
1	←	4		1			1
1	→	5	1	1	1		3
1	←	5					0
2	→	3		1	1		2
2	←	3	1				1
2	→	4			1		1
2	←	4	1	1			2
2	→	5					0
2	←	5	1	1	1		3
3	→	4	1	1	1		3
3	←	4					0
3	→	5	1	1	1		3
3	←	5					0
4	→	5		1		1	2
4	←	5	1		1		2

Relationships between affinities can be one of three; those that influence one another in either direction or no relationship between affinities (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). Responses were taken at face value as the true meaning on how participants conceptualised the affinity relationship. In my construction of the IRD, I needed to decide between developing a group composite applying the Pareto protocol or the democratic protocol.

The Pareto protocol is a statistical method which considers cumulative frequencies, cumulative percentages, and power as a degree of optimisation of a system, useful for instances where there is disagreement between individuals and subgroups about the nature of relationships (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). As the participants of the focus group did not deliberate collectively on the relationships resulting in no disagreements I decided on the democratic protocol where I counted majority relationships and added

these to the IRD (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). This meant I only included those relationships to the IRD where two or more participants had indicated directional relationships. A group composite as seen in Table 3.8 was developed from the IRD matrix.

Table 3.8

IRD Matrix Sorted in Descending Order of Δ

Affinity	1	2	3	4	5	Out	In	Delta Δ
1	●	↑	↑	↑	↑	4	0	4
3	←	←	●	↑	↑	2	2	0
4	←	↑	←	●		1	2	-1
5	←	↑	←		●	1	2	-1
2	←	●	↑	←	←	1	3	-2

Note. Affinities with positive deltas are relative drivers or causes. Affinities with negative deltas are relative effects or outcomes. Affinities with an equal number of ins and outs suggest the metaphor of a circulator or pivot indicating a position in the middle of the system (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

The group perspective of the relationships between affinities included the number of votes for each directional relationship the participants identified, listed in an IRD matrix indicating the direction of influence. An arrow pointing from 1 to 2 indicates that 1 is the cause or influencing affinity and that 2 is the effect or influenced affinity. Based on the information in the IRD, the value of Delta is then sought which indicates whether each affinity in a pair is either a cause or an effect or if there is no relationship between affinities. The value of delta (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004) is used as a marker for the relative position of an affinity within the system as seen in Table 3.8.

b   The SID of the RIDE

The RIDE system was visualised from the IRD Matrix by ordering the affinities in topology zones. These zones are a means to rationalise the system according to different sets of rules, with the objective to sort elements in a system which share similar characteristics of influence into a series of zones (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

- Zone 1 included the primary driver (1), the fundamental cause or source of influence in the system, affecting all other affinities, but not affected by any others in the system.

- Zone 2 included the pivot (3). Placed after the primary driver before the three secondary outcomes in the middle of the system. The pivot influences and is influenced by all other affinities in the system.

- Zone 3 included the two secondary outcomes (4 & 5) which shared a delta of -1. These Secondary outcomes were placed after the pivot as they were influenced by both the primary driver and the pivot in the system. A relative effect in the system.

- Zone 4 included the secondary outcome (2) with a delta of -2. A strong relative outcome in the system. Influenced and influencing all other elements in the system. Excluding a direct influence on the primary driver.

Placing the different affinities in topological zones as seen in Figure 3.3 provides a visual representation of the RIDE system according to the focus group participants. The network feature of the Atlas Ti programme was used to create the SID including the relationships between affinities as a cluttered SID.

Figure 3.3

The Cluttered SID
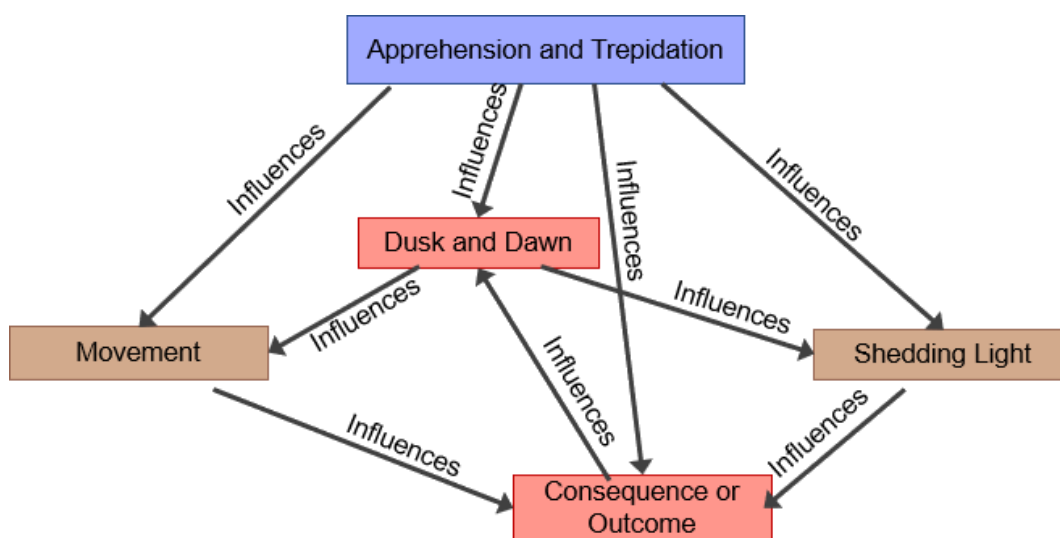
Note. Naming the affinities: Apprehension and Trepidation (1) was the primary driver in the RIDE System. Dusk and Dawn (3) was the pivot. Movement (4) and Shedding

light (5) were secondary outcomes. Consequence or Outcomes (2) was a significant outcome of the RIDE. Directional arrows indicate the direction of influence amongst the different affinities in the RIDE system.

In addition to the visual representation of the system, the data suggested three anomalies:

(1)   Firstly, there was no primary outcome. An IRD that presents no primary outcome is not uncommon according to Northcutt and McCoy (2004). What this means is that the affinities are a strong relative effect while still being influenced by other affinities.

(2)   Secondly, it appeared as if there were three secondary outcomes in the system (4, 5 and 2), however (2) had the highest delta of -2 which meant it had a strong relative effect of the system in contrast to the relative effect of (3) and (4) both with a delta of -1 in the system according to IQA protocol.

(3)   A third and significant anomaly in the system was that the focus group indicated that four directly influenced five and five directly influenced four. According to IQA protocol, this is an ambiguous relationship (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004) as only three relationships exist in the rules of hypothesising. There is no direction if four influences five and five influences four. While both directional influences may seem plausible, what had in fact happened was that the IQA focus group hadn't identified at least one other affinity that somehow interacted with both 4 and 5 (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). In other words, the group had identified a direct relationship, when in fact there was an indirect relationship. If there was indeed an undetected uncommon influence on 4 and 5, it could influence possibly identifying a feedback loop which would support a hypothesis that both directions 4 to 5 and 5 to 4 are equally relevant.

These anomalies will be addressed in subsequent sections as they relate to the whole data set.

This then concludes the data analysis applying the IQA protocols. In the section to follow, I continue with Braun and Clarke (2006) third step of thematic data analysis, which involves building a thematic map and bringing the whole data set together by including the participants data they had generated during the focus group and the SID

I had generated according to the IQA protocols representing the RIDE system according to the focus group participants.

3.6.4 A semantic level of data analysis

Organising the data is not part of Braun and Clarke (2019) steps of thematic data analysis. It is however implied in both thematic data analysis and IQA, and forms part of data analysis of phenomenological research (Creswell, 2013). In that case, I proceeded to organise all the data (FANI & IQA) into the Atlas ti 8 software programmes, in addition to saving these as individual data files on my computer. I included the research proposal to the Atlas ti programme as, suggested by Dr Steve Wright (2016) in his YouTube video, a resource which provided valuable insight on how to code and create themes in the programme. The inclusion of the research proposal made it possible to link research questions to the coding and eventual theme identification. A method which grounded me in the research. In addition, I included word documents and e-mail sent to me by the participants, image files of the affinities generated by the participants during the IQA and, the ART. In this manner, I worked with all the forms of data of both the FANI and IQA.

The programme made it easy for me to access all my data in one place. Keeping the data in separate files on the computer was a back-up solution. It was also useful as I zoomed in and out of the data as I analysed the data hermeneutically and iteratively in an analysis spiral (Creswell, 2013; Vagle, 2014).

What I found constrictive of the Atlas ti 8 programme was that the PC screen was too small when I needed a helicopter view of the data, as a system of connections, in the network tool of the programme. To overcome this restriction, I proceeded to use whiteboards at my place of work and at home to conceptualise the data as seen in Figure 3.4. This agrees with Creswell (2013) that the process of data analysis is the same, whether a programme or manual system is used. I easily moved between the two systems. I did not feel that there was a machine or any other tool between the data and myself.

Figure 3.4

Whiteboard Network Conceptualisation
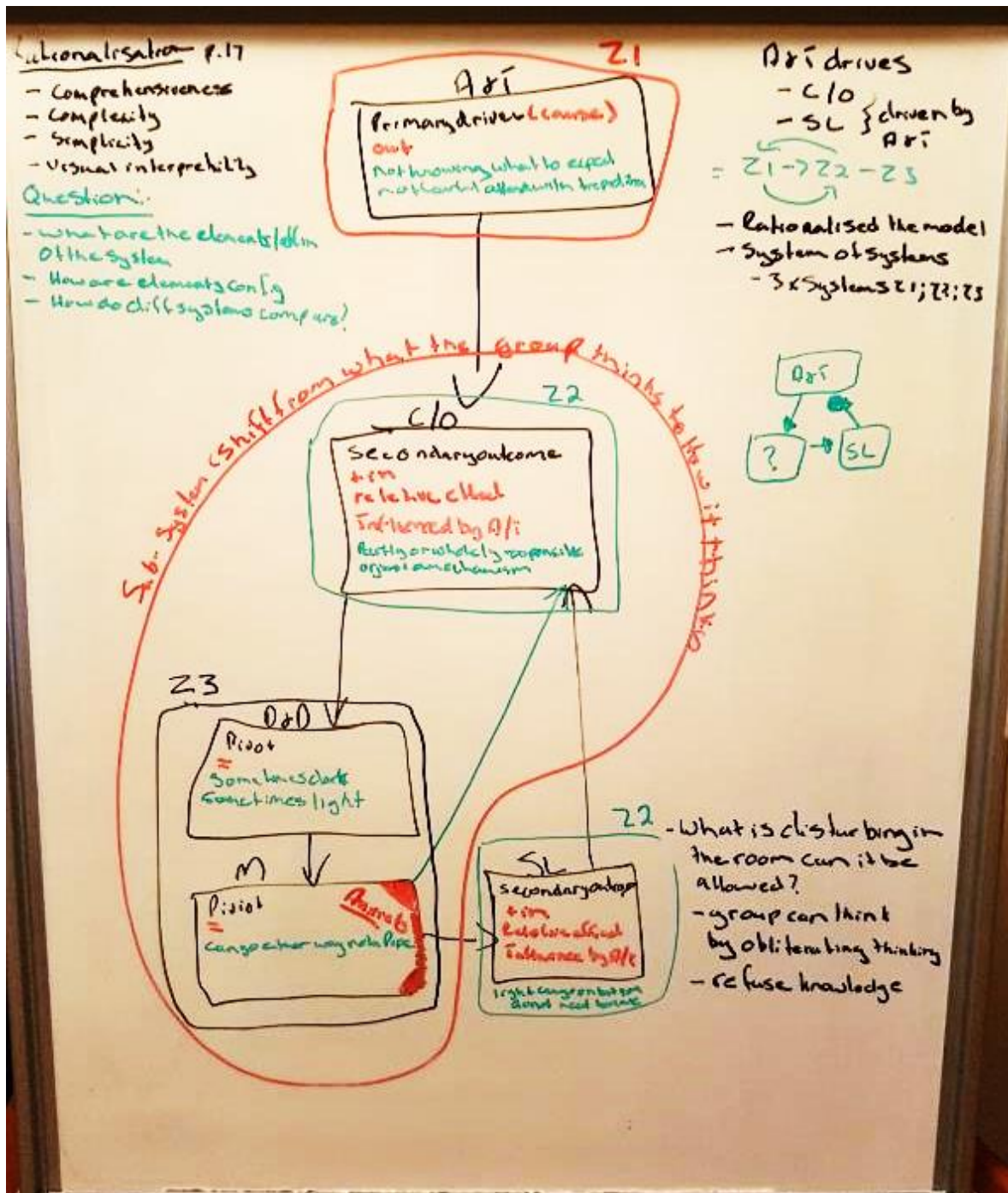
I found that the research proposal grounded me in the research, enabling me to extract the themes, clustered around the questions the participants had been asked to discuss and, relating these to core shared meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2016) of the experience of the RIDE. Treating the data as two separate entities at first, I concentrated on the

FANI and IQA data in terms of the transcripts I had of the individual participants and the focus group. Before I considered the participants data of the IQA and SID. I felt that it was important at that time to get to know the participants individually as well as to provide structure to the data analysis before I delved deeper.

As indicated in the sampling strategy, I used pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants and named the transcript of the IQA focus group as "Focus Group". I also categorised the documents of each participant into one case a name given by the Atlas ti 8 programme to indicate a grouping of documents, to keep all the documents of one participant together in one central folder so to speak. This was particularly relevant for this research, as some participants shared additional documents with me. After organising all the data, I then moved to Step 1 of the organising framework of thematic data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), familiarising myself with the data.

3.6.4.1   Step 1: becoming familiar with the data
This first step of the 6-step thematic data analysis entails transcribing the data, reading and re-reading the data while noting down initial ideas (Braun & Clarke, 2006, Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). It has much in common with data analysis of phenomenological research of reading and memo-ing which involves making marginal notes in the data and form initial codes (Creswell, 2013). I started to familiarise myself with the FANI data by reading and re-reading the FANI transcripts and I listened to the audio recordings of the eight participants (Creswell, 2013; Welman et. al., 2012).

The task was laborious at that time. There was also too much data to deal with. The process left me bored and mechanical. I did make a few observations in the form of memos and short phrases as I explored the data. However, what I found at that stage was that despite my best intentions, I was forming impressions and feeling quite defensive at times (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). I found myself engaging with some participants more than with others and being defensive with some, while colluding with others, as I read and re-read the transcripts. After a debriefing session with my supervisor where we discussed the possible projections and counter projections, I decided to immerse myself in one participant's transcript at a time "forgetting" others, to really hear what the participant was sharing with me to fully immerse myself in the data and catch the finer nuances, tones, and emotions of the participants. At times I

read the transcript, and while listening to the audio recording in this manner, projections and counter projections came into my awareness and I found myself becoming less defensive as I progressed with the data analysis.

The FANI allowed for unique individual narratives for each of the participants (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). Each narrative differed in the detail of its telling, different points were emphasised, and different morals were drawn, by the participants themselves. As I read and re-read the FANI data concentrating on one participant at a time, I became aware of the participants preoccupations when telling me their stories. Some of those shared in their use of metaphors. These I wrote down as short phrases:

(1)   Mr. Een: Boundaries of time and race

(2)   Ms. Mbini: Nutshell

(3)   Mr. Drie: A five-day revolution

(4)   Ms. Vier: Cat amongst the pigeons

(5)   Ms. Tlhano: Baggage inside our bags

(6)   Ms. Ses: A dangerous and delirious game

(7)   Mr. Seven: Royalty, entertainers, and polygamists

(8)   Mr. Seswai: Holding grudges

During the data analysis, an important aspect of group relations conferences emerged, which impacted on the transcriptions. Psychological language used at these events was not always understood or put into context by the transcriber. There is a phenomenon of group relations conferences, which Scott (2011) found members use to express their shared learning experiences, which are often, painful, and difficult.

This phenomenon was experienced in the transcript of the focus group, which I familiarised myself with after the FANI transcripts. I could hear participants talking in the background, which the transcriber did not transcribe. When reading and memo-ing the focus group transcript, this added to the richness of the data and my understanding of the group dynamics, which might have been lost, had I not read and simultaneously listened to the recordings.

Initial codes were generated from both the FANI and focus group transcripts. In addition, I coded the IQA data in terms of the pictures I had taken of the different stages and the affinities the focus group had generated. In the process of becoming familiar with the data I had some initial ideas about the codes in mind as they related to the empirical aims of this research. Continuing with the next step of generating the initial codes, I proceeded to code interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set and, collated data relevant to each code (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The inductive process I followed (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017) left me with 5978 codes across the data set.

At the outset there were too many codes to manage. Consulting the literature once more I found that Creswell (2013) cautions researchers to develop a short list of tentative codes (25-30 or so) irrespective of how large the database is. To achieve the suggestion by Creswell (2013), I applied the Wright (2016) coding strategy, by grouping similar codes under one classification system, generating categories of codes or domain summaries as referred to by Braun and Clarke (2019). The codes were divided into descriptive codes, interpretive codes, and pattern codes according to the suggestion by Braun and Clark (2019) as seen in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9

Domain Summaries of Codes

Descriptive codes (14)			
Attributing a theme category to a segment of text.			
(1) Childhood:	**(2) Communication:**	**(3) Boundary:**	**(4) Disconnect:**
Baby, family, mother, father (4)	Explain, listen, silence, speak (4)	Allow, respect, Intrusive, New frontiers (4)	Avoid, destroy, disrupt, leave, left, split (6)
(5) Emotions:	**(6) Future:**	**(7) Individual:**	**(8) Leadership:**
Bitter, cry, enjoy, fear, grieve, grudge, happy, hate, irritate, love, pain, sad, Euphoria (13)	Dream, hope, **wish** (3)	Attitude, beast, blood, depression, draining, exhausting, eyes, face, fist, head, identity, philosophy, physical, process, rebel, relax, role, skin, tired, value. (20)	Authority, consultant, director, facilitate (4)

(9) Memory:	(10) Organisation:	(11) Others:	(12) Robben Island:
Remember (1)	Culture, fire, task, work (4)	Colleagues, enemies, foreign, friend, funny, game, group, joke, music, personalities, play, royal, trauma (13)	apartheid, bed, boarders, country, event, first session, holiday, isolated, LSG, pillow, prison, prisoners, programme, group size, spiral, venue, water, world, structure, (19)

(13) Time:	(14) Free associated words:
Day, five, Friday, halfway, last day, Monday, morning, night, Thursday, Tuesday, Wednesday. (11)	Breaking, challenge, damage, different, dynamic, emotional, enlightening, essential, exciting, explosive, frustration, hard stewing, humbling, interesting, introspective. (15)

Interpretive codes (12)

Related to the reasons, explanations, and motives behind the information.

(15) Aggression:	(16) Anxiety:	(17) Awareness:	(18) Connect:
Anger, Attack, beaten, conflict, erupt, fight, furious ganging up, hostile, knife, rage, shout, Temper, threat, violence (15)	Laugh, tense (2)	A-ha, Accept, Amazing, Bag, Confront, Discovered, Illuminate, Justify, Mirror, Realise, reflect, shedding light, See, Trap, Trust, Understanding, Watch (17)	Contact, engage, integrate, share, stay (5)

(19) Containment:	(20) Diversity:	(21) Expectation:	(22) Help:
Comfort zone, comfortable, complacent, control, cook, coping, neutral, peace (8)	Age, black, coloured, disability, gender, female, male, race, similar, socio level, economic class, white (12)	Disappoint, lost rudder, missing, money, surprise, strange (6)	Deity, intervention (2)

(23) Integrity:	(24) Perception:	(25) Safety:	(26) Uncertainty:
Honest, lie, sceptical, truth (4)	Know, overwhelm, powerful, problem, real, reality, sense. (7)	Cautious, home, expose, hiding, shields. (5)	Confused, weird (2)

Pattern codes (4)			
Connecting different sections of the text towards a meaningful whole.			
(27) Consequence:	**(28) Judgement:**	**(29) Metaphor:**	**(30) Transform:**
Answer, Gratifying, guilt, reconciliation, resolve, victory (6)	Bad, beautiful, crazy, delirium, difficult, effective, enrich, extraordinary, first thought, good, intellectual, intimate, methodology, nice, normal, not fun, not nice, Tavistock, terrible, Wonderful, ugly. (22)	Cat amongst the pigeons, Penny dropped, Throw rocks, Miss the bus, Puppet, pulling strings, Dropped the bomb, Buttons pressed, Baggage in bags, mind blowing, Keep the ship floating, Whole tootie, Bump into reality, Nutshell, Jumped off a cliff, Safety harness, Five-day revolution, Elephant in the room, Stewing your own juices, Runs like water off a ducks back, Walking in the black forest, Pot boiling over, peek under your own ask, Ouma swaddled in a white Blanket, Unmasking, New dawn one of those with the vampires. (26)	Chaos, death, Eros, and Thanatos, grow, let go, pull, push, richer. (8)

According to Braun and Clarke (2006) domain summaries are differentiated from themes, in that domain summaries are limited cover terms of distinct properties in the data which contains specific bodies of ideas. For example, the category Aggression as indicated in Table 3.9 held the ideas around, anger, rage, hostile, attack, fight, ganging up etc. Ideas/codes were organised around a shared topic with no shared meaning. Themes on the other hand, in the absence of an agreed upon definition (Braun & Clarke, 2016; DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000) should grasp the essential meaning of something (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Creswell, 2013; DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000) which the domain summaries or categories in Table 3.9 do not.

In developing domain summaries, I aggregated the text into small categories of information (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Wright, 2016). Evidence for these were sought

across the whole data set by assigning a label to the code (Creswell, 2013; Welman et al., 2012). This meant that categories of descriptive, interpretive, and pattern codes were developed. Welman et al. (2012) defines these as:

- Descriptive codes i.e., attributing a theme category to a segment of text.
- Interpretive codes which related to the reasons, explanations, and motives behind the information.
- Pattern codes to connect different sections of the text towards a meaningful whole of the data.

As I coded and categorised, I used reflective remarks, when I found a pause or omission from participants and/or when they used metaphors to describe their experience, and marginal remarks where I noted ideas about and reactions to what were discussed, reflecting on what the data was telling me and what I wanted to know (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009).

During the winnowing process as described by Creswell (2013) the constant review of the data, meant that new codes originated, while others were replaced with more meaningful codes. I colour coded a specific category of code in the Atlas Ti8 programme, for ease of reference. For example, the category of "AWARENESS" part of the interpretive codes in Table 3.9 was colour coded red as seen in Figure 3.5. Codes such as "realise" fit the category and were linked to this code.

Figure 3.5

ATLAS.ti Coding Strategy
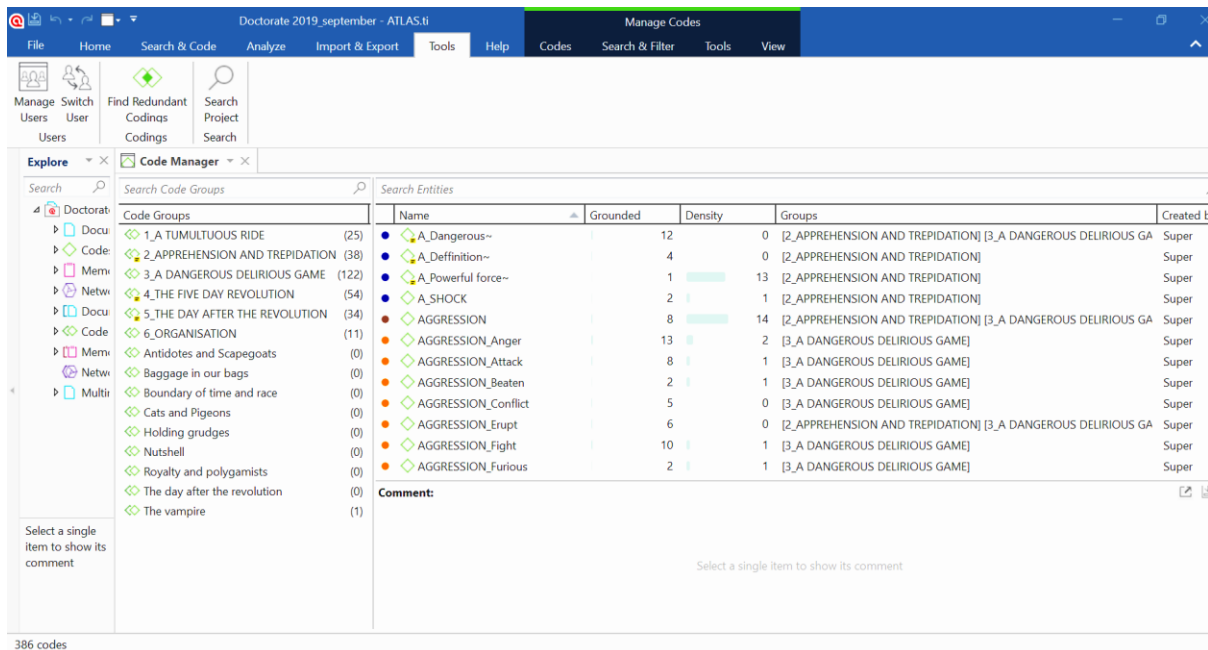
Not all the text was coded and not all codes fit into these categories. There were several stand-alone codes. These standalone codes were evidence of each participant's unique experiences of RIDE. Words were not counted, as codes in this study cannot all be given equal emphasis (Creswell, 2013). In cases where participants used a particular word more frequently than others, I marked these as in vivo codes for further analysis. Codes were classified and declassified, and some were discarded based on the iterative nature of my data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2016; Creswell, 2013). In the end I had 268 codes classified into 30 domain summaries after coding both the FANI transcripts and the focus group transcript as seen in Table 3.9.

I concur with Braun and Clarke (2019) that themes do not passively emerge from the data but are actively generated through prolonged data immersion, thoughtfulness, and reflection on the part of the researcher. As I started to think about themes that the domain summaries could allude to; I generated an additional eight categories in the form of the interview questions I had developed for the FANI as seen in Table 3.10. This enabled me to think about how the domain summaries may cluster around those questions I had asked during the FANI. In addition, I considered what seemed to be the participants' preoccupations as indicated in section 3.6.4.1.

Table 3.10

Categories of Interview Questions

FANI question	Interview question posed	Literature aims of question	Empirical aim of question
1 (IQ1)	What comes to mind when you think of your learning before, during and after the event	Conceptualising adult learning experiences.	Explore learning processes of individuals attending group relations conferences.
		Conceptualise group processes	Describe member's experiences after attending group relations conferences.
2 (IQ2)	What turning points, if any, did you notice in yourself during and after attending RIDE	Conceptualise adult experiential learning	Explore whether members of group relations conferences transmogrify and what this means for the individual and the organisation.
			Explore the learning processes of individuals attending group relations conferences.
			Describe member's experiences after attending group relations conferences.
3 (IQ3)	In your opinion, what would you say you carried with you immediately after the event? How did that make you feel?	Conceptualise adult experiential learning	Describe member's experiences after attending group relations conferences.
			Explore whether members of group relations conferences transmogrify and what this means for the individual and the organisation.
			Explore the learning processes of individuals attending group relations conferences
4 (IQ4)	Where do you think, you could apply what you learnt at RIDE more effectively, in your personal life or in the organisation. Please elaborate.	Conceptualise group processes	Explore the value of group relations conferences as an intervention tool.
			Describe member's experiences after attending group relations conferences.

FANI question	Interview question posed	Literature aims of question	Empirical aim of question
5 (IQ5)	Considering the IE how does this fit with how your organisation does' things	Conceptualise Systems Psychodynamics	Explore the value of group relations conferences as an intervention tool Add to the body of knowledge about the impact of Group Relations Conferences on the individual and the organisation.
6 (IQ6)	Can you recall any situations where you applied your learning back to the organisation, please elaborate? What was the outcome?	Conceptualise Systems Psychodynamics Conceptualise adult experiential learning Conceptualise group processes	Explore the value of group relations conferences as an intervention tool Add to the body of knowledge about the impact of Group Relations Conferences on the individual and the organisation.
7 (IQ7)	If there are no situations where you applied your learning back to the organisation, were there situations in the organisation that reminded you of RIDE? Could you have applied your learning, what made you hesitant to do so?	Conceptualise adult experiential learning Conceptualise group processes Conceptualise Systems Psychodynamics	Explore the value of group relations conferences as an intervention tool Add to the body of knowledge about the impact of Group Relations Conferences on the individual and the organisation.
8 (IQ8)	What words would you use to describe the RIDE event you participated in?	Free Association	

Specific interesting features of the data could thus be linked explicitly to the general and specific aims of the research as seen in Table 3.10. In addition, a general structure for further analysis with linkages between the interview questions, such as experiences before, during and after the RIDE could then reveal something important about the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Wright, 2016).

The next step of Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic data analysis was to build a thematic map which involves a detailed account of the hierarchical relationship between codes and categories towards theme development. In doing so, the authors suggest keeping some of the context around, so the context is not lost (Braun & Clarke, 2006) while considering tensions and inconsistencies in the data across all data items (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.6.4.3   Building a thematic map: bringing it all together

Building the thematic map (Braun & Clarke, 2006) suggest keeping some of the context around, so the context is not lost. A thematic map involves a detailed account of the hierarchical relationship between codes and categories towards theme development. At this point I included the data of the IQA and extended the 30 domain summaries as seen in Table 3.9 with the 5 domain summaries (affinities) of the IQA data as I considering tensions and inconsistencies in the data across all data items (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The domain summaries of both the FANI and IQA data are seen in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11

Domain Summaries Across the Data Set

FANI data			IQA data
Interpretive codes	**Pattern codes**	**Descriptive codes**	**Affinities**
Aggression	Consequence	Childhood	Apprehension and Trepidation
Diversity	Transform	Communication	Dusk and Dawn
Expectation	Judgement	Boundary	Movement
Help	Metaphor	Disconnect	Shedding light
Integrity		Emotions	Consequence or outcome.
Perception		Future	
Safety		Individual	
Uncertainty		Leadership	
Anxiety		Memory	
Awareness		Organisation	
Connect		Others	
Containment		Robben Island	
		Time	
		Free Association	

After concluding the data collection and analysing the data at a semantic level of data analysis, I had 35 domain summaries over the whole data set which included the FANI and focus group transcripts and the IQA data. Figure 3.6 indicates a preliminary thematic map of the data at a semantic level of data analysis. How these domain summaries evolved into themes is presented in the next chapter in several tables. I show how I investigated the hierarchical relationships between the codes and domain summaries (Braun & Clarke, 2019) while exploring how different codes may combine to form overarching themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Figure 3.6

Preliminary Thematic Map of the Whole Data Set
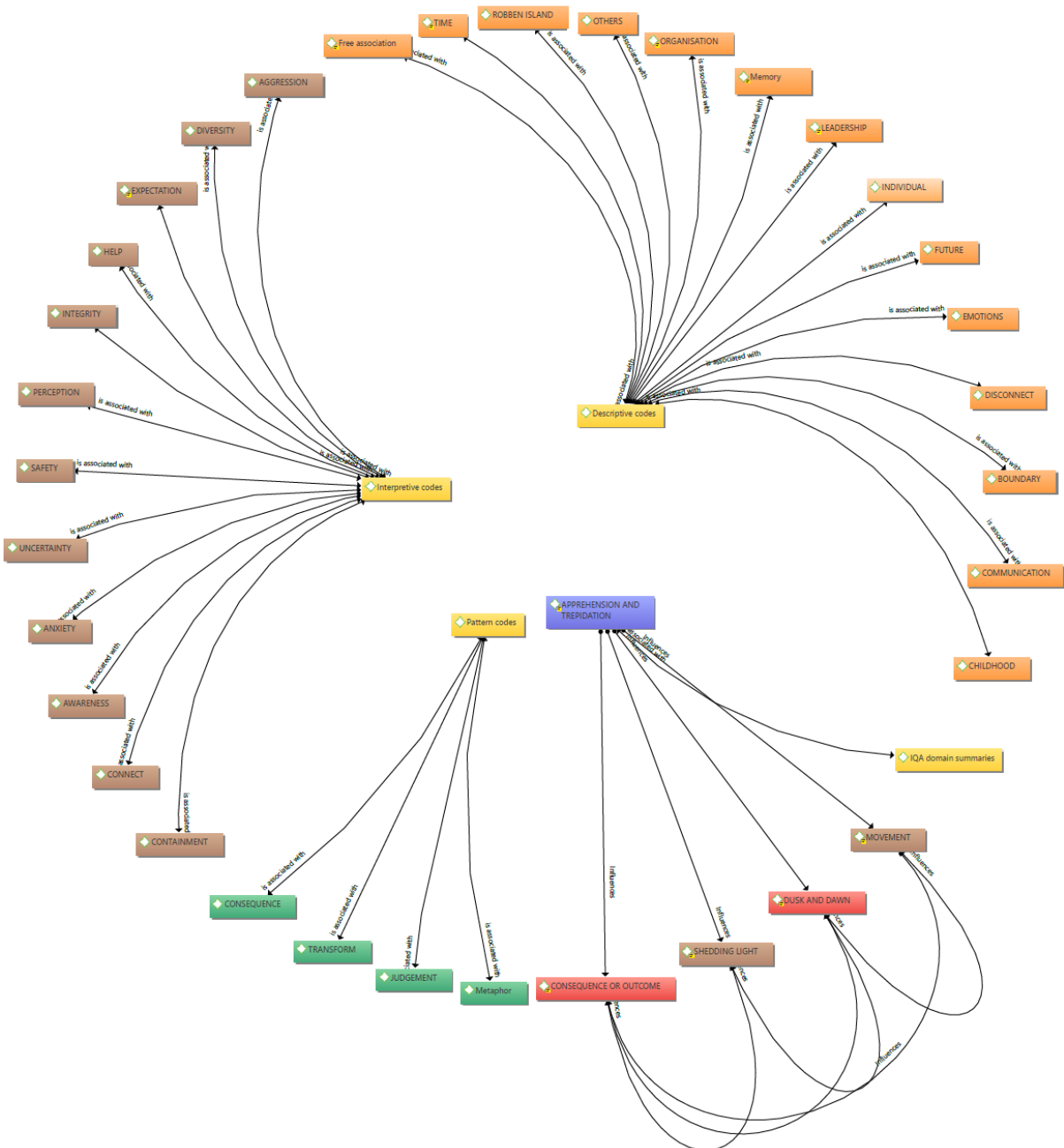
Note. Own work.

3.7   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter described my scientific approach to the research within an interpretive framework grounded in the meta-theoretical post-positivistic paradigm of critical realism. The research setting, a group relations conference the RIDE was described. Explicating my role as the researcher, and the scientific rigour of my sampling strategy,

the multimethod data collection strategy was described. That included face-to-face interviews and a focus group to try to gather as much data about the lived experiences of the participants to use the knowledge reflectively in my thematic data analysis process. Finally, I presented the analytic work at a semantic level of data analysis concluding with a preliminary thematic map of both sets of data.

In the chapter to follow (Chapter 4) I present the analytic work at the intersection of data analytic process and subjectivity on a latent level of data analysis.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTING THE ANALYTIC WORK AT THE INTERSECTION OF DATA, ANALYTIC PROCESS AND SUBJECTIVITY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Here I go beyond the semantic content of the data, to examining underlying ideas, assumptions, conceptualisations, and ideologies, shaping, and forming the semantic content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I describe the latent level of data analysis performed. By actively engaging with the data within a definite set of parameters (Braun & Clarke, 2016) themes were generated at the intersection of data, analytical processes, and subjectivity. Themes are defined by Braun and Clarke as "patterns of shared meaning underpinned by a central organising concept" (Braun & Clarke, 2016, p.589). Themes are differentiated from domain summaries, as described in chapter 3, in that the themes which were generated from data extracts related to core shared meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2016). As such the final themes in this research captured ideas, expressions or guiding principles explaining large portions of data. The themes thereby capture the essence of meaning (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000) of the participants' experiences of the RIDE.

Developing themes in this manner involved interpretive work, not just descriptive analysis, but theorised to gain meaning about the whole data set, not only its parts. I tussled with the data to develop an analysis that best fit the aims of this research, where coding and theme development processes were organic and exploratory, involving active, creative, and reflexive researcher engagement, as Braun and Clarke (2016) describe the thematic analysis procedure. The goal was to say something about the research issue, not just to summarise the data, but also to interpret it and making sense of it (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

4.2   GENERATING PRELIMINARY THEMES

Chapter 3 concluded with the domain summaries across the whole data set, which included the affinities of the IQA as domain summaries (Table 3.11). The preliminary thematic map as seen in Figure 3.6 evolved from Table 3.9 in section 3.6.4.2 and provided some context to the domain summaries as suggested by Braun and Clarke

(2006). Generating themes is the third step in the six-step thematic data analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006). In considering what constitutes a theme Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest a researcher take the following into consideration:

- If this is a theme: What is interesting about it/why?
- Consider the broader overall story the theme fits within.
- What does the theme mean?
- What are the assumptions underpinning a possible theme?
- Underlying ideas, conceptualisations, what are the implications of the theme?
- What conditions gave rise to the theme.
- Why do people speak differently about the theme as opposed to others?

Engaging with the data in this manner I considered the overlaps, extensions, contradictions, finer nuances, and metaphoric language evident in what was shared with me by the participants and what these could mean. This allowed me to identify some initial preliminary themes. In the next sub-sections I describe how I generated preliminary themes from the domain summaries across both data sets.

4.2.1 Generating preliminary themes from domain summaries

I would concur with Braun and Clarke (2019) that generating and developing the preliminary and final themes, as described in the next step of the thematic data analysis, was an organic process. But generating and developing the preliminary and final themes included a structured approach of firstly coding the data and developing the domain summaries, as described previously.

Taking up a reflexive researcher role in thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) I took up authority in that role of knowledge production, being aware of the decisions I made during the analysis. Continually bending back on myself as Braun and Clarke (2019) suggest, I constantly questioned my assumptions in interpreting the data I had coded. I hope to provide a transparent account of the approach I followed in developing the primary themes.

4.2.1.1   Step 3: Collating domain summaries into preliminary themes

Gathering all data relevant to each potential theme, at the sematic level of thematic data analysis, I wondered if what I saw as the participants' preoccupations during the FANI were possible themes. There were a few overlaps in the domain summaries, such as the nutshell and baggage appearing in both sets of data. Royalty was spoken about by two participants and polygamists by only one during the FANI. At a semantic level of data analysis, holding grudges seemed to belong to one participant only during the FANI. There was not enough data to include these as preliminary themes, and they were therefore discarded. At a later stage these were collapsed into other preliminary themes (see Table 4.1.)

The five-day revolution spoken about during the FANI, which mapped onto five domain summaries (Diversity, Boundary, Leadership, Anxiety, Time, Aggression, Others, and Metaphor), was considered as a possible theme as it not only related to the FANI but the focus group and IQA data. Boundaries, race, and time were considered as a possible theme, but these concepts were too diffuse. They were found across the whole data set as a common experience, not a particular theme. They felt to me like a shared topic, not a shared meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Two concepts the participants spoke of during the FANI, and the focus group were notable. Mr Drie spoke about the day after the revolution during the FANI, and a discussion ensued in the focus group about antidotes and scapegoats. I considered exploring these interesting features in the data as two possible preliminary themes.

The data analysis concluded with six preliminary themes across both the FANI and IQA data set, at that stage. Various codes and domain summaries alluded to these preliminary themes, while there were several overlaps and extensions into other pre-liminary themes, as seen in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Preliminary Themes from Both the FANI and IQA Data Sets

Name of preliminary theme	Data set	Collapsed from:
1. A five-day revolution	Preliminary theme from FANI, focus group and IQA.	**FANI –** *Of Royalty singers and Polygamists* and a **nutshell** were collapsed into this theme – not enough data for it to be a stand-alone theme. **FANI –** *Boundaries of Time and Race* overlapped and extended across all the themes
2. Apprehension and Trepidation	Preliminary theme from IQA	Identified as a primary driver in the IQA of the RIDE. Overlapped due to significance as codes and categories over the entire data set.
3. Antidotes and scapegoats	Preliminary theme from IQA	**FANI** – Holding **grudges**, which developed into this theme There were several overlaps between the preliminary themes.
4. Delirium of Movement and Shedding light	Preliminary theme from FANI and IQA	**FANI** – Baggage *in our bags* was collapsed into this theme, as there was not enough data to support it as a stand-alone theme **IQA** – Movement, Shedding Light, from the IQA data.
5. The day after the revolution	Preliminary theme from FANI and IQA	
6. The vampire	Preliminary theme from FANI and IQA	**IQA** – vampire, food, eating and drinking. **FANI** – cats and pigeons, food, eating and drinking

Next, I describe how the preliminary themes were generated. As indicated, the preliminary theme I named the five-day revolution seemed quite significant. The data of the IQA seemed to add to this concept as a possible theme at a latent level of data analysis. Then I considered whether the affinities as domain summaries could be preliminary themes.

4.2.1.2   The affinities as preliminary themes

During the semantic level of data analysis (in section 3.6.4), I had identified the affinities of the focus group as domain summaries, as these did not meet the requirements of a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Creswell, 2013; DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000; Northcutt & McCoy, 2004) or provide meaning across the whole data set at that time. In this section I test that hypothesis by applying Braun and Clarke's (2019) suggestions of what constitutes a theme.

The four elements of affinities are detail, contrast, comparison, and richness (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). Participants are required to write a descriptive paragraph of each affinity so the meaning may be clear to each before they identify relationships among these. In this research, I forgot to ask participants to do so. However, I checked with them verbally whether they understood the meaning of each affinity before the relationships were considered. The participants agreed verbally that they understood what the affinities meant. The disadvantage of not having a written definition of the affinity was that I could not know whether the participants of the focus group all held the same understanding of the affinities. This could have affected the generation of the individual ART.

Evidence of the affinity's meanings were however found in the transcript of the focus group. The focus group defined the affinities as follows:

- Apprehension and Trepidation: Anticipation, not knowing what to expect, yet not fearful, rather attending with trepidation.
- Dusk and Dawn: It has two sides, you always find both, sometimes dark and sometime light, it's not either or.
- Movement: Can go either way, anyway, anywhere, and sideways. Not like a pipe where you start in one place, and you're forced through to another place. Sometimes it is what happens in the move, you've got loss and gain but sometimes it is just the move itself, which is a paradigm shift and a transformation. A process which is not funny or at times surprising.
- Shedding light: The light can go on, but you do not need to move.

- Consequence or outcome: The participant is partly or wholly responsible for what is happening, while outcome is just a mechanism.

I decided to keep the affinity/domain summary of Apprehension and Trepidation as a preliminary theme, because the focus group participants had indicated that this was a primary driver in the RIDE system.

The affinities of Movement and Shedding Light were also considered a preliminary theme as these two domain summaries were identified in two feedback loops (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004) in the IQA data, which seemed significant at the time. The focus group identified feedback loops in the system through a process of linking each possible pair of affinities. Theoretical coding identified perceived relationships among the different affinities (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

4.2.1.3 The feedback loops as preliminary themes

The SID of the RIDE was described in section 3.6.3 and visually represented in Figure 3.3. It is the norm of the IQA to remove redundant links to improve interpretation from the SID (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). After removing the redundant links, the RIDE system was interpreted as follows:

Figure 4.1

The Uncluttered SID
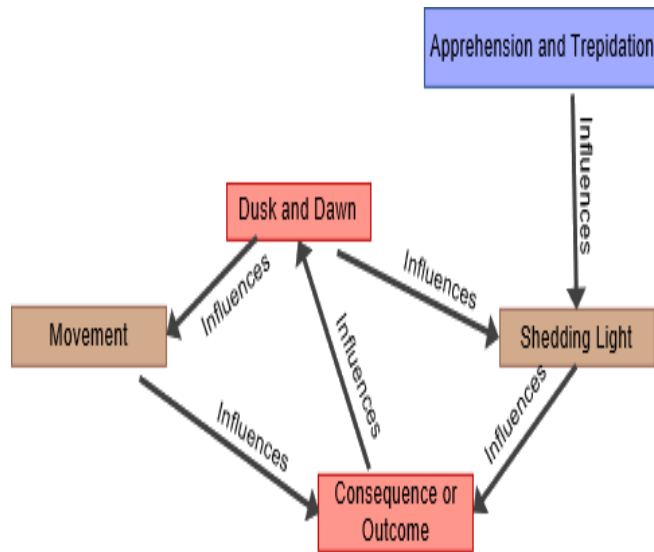
Note. Participants can move through the system in a continuous motion, as if in a figure eight.

Figure 4.2

The Shedding Light Feedback Loop
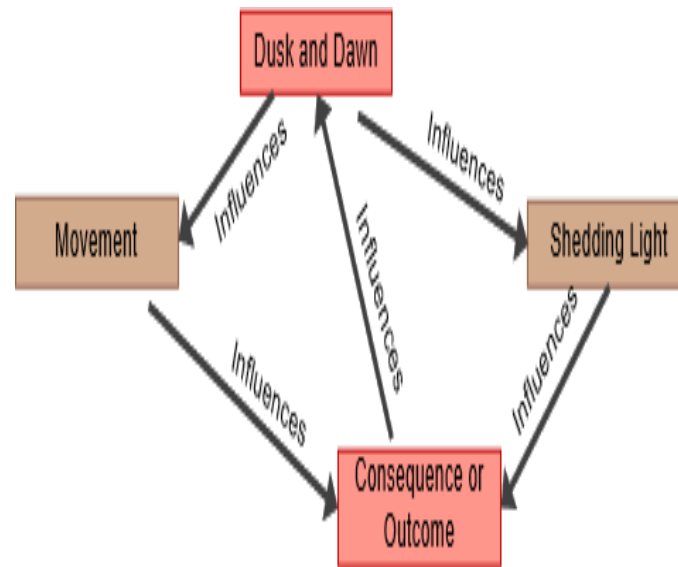
Note. Participants can move in a circular motion between Consequence or Outcome, Dusk and Dawn and Movement.

Figure 4.3

The Movement Feedback Loop
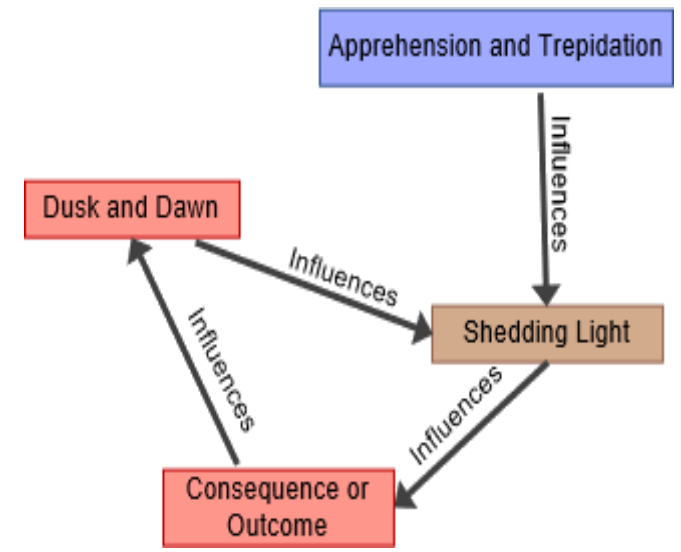
Note. Participants can move in a circular motion between Shedding Light, Consequence or Outcome and Dusk and Dawn.

- When tracing the directional arrows of influence as identified by the focus group participants, the uncluttered SID (Figure 4.1) suggests that participants may move continuously through the system from Apprehension and Trepidation in a figure eight formation, between the affinities of Shedding light, Consequences or Outcome, Dusk and Dawn and Movement.

- Participants may also move from Shedding light to Consequence or Outcome, Dusk and Dawn and Movement and maintain a circular motion between Consequence or Outcome, Dusk and Dawn and Movement without necessarily returning to Shedding light. That motion through the RIDE system I named the Shedding light feedback loop (see Figure 4.2).

- In addition, participants may move through the RIDE system from Apprehension and Trepidation to Shedding Light, Consequence or Outcome and Dusk and Dawn. That motion I named the Movement Feedback loop (Figure 4.3).

The interpretation is based on the focus group participants' identifying direct and indirect influences and outcomes between the affinities. Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 provide a glimpse into that complex system: a system driven by Apprehension and Trepidation around a central point of Dusk and Dawn containing a significant outcome of Consequences or Outcomes. In addition, the split between secondary outcomes of Movement and Shedding light are evident, alluding to an indirect influence on these two outcomes, as described in Chapter 3. The depiction of the RIDE System in this manner provides evidence for Dusk and Dawn as the undetected common influence between Movement and Shedding Light. This provides an explanation for the anomaly in the system (discussed in section 3.6.3.2): a complex system of relatedness and interrelatedness (Shongwe, 2014; Stapley, 2006) in which I could explore and attempt to understand the relatedness between the themes and psychic reality present in the RIDE system (Papadopoulos, 2018).

An interesting feature in the data was the pattern of a figure eight, which can be traced in the uncluttered SID (Figure 4.1). The figure eight represents infinity in mathematics (∞). This is interesting, as the figure eight could be drawn ad infinitum in the uncluttered SID. Applying Bion's (1961/2004) binocular vision to this feature, I found, that the Lemniscate and its symbol (∞) is used in mathematics to describe an action of "a closed plane curve consisting of two symmetrical loops meeting at a node"

(Dictionary.com, 2021b; Ferreol, 2017). This description fits the feedback loops when tracing the arrows, ad infinitum, creating two loops meeting at a central node. Significant for this research was that tracing the figure eight of the feedback loops, two nodes and a central point seem to meet somewhere within and between the affinities of Consequence or Outcome and Dusk and Dawn (see Figure 4.1).

The motion of movement this implied made me wonder what the preliminary theme of the Five-day Revolution was about. On a semantic level of data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the FANI data seemed to suggest a revolution in sociological terms, which is "a radical and pervasive change in society and the social structure, especially one made suddenly and accompanied by violence" (Dictionary.com, 2021c). Categories of aggression across both data sets provided that evidence. The FANI data also suggests a delirium, which is "to swerve from a furrow, hence be crazy, a state of excitement and mental confusion, violent excitement or emotion" (Dictionary.com, 2021a). Considering both these concepts as verbs, on a latent level of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) there seemed to be more to the sociological description of a revolution at the RIDE than at first indicated. The revolution also pointed to the action (verb) of movement through the system which the Lemniscate (∞) symbolised. From these findings I generated a preliminary theme of "a Delirium of Movement and Shedding Light", which included the domain summaries of Movement and Shedding Light of the IQA of the RIDE. I retained the preliminary theme of "A Five-day Revolution", as it seemed there was more to the revolution, which could be described sociologically, or as an action of movement.

The domain summaries of Consequence or Outcome and Dusk and Dawn were discarded as preliminary themes at that stage of the data analysis, as I could not see how they added to meaning across both data sets. In my search for meaning other than what the focus group ascribed to the domain summaries I turned to the data the participants had generated during the focus group, and to how they had generated the data, triangulating towards rigour, in my search for meaning making while generating preliminary themes.

4.2.1.4 Generating preliminary themes, a focus group perspective

During the focus group, the participants pasted their data according to IQA protocols in five clusters across the wall from left to right, as seen in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4

The RIDE Affinities

Note. The circled cards were the cards participants used to "intersect" the different clusters. The line indicates a split between the fourth and fifth clusters of cards. No intersecting cards were included between these two clusters.

Firstly, the topological zones of the SID (see Figure 3.3) seemed to fit with the colours of the heading cards the focus group participants chose to name the clusters, long before the relationships between the affinities had been identified. According to the uncluttered SID (Figure 4.1), Apprehension and Trepidation (blue card) was a primary driver in the RIDE system, the first topological zone of the SID. The two secondary outcomes are both written on brown heading cards. The pivot (Dusk and Dawn), which is a unique feature in the SID, is on a red heading card. Consequences and outcome (red heading card) in the fourth and last topological zone of the SID were a unique feature. As a significant outcome of the RIDE, it was differentiated from the two outcomes both on brown heading cards seen in Figure 4.4 and the uncluttered SID (Figure 4.1). These overlaps of topological zones in Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.4 may or may not have been a coincidence. These are worth noting in that a group meaning making of the RIDE seemed to happen before the individual ART and my development of the IRD and SID were complete.

Secondly, moving from left to right (Figure 4.4) in the same manner as the participants had clustered the cards, the first three clusters seemed to be connected to each other, with two cards between the first two clusters and two cards between the second and third cluster. The first three clusters seem disconnected from the last two clusters, which seemed to be connected to each other with one card. While this is not strictly according to IQA protocol, it is not disallowed (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). In the context of this research, I allowed for these "overlaps" at that time, as it seemed important to the focus group participants to have these.

Lastly, there were no overlapping cards between the third (Movement) and fourth (Shedding light) affinities seen in Figure 4.4. Returning to the anomalies in the system as described in section 3.6.3.2, a split between the Movement and Shedding Light affinities is clearly seen in the cluttered SID (Figure 3.3) the uncluttered SID (Figure 4.1) and the two feedback loops (Figures 4.2 and 4.3), which each contain one of these affinities. On the one hand the Shedding Light feedback loop (see Figure 4.2) contains Movement while being influenced by Shedding Light. On the other hand, the Movement feedback loop (Figure 4.3) contains Shedding light and not Movement.

While the SID and the feedback loops produced interesting features in the data, in the relationships between affinities, congruence between the clusters on the wall and the SID, and the two feedback loops, they were essentially units of analysis (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000). They did not provide meaning across the whole data set. While I was tempted to use the affinities as themes at that stage, the affinities did not satisfy the five aspects of a theme, namely: themes have form; function to unite, are the underlying factor or meaning of an experience, are woven throughout the data, and exist apart from their individual properties (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000). The IQA affinities, SID and feedback loops alone did not satisfy these five aspects of a theme and were discarded as preliminary themes at that stage.

Through repeated reading in a hermeneutic spiral (Creswell, 2013; Vagle, 2014) and reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019), I looked for patterns of data that would capture something significant about the research. I examined and analysed the codes and domain summaries for the finer nuances of what was spoken about and how it was spoken. I explored whether the data collected from both the FANI, focus group and IQA methods, formed a coherent pattern across the whole data set, and considered its internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity. I attempted to find clear identifiable distinctions between these (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and/or whether parts of the data would hold as preliminary themes.

Turning to the domain summary of the metaphor, the two metaphors of cats and pigeons as discussed in the FANI, and the vampire discussed during the focus group, made me consider what those could have meant. I then considered exploring those as a preliminary theme.

4.2.1.5   The metaphors as preliminary themes

A domain summary named Metaphors, as described by the participants, was found in both the FANI, and focus group data (see Table 3.9 and section 3.6.4.2). Paying attention to the metaphoric language, I could observe the unconscious processes of participants indirectly in their covert behaviour, jokes, and slips of the tongue, as they described their experiences of the RIDE during both the FANI and focus group (Whitehouse-Hart, 2012). The metaphors were important, as Kiel (2017) suggests that internal metaphoric phantasies could be a harbinger of things to come. Northcutt

and McCoy (2004) mention the importance of a facilitator of the IQA remaining sensitive to the metaphoric language of the participants, as by its very nature these are interpretive.

I found the statement of the authors helpful, as during the IQA of the RIDE I felt the participants of the focus group acted out their phantasies as they explored their experiences of the RIDE evident in the dynamics of the focus group. In one such incident, during the focus group, Mr Drie did not sit down once, but rather moved between the desk and window where he puffed on a smoking device throughout. He did not once refer to the device or ask the group if they minded (also the focus group did not address his behaviour), which seemed not only to be a harbinger of the anxiety of the focus group as he paced as the focus group explored their experiences of the RIDE, but also a representation of the phantasy of the risks of attending the RIDE. Risk being an important concept to this research which will be explored in subsequent sections.

For purposes of understanding the meaning of the metaphors in this section the concept of risk in the metaphors not only belonged in the IQA data. Ms Ses alluded to the risks of attending the RIDE during the FANI, saying the RIDE should come with a health warning, like a packet of cigarettes. Mr Drie's device seemed to represent that dynamic. Also, as will become apparent, the findings suggest that Mr Drie might have had the valence to carry fear and risk safely during the focus group and during the RIDE. A dynamic which seemed to present itself through Mr Drie's smoking. However, Mr Drie was not smoking cigarettes but a device which is presumably "safer" than cigarettes. In this way the phantasy that the RIDE held risks to the participants health filled with anxiety was evident in the metaphoric symbol of the smoking device and Mr Drie's apparent inability to sit down during the focus group. Actions during the focus group conformed to Kiel's (2017) statement that metaphors are often harbingers of things to come in group scenarios. Perhaps harbingers of things that occurred during the RIDE also.

During the FANI the metaphor of throwing cats amongst pigeons was used. Cats as a metaphor are beast of good or evil omen, depending on the culture in which they are symbolised (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969/1996). Many traditions hold black cat as

symbols of darkness and death. In central African traditions medicine bags are made from wild cat skin. Among North American Indians the wild cat is a symbol of cunning. In Victorian times the pigeon was considered a sucker and in poetic terms the symbol of love. In Algeria the pigeon is a bird of ill omen, whose cooing is the groans of souls in torment (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969/1996). The significance of this metaphor will become apparent in subsequent sections.

During the focus group the vampire as a metaphor emerged. This metaphor became a pre-conceptual theme in the reading of the data. Vampires as a metaphor (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969/1996; Pavarti, 2012; Starrs, 2004) are found in many cultures and depicted in many films, books, and plays. Pavarti (2012) describes a vampire hiding in the shadows, embodying both "redemption and damnation" all wrapped up in a sexy leather overcoat. Vampires are also described as **shapeshifting,** and as sexy broken figures. They are also **dangerous**: they drain their victims' **blood** with sharp fangs, **killing** them and at times turning them into vampires. They suffer extreme sun **sensitivity**, cannot see their own image in a **mirro**r, cast no shadows and have a **hypnotic** sensual effect on their victims (History.com).

These metaphors appeared to overlap in terms of violence and victimisation at first glance. The metaphors seemed to extend on the participants experiences in both data sets in their description of the psychic reality of beasts present at the RIDE. Both data sets held metaphors linked to food and eating, among others. In approaching this dynamic within the data, I found Bion's suggested methods helpful (Pistiner de Cortinas, 2003). One of those methods is to use a reversible perspective, a healthy idea of shifting perspectives to achieve binocular vision. Bion described this method as using both eyes by correlating between imaginative conjectures and "wild thoughts" and common sense (Pistiner de Cortinas, 2003). That meant that I had to correlate between imaginative conjectures and common sense (Pistiner de Cortinas, 2003) in understanding what these metaphors meant in the data.

My concern was that I might presume to know, when in fact I did not know. I then turned my attention to polysemy, which concerns single words in a particular language having multiple sense generated over time (Xu et al., 2017). Using single words which have multiple sense enables us to communicate a potentially infinite set of ideas by

compressing emerging meanings into words. In the English language single words and their multiple senses have been mapped across history (Mapping Metaphor, 2015). The metaphorical mapping charts an existing sense of a word to another target domain. For example, the metaphor of food and eating has a strong metaphor connection with some categories of emotion in English language, such as strong emotion and lack of emotion, fear, pride, love and friendship, anger, emotional suffering, pleasure, and excitement (see Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5

The Mapping Metaphor: Food and Eating
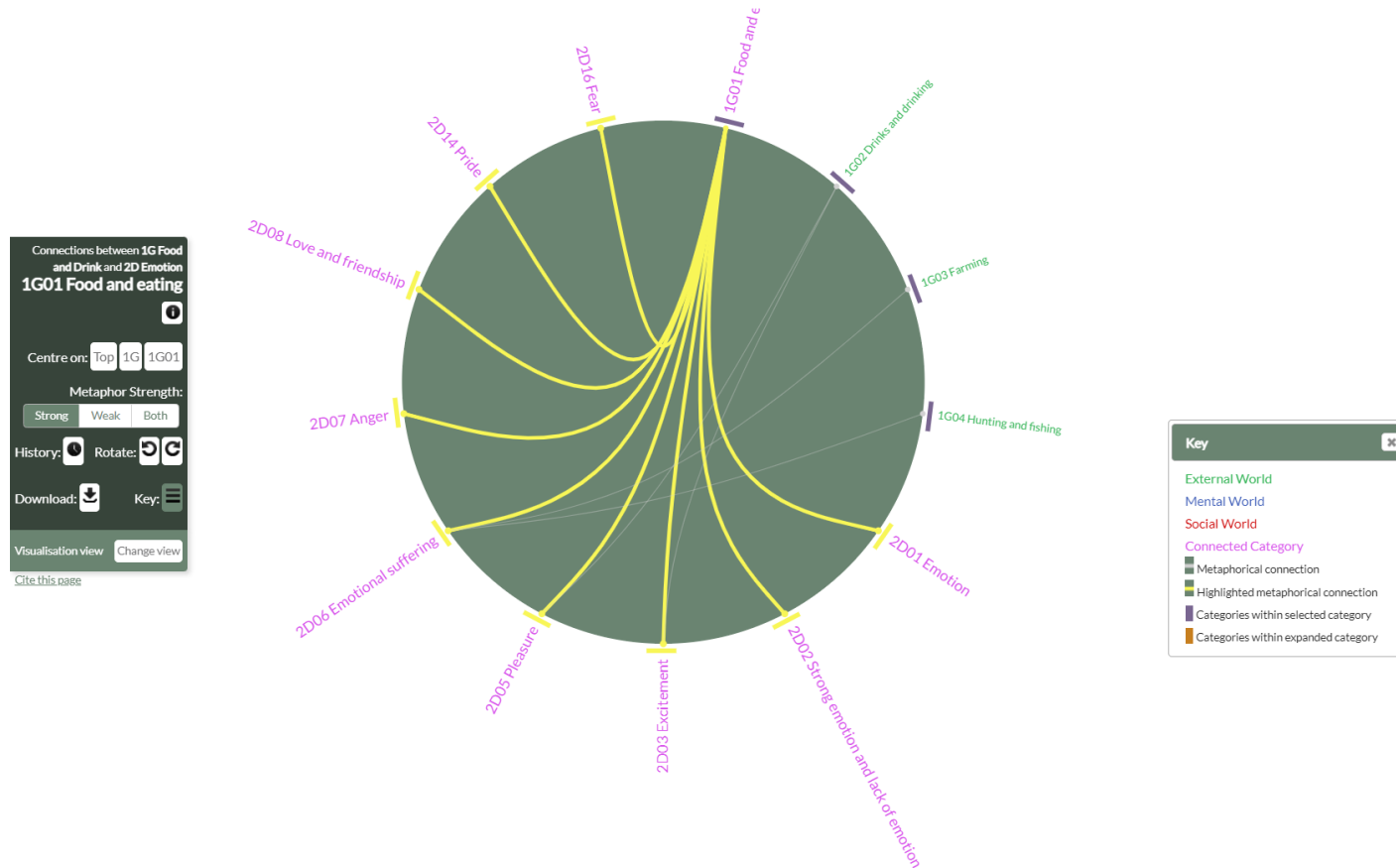
Note. Visualisation: Connections between '1G' and '2D', Category '1G01 Food and eating' selected, strength: strong. 2022. In Mapping Metaphor with the Historical Thesaurus. Glasgow: University of Glasgow. Retrieved 26 January 2022, from

https://mappingmetaphor.arts.gla.ac.uk//map-

english/drilldown/?letter1=1G&letter2=2D&changeBoxSelected=1G01_Food_and_eating&viewChange=y&strength=strong&changeViewOpt=changeVis

The metaphors of the vampire, cats and pigeons seem to link with the emotional expressions of food eating and drinking. The metaphor of the vampire (Mapping Metaphor, 2015) maps onto the categories of emotional suffering and love and friendship in the emotion category. It also refers to bad, taking and thieving, disadvantage and harm, behaviour and conduct and performance arts and film. Similarly, the metaphor of cats (Mapping Metaphor, 2015) mapped onto ill health and emotion such as contagion, biting, badness and choking. Pigeons mapped onto leisure, games, fear, love and friendship, truth, and falsity.

The shared concept of the psychic reality of the beasts at the RIDE and shared emotions these represented across these metaphors led me to include the vampire as a preliminary theme by collapsing the cats and pigeons and the food, eating, and drinking metaphors under this theme. The humanoid form of the vampire as a transmogrified being seemed appropriate as a name for a preliminary theme because there was evidence of the psychic reality of beasts present during the RIDE across the whole data set.

Concluding step three of the six-step thematic data analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006), the questions to be asked were: whether these preliminary themes made sense, was there too much in them, were these the only themes, and/or were the preliminary themes possibly sub-themes? (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). This takes us to the fourth step of the thematic data analysis: reviewing preliminary themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.3   REVIEWING PRELIMINARY THEMES, GENERATING THEMES

In this section I describe how I combined, refined, separated and/or discarded some of the preliminary themes generated during the previous step of thematic data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I considered whether these themes were an accurate representation of my theoretical and analytical approach to this research, a process which entailed analysing underlying ideas, assumptions, conceptualisations, and ideologies, shaping, and forming the six preliminary themes at this stage of the data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

What I found useful at that time was to move to a whiteboard, as in Figure 4.6, where I worked reflexively and accurately, to reflect the meanings evident in the whole data set, as those existed in my mind at the time (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Figure 4.6

A Review of the Preliminary Themes
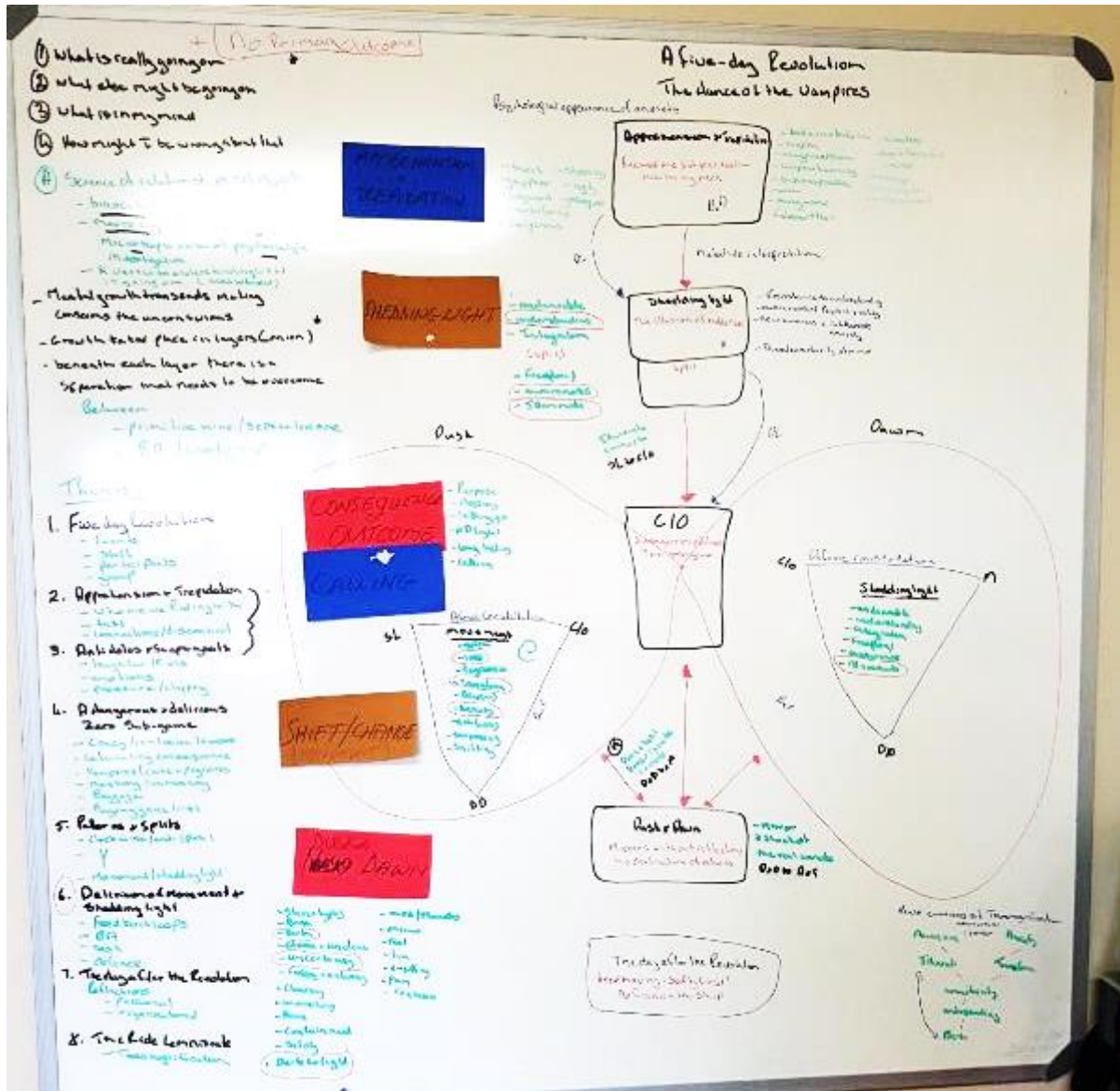
This process extended over several weeks as I proceeded with the review of the preliminary themes, reflecting on the FANI, focus group and IQA data in a hermeneutic data analysis spiral (Vagle, 2014). I plotted the course, so to speak, with new data as

these developed, of which Figure 4.6 is a snapshot at a point in time (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

In line with my theoretical perspective, I firstly drew the SID of the RIDE system on the right-hand side of the whiteboard. The SID is somewhat different to the uncluttered SID in Figure 4.1. The topology of a system, which refers to the patterns of links among similar elements in the system, can be transformed if the patterns of links are not changed or broken, thereby changing the essential topological character, injuring, or degrading the essential nature of the system (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). As I reviewed the preliminary themes visiting and revisiting the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006) a gradual transformation of the SID occurred while its essential nature was maintained (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

The heading cards used by the focus group participants to name the affinities were positioned on the left, opposite each affinity in the SID. I added the "Calling" card to those as the focus group participants confused the naming of the last affinity (Consequence or outcome) with Calling during the naming of the last cluster of cards (which will be elaborated on in Chapter 6). I added the preliminary themes I was thinking about on the left of the whiteboard and theoretical perspectives that aided my thinking about the data. All the while I engaged in a hermeneutic data analysis spiral (Vagle, 2014). This process revealed several preliminary themes I had not included in Table 4.1.

4.3.1 Step 4: A hermeneutic data analysis spiral

How the preliminary themes evolved into the final themes is described in this section, and how I considered overlaps and extensions among them. Firstly, I retained the preliminary theme of the Five-day revolution as a theme.

4.3.1.1   The Five-day revolution

As indicated in step 3, the Five-day revolution appeared to be about both a social revolution and a revolution of movement through the RIDE system. It also appeared to capture the essence of the RIDE itself. The Five-day revolution appeared to provide meaning for the domain summaries of Boundary, Race, and Diversity which included race as a code. In reviewing the Five-day revolution, I decided to include these domain

summaries in this theme as they provided meaning for the common topic across the whole data set. In addition, the Five-day revolution indicated the "what" of the participants' experiences according to phenomenological research.

Considering the Five-day revolution as a movement through the RIDE system I collapsed some preliminary themes, as seen in Table 4.1, into a theme I named a Dangerous and Delirious zero-sub game. The zero-sub game a name Mr Een alluded to during the FANI to describe his experience of the RIDE.

4.3.1.2   A Dangerous and Delirious zero-sub game
The FANI data alluded to two kinds of games at the RIDE: a dangerous and delirious game according to Ms Ses and a zero-sub game according to Mr Een. One is a delirious and dangerous game where participants may have found themselves in "a state of excitement and mental confusion, violent excitement or emotion" (Dictionary.com, 2021a) and the other is a zero-sum game (the correct word in the English language) described by economists as "a situation where losses or gains by individuals are exactly balanced to the losses and gains of other participants" (Levin, 2002). Mr Een's description of the game as a "sub-game" was retained in this research context as it related to the meaning he ascribed to his experience, not the definition in the English language. It became evident during the findings that an experience did not always coincide with the definition in the English language although it did hold similar elements.

In a zero-sum game according to Levin (2002) participants bargain with each other in different ways towards a sense of equilibrium, often counting on belief systems when deciding to reject or accept counteroffers depending on how much "cake" was available, as Mr Een said. This kind of interaction Levin (2002) says may be the simplest way to capture the idea of interaction between parties: that actions today will have consequences tomorrow. Collusion among parties could bring about a desired outcome. This does not necessarily result in cooperation as Levin (2002) cautions, but cooperation is a possible outcome. The assumption that actions today will have consequences tomorrow was evident in the SID when the focus group participants indicated that Consequences or Outcome was a significant secondary outcome of the

RIDE. The domain summary of Consequences or Outcome from the IQA data were then included in this theme as a sub-theme.

The Consequences or Outcomes (IQA) and the actions of eating the cake (FANI) seemed to be a result of the games played at the RIDE, as suggested in both sets of data. This led to the theme a Dangerous and Delirious zero-sub game, which included how the participants moved through the system in a delirium of Movement and Shedding light, a preliminary theme I collapsed into this theme as two sub-themes. The hermeneutic data analysis spiral (Vagle, 2014) led me to include the domain summary of Apprehension and Trepidation that I first identified as a preliminary theme into this theme as a sub-theme. Apprehension and Trepidation (a primary driver in the RIDE system) did not satisfy the five aspects of a theme according to DeSantis and Ugarriza (2000), even though several domain summaries across both data sets were found to be linked to the concept.

4.3.1.3 *Of mirrors without reflections in a distraction of echoes*

As I continued my analysis of the data through intuitive, interpretive work at a latent level of thematic data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), my theoretical approach led me to Bion's suggestion of applying different vertices (points of references) to the data when investigating the psychic reality of participants' emotional experiences (Bion, 1962). As I progressed with the thematic data analysis on a semantic and latent level, I viewed the data from a microscopic vertex of psychoanalytical investigation. For example: on a microscopic vertex of psychoanalytic investigation, I asked myself what the meaning of the stirring of a cup of tea during the IQA of the RIDE was. Was it related to the participant's valence for containment she had shared with me during the FANI? On a macroscopic vertex of group observation, what was the stirring of the cup of tea doing for the group as-a-whole (Pistiner de Cortinas, 2003)? I analysed the data reflexively on a semantic and latent level of analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2019) and considering Bion's (1992) different vertices of investigation. Table 4.2 provides a thematic map of that analysis.

Table 4.2

Of Mirrors Without Reflections in a Distraction of Echoes

Semantic level of data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)	Latent level of data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
o **AWARENESS**: mirror; **TRANSFORM**: death, birth; **INDIVIDUA**L; **AGGRESSION**; **APPREHENSION AND TREPIDATION**: mirror; **DUSK AND DAWN**: birth, mirror, Thanatos	o **Wish to understand**, remain in the status quo of usual way to transform does not cost.
o **Aggression:** a concern for me that we that this method maybe so **unleashes the beast**. I know I would also be **skinned alive**, in certain circles if I say that but that's my stuff.	o **Mirrors:** Vampires cannot see themselves in mirrors, mirrors are held up. What is it about the mirror which is so terrible to see (I am a vampire to, there will be no reflection, I am the same)? Impossible to see does not exist.
o **Communication: people want to talk**	o Narcissus loves his reflection, only sees his reflection, what if the reflection is so bad it cannot be seen? *(The opposite of a reflection is the original)*
o **Disconnect:** So, I sat the entire hour and a half or whatever it was without saying one word. And people were screaming at me, shouting at me…afterwards in the debrief session I said you were **so busy fighting you didn't see I did not speak**	
o **Diversity:** So when you look at diversity **When you look at people.**	o **Judgement: Preoccupation with others** in relation to self. *There is something about the physical body and leaving (envy of the escape?).*
o **Emotions:** I think in many ways it was quite an emotional draining exercise Individual And forget it and **it's her problem, not my problem**.	o **Diversity** used as a lens to see. **Being exposed by the mirror**. **The mirror is the weapon**. If I look at you, I do not need to look at me, not see my reflection.
o **Judgement:** I want to almost say have an inability to see past the stereotype. And so, **I really don't fit the stereotype in, I almost want to say a any form or fashion** there was no intellectual stimulation	o **Envy** for those who do not stay. Echo was the lover of Narcissus.
o **Others:** She can deal with whatever … but it was frustrating **I was watching other things that other people**	o **Connection and disconnection**: Want to speak do not hear, speak, shout

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- Safety: **I can be very cautious**, but I didn't really go to say you know what I need to feel the guilt, or I need to feel the justification. I didn't go there I stayed quite neutral to say, you know what just respect both sides' opinions and feelings, and it's also their stuff.

- **Perception: Because people don't understand why. Why shouldn't I talk too, why don't we introduce each other when we come? Why don't you tell me your name, why don't, you know?**

- **Anxiety:** I found it…and I kept wishing that it would go quicker… **No, it was terrible hey … it was not nice**, I first have the **impression of real danger**, that which also says to me this is what comes in from outside

- **Dusk and Dawn**: It has two sides, you always find both, **sometimes dark** and **sometime light**, it's not either or.

(The opposite/lover of Narcissus *is Echo. Echo reflects a sound wave off a hard surface).* What is the **silence** doing, taking in or not? Do not hear I do not speak. It's about taking the projections introjecting them (transmogrifying these) connecting and projecting out without defence (is this possible?) The introjection will change you how?

- **Birth**, Clean and unclean, Clearing, Container, Dark to Light, Dawn, **Eros and Thanos**, Fun, Fussy and unfussy, Mirror, Real, **Safety**, **Stereotyp**es, Uncertainty, **Unmasking**, Pain.

As the data analysis progressed this theme was collapsed into the theme "A new Dawn", one of those with vampires describing the psychic reality of the participants and why they experienced the RIDE as they had. The theme included the Dusk and Dawn domain summary of the IQA and the preliminary theme of the vampire, which extended evidence of the psychic reality of participants experiences of the RIDE across both data sets.

4.3.1.4 *Keep Moving: Safety first! No fires on the ship*

To satisfy the aims of this research as discussed in section 3.6.4.1, I asked specific questions of the participants during the FANI. Among those questions, I asked what learning was transferred to the organisation after the RIDE. As the data were analysed the metaphor of a ship became evident as participants spoke about crew, rudders, and undercurrents, among other things. The preliminary theme of "the day after the revolution" was collapsed into this theme as there was not sufficient data for it to continue as a stand-alone theme.

The underlying assumption of this theme was that some participants were able to take the learning they experience at the RIDE back to the organisation, while others found it difficult. What sets this theme apart from the others is that it focuses on events outside the RIDE.

In conclusion of the fourth step of the thematic data analysis, four themes were identified:

(1)   The five-day revolution.

(2)   A Dangerous and Delirious Zero-sub game.

(3)   A New Dawn one of those with vampires; and

(4)   Keep Moving, Safety first, no fires on the ship.

Step five of the thematic data analysis was to define and name the themes.

4.4   STEP 5: REFINING THEMES DESCRIBING THE ESSENCE

Braun and Clarke (2006) state that this step begins when a researcher has a satisfactory thematic map of their data, which I presented in several tables and figures in Chapter 3, Chapter 4, and appendix E (audit trail). Bringing it all together and further defining and refining these themes as Braun and Clarke (2006) and Maguire and Delahunt (2017) suggest, I asked myself:

- What is the theme saying?
- If there are subthemes, how do they interact and relate to the main theme?
- How do the themes relate to each other?

My final thematic map is seen in Table 4.3. The findings tell the tale of a **Five-day Revolution of the dance of the vampires: pardon me but your teeth are in my neck**, in which the participants experienced a shapeshifting, coinciding dichotomy, of transmogrification in four overarching themes.

Table 4.3

Final Thematic Map of the Six-Step Thematic Data Analysis

The Five-day Revolution, a tale of the dance of the vampires – pardon me, but your teeth are in my neck				
General aim: to explore how members of group relations conferences transmogrify and what this means for the individual and the organisation.				
Overall story	A shape shifting, coinciding dichotomy, of transmogrification			
Theme and specific aims	**The story of the theme**	**How it fits with the overall story in relation to the research aims**	**Sub-themes**	**Definition**
THE FIVE-DAY REVOLUTION				

Specific aims
 	
• Explore the learning processes of individuals attending group relations conferences.
• Describe members' experiences during and after attending group relations conferences**.**
	Participants came to the RIDE for a "workshop" as if going on "holiday" to experience the "nice sea breeze" and the privilege of being on Robben Island unlike the usual "tourist". What they found was "weird" and "strange". Naming the experience apprehension and trepidation, when it was all about fear and risk.	In the meta-theoretical paradigm of critical realism, applying the lens of Hermeneutic Phenomenology, this theme explores **what** participants experienced at the RIDE.
		
		A depth ontology combining understanding and explanation provides evidence for and, analysis of, participants' experience of the RIDE. Those are:
		• The crossing of boundaries of:
		    • Events
		    • Time
		    • Authority
		    • Task
		    • Identity
		• The psychological appearance of anxiety resulting in mutative
			6.2.1 Entering into the RIDE
			6.2.2 Crossing boundaries
			6.2.3 The Triad: director, consultants, and participants
			6.2.4 Flight from task
			6.2.5 Shattering psychic reality
			6.2.6 Interconnected experiences
				A sociological experience of revolution and a revolution of movement through the RIDE which could be multidirectional.

		interpretations driven by feelings of apprehension and trepidation. • The spaces in-between.		
A DANGEROUS AND DELIRIOUS ZERO-SUB GAME				
Specific aims • Explore the learning processes of individuals attending group relations conferences. • Describe members' experiences during and after attending group relations conferences**.**	A tale of a zero-sub game, where participants know that "the cake is only so much, there is not much to go around, so I must take and in my taking I must prevent you from taking" resulting in a delirium of causatum (effect) as participants bargain for desired and undesired outcomes, and live the consequences and outcomes of those strategies as a group, driven by fear and risk of possible integration and/or loss.	This theme describes the causal mechanisms of the RIDE system: how they worked if they had been activated, and under what conditions. We look beyond the surface meanings of participant's experiences of the RIDE, within the meta-theoretical paradigm of critical realism. From a hermeneutic phenomenological perspective this theme describes **how** participants experienced the RIDE, as a living entity that balanced the demands of the individual and the group, while integrating and defending against transmogrification.	6.3.1 A game, a play, a gag 6.3.2 Fear of Risk and Risk of Fear 6.3.3 Shedding light as an outcome 6.3.4 Escaping illumination 6.3.5 Movement an outcome 6.3.6 An outcome which cannot be named 6.3.7 Containing the contained and uncontained	Transformation is not funny. Full of anxiety it can go either way, anywhere, anyway, and sideways. It has two sides sometimes dark and sometimes light "the light can go on, but you do not need to move". The keys to unlock these experiences are not always the right keys.

A NEW DAWN: ONE OF THOSE WITH VAMPIRES				
Specific aims: • Explore the learning processes of individuals attending group relations conferences. • Describe members' experiences during and after attending group relations conferences.	A dance of vampires, where narcissistic mirrors are the weapon used to expose the vampires in an "inability to see past" the "shocking reality" of no reflection in the mirror as the "beast is unleashed". This is made possible by a deflection of the cacophony of sound and silence, echoing back, "I really don't fit the stereotype in, I almost want to say a, any form or fashion"	From a hermeneutic phenomenological perspective and the theoretical perspective of Systems Psychodynamics this theme describes **why** participants experienced the RIDE as they had. The presence of a psychic reality describes **why** the participants experienced the RIDE and the anxiety that transformation holds.	6.4.1 Crossing the boundary of container, safety, and containment 6.4.2 Unleashing the beast 6.4.3 The feast of the vampires 6.4.4 A pressure cooker of stewing in own juices 6.4.5 Transformation during the RIDE	Transformation is resisted in defence of the status quo through an illuminated awareness of the Deep(er) loss that may be gained.

KEEP MOVING, SAFETY FIRST! NO FIRES ON THE SHIP				
Specific aims: • Explore the value of group relations conferences as an intervention tool. • Add to the body of knowledge about the impact of Group Relations Conferences on the individual and the organisation.	This is about the safety of the status quo, of transformation with known and manageable risk, and the anxiety of unmanageable risk which could sink the ship.	Describes participants' experiences after the RIDE and what they took back to the organisation. A Flight into rationalisation and intellectualisation of why the learning at the RIDE is resisted in the organisation.	6.5.1 Transferring learning to the organisation 6.5.2 Transformation experiences at the RIDE 6.5.3 The process of transformation a visual representation.	What can be transferred to the rganisation and defence against ansferring learning to the rganisation.

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The themes expressed the specific aims of this research in four overarching themes of Hermeneutic Phenomenological research (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Creswell, 2013; Fossey et al., 2002). Those themes described the participants' experiences of the Five-day revolution (the what), the Dangerous and Delirious zero-sub game (the how) and the New Dawn: One of those with vampires (the why) within the paradigm of hermeneutic phenomenology. This culminated in a description of transferring the learning of the RIDE back into the organisation with Keep moving, Safety first! No fires on the ship.

4.5   STEP 6: REPORTING ON THE THEMATIC DATA ANALYSIS

The last step of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) is to write up the thematic analysis and tell the story of the data.

To this end I tell the story of the participants' experiences of the RIDE in the first person as discussed in chapter 1 so that my and the participants voices may not be silenced Gilgun (2005). It is a story of a shapeshifting, coinciding dichotomy, of transmogrification at a group relations conference which provided for "opportunities for members and consultants to study the dynamics of diversity in terms of the core concepts as it happens in the here-and-now" (Pretorius et al., 2006).

Something that made it particularly difficult for me to explore and understand participants' experiences of transmogrification at the RIDE was that they did not clearly distinguish between different events of the RIDE. Instead, experiences during the different events were described in a mashup of the LSG and the smaller group events. Mr Seswai said, "I do not know if it was in the small sessions or the big session…" The small group he was referring to was never named. In another instance, Mr Seswai said "We were broken up into smaller groups and this is where I saw the worth to going down there to the island", a sentiment shared by Mr Drie when he said, "I found the small-group exercises extremely useful to make sense of what was going on in the larger groups".

The way in which the participants recalled the RIDE often made it difficult for me to distinguish whether the participant was referring to the Small Study Group (SSG) or other small group events such as the Personal Processing group (PPG), the

Discussion group (DG) and/or the Application group (AG). These events during the RIDE will be elaborated on in Chapter 5. However, one participant (Ms Vier) was clear about which event she was recalling. She attended the RIDE as a trainee consultant who sat at the boundary between being a member and a consultant. On occasion I would assume a participant was speaking about a particular event from the way they were recalling a particular experience, based on my experience with the RIDE and group relations conferences in general.

It was only through an in-depth exploration of the data, visiting, revisiting, reflecting, engaging, and navigating through what seemed to be illusions and reality, that more than just a sequence of events became evident. The process evolved as I engaged in a reflective conversation with the data (Micheli et al., 2018), where rationality and intuition met with shifting of perspectives (Pistiner de Cortinas, 2003) between the sequence of events and the relationships those held. In the end I could work with and explore participants' experiences of what happened during the RIDE, why it happened, and how it happened (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Grix, 2010; Owens, 2011; Ron, 2010; Terre Blanche et al., 2006). I came to realise that there was more to Calvin's transmogrification box (Finn, 1999) than going in one side and, coming out as something different.

4.6   CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 4 concludes the data analysis approach I applied on both a semantic level (Chapter 3) and a latent level of data analysis, culminating in the final thematic map, indicated in Table 4.3. A presentation of the data, grounded in my research paradigm of critical realism which allowed for an in-depth ontology, beyond the surface phenomenon of the RIDE. As I entered anew, on numerous occasions, into the meanings before me. (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Vagle, 2014), the analysis and interpretation of the data continued.

As indicated previously I reported on the findings of the data analysis directly after the analysis before the literature review. For reporting purposes here, I present the remaining two literature aims of the research, namely (1) to conceptualise group relations conferences and (2) to conceptualise group relations conference experiential

learning in Chapter 5, to explicate the concepts, and to provide some context to the participants' experiences of the RIDE in the findings (in Chapter 6).

CHAPTER 5: GROUP RELATIONS CONFERENCE AND GROUP RELATIONS CONFERENCE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As with Chapter 2 this chapter contains the traditions of thinking and a critical review of the gap in the literature about members experiences of Group Relations Conferences. The supporting sources (Trafford & Leshem, 2008) of the scholarship review (Mouton, 2011) are included. The chapter consists of two parts. In the first part Group Relations Conferences are described in general and the RIDE specifically. The second part of the chapter is about experiential learning at Group Relations Conferences.

Group Relations Conferences in the Tavistock model have been thought of as providing a container within which to explore and learn about relations and across groups and organisations (Sapochnik, 2017). The term *Tavistock model* according to Lawrence (1979) refers to a heuristic framework for identifying and understanding what conscious and unconscious processes take place within and between groups of people. However, the use of the term is problematic according to Lawrence (1979) because the term has its origins at Tavistock and is still being developed there, yet the tradition is also located in several other institutions (Lawrence, 1979). So, the tradition is continually being reinterpreted and reworked by representatives of different institutions.

5.2 GROUP RELATIONS CONFERENCES

Group Relations Conferences can last from a few days to a fortnight, either as residential or non-residential events (Lawrence, 1979), which "offer opportunities to learn about group, organisational and social dynamics; the exercise of authority and power; the interplay between tradition, innovation and change; and the relationship of organisations to their social, political and economic environments" (Aram et al., 2019). Each working conference would have a primary task (Lawrence, 1979) determined by the dominant import-transformation-export process which is to study group behaviour (Lawrence, 1979).

What makes these groups different to others is that a number of heterogeneous individuals get together at such conferences to work on a specific primary task, learn experientially while simultaneously experiencing group dynamics, designed around the primary task and role of staff (Lawrence, 1979). What the members then choose to do is on their own authority (Lawrence, 1979). Group Relations Conferences are dynamic experiential learning events (Aram, 2010; Lousada, 2019) through which both staff and members co-create a temporary learning institution which allows for the study of conscious and unconscious dynamics of organisational life while also being part of those dynamics (Wallach, 2010, Petriglieri, 2020). Systems Psychodynamics as conceptualised in this chapter is applied to understanding participants' experiences and to exploring tensions inherent in group relations during the conference life (Armstrong, 2010; Pretorius, et al., 2012).

During the literature review a question became evident in the literature about what a real group relations conference was. The concern was around Group Relations Conferences becoming more didactic than experiential (Lawrence, 1979). The author raised a concern that traditional Group Relations Conferences could lose their value if the focus shifted from authority and political relatedness. In later years there were views across the globe that strictly traditional methods were boring (Khaleelee & White, 2014).

5.2.1 Traditionalist and non-traditionalist Group Relations Conferences

The traditionalists' focus in Group Relations Conferences is on boundary management and events growing out of organisational studies which are meant to provide learning opportunities for people who run organisations (Lawrence, 1979; Khaleelee & White, 2014). Those practitioners who believe in the universality of human nature have changed the model little according to Gertler (2019). However, there is a concern about the rigidity of the traditional way of thinking, that group relations may have become a thing, rather than a vessel for learning from experience (Khaleelee & White, 2014).

Authors such as Schafer (2003) were concerned about the applicability of the traditionalist view of Group Relations Conferences. The concern was that these events may not always adequately assist conference members to think divergently about their own contemporary organisational settings. Rather the traditionalist view may provide

frameworks which are less relevant and even erroneous in a postmodern society (Schafer, 2003). Group relations conference organisers who shared similar views to Schafer's (2003) and others of the non-traditionalist persuasion preferred to incorporate more innovative events such as a silent event, meditative event, or lectures amongst others. In this way they adopted a more humanistic perspective and demonstrated greater openness (Khaleelee & White, 2014). In addition, there are "model innovators" who emphasise a creative way of taking up authority. This involves a flattening of the authority hierarchy or a dissolution of the boundary between staff and member (Khaleelee & White, 2014).

Group Relations Conference organisers such as the Australian Group Relations Conferences have mainly held to the Tavistock traditions according to Schafer (2003). However, the peculiarities of the Australian culture have shaped the work and created distinctive ways and possibly adventurous possibilities for applying learning from Group Relations Conferences. Some of the innovations have been to have members present a work issue they would like to work on before the conference, or application of various methodologies such as work drawings. The creation of A and B memberships was an innovation. An advanced group was invited to use technology to develop themes of interest and then to work in two groups on selected themes. Follow up events after the conference were presented after four to six weeks. These events were found to be modestly attended and a continuation of the conference experience.

In addition to the cultural influences in the Australian events cultural influences also manifested in the Group Relations Conferences of India which incorporated Yoga and music. These events are now included in the Tavistock conference events (Tavistock Institute, 2016). In Germany, a Socio-Technical Systems Event of German Group Relations Conferences had the aim of paying attention to the dynamics of the marketplace at the conference (Khaleelee & White, 2014). In other events around the world spiritual needs were addressed by social dreaming matrixes, etc (Khaleelee & White, 2014). During the1960s in Denmark, collaborative work began across conflicting boundaries such as ex-prisoners' meeting with police to discuss crime which is about the ideas of equality and democracy. In America collaborative work across hierarchical boundaries was explored relating to personal authority and collaborative work (Khaleelee & White, 2014).

During later years, the demographics of the conference directors evolved. In a study by Khaleelee and White (2014). It was found that during the first years of Group Relations Conferences, directors were predominantly male. Due in part to a strong tradition of male leadership in many countries and their experiences as soldiers and/or psychiatrists during the Second World War (Khaleelee & White, 2014). Female directors started taking up the role during the 1980s when conferences had a task to study gender roles. As patriarchal systems evolved to include female leadership female directors became the norm.

Currently the focus at Group Relations Conferences is more on contemporary issues of society together with a de-emphasis on contemporary organisational issues according to Gertler (2019). Basic assumption mentality is very much influenced by the sociocultural elements of rapidly changing experiences (Gertler & Hayden, 2015). The authors are concerned that these shifts and others may have led to learning from experience for deeper understanding and vision as being seen as less important than swimming in the unconscious for its own sake. In addition, there is a risk that self-reflection on societal influences is lost in the opportunistic pull for individual gain because of the power of group relations, which sell self-promotion, ambition, individual achievement, and competition (Gertler & Hayden, 2015).

5.2.2 Collusion with consumerism

During the time of Lawrence (1979) he noted that there was a continuous pressure on staff in their consultant roles to explore interpersonal relationships at Group Relations Conferences. Lawrence (1979) stated that the concern had to remain with the exploration and explication of the real and phantasy relatedness of the individual and their roles to the group, institution and society, political responsibility, and authority. A shift away from that could be construed as a defence against the anxiety such a concern raises. This could be a result of feelings held by members that they are consumers of experiences which must be good and free of any psychic pain and anxiety. A paradox is that as the members of the temporary institution are in effect consumers and, not employees who get paid for services (Beck & Visholm, 2014) but rather pay for services.

Consumerism and the American culture of capitalism has also changed over the past 50 years (Gertler & Hayden, 2015) and has had an impact on Group Relations Conference work. Supercapitalism has, over the past few decades, moved American society from capacities as citizens to being citizens as consumers and investors (Gertler & Hayden, 2015). A shift has happened between the desire to achieve the American dream of growing wealthier, rather than taking up the responsibility of supporting a standard of living with enough resources for all for sustaining families and others effectively (Gertler & Hayden, 2015). Competition is intensified. Super capitalism has been growing since the days of European colonies on the north American continent and since the 1970s has burgeoned. The manifestation of consumerism in Group Relations Conferences could be an indication of why Lawrence (1979) was convinced that organisers and staff of Group Relations Conferences colluded to avoid the challenge of a joint educational event during which members defended themselves against psychic pain and anxiety from learning (Bion, 1961/2004).

A study conducted by Gertler and Hayden (2015) specifically within the boundaries of Group Relations Conferences in the USA between 1964 and 2012 found that between 1965 and 1973 Group Relations Conferences in the USA were named *Group Relations Conferences* (national). Afterwards, between 1974 and 1991 conferences remained focused on leadership, authority, and organisational issues. From 1992-1995 the first appearance of conferences about diversity including authority and leadership emerged. Then between 1996 and 2012 a mix of conferences with diversity, authority and leadership continued including the topic of faith in some cases.

While Gertler and Hayden (2015) did state that their study was confined to the USA only and not all conferences were included in their study, a trend was seen to emerge. The authors state that over the course of time there has been "a shift in subject from leadership and authority conferences with a systems psychodynamic role-system focus to one more dominated by person role focus which can blur the line between organisational learning and therapy" (Gertler & Haden, 2015, p. 149). The authors point out that this shift was not happening everywhere in the USA, but it *was* happening. Many conferences in the USA were confusing in their combination of person-role issues and role-system issues (Gertler & Hayden, 2015).

It would appear as if the shift were happening outside the borders of the USA as well, based on the findings of Khaleelee and White (2014).

5.2.3 The macrosystem and Group Relations Conferences

In recent times the influence of global events on the design of the conferences became evident (Khaleelee & White, 2014), though there were only minor changes during the years after the first group relations event (Erlich-Ginor, 2006; Khaleelee & White, 2014). The themes of the conferences seemed to indicate that there was and is an increasingly focus on larger and wider societal issues with less of the traditional interest in hierarchical organisation (Khaleelee & White, 2014).

The collapse of power structures of universal culture, universal values and identity, the decentring of contemporary life all have implications for group relations (Gertler, 2019). The belief in a common and core identity that is the same for everybody has eroded according to Gertler (2019) from a colonialist structure dominated by one centre, the Spanish, the Dutch, the British and the United States (Gertler, 2019). The world has become decentred in power, culture, values, and identity, prompted in part by technological change, according to the author. We are now in a postmodern world which challenges the claim of objectivity. The postmodernist world claims all perception has subjective elements and claims to absolute truth and certainty are suspect and subject to debate (Gertler, 2019). However, Schafer (2003) disagrees stating that many contemporary organisations continue to operate with modern rather than postmodern structures.

Group relations is concerned with the organism metaphor and the primary task is what a system must do to survive. Gertler (2019) states that group relations were originally defined by an English version of psychoanalysis (Klein-Bion) and Western systems approaches. These were modernist in their assumptions of the universal man, from psycho analytic principles with the use of modernist forms of the organisation (centralized authority, defined distribution of roles, static boundaries etc.) and the biological metaphor of open systems (Gertler, 2019). From an organisational perspective postmodernism challenges the notions of hierarchy, of machine and open-systems metaphors, authority boundaries etc. according to Gertler (2019).

The focus on diversity in later years and the person-role issue from the identity-based focus, figure now far more in Group Relations Conferences than the system psychodynamic focus of leadership and authority which lately seems to be in the background (Gertler, 2019). The focus is more on the social than a social organisational-group psychoanalytic examination of leadership, authority, and experience, without a specific agenda, which was the original purpose of Group Relations Conferences (Lawrence, 1979; Gertler, 2019). A position on the traditionalist and non-traditionalist view of Group Relations Conferences is not taken in this thesis as it is outside the scope. These views are important though as they relate to the RIDE, a Group Relations Conference like the Australian conferences, and others in the traditionalist view. What is clear about Group Relations Conferences is that learning (Aram et al., 2019; Joseph et al., 1975; Klein et al., 1989) and transformation (De Gooijer, 2019) is evident during and after members attend Group Relations Conferences.

5.3   THE ROBBEN ISLAND DIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

The RIDE as a Group Relations Conference took place on the African continent where diversity dynamics were studied within the African context using a Eurocentric model of psychoanalytic theory and group relations, developed by Europeans complementing Eurocentric society (McRae & Short, 2010). The model however had been found to have widespread applications across race and culture according to McRae and Short (2010). The authors citing Slavson (1956) attribute psychological needs of individuals in terms of anxieties and motivation being more similar than different across cultures and to be united in emotional response to a variety of stimuli at group level. Yalom (1995) stated that curative factors such as hope, universality, knowing one is not alone and expressing emotions were constant across differences. McRae and Short (2010) argue that cultural patterns may cause individuals to behave differently however, they may be united in their emotional responses to a variety of stimuli at group level.

The cultural patterns which may cause individuals to behave differently were particularly relevant to the RIDE. Members and consultants worked with the additional complexities of black and non-black Africans and other nationalities as they confronted the traumatic effects of South Africa's past at the RIDE on a historically significant island (Cilliers & May, 2012).

5.3.1 The study of otherness amongst others

It would be a fallacy to pretend that South Africans and Africans have fully recovered from the traumatic effects of the past confrontation with Europe according to Nwoye (2017). The transformation of a South African society with its dream of creating a rainbow nation is an ongoing challenge, increasing in difficulty over the years (Hans, 2018). Initially any talk of differences between white, black, and other races' lifestyles, attitudes and expectations were shouted down to avoid the realities of South Africa and its past and in later years differences were highlighted (Mitchley, 2018; eNCA, 2018) leaving South Africans very much classified along racial lines as in the past. This created intense emotions, conflicts and diversity dynamics that arose in the process of integrating South African society according to Pretorius et al. (2012) and at the time of this writing.

Africans are left feeling that something in their psyche had been destroyed during the colonial and apartheid contact with Europe according to Nwoye (2017). Western categories were and are used to advance the negative idea of African otherness, in an Africa depicted as a place of negations, trapped in the primitive stage of human civilisation (Nwoye, 2017). It is necessary not only to consider snapshot measures of implicit biases, stereotyping, judgements and nonverbal behaviour as Abrams and Hogg (2017) suggest, but also blatant and aggressive prejudice that might arise in many national and cultural contexts such as those Nwoye (2017) observed. The role of minorities and majorities in groups, the role of communication, emotions and group membership and the role of group and task, are all widespread commonalities across societies applicable to all groups across cross-cutting memberships of socio-economic status, ethnicity, religion, and gender (Abrams & Hogg, 2017). The RIDE as a group relations conference was then relevant for the study of "otherness" amongst "others" (Nwoye, 2017).

The RIDE as a Group Relations Conference assumed that exploring these dynamics in a group would bring people together and allow the experience of the "other" to develop (Carlyle, 2010). The conference brochure to the RIDE (Pretorius et al., 2006) stated that to hold onto the aspects of the old and to use the banished aspects, differences and similarities needs to be dealt with. After working on matters from the

previous dispensation it would be possible to work towards a celebration of diversity. This phenomenon could be best understood by studying underlying human dynamics referring to relatedness between people, the identity of those involved, the role of power in these relationships as well as the effect of reference systems in understanding diversity (Pretorius et al., 2006). The conference brochure further stated that dealing with diversity involved drawing on individual inner resources or limitations in such a way as to enable effective functioning in a group.

The assumption was that the positive aspects of groups would enable the capacity to contain and resolve destructiveness and destructive forces (Carlyle, 2010) as is the norm of all Group Relations Conferences (Tavistock Institute, 2016). If during the group and if not assaulted too vigorously the dynamics in the group would lead to growth in both the self and other (Carlyle, 2010; Weinberg, 2016). Through experiential learning in a temporary institution experiences and moments or even entire sessions of work group functioning would allow for possible exposure of conflicted and shameful impulses of the group-as-a-whole (Carlyle, 2010). These experiences are not often addressed outside of the social inhibitions and anxieties, presented in most social settings (Carlyle, 2010).

5.3.2 The RIDE system

In line with the Leicester model, potential members of the RIDE were made aware before the event that the learning experience had no therapeutic aims, as it would not focus on the individual's personality (Pretorius et al., 2006). During the RIDE it was suggested that when members found themselves in relationships with other members that those feelings, be used as data to provide fresh insights about diversity relationships and underlying processes in the temporary organisation, a member's own organisation and society as a whole (Pretorius et al., 2006). It was further stated that an understanding of those processes would assist with the appropriate management of diversity (Pretorius et al., 2006).

All Group Relations Conferences begin with an opening plenary and close with a closing plenary in which all members and staff are present.

5.3.2.1 Opening and closing plenaries

The opening plenary sets the tasks and administrative boundaries of the conference and the experiential events which would be made available according to Lawrence (1979). The closing plenary provides an opportunity to end the relationship between members and staff without closure of learning from the conference (Lawrence, 1979). When members move towards the outer boundary, they ought to have the opportunity to reflect on what is involved in taking up the outside role again (Lawrence, 1979). These events can be seen as being between the inner experiential skin of the conference and the outer organisational role (Lawrence, 1979). They are designed to enable members to consider what authority they have in relation to various internal and external realities (Lawrence, 1979).

The RIDE contained an opening plenary, various other events, and a closing plenary (Pretorius et al., 2006). The first event, the opening plenary involved all the members of the conference to process the crossing of the boundaries into and out of the conference and different events during the conference.

The primary task of the plenary events of the RIDE were to "provide information about the experience and its events as well as to discuss the crossing of boundaries into and out of events, the total experience, the intergroup event (IG) and the institutional start and end plenary" (Pretorius et al, 2006, p. 11). The aim of the plenaries is to further the process of crossing the boundary in and out of the conference and the various events. The closing plenary allows for studying the process of ending relationships (Tavistock Institute, 2016).

5.3.2.2 The Large study group (LSG)

The LSG is mostly the primary experience of the Group Relations Conference. There are two reasons for positioning it first after the opening plenary according to Lawrence (1979). First because the large group and its immediate related activity, the median group, were recent post-Bion discoveries at the author's time; the second reason was that members of the large group would experience what Lawrence (1979) calls the crowd that lies behind the organisation of every large-scale system.

The primary task of the RIDE LSG was to "study the core concepts of diversity dynamics as it happens in the total system" (Pretorius et al., 2006, p. 12).

The LSGs comprise the whole conference membership working together with consultants (Tavistock Institute, 2016). The primary task of this event is to provide opportunities for studying the dynamics of large groups and the processes of cohesion and fragmentation, mythmaking, and reality-testing as they happen in the group, through the exploration of the myths, beliefs, assumptions, identities, and dreams that emerge. This is an experiential "here-and-now" event in which the behaviour of the group is placed under a high-resolution microscope and the group can study its own behaviour as it happens in the here-and now (Tavistock Institute, 2016).

The myths as indicated by the Tavistock Institute (2016) refer to Bion's hypotheses about myths on which groups of people operate (Lawrence, 1979), and the process of mythmaking at Group Relations Conferences which manifests in constant conflict between the individual and the group. Myths are available for study in the LSG according to Lawrence (1979). The author states that two myths of society are found during the LSG. One is that society is unknowable and the second that only the individual is knowable. The LSG according to Lawrence (1979) is the frame for catching what is unconsciously happening in wider society even though the larger society is not the topic of discussion with the result that in the LSG at times is experienced by members as "hell realised" according to Lawrence (1979), either through total order, buzzing chaos or nothingness. Lawrence (1979) is of the opinion that it is in the LSG that the narcissism of individuals, struggling with a phenomenon experienced akin to society can be found.

5.3.2.3   The Small Study Group (SSG)

The SSG is the median group Lawrence (1979) referred to which follows the LSG. The event is designed to enable authority and relationships for study, while focusing on intergroup relations. Based on the work of Bion on small group processes (Lawrence, 1979). The author notes that Bion's hypotheses about small groups provided a set of heuristic notions for what takes place in groups, such as the work group mentality and basic assumption mentalities reviewed in chapter 2.

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The primary task of the RIDE SSG was to "study the core concepts of diversity dynamics during face-to-face interpersonal relations" (Pretorius et al., 2006, p. 12). Tavistock Institute (2016) on their web page state that the small study groups consist of up to 12 members working with 1 consultant. The primary task is to learn about the dynamics of small groups and the formation of leadership and followership relationships as they happen in the group (Lawrence, 1979; Tavistock Institute, 2016). The177malll study groups are experiential "here-and-now" events in which the behaviour of the group is placed under a high-resolution microscope and the group can study its own behaviour as it happens, with the help of consultancy (Lawrence, 1979; Tavistock Institute, 2016). The rationale for this is that learning, understanding and knowledge lead to change according to the Tavistock Institute, (2016).

The statement of Lawrence (1979) that the work group must be contrasted with the basic assumption group is corroborated by French and Simpson (2010) and de Felice et al. (2018). However, Lawrence (1979) did not distinguish between the group and group mentality as later research has (de Felice et al., 2018; French & Simpson, 2010). In addition, Lawrence (1979) states the basic assumption group is the unconscious of a group which has been refuted in later research (Armstrong, 2010; French & Simpson, 2010). However, Lawrence (1979) states that Bion's descriptions of how small groups function provide benchmarks in understanding the unconscious reality of groups which has been elaborated on in later research. According to Lawrence (1979) the thinking around the small group has had the qualities of an "architectonic paradigm" (p.9) for considering other group activities. Bion's thinking about small groups can be utilised in relation to other group events, to press interpretations of other events and their unique phenomenon back into the small group mould of thinking (Lawrence, 1979).

5.3.2.4 The intergroup event (IG)

When Group Relations Conferences were presented at first the organisers realised that while the LSG and SSG did provide for opportunities to become aware of destructive and creative processes of the unconscious in those group settings there was a gap between those experiences and the world of work (Lawrence, 1979). The IG was then introduced (Lawrence, 1979). The IG introduced a second task of studying group processes in relation to a particular project at the group relations conference.

The IG sharpens the focus on political relationships both within and between group members because staff are present in their consultancy roles only and not as management (Lawrence, 1979). The director of the conference also opens the plenary and withdraws to emphasise the absence of management. Members can then project into the situation their internal conceptualisations of management according to Lawrence (1979). The internal objectifications of what the member/members believe about management is termed management in the mind (Lawrence, 1979). The consultant's task is to help the members explicate the different notions of management in the mind as a way of pointing out what authority is exercised by members.

The primary task of the RIDE IG was to "provide opportunities to study relations and relatedness between groups as it relates to diversity dynamics with particular emphasis on the exercise of authority on behalf of self and others" (Pretorius et al., 2006, p. 12). Further information about the event was provided in the conference brochure about the IG event opening and closing in plenary. The members of the RIDE were informed that the IG involves all members and staff (Pretorius et al., 2006). Delegates had the opportunity to form groups themselves; consultants would be available to groups and to any meetings between whole groups or representatives of groups.

The IG is an opportunity for members to learn about the processes and relationships that form between different groups when they are engaged in a common task (Tavistock Institute, 2016). Particularly relevant is learning how to take up representative roles and negotiating and carrying authority on behalf of others (Tavistock Institute, 2016). This is an event that combines experiential "here-and-now" learning with action learning, i.e., the putting into action, within the conference, sets of relationships between groups that derive from the experiential learning of the conference (Tavistock Institute, 2016).

5.3.2.5   The institutional event (IE)

During this IE there are two major groupings, staff, and members (Lawrence, 1979). Management can either divide into a management and consultant subgroup or stay in one group (Lawrence, 1979). As in the IG task time and territory boundaries are specified. This is for the convenience of the staff; what the members choose is on their own authority according to Lawrence (1979). The focus is on the political relatedness

of members and staff. The task is to study what conscious and unconscious relationships are present or do not exist between them (Lawrence, 1979). In this way the institution in the mind comes into play. Both members and staff relate to their perceptions of and visions for the institution within whose frame the action is taking place (Lawrence, 1979).

The IE of the RIDE opened and closed in plenary and involved all members and staff, in their role as management. The primary task of the IE was to "study issues pertaining to the delegation of authority, intergroup relations and relatedness between membership and management as it relates to the core concepts of diversity dynamics" (Pretorius et al., 2006, p. 12). The members were provided with additional information about the different levels of authority during both the IGE and IE events in the conference brochure (Pretorius et al., 2006). The observer level of authority about being able to cross the boundary into other groups with the authority to observe and report back (Pretorius et al., 2006). The representative level of authority involved crossing the boundary into other groups with the authority to represent own group by collecting and providing information around a predetermined task and then reporting back (Pretorius et al., 2006). The last level of authority involved full authority that being authority to cross the boundary into other groups with full authority on behalf of own group (Pretorius et al., 2006).

Tavistock Institute however no longer includes this event on their key to conference events (Tavistock Institute, 2016). The event's name may have changed in the interim to the Whole System Event (WSE), to reflect that the event involves all parts of the conference. Groups are formed by the members and the staff. The aim is to learn about relationships between parts and wholes according to Tavistock Institute (2016). The description does however corroborate Lawrence's (1979) description of an IE.

The review and AGs, orientation groups and role analysis groups (Lawrence, 1979) or Review and Application groups (RAG) the Tavistock Institute (2016) refers to, all serve the same function according to Lawrence (1979). According to the author these events enable a member to consider what learning is appropriate to his/her back-home situation. A space is provided in the time of the conference to consider their relatedness

to the conference as an institution as a paradigm of their relatedness in outside systems.

According to the Tavistock Institute (2016), RAGs provide opportunities for members to review and reflect on their experiences of the day and how they are taking up their different roles in the conference. How the members hope to transfer their conference learning into their back-home organisations (Tavistock Institute, 2016). This is a bridging exercise between the individual's conference learning and post-conference organisational behavioural practice and has 'here-and-now' and 'now-and-then' aspects to it (Tavistock Institute, 2016). The focal question is: what are we learning in the conference ('here-and-now') that can be applied to our roles in our organisations ('now-and-then')?

The RIDE included three of these events (Pretorius et al., 2006). A PPG, DG and an AG reviewed next.

5.3.2.6 *The personal processing group (PPG)*
The PPG followed the tour of the island and the prison after all other events of the RIDE had concluded. Members were divided into functional groups of up to seven members and one consultant (Pretorius et al., 2006). The primary task of the event was to "process each delegate's personal experience and learning about how they interact and contribute to their diversity" (Pretorius et al., 2006, p. 12).

5.3.2.7 *The discussion group (DG)*
At the RIDE, the DG followed the IG and IE events (Pretorius et al., 2006). The event provided an "opportunity for members to discuss the practical application of group relations model to diversity related problems in their work context" (Pretorius et al., 2006, p. 12). No primary task was explicitly set.

5.3.2.8 *The application group (AG)*
The AG was the last event before the closing ceremony on the last day (Pretorius et al., 2006). Members working in the same groups as the PPG were provided a primary task to "provide opportunities for members to work towards the application of the

learning about diversity dynamics within the different spheres of their daily lives"
(Pretorius et al., 2006, p. 12).

As indicated in the introduction to this section the tradition of Group Relations
Conferences is continually being reinterpreted and reworked (Lawrence, 1979). This
can be seen in the inclusion of a WSE in the key to conference events of the Tavistock
Institute itself and an Embodying Role Event (ERE) which involves all parts of the
conference as an experiential "here-and-now" event in which everyone collectively can
develop mindfulness allowing them to have greater access to embody their creativity,
as well as their intellectual and emotional selves (Tavistock Institute, 2016). This event,
a newer addition to the Tavistock Group Relations Conferences, had not been
considered as an event during the time the RIDE was presented. The RIDE however
included an event named *Tour of the island and prison,* unique to its design.

5.3.2.9 *Tour of the island and prison*

Robben Island was consciously chosen for marketing purposes according to the
directors of the RIDE, only realising later how significantly history and symbols
influenced the diversity work on the island (Cilliers & May, 2012). According to Cilliers
and May (2012) the programme of the RIDE at a particular RIDE had to be changed
to leave the evening full for processing as the members were so keyed up after the
tour of the island and prison on their return they could not work. On another occasion
President Mandela visited the island while the RIDE was in session. There was talk of
inviting the president to the RIDE, which did not materialise. His visit did happen during
an SSG event from which members ran. However, the members did not see him
(Cilliers & May, 2012).

This concludes the section about the RIDE as a Group Relations Conference. To follow
I present what I call a myth in the gap about researching Group Relations Conferences
I identified through a literature review.

5.4   A MYTH IN THE GAP

Group Relations Conferences are experiential events not training events (Miller, 1989).
Miller (1990) and Bartle (2015) state that measuring experiential learning is difficult.
Wallach (2014) states that research may disrupt the dynamics of the conference itself

and meaning making by members is difficult according to Lawrence (1979) and Silver and Josselson (2010). These rationalisations about why it is difficult to research members' experiences of Group Relations Conferences have resulted in very few studies since the inception of Group Relations Conferences.

5.4.1 Training versus experiential learning

Group relations conferences are open systems which take in members who want to learn about issues in relation to their work and other organisations (Lawrence, 1979). The hope is that members will transfer new learning to their organisations according to Lawrence (1979). This hope is alluded to by the Tavistock Institute (2016) which also suggests there will be a transfer of learning to organisations, and this will benefit organisations should employees attend these events. The benefits are better understanding of how organisations, groups, and teams' work. The transfer of learning is the focus/primary task of some events during the group relations conference (Lawrence, 1979; Tavistock Institute, 2016). Tavistock Institute (2016) states that potential members would have improved capacity to manage themselves in multiple roles for contemporary leadership after attending Group Relations Conferences.

According to the Tavistock Institute (2016) learning at Group Relations Conferences is more substantial and lasts longer if all senses and faculties are involved. They state that Group Relations conferences are built on the values that provide learning opportunities for the new generation. The conferences help members link technology in teams to bring out the best in people, mobilising co-operative inter-dependency and creating collaborative sustainability (Tavistock Institute, 2016).

Researching Group Relations Conferences Miller (1989) stated that the pedagogic style of the conference and the kind of learning generated made researching these events problematic. For Miller (1989) that training implies transmission of skills, and acquisition which should be measurable. However, the conference provides for a set of experiences which require the individual to take up their own authority for the learning they gain from the conference (Lawrence, 1979; Miller 1989). The result is idiosyncratic and unpredictable (Miller, 1989). Such outcomes are in line with the concept of experiential learning (McCallum, 2008; Schwartz, 2012).

Transfer of learning outside of the conference is unclear. A study by Wallach (2010) found that while awareness was created about Palestinian-Israeli conflict in a Group Relations Conference exploring the topic, the awareness did not necessarily translate into action. The author states that while these kinds of interventions may be effective in changing personal bias, the change does not necessarily carry over to a societal level. However, a study on members experiences of the 2012 Leicester conference (Hills, 2018) found that some members were able to return the learning from their experiences and into something valuable for their organisations. Those who did report ambivalence about transferring their learning in their organisations ascribed that ambivalence to the constraints on their organisational role. Measuring learning and its outcomes is difficult and subjective.

5.4.2 Measuring members experiences in group relations conferences is difficult

Measuring members' experiences of Group Relations Conferences is difficult because of the reliance on research from impressionistic and anecdotal evidence from past members and the own observations of staff (Miller, 1989). Miller (1989) found the cost exorbitant in performing "before and after" research, in-depth clinical reviews, and assessments in work settings. Funding was not available at that time to continue with such a project.

In a study conducted in 1969 by Joseph et. Al. (1975) of a Group Relations Conference based on the Tavistock approach at Yale university, students who were all involved in mental health were asked to complete biographical questionnaires prior to the conference. Six months after attending the conference a questionnaire was sent to members asking about group joining, what learning was taken from the Group Relations Conference and about the psychotherapy history. A personality measure on an introversion extroversion scale was completed by the members. The focus of the study was to enhance learning and not individual problems according to Joseph et al. (1975).

A study by Klein et al. (1989) of 13 AKRI Group Relations Conferences with 477 members in attendance described sending surveys using a Likert scale three months after attendance to investigate dimensions that facilitate learning at these events. Of

the members 60% responded to the survey. The three-month period between attending the conference and the survey was to allow for distance and integration. The afore mentioned studies indicate that measurement of members' experiences of Group Relations Conferences have occurred over time albeit after the events with objective measuring instruments and interviews. Wallach (2010) and Hills (2018) conducted similar research, but they also observed members during the event.

In a pilot study of a Group Relations Conference Wallach (2010) administered pre-conference surveys to members and staff to gain information about demographics, learning goals, hopes, concerns and expectations of conference members. Wallach (2010) also sat in as researcher with a voice to some events and recorded her observations sitting apart from the main group. Following the conference Wallach (2010) interviewed members and surveys were administered again post conference three months later together with a second round of interviews.

In a study to explore how members had heard about a Group Relations Conference and their reasons for attending, Hills (2018) conducted research into the 2012 Leicester group relations event to explore several questions about learning derived from the conference. The focus was on different aspects of the conference and the challenges of researching these events. The author used participant observation and spent two days at the conference attending two plenary events and a staff meeting (Hills, 2018). During the breaks, the researcher sat in the dining area inviting members and staff to be interviewed with a short topic guide. Online surveys were sent to members before and after the event and to members only nine months later.

A recent measure applied at a Group Relations Conference measuring staff experiences was Q-sort analysis as a method of data analysis (Harkins, 2018). The analysis was applied at the 2018 Beijing Group Relations Conference to assess beliefs about Group Relations Theory, concepts, and practices as well as leadership, organisations, and information processing (Harkins, 2018). The study had a pre and post conference focus. While not measuring members experiences of group relations conferences it does provide for a method of measuring these.

In her study on sentience and group relations work Short (2019) provided a questionnaire to eight members post conference who had attended Group Relations Conferences to share their lived experiences of group relations work.

5.4.3 Research may disrupt the dynamics of the conference

Wallach's (2010) study about Palestinian-Israeli conflict included the conference directors and staff who were aware that research would be embedded into the pilot study of Group Relations Conferences. Wallach (2010) assisted in designing and presenting the conference. The directors and staff knew that she would observe the conference events and the staff meetings. During these events, the researcher (Wallach, 2010) sat outside the group with her laptop and transcribed as much as she could verbatim. The researcher's role was negotiated as a researcher with a voice which meant she would be able to take up her authority to speak if she felt it important to do so. According to her, a researcher with a voice was both useful and problematic. A boundary was set that she would not have a voice in the "here-and-now" event but would have a voice in others which allowed her to speak from her researcher role. Wallach (2010) stated that she had more freedom to converse with the members in her role than the directors had; she also did not work in the staff meetings but took notes.

In terms of research disrupting the dynamics of the conference Hills (2018) found that most members and staff were open to the idea of having researchers at the 2012 Leicester conference she was researching. Some staff commented that it strengthened the idea that there were things up for study and signalled approval for the work. However, two staff members felt the presence of the researchers was intrusive in the sense of being observed. They experienced the coming and going of the researchers as disruptive. Hills (2018) states that this may have something to do with primal anxiety about being judged and not being good enough as staff. This would manifest in a range of behaviours to contain the anxiety. One such behaviour would be to keep a well contained boundary in the research process.

5.4.4 Meaning making by members is difficult

Meaning making is complex and entails a process which happens over time (Wallach, 2010). It happens in relationship to others, which makes it difficult for members to make

sense of their experiences. In addition, there can be no guarantee that people will share the same meanings of experiences or that researchers would share the same meanings about those experiences researched (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). It is impossible to view participants as fully knowledgeable with no unconscious defences and remain on the discursive level of experience when researching meaning making (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). The stories participants share is however a means of understanding the participants themselves (Bauer, 1996). Ultimately the story shared, and the personal meaning attached to it stays closer to life events (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008).

Not many studies were found that explicitly researched members meaning making of Group Relations Conferences. Those studies presented in this sub-section mostly implied meaning making. The studies as presented here did however show that participants of those studies were able to describe their experiences of Group Relations Conferences from the interviews and surveys which had been applied. Such a study by Joseph et. Al (1975) shed light on learning at the Group Relations Conference at Yale university in terms of power and authority. Participants were able to describe learning about competition and feedback. While the study did not search for meaning making per se the participants could describe their experiences. The study by Klein et al. (1989) did not search for meaning making at the conferences but asked rather whether attending residential conferences had more impact on learning than non-residential conferences which the participants could describe. A study by Pretorius (2003) explored diversity dynamics members of the 2000 RIDE experienced and group relations as a training method. Not only does meaning making evolve over time but conference learning evolves over time (Wallach, 2010). The researcher states that the interviews conducted three months after the event might have played some role in the evolution of participant learning. Participants noted that the interviews helped them to reflect further on what they had learnt at the conference.

The participants of Hills' (2018) study were able to create meaning from their conference learning. However, very few people returned the survey sent out nine months after the event. Personal learning and ascribing learning to the organisation were indicated by those who replied together with ambivalence about the learning. Hills (2018) noted that the low response rate to the survey limited findings on the long-term

effect of the conference for members. The low response rate was attributed to people being too busy and not having time to complete it and/or the conference was relegated to the background. According to Hills (2018) members derived increased understanding of group dynamics and felt more at ease in their ability to cope in complex, ambiguous and emotionally charged situations.

Implicit meaning making of members' experiences of Group Relations Conferences was part of the study of Short (2019). In the study the participants were able to express meaning making of the events they had attended. Themes were identified related to authority, leadership, and organisation, including race and ethnic identity in group and organisational life. The participants' abilities to formulate meanings of their experiences showed complex processes of learning, integration, and application of the group relations lens according to the author.

Very few studies have included members voices over the years. The sub-sections above contain some of those empirical studies. While it is difficult to study members experiences of Group Relations Conferences these studies provide some evidence that it is possible. Group Relations work should be researched more frequently says Short (2019) and its impact, amongst other things, on members should be documented and evaluated thoroughly. This would potentially provide enhanced understanding of the collective human experience. Data collected over time could help us understand what aspects of conference experiences facilitate what kinds of conference learning (Wallach, 2014).

There appears to be a myth that members' experiences of Group Relations Conferences cannot be explored, measuring is difficult, research may disrupt the dynamics and meaning making by members is difficult in addition to the ambivalence of whether Group Relations Conferences are training events or not. A question could be asked as to whether Group Relations Conferences where everything is done for the benefit of the member or that of the community might not have created a particular kind of environment. That environment would be characterised by a lack of acknowledgment of members' experiences through research. The feeling might be that it is too difficult a task to research experiences. There is also a likelihood that the

community has its own basic assumption that members could be treated as things and possessions if their experiences were to be researched (Lawrence, 1979)

In addition to learning being experiential at Group Relations Conferences learning is also about the unconscious mind in relation to the conscious mind according to Shapiro and Carr (2012).

5.5   EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AT GROUP RELATIONS CONFERENCES

In this section experiential learning at Group Relations Conferences is presented in six sub-sections. There is an overview of experiential learning perspectives, followed by the psychodynamic principles of learning. As the group is a manifestation of the individual and the individual a manifestation of the group (Bion, 1961/2004; Shapiro & Carr, 2012) experiential learning from the perspective of the individual and the group is explored followed by individual learning in a group. This section concludes with the casualties of experiential learning at Group Relations Conferences.

5.5.1 Introduction

The field of group relations embraces experiential learning perspectives, psychodynamic principles, using the self as an instrument and the group-as-a whole concept, to study the group as a holistic social system (Fraher, 2004a; Geldenhuys et al., 2012). Systems learning is at the heart of group relations according to Silver and Josselson (2010). In this way opportunities are provided for members to internalise and make for themselves a "living methodology" for inspecting the conscious and unconscious realities of groups and institutions and their political relatedness of individuals in roles (Lawrence, 1979). Lawrence (1979) defines living methodology as the idea of an individual using their subjectivity and sensibility to explore realities; they move from working hypotheses about those realities and test them with others as a way of arriving at some externalised objective statement about the truth of the social situation, perceived from the role of the member (Lawrence, 1979). Members are then both experiencing the dynamics of the group and their relationship and relatedness (Petriglieri, 2020; Stapley, 2006) towards the group and each other. Simultaneously members are trying to learn from the experience according to Sapochnik (2015). These two passive and active components are strangely combined.

5.5.2 Experiential learning perspectives

Not all experiential learning brings about learning Willerman (2014). Simple participation in a prescribed set of learning experiences does not make something experiential (Schwartz, 2012). A shared experience may change one person but not another owing to, in part, the meaning making of the experience (McCallum, 2008). For learning to occur Willerman (2014) states that two things are required, firstly, continuity through which the learner connects the new experience to what is already known and secondly, interaction, when the learner interacts with the environment.

Several characteristics were identified by the university of Ryerson (Schwartz, 2012) to define whether an activity or method is experiential. The findings indicate that there must be a balance between experiential activities and underlying content or theory. There is a need for absence of excessive judgement; to be avoided, there must be engagement in purposeful endeavours, so the learner experiences meaning in their learning. The perspective of the bigger picture needs to be encouraged for the student to make connections to the outside world. Learners need to be able to reflect on their own learning and create an emotional investment in the experience. For that to happen they need to be fully immersed in the experience and not merely doing what they are told to do.

A space of safety needs to be created for self-exploration in which learners can begin to analyse and even alter their own values. One way of getting learners to see learning in the context of the whole world is by showing the relationships between learner and self, learner and facilitator and learner to learning environment. This creates a sense of meaningful relationships and learning outside of one's perceived comfort zone and in that way being accountable for one's own actions and owning the consequences. A non-compartmentalised form of learning built on a foundation of interdisciplinary and constructivist learning reflecting and mimicking the real world of learning is ideal (Schwartz, 2012; Willerman, 2014).

To study tensions in groups a structure needs to be created to mobilise the tensions (Armstrong, 2010) and allow for experiential learning. These are some of the psychodynamic principles of learning which follows.

5.5.3 Psychodynamic principles of learning

Group Relations Conference experiential learning is about attending to the unconscious and systemic processes in group dynamics (Sapochnik, 2015). The Systems Psychodynamic approach is concentrated on the individual only in so far as the individual is manifesting something on behalf of the whole group (Silver & Josselson, 2010). The overall task is for members to experience and examine conscious and unconscious processes of group dynamics as they manifest in the here and now (Sapochnik, 2015). This has a powerful impact for an individual. Essentially this is a meta-learning experience in which members work and learn during confusion and fear in an unfamiliar setting. They seek to understand and manage a world of social relations outside the conference confines, in an artificial environment which appears to have no tasks in tight boundaries according to Sapochnik (2015).

In this way, Group Relations Conferences accommodate the potential for transformational learning (Willerman, 2014), through critical enquiry into personal assumptions and mental models. There is a heightening of the sense of self-awareness of individual behaviour as part of the unconscious group dynamics (McCullum, 2008). The focus is on learning, "engaging with", rather than on teaching about the unconscious mind in relation to the conscious. It is about the group as a creature of the individual and the individual a creature of the group (Shapiro & Carr, 2012).

Not all shared experiences bring about learning (Willerman, 2014). In conference tradition it is explicit that learning is personal and that it is up to the participant to decide what sense is made of it (Beck & Visholm, 2014). In addition, organisers of Group Relations Conferences are explicit in their advertisement of these events that the overall task is to experience and examine conscious and unconscious processes of group dynamics as they manifest in the here and now (Sapochnik, 2015).

According to Beck and Visholm, (2014) there are four levels of learning at Group Relations Conferences. These are:
- an individual's ability to think under fire;
- development of insight into own personality and patterns of reaction;
- ability to identify what might be going on and what this might mean;

- an ability to intervene and extended anticipatory organisation-psychological understanding.

Conference learning according to Sapochnik (2015) consists of a strangely combined active and passive element in learning. In describing these elements, the author notes that the active element refers to the participant trying, as in experimenting. The passive element of the experience is as undergoing of something. This way of learning may not have an immediate impact but occurs later when the individual returns to the work environment and using the insights gained at the group relations conference can put them into practice. These are meta-learning strategies according to Sapochnik (2015). An individual who has attended a Group Relations Conference is enabled to understand and manage relations outside the conference confines (Sapochnik, 2015) as they integrate new perspectives and act on these new understanding (Willerman, 2014). Different members would do things differently dependent on the learning each member would take with them after having attended the event (Beck & Visholm, 2014). This varied and often unpredictable way of individual learning from experience (Schwartz, 2012) eventuates in some members not deriving any value from attending Group Relations Conferences.

5.5.4 The individual and the group

The public nature of the group means that as well as learning from personal experience each member has the chance to observe and to learn from every other (Bion, 1961/2004; Carlyle, 2010). In addition, they have the chance to be exposed to the observation of others and to their view of themselves according to the authors. The dynamic has implications for individual autonomy in a group, the affront of the group on individual narcissism and feelings of helplessness in a group setting as discussed next.

5.5.4.1   *Autonomy*

A concern of Freud (Freud, 1921c, as cited in Carlyle, 2010, p. 86) was that being a member of a group could lead to an individual abandoning his/her usual regard for personal morality and empathy. Instinctual aggression would be in conflict with the unifying capacity of the life force (Carlyle, 2010). The result could be that the individual may resign individual autonomy to the group even if it diminishes an individual's own

functioning (Freud, 1921c, as cited in Carlyle, 2010, p. 86). Later research concurred with this view (Freud, 1921c, as cited in Carlyle, 2010, p. 86) that individuals may resign individual autonomy in groups. A group functioning in the basic assumption mentality of one-ness (de Felice et al., 2018) for example, allows group collusion to manifest according to Tchelebi (2017). In this basic assumption mentality of the group an individual gets lost in the group and loses autonomy, a survival mechanism for the individual and the group. A group in this state experiences no creative powers and distorts reality (Tchelebi, 2017).

Group projections can carry authority for actions and behaviour far more powerfully than when these occur unsynchronised in several separate individuals (Carlyle, 2010). Individuals in groups wrestle with understanding and managing the continuous to and fro between powerful personal wishes and needs and the basic demands of the group (Bion, 1961/2004; Garland, 2010). The effect of group projections is that they are endowed with the weight of numbers and given an apparent consensual agreement threatening individual autonomy (Carlyle, 2010).

5.5.4.2   Narcissism

In any group the individual's narcissism is affronted by the reality of finding themselves part of something larger than the self (Hume, 2010). Jealousy, envy, rivalry, desire for special status and wish to control are universal and ever-present (Garland, 2010). Envy is a powerful feeling that can have devastating consequences (Cardona, 2010). Creativity and change can stir up envy both towards own capacity of creativity and creative capacity of others, intensifying resistance to change according to the author. Fear of own envy and dread over the possibility of envy with its potential for disruptiveness, aggression, rivalry, and competitive feelings may be withdrawn in fear of envy. Creating the appearance of contentment with others' successes and achievements or expressions of contempt in what others do (Cardona, 2010). Envy is the expression of own imperfections, failures, and inability to reach the ego ideal. When the gap between the self and the ideal self is too big envy becomes more prominent.

The power of envy can be so great that the sight of others having a good time will lead to engaging in destructive behaviour even if the individual or group is a loser in the process (Garland, 2010). This dynamic could manifest in Machiavellian behaviour

through covert process, coalitions, and secret alliances (Allen, 2019). Competition may increase in taking up defensive positions. Cardona (2010) says narcissistic individuals may feel too special to compete. Not competing is a characteristic of defensive narcissism. When an individual feels threatened by internal and external forces psychic retreats may manifest. A psychic retreat is not always destructive and could mean a temporary relief from anxiety (Cardona, 2010). However, in its pathological form it means giving up the competition with the other and withdrawing when external pressure is experienced as intolerable.

Power may be perversely seen as an antidote to envy to undermine or attack the other even if only to prevent others from doing what is enjoyed. Some individuals might have so much trouble with groups that they cannot be part of others. A state of isolation is then maintained in which these individuals' become loners and the group is avoided (Garland, 2010). Hopper (2009) stated that helplessness and fear of annihilation precede the emergence of envy. Envy may then be a protective defence, more so than its primary impulse according to the author.

5.5.4.3   *Helplessness*

When an individual feels his/her environment impinges too strongly upon them, a sense of helplessness can create feelings of being a victim outside of the individual's control (Garland, 2010). This can be true of positive events as well. A lack of control can undermine the sense of the self and diminish the feeling of integrity in the personality. This is aggravated when intragroup dynamics such a baD (Bion, 1961/2004) involve a tendency to have idealized expectations of people who are sought after for guidance because the potential disappointment in the object is greater (Bion, 1961/2004; Dal Forno & Merlone, 2013; Garland, 2010).

An individual's external experience will play a part in determining the internal dynamic structure of the personality (Garland, 2010). Where there is limited resilience to these feelings, anxiety and fears will be readily mobilised (Garland, 2010; McCallum 2008). Personal histories mediate the individual's experience of joining a group according to Garland, 2010). Individuals may join up powerfully with the effects of external events or context. Problems with containment (Bion, 1970; Boxer, 2014), or effects of external

events, or contexts individuals may have outside the group, can be destabilizing for the individual and the group (Garland, 2010).

The group can be Both destructive and constructive (Carlyle, 2010). There is a push and pull between the self-reflective, self-referential capabilities of individuals which are lost when given over to a group. This is particularly true of a group that preys on fears, leading to panic about its own existence. The group is fuelled by fear which allows for the legitimisation and sanitisation of destructive and murderous actions (Carlyle, 2010). Those who manage to tolerate the ins and out and put the task first, get on with the job (primary task and learning) despite personal wishes.

5.5.5 Individual learning in a group

Learning in groups according to Freud (1925/1955) does not proceed in a linear fashion. For meaning making of a new situation to occur, an account of a past experience must be taken note of in the present situation, (Freud,1925/1955; Sapochnik, 2015). According to Jung (1959/1990) when individuals transform within groups, identify with the group, or identify with one another through a particular frame of mind they have a collective experience of transformation. Experiencing transformation in a group and within oneself are two quite different things. Once removed from the group the change that may have occurred in the group does not last long in the absence of the group (Jung, 1959/1990). This is a contradiction in terms of Lawrence's (1979) living methodology. These contradictions in the literature could be why the transfer of learning outside of Group Relations Conferences remains unclear according to Hills (2018), Stokoe (2010) and Wallach, (2010) when reporting on the ambivalent experiences of transfer of learning to organisations by members of Group Relations Conferences. Dynamics which may be explained by individuals' hatred of learning by experience (Bion, 1961/2004), the tension between knowing and learning (Bion, 1962; Erlich-Ginor, 2006) and between experimenting and repeating.

5.5.5.1   Hatred of learning and commitment to development

Individuals' hatred of learning by experience and a lack of faith in such learning (Bion, 1961/2004) is not simply a negative attitude but a longing for knowing without training or development. Bion attests that there is only one kind of group that lives up to this dream. That is the group dominated by the basic assumption mentalities of

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dependence, pairing and flight/fight. In either of these group assumption mentalities an individual can sink their identity into the group. At the same time, individuals are also committed to development (Bion, 1961/2004). This state of commitment to both states of affairs (Bion, 1961/2004) leaves an individual struggling to cope. He/she is either wholeheartedly identifying with the basic assumption mentality of the group and feeling persecuted by what may be perceived as the intellectualisation of the group, and at the same time identifying with the intellectual outlook. So, he/she may then find themselves persecuted by internal objects which Bion suspects are an awareness of the emotional movements of the group. This would then mean that the individual feels both internally and externally persecuted by the group.

Individuals have a desire to be masters of their own fate according to Bion (1961/2004), tending to concentrate on those aspects of mental life which they feel they truly own. It is this phenomenon, which Bion states makes an individual willing to observe phenomena related to the group. It is not just about seeking security where the dependent group would suffice. It is that an individual seeks a state of being fully equipped for group life without undergoing the pains of growth (Bion, 1961/2004). The result is a pull towards a group structured for pairing or for fight/flight. The fight/flight group expresses an incapacity for understanding.

Should an individual clash with the group mentality it often leads to feelings of discomfort for the individual as each member is pressed to conform, leading to a loss of individuality (Hume, 2010). Therefore, an attempt to make a rational investigation into dynamics is troubled by fear. The mechanisms to defend against fear are characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid position (Hume, 2010; Klein, 1948). In the paranoid-schizoid position Bion (1961/2004) observed that the groups' preoccupation with fight/flight would lead the group to ignore all other activities, suppress them or run away from them to preserve the group.

Co-operation between individuals and groups are dependent on the degree of sophistication and skill of the individual who has developed mentally through experience and learning. Co-operation in this way between individuals and groups, occurs on a rational level in which methods are scientific and known as the work group mentality. Nevertheless, workgroup activity may at times be obstructed and/or diverted

by certain other mental activities attributed to common powerful emotional drives (Bion, 1961/2004; Sher 2003).

5.5.5.2 *Group tensions*

The constant tension between knowing and learning (Bion, 1962; Erlich-Ginor, 2006) and between experimenting and repeating, needs to be managed during Group Relations Conferences. Management is needed in service of learning through own experience by both the staff and members of these conferences (Erlich-Ginor, 2006). The role and status of the outside world is left behind in favour of the complex, demanding and absorbing role of getting to know one another. This means speaking in depth about what is going on in the self in relation to events inside and outside of the group and what is going on in the group. Listening and talking and taking group work seriously is demanding (Garland, 2010).

Towards that end, there is a need to move from narcissism to socialism (Bion, 1962/2004) or from the paranoid-schizoid state (Klein, 1959) to the depressive state, the foundation stone of growth, development, and creativity, in Group Relations Conferences and groups, individuals in a group need the capacity to reflect before acting. Members of the group need to hold back on personal aims and ambitions (Bion, 1962), when the group requires something other from each of its members. In addition, Carlyle (2010) states that love acts as a civilising factor. Change from egoism to altruism in groups can mobilise action for good and ill according to the author.

The ability to modify projections and introjections takes place in all group settings according to Garland (2010). Individuals can notice through the observation of others and through deeply felt engagement with those others, the elements in the self that attack or denigrate or nullify personal hopes and ambitions (Garland, 2010). The impulses associated with the struggles between groups is exacerbated by the experiences of shame, degradation, disenfranchisement, and inequality, inflicted from the outside (Carlyle, 2010). It is particularly powerful when difference is seen as a rationale and vehicle for prejudice, abuse, and the misuse of power (Carlyle, 2010; McRae & Short, 2010). The effect for everyone on the receiving end of such de-humanising experiences is unique. The results can be devastating when members of

groups disown and deny their own hatred, aggression, as well as victimhood and project it, to feel themselves free of it (Carlyle, 2010; McRae & Short, 2010).

Equally, love as the inverse of hatred, can be stoked up and amplified to produce idealisation. Gripped in such a group mentality an irrational wish to possess an ideal leader, idea, goal, or principle would manifest (Bion 1961/2004; Carlyle, 2010). Even if the overt behaviour is different, the groups would have a lot in common with a mob fuelled by hatred (Garland, 2010). These two groups who are enemy orientated or deity orientated are similar in that members have submerged their own capacities for individuality through, planning and reasoning and decision making into a leader (Garland, 2010). The projective process means cessation of all feelings of consideration which members of the group would otherwise show each other. Certain aspects of human behaviour i.e., cruelty or dependency are then more comfortably negotiated, when they are felt to exist outside the self (Carlyle, 2010) permitting scapegoating and ostracising of others perceived as different.

In defence of these experiences the wish to know is strong. The need not to know is constantly under attack by the need to know at Group Relations Conferences and in other groups (Bion, 1961/2004; French & Simpson, 2010; Schneider, 2005). Members who do not know what is going on are found at all Group Relations Conferences (Aram, 2012; Miller, 1990; Sapochnik, 2017). It is this sense of the unknown which is defended against. Projections of omniscience are projected onto staff reassuring the members that all is under control (Nossal, 2007; Stokoe, 2021). The design of the conference in this way serves as a protection against the unknown according to Erlich-Ginor (2006).

5.5.6 Casualties or defence of learning

Researchers, Joseph et al. (1975), stated that it is useful to consider Group Relations Conferences in terms of an input, throughput and output process as described by Miller and Rice (1967). Input is the expectations of the members; the throughput is the conference and its collective processes and the output the individual learning and its application. It is important that when advertising the events conferences must not promise more than they can possibly deliver as that could add to bitterness and disappointment (Miller & Rice, 1967). Which may lead to attacks on knowledge (Bion,

1962; Weinberg, 2016) and defence against learning (McCallum, 2008; Sapochnik, 2015).

The intention of Group Relations Conferences is to increase organisational effectiveness (Joseph et al., 1975; Pretorius et al., 2006; Tavistock Institute, 2016). Joseph et al. (1975) believed those who lost sight of this task became primarily involved in other issues. This can be extremely disruptive. Failure to maintain the contract between organising institution, staff and membership leads to the increased possibility of membership duress. Miller (1990) referred to those individuals as "casualties" of learning at Group Relations Conferences. The author stated that according to his knowledge it might be an exceedingly rare occurrence of some 0.1 percent of members of Group Relations Conferences. Miller (1990) was of the view that treating "individual disturbances" as a product of group projections almost invariably was alleviated by rigorous interpretation at group level. Later research by Aram, (2012) and Singer et al. (2018) revealed that "casualties" of Group Relations Conferences were still present at these events years after these were first presented.

Bion (1961/2004) believed that the hatred of learning or process of development may have been about the individual's wish not to do the work but to rather arrive fully equipped in a group fitted with an instinct of knowing exactly what to do without any training or development. Deriving no learning at these events could be the defences members put up against what the experience elicits in themselves. The process is perceived as arduous and the experience of undergoing a group relations conference could lead to "casualties" (Sapochnik, 2015).

5.5.6.1   Attacks on knowledge

Not knowing could be preferable to knowing for some members according to Schneider (2005). Towards this end groups could attack and destroy connections between logic, emotions, feelings and thinking and any form of thinking (Bion, 1962; Weinberg, 2016). Yet Bion (1961/2004) believed that individuals are "hopelessly committed" to development despite their hatred of having to learn from experience and lack of faith, in experiential learning. He believed it is not about a negative attitude, but rather a longed-for alternative of being a fully equipped adult without the need for training and development. Armstrong (2010) concurred with Bion (1961/2004) that the work group

mentality is an expression, at group level compulsion, to develop. The basic assumption group mentality on the other hand seeks to evade development.

5.5.6.2   *Defence of learning*

The effort that is found in getting to know, to be receptive to what is real of an experience, is relevant to learning by experience (Bion, 1962). McCallum (2008) in his research found that even though the intention of Group Relations Conferences is to help members to reflect on their behaviours under conditions where anxiety is caused by fear and conflict, diversity, and uncertainty, it would be very difficult for even the most resilient members to engage in the task of learning. The perceived sense of scarce resources may provoke members into regressive and non-adaptive patterns of behaviour despite the setting in which they are encouraged to reflect on their behaviours. This may leave members with feelings of being overwhelmed with the result that they would not be open to learning (McCallum, 2008; Sapochnik, 2015).

McCallum (2008) further argued that conference organisers do not understand the developmental needs of members, when there is a perceived lack by members of internal resources. Resources such as support by the setting and staff and previous learning and/or internal adaptive resources, such as optimism and capacity to cope with environmental challenges. Members' perception of the lack of these resources at a Group Relations Conference may further compromise learning according to McCallum (2008). Bartle (2015) in his research on trainee psychologists' experiences of learning in Group Relations Conferences considered members' different perspectives of learning and hatred of learning congruent with the views of Jung (1959/1990) and Bion (1961/2004) on learning in groups as possible explanations for the lack of learning of some members. For McCallum (2008) diverse ways of knowing need to be acknowledged. He maintains that diverse ways of knowing are understood to be determined by the cognitive and affective capacity a learner has available to his/herself as they progress through distinct stages of growth, in sum, *how* people know, not *what* they know.

The aim of Group Relations Conferences is to assist members to move from fragmentation to integration (Bion, 1962, 1965/2018; Sapochnik, 2015) while considering possible applications of learning to organisational life. In essence a

transformational process, as described by Willerman (2014), is critical to organisations of the type which call for critical examining of assumptions and biases guiding the behaviour of their employees and the tensions that assumptions and biases create in groups.

Yet there remain the "casualties" to be considered:

The terrifying dimension of the psychotic state of mind (the madness-inducing quality that rumour has it, Group Relations Conferences in the Tavistock tradition foster in the form of "casualties") is feared not only by the conference membership but also by their staff, who may lose sight of the fragility of the interdependence between container and contained if they conceive themselves as merely a concrete receptacle of the membership's distress. (Sapochnik, 2017, p.179)

Aram (2012) stated that the concept of the casualty in the "tradition" of Group Relations Conferences had reached a perverse degree. It seemed to the author that there where attempts to use its members at some group relations conference as guinea pigs to support and protect the "victim" through the valences of others in group, unwittingly reinforcing the potential casualty, perversely in keeping with the "tradition".

5.6   CHAPTER SUMMARY

The literature review satisfied the literature aims of this study which was to conceptualise Group Relations Conferences and Group Relations Conference learning.

A detailed overview, underpinning this thesis and its application in Group Relations Conferences and group relations conference learning was achieved. A literature review of evolving Group Relations Conferences as containers to explore and learn about group relations in organisations were conceptualised in general and specific. This provided a glimpse into what is considered a group relations conference from the traditionists and non-traditionists perspective and the impact of presenting these in the postmodern world. Interrogating the myth around the gap in the literature about members experiences at these events, aimed to shed light on the gap in the literature about Group Relations Conferences. Lastly experiential learning as applied at Group Relations Conferences as a method of learning and the impact thereof on the individual

and the group was conceptualised. In conclusion the impact of attacks on knowledge and defence of learning at these events was conceptualised.

CHAPTER 6: THE FIVE-DAY REVOLUTION: A TALE OF THE DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES, EXCUSE ME BUT YOUR TEETH ARE IN MY NECK

"…we felt like we were all a bunch of prisoners…I was finally going home, I was free because I was actually quite homesick by the time, I left…we're departing everyone taking their own way, we were just happy, just one big family…That is all you see now. It's no longer like that when we got there" (The RIDE participants 2000-2015)*.*

6.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the participants' experiences of the RIDE as a five-day revolution are explored in four themes, as generated from the data seen in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1

The RIDE in Four Themes

Note. Hell image by Gordon Johnson from Pixabay. Flowchart, Own work.

The participants' experience of the **Five-day revolution** is described in theme one. How they experienced the five-day revolution is explored in the second theme. A five-day revolution described as, **a dangerous and delirious zero-sub game**. In the third theme**, a new dawn one of those with vampires,** why the participants may have experienced the RIDE as they experienced it, is investigated. Lastly the fourth theme, **keep moving safety first! No fires on the ship**, the learning the participants took with them across the boundaries of the RIDE is described as well as how it was applied once back at work.

The term "a five-day revolution" was ascribed to the RIDE by Mr Drie during the FANI. His description and experience initially seemed quite apt based on other participants' experiences. A place that "reminded of black kids being beaten up" Mr Een said, referring to the apartheid era. An island which held the massive trauma of South African society, which perhaps prompted Mr Drie's comment, "we had a hell of a RIDE there…". A comment consciously about the crossing of the stormy Atlantic Ocean and perhaps unconsciously, about the experience of the RIDE itself, which was referred to as "hell". That as participants took up or defended against opportunities to work on the primary task, exercise personal authority, respect task and boundaries.

To state that all participants experienced the RIDE in the same way or spoke about it in the same way would be an oversimplification of the complexity of their experiences. However as will become evident in this chapter all the participants were part of the larger system where individuals carry different things on behalf of the system. What the participants experienced at the RIDE is described next, in the first of the four themes.

6.2   THE FIVE-DAY REVOLUTION

The data affirmed the complexity of the participants experiences of the RIDE in that it appeared as if there was more to the sociological description of the RIDE than first implied. The data provided evidence of an action of movement, a revolution through the RIDE system. Experienced by the participants in a symbolic lemniscate (∞), defined in chapter 4, of feedback loops as indicated by the SID of the focus group. Similar to the non-linear description of movement described by Ms Ses during the FANI when she described experiencing a "delirium", defined in chapter 4.

In the sub-themes of this theme, I explore the dynamics of this revolution through the RIDE system from the participants point of entry into the RIDE, what the participants experienced during the RIDE and concluding with an experience the focus group participants shared with me which they said drove all their experiences at the RIDE.

6.2.1 Entering into of the RIDE

Initially, the participants seemed to have different expectations of what they would find at the RIDE and how they would study diversity dynamics, a shared common interest of all participants.

A holiday was expected by some participants. During the FANI Ms Mbini said, "…ooh we are going on holiday… [being a] …deserted area made it feel so much more intimate". Mr Seven said, "Robben Island just extraordinary in itself" similar to Ms Tlhano's comment that, "The best thing about RIDE for me was that by participating there, we were able to go to other venues on Robben Island that as a tourist you are not allowed to go". Yet not all participants entered the RIDE with positive expectations.

On a less positive note, Ms Vier said, "I went in quite cautiously". An experience she shared with Mr Drie and Mr Seven. Mr Seven said, "I was a little bit prepared", reading up about the island before he attended, remembering a past experience of the RIDE. Mr Drie's experience was similar when he said, "I had some inkling…about what to expect" after reading about the methodology, even though he had not attended the RIDE before.

In addition to the participants expectations about what would be found at the RIDE and expectations of how diversity would be studied those seemed different to those of the director and consultants' expectations. The participants expected "rigorous diversity discussions" as Ms Tlhano shared with me during the FANI and to "take in and take in and at some point, to say something" as Ms Mbini described. According to the conference brochure (Pretorius et al., 2006) the RIDE participants received during the opening plenary, the director and consultants expected participants to "study the dynamics of diversity in terms of its core concepts as it happens in the here-and-now" (Pretorius et al., 2006, p. 7). In addition, the conference brochure contained information about the programme, the mission statement, the primary task, and the methodology

among others. It would seem that these different expectations of the RIDE and what was experienced set the scene for a "hell of a RIDE" as Mr Drie described, that as participants crossed the physical and psychological boundaries of the RIDE.

6.2.2 Crossing boundaries

Boundaries enabled both the participants and staff to work on the primary task of the RIDE. Boundaries at the RIDE were both conscious physical boundaries between leisure areas and the building which contained the RIDE and unconscious psychological boundaries of; time, authority, task, role, and identity (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). However, the participants' relatedness (Stapley, 2006) to the RIDE was complex.

The first boundary to cross was that of the Atlantic Ocean to Robben Island followed by the boundary between the living quarters and the building in which the RIDE was to be presented. While these boundary conditions were recognised by the participants crossing the physical boundaries and psychological boundaries appeared to be difficult for some. Mr Seven observed a member who, "came with very fancy clothes and high heel shoes and she complained bitterly because over the rocks and the rough paths, she struggled with her high-heeled shoes". In addition, boundaries of time were experienced linear as described by Mr Een when he said, "…so that was sort of day one, but then you went to day 2, day 3, day 4…". Similarly, time boundaries also appeared to be difficult as Mr Seven and Mr Een observed themselves and the group "kicking" against those boundaries.

On the first event of the RIDE, the opening plenary, all participants and the director and staff were present. The task of the plenary was, "*to provide information about the experience and its events, as well as to discuss the crossing of boundaries into and out of events*" (Pretorius et al., 2006, p.11). The seating arrangement was cinema style as Ms Tlhano observed regarding the consultants, "there were four of them at the RIDE and they were there in the front…" an observation similar to Mr Een's who said, "the facilitators came in and they sat just in front" during the FANI.

Not one participant referred to the opening plenary in name. It appeared to be confused with the LSG and other events. On recalling their experiences of the RIDE during the

data collection process it appeared that the boundaries between events became blurred or forgotten. This is evident in the comment about the consultants not speaking during the opening plenary. Both Mr Een and Ms Tlhano referred to the consultants not speaking when recalling the "first session" during the FANI. Ms Tlhano said, "they were not talking for a long time, and we wanted them to talk" a statement which contradicts the opening plenary's primary task, to provide information to the participants.

The apparent forgetting of the opening plenary seemed to have served the participants in some way. Forgetting about the opening plenary, suggested the primary task was forgotten. Alternatively, it may have been clear what the primary task was, however, the participants may have preferred to frame the RIDE as a place of no structure.

6.2.3 The RIDE a place of no structure

The RIDE management team created the structure of the RIDE which included boundaries in which the participants could feel safe and in control of their learning. However, it would seem as if the participants felt exactly the opposite. During the FANI Ms Ses said there was, "no safe space", Mr Drie using a metaphor said, "you've jumped off the cliff with hardly any safety gear". Ms Tlhano said she, "needed to create safety for conversations to happen". Safety was described as belonging to the container during the focus group. Ms Vier said, "Safety will go with your container" however, Ms Ses said, "Just tell me where's your container or your containment?" The participants were unable to see where the focus group had positioned those cards to the wall. When two cards namely safety and regression were found outside of the boundaries of the clusters the focus group had created.

The apparent inability to see the container or the containment of the RIDE was reflected in the participants, experiences of framing the RIDE as a place of no structure, information shared with me during the FANI. Ms Ses being the Skype participant who, not surprisingly, found it difficult to see the cards of container and containment on the wall, seemed to carry the inability to see the structure of the RIDE on behalf of the participants.

The internal phantasy i.e., psychic reality (Bion, 1965/2018) of an "unstructured environment" as Mr Drie described, in contrast to the structure of the RIDE the staff provided, seemed to create confusion for the participants. Unable to recognise boundary and the conditions which provided the structure of the RIDE. Mr Een said, "It was weird that there was no structure". Similarly, Ms Ses said, "in a sense there was no structure at all…" describing "…unstructured screaming for two days". Mr Drie said the unstructured environment, "was very difficult for me to click". A confusion which seemed to be shared by Ms Mbini when she said, "how to explain it, but you get into the room the first time…we're having a session and you, kind of like, so what's happening". It would appear as if learning in an unfamiliar setting where "those rules" of a familiar, "workshop… were not there" as Ms Tlhano said, seemed to create some anxiety for the participants.

Anxiety was a major feature of the RIDE experience. This was anxiety which were confirmed by the focus group who described Apprehension and Trepidation as experiences of the RIDE with words such as, "shock", "group power", "grotesque", "ugly", "dangerous", "powerful force", "shocking" and 'judgement". An experience the focus group defined as "not knowing what to expect, yet not fearful, rather attending with trepidation". Similar to what the participants shared with me during the FANI when participants such as Mr Drie observed that, "everybody's uncomfortable" and Mr Een said it was, "weird…strange". Corroborated by Mr Seswai experience when he said "no one was talking, no one said anything, and we were just sitting there. I thought maybe we are just crazy". Experiencing confusion, being uncomfortable, feeling weird, strange, and crazy as the participants described seems to indicate that the participants felt they had no autonomy at the RIDE.

Experiencing dependence instead of autonomy was described by Ms Mbini when she observed that the consultants, describing them as facilitators, treated the participants as "a bunch of prisoners and I think at some point it was us against the facilitators, because they treated us hostile in a way…". It would appear as if experiencing the RIDE as a place of no structure, a need for autonomy paradoxically created a wish for "some form of structure…" which was already there even though it could not be recognised. In addition, it appeared as if the primary task was "safe" within the boundary of an apparently forgotten opening plenary and the pages of the conference

brochure carried by the participants across the boundaries of different events. Keeping the primary task hidden the participants appeared to perpetuate the "forgetting" in not understanding their or the consultants' roles during the RIDE, while these were explained during the opening plenary as well as in the conference brochure the participants carried.

6.2.4 The triad: director, consultants, and participants

Confusing the consultant's role to that of facilitators and leadership and not co-creator of learning is a signature stance between the management team of a Group Relations Conference and the participants of such a conference. Ms Ses said there was confusion about, "what is everybody's role, what are we trying to discuss or what are… what, what, what Nothing". It would seem a dynamic of us (participants) against them (consultants) started to emerge. Mr Een said during the RIDE he attended that there was a certain, "leadership position that the facilitators maintained and a certain position that we had as, the participants". It was curious to find that the issue of the divide and split between the consultants and the participants, in contrast to the role of the consultant as co-creator of learning at the RIDE, remained in the discourse of the participants during the interviews.

Despite the participants having attended the RIDE and learning with the consultants during that event, Mr Een said, "as participants you went through this experience and it's a different experience, I am assuming for the participant than for the facilitator" during the FANI. Mr Seven seemed to agree with Mr Een's observation when in a note to me after the FANI he said it, "appears to have been very eventful also for the directors" after stating he gained "new insights" after our interview. The participants' view of the consultants seemed to be an indication of the participants paranoia in the system and a phantasy of us "against them" during the RIDE. These views seemed to have crossed the boundaries of the event itself. There seems to be to some residual anger towards the consultants, who seemed to be blamed for the participants experiences at the RIDE many years, after the event.

During the RIDE, the participants felt the need, "to split off or divide and conquer all" as Ms Vier observed. A need which may have risen from the paranoia in the system where participants felt that "the staff members are ganging up against me".

Where according to Ms Vier both the management team and the participants felt each group were "talking about us" in her role of being both trainee consultant and participant. It seems, in defence against the primary task, the participants preferred not to take up their roles and personal authority of their learning as that may have been experienced as challenging, scary, and frustrating.

Working in a familiar workshop setting might have been preferable to the participants as Ms Tlhano observed "I expected that we were going to engage on the diversity issues in the country and we never did". She said, "how the thing was facilitated frustrated other people and me" during the FANI. Similarly, Mr Seven said he observed the "predictable anger and frustration at everything…" from members during the RIDE. Describing his own frustration he said, "We didn't have enough time to deal with what we wanted to do…that was very frustrating". In addition, it would appear that the consultants were seen to be withholding from the participants, as Mr Drie's observed during the FANI of the consultants. He said, "I'm being the wise consultant you know deep secret; you know…that can see everything that says nothing". Thereby corroborating Ms Ses' experience of receiving nothing from the consultants. She said, "If you cannot intervene on an emotional level at least intervene on a process level". This was when she felt attacked by the group and requested assistance from the consultants during the RIDE.

It would appear that the participants irrationally maintained the phantasy of "all knowing" consultants withholding learning. The participants entertained no thought about the impossibility of such phantasy but rather attacked boundaries in a fight against the primary task. The participants then appeared to take control of their learning not in service of the primary task but in the need to feel safe.

6.2.5 Fight for autonomy

The groups and participants need for safety and autonomy was complex. There appeared to be participants who felt unsafe and uncontained, as well as participants who felt safe and contained during the RIDE. Ms Mbini saying, she felt more "intimate" at the RIDE, supports this situation, despite her statement that the facilitators treated them with hostility. However, not all the participants experienced the

consultants as hostile either. Mr Seven's comment illustrates this when he said, "It was just so exciting to meet people who could kind of highlight issues so concisely so well…I'm just full of admiration for him". He referred to a director/consultant by name. Nonetheless, he did mention rebelling against authority.

Some participants, such as Mr Seven's valence (Bion,1961/2004) to instigate a rebellion may have been used by the group to rebel against the primary task and learning by experience. Mr Seven said he "did not respond well to authority…bit of a rebel I don't want to take instruction from anyone" and Ms Vier said, "my personality structure has the tendency to comply with authority but also test, challenge in fact". Rebelling against and challenging the primary task it would seem that Pseudo-consultants were recruited by the group to contain on behalf of the group. Not surprisingly both Ms Vier and Ms Tlhano seemed to be roped into the pseudo-consultant roles. Probably because they were more "authorised" to take up consultant roles outside of the RIDE, in their professional capacities.

The concerns of Ms Vier and Ms Tlhano in their pseudo-consultant roles seemed to revolve around the way they were worked with. Ms Vier said, "I feel being led into a trap… I am putting myself out there being worked with or not. Finding it also very difficult to contain to work with the groups". Safety was also a concern for Ms Tlhano who said, "I need to create safe space for conversations and if my emotions get into it, then I'm not holding the space anymore".

In addition to their roles as consultants outside of the RIDE it would appear as if the valences Ms Vier and Ms Tlhano had for the consultant/pseudo-consultant role was further solidified in their own views about the consultant's ability to contain on behalf of the group. Ms Vier said, "the consultants think they know but they don't know" and Ms Tlhano said, "the facilitators were there, and they did not talk for a long time…and I was just seeing myself getting more and more irritated that there is a lack of direction in the group". This seemed to play into the distrust some participants had of the consultant's ability to contain on their behalf, fuelling the hostility towards the RIDE consultants.

It does seem both Ms Vier and Ms Tlhano were not entirely unaware that they were being used by the group. Ms Vier was aware of this "trap" when she said, "knowing the dumb thing that is going on and taking it or not, working with it or not, I am quite aware of that". Similarly, Ms Tlhano also seemed to be aware of how she was being used by the group when she said, "whenever your button is pressed, you need to pause and reflect … don't even fight with the other person". In response on how to contain on behalf of the group Ms Vier said "I need to feel the guilt, or I need to feel the justification. I didn't go there I stayed quite neutral to say, you know what just respect both sides' opinions and feelings, and it's also their stuff". The way in which Ms Tlhano and Ms Vier felt they needed to take the role as passively as possible, provides some evidence that taking up the role as pseudo-consultant was not enough. It would seem that the pseudo-consultant needed to reflect the psychic reality of emotionless consultants to the group to maintain the phantasy.

The apparent need for no emotion and emotionless pseudo-consultants was curious as the findings indicated the RIDE group was far from emotionless. Perceiving the consultants as emotionless as Mr Drie said, "I get the feeling that somewhere in the back of their minds, there is a real Tavistockian looking over their shoulder saying don't smile don't be friendly remember it is an engine". This contradicts the "metaphysical fight" Ms Ses experienced at the RIDE and fighting Mr Seswai, Ms Vier, Ms Tlhano, Mr Seven and Mr Drie said they experienced at the RIDE. Emotions which may have been difficult to work with necessitating a psychic reality of the emotionless. Yet experiencing dependence on the consultants to manage those on behalf of the participants but fighting against additional emotion begs the question: should the consultants' hypotheses about what might be going on in the group cause additional emotional reactions from the group.

Replacing the RIDE consultants with pseudo-consultants as passive receptors to the group's emotions may have been about the groups need to pour in freely all their emotions into the pseudo consultants in solidarity with the group. The risk of having the groups emotions reflected by the consultants then circumvented. Forcing the pseudo-consultants to "take in and take in" as Ms Mbini expected to do, diverted the groups unsatisfied need to "take in and take" in. The Pseudo-consultants took up that role on behalf of the group. The risk of allowing the consultants of the RIDE to contain

all the emotion of the group and have that transformed into a learning experience may have been too unbearable for the group to address. It seemed that the group felt safe in the knowledge that it was the RIDE consultants themselves who were hostile and not the group itself.

6.2.6 Power dynamics

Power dynamics at the RIDE were complex. It would seem as if the groups experience of dependence and loss of autonomy held elements of powerlessness, feeling forced to work on the primary task as prescribed by the RIDE. It would seem as if the power dynamics were more than just those acted out between the consultants and participants during the RIDE. Power dynamics seemed to include the power dynamics of the whole RIDE system which included the hierarchy of the organisation presenting the RIDE and the larger system it was situated within

A consumer relationship (Beck & Visholm, 2014) seemed to emerge. Evidenced in Mr Een's comment when he said, "I think we paid R15,000.00 for this thing, which seemed like a lot of money for us…". A comment which seemed to imply that the participants were not getting their money's worth. The "power of the consumer" or the power the RIDE group held was described by the focus group participants in contrast to experiences of powerlessness when Ms Ses said the group was a "powerful force". An experience shared by Mr Drie during the FANI when he said, "if you have sat in the spiral" referring to the seating arrangement of the LSG, "you know exactly how powerful a group is". Yet there seemed to be some apprehension and trepidation about the power of the group as the focus group included the words "group power" and "powerful force" in their description of their experience of apprehension and trepidation during the RIDE. It would appear that there was an element of caution about the power of the group as both participants and the group defended against the primary task.

6.2.7 Defence against the primary task

Everything thus far; the preoccupation with the structure of the RIDE, the fight for autonomy, and the power dynamics, all served the participants in avoiding and attacking a primary task imprisoned within the boundary of the opening plenary.

Questioning the validity of the primary task and its methodology seemed to give the participants more ammunition to attack the primary task and resist delving deeper into the dynamics of the group. Curiously, the suitability of the primary task for different personalities was questioned by the two pseudo-consultants indicating further valences for the group to use in its resistance to the task. Ms Vier said her personality structure both complied and challenged authority. Ms Tlhano said, "personality can stand in your way of you even enjoying the whole experience". In addition, Mr Seven said "what you call psychoanalytic, Freudian kind of style, he is a little bit not quite my style, my orientation" alluding to his personality.

Personality was not the only limiting factor "of following that approach" according to Ms Ses. Ms Tlhano felt that "the model does not allow… talk about the discrimination" and Mr Drie felt, "it's the same with every methodology it has a philosophy right in the middle and of course it is laughable". The participants had suggestions about how to overcome these limitations of the primary task. Ms Tlhano said, "their recruitment strategy must be very clear around the intellectual demands of that model". Mr Drie felt the model was good for "recruiting spies… but…You are not going to become a supporter of that" he said.

Attacking the methodology and rendering personality, a requirement for learning served the participants in that it created immunity to learning with the idea that nothing could be learnt at the RIDE, as identity cannot change, no transformation could be possible, in that way the participants were safe from learning and safe from the primary task. This is Ms Mbini experienced the RIDE as "intimate". During the FANI she said she did not experience any life shattering moment at the RIDE because, "I am already very self-aware" alluding to the possibility that no change was possible for herself.

A possible reason for attacking the task in this manner may be held in the words of Mr Seven who said the "psychodynamic approach would actually facilitate…, but it's pretty scary". A challenge Mr Drie alluded to when he said the "whole stance of the facilitator to say, I am not here to tell you how you should behave, and what you should do [was] extremely challenging". Learning by experience

was a "not fun experience" as Mr Een said. Yet not all participants shared the same experiences. Some participants spoke about the RIDE being a great experience such as Ms Mbini. Ms Tlhano shared that one of her colleagues "enjoyed" the RIDE and Mr Seven said the RIDE was a "remarkable experience".

Even though the experience could be challenging and scary, it appeared not to be so for all participants. However, learning by experience was described as hell for some participants, as indicated at the beginning of this theme. How long participants would then have to stay in hell or how quickly they could escape from it may have been important for the participants survival, possibly necessitating any means necessary to escape.

6.2.7.1   Sabotaged and constrained by time
Anxiety about the amount of time participants had at hand was described by Mr Een during the FANI when he said, "I never thought about time…when you were in the group and you are aware there is a boundary, it's ten minutes, it's 20 minutes, it's 30minutes". Curiously he was not counting down time as would be the "norm" when calculating how much time was available to complete a task but extending it. Providing some evidence about the anxiety around time and tensions around time as Mr Seven described. He said, "so I think that there was a tension, I just remember being very tense, being very tense [repeating twice] and the time issue was very strong there".

Concerns were also raised around wasting time. Mr Seswai said, "when we first got there…I was just thinking it was just a waste of time". Similarly, Mr Een said, "people in the group were debating…, this seems like a total waste of our time…". What participants thought time could do to them was curious. Mr Drie said, "we're not going to get kneecapped" during the focus group and during the FANI Mr Seven said there was a "constant feeling that we were being sabotaged by time if you like" at the RIDE. The preoccupation with time may have been about escaping a tense and challenging situation as Ms Mbini alluded to during the FANI when she said, "the week took long in as much as it was a great experience…I was finally going home".

The preoccupation with time could also have been about performance anxiety. During the focus group Mr Drie said, "I want to just…do we have time…". In response to Mr Drie's question, whether there was enough time to work on the IQA task I said, "We've still got time" to which Mr Drie responded "To waste? Mr Een then said, "We don't want to…we don't want to waste cards here…Until we've…until we've decided". The focus group participants concern about what they could do with time and the tension around time seemed similar to those shared with me during the FANI. In addition, there was an element of autonomy the participants wanted to exercise in terms of the time available to themselves evident in this interaction.

Feeling sabotaged or kneecapped by time added to the participants experiences of powerlessness in the group. Blaming time for the sabotage and kneecapping in the system maintained the psychic reality of experiencing themselves as passive and powerless, in defence against the primary task. Differences in experiences provide some evidence of the split between those possibly working on the primary task, perhaps feeling kneecapped to do so, while others in the group might have felt sabotaged in working on the primary task or the defended task of the group.

That dynamic seemed to play out as participants had the power and freedom to do what they wanted at the RIDE, even sabotage the RIDE. Ms Mbini said, "in terms of our so-called freedom, I do not know how free we really are" when speaking about her political freedom. Yet in the context of the RIDE, it could be a comment on the RIDE itself about what could or could not happen and the consequences of those decisions. Mr Drie said, "there is freedom, but we are also dominated unnecessarily…by trying to be free". The participants trying to free themselves of the primary task by calling for robust engagements and debates as Ms Tlhano expected seemed to have consequences for the participants. It would appear as though working with the defended task participants were aware of "shallow so polite conversation" as Ms Ses described.

The consequence of a shallow polite conversation is evidence for the participants not fully engaging with the primary task of the RIDE. That seemed to allow the group to morph with the least amount of effort to maintain an acceptable status quo while

appearances were upheld that the group was working with the primary task of the RIDE.

6.2.7.2 *Mutating transformation*

The appearance of working on the primary task seemed to include splitting the group into undifferentiated sub-groups to maintain the status quo of what the demographics of the larger South African society needed to look like at a given point in time.

During the early years RIDE was presented just as South Africa was entering and working with her democracy the familiar split between black and white seemed to be sought during the RIDE. Intolerable to some perhaps however, a familiar group, in the South African setting of apartheid. Ms Vier said, "there was a black group but there was a white group". Mr Drie said, "we just about had a fifty/fifty split between white and black…it was whites on one side and blacks the other, you could have drawn a line through the middle" during the FANI.

It would appear as if the RIDE group needed to reflect the post-apartheid and later years of South African society by being more diverse to be identified as a homogeneous group. The RIDE group seemed to fit that criterion when Mr Seven said, "we had a typically diverse group there". Over the years the diversity in a group seemed to change and the loss of a particular group (white?) within the group became noticeable. Change seemed reflected in the RIDE group when Ms Mbini said that "we do not have a lot of white people here" having attended in 2015.

Performance anxiety then seemed to be attended to and the appearance of working on the primary task to reflect the larger South African society of a particular time resulted in shallow mutated transformations while the participants continued to defend against the primary task and maintain the status quo of the group with no real learning or transformation taking place.

6.2.8 Shattering psychic reality

Going below mutative transformation the phantasy of a "gelled" group Ms Mbini described could not be maintained indefinitely considering participants awareness of oddness of, "different race groups are now in charge…odd when different age

groups are in charge, odd when women are now in charge…" as Mr Een said during the FANI. Referring to a female director of the RIDE. In addition to recognising cultures and socio-economic ties such as when Mr Drie said, "there was one Zulu woman, I think she had some royal blood" at the RIDE he attended. Similarly, Mr Seven said a "Swazi princess" was present at his RIDE and Ms Tlhano found she was "preoccupied with what I felt was the lack of people on the same level". Other differences such as religion and language in addition to race were also recognised when Ms Vier said, "I was the only white person, Afrikaans white person with an English white consultant in the small group". These projections allowed participants to cast themselves and others into roles, while stereotyping some individuals in the group. The us and them dynamic then included an additional dynamic of me and not like me in the group in which participants searched for "who we will RIDE with and who we would kill" according to Mr Drie.

To see the other as "not me" the participants needed to hold up mirrors to see the "me" in which to compare themselves. The mirror then becoming "a thing" according to Mr Drie during the RIDE.

6.2.8.1   Reflections in mirrors, the shock of the real

The metaphor of a mirror appeared in both sets of data. A mirror only reflects that which is reflected into it, and yet during the focus group Mr Drie said, that when participants gazed into a mirror they saw "Grotesque, shock, dangerous and all those…". During the FANI Ms Tlhano said, "When I truly hold up the mirror it is something, I am battling with". Ms Ses said, "this method maybe really so unleashes the beast". It would seem when participants gazed into the mirror it was a "shock when you see yourself for real" as Mr Drie said during the focus group.

In reaction to seeing the "shock when seeing yourself" it appeared as if the participants then sought an "enemy" which needed to be "annihilated" as Mr Drie said during the FANI. It would appear as if the reflected beasts in the mirror could not be recognised. The annihilation, considering who would be killed and who participants would RIDE with, alluded to an experience of psychic violence for the participants of the RIDE. During the FANI Ms Vier said there was an "impression of real danger…coming from outside". Mr Seswai experienced the RIDE group "chopping each other's head". Ms

Ses said, "It was quite obvious they were beaten deep". Threats seemed to have been internalised as expressed when Mr Seswai said, "I don't think we would be alive hey". Threats were also not confined to the boundaries of the RIDE. Mr Drie observed another member of his RIDE say, "don't worry we already have her address" threatening the member who would not conform to the group requirements.

As indicated the splits during the RIDE were then no longer solely directed at the management team of the RIDE but rather to elements within the self which sought to split the good from the bad by denying the beasts existed and searching for an enemy that produced those beasts. As the participants attempted to maintain the status quo in defence against the primary task with threats of violence and of exclusion.

6.2.8.2   Who will we RIDE with and who will we kill?

The participants appeared to use a number of diversity markers during the RIDE to decide who they could RIDE with and who they would kill. It appeared to be risky for participants had they wanted to take up personal authority and work on the primary task shattering the psychic reality of the group. The vulnerability the participants may have experienced is evident in the statement of Ms Vier when she said she could have been "skinned alive" had she said something at the RIDE which others did not like. Ms Mbini observing a colleague of hers during the RIDE said, "He's just hiding behind the nutshell of an exterior that makes you think he's something that he's not". Curiously, Ms Ses seemed to deny her own vulnerability when she said "I won't even say vulnerable" even though she said she experienced the RIDE as a metaphysical fight. During the focus group Mr Drie said, there was a "…fear of losing your shape, losing your favourite convictions", a "loss of a limb" Ms Vier said. Similar to Mr Seswai comment about chopping heads during the FANI.

It would appear that remaining with stereotyping participants may have felt safe and justified in splitting the us and them dynamics along those lines. According to Ms Ses, "the level of stereotyping is so deep and so ingrained... I want to almost say have an inability to see past the stereotype" during the FANI. Ms Ses observation seemed to ring true in the way participants stereotyped one another at the RIDE. Mr Seven stereotyping a Swazi princess said she was, "a very interesting character…she came with very fancy clothes and high heels…was completely out of her depth, completely

I mean she didn't know how to handle what was going on". Both Mr Seven and Ms Vier stereotyping members of the RIDE who had been part of the "liberation movement" (Mr Seven), some of whom had been "inmates on Robben Island" (Ms Vier), described the members as, "very angry, very frustrated in many ways (Mr Seven) … two very, very, angry men," said Ms Vier. Stereotyping along language as a diversity marker, Mr Drie said one of the members of the RIDE were experiencing problems with the language used at the RIDE. He offered to help and said the member, "had to write down a lot of words to come ask me what those fancy psychological terms mean".

Not only did participants stereotype members of the group they too experienced stereotyping from the group. During a small group event at the RIDE, she attended Ms Vier said it, "turned into a racist thing about white people thinking they know everything and needing to help black people". In addition to describing the RIDE as intimate Ms Mbini also described the RIDE as "intrusive" when she said, "I remember at some point we discussed the colour of my skin and the colour of my eyes…it was like, but you know [Ms Mbini] is white. No but [Ms Mbini] is not white". Similarly, Ms Ses experiencing stereotypical behaviour against herself said, "I really don't fit the stereotype in I almost want to say a any form or fashion".

Projections and counter projections appeared to make the participants question, "what is real? How shocking is real, how can we express, how do we find words for real? As Mr Drie said during the focus group. It could be argued that splitting and shattering of the psychic reality of the group which could be shocking, as participants confronted reality, enabled the participants to take up personal authority and work on the primary task. The participants reflected on what was happening in the group and how it related to themselves. That seemed to be evident in Mr Seswai comment about observing a member being attacked verbally by another. Mr Seswai said, "I'm not that kind of a person who will hold grudges". However, if he was the same person as the "guy who was attacking the white lady there" he implied his reactions would have been different, in a scenario he came up across as a black employee and white "racist" boss. Alternatively avoiding working with others by "watching other things" as Ms Tlhano said not working on the primary task may have been about participants own vulnerability. By not going much deeper than prejudice and stereotyping, the phantasy that diversity could be worked with safely and without risk could be maintained.

In contrast to shattering the psychic reality of the group to enable the participants to work on the primary task it would appear as if homogeneity, by shattering, skinning, and slashing at individuality, was meant to ensure the survival of the psychic reality of the group. Taking risks to express similarities or differences regarding the primary task may have been too threatening for some participants. Attesting to the power of the group the focus group viewed with apprehension and trepidation. An experience which the focus group participants indicated influenced all experiences of the RIDE.

6.2.9   Interconnected experiences

The focus group spoke about the RIDE as an experience of interconnected experiences which included apprehension and trepidation influencing all other experiences of the RIDE. The interconnectedness of experiences was visualised during the IQA of the RIDE as the focus group participants used what they called "intersecting" cards between different clusters of cards. Two cards with the words "mirror, shock of the real" and "real" were positioned between a cluster the participants named Apprehension and Trepidation and Dusk and Dawn as seen in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2

Interconnected experiences

These intersecting cards and others (elaborated on in subsequent sections) were placed long before any of the clusters were named. This seemed to indicate that the participants were clear about what they had experienced regardless of the name ascribed to the experience even though the task of the IQA was to name experiences. What was important for the focus group was that "I don't think there's…one can put a boundary around any of these" Ms Vier said referring to the different clusters

of cards they had not yet named at that time. Mr Drie said, "some of these things obviously belong to that…it's a Venn diagram where this cut across that". The use of the word "mirror" as an intersecting card at that time was that the words in the first cluster of cards "intersect with mirror" Mr Drie said.

The focus group participants based that decision on considering the word "grotesque" in relation to the mirror, which Mr Drie said, "means shockingly". Being shocked by seeing the "ugly" and "monsters" both Ms Ses and Mr Drie described, alluded to a difficult space in-between to cross. In addition to a RIDE which Mr Drie described as "the whole thing is about fear and about risk" the focus group participants felt the need to describe as Apprehension and Trepidation. What this meant for the participants is described next.

6.2.10 Apprehension and Trepidation

The focus group participants chose to rationalise this experience of the RIDE, which influenced all other experiences, with "a nice pairing" of words (Mr Een). Searching Google and dictionaries to describe their experience of the RIDE the focus group participants decided that "apprehension is nice. Trepidation is tremulous, fear, alarm or agitation and perturbation. So, trepidation also sounds nice. So, trepidation and the other one is also nice," said Mr Een. It was curious that the focus group participants chose to name this experience as such, and that Mr Een seemed to be doing most of the work on behalf of the focus group. It would appear Mr Een's valence for rationalising which he may been more "authorised" to do in his professional capacity resulted in the group to work on their behalf. In addition, during the FANI Mr Een observed participants were, "trying to intellectualise everything … trying to explain things rationally and not going into the parts where it is a bit uncomfortable" during the RIDE. An experience which seemed to be reflected in the focus group.

It would appear the focus group participants may not have wanted to go into those issues that reminded them of an uncomfortable experience at the RIDE, so much so that they needed to remove the name "Fear slash Risk" initially ascribed to this experience by Mr Drie and Mr Een from the data and to it give to Mr Drie to take home with him. It seems it was not only Mr Een's valence, which was used to hold a difficult experience, but Mr Drie's as well. The data will show they seemed to be less risk averse

than other participants. Naming an experience which was about fear and risk with a nice pairing of words may have been a wish of the focus group participants that the experience had been different. It would appear that valences of individuals were used in the focus group as they had been during the RIDE to force homogeneity of the group.

In this way the psychic reality of the focus group that the RIDE was filled with apprehension and trepidation and not fear, and risk was preserved by removing those words, which may have been too anxiety provoking. Yet in the definition of the rationalised words the participants did name the fear, the alarm, the agitation, and the perturbation of the RIDE between nice words. The focus group participants then seemed to be defended subjects (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Hollway & Jefferson, 2008) not telling their stories as it exactly was. Further evidence for the participants not telling their stories as it was, was expressed when the participants seemed surprised at their experience of the focus group and the IQA of the RIDE when Mr Drie said he had "hoped for a little bit of pain…but we managed to keep it nice" and Mr Een said, the IQA experience was "fun and nice" seemingly in contrast to their experience of the RIDE.

Fear and risk were initially explicitly expressed by the focus group participants before defending against those with apprehension and trepidation. During the FANI fear was not explicitly expressed but "danger" was. Ms Ses said the RIDE was a "dangerous game". Ms Vier described danger coming from the outside. Mr Seven spoke about pushing "subterranean changes which are quite dangerous if not dealt with" and Mr Drie described members not wanting to learn because, "some cases are just too dangerous". Danger which was included in the experience of apprehension and trepidation by the focus group participants.

In the theme to follow the participants experiences of a dangerous and delirious zero-sub game is described. An experience which gave name to the monsters described in this theme, that of vampires. Curiously monsters which cannot see their reflections in mirrors.

6.3   A DANGEROUS AND DELIRIOUS ZERO-SUB GAME

The RIDE was not only described as a game but a specific kind of game. Ms Ses described the RIDE as a dangerous and delirious game and Mr Een described the RIDE as a "zero-sub game" in which there was "only so much cake… to go around, so I must take and in my taking I must prevent you from taking". From Ms Ses description of the game, she implied an emotional state of delirium and danger in which the participants did not know what to do with the anger, rage, and aggression in the group. Mr Een's description of the RIDE seemed to imply a cognitive state rather than an emotional state during the RIDE.

6.3.1   A game, a play, a gag

The RIDE experienced as a game was expressed in the descriptions of both Ms Ses and Mr Een during the FANI. Mr Drie shared the concept of the game at the RIDE in his comment that his organisation was "playing exactly the same game". What "I discovered" Mr Drie said of the RIDE was that "different splits, same game" were present at his organisation and that "we are such good friends and of course we aren't" he said. Related to the game, play was described during both the FANI and the focus group. Ms Ses said the RIDE was a "game played on a knife's edge…I don't think we can play this game without intervening" referring to her experience of the consultants withholding. This is similar to Mr Drie's experience when he said the consultants "can play that very well". During the focus group Mr Drie referred to playing with the "dom" (stupidity) in the concept of free(dom) as described in the previous theme, playing with time, and playing "with outcome".

Referring to others during the RIDE Ms Tlhano said, "I was watching the dance between them…". Ms Vier said she saw the "dynamics that can play out…but I was outside" further stating that, "there was a lot of chaos with all the dynamics that are playing out". Mr Een shared a similar experience to Ms Vier when he said, "it was interesting for me to see how the dynamics play out" during the FANI. It would seem as if in these descriptions of the game the participants experienced during the RIDE, they also distanced themselves by watching from the outside as the chaos Ms Vier described unfolded. The concept of playing may have further indicated that participants distanced themselves from the reality of the RIDE. That as participants competed with

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one another in taking and preventing others from taking the cake Mr Een described in his description of the zero-sub game.

Gagging at the RIDE may have been about being filled up, gorging on the cake until feeling as if they would gag with so much that had been taken in but letting nothing out to be shared. Gagging could also mean that the participants may have felt being silenced. Additionally, gagging may have been related to what Ms Tlhano observed during the RIDE she attended of members as, "joking unnecessarily" shared with me during the FANI. A gag (joke) at the expense of others described by Mr Seven who said he and a colleague were laughing at a member who found it difficult to cross the physical boundaries of the RIDE. Ms Vier described a "laughing session" which according to her 50% of the members of the RIDE she attended, were present. Not being a consultant to the RIDE a member facilitated the event to break a laughter record which was not a task of the RIDE. The members created that event outside of the boundaries of the RIDE after the prison event to "get rid of the anxieties which went around" according to Ms Vier sharing that experience with me during the FANI.

It would seem that the game, the play, and the gag held elements where participants could distance themselves from others. This seemed to enable participants to deal with their own gagging and to project unwanted feelings onto others in a playful and innocent game. However, the jokes or gags seemed to be at the expense of others, as they became objects of the participants' hostility (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2012) who were watching the game. The participants watched the game, play out in front of themselves where laughter hid the aggressive nature of projections into the objects of the joke (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2012).

Projections which stifled others, made it difficult to receive counter-projections which may have threatened the psychic reality of the dangerous game. Where the fear of violence, bombs going off, being skinned alive, loosing limbs, being beaten, and having heads chopped off enforced the status quo in defence against working on the primary task. Heads on the chopping block, metaphorically obliterating any possibility of thinking or knowing, allowing the fear of violence in maintaining the delirium of not knowing what to do as participants continued to avoid the primary task.

These experiences contradict the focus group participants naming their experience of the RIDE as apprehension and trepidation. Seemingly defending against experiences of the violent and dangerous game with a statement such as, "you can't say that you are fearing" as Ms Vier said during the focus group. It does however affirm and provide evidence of the focus group participants as defended subjects finding it difficult to work with what they experienced during the RIDE.

The focus groups apparent inability to express or speak about the experience of a violent dangerous game during the RIDE as a group, was curious. It seems as if the focus group were gagged not able to speak or alternatively so filled up with what they had experienced it was too difficult to express. The concept of risk and fear was explicitly expressed by the focus group and not so explicitly during the FANI. On further investigation as to why the focus group participants worked with fear slash risk as they had, what risk slash fear was all about was not immediately clear.

There seemed to be some ambivalence around whether the RIDE experience was about fear and risk; fear of risk and/or risk of fear described next.

6.3.2 Fear of Risk or Risk of Fear

Risk at the RIDE for participants and the group were evident in the previous theme's findings. How the participants worked with risks and fear is described in this subsection.

6.3.2.1   Fear

The only person to explicitly refer to fear during the FANI was Mr Een when he said, "you hear people speaking in the sessions and you hear the fears, the anxiety that people have". Speaking about the fears of others and not his own. None of the other participants explicitly referred to fear during the FANI. In the same manner as Mr Een spoke about others fears, Mr Seswai spoke about danger and violence experienced of others during the RIDE he attended when he said, "the way they were talking, the way they were [Leaving this unsaid] if in that room there were guns and bombs…I don't think we would be alive" during the FANI. When I asked him how seeing that at the RIDE made him feel, Mr Seswai responded with "nothing". It would seem Mr Seswai distanced himself from the experiences of the group similar to Ms Vier who

said, "I stayed quite neutral…respect both sides, opinions, feelings". It would seem the participants were afraid of engaging with the group and the consequences if they did. This was apparent in the statement of Ms Ses who said, the RIDE needed to "come with a warning" like a "packet of cigarettes". It would appear as if the participants feared for their survival had they engaged with the group.

6.3.2.2   Risk

The element of risk emerged in both data sets in terms of boundaries and boundary management. During the FANI Mr Een said he learnt about "the effect of not respecting space…respecting time" during the RIDE. Ms Mbini said, "I think sometimes I operate on a non-boundary type of attitude you know…I learnt to respect boundaries…listen more and respect others". In addition, Mr Seven experienced fury when he said a colleague who had attended the RIDE with him was called back to the office and said, "I think it's a respect issue, people do not respect other people's time…".

Risk was linked to grotesque when Mr Een said "Dis bietjie meer as risk…dis daai…jy sien daar staan grotesque. Yah dis nog risk…risk is nie sleg nie [It is a little bit more than risk, it's that, you see there, there is grotesque, that is still risk, risk is not bad]" during the focus group. The statement of Mr Een about risk not being bad adds to the ambivalence of this experience of the RIDE. Stating that risk was not bad even though it was grotesque could be about the focus group participants wish for the RIDE not to have been experienced as it was. Alternatively, it could have been about the description of the cluster of cards not being bad or that risk in itself might not always be bad.

That risk and fear was experienced at the RIDE was agreed upon by Mr Een and Mr Drie as individuals during the focus group but not by the focus group as-a-whole. The focus group as a whole defended against the concept by rather naming the experience as apprehension and trepidation. Based on the evidence thus far it would seem that fear and risk were experienced at the RIDE even though participants seemed to find it difficult to express. Ambivalence remained about whether the experience was "Risk of fear or fear of risk" as Mr Een noted during the focus group.

6.3.2.3   Fear of risk or risk of fear

Based on the participants being threatened with life and limb had they challenged the status quo of a homogeneous gelled group going deeper than working with surface level diversity, stereotyping and prejudices it would seem the group worked with the free(dom) of remaining in a "delirium because we don't know what to do" as Ms Ses said. This dynamic worked for the group as it provided the group the opportunity to fight, "anger with anger…fight rage with rage and fight aggression with aggression…" as Ms Ses said as the group received projections and counter projections without attempting to understand what those meant. Holding the group hostage in its emotional experience in service of the status quo while participants nearly experienced "fist fights" (Mr Seswai), experienced "attacks" (Ms Vier), "anger" (Mr Seven & Mr Drie), "conflict" (Mr Een) and "intrusion" (Ms Mbini) on themselves. At the expense of rationality and thought in defence against the primary task.

Had participants risked the fear of challenging the status quo it could have left themselves unrecognisable to the self as they would have been "skinned alive" and heads could have been "chopped off". It would appear as if participants sought to camouflage themselves which required masks for some participants to "hold onto" stereotypes, as Mr Drie said during the FANI. The risk involved in holding onto stereotypes could mean that masks could "solidify" as Ms Ses said during the focus group. However, had participants risked the fear and violence in the group it would have meant that participants would have had to "peek under your own mask and sometimes somebody else" as Mr Drie said during the focus group. Peeking under others or own masks and holding up mirrors as Ms Tlhano said during the FANI, meant that participants would risk the fear of seeing the grotesque, the monsters below the surface or the monster in the reflection, the shock of the real.

Risk seemed to hold consequences for the RIDE participants, "a consequence of reckless driving" according to Mr Een. However, the consequence of risk also held reward as the focus group linked risk and reward to their experience of consequence or outcome of the RIDE or the "cake" Mr Een described in the zero-sub game, during the FANI.

6.3.2.4 Reward

Risk was linked to reward as an outcome of the RIDE by Mr Drie during the focus group. It would appear that despite the fear and risk experienced during the RIDE that some participants experienced the RIDE as rewarding. During the FANI Mr Een said he came out "richer in terms of understanding diversity dynamics than I (he) went in" even if he was not sure if richer was the "right word" to use. Mr Seven said the RIDE, "did me a power of good… I just wish I could have got more involved professionally". Mr Drie said the RIDE was, "a true picture… if you put in the time and allow yourself to be thoroughly uncomfortable" however "I had hopes that more of the positive and less of the negative would appear". Ms Vier said she wished what happened during the RIDE "could be more prominent in organisations… I wish we could have more of a reflection".

Curiously, each of these statements about the outcomes of the RIDE included a wish or hope for something in addition to the outcome they had experienced. This overlaps with the dynamics of pairing of words of apprehension and trepidation which appear to be an unconscious wish for a different outcome as expressed during the focus group. Mr Een seemed to wonder whether the learning he experienced did enhance his understanding of diversity dynamics. Ms Ses seemed to share a similar attitude when she said, "a difficulty for me is that I really do want to know, that there really was a purpose or reason of whether something good came out of it". Mr Seswai was quite clear that he learnt nothing personal at the RIDE only about "the pain and grieving" in others. Ms Tlhano said that the RIDE organisers must be "stricter on the intake" pitching the RIDE at a course specific level. In that way members would be "intellectually…in the same level", implying that she could not take anything from the RIDE.

An additional reward may have been about adulation on the part of the participants. Curiously linking bravery to not knowing (Ms Vier and Mr Drie), Ms Vier said, "people call me brave; I sometimes think I am stupid" and Mr Drie said, "I was quite brave because, I knew so little". Alluding to the risks participants experienced during the RIDE in the face of fear and danger.

It would appear as if something needed to happen before a reward or outcome could be expected. During the focus group Mr Drie said, "outcome before your outcome". That "something" appeared to be Shedding light and Movement, which were identified as secondary outcomes of the RIDE, according to the focus group participants.

6.3.3 Shedding Light – an outcome

The focus group participants defined shedding light as the light can go on, but you do not need to move. In the English language to shed light on something could imply increasing the focus or to illuminate something. To literally shed light could also imply removing light resulting in darkness. The participants use of their home language, Afrikaans to give meanings to their experiences compounded the meaning of this concept. It was unclear whether Mr Een said "werplig" or "werklig" in the recording of the focus group transcript. Translated to English the former would translate to "shed light" and the latter to "work light". In terms of language meaning making the latter does not make much sense. It might be a slip of the tongue however, in the context of this research and the discipline of Industrial and Organisational Psychology it may be in reference to work behaviour.

Shedding light does not seem to be the only thing shed during the RIDE. During the FANI air and breathing were described by the participants. During the focus group Mr Een used the word "lig" [light] "lug" [air] in two different contexts which could be about shedding light or air. The participants descriptions of air and breathing during the FANI were described by Ms Mbini when she said she went running every morning even though others did not join her as they promised. Mr Seswai after describing the RIDE as crazy said that the "isolated area and sea breeze were nice" possibly meaning the participants needed air in relation to possible gagging as described previously. According to Ms Ses a consultant told her, "With one breath saying…I've never seen such relentless warfare against an individual…and with the other breath say…I [consultant] cannot intervene" she further stated that she was not averse to "let's get it out…lets air it" during the RIDE. It would appear that participants not only needed to shed some light but some air as well, during the RIDE.

"Shedding light" as an experience according, to the focus group contained words such as understanding, undeniable and integration split from awareness

and free(dom) as seen in Figure 6.3. The card with the word letting go was part of the shedding light cluster before it was "let go" (shed) during the process of clarifying what this experience of the RIDE meant to the focus group.

Figure 6.3

Shedding Light and Consequences or Outcomes

Note: The outcome of shedding light was interconnected with the outcome of Consequences or Outcome with the intersecting card of Illuminate.

The concepts of shedding, clearing, and letting go seemed very much part of the participants' experiences of the RIDE. Whether that was about literally shedding light

for darkness to appear as if "jy stap so in die donker bos met toe oe [you walk in the dark bush with closed eyes]" as Mr Drie said or "as the light comes…it becomes clearer to you, as the thing gets illuminated" as Mr Een said during the focus group. Aligning with the concept that shedding light could be either about illumination or darkness.

Clearing was described by the focus group with a metaphor of "walking in the Black Forest and suddenly you reach a place where the sun suddenly shines through into the ground" by Mr Drie. That after "in your confusion you thrash about … You thrash it…thrash about and you clear a space" Mr Drie said. Once you reach the clearing, according to Mr Drie, referring to Heidegger, then it is possible to "let go of your own…cherished…philosophies. The things that you thought you couldn't live without" he said. However, it seemed letting go was not easy for all participants. Ms Ses wanted to know from the focus group "So what happens if you can't let go? How do you shed light if you can't let go?". Not being able to let go then became an uncomfortable point of discussion for the focus group.

6.3.3.1   *Stuck in shedding light*

When discussing the Shedding light cluster, the focus group became stuck. They could not move on from the discussion even though Mr Een tried to rationalise with Ms Ses who seemed to keep the focus group stuck. Mr Een said, "sometimes you've got your real purpose or the destiny, so the process has been authentic, and you've been real. But sometimes you've got OD light and OD light when it was just entertainment…I think what we're allowing for here is both situations because you don't know what going to come and you can't force either letting go or not letting go" seemingly bargaining with Ms Ses to get the group moving. Referring to words in the next cluster of cards that the participants later named consequences or outcome.

It appeared Mr Een became more and more uncomfortable remaining in the shedding light cluster discussion. When rationalising with Ms Ses did not work, Mr Een paired with Ms Vier and removed the card with the word letting go from the shedding light cluster to the outer edge of all the cards on the wall, hoping that

would satisfy Ms Ses. The action of moving the card appeared to create anxiety for Ms Ses when she said what was her "biggest difficulty [at the RIDE] People could not let go. People were left there still not having let go". Mr Een did not seem to understand Ms Ses' position and tried to interrupt her, at which time Ms Ses said "that was the big challenge and we left with that challenge. It wasn't resolved".

OD light was described as "just some fun time from the office" by Mr Drie. Which would imply that Mr Een thought that Ms Ses could not let go because, "that's exactly when you've got this OD light" implying Ms Ses did not engage with the process of the RIDE. Equally it would seem Ms Ses could not hear Mr Een either. It appeared one would have rather remained in the shedding light discussion while the other would rather have moved than remained in shedding light discussion.

The focus group were only able to move from the Shedding light discussion when Mr Drie stopped the impasse in the group stating they should wait and hear Ms Ses. That after Mr Een said, "what we are doing now is to move it on…". Mr Drie tried to understand Ms Ses by paraphrasing what she had just said. The focus group participants appeared to reflect on what was happening in the group. Each participant, except for Ms Ses, seemed reflect on what the concept of letting go meant for themselves. A disjointed conversation happened in which the focus group participants were not necessarily conversing with each other but reflecting as individuals in the group. The interaction is included here indicating how the focus group participants managed to become unstuck.

> (Ms Vier) You understand? (Mr Een) Yes, because there's other things that governs your…your…your… (Ms Vier) Yes, you can acknowledge that… (Mr Drie) I quite like your… (Ms Vier) The light is on… (Mr Drie) And its true. (Ms Vier) But it doesn't mean…so it can be an acknowledgment. (Mr Drie) So it's not… (Ms Vier) Which doesn't mean that you're moving. (Mr Een) No. No, it's shedding light. I mean because… (Mr Drie) Oh. Oh… (Mr Een) This happens… (Mr Drie) Oh of that's true… (Mr Een) That happens but… (Mr Drie) Do you see another possibility? (Mr Een) But the outcome… (Mr Drie) Do you see another self? (Mr Een) You don't just see…(Ms Vier) You don't…you don't have to, it's still your choice to stay there…(Mr Een) Because you've…you've got your…your history, you've got your fears, you've got your anxiety…(Mr Drie) It's just an intellectual thing.(Mr Een) Yes.(Mr Drie) It doesn't hit you when it should.(Ms Vier) You still

need to choose to move or not move. (Mr Een) But I think shedding light is still the right name for it. (Mr Drie) I like that. I like that.

The interaction seemed to be about understanding and choice. It would seem that the pause for reflection and interaction allowed the focus group to move on as Mr Een had wanted, even though Ms Vier seemed adamant about having the choice to remain in a position whether participants see or do not see. Seeing was seemingly not as important as choice for Ms Vier. Mr Een seemed to acknowledge that some participants may not want to move or need to move. However, Mr Een seemed to be concerned about the outcome alluding that there is more to the experience than just seeing but that seeing can be anxiety provoking for some. Mr Drie on the other hand seemed to guide this reflection/interaction by agreeing with both Ms Vier and Mr Een and giving his approval at the end. It would appear as if the focus group participants could then move forward as a group while each retained their understanding of what the Shedding light experience meant for themselves individually and a group.

It appeared as if there was understanding and acknowledgement of the other in the group. Other possibilities, concerns about the outcome of choices made and, differences which influenced choices were acknowledged. The Shedding light experience was understood to be more than just about seeing for some. Which seemed OK for the focus group participants. Ms Ses' silence could have meant that she felt safe in, not having to let go and move but could hold on. The focus groups use of Mr Een as the instrument to do the clearing and insisting on of moving on and letting go may be an indication of how uncomfortable it could be to stay in the light.

However, not all participants seemed to be uncomfortable in the light. Mr Drie seemed comfortable both in and out of the light, letting go or not letting go. He seemed to take on the role of supporting and pushing the participants in their reflections of what might have been going on. Ms Vier also seemed comfortable in or out of light and/or of letting go as she never strongly opposed either but gave the group an out of both holding on and moving on. Irrespective of these

differences the participants did agree that this experience of the RIDE was Shedding light whether they let go, did not let go, moved, or not.

Part of the experience of shedding light was integration as seen in Figure 6.3. What seemed to have happened was integration of different experiences to become unstuck so that the group and the individual participants could acknowledge one another while not appearing to shift too much from their own convictions.

6.3.3.2   Integration a step before clearing

Integration was mentioned by the focus group in terms of the concept of OD light. It seemed as if Mr Een thought Ms Ses could not let go because she experienced OD light and had not fully engaged with the process during the RIDE. This may have been true to some extent. Ms Ses seemed to acknowledge this when she said, integration was about "what happens on various levels in a group situation…a step before clearing". In the absence of integration "it maybe just runs off me like water off a duck's back" she said. The metaphor seemed to indicate that Ms Ses did not fully engage with the RIDE. Similarly, during the FANI Ms Tlhano seemed to allude to disengaging during the RIDE when she said, "you are in the middle of the thing, and you are not reflecting…while I was in it, it was not a big deal that I was not connecting…but after that I could say wow how could I spend almost a week…" not completing her sentence.

Not engaging or experiencing OD light was linked to the "spiral process" which Mr Een said could be "clean and unclean…fuzzy uncertainty……". Referring to cards in another cluster of cards. Mr Een said, "because OD light could be when this process didn't really work". It, the RIDE experience, was a "messy process…not as clear cut as you would like" according to Mr Drie. Yet integration was "important work" according to Mr Drie and Ms Ses.

6.3.4 Escaping Illumination

The concept of illumination was clarified by Mr Drie as "moving from…dark to light. So, shedding a light on something and that's where the concept of

illumination. Almost when you move into this clear that's sort of linked to it". Yet illumination may not have been comfortable for all participants.

6.3.4.1   Free(dom) from understanding and integration

The concept of being free and freedom was found in both data sets. However, the free(dom) the focus group agreed, was not the political freedom Ms Mbini spoke about during the FANI. The Free(dom) the focus group contemplated was a specific type of freedom which Mr Drie clarified as being, "dominated by trying to be free and we are so tired in our own little worlds and thoughts and conditions …There's freedom but we are also dominated unnecessarily. It also makes us dom [stupid]".

Being stupid implies not thinking, not learning, and not transforming. Based on the pedagogy of Group Relations Conferences the participants were free to choose whether they would take up personal authority for their own learning (Lawrence, 1979; Miller 1989). At the RIDE it would appear as if choosing not to understand and not to integrate may have been in service of preserving "my old self" as Ms Tlhano said during the FANI. Not learning about the self was clear in Ms Mbini's comment "I can't really say I learnt a lot about myself because I am already very self-aware". Similarly, Mr Seswai said, "the whole RIDE experience did not affect me…didn't change me…I can maybe show you on a graph". It may be that these experiences of not learning may have been about participants not being "prepared to work in ourselves…when you get to that space" as Ms Tlhano said. Thereby defending against understanding and integration as evidenced in the positioning of the cards to the wall during the focus group. Cards which were split from free(dom) and awareness in the Shedding light experience of the RIDE (see Figure 6.3).

6.3.4.2   Awareness

As the participants observed one` another during the RIDE, it would appear the dynamic of us and them seemed to be perpetuated, in their awareness of one another. Mr Een's comment that "unless people are more aware its always going to be some sort of us and them" illustrates this. Similarly, Ms Vier wondered

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whether other group members were "not aware of how insensitive" they were when she found herself between two opposing groups at the RIDE.

Light was related to seeing during the focus group. Yet how clearly participants saw seemed to be different to each. Seeing but not believing what was seen seemed to leave some participants amazed during the RIDE. Amazement was further described by Mr Seven who said the first RIDE was "an amazing group of people…" seemingly implying that the second RIDE was not so amazing? Ms Mbini found "one white guy…he was just a sweetheart…he was absolutely amazing". Ms Vier found herself amazed "to see the staff members grappling with what they are sensing". Not believing what was seen was described by Mr Een when he said, "now you see, no, no…" referring to a coloured woman as director of the RIDE. Not being able to see was described by Mr Seswai when he said, "I couldn't…I didn't even see that before" referring to other participants experiences of apartheid.

In addition to seeing, not seeing, and being amazed by what was seen, it would appear that seeing was a gradual process as Mr Een said, "the light becomes clearer to you, as the thing gets illuminated, as understanding and awareness grows". Similarly, the participants spoke about the gradual process of seeing during the FANI when Mr Een said, "you start seeing dynamics…see how groups work and why it sometimes does not work". Mr Drie spoke about the need for RIDE to go faster but cautioned against not pushing "the way you see things", instead letting things unfold".

Seeing could be sudden as well. During the focus group Ms Vier related awareness to an A-ha moment. During the FANI she said, she "could put the word awareness to the a-ha moment that came…then it feels to me that I have learned something, or I have grown or developed or now I can do something about it because I am suddenly aware of it". The suddenness of being aware of something which Ms Vier herself did not appear to be sure of, seemed congruent to the suddenness of the sun shining in the dark forest, seeing the light, seeing something amazing.

Awareness may have meant that participants did see however, the suddenness of seeing could also lead to created confusion or disbelief. This could occur without understanding about what was seen. In addition, shedding light could literally mean to shed light resulting in darkness. The analogy of the dark forest and suddenly coming into the clearing and light could imply blindness because of the illumination. Some participants would have closed their eyes to the blinding light or closed the eyes to what was illuminated or exposed.

Alternatively, amazement at the light and what could be seen may have result in opening the eyes further, becoming transfixed in the light, remaining there in the euphoria of what could be seen. However, if in the absence of understanding, or integration, stuckness could ensue as some participants basked in the illumination that, that kind of free(dom) could bring. Holding onto an old self by choosing not to learn and transform. Being transfixed in the light may have worked in that it allowed for an escape from inner thoughts and conditions as Mr Drie said when he described free(dom) during the focus group. Similarly, Ms Tlhano, during the FANI, said "we all have our baggages inside our bags. The one thing that the RIDE made me see is what sits in the bag for me…looking inside my baggage really sat bad with me". Denying understanding and integration remaining transfixed in awareness may have mitigated the risk of the fear of seeing the "messiness inside" Mr Drie spoke about during the focus group.

Working with the messiness inside implied working with that which may have sat badly with participants as Ms Tlhano implied, learning by experiencing others around themselves and possibly transforming. One of the aims of a group relations conference is that transformation might happen because of the learning experience (Brunner et al., 2006; Lawrence, 1979; Miller, 1989). The focus group included a card with the word transformation written on it into an experience they named movement, the second outcome of the RIDE according to the SID.

6.3.5   Movement an outcome

Shock is transformation according to the focus group. The focus group participants said that during the RIDE "it's always a shock…change and metamorphosis can be a shock…it starts with a shock…shocks others…ends with a shock… is shocking".

Transformation was related to, "A new place. It's a paradigm shift. It's a transformation" said by Mr Een during the focus group. As indicated transformation was included into the cluster of cards the focus group participants named movement.

Figure 6.4

Movement
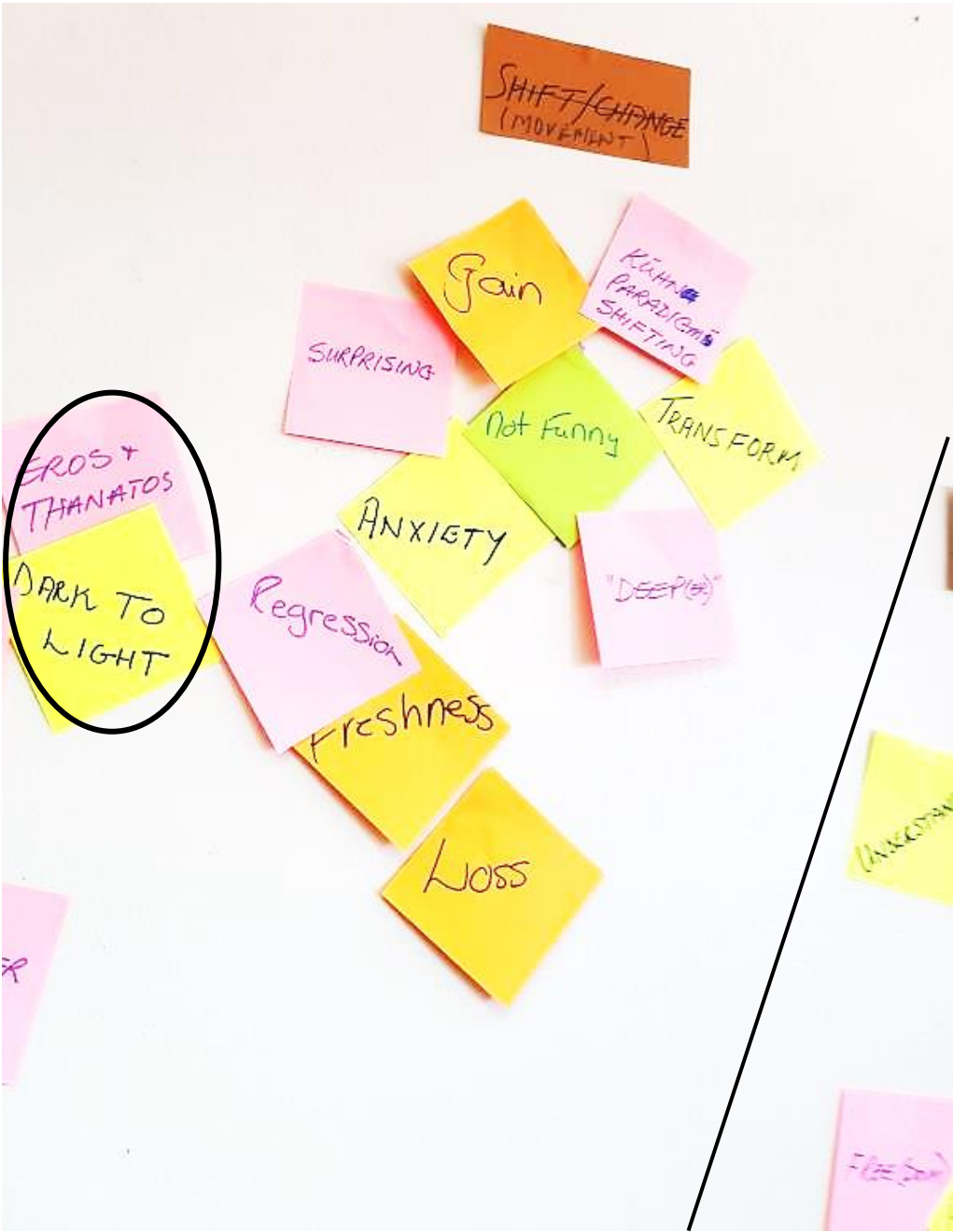
Note: The experience of movement contained; loss, freshness, regression, anxiety, surprising, not funny, gain, paradigm shifting, transformation and deep(er).

What is significant about the experience of movement is that it was split from the two outcomes of shedding light and consequences or outcomes. Yet interconnected with the second cluster to the left with the cards Eros &Thanatos and dark to light (see figure 6.4).

Mr Een and Mr Drie naming this experience as shift slash change initially and the focus group finally settling on movement as a name for the experience seemed to imply different kinds of experiences of movement during the RIDE. This was evident in the manner in which the focus group came up with the name as the participants turned to naming the cluster. Mr Een said, "so we thought that one is shift slash change. Change or shift" Ms Vier said, "or movement? Mr Een and Mr Drie said, "movement". Ms Vier said, "it can be…" and Mr Een said "movement, shift". Ms Vier said, "any way". Mr Een said, "shift change". Ms Vier said, "up down". Mr Een said, "movement". Ms Vier said, "it's like movement". Mr Een said that the words in the cluster "suggest in some way a change or a movement". Mr Drie said, "A new place" and Mr Een agreed with "a new place, yah. It's a **paradigm shift**. It is a **transformation**". Mr Drie said, "different from where you started" and Mr Een said "Yah. And sometimes it could be a **loss** and sometimes it could be…". Mr Drie said, "a **gain**" at which time Mr Een finished his sentence with "**Fresh**". Mr Drie said, "it could be a gain as well" and Mr Een agreed "and sometimes it could be a gain".

Shift, change, movement, "all…suggest in some way a change or a movement" Mr Een said during the focus group. "A new place" according to Mr Drie. A "shift from a way of seeing stereotypes to maybe seeing a different…" not completing her sentence, according to Ms Ses. This may indicate a paradigm shift, seeing something differently. However only seeing stereotypes would not necessarily lead to a transformation as masks could solidify as Ms Ses said. However, it may also result in a shifting of position.

6.3.5.1 Shift, change, move

As indicated all the experiences at the RIDE were interconnected. Change was described by the focus group as "changes the core of what you are…not the shopfront but the stuff inside" by Mr Een. Change seemed to hold fear for the focus group participants. While the participants were naming the experience of fear/risk Ms

Ses asked if that experience was "not fear of change" to which Mr Drie replied, "Fear of change is just a small bit of that" which Mr Een agreed to stating, "Fear of change is actually part of it, but the whole thing is about fear and about risk". Change for the focus group participants was then not only about shifting position with minimal risk. It held fear of change which could be shocking and could "bring loss" as Ms Vier said.

Differences in what change meant for the focus group participants meant that a loss connected to a change could "be positive, letting go so that there can be movement…", as Ms Vier said. A shifting of position with minimal risk which could also come with minimal pain of a "positive" loss. However, Ms Vier also said, "loss can also be detrimental of …depriving of, taking away of, stealing of, minimising…". It would then seem as if unmasking, change, metamorphosis, transformation came at the risk of loss detrimental to the self and possibly the group. However, letting go seemed a requirement for movement whether there was a shift or a change.

6.3.5.2   Letting go, loss and gain

In both sets of data participants spoke about the psychic reality of losing, their shape, favourite convictions, losing heads and limbs. During the focus group Ms Vier said, "change can bring loss. Loss can be positive, letting go". Mr Drie did not agree entirely with Ms Vier and said, "change always brings loss…you always mourn it don't you…you are not human if you don't mourn loss…even the stuff you don't like you don't want to let go". Ms Vier agreed somewhat with Mr Drie and said, "in certain degrees but it can be like a loss of a limb, but it also can be loss of baggage". Similar to the baggage Ms Tlhano spoke about during the FANI which she said sat badly with her. Ms Tlhano's experience seems to provide some evidence for participants shedding light, walking into the clearing, and seeing what is in the bag. A sight which might be uncomfortable to see. There were then choices to be made about what to do about what was seen as Ms Tlhano continued with, "Once you discover what is inside your bag…you must be committed to working on it…because it will trip you up". It would seem Ms Tlhano did not avoid the shedding light but decided to work with what was seen as she considered the consequences of what it would mean to her if she did not work on what she saw.

What is unknown from this comment of Ms Tlhano is how she decided to work with what she saw. The findings of the experience of movement seems to indicate that participants could have decided on minimal risk and shifted position. Participants may have weighed up the risks of transformation and decided some movement was required and shifted their position, not transforming, and not risking changing shape or losing limbs and baggage. Something which might have been difficult to let go. Seeing change, transformation as a detrimental loss, in addition to mourning over that loss or not having time to mourn the loss in the suddenness of the experience, may have been unbearable. Keeping the original form, shifting somewhat, may have been preferable in that case. Participants could also have risked the fear of change and transformation. They could see transformation as a positive loss of getting rid of baggage and/or an offending limb. Participants may have risked the deprivation, the minimisation, not felt anything was stolen from them but rather voluntarily let go, changing into something different while keeping an original form and transmogrifying with no need to mourn such a loss. Participants may have also felt that both the shift and the change may have carried too much risk and chosen another possibility, regression.

6.3.5.3   Regression

At one point during the IQA of the RIDE the words of safety and regression were found side by side. Until the focus group decided to split the two cards by moving regression to the experience, they named movement and safety to between two cards named container and containment in a cluster they named Dusk and Dawn.

The concept of regression was added to the data by Ms Ses. When she tried to clarify what regression meant to her, she kept being interrupted by Mr Drie as if he was not listening to her yet also agreeing with her at the same time. Ms Ses said, "and my thinking there was really just that um…", Mr Drie interrupted her, "it can happen", Ms Ses continued, "In terms of the [inaudible] that you're moving to a higher or to a lower…" Mr Drie said, "You can always go back yah". Ms Ses then said, "And what can that [inaudible] the happiness that you would regress instead of just enough". It would then appear as if movement was then not only about moving forward but also about moving in an opposite direction "go anyway" which may or may not be seen as backward considering the placement of the card to the wall.

It may be that once light was shed and participants saw what they saw it may have been difficult to admit what was seen. Something which was shared with me during the FANI when Ms Ses said, "I think I do have the answers I maybe just don't want to admit them yet". Similarly, Ms Tlhano said, "It's like I am seeing myself, but I don't want to admit that I am seeing myself". Regression as a form of movement where letting go may have been difficult seemed to allow for holding on, yet still allowing for movement.

Dealing with the choice of having to move or not to move as well as how to move may have meant that both shedding light and movement were avoided. The participants then rather regressed into the safety and containment regression may have provided. Holding on while moving contradicted the requirement of letting go as a requirement for movement. Regression allowed for movement which avoided the risks and fears that both shedding light and movement seemed to hold for some participants. Such as mourning a detrimental loss, deprivation and minimisation, any form of shedding light, or movement might wreak. Holding on, nothing could be stolen or taken away from the participants, seemingly finding safety in regression.

6.3.5.4   Dealing with choices

Transformation at the RIDE was not an easy straight forward experience for the participants. Also, the findings suggest each participant experienced the process of transformation differently. An experience which was not fun and did not always end in a humorous effect. Ms Ses said, "I just thought it's not always funny. It's not always humorous…the process or the outcome or…" not completing her sentence. Similarly, Mr Een said, "…sometimes it's not funny, its filled with anxiety" To which Mr Drie agreed, "Full of anxiety…and sometimes its **regression**". Mr Drie comment about regression here is, perhaps, an indication about why he kept interrupting Ms Ses in her explanation of regression. It may be that he shared in her experience of regression. However, regression may not have been safety for Mr Drie but rather as Mr Een said, "Like loss". Mr Drie's response to Mr Een was, "It's just movement" which seemed to diminish what movement entailed for himself.

Change seemed difficult for Mr Drie who said "I am lesser now" during the FANI. Providing evidence for his apparent defended position during the focus group. Yet

he also said, "my grandchildren are getting it better", implying a gain from that change after he had attended the RIDE. Further evidence of the movement and stuckness in the system was in Ms Ses' description when she said, "So maybe that's my difficulty…so maybe I agree then that movement is maybe the word because…in my head…all of that can either go positive or negative…or nothing can…end up happening". An outcome of a process indicating there may have been something more influencing participants experiences at the RIDE.

The findings thus far suggest that movement entailed dealing with choices about whether positions might be shifted, changed, transformation or regression might occur. Choices which carried both positive and negative losses and gains for the participants. In addition, any choices made appeared to hold consequences for participants. Not only in what might be lost or gained but also about the consequences of those choices. The concept of mourning loss the focus group participants alluded to, appears to indicate a long-lasting consequence of the RIDE. Long lasting consequences which left participants wondering about their purpose and destiny.

6.3.6 An outcome which cannot be named

The participants of the focus group named the significant outcome of the RIDE according to the SID, Consequences or Outcome, which contained the cards with the words long lasting, purpose, destiny, and OD light (see figure 6.3). Yet it also appeared as if the focus group participants could not name the "true" outcome of the RIDE. Evidenced in the absence of a primary outcome in the SID as described in chapter 3 section 3.6.3.2.

The RIDE was described by Ms Ses during the FANI as a dangerous game played on a knife edge, which could fall either way. In the zero-sub game Mr Een described participants competed and bargained with one another, for certain individual and group outcomes. They resorted to playing, gagging, joking, having fun, while hiding the aggressive nature of the RIDE.

In both sets of data, the metaphor of the kitchen appears in terms of food, eating, drinking etcetera. An analogy of "…the pot is boiling over, it's alright if you just spilling in the kitchen but once it starts running…into the major house then that's when it is

uncontained" was used during the focus group by Ms Ses. It was curious to find that spillage may have been tolerated at the RIDE. When, according to the focus group the messiness was to be "allowed to happen" but not directed, "not pushing it in a direction, but you allow it to happen…safely", Mr Drie said. "Making sure that it's not just spilling over without purpose" Ms Ses said, "that it is held" Ms Vier agreed. Mr Drie liked the idea of "the spill over without purpose, but it doesn't contaminate the…it doesn't go outside the group is that what you're saying" he asked Ms Ses to which she agreed.

Playing the game at the RIDE, not being serious was mirrored during the focus group when Mr Drie said, "Let's not be S-E-R-I-O-U-S, let's just play around". Playing around may have been why the spillage may have been tolerated by some participants during the RIDE. Perhaps even enjoyed as no real consequences or long-lasting effects may have initially been perceived. The game may have been thought to be contained and imprisoned within the boundaries of the RIDE. A game played at the RIDE, out of touch with reality. During the FANI when Ms Vier said she could not, "contemplate all the consequences" of her actions during the RIDE illustrates this. Mr Seven and Mr Een considered the consequences of not respecting time boundaries. Something Mr Seven considered during the RIDE and Mr Een after the RIDE. Consequences of actions during the RIDE such as members "not talking to other guys" and the frustration that was building in the group were observed by Mr Seswai. Similarly, Ms Tlhano noticed frustration in other members during the RIDE who wanted to discuss diversity and could not. While most of these observations shared during the FANI were about effects of the interaction between members at the RIDE. Ms Tlhano contemplated the consequences after the RIDE of not having engaged while she had attended. Similar to the focus group which was concerned with the long-lasting effects of the RIDE.

Long lasting effects of the RIDE were related to destiny and purpose. Destiny, according to the focus group was, "Destiny transformation and metamorphosis can…lead to getting you or any person, the group, the individual to their destiny. Desire or unconscious" Ms Vier said. Purpose as a word was never clarified. Purpose was related to OD Light and went "nice with" long lasting, as Mr Een said. Purpose was the first word the participants mentioned when they related the concept to mirror and shock of the real to, two intersecting cards between the first and second cluster of cards as

described in the first theme, as seen in Figure 6.2. Purpose was further differentiated from destiny while naming the Shedding light cluster of cards when Mr Een said, "you've got like your real purpose or the destiny". As discussed earlier, purpose seemed related to resisting contamination when the focus group said without purpose there would be contamination.

6.3.6.1 *Purpose an odd light*

The concept of purpose seemed to be on a continuum of, purpose, a real purpose, and an ultimate purpose. During the focus group the participants spoke about an ultimate purpose which was somehow related to destiny however they did not elaborate much. Destiny seemed to be a contentious issue which some participants resisted and played a significant part when naming the experience of consequence or outcome, the last cluster of cards. Purpose was mostly related to OD light throughout the IQA of the RIDE.

OD light was not mentioned at the time the focus group deliberated about what to name the last cluster of cards. OD Light was clarified during the clarification phase as, "the kinds of interventions where people write glowing reports when you're finished, and the food was wonderful and then two weeks later they've forgotten all about it" Mr Drie said. It would appear as if for OD light to be experienced there would be no long-lasting consequences for participants of the RIDE. It was curious that before the clustering of the cards the cards with the words OD light, fun and uncertainty were clustered together somehow indicating that these concepts were related to one another. All things being equal that would mean that there was ambivalence around an experience such as OD light and its component of fun.

Fun was related to OD light during the focus group as, "just some…fun time away from the office and it's not just team building…And it starts off with…let's have some fun here" Mr Drie said. In other words, let's play. Congruent to some participants' initial experiences of attending the RIDE as discussed in the first theme of going on holiday (Ms Mbini) and being able to explore the island freely (Ms Ses & Ms Tlhano). During the focus group, when Ms Vier related to Mr Drie's comment and said, "your destiny can even be…" not completing her sentence Mr Drie interrupted and said, "let's not be… lets have some fun here" seemingly resisting the idea that destiny

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(transformation, metamorphosis) could be fun. Ms Ses then said, "But then your OD light cannot also be ending up as your destiny", seemingly resisting the idea that OD light could be destiny (transformation, metamorphosis). Mr Drie said, "Oh yes it could yes". Mr Een then said, "OD light could also be when this process …didn't really work" seemingly indicating if the process of transformation did not work the outcome would be OD light.

Uncertainty about purpose and OD light and contradictions about purpose and OD Light abounded during the IQA of the RIDE. The focus group spoke about contradictions as they moved cards around during the clustering phase, finding it difficult to place some cards. The cards that seemed particularly difficult seemed to be "purpose" and "OD light". Mr Een said, "it's almost a bit of a contradiction because you're saying…I mean our purpose is not to have OD light…" and Mr Drie said, "But the participant's purpose is to have OD light". Ms Ses said, "But I just still wonder then in terms of this discussion if destiny also be part of your OD light and your purpose? Mr Een said, "Your OD light …is sort of an outcome which is not the desired outcome. So, it's an undesired destiny or undesired purpose…although they're opposites…Its only if you've got a freakish mind, it doesn't make sense it's sort of… a destiny which you don't want… then sometimes it is what you get…out of these groups. So, OD light sometimes is your destiny but its ideally not want you want, but many times…". Completing Mr Een's sentence for him Ms Vier said, "It's not what you want…But it plans…it plans out like that". This was an outcome the whole focus agreed with.

Taking Ms Vier's apparent slip of the tongue at face value for the moment and, ignoring the word pan, which would have been grammatically correct in the sentence, both Ms Vier's slip of the tongue and the interaction of the focus group participants about whether OD light was their purpose or destiny, held elements about being in control (plan) over their destiny or not (pan). To have a purpose is to have a plan. Yet the focus group participants said that it was not their purpose to have OD light at the RIDE, while it may have been the purpose of others. The use of the word "plan" implies that OD light could have been planned which the focus group acknowledged in terms of others but not themselves. In terms of OD light as a plan for themselves, it seemed to be a surprise. The focus group participants

seemed to be aware that OD light was not a destiny they really wanted. However, because of interactions with the primary task and with others during the RIDE it might have "panned" out that way. This may imply a regret about lost opportunities during the RIDE and the long-lasting effects of those losses.

In addition, even if the purpose was not to have OD Light when participants went to the RIDE, with expectation of having "diversity discussions" as Ms Tlhano described during the FANI, not finding those, defences may have ensued, and OD Light could have been an outcome for participants such as Ms Tlhano who found it difficult to engage with the primary task in defence of preservation of the self. Defences such as this could then result in outcomes of, an undesired purpose and an undesired outcome as Mr Een said. Alternatively, participants going in with a purpose to engage fully with the RIDE however, because of what happens during the RIDE and, the participants relatedness to dynamics thereof and defences against these, it may have been possible that the outcome was something which was not desired. As the findings suggest the outcome of the RIDE could then have been OD light and a painful loss of lost opportunities, a transformation and/or a surprising transmogrification which may have been painful or a gain.

The findings suggest that outcomes of the RIDE seemed planned for and not necessarily out of the participant's control. This was evident in the focus group's description of movement, where participants dealt with their choices of shifting positions, change and or regression. A planned for outcome of movement which influenced consequences or outcome as the focus group preferred to name this last cluster of cards, congruent with the findings of the SID.

How much ownership the participants felt they had over their choices was described in terms of the two words the focus group participants used to describe the experience of Consequences or Outcomes. Consequences meant that "I am partly or wholly responsible for…consequence happening…" and "outcome is just a mechanism…", an "Outcome of the process" Mr Een said. A "Physical thing that doesn't necessarily touch me" Ms Ses said. Seemingly maintaining the defensive position that the RIDE could not touch participants nor have long lasting effects. Blaming others and the process for presumably undesired outcomes.

Blaming OD light as an outcome of a process that did not work seemed to be a continuation of the narrative in the first theme in which participants felt passive and powerless, sabotaged, and kneecapped, and resulting in an outcome which was undesired. However, the "undesired outcome" may have been the participants desired outcome, the ultimate purpose in defence of the destiny of transformation and transmogrification working on the primary task would bring. A planned for purpose which mitigated the risk of a long-lasting destiny and possible contamination outside of the RIDE experience.

6.3.6.2   Destiny and Calling

As indicated previously, the term "destiny" played a significant part when naming the experience of consequence or outcome. It was a contentious issue, meaning different things to different focus group participants. However, it seemed to be the most contentious between Mr Drie and Ms Vier. Similar to the Shedding light cluster where Mr Een and Ms Ses seemed quite busy, Mr Drie and Ms Vier were quite busy in naming the experience of consequence or outcome. In addition, Mr Een seemed to find himself in between Mr Drie and Ms Vier, perhaps because he and Mr Drie did not entirely agree on the name of this experience initially. Mr Drie wanted to name consequences or outcome, "Calling". Mr Een said, "Calling, destiny" and Mr Drie said, "human right…the other monsters of those two" referring to the experience of Fear of Risk and Risk of Fear.

The focus group could not reach a consensus of what destiny was. For Ms Vier it appeared to be about transformation, metamorphosis and leading or moving individuals from one place to a desired place, "getting to a destiny". According to Ms Vier destiny could seemingly be fun. Destiny could be both OD light and an individual's purpose, "it can be both because you can have destiny in mind". Ms Vier described her idea of destiny as, "…you are on your way to something that you are foreseeing or that you have planned and that you need to reach. In other words, it can be a preconceived idea…ultimate purpose… Could also be your…the unconscious where you are going to land up". Ms Vier's statements were congruent with the planned choices participants made as they experienced movement. Ms Vier's statement also provides some evidence that her slip of the tongue (plan/pan) may not have been a slip after all. Based on Ms Vier's idea of destiny, it would be

the outcome of participants choices no matter the choice. This could be a long-lasting effect of the RIDE experience. What destiny was not for Ms Vier was fate "noodlot" where participants were powerless agents at the mercy of some form of energy outside of themselves.

Destiny for Mr Drie was, "when you discover something fresh and useful". Destiny was not, "that nonsense we have in organisations? Mission, vision all that kak [shit], … not destiny". It may be that for Mr Drie, Ms Vier's idea of destiny was about the mission and vision of the organisation, a position with which he did not agree. Mr Drie said, "destiny is a word where you make something your own. Where you get a calling. A new…an irresistible calling". Naming "calling" destiny, could imply that Mr Drie did not feel at the mercy of an energy outside of himself but rather at the mercy of an inner struggle within himself, feeling both powerful at being, "chosen" and powerless for having no choice. An inner struggle which was evident as he described free(dom) as being tired of being dominated by "own little worlds, thoughts, and conditions", during the focus group discussion about Shedding light. Freedom was once more indirectly referred to by Mr Drie when he and Mr Een were initially naming the clusters on the wall. Mr Drie used the term "human right" which he related to calling and destiny as two monsters. Something it would seem Mr Drie wished, "to get away from at least" he told Ms Vier as they discussed destiny.

A calling implies no personal planned for choice but rather something that could happen abruptly and happen out of control of the individual. A contradiction to Ms Vier's idea of destiny as "what you start off with to determine where you're going to end" which Ms Ses agreed with. It would appear as if Mr Drie's idea of destiny was about taking ownership of something personal, of being chosen for something, which could not be resisted. However, freedom of choice implies a calling can be resisted, but in choosing to resist a calling there is a risk of losing purpose in life which could be detrimental to the self and shatter the integrity of the self.

Destiny was not fate. Both Mr Drie and Ms Vier agreed on that point. They were not at the mercy of an energy outside of themselves. This implied that both Mr Drie and Ms Vier agreed to ownership of choices made at the RIDE. However, Mr Drie

seemed to reject the idea of destiny being about planned choices. Independent of those choices made that destiny would be the outcome and fit the choice that was made. Ms Vier on the other hand, rejected calling "roeping" which Mr Drie said was destiny. Ms Vier then rejected Mr Drie's idea of calling, which in part suggested no choice, the influence of an internal energy of both being powerful and powerless and a certain amount of impulse. Contradicting the planning Ms Vier and Ms Ses ascribed to destiny. Ms Vier said, "calling for me is something completely different… I can move to somewhere that has got nothing to do with my calling…absolutely nothing". Ms Vier was adamant about her choice as was Mr Drie, which caused the disagreement during the naming of this last cluster of cards. Both Ms Vier and Mr Drie agreed that destiny was about the unconscious, where an individual would land up. Which refers to whether the outcome would be consciously or unconsciously planned.

6.3.6.3   A preferred outcome

To overcome the impasse of whether to name the last cluster of cards Calling or Destiny the focus group decided to name the last cluster of cards with "Nice and neutral" words." You can sell it to your clients" Mr Drie said. It would seem "a final product or end result" as Mr Een said. However, this have may been a wish of the focus group which seemed to belie the reality of the RIDE itself.

As the findings suggest some participants may have wished for a different outcome of the RIDE than they had experienced. While different participants may have experienced different outcomes, whether desired or not, there seemed to be an overall wish that the RIDE had not been experienced as it had. Alternatively, it may be that participants did not want to remember an experience which may have had long-lasting effects for themselves. A dangerous and delirious zero-sub game played on a knife edge which could fall either way. In a heated kitchen in which pots were boiling over and contents were spilled. Feeling contaminated by the spillage had it spilled over to other parts of the psyche outside of the boundaries of the RIDE itself.

The wish to describe the outcome of such a RIDE with nice and neutral words seems to provide evidence that participants may have worked with the

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consequences of the RIDE and felt responsible for those and, perhaps defended against that which may have been too unbearable to contemplate.

6.3.6.4   The illusive ultimate purpose

The experiences of destiny and calling at the RIDE are contained in the meanings that the focus group participants attached to these experiences of transformation, and transmogrification, not in the definitions of these words in the English language. It appeared as if there were two distinct significant outcomes of the RIDE, one being destiny and another, calling which entailed the participants autonomy of choices whether planned for or unplanned. Both destiny and calling entailed transformation and metamorphosis. How they differed was in how that transformation evolved.

The planned for transformation entails:

A preconceived idea,

> A plan to reach a desired outcome based on the choices taken of whether to shift, change or regress in defence of the experiences of shedding light. The outcome would fit the choice whether desired or undesired.

The unplanned for transformation entails:

Transformation being abrupt and/or surprising.

Working with feelings of powerful and powerlessness.

Choice being complex.

Choice entailing risk of integrity of the self vs disintegration of the self.

On the one hand, it would seem as if an unplanned transformation may have been a deep(er) experience. It risked the long-lasting trauma of contamination outside the boundaries of the RIDE based on the freedom of choice participants had available.

On the other hand, a planned transformation with a significant outcome such as OD light could have been made to mitigate the personal risks of long-lasting effects and contamination outside the boundaries of the RIDE. Remaining in the psychic reality of the game at the RIDE, participants may have felt that

transformation could contaminate efforts to preserve the self and/or the group. Experiencing OD light may have been a defence against contamination and mitigation of the risks of the long-lasting effects of the RIDE. An outcome which may have also been surprising post reflection of the RIDE. A surprise evident in Ms Ses questions about whether destiny could also be part of OD light and purpose which seemed to keep her quite preoccupied, as she searched for an answer during the focus group.

Containment and safety seemed to play a role whether transformation was planned or unplanned. Transformation with preconceived plans and choices allowed for safety and containment where outcomes were certain even if different depending on the choices. Abrupt or surprising transformation with complex choices may have been unsafe and uncontained with outcomes less certain. The freedom to choose between the two monsters of transformation, as Mr Drie implied, those being to transform in safety and containment and, whether to risk transformation, unsafe and uncontained, "Jumping off a cliff with hardly any safety gear" as Mr Drie described, seemed to each hold its own risks to transformation during the RIDE.

6.3.7 Containing the contained and uncontained

It would appear the participants had fun during the RIDE, albeit fun that hid the aggressive nature of the RIDE. Such as when Ms Ses described "throwing the cats amongst the pigeons" during the FANI. However, when the game got too hot to handle, got too real, got out of hand, got too personal as Mr Seswai observed, pressure built, resulting in spillage. Participants then searched for direction from the consultants as both Ms Tlhano and Ms Ses expressed during the FANI. Seemingly to alleviate the pressure in the system. If that was not forthcoming the pressure was relieved by scapegoating the consultants and others in the system. The consultants were threatened with the participants exiting the system (Ms Ses) and withholding (Ms Mbini).

It would seem as if these tactics were used in an apparent bid of disowning any involvement in the consequences of the game that was played. The findings suggest that the participants distrusted the consultant's ability to contain the RIDE system on

their behalf as discussed in the first theme in statements that the RIDE served no purpose, the incorrect methodology was used to study diversity dynamics and, that it did not suit certain personalities.

It would seem as if there was a tension between play and reality at the RIDE. In both sets of data, participants seemed pre-occupied with reality. The focus group participants questioned, what was real, the shock of the real, how could real be expressed or named and real purpose. During the FANI participants spoke about real danger, real freedom, real challengers and real Tavistockian. The preoccupation with reality could be an indication of just how uncontained the participants felt at the RIDE. Alternatively, it could have been about a flight from the psychic reality of the dangerous and delirious zero-sub game. Trying to ascertain just how unsafe they should feel, as Mr Drie said during the FANI, while speaking about comfort zones, "I would have played it safer" had he known what he did after the RIDE.

6.3.7.1   Transforming safe and contained

Safety and containment in familiar comfort zones and complacency were evident at the RIDE. During the FANI Mr Een said people were "comfortable with what they know…" and that it was difficult to work with something that appeared odd. Similar to Ms Tlhano who said, "as much as I'm comfortable, it's the truth, that in the presence of people who don't stimulate me intellectually, I bail out". Referring to complacency Mr Seven said, "I guess one gets complacent". Referring to his problem with authority he observed that authority was, "not something people are comfortable talking about…". However, it would appear that the participants feared containment would fail had they "become complacent and just depend on the system. Then the system might just drop" Ms Vier said. A fear Ms Tlhano spoke about when she said she needed a safe space for conversation to happen where emotions did not interfere. If emotions interfered "I am not holding the space anymore" she said. Similarly, Ms Ses said that messiness was to be allowed to happen safely but not pushed into a particular direction during the focus group.

6.3.7.2   Transforming unsafe and uncontained

Some participants did work with the unfamiliar, going outside of comfort zones. Mr Seven said that the RIDE "helped me to develop a more comfortable relationship with authority" that after he observed others at the RIDE being unable to talk about authority. Mr Drie said, "the big experience lies just outside your comfort zone, not the other side of the world, just outside your comfort zone". However, to contain outside of the comfort zone may have been difficult. Ms Tlhano said, "When I do container elements, how do we contain the discussions… whenever your button is pressed". Ms Vier said, "it difficult to contain, to work with the groups depending on what is happening in there…in the RIDE specifically". Ms Vier's comment about containment at the RIDE being particularly difficult was echoed in her statements in the first theme when both she and Ms Tlhano expressed the difficulty of containing in spaces, they felt unsafe to work in. Particularly as they were cast in the role of pseudo-consultants by their groups, to contain on behalf of the group. A state which left Ms Vier feeling trapped.

To work uncontained, it appeared the participants needed courage. Ms Vier said, "people call me brave; I sometimes think I am stupid" and Mr Drie said, "I was quite brave because, I knew so little". Feeling stupid or knowing little implies the participants worked with uncertainty and uncertain choices, outside of their comfort zones, uncontained, going deeper. It seems as if they were working with the messiness inside, risking the fear of the shock of the real, working on the primary task, in the unfamiliar, amid the grotesque monsters lurking below the surface or in reflections. It would seem as if some participants risked possible long-lasting effects of the RIDE which could have required mourning losses that were perhaps difficult to let go, even if those losses were a gain.

Not all participants risked working with the unfamiliar and outside comfort zones. It seems as if some participants preferred to remain complacent and in comfort zones maintaining the status quo on individual and group level, in defence against any transformation that could happen had the participants engaged with the primary task. According to the participants, a RIDE system, contrary to reality, had no structure and no containment. By remaining complacent and not testing reality,

participants could shift and change in their comfort zones by not going much deeper. Choices might have been easier and known to work. The outcome would have been what was expected and planned for and some form of change of position could then be possible. In the safety of containment, comfort zones, perceived containment, and control over learning in a familiar workshop, thereby resisting learning by experience and transformation, mitigating the risks of no real long-lasting effects other than some regret post reflection, if at all. In addition to mitigating the risks and fears associated with seeing what was seen and the personal choices that needed to be made about what to do about what was illuminated.

Containment at the RIDE specifically, as Ms Vier said was complex. It was not only about providing safety and containment as participants worked on the primary task of the RIDE but, also about containing while breaking out of complacency and comfort zones. A dangerous and delirious zero-sub game risking a "new dawn… having something new come out" that the focus group alluded to, one of those with vampires in, explored in the next theme.

6.4   A NEW DAWN – ONE OF THOSE WITH VAMPIRES

The findings suggest that, that which was "something new coming out" might have been surprising, not always funny, and not as exciting as first thought. Something new coming out could also be filled with pain for the participants of the RIDE, as they crossed seemingly difficult boundaries towards transformation.

The focus group described this experience at the RIDE, the second cluster of cards, as Dusk and Dawn not "dusk to dawn?" as Ms Ses inquired during the focus group but about an experience which has "two sides" according to Mr Drie. Mr Een agreed and said, "it must be and…not or because you always find both…it's sometimes dark but its sometimes light you know it's not either or". An experience which held the words; uncertainty, clean & unclean, Fuss & unfussy, clearing, stereotypes, fun, exciting, pain, birth, unmasking, dawn, containment, safety, and container as seen in Figure 6.5.

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Figure 6.5

Dusk and Dawn

What was curious about this experience was how the participants positioned containment, safety, and container in this cluster of cards. As if forming a boundary to the experience of Dusk and Dawn, the intersecting cards of Eros & Thanatos and Dark

to light, positioned between the experience of Dusk and Dawn and Movement (see Figure 6.4), the third cluster of cards, which is just out of view to the right as seen in Figure 6.5.

In this theme, I explore the possible meaning of the placement of the cards as such, exploring what the Dusk and Dawn experience held for the participants of the RIDE, beginning with what seems to be crossing a psychological boundary for the participants towards transformation.

6.4.1 Crossing the boundary of container, safety, and containment

The Dusk and Dawn experience held several elements of containment. Firstly, when the cluster of cards were initially named Mr Drie said, "hakkies…tussen hakkies" [Brackets between brackets] as if to contain the "new dawn". Secondly the experience of Dusk and Dawn as the focus group eventually named it, held two cards with the words birth written on them. According to the Mapping Metaphor (2015), birth as a metaphor relates to being confined, rebirth and regeneration. However, according to the focus group, while one birth was about something new coming out the other seemed to hold elements of death.

6.4.1.1   An uncertain birth in a new dawn

The element of death in birth was evident during the focus group about the two births present in this cluster of cards. The discussion revolved around which birth was the real birth and which may have been a fake birth. Trying to convince the focus group to keep both birth cards Mr Drie said, "But birth…are we going there to say that birth is not that neat little picture that you centre upon…Ouma [Grandmother]swaddled in a white blanket? That's not the…it's also that what happens before that picture". Mr Een said, "I think it could be both. I mean it doesn't need to be…". Mr Drie said, "I am so worried about these cleaned up pictures" and Mr Een said, "Clean or unclean" referring to another card in the cluster and said, "You know it doesn't need to be…" Mr Drie said, "I think it's both this or that…". Mr Een then said, "But I think very important about the process eventually is something new, there's something new coming out and that's the birth. There at the end result of that there's something new or different". In the end both cards remained, as the focus group felt both births had merit in the description of their experiences of the RIDE.

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For Mr Een, birth was about something "new coming out" for Mr Drie it was about "I have been here before. This is real" as he related a story to the focus group as the participants asked for clarification. It also appeared as if birth was messy for Mr Drie when he said, at the scene of the birth, "he saw the blood on the floor and that terrible primal scene". Mr Drie found that description of birth, "wonderful… there's a kind of a beauty, a kind of a realness, a kind of a…what was your word? Mr Drie asked of Mr Een. Mr Een said, "authentic". Mr Drie then said, "there's a kind of authenticity there that is unrehearsed…that's grotesque…".

As seen in Figure 6.5, birth seemed to be confined behind the wall of containment, safety, and containment. It was not only about one kind of birth, one being fake and the other not, but both apparently authentic births which were not only about a neat picture as an outcome, but also about something old and grotesque as an outcome, according to the focus group participants. Evidenced in using the word grandmother swaddled in a white blanket instead of a baby. An image which brings about a corpse swaddled in a blanket – death. Alluding to death as an outcome of the RIDE which Mr Drie corroborated when he said "Make no mistake people die there" referring to the RIDE.

Turning attention to the meaning of the intersecting cards of Eros &Thanatos and Dark to Light between the experience of Dusk and Dawn and Movement (see Figure 6.5), the findings suggest, as if crossing the boundary of containment, safety and container could be a life-or-death situation (Eros & Thanatos). A moving from dark to light (birth) where the light might not always be as safe as first thought as described in the previous theme. Alternatively crossing the boundary from light to dark (death) which Ms Vier referred to turning the words on the card around when she spoke about it could mean crossing a boundary of knowing into a space of unknowing. A possible reason why the focus group participants rejected calling the Dusk and Dawn experience "New Dawn" which "sounds exciting but it is not" Ms Vier said. Ms Ses agreed and said new age was "a bit too easy" and Ms Vier said that "something new but in a positive sense coming" may not always have been the case. Alluding to a difficult RIDE for some participants, where choices may have been seen as life and death and, safety and containment did not ensure something new coming out but, that something old and grotesque could also emerge.

Something old and grotesque which could emerge may have been represented in the metaphor of the vampire. Unleashing the beast was spoken about during the FANI by Ms Ses. It would also seem these beasts were given identity with reference to the new dawn filled with vampires. A humanoid form, a transmogrified entity in part human albeit dead – the vampire. It would then appear the beasts were not only out there where the danger seemed to be coming from the outside, as Ms Vier said but also from inside of the participants seemingly containing the murderous self during the RIDE, evident in both sets of data. That of the use of the vampire as a metaphor during the focus group and the metaphor of throwing the cats amongst pigeons during the FANI.

6.4.2 Unleashing the beast

The psychic reality of the vampire may have emerged to keep the murderous self, contained to deny the possibility that participants may have upped their game of aggression from killing the enemy to annihilation of the enemy. A life-or-death game of throwing cats amongst pigeons. Looking in mirrors participants only saw the reflected other, the vampire into which the participants could project all the bad. The vampire could then do what the participants could not do or wished they could do. Something Mr Seswai alluded to when he said he held no grudges though he experienced others at his RIDE holding grudges. Referring to a former boss he said, "you might think (t)hey we are good, good buddies". However, after witnessing an attack on a "white lady" at the RIDE, Mr Seswai said, "… my boss…former boss would make sure that if he comes here, he doesn't see me at all". Similar to Mr Drie stating that they (members) were not friends during the RIDE as described in the first theme. In this way the integrity of the self, seemed to be maintained in the psychic reality of the RIDE and the vampire could do the work without consequences for the individual.

In the life and death fight of the vampires, cats, and pigeons', participants searched for those who could be played with, easily deceived, or imposed upon (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969/1996), the cats, pigeons and the vampires mirrored/represented how the participants played the game. Vampires also enthral as described previously. Both Mr Seven and Ms Tlhano were enthralled by the consultants. Mr Seven was full of admiration for a particular consultant and Ms Tlhano watched the dance between the consultants. Being hypnotised and enthralled by the vampire could mean that, not

only were participants shocked by the grotesque/real seen in the mirror, but some participants may also have been enthralled by the power of the vampire.

The vampire holds one power that might have been particularly tempting for some of the participants. The vampire cannot see itself in the mirror which means the participants could not see the bad parts of themselves reflected in the mirror, thereby denying what was reflected in the mirror as "nothing" was there to see. Having no reflection, the participants could not possibly exist, were totally consumed by the vampire, and had no personal ownership of the RIDE. A pseudo containment of the integrity of the self in the loss of the self. Thereby giving up mortality (annihilation of the self) to become the immortal vampires.

The envy in the system and the attack on the consultants provides evidence for participants need for power perceived to be in the hands of the consultants and the bringing to life of the pseudo-consultants by the participants. Turning as many "victims" into vampires as possible would satisfy the need for a homogeneous group. Humans collude with vampires. The psychic reality of the zero-sub game discussed in the second theme provides evidence for the collusion amongst participants to satisfy their needs. Humans fight with vampires. The conflict in the system provides evidence for the fight amongst the participants elaborated on in this theme.

6.4.3 The feast of the vampires

As indicated, the metaphor of food, eating and drinking, was found in both sets of data, as participants described their experiences of the RIDE. A metaphor which carries elements of emotions, according to the Mapping Metaphor, (2015). The metaphor of food, eating and drinking expresses participants: strong emotion and lack of emotion, fear, pride, love and friendship, anger, emotional suffering, pleasure, and excitement.

Related to the food, eating and drinking, the analogy of a kitchen described internal "conflict that's just bubbling out" during the RIDE as Ms Ses said, "the pot is boiling over" during the FANI. Similar to Mr Seswai's description of members chopping heads during the RIDE he had attended. However, it would seem, for the participants, it was not only about cooking. Cooking under pressure was described during the FANI when Mr Drie said it was a "pressure-cooker thing of hard stewing on your own juices". A

kitchen (RIDE) in which turmoil existed as Ms Ses described alluding to spillage during the focus group. Describing the RIDE as a "less natural" environment Mr Drie said the RIDE "tends to be aggression" during the FANI. Similar to Ms Ses description of the RIDE as participants fighting aggression with aggression.

In both sets of data, strong emotions were evident as participants shared their experiences. Ms Ses said the RIDE, "was still just this torrent of aggression and rage" during the FANI. The RIDE was described as "hell" by both Mr Seven and Mr Drie. Mr Seven said, "people fight like hell…" at the RIDE he had attended. Mr Seven described the RIDE as an "emotional roller coaster". Observing others at the RIDE Ms Ses said, "it was quite obvious that they were beaten deep and traumatised". Mr Seswai said, he observed a member "got too emotional and personal and he was attacking her on a personal level". Ms Ses said, "one person in the group would literally jump off his chair, fists flinging in the air, shouting, screaming, and then sit down and fall asleep". It would seem there was an element of feeling uncontained in these descriptions of the participants.

However, it appeared the participants addressed experiences of feeling uncontained differently. Ms Ses blamed the system and consultants for the lack of containment and said they were, "just left" referring to herself and the group. Mr Seswai on the other hand, addressed the person attacking the member after the attack when safe to do so, after the event, as he felt it "was not the right way to go". Mr Drie seemed to contain himself when he said he felt, "challenged" and wondered, "what the hell face should I …what game face should I put on now? As if hiding behind a hellish mask to create safety for himself, it would seem.

Safety seemed a concern in the face of aggression experienced at the RIDE. Aggression related to the psychic reality of the presence of vampires metaphorically described by the participants when they described blood and guts (Mr Drie), specific types of blood running through veins (Mr Seven & Mr Drie), killing (Mr Drie & Mr Seswai), changing shape and morphing (focus group) and death (Mr Drie, Ms Vier, Mr Seswai). The findings of the FANI provided descriptions of aggression when participants such as Ms Vier said, she found

it, "…very, very difficult to relate to the anger and violence" that she experienced as coming from both sides. Explicit descriptions of being attacked were shared by Ms Vier and Mr Seswai. Mr Seswai referred to "a male attacking a female" Ms Vier referred to an attack she experienced as an "assault…so violent that it stayed with me" she said. Mr Een referred to "conflict and anxiety within people". Ms Ses said the RIDE, "just becomes conflict for the sake of conflict".

Concerns about whether violence was going to erupt were shared by Ms Vier. According to Mr Seswai there was nearly a "fistfight". Ms Tlhano cautioned against fighting when buttons were pressed. Mr Seven shared his experience of being, "furious" when his colleague was forced to leave the RIDE. Ms Vier described the participants experiences of the consultants, "ganging up on them". Consultants being experienced as "hostile" were described by Ms Mbini. Rage was explicitly described by Ms Ses. Threats seemed to exist when Mr Drie described a member being threatened outside of the boundaries of the RIDE and the veiled threat from Mr Seswai towards his former boss.

Not only were experiences of aggression and conflict described during the RIDE but specific emotional experiences, those being, anger, hate, pain, sadness, happiness and niceties and humour.

6.4.3.1 Anger and hate

Emotions such as anger and hate were not expressed during the IQA of the RIDE however, participants did share experiences of these emotions during the FANI. Emotions of hatred were expressed when Ms Ses feeling projected onto said she was not "prepared to be pushed into a position of hate". Ms Vier shared a similar experience of projection when she said "I am the hate object in the moment" in her group. It would appear there was a risk that some of the projections could be introjected. Ms Ses said that "conflict can very, very quickly shift to hate… I've really experienced such a lot of hatred towards me". Ms Ses said she never experienced "this level of anger and hate against me as a white woman" outside of the RIDE. Something she tested with her second private tour to the prison it would seem, when she said, "not experiencing any hate from him in any way", referring to the ex-prison guard who took her on her tour. Splitting the good and bad Ms Ses said the ex-prison guard was, "able to transcend

his own hate as opposed to real hate that I felt throughout that room" referring to members of the RIDE. Seemingly feeling victimised Ms Ses said, "is there really a place for me here, really a contribution for me to be made if this is the level of anger and hate against me as a white woman". Mr Seswai described the RIDE with "hatred". When asked if these were his personal experiences, he said no it was his observation of other people in the group.

Emotions of anger at the RIDE were expressed in Mr Seswai's observation of other members when he said, "it's like taking out his anger on her" as one member was attacking the other. Similarly, in observing others Mr Drie said after the member who accused Mr Mandela of being a terrorist at the prison, refused to ask for forgiveness, there was talk amongst the members which, "broke the anger…after her speech, we went into the small groups and handled in the small groups". It would appear talking alleviated the pressure in the system. When the group, "came back into the large group, it was much better" Mr Drie said. Ms Vier spoke about the anger she felt from both sides when she referred to two opposing groups those who had been incarcerated in the prison on Robben Island and those who had benefitted from the apartheid system at that time. Ms Vier spoke about how she could not connect to both groups emotions which may have been a form of self-preservation not to side with one group over the other. Mr Seven shared a personal experience with anger when he said, "I was very angry, very frustrated and, it put a bit of a damper on the start, but I think I managed to let go of it and forget it". Referring to his anger at a supervisor who had recalled a participant he had brought with him to the RIDE back to the office.

6.4.3.2   Pain and sadness
The RIDE was seemingly painful and sad as Mr Seswai said he observed at the RIDE "the pain, grieving, inside other people the different race, especially how we came to this point in this country…and some are even holding grudges" he said. During the IQA of the RIDE pain was related to loss. At that time the focus group said, "the process can be fun, can be exciting, can be pain, can be loss" while the focus group were exploring the concept of clearing, letting go. As discussed earlier, letting go was difficult even if letting go may have been a gain. Holding grudges as Mr Seswai described may have been an indication of how difficult it could be to let go.

Sadness was referred to by Mr Seven and Ms Ses when Ms Ses said, there isn't place definitely for the white woman in the new South Africa…and it is quite sad". Mr Seven said, "I don't think we were ever able to take it [learning from the RIDE] across into the organization, which was sad for me I think".

6.4.3.3   Happiness and niceties

Happiness and being nice was mostly expressed during the IQA of the RIDE almost as if the focus group could not bear to express any difficult emotions experienced at the RIDE. Coincidently "Happy" is the antonym of "delirium" (Dictionary.com, 2019). The focus groups preoccupation with happy and being nice during the RIDE could be evidence for defences against what they had experienced during the RIDE. The focus group checked constantly with one another if they were happy. Not totally surprising as their task was to reach a consensus. However, as indicated in the previous theme the focus group participants chose names for their experiences of the RIDE mostly from defended positions and defended subjects.

It would also appear the focus group had different expectations of what the IQA of the RIDE was going to be about. As we were wrapping up the IQA of the RIDE Mr Drie said, "Thank you for doing such a fun thing with us…I enjoyed it". Mr Een said, "Yah it was actually nice". Both participants seemed surprised by the outcome of nice. Mr Drie said, "I was hoping for a little bit of pain and… Uncleanliness but we've managed to keep it nice…". Referring to words such as pain and uncleanliness provides evidence for remembered difficult emotions at the RIDE which the focus group participants felt the need to defend against during the focus group. Providing evidence of the long-lasting effects of the RIDE. Mr Seswai was the only other participant outside of the focus group who referred to happiness when he said everyone left the RIDE as one big happy family. Yet none of the members kept touch with each other after the RIDE according to Mr Een and Ms Ses. Perhaps Mr Seswai too maintained a wish for a different outcome to the RIDE in his statement.

Other more positive emotions such as love and enjoyment were expressed by Mr Seven who said one member was a lovely person and that he would "just love to do it again", referring to the RIDE. Ms Mbini said of her morning run, "I'm like I'm gone, but it was so enriching you know because you got to see the island and you got to just

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enjoy the freshness of the morning and so forth". Ms Mbini expression of enjoyment outside of the RIDE in the freshness of the morning air perhaps a comment on experiences of depletion and stuffiness during the RIDE events. A RIDE which, "kind of took long in as much as it was a great experience" Ms Mbini said.

The pressure in the RIDE system appeared to be palatable in these descriptions of aggression, anger, hate, pain, sadness, happiness, and niceties the participants experienced at the RIDE. A physically and emotionally draining experience Ms Vier described as, "… I was very tired, but it was as if I was already becoming not a depression but a melancholy". Similarly, Mr Een said he experienced the RIDE as "very physically and emotionally demanding…very deep emotional experience…very emotional…physically draining". Mr Seven said, that he "can't even remember being so damn tired" of his time at the RIDE.

It would seem to alleviate some of the pressure at the RIDE, the participants turned to humour as the key that "unlocks" as Mr Drie said during the focus group.

6.4.3.4   Humour

During the focus group as the participants were discussing anxiety, an altercation ensued between Mr Drie and Ms Vier. Mr Drie said, "…isn't humour the wonderful anecdote to…antidote to that? You know how anxiety can immobilise us". Ms Vier pointed out, "humour can also be a scapegoat". Mr Drie said, "But …of course you can escape". Ms Vier said, "Or not standing with…And not going…Through the process. So, it's convenient…". Agreeing with Ms Vier, Ms Ses said, "Yes and actually detracting from going where…you can't go", based on the findings thus far Ms Ses may have been alluding to her anxiety about not being able to let go. Mr Een agreed and said, "… I saw it as a defence mechanism for many people…". Mr Drie did not agree with the focus group participants and said humour, "could also be the key that opens the lock" ending his sentence seemingly extremely frustrated.

Humour, it would seem found itself in places and spaces between different events of the RIDE. During the FANI Ms Tlhano said she noticed other members joking unnecessarily during the RIDE she attended. Mr Seven "found that very funny" when

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a member could not cross the boundaries between events in high heeled shoes. Ms Vier described a laughing session the members of the RIDE she attended put together, during the social event where, "a member of the group facilitated laughing sessions". Ms Vier said they were, "going to laugh for 45 minutes… to break a record" at that time.

The laughing session Ms Vier described provides for some evidence of humour used as a defence against anxiety (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2012). Bearing in mind that the laughing session was put together by the members and not the consultants during the RIDE Ms Vier had attended. Seemingly restructuring the RIDE as the findings suggest thus far and creating a pseudo-consultant as "a brilliant facilitator" as Ms Vier described the member. It also seemed as if just having a laughing session was not enough. The RIDE seemingly required a record to be broken. Describing the laughing session Ms Vier said, "it was like a heat wave, it was like as if there was a healing and a release coming through this wave of this laughter and we literally continued for 45 minutes…it was such a spontaneous thing and there I also, I think because of the laughter I got rid of a lot of anxiety and the stress that came with [the RIDE]". The spontaneity Ms Vier described may have been about a quick fix to release the pressure in the system the participants may have wished for. Rather than doing the work of working on the primary task of the RIDE. Evidenced in Ms Vier's comment, "because of the release I could get rid of a lot of my defence with regards to having to side with or wanting to feel or wanting to work out this friction that was [at the RIDE]". It would then seem the laughing session worked for Ms Vier as she no longer had to take responsibility for choosing one side or another or "working out" what the "friction" was about.

It would seem as if releasing the anxiety and pressure in the RIDE system with a laughing session, which was not a task of the RIDE, enabled the participants to defend against the primary task. Working on the primary would have allowed the participants to understand the dynamics in the system and to work with it. Others also become objects of hostility if humour is used as a defence against anxiety. Ms Vier stated that 50% of the members of her RIDE attended the laughing session. The exclusion of 50% of the members from the laughing

session and creating the pseudo-consultant to act on behalf of the members begs the question about how the participants used others and the consultants as objects of their hostility with the laughing session.

6.4.4 A pressure cooker of stewing in own juices

Releasing the pressure and anxiety in the system as if in a heatwave, provides evidence for the RIDE described as a pressure cooker in which participants stewed on their juices as Mr Drie described. Where the pot was just boiling over, and conflict was just bubbling out as described by the focus group. A pressure which seemed present throughout the RIDE before, during and after the prison tour. That as the participants came face to face with the unresolved emotions from the apartheid era (Cilliers & May, 2012). Where "the discourse in the macrosystem outside of the boundaries of the RIDE were filled with high levels of anger, hate and emotional baggage" (Cilliers & May, 2012 p. 3.) imprisoning South African society. A reality the participants came face-to-face with during the prison event and as they worked on the primary task of the RIDE.

The laughing session Ms Vier described happened after the prison tour. The prison tour was a unique event of the RIDE which included a tour of the prison on Robben Island which held many political prisoners of the apartheid era. An event held on the second or third day of the RIDE, which usually took place after the participants had been part of several other events such as the LSG, SSG and IGE events. Not many participants referred to the event and only Mr Drie spoke about what happened as they were touring the prison. During the FANI Ms Mbini said, "what particularly touched me, … well it was part of the RIDE experience you know that whole point when you… take a tour into the actual prisons". Participants did speak about places outside the prison walls they visited, particularly the house of Robert Sobukwe, an isolated political prisoner, outside of the political prison itself which Ms Mbini and Ms Tlhano referred to. Mr Seswai, Mr Seven and Mr Een never mentioned the tour. They only referred to apartheid during the FANI and focus group. Ms Ses mentioned a private second tour she had on the last day of the RIDE.

The prison tour was significant for the participants, the point of the RIDE as Ms Mbini said. She also said, "I think you just learn a lot about, your country per se and just generally about what other people have had to go through" speaking about her own experience after she attended the event. Ms Tlhano said, "the most powerful thing was

the venue in terms of what it symbolises and the visitations we had" referring to the prison and island tour. It appeared as if there were different reactions to the prison tour at different RIDEs.

At the RIDE Ms Vier attended she said, "at one point there was just about a physical eruption when we did the prison experience on the Wednesday". Ms Vier said, "It was developing throughout". At the RIDE Mr Drie attended he said, "nothing much happened that afternoon, it's kind of cold, you know silence…it's like cold water being poured over everybody there". That after he had attended the prison tour and a "Afrikaans girl" said, "he [Mr Mandela] was locked up here because he was a terrorist. He deserved it". On the one hand Ms Vier's description alludes to a pressure in the RIDE system before the prison tour which erupted after the event. On the other hand, Mr Drie's experience seemed to indicate that the pressure was in the system after the event. He said that from the first day, "we cook along…there's a couple of bright sparks that says, maybe we can do something, make this work". During the IGE, which Mr Drie called "a role-play thing" which he said, "we thoroughly "buggered" up" it seemed to him as if participants were playing the game, "chubbing along" he said. From these observations an impression of both hot and cold seems evident. One of a system erupting and another a system freezing, with pent up emotion.

6.4.5 A distraction of echoes

The eruption of emotions was also evident in Ms Ses experience of her RIDE when she said she experienced the RIDE as "constant screaming" from the beginning. Mr Drie described a member of his RIDE which "spoke for I think about half an hour without stopping. Of course, that did not make any difference…". It would seem as if the screaming, shouting, and excessive talking may have been about airing out the pressure in the system.

Descriptions of air and breath was present in both sets of data. Shedding light as described in the previous theme held elements of shedding air according to the focus group participants. During, the FANI participants described fresh sea breeze (Mr Seswai) and early morning running (Ms Mbini) as if being able to breathe better outside of the boundaries of the RIDE. Which may imply feeling stifled inside the RIDE boundaries. It would appear as if all the talking and screaming made no difference.

The shouting and screaming could then have become a distraction to what was really going on at the RIDE, perhaps a distraction of echoes as sound bounced of hard unreceptive (participants) surfaces.

6.4.5.1   Shouting

The shouting and screaming were mostly shared by Ms Ses about the RIDE she attended. Ms Ses said there was unstructured screaming and shouting for two days before she moved to a different small group. Ms Ses said she moved to another small group because, "there was better opportunity to speak and to share and to be heard and listen…". Seemingly ascribing the screaming and shouting in the group to the structure and composition of the group. Before she made the move, Ms Ses said, "people were screaming at me, shouting at me…as this fighting was going on against me and I wasn't fighting back or any point, I wasn't arguing or justifying my own…I didn't even speak in some of the sessions…it was still just this torrent of aggression and rage…". In defence against the shouting and screaming Ms Ses experienced, she said, "I decided I'm going into the session… sorry... I'm not going to say a word. So, I sat the entire hour and a half or whatever it was without saying one word". It may be that Ms Ses was the object of the group's anxiety. Her silence meant that the groups anxiety could be poured into her without it being projected out. Had Ms Ses projected out it would mean the raw emotions would then have to be worked with. Ms Ses's valence for silence then worked for the group. Emotions did not need to be worked with only evacuated. However, the silence seemed to create even more anxiety as Ms Ses did not appear to be holding the anxiety for the group but rather wished her silence would silence the group.

6.4.5.2   Silence

It appeared silence in the group made participants uncomfortable and paranoid. Ms Mbini said, "…there's just silence…I figured okay…they're trying to do something, so I would just sit quietly…   But I noticed how others would get so aggravated". Not only did Ms Mbini sit quietly in with what seemed to be her paranoia, in contrast to Ms Ses silence which seemed to be about challenging the group, Ms Mbini felt the need to, "just start a conversation". Seemingly to talk only for the sake of talking to release the pressure as evident in the interaction between the group and Ms Ses as described in the previous subsection. Creating additional frustration in the group which Ms Tlhano

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referred to when she observed others would get "frustrated" because, "people don't understand why" they could not talk. It would seem participants then also felt silenced.

6.4.5.3   Competition

It would appear as if there was some competition amongst the participants in who spoke, were allowed to speak and who were silenced. During the FANI Mr Seswai said, "she was also actually shouted down to a point where I think for two days she didn't speak" describing his observation of another at his RIDE. Ms Tlhano said, "Why shouldn't I talk too…So, people want to talk". Similarly, Mr Drie said "Once or twice, I had the feeling that I'm not going to share anything with them I'm just going to let them stew in their own flipping juices" speaking of others at his RIDE. Ms Ses said, "you know it's probably in your right to scream and shout also to allow the other person to scream and shout and then to listen while the other person screams and shouts". From the perspective of the group silencing others and/or not allowing some individuals to speak may have been about the group exercising its power to maintain the status quo. Not allowing for learning and development to take place. Alternatively, from an individual perspective, not speaking and not sharing what was learnt could be an individual exercising their power of withholding at the expense of the group learning.

Not learning in the distraction of the echoes of shouting at each other, shouting down on others, screaming, and talking, meant that it may have been difficult to hear and listen to others. While Ms Mbini might have taken the defensive position of talking for the sake of talking, Ms Ses seemed to take up the defensive position of withholding and not listening when she said, "ten people are all at the same time for an hour and a half shouting and screaming at you, and you're not even saying one word in that session, then I'm sorry there's no… then I don't believe there's any learning to have from that". Taking Ms Ses number of ten members at face value, it would seem the group required more than one person to gang up against what she represented in the system, to possibly alleviate the pressure and anxiety while possibly also feeling challenged by Ms Ses silence.

It would appear from these comments and the findings thus far that the participants did not hear or listen to others, thereby defending against what was being said and not taking anything in. The listening seems to only allude to a pause in the echo of

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screaming and shouting of hearing own voices which needed to be raised as no one was listening. Alternatively, the shouting and screaming could be about anxiety not being heard, not mattering and exclusion from the group, by implication – powerlessness.

6.4.5.4 Listening

In the midst of the distraction of echoes. The participants did share that they tried to listen more. Ms Mbini said, "So I've really learnt to listen more…and respecting other". Mr Een said, you sit there, and you sort of think, you know people are the same. You sort of sit there and think although people are different there's also a... there's also a similarity in, what people's um, dreams and desires and their needs, their needs are". However, it is unclear whether Mr Een was distracted and dreaming here or genuinely listening to the group. Mr Seswai shared a similar experience when he said, "just hearing other people's problems, what they experienced in life". Mr Seswai might have also only heard but not necessarily taken anything in. Ms Vier said, "maybe you can point to something that you can say listen this is not what's happening." Ms Vier said that there may then be "less chaos". Ms Tlhano said that "once you discover something in your bag you don't even have to be forever shouting". Both Ms Vier and Ms Tlhano alluding to an external and internal reflection of understanding of what might have been going on during the RIDE. Which may have alleviated the pressure in the system, instead of maintaining the pressure at the expense of understanding and integration about the dynamics in the group.

The feast of the vampire was then aggressive violent and overindulgent. In a pressure cooker of stewing on own juices. Which seemed to work for the participants in echoes of screaming and shouting, towards defence against learning by experience and perceived powerlessness. In addition, it would appear as if the anxiety in the system may have been about anxiety about transformation. Which the findings suggest, may have been a metaphorical life-or-death situation, requiring complex decisions with complex outcomes, which could have long lasting effects, whether the participants defended against those or not. Rendering the new dawn with the expectation of something new and fresh coming out to be filled with the possibility of something old and grotesque emerging.

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In conclusion, anxiety was linked to transformation during the focus group when the focus group participants positioned the card with the word "anxiety" written on it in the Movement experience together with transformation as seen in Figure 6.4. Anxiety is also evidenced in the findings of this theme, as participants seemingly needed to cross the boundary of containment and the container safely towards transformation, behind which an uncertain birth seemed to be confined as the beast was unleashed in a murderous rage of a feast of vampires. Where pent-up emotions erupted, stewed, and festered in a defence against learning by experience in a distraction of echoes of screaming and shouting. Raising the pressure/anxiety in the system seemingly to confine an uncertain birth/transformation.

6.4.6 Transformation during the RIDE

Even though Ms Ses believed there was no learning to be had from the RIDE, Mr Een described the RIDE as "a growth experience" during the FANI. Similarly, Mr Seven said he was going through some turmoil in his private life at the time he attended however, the RIDE "did me a power of good… really". Ms Mbini said she met an employee in her organisation who had attended the RIDE previously, and said, "she couldn't stop talking about Ride and what a difference it made in her life. And I just thought wow, that was just so phenomenal and, others that meet her... they say oh my word, she's such a different person". However, Ms Mbini believed, "that's like maybe one out of ten or twenty people that will actually then externalise what they learnt internally and actually practice it in the workplace" she said.

However, it would appear as if the RIDE was not a growth experience for all participants. During the FANI Mr Seswai said, "I'd say the whole Ride experience didn't affect me… didn't change much in me…I went there… and I went out as the same person". Similarly, Ms Mbini said, "I cannot say I learnt more about myself because I was already very self-aware, but it was interesting because I think others walked away having a different perception of me and my understanding of myself". She further elaborated on her observations about some of her colleagues who attended the RIDE and said, "these young boys that went I think…they had issues you know, either baby, daddy issues or whatever. And a lot of them that I spoke to were like, you know I learnt so much about myself and whatever. But I think they're still the same here at work". An observation shared by Mr Drie who said, "and I know nobody's changed They haven't

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moved an inch". These differences of experiences may be explained by how participants worked with transformation during the RIDE.

6.4.6.1 Risking transformation

Transformation seemed to be about taking risks and not easily controlled. Referring to birth included in the Dusk and Dawn experience the focus group participants described, Mr Drie said "both must be there…we have a…not deeper than that, we have need to… move towards Eros which is light and wonderful and the white swaddling cloth. And we also have that same need for the dark and the terrible and the blood and the guts. And they are both there". Apparently, less risk averse than Mr Drie, Ms Vier said she needed to stay quite neutral, and Ms Tlhano said she needed to pause and reflect. It would seem containment during the RIDE may have been about the amount of control the participants felt they had over their transformation. Similar to Ms Tlhano and Ms Vier, Mr Seswai said he, "controlled himself" referring to the altercation with the former boss. However, during the RIDE while witnessing the attack on a female who then started crying Mr Seswai said, "I even had to comfort her". Alluding to being forced to act on behalf of the group. Ms Vier spoke about how much control she had at the RIDE and to be aware of when, "you are being worked with or not". It would seem as if masks, the participants referred to, may have provided some control over their experiences and transformation during the RIDE.

6.4.6.2 Unmasking

Unmasking was related to Eros and Thanatos (life and death) to "birth it's like birth…It's also life and death… so die…death to light is the same as… Unmasking, or it could be clean and unclean". Attaching clean and unclean to unmasking seemed to carry something about how contaminated participants would feel if they did unmask themselves or others. Masks were the stereotypes "through which we look at the world" Mr Drie said during the focus group. During the FANI Ms Ses said, "maybe thinking was it really necessary for me to see it and experience it because you… I think things…You do look at people differently then". Looking at people differently would imply that Ms Ses then had learned something which she defended against.

In addition to masks being the stereotypes through which to look at the world it would appear as if the masks were worn to intimidate others and protect the self (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969/1996) from having the mask lifted. Evidenced in Mr Drie's comment when he wondered what hell-face he needed to put on when he felt "challenged" by the group during the RIDE. Masks hide the identities of those wearing them (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969/1996) which could mean the masks provide safety of containment not to see, to learn, to transform. Attempting to unmask others in the group may have proved dangerous and could have been construed as stealing from others or taking away from someone that which the participants may have been unwilling to let go or needed to let go. Evidenced in the focus group discussion about what unmasking meant to them in terms of change which could bring loss. Having masks stolen during the RIDE could have left participants with regret as Ms Ses alluded to.

Transformation at the RIDE was complex for the participants. It was fraught with fears and risks of what it would mean to work on a primary task of studying diversity dynamics in the here-and-now. Learning which in, "some cases are just too dangerous… you just cannot see it, name it, talk about it, bring it out in the open" as Mr Drie said, also suggested by the findings thus far. Which seemed to invoke strong emotions related to feelings of power and powerlessness which necessitated vampires to do the work on behalf of the participants. This also showed how participants at first tried to play a game to hide the aggression in the group through humour.

In the next theme I explore participants experiences after attending the RIDE or as Mr Drie said, "the day after the revolution". Mr Drie said he understood "the five-day revolution, I'm just not too sure that Tavistock methodology does well with the day after the revolution". That as he heard others "came away psychologically scared more than damaged, that lost their rudder" after attending "Tavistock in London", referring to the group relations conference held there annually.

6.5   KEEP MOVING SAFETY FIRST! NO FIRES ON THE SHIP

The metaphor of the ship was used by both Mr Seven and Mr Drie during the FANI. Mr Seven said that the "major priorities" of organisations was "keeping the ship afloat,

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keeping the ship moving…Looking at what was actually going on underneath all that was not, seen as a priority". He said, "I think the, the overall kind of thing was, we're trying to put fires out here, we're trying to keep the ship floating and moving forward". According to Mr Seven that made it difficult for him to transfer what he had learnt during the RIDE into his organisation. Experiences which seemed to be share by most of the participants.

6.5.1 Transferring learning to the organisation

The participants of the RIDE came from different economic sectors of the South African Macrosystem. Namely, the public sector in which Mr Een, Mr Seven, Ms Mbini and Mr Seswai worked and the private sector in which, Ms Vier, Ms Ses, Mr Drie and Ms Tlhano worked.

6.5.1.1   We don't do diversity here, tell me about your deliverables

Mr Een and Mr Seven worked in the same organisation and attended RIDE in different years. Mr Een recalled that he became part of senior management at a fairly young age in his organisation, just before attending RIDE. His perception was that the older colleagues did not like this much, it was a diversity issue that impacted him personally. The organisation was going through a transformation period at that time. Many white people were leaving, and young black graduates appointed under older white women who remained in the organisation, with years of experience but only formally qualified at a matric level. Mr Seven corroborated Mr Een's assessment of the organisation's culture at that time, relating the difficulties of the transformation period. Mr Seven said, "I remember ah… the very first workshop that I ran…we had a number of these white women and some of the young black graduates, and I did a 'kind of get to know you' exercise at the beginning" resulting in difficulties in pronouncing names causing conflict between employees. Mr Seven said he came to the RIDE with that in mind to help him fix the culture.

Both Mr Een and Mr Seven were particularly troubled by the time boundaries during the RIDE. Both said there was not enough time and Mr Een said he learnt that time boundaries were important. However, people outside the RIDE did not understand that which made it difficult to work with time boundaries at the RIDE. He said, unless a person understands "this sort of thing" of "not respecting boundary conditions" it is difficult to implement in the "broader community". After attending the RIDE Mr Een said

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he had done more things on diversity and racism like conducting a survey in his organisation on racism. Similarly, to Mr Seven's comment of trying to get as many employees as possible to attend the RIDE Mr Een said it was difficult to get management to send more people. He said, after those who had attended the RIDE, most had left the organisation. At the time of the interview in 2016 there was no longer any diversity programme within the organisation.

Both Mr Seven in the public sector and Mr Drie in the private sector said, they were unsuccessful in selling the RIDE to the organisation. Mr Seven said, "I'm not sure about public service organizations in the current South Africa being ready for taking this on board I think there are a lot of insecurities and vested interests in politics, and I think we're going through a necessary change process. I think that probably the psycho-dynamic approach would actually facilitate getting through that, but it's pretty scary for especially people in leadership positions in these organizations". While there is evidence that both Mr Drie and Mr Seven transformed during the RIDE, they did not manage to transfer that learning to their organisation.

6.5.1.2   *A RIDE to enrich individuals not to quantify*

Both Ms Mbini and Mr Seswai worked for the same organisation in the public sector, they attended on different years. Ms Mbini said, "I don't know in terms of organisational and I don't know if it's [RIDE] supposed to be organisational. For me it just remains personal kind of you know. I don't know how it's supposed to feedback into the organisation". She recalled that she expected the organisation to sit them down after the RIDE and do a study on the effectiveness of the RIDE. However, the organisation did not "quantify" the experience of their employees. Ms Mbini felt there was no use of continuing with the RIDE if it was not quantifiable. She said when a representative of those who attended the RIDE did report back it was "very airy fairy" She then realised, "that no one is interested to know that intricately".

Mr Seswai reported no transfer of learning from the RIDE to the organisation. He said, "I get too much respect from ordinary people compared to if I was working at other places". Even though Ms Mbini and Mr Seswai said they had experienced no

transformation during the RIDE, the findings seem to contradict their statements as described in the previous theme.

6.5.1.3   *Not the typical corporate way of looking at things*

Commenting on her learning during the RIDE Ms Tlhano said that she could see what happened during the IGE being relevant in her organisation and the industries in which she consults. She said that it is very easy for "somebody to complain about lack of leadership and then, or to say that leadership is interfering, and then when they don't, they allow you to create your own thing… you still complain, you know. You still feel that, but why are they not leading and yet nobody said you cannot lead". However, Ms Tlhano said she was hesitant to use what she learnt at the RIDE in her consulting profession "it's because of the nature of my job". Ms Tlhano said, "psychodynamics" is an alternative way of looking at things which is "premature for its time". She said she knows it is not a new thing but thinks corporate South Africa will only be able to implement it "in eight to ten years' time". At the time "people are too locked on problems… solve it; talk about the problem as I presented it to you. They need to be linear, and they need to make sense". Ms Tlhano said she had worked with numerous executive teams who may have influenced her thinking and she aligned to their way of thinking. She saw the model as important but in the future as an alternative method where organisations might be ready to look at different ways to solve problems. While the findings suggest Ms Tlhano did experience a change in the way she works with diversity after reflecting on the RIDE it appears as if her learning was more personal. She did not speak about how that learning transferred to the organisations to which she consults.

Ms Vier, a consultant similar to Ms Tlhano said, the IGE does reflect what was happening in organisations however, "I think it happens more haphazardly". She wished "one can teach that to, I don't know if that is possible, but teach that to organisations". Ms Vier did not know if this is possible as she recalled that from her experience when leaders sit together, they were sure they knew what was going on in their organisations and "they miss the bus half of the time. And it creates such a lot of chaos with all the dynamics that are playing out around them, and they actually don't know what goes on because they don't even stop and think about it, they just know that they know". This concurred with Ms Tlhano's view. Transferring learning

to the organisations was then just as difficult for Ms Vier as for Ms Tlhano. It would appear as if the planned transformation Ms Vier experienced at the RIDE could not be transferred outside of the boundaries of the RIDE.

Similar to the afore mentioned participants, Mr Drie found the IGE relatable to what was happening in his organisation. It was curious to find that these three participants spoke about the IGE in the context of taking learning back to their organisations when no mention was made about their experiences of the IGE other than a role play, something Mr Drie referred to and Ms Vier in relation to her being a trainee consultant during the RIDE.

Mr Drie said he understood the games that were played, however the RIDE "event made it real, just made it happen, made it real, made me recognize how it actually plays out. And for that I thank it". He recalled that "I'm not sure that I took much back to the work environment. I worked for the bank, so we were a bank like any other, we were just saying how we can please people to make a whole lot of money for ourselves". Similar to the experiences of Mr Een and Mr Seven in their organisation. However, he found "it was quite a learning experience" personally. As elaborated on in the subsection to follow the findings seemed to suggest Mr Drie transmogrified at the RIDE. He also said he would not be surprised if others shared the same experience "something that they worked on for many years afterwards, and that kept having some significance, some use that they could make it". It would seem as if Mr Drie too, was not able to transfer his experience back to the organisation.

Ms Ses said she took no learning from the RIDE, "I think anybody of us behaved in an organisation we will be fired, disciplined and fired that same day" which is congruent to the findings which suggest that Ms Ses defended against experiences of transformation during the RIDE.

These experiences of being unable to transfer learning back to the organisation may have had something to do with how transformation was experienced individually during the RIDE. Defences during the RIDE about transformation may have been projected onto the organisation in terms of the risk's participants might

have needed to take in their organisations to promote the learning experience of the RIDE. A risk which could threaten the participants standing in their respective organisations or survival in the organisation as Ms Ses said alluding to getting fired, had participants challenged the status quo. Consequences of which may have been fresh in the minds of the participants post the RIDE.

6.5.2 Transformation experiences at the RIDE

Individual transformation experiences were different for different participants. In addition, the participants experience of their transformation represent the transformational experience of others in the RIDE system, according to Systems Psychodynamic theory.

6.5.2.1   *Preservation rather than transformation*

The findings suggest that not all participants could transform during the RIDE. Ms Ses said, "if the process does not run well then it can be quite detrimental" during the focus group. During the FANI she said, "I think maybe not being involved in a process like that actually does less damage…" referring to the RIDE. It would appear as if Ms Ses represented those participants in the system who found it difficult to transform during the RIDE. Participants who instead remained in control and regressed as the findings suggest. Defending against any kind of transformation Shedding light or Movement might have entailed. It would appear as if Ms Ses preserved her identity (Sapochnik, 2020) in defence against transformation.

6.5.2.2   *Transformation post reflection of the RIDE*

Ms Tlhano shared a similar experience of no learning during the RIDE as Ms Ses. Ms Tlhano said that she switched off if she felt that people were at lower levels than herself. Yet in contrast to Ms Ses who post the RIDE said she saw no learning to be had from the RIDE, Ms Tlhano said she needed to learn more about herself and "once you discover something about yourself you must be committed to working on it…or it will trip you". In addition, she did take learning from the IGE event as described in the previous subsection of this theme. It would then appear Ms Tlhano represented those participants that may have needed to control and contain their learning during the RIDE but defended against transformation during the RIDE. The findings suggest Mr Seven

did transform during the RIDE however he also seemed to learn post the RIDE. He said, he learnt to be more mature about authority after the RIDE.

6.5.2.3   Transformation during the RIDE

As the findings suggest working with *fear and risk* seemed to have different outcomes for different participants. Ms Vier as with Mr Drie did not seem averse to working with risk and taking risks. Ms Vier said, "I would easily throw the cat amongst the pigeons and see what jumps out". However, when it came to the purpose of transformation, Ms Vier seemed to lean towards planned transformation more so than unplanned transformation as Mr Drie did. The reason for Ms Vier being more cautious during the RIDE may have been about, "been there done that, no ways am I even going to allow myself to go there again" she said remembering a previous experience of a group relations conference. Ms Vier and Mr Drie's difference of opinion about fear and risk may have been about their similarities in taking risks and their differences about the outcomes of risk taking. It would seem as if Ms Vier preferred a planned transformation while Mr Drie risked an unplanned transformation.

Similar to Ms Vier, Ms Mbini seemed to defend against transformation during the RIDE based on past experiences of people discussing her and finding a similar situation during the RIDE. Stating that that did not bother her during the RIDE because she was very self-aware may have been a defence against transformation during the RIDE. However, even though Ms Mbini said she experienced no transformation during the RIDE she said, "I learnt that your expectations and perceptions are not necessarily reality sometimes you shouldn't be fixed on the past and what you think you know there is still much to learn and so many ways of doing things" post the RIDE.

The findings suggest that Mr Een's experience of the RIDE may have also included a planned for transformation. However, Mr Een was adamant that the outcome of the RIDE must contain something new and not something old. It may be that in defence against something old emerging from his transformation Mr Een may have remained on the surface level of transformation. Not wanting to see what was difficult to see evidenced in his apparent need to move on from the shedding light discussion during the focus group. On his return to his organisation Mr Een did not transfer his learning

back to the RIDE other than to comment on time boundaries but rather conducted a survey.

These experiences of participants suggest that some participants were risk averse and others not. There may have also been degrees of risk-taking influencing the dynamics of their learning and transforming. How participants worked with risk had implications for their transformation.

6.5.2.4   Transmogrification during the RIDE

Mr Drie might have represented those participants at the RIDE who risked uncertainty working uncontained towards transmogrification. Such a process of transformation which entailed loss for himself when he said, "… there was a positive loss, so it could be a bit like both and exciting". During the FANI he said he was lesser now. What he meant by this is unclear however he did imply he was better with his grandchildren than he was with his children after the RIDE. Alluding to a change which may have been a loss on the one hand and a gain on the other. It appeared that Mr Drie was not averse to taking risks as the FANI and the focus group data suggested. During the IQA the focus group gave him *risk and fear* to take home with him which alludes to the valence he must carry risk and fear on behalf of the system. This may have enabled the focus group to work "nicely" during the IQA of the RIDE as no fear or risk was present while Mr Drie carried that for the group.

The discussion thus far seems to indicate that participants could be classified into neat boxes of who transformed, transmogrified, or experienced no transformation at all. However, these assumptions cannot be made. The findings suggest some participants may have been defended subjects, not wanting to acknowledge that transformation may have occurred for various reasons. Ms Ses and Mr Seswai in addition to the focus group may have represented these participants and group in the system. Ms Ses said she did not want to admit to herself what happened during the RIDE. Also, Mr Seswai said he went in and came out the same person. There is no evidence that he may have regressed. On the contrary, he might have changed more than he expected as he said it would have helped him in his previous job if he had attended the RIDE before he had the altercation with his previous boss. Mr Seswai said, "…my former boss, he was too racist… too racist in such a way that even other whites… other white

". After witnessing the attack on the white female during the RIDE whom he felt the need to comfort, Mr Seswai said if he was the one attacking the female his former boss would not come around. This suggests that Mr Seswai had changed during the RIDE. However, there is no evidence to the degree of change in the findings nor whether it was a positive or negative change. The process of transformation was not simple at the RIDE nevertheless it held *planned for* and *unplanned for* transformation which required control of the self and the system it would seem.

In the next subsection I provide a visual representation of the process of transformation during the RIDE and the outcomes of that transformation in the transfer of learning to the participants respective organisations.

6.5.3 The process of transformation a visual representation

Figure 6.6 provides a visual representation of the data across the preceding themes. The figure represents a process of preservation, transformation, and transmogrification through three distinct stages during the RIDE. Including the implications of these transformations on transfer of learning to the participants organisations.

Figure 6.6

Process and implications of preservation, transformation, and transmogrification during the RIDE
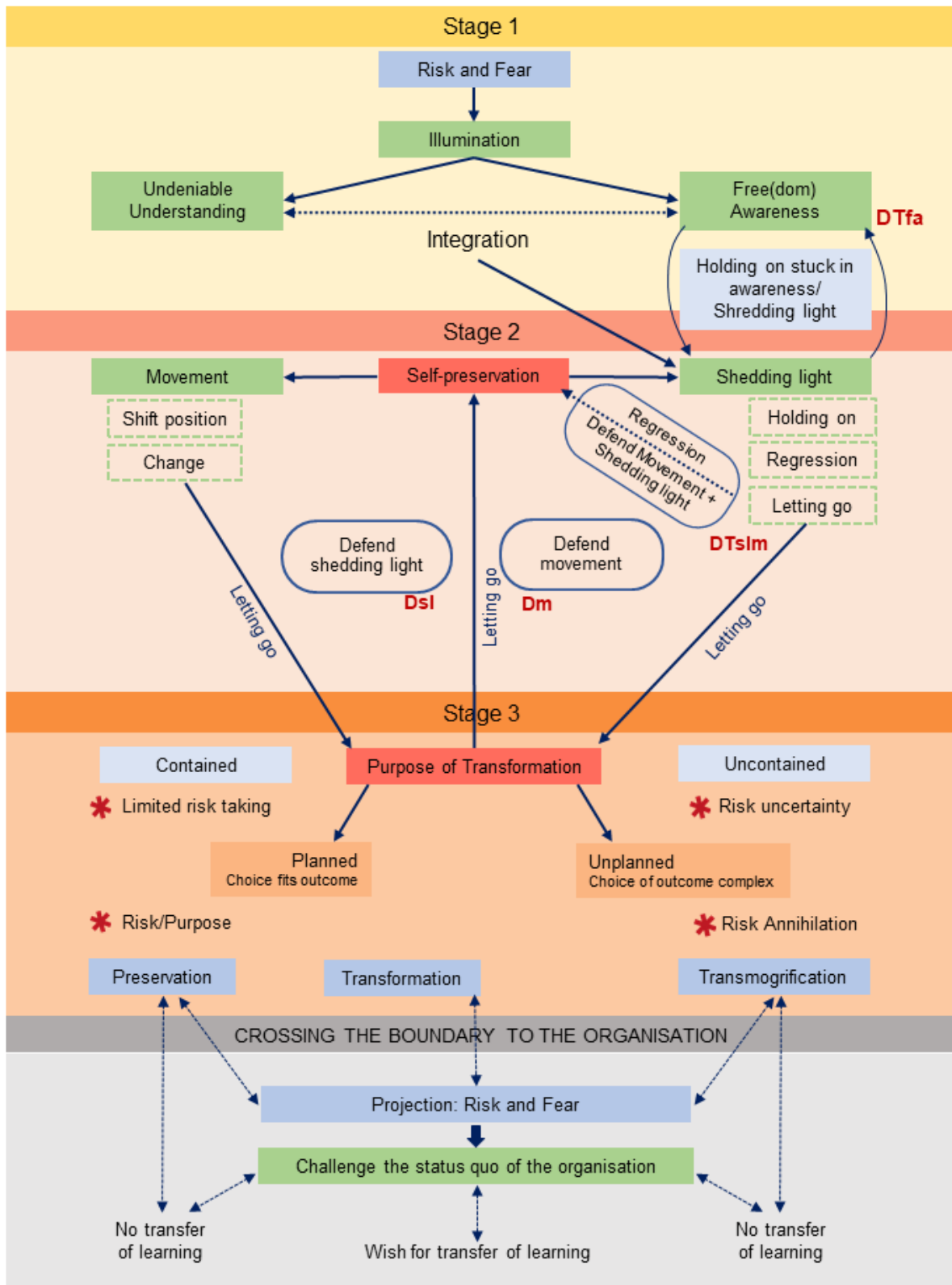
6.5.3.1   Stage 1: experiences of risk and fear

The first stage contains the experiences of risk and fear which influenced the whole process of transformation during the RIDE. Risk and fear influence experiences of illumination. What may or may not have been seen and whether participants would have defended therefrom. If experiences of illumination were integrated the participant would have been able to work with experiences of shedding light, and movement. That if both the purpose of transformation and self-preservation, the primary libidinal instinct of Narcissism (Nossal, 2007) were integrated.

- In that instance the participants could have moved through the complete second stage of the process of transformation, all things being equal.

- However, if participants did not integrate experiences of illumination participants could have become stuck in awareness and free(dom). In defence against understanding, becoming transfixed in the light and fixated on the self. No transformation would be possible.

- Defence against transformation in freedom and awareness (DTfa) would be an outcome.

6.5.3.2   Stage 2: Integration of Shedding Light and Movement

The second stage concerns those participants who integrate experiences of illumination and experience shedding light. While experiencing shedding light the participants would either let go, hold on, or regress from that which was illuminated or exposed.

- Had participants been able to let go that which was illuminated, integrated what was seen with understanding, the participants may have experienced movement. Integrating the purpose of transformation and self-preservation.

- Had participants not been able to let go and/or integrate what was seen with understanding. Participants may have become stuck in the experience of shedding light and defended against movement.

- Defence against movement (Dm) would mean that participants may not necessarily been fixated by shedding light as in (DTfa). However, participants would defend against the risks that movement might have held for themselves. Participants would consider:

- o Holding on and remaining in shedding light until integration with understanding was possible to move on depending on interactions with others, and how participants worked with projections and introjections.
  - o Letting-go and risking movement.
  - o Regression, move on from shedding light which may hold to many risks yet not risking experiences of movement but rather defending against both Shedding Light and Movement, Defence against transformation by defending against both shedding light and movement (DTslm).
- Participants may have also defended against shedding light (Dsl) by moving.
  - o Avoiding shedding light by shifting positions and changing by risking minimal exposure.

6.5.3.3   Stage 3: Outcomes of defences during the RIDE

The third stage is about the outcomes of participants' defences during the RIDE and the purpose of transformation each would ascribe to the self. This stage consists of *planned transformation* and *unplanned for transformation.*

- *Planned for transformation* is most likely to occur when participants feel contained with limited risk taking. Choice will fit the outcome. The outcome of that kind of transformation could be preservation and/or transformation.
  - o Preservation which defends against all transformation experiences.
  - o A transformation which may involve change however less likely to be transmogrification which challenges the status quo.
- *Unplanned for change* is most likely to occur when participants work uncontained and risk uncertainty. Choice and outcome are complex.
  - o The outcome of this kind of transformation would most likely be transmogrification challenging the status quo.

6.5.3.4   Stage 4: Transfer of learning to organisations

The risk and fear the participants experienced during the RIDE as they challenged the status quo of the group may mean that the risk and fear experienced during the RIDE is projected onto the organisation. Past experience as experienced during the RIDE

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may make participants weary of challenging the status quo of the organisation with new learning as it threatens survival of the participants in the organisation.

- Experiencing preservation during the RIDE the projection could be that no learning can be transferred to the organisation
- Experiencing transformation during the RIDE:
  - Wish to take the learning to the organisation. However, fear and risk of survival could enable defence against transferring the learning to the organisation.
  - Experiencing transmogrification during the RIDE
  - The risks of the cost of challenging the status quo might outweigh the need to transfer the learning to the organisation.

In conclusion, transmogrification or defence against transmogrification may be filled with risk and fear of the awareness of what may be seen of the self and the group. Without integrating an understanding thereof participants may become fixated by all good or all bad of what is seen. If however participants do not become fixated and can integrate understanding and awareness, participants may be able to work with what is seen. Working with what is seen participants would employ different defence mechanisms which may entail a degree of change individual participants were willing to risk based on the consequences or outcomes of those which would have long lasting effects transcending the boundaries of the RIDE. The fear and risk the participants experience during the RIDE may be projected onto their organisations making them weary to transfer what has been learnt during the RIDE into the organisation for fear of challenging the status quo of the organisation.

6.6   CHAPTER SUMMARY

These findings conclude the analysis of the data collected about the participants' experiences of the RIDE, which was reported on in four themes of the five-day revolution, a dangerous and delirious zero-sub game, a new dawn one of those with vampires and keep moving safety first! No fires on the ship telling the participants story of the dance of the vampires: excuse me but your teeth are in my neck. The chapter concluded with a visual representation of the process of participants efforts to preserve, transform and/or transmogrify during the RIDE and the implications thereof for transferring their learning to their respective organisations.

In the chapter to follow (Chapter 7) the findings are integrated with the literature as conceptualised in the literature aims of this thesis.

CHAPTER 7: EXPERIENCES OF TRANSMOGRIFICATION AT THE RIDE

7.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the findings of Chapter 6 are integrated with those of the literature review in Chapters 2 and 5. The themes are presented in terms of what, how and why the participants experienced the RIDE as they had. I explain each theme in terms of the underlying assumptions, implications and conditions that gave rise to it. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the key concept of this thesis namely transmogrification and the substantive topics I have explored.

Interpretation functions as an essential part of human-meaning making in hermeneutic and qualitative research traditions (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). This chapter is about integrating the findings and the literature to make meaning out of the findings, substantiated by academic and practice ideas. I begin by looking back at the research strategy I followed which was the frame in which the questions were set and produced the answers I received (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). A research strategy which contributes to the knowledge about methods to research Group Relations Conferences and the unconscious by applying Systems Psychodynamics to social science through interviews and observations (Figlio, 2018). In addition, the research strategy enabled me to maintain a certain amount of distance from the participants while interpreting their experiences. A method in which I found myself partially immersed in the participants experiences but not totally assimilated into them (Figlio, 2018).

7.2   CREATING   INSIGHTS: INVESTIGATING   GROUP   RELATIONS CONFERENCES

In my attempt to understand and develop knowledge about the participants' reality of the RIDE I approached the research with a specific research method in mind as discussed in chapter 3 and chapter 4. What I found was that approaching the research by collecting and reporting on the data before I conducted the literature review and, applying the FANI before the focus group, the theoretical perspectives of Systems Psychodynamics were incorporated into this research, enabling me to explore a different method of researching Group Relations Conference learning.

From a theoretical perspective I investigated both conscious and unconscious group dynamics at a specific Group Relations Conference. This means that interpreting those group dynamics required a specific kind of approach from me as an active participant in the dynamics of interpretation (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008; 2013). Psychoanalytic interrogation enabled me to understand how content impacts on the shape of the system, the systems genesis and the conditions that sustain and defend against learning and growth (Sapochnik, 2020). Interpreting group dynamics requires a toleration of anxiety about not knowing according to Bion (1962). It was the authors view that memory, desire and understanding on the part of the researcher must be avoided. In that way a researcher would be sufficiently unknowing when presented with the psychic reality of the participants (Bion, 1962;1965/2018; Grotstein, 2003; Nossal, 2007).

Collecting and reporting the data before the literature review enabled me to interpret the dynamics, as they emerged in the data, in line with Bion (1962) suggestion. In addition, the method allowed me to contain my own bias as far as possible and limit the temptation to fit the participants' experiences into the literature. The stages in which I engaged with the data evolved into a complex understanding of the participants' reality of the RIDE. Bits and pieces of data brought together as seen in Figure 7.1 enabled me to make sense of the whole. I could then make sense of previously incoherent and chaotic elements in the data and be surprised and intrigued by what emerged.

Figure 7.1

A method to elicit and work with psychodynamic material
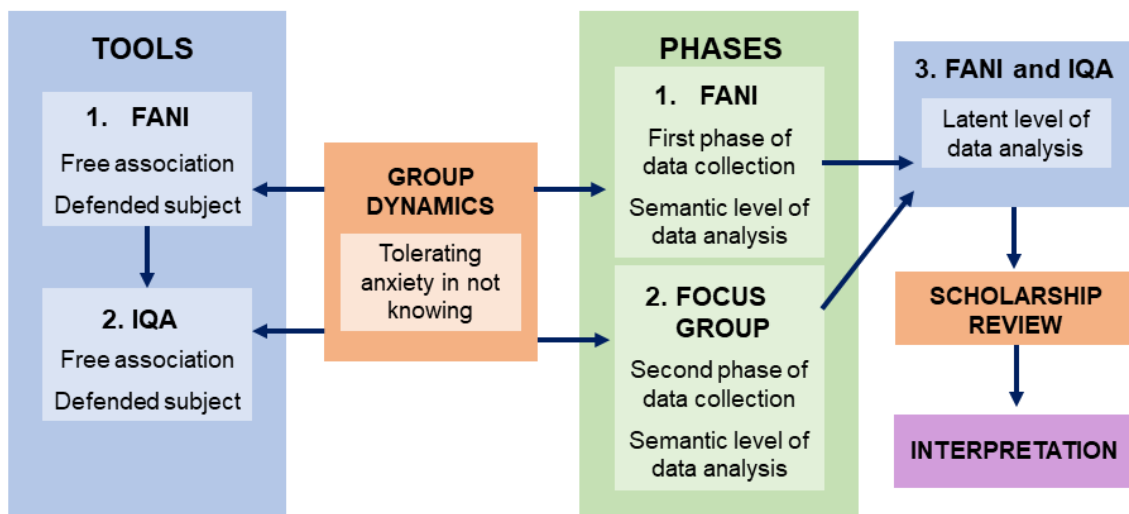
Note. Own work.

My understanding of group dynamics is the reason that I chose the FANI and IQA as a means of data collection (Chapter 3). The FANI (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008; 2013) a fairly new tool, applied in previous research on Group Relations Conferences (Abrahams, 2019), enables an exploration into unconscious motivations of individuals explicitly rejecting any form of interpretation by the researcher during the FANI (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008; 2013). The IQA (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004), a systems approach to qualitative studies enables an exploration and understanding of the system from the participants' point of view. Including both FANI (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008; 2013) and the IQA (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004) as a method of research I was able to work with the psychodynamic material I had before me.

7.2.1 The interpretive lens

Throughout this research the theoretical lens of Systems Psychodynamics informed my thinking about the data. In the interpretation of participants' experiences of the RIDE I kept the following questions in mind:

- How do I know?
- What do I assume about the participants?
- What is it that I know and do not know?
- How can I be wrong about that?

Recognising and interpreting the world of the participants within a hermeneutic interpretive approach the researcher-researched rapport allowed me to recognise the participants as interpretive individuals governed by unconscious forces (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). Our interactions enabled me to recognise that I too was part of those unconscious forces. This realisation allowed me to mediate my interpretations of the participants' world (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009), experienced by me in our interrelationships with one another. Firstly, my critical interpretations of the structures and processes which affected the participants and myself during the research process (Fangen, 2015) enabled me to interpret the interpretations of the participants' experiences of the RIDE and my own interpretations in the context of that interaction (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). In this way I was free to engage in a variety of unpredictable and anxiety-provoking situations and interactions (such as a participant crying during the interview process) and still sustain a reflective and ethical stance by retaining the capacity to think (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009).

Secondly, I considered my own assumptions about the participants' capacity to know, remember and tell about themselves? The hermeneutic suspicion (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Hollway & Jefferson, 2008) state that participants may not necessarily tell their stories as they are. A statement which is not a judgement of the participant. The idea is supported in the findings where the participants were experienced as defended subjects in both the FANI and the focus group. Instances of this dynamic emerged during the FANI when a participant was preoccupied by intellectualising his/her experience rather than describing how he/she experienced the RIDE. During the IQA the manner in which the participants described some of their experiences with nice words, instead of telling it as it was (Chapter 6) pointed to the dynamic of a defended group (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Hollway & Jefferson, 2008).

Observing indirectly and paying attention to the metaphoric language (Kiel, 2017; Northcutt & McCoy, 2004; Whitehouse-Hart, 2012) of the participants, unconscious processes were revealed. The metaphor about eating, and drinking was particularly evident in both sets of data and in the interview process itself. A metaphor which represented the participants' emotional experiences during the RIDE and the interview process. During the interview there was a lot of eating and drinking. One interview was held at a coffee shop with a participant who stated her valence for containment. The

participant also found herself stirring a cup of tea for over three minutes during the focus group. Memories of the RIDE may have stirred up experiences of anxiety which required the participants to defend against them making them defended subjects during the interview process (Stamenova & Hinshelwood, 2018; Thomas, 2018). An interpretation can be made that the emotional experiences during the interview process also needed containment and in that case the metaphor became literal – to contain the anxiety of the interviewees as they shared their experiences of the RIDE with me and each other during the focus group.

Understanding these dynamics while listening to what was not said brought me closer to understanding the participants through their discourse (Grotstein, 2003; Thomas, 2018). However, I was aware of being cognizant of finding a defended subject in the absence of evidence. To do so would be to impose on an overvalued idea (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008) and risk fitting the participants into the theory. In the context of this research, I did not fit the participants into the theory of the defended subject as further evidence was found of this phenomenon in both the FANI and the focus group as indicated previously (Chapter 6. Collaborating the evidence of the FANI).

Lastly, what do I know and what do I not know. Bion (1962,1965/2018) suggested learning through not knowing. To enable learning through not knowing Bion (1962,1965/2018) put forward the idea of the selected fact. For the author it was about patiently listening for connections between elements that have previously remained unlinked. A concept distinct from the overvalued idea Hollway and Jefferson (2008) refer to. The selected fact (Bion, 1962;1965/2018; Grotstein, 2003; Nossal, 2007) "emerges from eschewing memory, desire and understanding and waiting for patterns to emerge which give coherence to elements not previously seen to be coherent" (Bion, 1965/2018, p. 59).

The truth value of a selected fact would be determined by what Brown (2012) terms the constellation of thinking which includes Bion's views of alpha functioning in the container-contained relationship, basic assumption and workgroup mentality, the Paranoid-Schizoid balance, reverie and tolerated doubts (Chapter 2). In addition, the truth value would be held in the emotional domain of how it makes me the researcher feel (Nossal, 2007) and you as the reader. Listening for the selected fact enables the

observer to decipher and create new concepts that link together elements not yet seen to be connected (Bion, 1962, 1965/2018; Grotstein, 2003). In the context of this research the concepts of annihilation and pre-conception emerged which enabled me to see the linkages between these concepts (Bion, 1962; de Felice et.al., 2018, Hopper, 2009) and transmogrification (Bowker, 2020; Finn, 1999) among others, elaborated on later in this chapter. Linking these o concepts left me with a sense of discovery of coherence (Bion, 1962, 1965/2018; Grotstein, 2003) in my findings of the participants experiences of the RIDE.

7.3 THE UNCONSCIOUS DYNAMICS EXPERIENCED AT THE RIDE

At the outset it appeared as if the participants experienced a pseudo transformation of transmogrification during the five-day revolution through morphing. A mutated form of transmogrification enabling a defence against transmogrification in the face of the psychic realities the participants experienced. Morphing meant that participants transformed, in a self-contained mental domain (Stokoe, 2010) with the least amount of learning by experience and emotional cost to themselves and the group.

7.3.1 The assumptions of the five-day revolution

The RIDE was experienced as a five-day revolution (Chapter 6). Not only a social revolution as first thought but a revolution through a system towards transmogrification with many swerves and deflections along the way as the participants defended against learning by experience and development. The findings highlight:

- a fight for survival during which both the individual and the group fought to maintain the status quo.
- a non-linear process of the participants transformation whether desired or not. A transformation which entailed more than going in one side of the RIDE and coming out on the other end as Calvin's Transmogrification box suggests (Finn, 1999).

From the findings there is a strong inference that the unconscious dynamics the participants experienced were seemingly knowing before experiencing (Bion, 1962), resulting in mutative interpretations (Rustin, 2015; Strachey, 1999) and a mutative transformation (Petriglieri, 2020).

Figure 7.2

Unconscious dynamics experienced at the RIDE
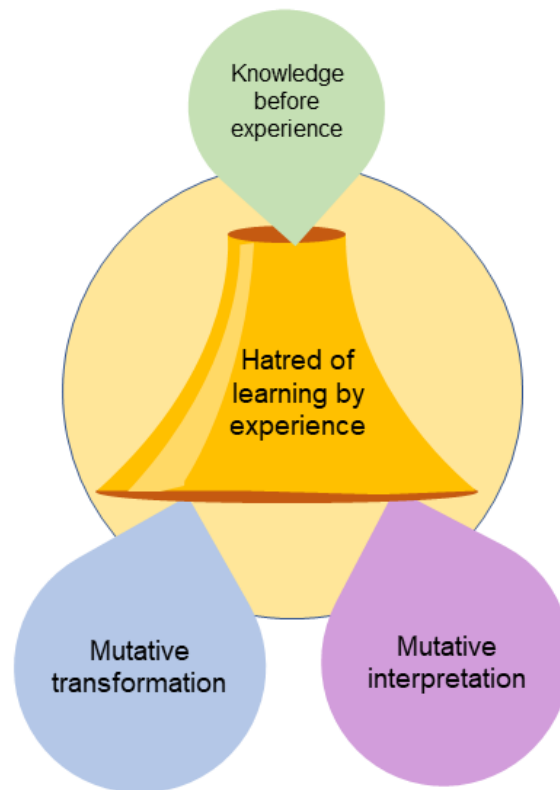
Note. Own work.

The seminal work of Bion (1961/2004) states that groups and individuals are committed to learn, hate to learn, want to know all and experience pain in development. The participants' experience of potentially destructive impulses of splitting, projection, introjection and introjective identification (Garland, 2010; Klein, 1959) seemed to be indicative of their apparent hatred of learning by experience, wanting to know it all and their pain in development (Bion, 1961/2004). Phantasies emerged about who the participants would RIDE with and who they would kill as the participants engaged with power dynamics in the system and fought for autonomy in defence against working on the primary task (Chapter 6). Psychic phantasies were enacted and reacted to as participants shouted, screamed, and remained silent as others justified important internal objects of individuals.

The RIDE however was not only filled with the psychic reality of basic assumptions the phantasies represented but also working with reality a work group mentality represented (Bion,1961/2004; van Reekum, 2020). It would seem as if the tension (French & Simpson, 2010; Sapochnik, 2015) between these two mentalities provoked anxiety and the need to defend against such anxiety.

7.3.1.1   *Knowledge before experience*

During the data collection and analysis phase I had a sense that participants did know what was happening during the RIDE and were not as unknowing as was shared with me. I had a sense that this dynamic was more than just a dynamic of participants being defended subjects as I integrated the literature with the findings. Exploring the literature further a dynamic about the defence against the unknown at Group Relations Conferences (Khaleelee, 2006; Lazar, 2006) emerged. A possible interpretation of this finding led me to Bion (1962) theory of pre-conception. According to the author pre-conception is about an emotional experience which involves a potential awareness of infinite possibilities before the experience is experienced. Before an individual experiences an experience pre-conception allows an individual to receive a restricted range of phenomena. When pre-conception and realisation "mate" as Bion (1962) suggests conception emerges (Bion, 1963/2018).

The elements of investigation, speculation, and expectation are all elements of what Bion (1963/2018) names pre-conception. The metaphor of the mirror holds similar elements. The mirror not only signifies a reflection of something seen or something difficult to investigate, but also something about an expectation and prediction (Mapping Metaphor, 2015). The Latin word for mirror *speculum* is related to "speculate". The mirror is also seen as an instrument of enlightenment (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969/1996).

Speculation seemed to be present when participants shared that they found it difficult to look into the mirror and truly see themselves. They speculated about what was real or not and tried to predict what would happen during the RIDE. A RIDE experience which was anticipated to see "what things may come to" as one participant stated. The use of the metaphor of the mirror indicates that the participants connected with their reality. In doing so they could view the anticipated shock of the RIDE experience but

not yet experience it. That connection implied that participants looking in the mirror then only received a restricted amount of data about their experience. The experience was not yet fully experienced only anticipated. The idea is further supported by the participants experiencing a state of expectancy in their description of an experience of apprehension and trepidation during the focus group. In addition to placing the card with the word mirror written on it as one of the first intersecting cards in the IQA data by the focus group participants (Chapter 6).

It would seem as if pre-conception was a defining moment for the participants of the RIDE. Pre-conception seemingly enabled the participants to contact reality, amid the shock of that reality. Knowing before experience enabled the participants to engage with the dimensions of reality of action and the psychic reality of group life (French & Simpson, 2010). That meant that participants not only worked with the basic assumption mentality of the group, but also the work group mentality of the group. This finding echoes the literature that both group mentalities are always found in groups at any given point in time (Armstrong, 2010; Bion, 1961/2004, de Felice et. al., 2018; Hume, 2010). The concept of pre-conception extends the literature about defences at Group Relations Conferences with a concept that seems new in the study of these events as no literature could be found about experiences of pre-conception at Group Relations Conferences.

While pre-conception seemed to allow participants to connect with reality and work with both group mentalities, it also provided participants the opportunity to defend against knowing in the form of mutative interpretations. A pattern of findings consistent with the literature of Rustin (2015), Strachey (1999) and White (2011) which deals with anxiety as an other-related state of mind, the distortion of reality and mutative interpretations of reality.

7.3.1.2   Mutative interpretations

According to Klein (1959) and Rustin (2015) anxiety is essentially an other-related state of mind where fear arises from the self's relations with its objects. The degree of disturbing forces of anxiety and anxiety around awareness of others' reality may however become lost or distorted (Rustin, 2015). The distortion of others' reality is evident in the participants experiencing the consultants as hostile and necessitating

their own attempt at hostile takeover of the RIDE. Consistent with the literature (Rustin, 2015; Strachey, 1999, White, 2011) that excessive anxiety may lead to a mutative interpretation of reality (Rustin, 2015; Strachey, 1999).

A concern is what do individuals do with anxiety? It seems as if what happened at the RIDE and what the participants did with what happened (their experience) (van Reekum, 2020) resulted in their creating psychic realities in defence against working on the primary task and learning by experience (Rustin, 2015). Survival of a group depends on a group working on the task (van Reekum, 2017). It appears as if the participants unconsciously kept the primary task prisoner in the opening plenary (Chapter 6). It would seem as if keeping the primary task "prisoner" worked for the participants as it enabled a defence against knowing and/or the unknown (Khaleelee, 2006; Lazar, 2006) about what would it mean if they did work on the primary task. A dynamic which provides an example of the participants' fear of knowledge where survival meant not knowing in defence of knowing (Schneider, 2005). Attacking the ability to think in an effort not to know as a form of survival (Schneider, 2005) may have been preferable to experiencing own envy and pain related to loss that may have been intolerable to bear (Brady et al., 2012) had participants worked on the primary task.

Defence against the primary task and learning by experience is not new to group relations conferences (Bahat, 2019; Lazar, 2006; Salmi, 2015). Members of Group Relations Conferences being at odds with the methodology, roles and staff members are also not new (Schafer, 2003). However, it would seem that the participants' mutative interpretation of the consultants as hostile worked for them in two ways. Firstly, the participants could take control of the primary task by mutating the task to fit the way participants were willing to work with it. Secondly, neutralising the consultants and creating their own emotionless neutral consultants meant that participants could not work with any new understandings the primary task may have afforded. In this way the participants' own destructive impulses were self-contained and the nameless dread which Bion (1962, 1965/2018) refers to as psychotic fragmentation was averted.

The findings highlight those mutative interpretations could result in mutative transformation. An idea supported by the apparent need of the participants to remain in the paranoid-schizoid position (Klein,1959) by splitting off the participants as all

good, the consultants to the RIDE and the RIDE as all bad, in their hatred of learning by experience (Bion, 1961/2004). It would appear as if the participants dismissed the idea that knowledge during the RIDE was co-created by both themselves and the consultants to the RIDE (Gertler, 2019).

7.3.1.3   Mutative transformation

Support is found in both the literature and the findings that transformation does occur at Group Relations Conferences (Armstrong, 2007; De Gooijer, 2019; Erlich-Ginor, 2006; Fraher, 2004b; Miller, 1990; Sher, 2012; Stokoe, 2010) when participants respect the task and boundaries of the conference. However, what this transformation looks like is unclear in the literature. In addition, how transformation transfers back into members of Group Relations Conferences organisational lives (Dimitrov, 2008; Kets de Vries & Cheak, 2014; Waddell, 2015) is scantily mentioned.

It would appear as if the participants initially defended against transformation to maintain the status quo and resisted challenging the existing order of things in the group as Finn (1999) described. Transformation then seemed to be more about transforming so everything may remain the same (Petriglieri, 2020). Focusing on race as a broad generalisation and cliché (Tchelebi, 2017) the participants created a mutative transformation. A superficial transformation which defended against the primary task of learning about diversity dynamics in the here-and-now (Pretorius et al., 2006).

It would seem as if the participants did not go any deeper than acknowledging race as the "only" diversity marker initially. Race as a broad generalisation and cliché (Tchelebi, 2017) enabled the participants to morph the group with the least amount of work to reflect the larger South African macro system and its norms at a particular point in time (Chapter 6). The primary task could be worked with superficially with "diversity discussions" which were wished for. The known race divide of the group could be maintained, and no further changes were needed to the "shop front" as described by the participants.

The "change" then only ensured that the RIDE group reflected South African society in the mind of the participants, no "real" transformation occurred. The status quo seemed

to be maintained as individual participants seemingly surrendered themselves in passive participation to the group experiencing well-being and wholeness, believing that all problems will be solved in a cohesive group (Abrahams, 2019; de Felice et.al., 2018) consistent with the work of Lawrence et. al (1996) and the basic assumption mentality of baO. It appeared as if the ability to think independently was lost (Abrahams, 2019; Tchelebi, 2017) as the participants gave up their individuality to feel their existence in preserved unification with the group (de Felice et.al., 2018). Regressing into the baO (Abrahams, 2019; de Felice et.al., 2018). There was no possibility of gaining new insight and the group could remain unknowing, safe in a mutative transformation. Which allowed the participants to work towards a work group mentality while defending against learning by experience in the fastest way possible (de Felice et.al., 2018). In this way the group used the diversity marker of race, to show it worked towards knowing, which also created the paradox, to not know (de Felice et.al., 2018).

Safety in a mutative transformation came at a violent cost of going deeper by shattering, skinning, and slashing at individuality for the group to feel omnipotent, unified, and supreme in baO (de Felice et al., 2018; Tchelebi, 2017). The latter ensured the survival of the psychic reality of the group, that they were an omnipotent force (Abrahams, 2019) as an undifferentiated cohesive group, which had implications for the participants of the RIDE.

7.3.2 The implications of the five-day revolution

The pattern of findings thus far is consistent with previous literature (Henning, 2009; Nossal, 2007) that there are many ways the primary task could be amputated, simulated, or mutated. As indicated in the introductory Chapter of this thesis, the participants not only learnt about the systemic concepts of boundaries, authority, role, task, and leadership during the RIDE, but also about the salience of racial and cultural identities (McRae & Short, 2010). The RIDE participants learnt about the core concepts of diversity as indicated in the conference brochure (Pretorius et al., 2006) of relatedness, identity, reference systems and power and authority. In addition, the work of Smit and Cilliers' (2006) shows work that deals with diversity dynamics in the here-and now, manifests with extreme levels of anxiety and all kinds of defensive behaviour in groups.

7.3.2.1   Diversity markers as weapons

Stereotypical assumptions and phantasies about race (Skolnick & Green, 2003; McRae & Short, 2010) are often used to work superficially with diversity through projections and splitting. A statement which appeared true to the participants of the RIDE. Stereotypical assumptions about race and how individuals act on behalf of the larger group to sustain the group's basic assumption mentality which is driven by fear (Bion, 1961/2004) was highlighted in the findings.

A participant who belonged to a particular culture group in South Africa found herself as an object of stereotypical assumptions due to her race. Something she said she was used to as she received these stereotypical assumptions outside of the RIDE as well. The group openly discussed her skin colour ignoring her cultural affiliation. The discussion seemed to hold a veiled threat about whether she would be excluded from the group as she did not suit the stereotypical assumption being made by the group of her. A threat which could be heard and seen by the whole group as they openly discussed her. The group investigating her in that way may have been a shameful and fearful experience, even though she said she was used to that happening to her. The comment by the participant that she was used to this happening to her is consistent with the work of McRae and Short (2010) that projective identification on a group level in a racial cultural context is often a microcosm of what occurs in society.

In the context of this research, it would appear as if the diversity marker of race was used by the RIDE group as a weapon of inclusion/exclusion to threaten the group to conform to a particular stereotypical assumption, such as race, which allowed the group to work superficially with diversity through projections and splitting to maintain a mutative transformation. In this way the participant's skin colour was used as a weapon by the group to sustain the basic assumption mentality of baO as they tried to maintain the phantasy of a cohesive group (de Felice et al., 2018; Tchelebi, 2017) unified and supreme.

Projection tied to race and culture is intricately tied to societal attitudes, expectations, prejudice, and stereotypes in service of maintaining power and privilege according to McRae and Short (2010). The pattern of findings is consistent with research that the group serves as a container for various individual projections which takes on a life of

its own (Wallach, 2004). Yet the character of the projection is very important according to McRae and Short (2010). It would seem as if the projections the participant was receiving about her skin colour was dominated by hostility and overdependence (Klein, 1959; McRae & Short, 2010) in the guise of curiosity, as the group openly discussed the participant seemingly weaponizing race as a diversity marker. In this way the inner world (Klein, 1959) of the participant was not enriched but rather threatened. Had the projections been balanced as Klein (1959) stated the outer world of the participant would have been enriched. A statement made in the conference brochure (Pretorius et al., 2006) which did not seem evident for this participant who spoke about freedom in leaving the RIDE, it took too long and found herself running alone in the early morning as others did not join her on her run.

Projecting in this manner is largely an unconscious and collusive process (Skolnick & Green, 2003). Using a diversity marker such as skin colour as a weapon adds to knowledge about psychoanalytic concepts of splitting, projection, and projective identification which individuals use in interpersonal relationships to alleviate feelings of overwhelming anxiety (Klein, 1959; May, 2010; McCallum, 2008; McRae & Short, 2010). In this context it appeared as if the group experienced overwhelming anxiety knowing that they were not a cohesive group yet defending against knowing.

The findings support the idea that difference was used as a rationale for prejudice, power, and abuse during the RIDE. It seems as if the participants experienced covert attacks on diversity in the form of projections. Consultants were seen as wise and holding secrets as the participants projected their own powerlessness. Men exercised their power by laughing at females' clothing and being fascinated that someone would possess many wives. A white man exercised his apparent power in terms of race and gender onto a black female, instructing her to write down difficult psychological words. She was then to bring those to him so he may translate the words for her. In addition to the covert attacks on diversity it appears as if overt attacks on diversity across race and gender (a black male shouting at a white female) and threats of violence across the boundary of the RIDE abounded. All these attacks on diversity in the form of projections were not deliberately made or negotiated consistent with the work of Bion, (1961/2004) and French and Simpson (2010). These findings are consistent with the literature (Carlyle, 2010; McRae & Short, 2010) that projections about leadership,

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power and authority who represent the group with more power in society in terms of skin colour, gender and language fluency were present at the RIDE.

Difference used as a rationale for prejudice, power and abuse is often disowned. The work of Carlyle (2010) and McRae and Short (2010) states that when individual group members disown the group's aggression or victimhood it is devastating for the group. The apparent curiosity of the group about the participants skin colour led to the group scapegoating the participant as an apparent non-threatening and willing container for the groups unwanted, undesirable aspects of the group's unconscious (McRae & Short, 2010). Denying that the group was not a cohesive group, as the phantasy suggested, supreme and omnipotent. The group forced their denial onto the participant with projective identification. Ultimately ostracising her evident in her not being able to get others to run with her even though they agreed to.

7.3.2.2   Disowning aggression and victimhood

Slashing at skin to become a morphed homogeneous group, the group disowned their aggression and seemingly experienced powerlessness by feeling sabotaged by time and kneecapped during the RIDE. It would appear as if by denying own hatred and aggression, victimhood was projected onto a construct such as time and onto the other to feel free, consistent with the work of Carlyle (2010) and McRae and Short (2010).

Splitting in its most negative form functions to rid the self of anxiety related to shameful, negative aspects of the self (McRae & Short, 2010). During Group Relations Conferences it is not unusual to find splitting in defence against feelings of anxiety (Bowker, 2020; Foldy & Buckley, 2017; Fotaki & Hyde, 2014). Splitting creates polarities of good or bad, such as participants seeing the group split 50/50 along racial lines, where group members perceive each other as possessing opposing qualities (Carlyle, 2010; Chattopadhyay, 2018; McRae & Short, 2010). During the RIDE it seems as if there was a tendency to look at the world from the perspective of participants' own culture differentiating it as a we/they process. In addition, the participants differentiated the group from a socio-economic perspective. Participants were seen to operate on different "levels". This is consistent with the work of McRae and Short (2010) who state that the characteristic of such a group is self-righteousness and denial of all aspects of complexity and validity between groups. The implications of this in the context of the

RIDE meant that the participants could maintain the above the surface diversity dynamics of expectations, prejudice, stereotypes, and societal attitudes and not learn about diversity through experience, rather engaging and talking about diversity as the participants wished they could.

7.3.2.3   Societal attitude as defensive behaviour in groups

Respect is an important concept at group relations conferences. Particularly in culturally diverse settings according to McRae and Short (2010) where it is important that the staff treat the members with respect. In the context of the RIDE the findings seem to suggest the concept of respect mutated into arrogance in defence against anxiety and diversity dynamics on the part of the participants.

It seems as if the participants in basic assumption mentality of the group turned to respect to manage their feelings of themselves or others, by respecting boundaries when feeling fury, respecting both sides when feeling guilty or justified and listening more where listening was not an option before. From a Eurocentric perspective respect according to Dillon (2021) involves deference, a sense of yielding. Self-absorption and egocentric concerns give way to consideration of the other and personal motives or feelings submit to the other's reality. Similarly, from an African perspective respect plays a major role in the value system such as honouring elders and authority with the belief if elders are respected the individual will too be respected when they become elders (Ebenezer, 2020).

In the context of the RIDE, it was curious to find that counter to any yielding of the self (Dillon, 2021; Ebenezer, 2020) there appeared to be a defence against submitting to other's reality. Extrapolating from the findings it would seem that there was no sense of deference. Respect as a societal attitude during the RIDE seemed to mean that participants could disengage from others and diversity dynamics. It would seem as if the high ground (Ebenezer, 2020; de Felice et. al., 2018) was taken when participants stated that they received too much respect from "ordinary people". Respect was also stated as a reason for not engaging with the conflict in the group, seen as others "stuff". It appears as if there was no thought of the others pain or wellbeing (Ebenezer, 2020; de Felice et. al., 2018) in that context. It may be that respect could be used to project a sense of superiority, impotence, and anger onto the other if the group found

themselves in the basic assumption of arrogance (baA). A basic assumption mentality as suggested by (Sarno, 1999, as cited in de Felice et. al., 2018) which seems to contain elements which could describe the participants use of respect as a defensive behaviour against anxiety and diversity dynamics in groups.

7.3.2.4 *The conditions that gave rise to the five-day revolution*

It would appear as if there was incongruence between what the participants expected to experience at the RIDE and what they eventually experienced. The surprise of finding something different to what was expected may have been seen as a violation of a kind of psychological contract (Papadopoulos, 2018). While the RIDE organisers did not offer more than promised, a concern Joseph et al. (1975) raised, it may be that the illusion of the venue as a holiday and not a place to work led to bitterness and disappointment.

In addition, the findings provide a demonstration of the process of knowing before experience (pre-conception) in that participants were able to connect with both dimensions of reality as symbolised in the mirror. The connection enabled the participants to work with the fear which drives basic assumption mentality (Armstrong, 2010; Bion, 1961/2004, de Felice et al., 2018; Hume, 2010). The co-existence of basic assumption and workgroup mentalities (Bion, 1961/2004) provided the participants a means to work with fear on the borderline between somatic and psychic life. A boundary at which the participants experienced the tension between rejecting learning by experiencing and the need for development (Bion, 1961/2004, French & Simpson, 2010).

It was the view of one participant that the RIDE should come with a warning in the same way as a packet of cigarettes attesting to the danger of the experience for the participant. In terms of survival of the group (Bion, 1961/2004; Schneider, 2005), it would seem that pre-conception, mutative interpretations, and a mutative transformation were all conditions which gave rise to the five-day revolution. Working with diversity on a surface level of expectations, prejudice, stereotypes, and societal attitudes meant that some participants defended against learning about diversity by experience. Using diversity markers as weapons the participants could disown their aggression and victimhood. Dynamics in the system which enabled the participants to

maintain a status quo in defence against the risk of transmogrification and the danger it seemingly posed.

7.4   HOW THE RIDE WAS EXPERIENCED

Group Relations Conferences are created to study how individuals' function in groups (Stokoe, 2010). According to Bion (1961/2004) investigating groups cannot be carried out without stimulating or activating basic assumption and work group mentalities (Armstrong, 2010; Bion, 1961/2004; Hume, 2010). These are intragroup processes which sustain the group's basic assumption mentality, driven by fear (Bion, 1961/2004) which is largely an unconscious and collusive process (Skolnick & Green, 2003).

The findings highlight participants' unconscious processes through the use of several metaphors (Kiel, 2017; Northcutt & McCoy, 2004; Whitehouse-Hart, 2012), such as games, vampires, and the mirror among others. These metaphors presented in this section, in addition to other findings, provide a glimpse into the unconscious processes of how the RIDE was experienced by the participants and inform the assumptions of how the RIDE was experienced.

7.4.1 The assumptions of the dangerous and delirious zero-sub game

One of the more prominent metaphors used was to describe the RIDE as a game. However, not one game but two were experienced at the RIDE. One was a dangerous and delirious game which seemed to contain the emotional aspects of the RIDE and the other the zero-sub game which seemed to imply a more cognitive aspect of the game. From a theoretical perspective the two games experienced at the RIDE, provides for a compelling explanation of basic assumption and work group mentalities being present at the same time. An interpretation cannot be made that one represented the basic assumption mentality alone and the other the work group mentality, it would seem each game had elements of both. The zero-sub game may have had more elements of the work group mentality based on its definition in the literature (Levin, 2002). As a game which considers the actions in the now and the consequences of the game at a later stage. More so than the basic assumption mentality which contains the emotions of the group and fear of anxiety.

7.4.1.1   A transitional space of becoming

The games and reference to a play and playing at the RIDE are possible transitional spaces of becoming (Winnicott, 1971/2005) which included vampires as transitory objects (Davar, 2020). The transitional space was important for participants to maintain the illusion of the games and the vampire to gain access to reality and experience relations through their use of symbolism. This echoes the work of Bion (1961/2004), Nicolò (2015), Stokoe, (2021) and Winnicott (1971/2005) who state that symbols are the elements we use for thinking in order to transform raw emotional experience into information which can be thought about.

It seemed that the game symbolised the basic assumption mentalities the participants employed to work on the primary and/or pseudo task. Having employed symbolism, the participants had already clearly distinguished between phantasy and fact, between inner and external objects (Winnicott, 1971/2005). The idea of symbolism is further supported by the participants' connection with their reality when the experience was anticipated, not yet experienced (Bion, 1961/2004) and the mirror served as a transitory object for the participants. The transitional space allowed for participants to experience the experience, to come to terms with reality and make sense of that reality as long as it took (Nicolò, 2015; Winnicott, 1971/2005).

In the container of the transitional space of becoming, containment included how participants worked with their unconscious anxiety about learning by experience, how they integrated or not, the intellectual and emotional experience of the RIDE and how change and the consequences of change were tolerated (see Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3

Transitional space of becoming
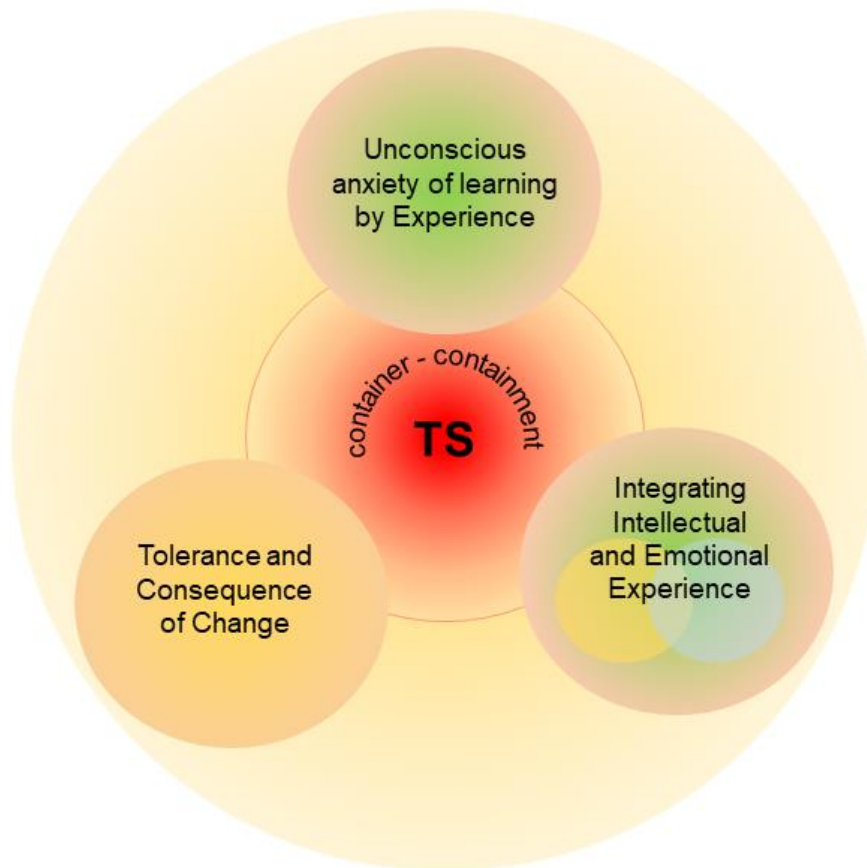
Note. Own work.

The participants' state of confusion expressed in sharing their experiences of delirium, chaos, excitement, aggression, rage, and anger, among other emotions, is consistent with the suggestion by Davar (2020) that transitions hold states of confusion and uncertainty. A holding space which Winnicott (1971/2005) refers to as a transitional space enabling separateness of the self while being in connection with the object (Davar, 2020; Ogden, 1986; Winnicott, 1971/2005). In the context of the RIDE the findings are congruent to the ideas of Winnicott and the infant-mother unit.

The participants represent the relatively primitive organisation of the infant-mother unit as they process their transformation. The RIDE container represented the relatively mature organisation of the infant-mother unit in which the participants transform in a transitional space of becoming. The participants are not a one-person (or one-group)

dynamic but a unit which includes the dynamics of both the participants and the staff of Group Relations Conferences (Sapochnik, 2020). The games the participants created held the transitional phenomena of the participants which belonged to the realm of illusion (de Goldstein, 2015; Winnicott, 1971/2005). The illusion created a space of safety to ensure the participants' psychological safety (Davar, 2020) as they felt they were jumping off a cliff without much safety equipment.

Unexpectedly safety seemed to be found in a phantastical world filled with vampires. The representation of the vampire gave temporary relief to the emotional suffering (Mapping Metaphor, 2015) of learning by experience. Emotional suffering which contained experiences of dejection, depression, melancholy, harassment, oppression, anxiety, worry, regret, remorse, sorrow, and grief among others. The vampire not only included negative emotional experiences but positive emotional experiences as well, such as love and friendship (Mapping Metaphor, 2015). Humour at the expense of others such as a laughing session and laughing at others during the RIDE was represented in foolishness the vampire represents in addition to its elements of positive and negative emotions. The vampire as a transitory object meant that the participants could encounter the other, both inside and outside the self. This process had a few implications about how the participants then experienced the RIDE.

7.4.2 The implications of the dangerous and delirious zero-sub game

The study of how individuals' function in groups, at Group Relations Conferences, leads to understanding groups' productivity or lack of it (Stokoe, 2010). It would seem that the participants were not certain of whether the RIDE was a product or a process. Not surprisingly the participants seemed to see the RIDE as an end product, sold to clients, in line with the outcomes of organisations and group relations conferences which is about product and performance (Stokoe, 2010; Tavistock Institute, 2016).

7.4.2.1   *Unconscious anxiety about learning by experience*

The dynamics of knowledge perceived as a product to be consumed may be explained by the vampire which symbolises the persecutor and the victim, the eater and the eaten and lust for life in its search for being satiated (Chevalier & Gheerbrant,1969/1996). The search for being satiated is further symbolised in the cake which was taken and not eaten. Not ingesting the cake meant that the participants could not be satiated as

nothing was taken in. The vampire too is never satiated, and exhaustion sets in in the pursuit of satisfaction. Cake as a source of food and eating has a strong metaphorical connection to knowledge and experience and lack of knowledge (Mapping Metaphor, 2015). The inability to be satiated in terms of knowledge means that knowledge was seen as a product to be consumed and not a process of ingestion which would mean work and delayed gratification.

Perhaps the participants had an insatiable need to know, as Bion (1961/2004) suggests about individuals wanting to know it all. The competition for knowledge was only about the lust after knowledge, who would get the reward. Without consuming the knowledge, it could be possessed in a defence against any development that ingesting may have brought. These findings provide an example of a group being overwhelmed in basic assumption mentality when fear is the fear of knowledge. In this way I can make a slight contribution to scholarship about basic assumption mentalities with a new basic assumption – fear of knowledge (baFK).

The RIDE group in the basic assumption mentality of fear of knowledge (baFK) seemed to be motivated by unconscious survival needs which the group manifested in a competition for knowledge. The competition provided the group with pleasurable feelings, purpose, and vitality in defence against the pain of learning (Bion, 1961/2004; French & Simpson, 2010). The vitality is illusory when it is aimed at possessing knowledge in this basic assumption mentality and is experienced so as to avoid pain in processing knowledge and the loss which may be involved in that process.

Participants in the basic assumption mentality of the group defended against knowledge, in a state of not knowing, by consuming, not ingesting knowledge in a frenzied competition of taking and possessing knowledge, in a dangerous and delirious game where not knowing was a form of survival according to Bion (1961/2004) and Schneider (2005). Individuals attack knowledge and destroy the capacity to think related to loss should envy and pain be too much to tolerate, as a form of survival. Not ingesting the knowledge mitigated the risk of loss of part of that knowledge. Losing some knowledge however might have produced fertile ground for learning for the self and others. The possession of knowledge without ingestion is consistent with the

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pathological and pathogenic character of a basic assumption mentality (Hopper, 2009) which concerns the use of pain in the guise of pleasure leading to infertility.

Competition at Group Relations Conferences is not new, and the literature abounds with examples of this (Bartle, 2015; Kelly & Gangjee, 2019; Nutkevitch & Sher, 2006). However, the dynamic of knowledge as a product or process at the RIDE adds to the dynamic with a perverse form of competition of possessing knowledge in defence of ingesting knowledge. It would seem a dynamic which enabled maintenance of an infertile stasis for both the participants and the group, in their effort to maintain the status quo and defence against learning by experience (Bion, 1961/2004; French & Simpson, 2010).

The participants' ambivalence about knowledge being a product or process and defending against knowledge as a process is reported by Bion (1962) who suggests all experiences fall into three groups, namely, Love, Hate and Knowledge. Knowledge is the link germane to learning by experience and characterised by painful feelings of frustration inherent in individuals' ability/inability to know anything (Bion, 1961/2004; French & Simpson, 2010). Knowledge is the link between the emotional experiences of love and hate (Bion, 1961/2004). To fully engage in the experiences of the RIDE the cognitive and emotional experience of the RIDE needed to be integrated to allow for the fertile ground of learning by experience.

7.4.2.2 *Integration of intellectual and emotional experience*
To acquire knowledge individuals must relinquish the desire to possess and control knowledge and learn to tolerate doubt (Bion, 1962; Bolingbroke, 2017; Schneider, 2005). However, it would appear that the participants preferred to know about (product) rather than learn from experience (process) at the RIDE. The participants spoke about how important integration of the RIDE experience was, yet in the findings it is obvious that participants struggled with integration. The literature abounds with the importance of integration at Group Relations Conferences (Correa et al., 1981; Sapochnik, 2015; Short, 2019). The Tavistock Institute (2016) states that Group Relations Conferences promote the integration of intellectual capacity and emotional intelligence. The use of psycho-analytic and systemic perspectives at Group Relations Conferences brings into focus group dynamics around boundaries, roles, tasks, and authority to assist

participants to move from fragmentation to integration (Sapochnik, 2015). It seems as if there was a fragmentation between participants' intellectual capacity and emotional experience in their description of the split between understanding and awareness. A pattern of results consistent with previous literature (Correa et al., 1981; Klein et al., 1989; Wallach, 2019) shows that there is a discrepancy between the integration of the cognitive and experiential aspects of members' learning at Group Relations Conferences.

The findings echo Wallach (2019) that learning at Group Relations Conferences is complex. A particular concern in the findings in the context of the RIDE, is that none but the trainee consultant and two others referred to the IE and IG events without any prompting from me. According to Klein et al. (1989) these events are designed to emphasise integration of cognitive learning. The findings reveal that participants defended against knowledge as a process with an apparent inability to think (Bion, 1961/2004). Defending against knowledge as a process and rather seeing knowledge as a product meant that participants would not need to think (Bion, 1961/2004; French & Simpson, 2010). A dynamic which would make integration between cognitive and experiential aspects of learning challenging, particularly when participants of the RIDE spoke about these events as leaderless, role-play things which they messed up.

It would seem as though participants were pre-occupied with awareness in defence of understanding, there appeared to be a freedom in awareness. As the work of Correa et al. (1981) suggests there seemed to be a fascination with and the potency of unfolding of unconscious group processes which kept some participants engaged. Correa et al. (1981) found participants' own interest in meaning making of group behaviour leads to a preoccupation with others' behaviour at the expense of awareness and understanding of own behaviour, a finding of this research. The idea is supported in how the participants related to others' behaviour instead of their own in many instances, being amazed, watching others, and identifying fear in others but not speaking about the fear in the self.

It would seem as though maintaining the split between awareness and understanding meant that the participants protected themselves from vulnerability evident in any experiential learning experience (Correa et al., 1981) by not integrating their intellectual

capacity and emotional experience. Attacking knowledge by not integrating the intellectual and emotional experience some participants were free to engage in the emotional experiences of Love and Hate only, without any effort to get to know. This pattern of findings resonates with previous literature (Bion, 1962; Brady et al., 2012; Whitehouse-hart, 2012;) and participants' descriptions of experiences of anger, hate, pain, sadness, happiness, and humour as the vampires feasted and consumed, lifeless in their lust for life.

Integration would mean that participants needed to risk their own vulnerability in opening to the evaluation of others and so expose their authentic and public selves (Kiel, 2017). Risking unthinkable anxieties could lead to an unpredictable encounter with disruptive events (Correa et al., 1981). Tolerating doubt by linking Love and Hate with Knowledge was not something all participants were willing to do which had consequences for the participants' learning and transformation at the RIDE. Not all participants were risk averse. How vulnerable the participants felt during the RIDE informed whether they would hold onto their "understanding" of the RIDE experience, let go or regress and this seemed to have implications for any change they could or would experience.

7.4.2.3 *Tolerance and consequence of change*

Myths (Bion, 1963/2018; Chattopadhyay, 2018; Garland, 2010) on which groups operate are created because of basic assumption wishes of togetherness and an easy life (Lawrence, 1979). The denial of differentiation sets the stage for unconscious collusion (Dobosz, 2018). It would seem as if participants of the RIDE wished for a homogeneous "gelled group of togetherness". The participants' concern about loss and gain as they spoke about the consequences of change implies that the myth was tested and manifested as the feeling of loss. Freeing the self from the illusionary sense of togetherness could also produce a feeling of gain (Lawrence, 1979), although any gains the participants may have experienced were not much spoken about. The participants however did speak about regression as they considered the degrees of change (Finn, 1999) they were willing to make.

a   Societal regression

In the South African context where there had been massive trauma in society during the apartheid era the participants had to work with societal regression (Dobosz, 2018; Hopper, 2009; Wallach, 2012), to protect or repair a sense of group identity at the RIDE. The sharp division of *us* and *them* described by the participants exhibited in the group as a split along racial lines meant that the group would do anything to maintain a shared group identity. Even if that meant loss of individuality and extensive use of projective mechanisms by the participants. Holding onto individuality in this context would mean that participants would need to give up long and deeply held beliefs about the self and others. This would be a loss of identity so terrifying that it would mean taking responsibility for perpetuating violence on the other.

The idea is supported by the findings in which participants explicitly speak about the need to give up favourite convictions for change to be affected. Loss is described by the participants as stealing, minimising, depriving, and taking away. These verbs may reflect the loss a large portion of the South African population experienced when their human rights during the apartheid era were stolen, minimised and deprived (Adonis, 2020). The loss is enacted by the participants in the descriptions of a black man shouting at a white woman who in turn is withholding in her aggressive silence. The idea is further supported by the participants stating that fear of change was only a small part of the process at the RIDE.

The participants stated that change was deep(er). Expressed visually in a card to the wall during the IQA. The participants put the last two letters of the word in brackets (er) as if to contain something which may have been anxiety provoking. My supervisor mentioned that ER could symbolise an emergency room, which is an idea which is supported by the finding of traumatic experiences at the RIDE. Based on the trauma experienced in society in the past, the trauma perpetuated during the RIDE still ongoing in current society (Hans, 2018; Mitchley, 2018) made working on the primary task and change at the RIDE particularly challenging for participants. This finding is complementary to the work of Wallach (2012; 2019) in her research in the Israeli–Palestinian communities. In those communities' massive trauma such as that experienced by South Africans could result in regression of the whole society and enacted out during Group Relations Conferences.

b   *Individual regression*

Experiential learning invites regression (Willerman, 2014) and Group Relations Conferences provoke such behaviours so participants can observe and learn from them (McCallum, 2008; Sapochnik, 2020). It would seem the participants of the RIDE did learn by regressing. This is evident in how the participants linked experiences of safety, happiness, and anxiety together with regression (Chapter 6). Papadopoulos (2018) reports that when individuals are faced with the complexities of group life massive regression into earlier phases of mental life occur. The participants described safety in regression and were surprised by finding safety in regression; this is evidence of the defensive position participants engaged in to protect themselves from anxiety of uncertain interpersonal relationships (Allcorn, 2015; Flotman, 2018). It was evident in some participants sharing that they did not fit the group's idea of them in any way or form while others held phantasies about the gelled group.

A group in too much basic assumption mentality (de Felice et al., 2018; Hopper, 2009; Lawrence et al., 1996) of we-ness, which the homogenous gelled group implies or me-ness as when participants felt they did not fit with the group, could lead to the group becoming stuck in the paranoid-schizoid position (Klein, 1948; Rustin, 2015). In the face of self-threatening occurrences, the participants seemed to resort to regression as a defensive position (see Figure 6.6). The paranoid-schizoid position enabled the participants to believe in the good object uncontaminated by bad threats (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008; Rustin, 2015) and this belief created a place of happiness and safety in the group. All was good in the group and outside the group all bad. In this primitive state no learning is gained (van Reekum, 2020). Describing happiness and safety in regression provides evidence for a regressive state of no learning during the RIDE.

c   *Fall-back regression*

A fall-back regression according to McCallum (2008) is a temporary state of regression an individual would fall into to escape from an anxiety-provoking situation (McCallum, 2008; Myburg, 2005). What this means is that a person would temporarily act in a way uncharacteristic of the self. An example might be of a participant realising that as a consultant, she puts herself out to be worked with. However, because of the dynamics in the system she finds herself withholding her interpretation about what is going on in the group. Later she realises that her withholding was to do with her own anxiety about

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the situation she found herself in. The statement that no learning can be gained in a regressive state is then only partly true. These findings complement the work of McCallum (2008) who described participants' temporary experiences of regression as a result of their experiences while being overwhelmed by the complexities in the group.

The idea the participants had that they could always go back when describing regression, represents an example of how regression was worked with during the RIDE. The safety and anxiety in regression can be explained in the different states of regression during the RIDE. Societal regression most probably represented the most anxiety (Wallach, 2010; 2012). Societal regression seems to be a new idea in the Group Relations Conference literature. Research on traumatic societal regression influence at Group Relations Conferences could not be found except in the work of Wallach (2010; 2012). Individual regression, which is not new in Group Relations Conference literature, as conferences induce regressive behaviour (Özdemir & Özdemir, 2019; Sapochnik, 2020) may have provided the participants some safety from anxiety-provoking situations. The participants' experience of fall-back regression is consistent with the work of McCallum (2008) about participants using this type of regression in a temporary defence against anxiety.

The findings highlight that for change to be affected participants needed to weigh the losses and gains of change and how much they were willing to change including the consequences thereof.

d   Consequences of change

The consequences of change were different for different participants. It seems the consequences of change for the participants could be positive, negative or nothing could end up happening. Aspects of change for the participants which seemed to have long lasting effects which transcended the boundaries of the RIDE. Change that transcended the boundaries of the RIDE might not have been welcomed by all. The different consequences of change which could have long lasting effects may imply that holding on and resisting integrating the cognitive and emotional experiences of the RIDE was about loss of identity. Change can be averted and the myth of nothing happened can be maintained. Resisting change in this way works in two ways. First, the individual can hold onto what is known and protect the integrity of identity.

Secondly, no change in identity means that no change of the self would be seen by others outside of the boundary of the RIDE. This was an unconscious fear alluded to by a participant when she said after the RIDE people in her community noticed the change and it took three days to get back to herself. It appears as though change in identity as seen by others outside of the RIDE may not be tolerated. The individual then runs the risk of exclusion from a societal group which may be intolerable. The participant runs the risk that identity is further disintegrated outside of the boundaries of the RIDE which could have long lasting effects.

Participants' apparent fear of identity disintegrating outside of the boundaries of the RIDE and defence against the disintegration for fear of exclusion from a group to which a participant may belong appears to be new to the literature about Group Relations Conferences. Identity provides a form of containment (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002) it is complex (Wallach, 2012) and by nature fragmented, insecure and shifting (Fournier & Smith, 2006). Preserving identity and defending against disintegration of identity may have been about preserving a collective group identity (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002) which the participant may have been unwilling to let go.

The inverse could also be true – participants may change "radically" to fit a certain group identity to become part of the group (Kelly & Gangjee, 2019). There is evidence in the finding that a participant shared that a colleague who had attended previously was seen to have changed dramatically after attending the RIDE by employees in the organisation. There is no evidence whether the colleague's change was a defence against fragmentation of identity or preservation of group identity at the expense of individual identity (Kelly & Gangjee, 2019). It was a curious finding.

The consequences of change may also be viewed as missed opportunities if the cognitive and emotional experiences of the RIDE were not integrated during the RIDE, post reflection. An idea supported by the comment and surprise that there was no connection with others during the RIDE by some participants. In another case there was surprise to find that the RIDE experienced as a product and not a process produced an outcome such as OD light (Chapter 6) which had more to do with a product than learning by experience.

The participants not only considered the consequences of change negatively but positively as well. In addition to holding on and affording none or minimal change in what could be viewed as a negative outcome, positive outcomes such as letting go meant that participants could grow and develop. Apparently, the unconscious dynamic of a positive change included the preservation of identity while both separating from and remaining with the group so breaking free from the group's myth of homogeneity.

The dangerous and delirious zero-sub game seemed to be the hypothetical area which existed and paradoxically could not exist (Winnicott, 1971/2005). A potential space which enabled the participants to play with and tolerate loss without necessarily needing to resolve loss (Ribas, 2015) as the participants learnt to separate from and remain joined to a group. Even though the basic assumption mentality of the group threatened separation from the group with violence in a dangerous and delirious zero-sub game.

Likewise, it would seem as if the work group mentality of the group may not have been averse to separation either. The manifestations of silence, shouting, suspicion, guilt, and latent anger the participants described points to a group which may have found themselves in the basic assumption mentality of silence (Sandler, 2018) characterised with these kinds of manifestations. The work group mentality of the basic assumption mentality of silence is not averse to using exclusion to keep the group on task (Sandler, 2018). This finding exemplifies similar findings in the literature (Armstrong, 2010; van Reekum, 2020) that groups cannot be viewed as operating on two clearly defined levels. Both group mentalities have the capacity to threaten participants in the service of the task. In this context both the basic assumption mentality and work group mentality would threaten individual members with exclusion from the group.

Research about the characteristics of transformation or the consequences of change outside of the boundaries of Group Relations Conferences is unclear. The findings about the consequences of change for the RIDE participants appears to be new to the literature about Group Relations Conferences. However, a common thread to these findings and those of other scholars in terms of the consequence of change seemed to be about the terrors (Sapochnik, 2020) of inclusion and exclusion of groups working

in basic assumption mentalities. Based on the findings thus far the terrors seem to extend to some work group mentalities as well (Sandler, 2018).

The games at the RIDE represented the illusion of safety to ensure psychological safety and further development (Davar, 2020). The participants needed to create that world for their own development to go forward. A good enough space needed to be created in which the participants could develop a mature tolerance of their experiences in which unconscious phantasies were not killed too quickly so rigid defences did not set in (Davar, 2020). The transitional space seemed to allow participants to get in touch with difficult feelings and emotions (Hinshelwood et al., 2010). Unconscious processes were given consciousness (Bion,1970; Boxer, 2014) in a space where phantasies, reality and boundaries needed free rein (Davar, 2020).

7.4.3 Conditions that gave rise to the dangerous and delirious zero-sub game

The RIDE as a container (Bion, 1970; Lawrence, 1979; Sapochnik, 2017) was designed to support individuals as they were being challenged to work with their own unconscious dynamics. In the findings there is strong evidence that these were influenced by participants' unconscious anxieties about learning by experience, integrating cognitive and emotional experiences during the RIDE and tolerating the consequences of change as they worked with regression (McCallum, 2008) murderous rage and violence caused by overwhelming pain and anxiety of separation and loss.

Safety is a state of freedom from anxiety (Stokoe, 2021). Participants linked safety to container and containment at the RIDE. It appeared as if there was a dynamic relationship between the two concepts consistent with Bion (1970) concept of the container-contained which has elements in common with the transitional space (Winnicott, 1971/2005). The literature (Beck and Visholm, 2014; Sapochnik, 2020; Tchelebi, 2017) is vast about participants' concern for safety at Group Relations Conferences. However, Weinberg (2016) states that these concerns may be overrated and even manipulated by participants at these events. Weinberg (2016) is of the opinion that a good enough playground should be established in which members could explore "unsafe" experiences.

From the findings it is possible to deduce that the participants worked with risk at the RIDE because this experience could not be spoken about during the interview process, neither by the group or the individuals. Risk could only be "spoken" about from a defended position or written down on a card to be summarily removed during the interview process. The idea is further supported by the need for emotions not to be allowed to run free and spill over without purpose "contaminating" participants and the group. A risk and fear to be averted as participants relied on the belief that the bad objects were located elsewhere in others (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008; Rustin, 2015). During the interview process the participants seemed to maintain this phantasy of the RIDE when they stated that it was not their (participants) intention to experience OD light (Chapter 6) but other members of the RIDE. It would appear as if the participants' preoccupation with safety is a manifestation of these unconscious dynamics about working with self-threatening experiences in an effort to remain impervious to any bad threats contaminating themselves or the group which extends on the work of Weinberg (2016).

7.4.3.1 *The container*

In the context of the RIDE the participants were the contained according to Bion (1962) theory of container and contained. The container was the RIDE into which the participants projected into and onto others (Bion, 1962). Cilliers and May (2012) reported on the symbolic importance members attached to the RIDE presented on the island in the context of South Africa's history. The RIDE container symbolised a place of depravity and violent authoritarian rule as well as a holiday destination. This idea is supported by the finding that the RIDE container was at first perceived to be a holiday experience. For some there was intimacy and safety in the symbolism of a deserted island. For others there was no symbolism of safety rather the container was entered with caution.

It would seem as if the participants of the RIDE may have felt neglected "just being left" as the participants described and/or powerless. As Bion (1965/2018) suggests emotion which becomes intolerable will become more and more exaggerated to ensure the container reacts with more and more evacuation. The exaggerated emotions being expressed at the RIDE – shouting, screaming, excessive silence, jumping off chairs, etc. concurs with the work of Bion (1965/2018). It would seem as if some participants

felt uncontained as the emotion exaggerated. Even though the emotion was exaggerated to ensure the container reacts in the perceived neglect of the container, there seemed to be a fear that the container might not be able to hold the exaggerated emotion safely. Of interest was to find how the exaggerated demands placed on the container worked for the participants.

A preoccupation with spillage and contamination implied that participants were aware of the messiness of learning by experience which the participants felt the consultants needed to allow to happen, but not push in a particular direction. Yet when the participants perceived no direction from the consultants there was resentment towards the consultants for not giving direction. In addition, the participants demanded purpose to feel safe for any change to happen. An interpretation could be that maintaining exaggerated emotion in the container would put so much pressure on the container that the container would have no other recourse but to evacuate and not allow for any digestion of those emotions which avoid learning by experience. The idea is supported by the participants describing the RIDE as a pressure cooker and hard stewing in own juices. By exaggerating the demands on the container and consultants to the effect that safety could never be obtained and responsibility for not learning by experience could be projected onto the consultants and onto the container. A container with no purpose denudes the container and consultants of all authority and meaning. This was evidenced in the participants denuding the consultants of their authority by creating their own pseudo consultants. The fear of failure of the container, then seemed to hold the unconscious dynamic of hope, in the failure of the container and the consultants, to contain anxiety.

This pattern of findings conforms with Weinberg's (2016) that participants can use safety in defence against learning by experience and that it is possible that contents could be so explosive that the whole container explodes with an uncontained result (Bion, 1970; Weinberg, 2016). The explosion of unbearable anxiety with safety as the weapon could be in service of destruction in an attempt at survival in extreme cases. The paradox is that demanding a safety which can never really be obtained, the call for safety becomes the weapon to justify the destruction of the container. If the container is destroyed participants could then escape learning from experience and any defences against learning by experience in order to maintain integrity of the mind

and self. In addition to the survival of the integrity of the group participants seemingly take no responsibility in the destruction of the container. A dynamic which possibly extends the work of Weinberg (2016) with new concept of safety as a weapon freeing the participants from anxiety (Stokoe,2021). A pattern of findings consistent with the work of Bion (1967/2018), Kolchin-Miller (2015) and Sapochnik (2017) description of attacks on linking in defence against knowledge. Attacks on linking seemingly creating destruction of connections between the cognitive and emotional experiences of participants. In that way no thinking ensures the survival of the participants and the group.

The RIDE as a container and the consultants providing containment provided a safe enough space for participants to contain unpleasant, destructive, dangerous, and anxiety-provoking experiences (Struwig, 2010). In the findings there is no evidence that the RIDE container exploded even though safety was a preoccupation in the transitional space of becoming. There may have been phantasies of an explosion as guns and bombs were phantasies however contagious and harmful emotions were contained (Mathur, 2020) as the RIDE possibly allowed for growth and development (Brady et al., 2012). Providing opportunities for participants who would risk learning by experience.

7.4.3.2   Containment

Containment is a process of making thinking possible (Henderson, 2018) in a container working with the contained and uncontained. A role which consultants to group relations conferences take up. The participants shared with me that containment was different for themselves than for the consultants after they had time to reflect and had read a paper written about the RIDE. One participant said that containment appeared to have something to do with integration.

Finding the difference about what containment means for the participant and the consultants in the minds of the participants is consistent with the work of Short (2007). Referring to the function of the formal system (Director and staff) of group relations conferences and the informal system (participants) two interrelated systems at group relations conferences. Short (2007) found that these two functions often do not provide the "containment function" necessary to stimulate integration of data in both these

systems within a group relations conference. Short (2007) was of the opinion that the dynamic may have something to do with the split between basic assumption and work group mentalities if existing theory maintained a split between these mentalities. Short (2007) stated that open exploration of volatile topics such as race and culture may often be unsafe and dangerous to address in the formal structure but safely expressed only in the informal system. The author stated that aspects of envy, competition and succession which may have led to conflict were avoided in the formal section.

While there is no evidence in the data about the consultants' experiences of containment during the RIDE, the participants alluded that containment for the consultants was related to the process of the RIDE and for themselves it was about the emotional experiences of the RIDE. For the participants containment was at the intersections of mirror, reality, death, and life instincts (Eros and Thanatos) and illumination (Chapter 6). The consultants were seen as devoid of emotion as they were described by the participants as sitting like pillars of salt. It would seem as if there was envy over the "emotionless" consultants on the part of the participants when they projected the envy in describing the consultants as "look at me I am a big consultant now".

As the findings suggest learning by experience created intolerable anxiety for the participants. The split in the mind of the participants that the consultants did not experience these emotions may have rubbed more salt into their pain and wounds of development. On the one hand, it may or may not be, as there is no evidence of consultants' experiences of the RIDE, that the split the participants experienced during the RIDE may have inhibited or destroyed the potential for shared learning and collaboration as Short (2007) found. Perpetuating dysfunction concerning the relationship between cultural dynamics and group functioning at group relations conferences (Short, 2007).

On the other hand, the findings suggest the split between what containment meant for the participants and the consultants in the mind of the participants, may have had something to do with the participants not wanting to think in a space created for thinking. A schism (Bion, 1961/2004; French & Simpson, 2010) in which a wish for integration without thinking meant that integration could not be obtained. Defending

against integration meant that the participants avoided the painful effort thinking and development could bring. Claiming containment over the emotional experience of the RIDE and excluding the consultants from it meant that participants could remain in the basic assumption mentality of the group at the expense of all other activities (Bion, 1961/2004; Short, 2007). In addition, it would seem as if excluding the consultants from the containment of the emotional experiences the participants defended against the risk that emotional elements could be distilled by the consultants and made available for thinking (Henderson, 2018). The "complexity" of containment at the RIDE as a participant described contributes to the scholarly literature about the meaning of container and containment at Group Relations Conferences (Henderson, 2018; Parry, 2011; Rao, 2013).

7.4.3.3 *Maintaining the status quo*

Containment at the RIDE was the responsibility of the director and consultants. In their role the consultants, through their interpretations of the group dynamics, made the unconscious, conscious (Bion, 1970; Boxer, 2014) for participants and themselves to work with. The literature abounds with the importance of containment in group relations work and the consequences of the breakdown of containment (see Bion, 1962; Mathur, 2020; Rao, 2013). The participants' experience of feeling like a "bunch of prisoners" could mean that the participants felt excessively contained, limited, and constricted. This finding contributes to the literature on group relations about containment and the consequences of it. Alternatively, the participants could have been mirroring the dynamics of their organisations which are at times seen as restricting and limiting to employees (Mathur, 2020).

As discussed in the previous section the phantasy about the split in containment for the participants and the consultants seemed to be about envy for the consultants, the defence against learning by experience and defence against the pain of development. A phantasy seemed to be maintained that the participants and the consultants were not a unit (Sapochnik, 2020; Winnicott, 1971/2005) processing knowledge. It would seem as if the consultants were not trusted in their role either to contain the emotional experience of the participants or what it would mean if the consultants were given the opportunity to distil the participants emotional experiences (Henderson, 2018) so they may think. Thinking would have consequences for the survival of the individual or the

group (Henderson, 2018; Schneider, 2005). A finding which is not unique to the literature about this phenomenon at group relations conferences (Cilliers & May, 2012; Skolnick & Green, 2003; van Reekum, 2012).

Towards survival of the individual and the group the participants fought to maintain the status quo about them being an undifferentiated homogeneous group and not a unit which included the consultants processing knowledge towards mutual understanding. As an undifferentiated homogeneous group, the phantasy was that the group would then be safe and cared for (Dal Forno & Merlone, 2013). The finding is not unexpected as the literature abounds with this group phenomenon (Lawrence, 1979; Long, 2011; Sher, 2015). Yet as suggested by Fraher (2004) the desire also created the fear that the participants would be overwhelmed by the undifferentiated group, be rejected by it and/or be abandoned by the group. This was evidenced in the participants considering who they would RIDE with and who they would kill. Mobilising these primitive feelings and defences it would seem the group split the good from the bad in themselves and projected their feelings of powerlessness such as feeling like "a bunch of prisoners" onto the director and consultants whose task it was to provide containment for these experiences.

The envious attack on the consultants seemed to be about the phantasy that the consultants did not share/experience the emotions associated with pain in development (Bion, 1961/2004;1962) at the RIDE. It could be that the phantasy of the consultants being emotionless and the envy around that could have been perpetuated by the role of the consultant which is task focused and shuns social niceties (Nossal, 2007). Challenging the habitual way of doing things. It could also be that the phantasy of the consultants not sharing the participants' experience could have reflected the consultants not exploring volatile topics such as race and culture in the formal system as Short (2007) found in her research. Evidenced in a participant stating that the consultants thought they knew what was going on in the "informal system" as Short (2007) described, but they (consultants) did not know.

7.4.3.4 Self-preservation

Narcissism, the primary libidinal instinct of self-preservation according to Freud (1914) (cited by Nossal, 2007) seemed to be part of the group dynamic at the RIDE. It could

be the case that the participants were affronted by the reality of finding themselves as part of a group (Hume, 2010). There was also the basic assumption mentality of arrogance (baA) the group may have found themselves in. It could be that desire for special status (Garland, 2010) already felt in the invitation to stay on Robben Island for five days and able to go where other tourists could not, was dashed. When the participants no longer experienced the feeling of being special during the RIDE, this may have inflamed the jealousy, envy and rivalry towards the consultants who were initially seen to be special and omnipotent. This phenomenon is reported in the work of Nossal (2007) who states that consultants are often seen as heroes when they first begin to work.

During the normal course of consultancy work the hero status of the consultant wanes according to Nossal (2007). The participants referred to the consultants as facilitators during the interviews as well as creating pseudo-events and pseudo consultants and stating that consultants "think they know but do not know". It would seem as if in the minds of the participants they destroyed the phantasy of the consultant's omnipotence in their (participants) minds. An omnipotence the consultants may have accepted uncritically as the "one that knows" as described by Sapochnik (2017) had they introjected the participants need see the consultants as all-knowing in defence against learning.

The loss of the ideal (Stokoe, 2021) seemed to be a gain for the participants as the participants reflected the phantasy of omnipotence and narcissism expected from the consultants in their own expressions of narcissism and omnipotence. A necessary dynamic as primary narcissism according to Freud (1914) as cited in Nossal (2007) is necessary for development and maintenance of a positive self-regard. It seems that during the RIDE narcissism was expressed by some participants in learning about the self in relation to others yet feeling superior to others in a mutated container.

The participants' preoccupation with maintaining the status quo and preservation of self, meant that the participants defended against learning in a transitional space where participants needed to observe, reflect on, learn from regressions, check phantasy from reality (McCallum, 2008) and recognise an object as external and distinct from the self and not just as a bundle of projections (Winnicott, 1971/2005). A

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possible reason among others for why the participants experienced the RIDE as they had.

7.5   WHY THE PARTICIPANTS EXPERIENCED THE RIDE AS THEY DID

Experiencing the RIDE and transmogrifying was a moving experience whether participants wanted to be moved or not. As they moved from a solid state in a group, to fragmentation, to integration where some state of mind is achieved only to be lost again according to Sapochnik (2020). In the findings it was evident that experiences of primitive and destructive forces to protect the self might have been too overwhelming for some to enable reflection, to learn from regressions and to distinguish phantasy from reality as fear arose from the self's relations with its objects (Klein, 1959; Rustin, 2015) as well as the self's relation with the self as an object (Bollas, 1987/2018).

The dynamics of looking and being observed (Bion, 1961/2004; Carlyle, 2010; Kiel, 2017) while learning by experience played itself out at the RIDE. It seems as if working with the self in relation to its objects and the risk of experiencing fear about who sees what I see, who sees what I am looking at, who accompanies my gaze, where is the other whom I do not see, if I do not see the other are they present (Sapochnik, 2020) if I do not see do I exist? In addition to how participants worked with themselves as the object (Bollas, 1987/2018) meant risking the fear of addressing who is speaking, what part of the self is speaking, what part of the self is being addressed, what is the nature of this object relation, is it a good enough object relation? Experiences which informed why participants experienced the RIDE as a five-day revolution of a dangerous and delirious zero-sub game in a new dawn filled with vampires.

A strong symbolism of dark and light emerged in this theme. The participants used the metaphors of Dusk and Dawn, dark to light and walking through dark forests until a clearing appears and the light shines through. An interpretation of what these experiences may have been about follows.

7.5.1 The assumptions of a new dawn filled with vampires

It would seem as if participants felt vulnerable and feared exposure during the RIDE as they experienced violence and threats of exclusion while attempting to hide behind masks. Scholarly literature includes reports that powerful dynamics exist in groups

such as splitting, projective identification, regression, attacks on knowledge, scapegoating and envy (Hazell & Kiel, 2017). The freedom to express oneself in a group is limited to authorization from the self and others. For that to happen the group must be working from a work group mentality and not locked into roles the group has assigned to members (Hazell & Kiel, 2017) or roles members have taken up on behalf of the group when working in the basic assumption mentality of a group (Bion,1961/2004).

How the participants experienced the dynamic was described in the metaphor of walking through the forest with eyes closed and suddenly coming to a clearing where the sun shone through. The forest symbolises the RIDE. Several interpretations can be made about how the participants worked with their vulnerability, defended against anxiety, and worked with their objects. These are listed for ease of reference:

- Not fully entering the RIDE, remaining in the dark and keeping the eyes closed nothing could be seen or experienced. The phantasy that nothing existed meant that there was no need to relate to the other as object. The risk was if nothing was seen or not related to do the self or others then exist?

- Not seeing in the dark but relating to others could bring about other phantasies such as missing what was seen and knowing who was watching. Coming to the clearing could be a relief as participants could then see.

- The clearing held its own risks:
  o Seeing in the clearing after coming out of the dark may have been awe inspiring only seeing the light and remaining in the clearing as a place of safety, there was then no further need to enter the dark.
  o Seeing could be too much. If the light was too bright it could be blinding, and nothing could be seen as the eyes were closed once more.
  o A risk of exposure was imminent in the illumination of the clearing. Others could then see what the participant would rather have kept hidden.

- Where the clearing was not seen as a place of safety but a place to be avoided entering the dark again may have then been preferable. However, the dark was not what it was before it now held historical memory (Ogden, 1986).
  o Having seen, been blinded by that which was seen or escaping exposure, the dark held different terrors requiring different defences

than just closing the eyes with phantasies that the self or others did not exist. The self or others not existing paradoxically describes the "dead" vampires who did not exist. In addition to the new dawn which could contain vampires not yet banished to the dark. The light then may not have been as safe as first thought.

If, however, the participants could move through the RIDE and integrate what was learnt through the different spaces of turbulence (dark/light) to calm (light/dark) and calm to turbulence (Bion, 1965/2018), the participants would then be able to enter fully into the RIDE experience. In this way it may have been possible that the participants could achieve a state of mind which allowed for loss and gain in a cycle of learning by experience. However, this was not easily achieved and had several implications for the participants of the RIDE.

7.5.2 The implications of a new dawn filled with vampires

The RIDE provided a transitional space in which the participants could deal with difficult and profound issues (Kiel, 2017, Pretorius et al., 2006; Tavistock, 2016) of learning by experience and working on a primary task. It would appear as if the participants tolerated loss in the transitional space (Seulin, 2018) as they learnt by experiencing that being oneself means moving from the subjective object (object not yet acknowledged as being not me) to objective object acknowledging as being another subject and being able to be used (Seulin, 2018; Winnicott, 1971/2005). The authors state that the task is accomplished through the destruction of the object in phantasy while seeing in reality that the object still exists and is not retaliating but rather that the object can be used (Seulin, 2018). As the findings suggest when participants said if they saw another self, they had a choice to let go or not to let go (Chapter 6) which implies that some may have tolerated loss and found that they did not need to necessarily resolve it (Winnicott, 1971/2005). A process the participants engaged with as they worked through the paranoid-schizoid and achieved the depressive position (Klein, 1959).

7.5.2.1   *Paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions*

As discussed previously it would seem as if the participants fought to maintain the status quo initially and gave up identity to the group in self-preservation and safety that

the group was omnipotent, supreme providing a safe space. Attacks on the director, consultants and others in the group ensued in an effort to defend against the primary task while working in the basic assumption mentality of the group. This allowed for functioning in the paranoid-schizoid position (Klein, 1959) as participants engaged in a disturbed relationship with the container by mutating interpretations of it, creating mutative transformation in the process.

The idea of splitting the good and bad objects of the self and the group, is consistent with the findings in scholarly literature (Klein, 1959; McRae & Short, 2010), namely that splitting as a defence mechanism in its most negative form, functions to rid the self of anxiety related to shameful, negative aspects of the self. Aspects such as envy and greed which manifested during the RIDE when the consultants were perceived to have a different experience of the RIDE by the participants. Leaving the participants to experience painful emotions during the RIDE and the consultants not, among others. In addition, the participants competed amongst each other about who would possess knowledge. Greed too manifested in how much could be taken in and taken in, and in taking depriving the other from taking. In the war during the RIDE destruction of the other was a characteristic of a group functioning in the paranoid-schizoid position and meant the participants could destroy other's learning by experience and destroy any enjoyment others may have had of the RIDE itself.

A finding consistent with the literature (Stokoe, 2020; Ogden,1986) that in the paranoid-schizoid position everything is taken at face value. No guilt is felt for destroying the other in this position. The fear in this position is not of death but nihilation or the nameless dread according to Bion (1962). Death is not absolute, absence is not permanent, there is always the ability to recreate the absent object (Ogden,1986), symbolised in the presence of the vampire at the RIDE which was immortal. If the vampire gets "killed" it will rise again.

The paranoid-schizoid and depressive position is a dialectical relationship which evolves between the two positions as a process of ongoing psychological-interpersonal processes of projective identification (Flotman, 2018; Ogden, 1986; Sapochnik, 2022). Adequate splitting however is necessary for eventual integration of part objects and part of self into whole objects and a continuous sense of self (Ogden, 1986). Should

adequate splitting be obtained, and loss tolerated a group would function in the depressive position (Klein, 1959; Ogden, 1986; Stokoe; 2021). This is a state of mind which could tolerate the interconnectivity of all experience (Sapochnik, 2022).

In the depressive position nothing is that simple and interpretation provides meaning (Flotman, 2018; Ogden, 1986; Stokoe, 2021). The process of interpretation allows for the possibility that the other is a subject as well as an object and the participant can feel concern for the other (Ogden, 1986). Anxiety manifests in the fear of the loss of the object as one fears what is driven away (Flotman; 2018; Ogden, 1986) creating guilt.

The idea is supported by the finding that participants were preoccupied with loss and whether loss could be mourned (Abrahams, 2019; Kolchin-Miller, 2015; Ogden,1986) if not, it was implied that the participants would not be human but possibly vampires. The findings support the idea of the dialectical relationship between the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. It appears as if participants functioned in both the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008; Klein, 1959; Rustin, 2015) when the aggression which was described as fighting rage with rage initially was managed to bring together the good and bad objects (Klein, 1959) as participants began relating to one another in a depressive position.

Further to the participants functioning in the dialectical relationship of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions it would seem as if the trauma experienced during the RIDE manifested in the participants creating false selves. Consistent with the literature (Bollas, 1987/2018; Kiel, 2017; Winnicott, 1971/2005) when there is too much trauma, no play and a false self will be developed, filling the space with its own creative imagination fuelled with what was injected. It seems as if the creative imagination of the participants was symbolised in the representation of the vampire and brought about a false self. A tortured self, failing to acknowledge they are the cause of their own troubles rather imagining the other was at fault (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969/1996). As scholars such as Ogden (1986) and Klein (1959) have found, in defence of the depressive position where there is a danger of experiencing loss, individuals deny responsibility for own thoughts and actions. Further supported by the participants'

preoccupation with what was real and authentic (Kiel, 2017) during the RIDE, implying concerns about true and false selves.

7.5.2.2 *The false self*

The false self emerges in relatedness to the mother infant unit (see Bollas,1987/2018; Ogden, 1986). The infant is born with the potential for unique individuality of personality according to Ogden (1986). The true self develops in a responsive holding environment of the good enough mother. If, however, the holding environment is not good enough and disruption emerges to the development of itself, the infant experiences trauma (Bollas,1987/2018; Ogden, 1986). The infant then develops its own second reactive personality organisation, the false self (Ogden, 1986). The false self, monitors and adapts to the conscious and unconscious needs of the mother providing an exterior behind which the true self is protected to maintain its integrity. The dread of annihilation of the true self results in feelings of utter dependence of the false self, personality organisation (Bollas,1987/2018 Ogden, 1986). The false self is not malevolent it manages life, so the true self does not experience the threat of annihilation (Ogden, 1986). The difference between psychological split leading to the development of a false self and normally developed defences is that normal defences allow the person to disavow experience but also to unconsciously preserve the disavowed experience that is still one's own (Ogden, 1986; Verwey & Knight, 2019).

Evidence for the emergence of a false self during the RIDE came from a participant who stated that she went into the RIDE cautiously and remained neutral conforming to what she thought the group expected of her. In contrast to throwing the "cat amongst the pigeons" which she usually liked to do in other contexts. Another participant shared that he was an "authentic man" and that had been "his mask for a long time". The experiences of the participants are consistent with the literature (van der Merwe & Swartz, 2014) that shameful authentic identity is concealed by social conforming values. Socially conforming values which are the identity visible to others which may be a false self, protecting a true self.

Emergence of a false self was not the only dynamic at play. From the findings it seems as if a false group self (Kiel, 2017) emerged during the RIDE. Seemingly through collusion the group was forced to accept an identity of what a diverse group should

look like. Societal norms of the time seemed to be mirrored during the RIDE and not the authentic group identity of the RIDE which was much more fragmented than was wished for (Kiel, 2017) and defended against. Considering that the group dynamic seemed to be about maintaining the status quo while defending against learning by experience the dynamic of the false self and false group self, meant that participants could defend against learning and development. This is a dynamic in line with findings of Ogden (1986) that the false self does not allow for development of significant aspects of what might have become oneself. It will seem as if the participants struggle to be free in their authentic selves despite group pressure (Bion, 1965/2018) and needed to act in the public space, which resulted in mimicry (Kiel, 2017) of hellish masks during the RIDE, as one participant described those masks.

7.5.2.3   *The shadow*

The shadow is a part or parts of ourselves that we do not like, do not know, or do not want to know (Jung, 1959/1990; Henning, 2009; Kets de Vries, 2016). From the findings it seems as if the participants found it challenging to work with their shadows. In defence of the shadow, masks were used to hide personality (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969/1996). The participants chose hellish masks. As suggested by Jung (1959/1990) behind the mask lies the mirror which does not flatter but it shows whatever looks into it. It appears as if the masks the participants wore contained the reflections of the grotesque self and others which the mirror did not hide.

Looking deeper at the self and others the correction aspect of the mirror becomes the symbol of seeing things in their essential reality (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969/1996). It would seem as if these images of the self were rather projected outwards. Jung (1959/1990) stated that meeting the self belongs to the most unpleasant things that can be avoided if everything negative is projected. The mimicry of the hellish mask seemed to serve the participants in this way. The hellish masks also seemed to serve as a warning of danger (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1969/1996) to participants of the consequences of looking (Stokoe, 2021), daring to peek under those masks and seeing deeper at the self and others.

Fully accepting the shadow within the psyche meant that a full and rich relationship with the self would then be possible (Henning, 2009). However, seeing things in their

reality and working with the shadow may have been too challenging for some participants. A finding evidenced in some participants describing holding onto masks which eventually solidified, instead of holding onto mirrors which seemed to be difficult to look into for some. Masks which solidify can be understood as a defence mechanism of the false self, consistent with the findings in the literature that imminent catastrophe would follow if the false self was to be understood by the self or others (Bollas, 1987/2018).

The findings in this research reveal that defence mechanisms may have been too strong for some participants in that they were less responsive, less able to listen and less able to be approached by others (Henning, 2009) during the RIDE. Something which seemed to come as a surprise to some, who after the RIDE realised, they did not connect to others during and after the RIDE itself. Maintaining the defence of not seeing meant that the phantasy of not existing or only seeing what they wanted to be seen was not shattered, in defence of annihilation and loss (Ogden, 1986). The ability of the participants to contain or defend against the possibility of an imminent catastrophe of the self and experience containment in a good enough environment while acting as a container for others (Naik, 2014) are the conditions which gave rise to the new dawn filled with vampires.

7.5.3 Conditions that gave rise to the new dawn filled with vampires

The expression of life and death at the RIDE such as a participant stating metaphorically that people die there, is not a pathological experience but inevitable. Life and death instincts are a manifestation of psychotic experiences in groups working in basic assumption mentalities, together with the accompanying terrors of inclusion and exclusion (Sapochnik, 2020; Winnicott, 1971/2005). There seemed to be two safety concerns amid these psychotic experiences – a concern about the container failing and the catastrophe of failure to contain the self.

7.5.3.1   *Failure of the container: loss or gain*

The transitional space (Winnicott, 1971/2005) in which the participants transmogrified was not simply a holding space (Stokoe, 2021). It was a space for emotional growth in which the container (the RIDE) and the contained (participants) (Bion, 1961/2004) engaged. The process involved an experience of engaging, allowing the contained to

have an impact, processing the impact, responding to the contained and noticing how the contained respond to this (Stokoe, 2021). How the participants worked with containment at the RIDE and why they worked with containment as they had, informed whether the participants would preserve the self, transform, or transmogrify as containment provides a sense of safety and protection from that which is felt to be threatening (Stokoe, 2021).

In the process of engaging with the transitional space/container (Stokoe, 2021; Winnicott, 1971/2005) initially, for some participants and throughout the RIDE for others, trusting the container to contain their learning experiences seemed to be difficult. The impact of this distrust seemed to entail a defence against learning by experience, defence against the pain of development and what it would mean to individual participants and the group if they did work on the primary task.

Some participants seemed to respond to the containment at the RIDE by creating the phantasy that the RIDE had no meaning to themselves. For these participants, denuding the consultants in their role, competing with the consultants and others during the RIDE, defending against own helplessness, envy, and greed created much vitality during the RIDE, as Bion (1961/2004) and French and Simpson, (2010) described, as they worked on the pseudo task in defence against pain of learning which held long-lasting consequences for themselves.

It would appear as if there was a wish for some of the participants that the container would fail. If the container failed it would be a gain for some participants. This wish may have been felt in the RIDE system as a participant described if there had been bombs at the RIDE, they (participants) would not be alive. The container exploding would mean some participants could then escape learning by experience. Escaping learning by experience was possible for all participants in different defence mechanisms which could be employed as the findings suggest. The destruction of the container would not be necessary however, for some participants a container which was destroyed would mean that they would not need to experience learning by experience, the pain in development and the need to defend against those experiences. An action/loss which would be a gain for those participants.

As indicated previously there is no evidence that the RIDE container failed in reality however, it may have been destroyed in the minds of some participants as they preserved the self to escape the nameless dread as Bion (1962) described. Remaining in a paranoid-schizoid position (Klein, 1959), not giving up the disturbed relationship with the container, and the mutative interpretations of the container meant that participants defended against the depressive position. A position which would require meaning making (Flotman, 2018; Ogden, 1986; Stokoe, 2021) of the RIDE experience which was defended against by finding no meaning in the experience.

Perhaps there was too much trauma (Bollas, 1987/2018; Kiel, 2017; Winnicott, 1971/2005) for these participants, no amount of play may have been possible. Only a knifes edge which could fall either way as a participant described the dangerous and delirious game. The gain that might have been had in the destruction of the container also seemed to contain an element of loss for these participants. Post the RIDE the participant reflected about lost opportunities which seemed to hold long lasting consequences as defence against knowing continued long after the RIDE when the participant said she should know but does not want to admit it yet.

The findings show that the participants both wished for and felt threatened about the container failing and self-preservation failing. These would have long lasting effects for the participants outside of the boundaries of the RIDE and could be seen as contaminating if spillage were not contained.

7.6   TRANSMOGRIFICATION AT THE RIDE

In this section the key concept of the thesis, Transmogrification is developed. The model I present at the end of this chapter offers a clear example of the process of what I call transmogrification at the RIDE. This is a new concept in the study of Group Relations Conferences which develops the discussion (Armstrong, 2007; De Gooijer, 2019; Erlich-Ginor, 2006; Fraher, 2004a; Miller, 1990; Sher, 2012; Stokoe, 2010) about learning by experience and transformation at these events.

In its most concise form transmogrification occurs when an individual challenges the status quo (Finn, 1999) and risks transmogrifying internal objects (Bowker, 2020) while still maintaining an integrated form. Transmogrification is differentiated from

transformation in that transformation would not necessarily challenge the status quo of the psyche nor necessarily transmogrify internal objects. Transformation may rather entail the avoidance of conscious confrontation with real anxieties and terrors that arise in group settings (Bowker, 2020; Ogden, 1986; Winnicott, 1971/2005) in defence against psychotic fragmentation (Bion, 1962,1965/2018; Sapochnik, 2020).

7.6.1 To transmogrify or not to transmogrify

From the findings it became clear that there were three outcomes of the RIDE for the participants. Those were preservation, transformation, and transmogrification. Which outcome would happen would be influenced by the meaning the participants attached to transforming at the RIDE. In addition, to the perceived consequences of preservation transformation and transmogrification the participants felt would have long lasting effects for themselves, outside the boundaries of the RIDE.

7.6.1.1   *The meaning of transformation*

Transformation had direct implications for the self. Transformation could either mean a loss or a gain for the participants, although not much was spoken about the gains of transformation by the participants as indicated previously. To transform the participants would need to risk the fear of loss and experience the loss (Ogden, 1986; Stokoe, 2021). As indicated giving up favourite convictions as the participants described or giving up an object the participant believed was paramount to survival, was challenging. The pattern in the findings resonates with those of other scholars (Bion,1961/2004; Klein, 1959; Stokoe, 2021) who state working with loss and fear of loss is a process of working through the paranoid-schizoid position towards a depressive position. At this primitive level Stokoe (2021) states that separation/loss is undistinguishable from death. If the object that has split off and projected into contains too much of the self, then the individual runs the risk of losing the self in the process. A consequence of transformation the participants appeared to weigh up during the RIDE. Yet it would also seem as if the participants weighed up how much they were willing to lose, if they had to lose anything at all and whether there could be anything gained by transforming (Chapter 6).

These considerations of the participants around the consequences of loss are consistent with the work of (Bion, 1961/2004) who stated that if the projections from

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the container had been successfully transformed from alpha elements to beta elements introjected loss may well have been tolerated. The participants would then be able to work with reality (Stokoe, 2021). As loss is experienced, grieving is triggered, leading to the acceptance of separateness (Davar, 2020; Ogden, 1986; Winnicott, 1971/2005). It would seem if the participants achieved this depressive position they would most likely transform. That transformation could include transmogrification yet, also contain a defence against transmogrification.

If, however loss is not tolerated and there is denial of separation, as alpha and beta elements in the container are not introjected successfully there can be no grieving as loss cannot be experienced. All that is then experienced are the intolerable feelings perceived as loss (Stokoe, 2021). In this instance it would seem as if those participants who became stuck in the paranoid-schizoid position could have experienced a false transformation and/or a preservation of the self. Transmogrification would not be possible unless, the transmogrification was mutative.

7.6.1.2   *Transformation an oddity*

In the transitional space (Davar, 2020; Ogden, 1986; Winnicott, 1971/2005) work and play allows for the verification of the survival of the object (Nicolò, 2015) after its destruction, to be reanimated. A process allowed for in the paranoid-schizoid position (Klein, 1959; Ogden, 1986) to avoid the danger of nihilation and fragility (Nicolò, 2015; Ogden, 1986) of the object, to explore the object from a depressive position (Klein, 1959; Ogden, 1986). Based on the findings it would seem as if reanimation may have resulted in a false meaning being created, that as some participants remained stuck in the paranoid-schizoid position and could not achieve the depressive position because of defences.

It would seem as if the phantasy of the games, fun and the holiday in an uncertain container, may have resulted in an unconscious "planned" for change with the least amount of risk and the least number of long-lasting effects for some of the participants. In addition to the zero-sum game (Levin, 2002), Stokoe (2021) describes two types of games played in society. Firstly, the finite game which has much in common with the zero-sum game. In which the players are known, rules are clear, and competition characterises these games. Secondly, the infinite game which characterises the RIDE

where the players are unknown, and the rules appear unclear. The infinite game aims for outcomes of human values (See Stokoe, 2021). The finite game begins with the question "what do we want" and the infinite game asks a different question "why are we doing this". In other words what meaning is there in the game.

It seems as if participants did search for meaning at the RIDE in their questions about why and what they were supposed to do and the meaning they ascribed to transformation. Consistent with the literature that meaning making is an inherent predisposition of all humans (Stokoe, 2021). Meaning in the paranoid-schizoid position is certain and linked to perfect good and perfect bad. In the depressive position it is linked to complexity that results from the capacity to face the reality of what is seen in both the self and outside of the self (Stokoe, 2021).

It would seem as if the need to create meaning (Stokoe, 2021) in a container which was experienced as having no meaning (Ogden; 1986; Winnicott, 1971/2005) when some participants found themselves stuck in the paranoid-schizoid position, produced a false meaning such as OD light, the participants themselves found surprising. A need for meaning of the RIDE for the participants linked to perfect good and perfect bad (Stokoe, 2021) with the least amount of complexity. Walling off the true self by the false self in defence of nihilation (Ogden, 1986) transformation was defended against and could not be achieved. It would seem as if OD light as mutated transformation in defence against transformation, motivated by the need to create meaning was experienced, because no other form of meaning or transformation could be experienced by participants stuck in the paranoid-schizoid position. Yet the participants still remained true to their human predisposition to meaning making (Stokoe, 2021).

7.6.1.3   Preservation

It would appear as if some participants may have preserved the fundamental state of mind in defence against transformation and transmogrification. It seems distrusting the container's ability to contain the intolerable feelings, experienced as loss or, attaching any meaning to the container other than defending against it, the intolerable feelings remained unmodified in defence against the true self, manifesting a false self. The false self's need to defend from or against an imminent catastrophe seemed to enable some participants to break the very container that kept the participants safe as some

participants stuck in the paranoid-schizoid position experience fundamentalist anxiety (Stokoe, 2021).

Trauma "provokes and activates the fear of annihilation" (Hopper, 2009, p. 223). During the RIDE it appears as if the participants had to work with societal regression (Dobosz, 2018; Hopper, 2009; Wallach, 2012) and give up long standing beliefs. There is strong evidence that trauma manifested at the RIDE in the basic assumption mentality of massification and aggregation (Hopper, 2009). The description of the fight between the black man and white woman represented the trauma of the race and gender issues of the larger society for the group enacted during the RIDE. The enactment of the trauma, the group watches, which goes nowhere beyond the aggression. Allowed for the group to remain sealed off from one another and what is happening, by remaining neutral, such as the pseudo consultant described the need. The intrusion of trauma in the group also leads to the myth of individuality manifested in an ideology of hyper individualism (Hopper, 2009).

The findings highlight that in a traumatised group working in the basic assumption mentality of massification and aggregation it would do almost anything to maintain group identity, even at the expense of loss of individuality. An individual would then have found it particularly challenging to develop separateness of the self, while being connected with the object, in the transitional space of the RIDE. The findings of the aggression between the black man and white woman provide an example of the challenge. In the manifestation of hyper individualism, it could be that those internal objects were transmogrified in the process, consistent with the work of Bowker (2020) who puts forward the idea of sympathetic subsumption. The ambivalent identifications with and tenuous idealisation of past and present victims and victimisers at Group Relations Conferences (Bowker, 2020).

Sympathetic subsumption involves suffering together manifested in the victim's victimisation being subsumed by the victimiser in the latter's internal drama in which the roles of victim and victimiser are reversed. The findings of the aggression between the black man and white woman, the black man shouting and the white woman aggressively remaining silent evidenced in her comment that she would remain silent the whole session as others shouted at her may have been an example of sympathetic

subsumption according to Bowker (2020). A process of internal transmogrification evident in groups similar to the RIDE that experience deep regressive moments and disintegrative moments evoked by extreme anxiety. In the scenario the black man felt the victim evidenced in his comment to a participant about why he (black man) was shouting at her, that it was her "the white woman" that was victimising him. The white woman felt victimised in the shouting at her. At a later stage the white woman seemed to be proud of her silence stating to the group that she remained silent which they did not notice as they shouted at her. According to Bowker (2020) the behaviour on the part of the white woman then becomes a psychic revolution in which the victim (herself) becomes the victor and the victimizer by withholding in silence. The apparent victimizer (black man) then becomes the victim as the white woman victimised the black man in her silence. In that way the white woman becomes capable of sympathising with her own victimising objects, objects which contain some or all the humiliation and agony formally contained by internal victim objects (see Bowker, 2020). A "mutative transmogrification" individuals and groups make use of to facilitate attacks on others to avoid confrontation as the group watches on (Hopper, 2009), to avoid real anxieties and terrors in the group consistent with the work of Bowker (2020).

These findings are an example of a mutative transmogrification whereby the false self's need to remain stuck in the paranoid-schizoid position in defence against transformation and preservation of the self is experienced by only experiencing the disruption and chaos in the container. No other meaning is attached thereby justifying destroying that container in phantasy to contain imminent catastrophe (Bollas, 1987/2018) of the self at all costs as preservation is the gain.

Based on the findings thus far it would be safe to say that no transformation or transmogrification is possible other than a mutated transmogrification if a participant found themselves stuck in the paranoid-schizoid position. Had participants been able to work through the paranoid-schizoid position during the RIDE and achieve the depressive position transformation and/or transmogrification would have been possible.

7.6.1.4   Transformation

For transformation to occur, coming to the RIDE and experiencing the RIDE the participants needed to create a new form of containment (Stokoe, 2021). Creating a capacity for a new creation of the self and of meaning (Nicolò, 2015), with which to experiment. A space in which to be, alone in the presence of the other, in a constant alternation with a state of being with the other (Nicolò, 2015; Winnicott, 1971/2005). Building a relationship of trust and representing what is new. This process of "continuous coming, staying and going, of moving between different levels (reality-phantasy, internal-external, etc) and different vectors (self-other, self-other internal to the self) ensures that transformation can take place" (Nicolò, 2015, p. 33).

The findings highlight that some participants were able to transform at the RIDE working with the false self and the shadow as they moved through the paranoid-schizoid position and achieved the depressive position. Consistent with the literature (Hazell, 2017) that self-transformation does occur at Group Relations Conferences and that deep, long-lasting therapeutic effects do occur, although this is not the explicit aim of these events. It was interesting to find that while working through the depressive position (Klein,1959; Maizels, 1995), the participants planned for a type of transformation based on the amount of risk they were willing to take. A planned-for transformation with clear outcomes. Differentiated from the planned need for preservation which mainly arose from fundamentalist anxiety (Stokoe, 2021) had participants become stuck in a paranoid-schizoid position (Bion, 1961/2004; Klein, 1959; Rustin, 2015).

The findings imply that with a planned transformation participants felt contained (Bion, 1961/2004; Stokoe, 2021, Winnicott, 1971/2005) working in comfort zones and with complacency. In that way the participants rather worked with what was known than not known. It would seem as if these participants moved towards a depressive position in contrast to those participants who experienced preservation and defended against the depressive position by remaining in the paranoid position (Klein, 1959). In the depressive position loss could be tolerated in the presence of death. Adequate splitting was possible (Klein, 1959; Ogden, 1986; Stokoe; 2021) which was not possible for those participants who experienced preservation and false selves to counter the threat of annihilation (Benavides, 2005). The findings are consistent with the work of

Winnicott, (1971/2005) who stated that through a process of progressive disillusionment the true self could be accepted. A process differentiated from manic defence and its fear of loss which involves a regression into a state of being in which subjectivity, historicity, the experience of psychic reality and the capacity for mature symbol formation are severely compromised (Ogden, 1986), as presented in the previous section. However, the extent of the compromise was different for different participants.

Fall back regression (McCallum, 2008; Myburg, 2005) was identified as a form of regression that individuals would fall into to temporarily escape anxiety provoking situations. The findings highlight that the amount of control the participants felt they had over their transformation may have induced fall-back regression for some. This idea is supported by the findings in which a participant said she came to the RIDE cautiously as she was not prepared to be worked with as she was worked with at a previous event. In addition, participants discussed whether they would mourn loss, the answer was "to certain degrees". An interpretation can be made that the participants did not feel the need to change the whole self but only give up part of the self which may have been seen as offensive as in losing a metaphorical limb spoken about. In this way the participants could work with the known and experience containment while transforming to a certain degree with minimal risk.

It seems as if, working with the known and only losing a part of the self, meant that participants worked somewhat with their false self and shadow but defended against the nameless dread connected to the unknown and unthought known (Bollas, 1987/2018; Ettin, 2003). Not yet quite or, unable to work with, absorb or, extrude some of the self, others, and group experiences (Ettin, 2003). Considering the primary task of the RIDE one interpretation could be that for some participants not going deeper than using visible diversity markers in their interactions with others allowed them to remain in their comfort zones. A deeper exploration into diversity dynamics however would have required a shift in thinking and require participants to work with the unknown (Tagore, 2015).

To work with the unknown is an act of faith and essentially a spiritual approach to the self where the act of faith derives from a scientific state of mind not the usual religious

connotations this would have (Aram, 2012). The participants preoccupation with freedom alludes to the defence of working with the unknown consistent with the literature (Fubini et al., 2015) that working with the unknown elicits feelings of freedom. It is then curious to find that in the context of the RIDE "calling" which has both work and spiritual connotations was defended against, seemingly unconsciously defending the unknown?

Working with the unknown implies risk. Being open to work with the unknown known towards transmogrification the participants would have had to be prepared to work on the primary task even if not emotionally grasped. The primary task could then be thought about while yet not adequately conceived. Risking what is beyond the makeup of the self and to master the task, psychic elements would need to be mustered, which cause discomfort and emotional turbulence (Obholzer, 2001). The findings strongly imply that some participants did take the risk to work with the unknown in which an unplanned, uncontained transmogrification was possible, presented next.

7.6.2 Transmogrification

In this section I present the three core concepts of the conceptual model that form the basis of the model. Those are the concept of the truth and reality principle in the present, the panic of transformation and of thought and working at the edge between knowing and unknowing. I relate these concepts to transmogrification.

7.6.2.1   *Working with truth/reality in the present*

The truth is always available and access to truth-in-the-moment depends on a state of awareness and attention (French & Simpson, 2003). Resistance to working with the unknown may be a defensive attempt to avoid a difficult truth (French & Simpson, 2003). Entry into the unknown can either release an individual or group into new areas of creativity or make further work impossible as the finding of preservation alludes to. Knowing before experience (see Figure 7.2), provided an emotional experience of the potential for infinite possibilities (Bion, 1962). Some participants then seemed to be prepared for the capacity to engage with both dimensions of reality, reality of action and the psychic reality of group life (French & Simpson, 2010).

Learning arises from working at the edges of knowing and not knowing (Bion, 1965/2018; French & Simpson, 2003). The dimension of reality the participants had not yet experienced but would experience, consisted of both the known and the unknown. In contrast to knowing (K) Bion defined "O" as both the unknown and unknowable (Bion 1965/2018; French & Simpson, 2003). "O" is immanent as described by Bion, by which he means that "O" is truth or reality in the present. In the context of this research "O" would then be reality in the here-and-now of the participants' experiences at the RIDE, which as the findings imply was defended against.

"O" becomes, it does not fit the domain of knowledge or learning save incidentally, it cannot be known (French & Simpson, 2003). However, "O" as truth in the moment can lead to growth of the mind and can inspire learning even if it remains unknowable and unknown (French & Simpson, 2003). Truth in the moment is developed through an evolving "O" with another evolving "O" (French & Simpson, 2003). This idea is consistent with the findings of a transitional space of becoming (see Figure 7.3) containing the contained and uncontained. How open or closed the participants were to the truth/reality in the here-and-now seemed to inform a multitude of defences against learning by experience.

Working at the edge between knowing and not knowing offers the possibility to exposure to the truth-in-the-moment. While truth-in-the-moment never enters the domain of knowing its influence may be felt at the edge, opening the potential for learning (French & Simpson, 2003). Encountering not-knowing could be a block to further transformation. How risk averse the participants were may have influenced whether they could work at the edge which leads to exposure of another edge. This edge is not reached once and for all but must instead be the object of constant attention and awareness in every present moment (French & Simpson, 2003). In that way the transformational work can begin. It would appear as if the psychotic personality which resides in all individuals played a role in whether the participants would transform or could transform and what that transformation would look like.

7.6.2.2   *Panic of transformation and thought*

Within the theoretical perspective of Systems Psychodynamics, the individual is worked with as a member of a group and what they may represent in the group (Hazell,

2017). From this perspective the participants of this research were seen as a part of the larger system of the RIDE and what they may have carried on behalf of the system. Investigating individual personality types was never part of the research. Nevertheless, elements of the manifestation of psychotic personalities in the group through minute splitting (Klein, 1959; McRae & Short, 2010; O'Shaughnessy, 2005) seemed present in the findings. Psychotic personality is all of personality that is concerned with awareness of internal and external reality and the expulsion of those fragments so that they enter or engulf their objects (O'Shaughnessy, 2005).

In the psychotic part of personality (Bion,1965/2018; O'Shaughnessy, 2005) anxiety changes into psychotic panic. The pattern of findings of preservation rather than transformation as an outcome of the RIDE is consistent with the literature about psychotic panic which is anxiety and panic in the face of transformation. The precondition of a psychotic personality is a preponderance of destructive impulses, a hatred of internal and external reality and the dread of imminent annihilation. As the findings emphasised if no safety could be found in the container primitive disaster is felt in which the container needs to be destroyed (Bollas, 1987/2018; O'Shaughnessy, 2005). The nameless dread (Bollas, 1987/2018; Ettin, 2003; O'Shaughnessy, 2005) threatens to suffuse and annihilate the personality. From then on development takes on a divergent course as defences are adopted to avoid the experience of panic (O'Shaughnessy, 2005). As found in both the findings and literature the idea of psychotic panic provides for a compelling explanation of preservation during the RIDE by some participants.

The neurotic personality develops differently from the psychotic personality. Neurosis is not only pathological but also normal-neurotic psychic activity (Schmid-Kitsikis, 2005). Neurotic defence enables avoidance of anxiety and guilt caused by inhibitions connected with sexual desires and aggressive tendencies (Schmid-Kitsikis, 2005). Regression becomes one of the defences to resist the progress of thought into consciousness through a normal path. The findings provide an example of this regression in participants becoming stuck in awareness (see Figure 6.6) and own narcissistic tendencies to know rather than to not-know. Reaching this edge participants searched for some one that knows such as the consultants they perceived as all-knowing in defence against the participants knowing. Filling the edge in this way

does not allow for working with the unknown and further development. Rather it enabled a safe space of knowing and defence against learning. The defence against learning further defended against by using safety as a weapon in defence against learning in the context of this research.

As inferred from the findings reaching the edge is filled with well-worn defensive routines consistent with the work of French and Simpson (2003). Contact with reality is never lost despite some narcissistic injury (Ettin, 2003; Schafer, 2003). The edge is not a comfortable place to be. However, the findings highlight that some participants' ability to strive to find a new edge despite the panic of transformation and thought, enabled them to transform and transmogrify (see Figure 6.6).

7.6.2.3   *Working at the edge of knowing and not knowing*
Working with the unknown can be terrifying and confusing and not something all would risk as the pressures to know are almost irresistible (Bion, 1962; French & Simpson, 2003). As inferred by the finding's transmogrification is a process of becoming it is not something that is, or even the only true outcome of the RIDE for the participants. What differentiates it from transformation is that transformation is a state of attaining the edge to some extent, finding the known and remaining with the known without risking further development. Risking further development however could inspire a sense of incompetence and loss of control which can obliterate all sense of role and identity and of the task at hand (Bion, 1962; French & Simpson, 2003).

Whether participants transformed or transmogrified was seemingly influenced by the number of risks they were willing to take in working on the edge of knowing and not knowing. The findings support the idea that initially the mindless confusion present during the RIDE precluded an examination of the facts or reality to those deep emotions. Particularly when emotions were associated with racism and racial hatred (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2012; Mack, 2006) in a group filled with fear of being engulfed by unknown forces. While some participants gave no meaning to their experience others did in a continuous transitional process of development which resulted in transformation for some and transmogrification for others (Chapter 6).

Transmogrification is unplanned for. It is an outcome of the infant-mother unit, the transitional space (Winnicott, 1971/2005), which in the context of the RIDE was the outcome of the RIDE container and the participants as a unit. In addition to authority a participant takes up for their own learning experience and the risks they are willing to take to tolerate feelings of being uncontained in a contained space without destroying the container. For the participants who experienced transmogrification it seemed as if they remained in the moment, on the edge of the unknown, rather than retreating (French & Simpson, 2003). It would appear as if remaining on the edge of uncertainty and trusting the container and its containment allowed for transmogrification as an outcome of the RIDE.

It would be a fallacy to state that transmogrification was the only true outcome of the RIDE. There are many truths at work simultaneously (French & Simpson, 2003) and not all participants would share the same truth/reality. Truth for some could be a transformation of preservation no matter how defended, as the meaning of transformation will have different meanings for different participants. Similar to the participants attaching different meanings to what destiny and calling meant for themselves. Meaning which transcended the English language definition of those words.

In conclusion, to transmogrify or not to transmogrify was based on the meaning the participants attached to transformation at the RIDE. Outcomes of which would be different for different participants. A pattern of findings consistent with the literature that people derive their own meaning when learning by experience (Beck & Visholm, 2014; Miller, 1990; Schwartz, 2012). Manifesting in a multitude of defences in defence against learning by experience influenced by how participants work with the always present truth/reality in the present.

I now turn to placing all the concepts constructed and developed to this point together by presenting them in a conceptual model which depicts my understanding of transmogrification at the RIDE.

7.6.3 A conceptual model of transmogrification

An in-depth exploration of transmogrification within the meta-theoretical paradigm of critical realism, the hermeneutic phenomenological perspective and the theoretical perspective of systems psychodynamics has resulted in the construction of an understanding of transmogrification at the RIDE which I depict in a conceptual model at the end of this section.

The transmogrification model is a system thinking approach (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004; Senge, 1990) to understanding the RIDE system. A holistic approach to analysis as described in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 which enables me to present the different elements of the RIDE system in the sections to follow before presenting the RIDE system as a whole. Through this model I present my understanding of transmogrification as constructed by the data and guided by my conceptual framework.

I find it apt to end the stories of the participants with a model of transmogrification which has much in common with the American author Ernest Hemmingway's iceberg theory or theory of omission as a writing technique in which the deeper meaning of the story lies below the surface and implicitly shines through above the surface (American Psychological Association, 2020; Private Security Professionals of America, 2021).

7.6.3.1   Below the hidden story

The deeper meaning of the participants stories (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Hollway & Jefferson, 2008) about their experiences of the RIDE lies just beneath the surface. The stories provide evidence for the process of transmogrification as a non-static/non-linear process of continually meeting and working at the edge of knowing and unknowing. It is an experience of constant movement. A movement the participants said could go anyway, be both positive or negative or nothing could end up happening. The comment about nothing happening is evidence for the defence against transformation and transmogrification as the findings suggest that participants "transformed" whether they wanted to or not. This process entailed preservation and/or transformation in a transitional space of learning (Nicolò, 2015; Winnicott, 1971/2005), between an evolving "O" and another evolving "O", reality in-the-present (Bion, 1967/2018; 2005/2018; French & Simpson, 2003) as seen in Figure 7.4.

Figure 7.4

Working at the edge of knowing and not knowing

Note. Own work

Working at the edge of knowing and not knowing with an ever evolving "O" was a process which appeared to be at another level of below the surface dynamics of learning by experience. A process which implicitly manifested in how the participants engaged with the transitional space and explicitly manifested above the surface dynamics of preservation, transformation and/or transmogrification at the RIDE.

A multitude of defences against learning by experience was informed by how much awareness and attention the participants paid to truth/reality in the here-and-now (see Figure 7.4). As the group moved from a solid state in a group, to fragmentation to integration consistent with the work of Sapochnik (2020) and Nicolò (2015) who state that moving between different levels of reality and phantasy and different vectors of self and others, ensures that transformation takes place.

The unconscious dynamic of pre-conception (Bion, 1962) as discussed in section 7.3 enabled the participants to connect somewhat to their reality in-the-present through the use of the metaphor of the mirror and their pre-occupation with reality and what was real. How the participants worked with truth/reality in the present depended on the participants' state of awareness and attention to truth-in-the-moment as reported on in

the scholarly literature (Abrahams, 2019; French & Simpson, 2010). As the findings suggest, what truth was, was different for different participants, consistent with the work of French and Simpson (2003). Truth being different for different participants further compounded the participants ability to work with the truth-in-the-moment. These differences created experiences of feeling contained or uncontained as participants worked with a difficult truth which may have been known or unknown to themselves.

The participants' preoccupation with freedom is evidence of participants working with the unknown (Fubini et al., 2015) albeit defending against the unknown and unknown thought (Bollas, 1987/2018; Ettin, 2003). As the findings suggest working with the unknown meant that participants needed to take risks (Obholzer, 2001). How contained or uncontained the participants felt which was linked to safety concerns about the container's ability to contain the participants' experiences (see section 7.4) seems to have held the unknown thought (Bollas, 1987/2018; Ettin, 2003; Sher, 2012).

7.6.3.2   *The hidden story of the transitional space*
In defence against knowing it seems as if there was a wish for the container, in which there was no trust, to break, so some might escape from it. For others in defence against knowing there was trust in the container, experiencing adulation and narcissistic omnipotence of the self (Correa et al., 1981; de Goldstein, 2015), no escape from the container or risk taking was necessary (see Figure 7.5). Yet for others the risk was taken to work uncontained in a container, trusting the container to hold the participants' experiences for them to choose whether they would transform and/or transmogrify.

Figure 7.5

The transitional space
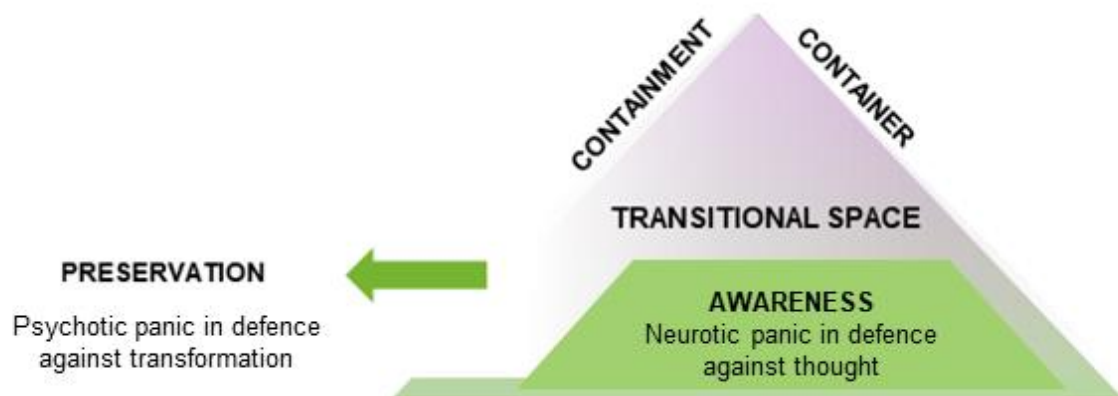
Note. Own work

The fear of the unknown provokes anxiety (Steyn & Cilliers, 2016). Anxiety in turn causes psychic pain (Bion,1965/2018; O'Shaughnessy, 2005) over fear of annihilation and fear of loss. How participants worked or defended against the risk of annihilation and/or loss is depicted in Figure 7.5.

a   Psychotic panic: breaking free from the container

In the transitional space of becoming psychotic panic breaks free of the container to preserve the self in defence against transformation (Bion,1965/2018; O'Shaughnessy, 2005). This finding is resonant with the work of Hopper (2009) in which he states that trauma activates the fear of annihilation. The findings suggest that participants had to work with traumatic events of the past which were imported and enacted during the RIDE, and this resulted in different forms of regression (section 7.4). The impact of societal regression on the participants of the RIDE seems to be a new concept in the literature of Group Relations Conferences. Too much trauma seems to have resulted in the development of false selves (Bollas, 1987/2018; Kiel, 2017; Winnicott, 1971/2005) as participants hid behind hellish masks in addition to a false group self, of a gelled group (section 7.5) in which play was not possible (Winnicott, 1971/2005).

Participants who had no trust in the container and could find no meaning in the container as they defended the fundamental state of mind (Stokoe, 2021) defended

against transformation and transmogrification and survival became about preservation at all costs in a psychotic panic in defence against transformation. This dynamic is compatible with the scholarly literature about transformation (Armstrong, 2007; De Gooijer, 2019; Erlich-Ginor, 2006; Fraher, 2004a; Miller, 1990; Sher, 2012; Stokoe, 2010) at Group Relations Conferences. Further, this finding is echoed in the literature about casualties of Group Relations Conferences which may not only be about individual disturbances of members as Miller (1990) suggests but about the group using members with the valence (Aram, 2012) for preservation to "break" the container for the sake of group survival.

b   Neurotic panic: safety in free(dom) against thought

The manifestation of neurotic panic (Schmid-Kitsikis, 2005) meant that participants remained in the safety of the container in adulation and narcissistic omnipotence of the self (Correa et al., 1981; de Goldstein, 2015) in defence against thought see Figure 7.5. These participants covertly distrusted the container's ability to contain on their behalf. Participants in neurotic panic may have perversely taken up the role of the consultants with mutative interpretations that the system would fail if they did not contain on behalf of the system. Others may have become trapped in the safety of the container by being preoccupied by the behaviour of others instead of looking at the self. Participants' pre-occupation with awareness at the expense of thought (section 7.4) emphasises narcissistic tendencies and a preoccupation with self in the safety of the container defending against unthinkable anxieties (de Goldstein, 2015). In addition, vulnerabilities evident in learning by experience are defended against (Correa et al., 1981). Participants then only engage in the emotional experience of love and hate attacking knowledge by not integrating the emotional and cognitive experience (Bion, 1962; Whitehouse-hart, 2012; Brady et al., 2012).

The neurotic panic in defence against thought at the RIDE extends the literature in a similar way as the psychotic panic in defence against transformation about what transformation may look like at Group Relations Conferences. In addition to contributing to the literature about safety (Weinberg, 2016) at Group Relations Conferences with a concept that perhaps too much safety could stifle development at these events. Findings (see section 7.4) suggest participants use safety as a weapon in defence against learning. Staff of Group Relations Conference may be tempted to

collude with participants in this case and provide "safety" in an effort to do everything on behalf of the members as suggested by (Lawrence, 1979). Instead of containing a "bad enough playground" as Weinberg (2016) suggested in which participants could explore their experiences in a relatively safe transitional space.

The hidden story of the RIDE then seemed to contain both the transitional space of becoming for the participants and the evolving "O" as seen in Figure 7.6. It would seem participants capacity to meet at the edge of knowing and not knowing, remain there or defend against the edge (French & Simpson, 2003) were the below the surface dynamics which influenced the risks the participants were prepared to take to transform and/or transmogrify.

Figure 7.6

The hidden story of the RIDE
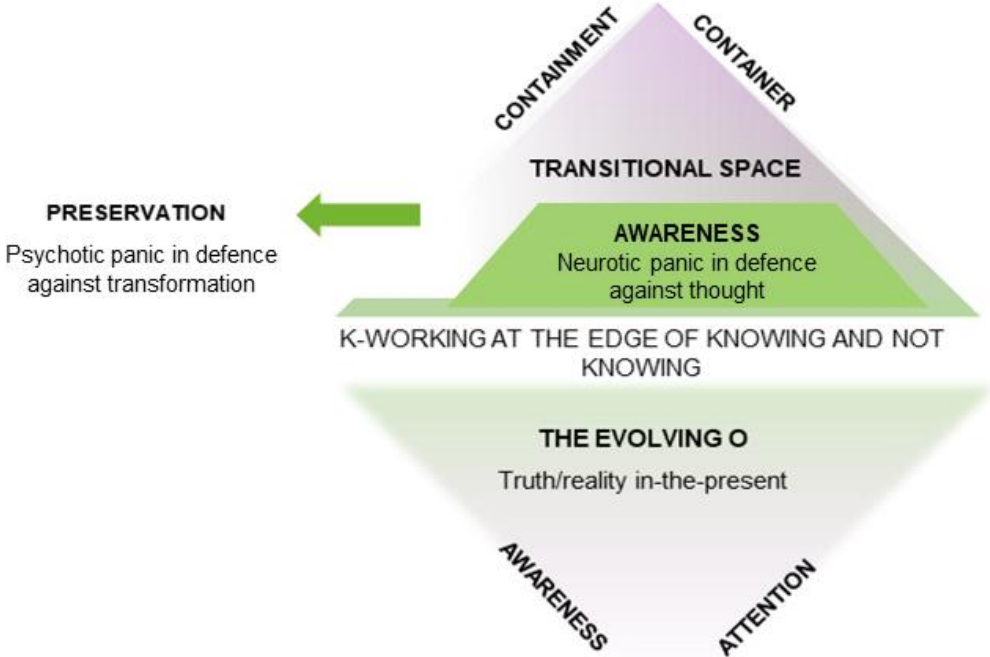
Note. Own work.

As the findings suggest, in both the defence against transformation and the defence against thought participants are risk averse. Reality in the present is denied and no

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work is done at the edge of knowing or not knowing. The system would find itself in the paranoid schizoid-position (Klein, 1948; Rustin, 2015) in which anxiety is stimulated by rigidity of thinking, fear of the unknown and of persecution and phantasies of grandiosity consistent with the work of Steyn and Cilliers (2016). However, this dynamic was not all that there was to the RIDE as some participants took risks and could process their anxiety effectively by integrating their good and bad objects as suggested by Klein (1959). In addition to their emotional and cognitive experiences during the RIDE. Participants were then able to work through the paranoid-schizoid position and achieve a depressive position (Klein, 1959; Ogden, 1986).

In the depressive position participants were able to work with loss at the edge of knowing and not knowing, consistent with the work of French and Simpson (2003). However, the findings suggest that the number of risks participants were willing to take and the consequence of transformation (see section 7.4) in addition to the risks they were willing to take with working with own vulnerability (see section 7.5) influenced whether these participants would transform or transmogrify.

7.6.3.3 *The hidden story shining through above the surface*

From the findings it was inferred that participants who were willing to take some risk would have risked loss in development to transform in a planned and contained way. This contributes to the literature about transformation at Group Relations Conferences with a concept of planned for change as part of transformation. A concept which seems new to the literature of group relations conference transformation and what transformation might mean for participants.

a *Transformation at the RIDE*

The findings suggest that participants who were somewhat risk averse would have risked some loss and worked at the edge of knowing and not knowing (French & Simpson, 2003) towards a planned for transformation, see Figure 7.7.

Figure 7.7

Transformation
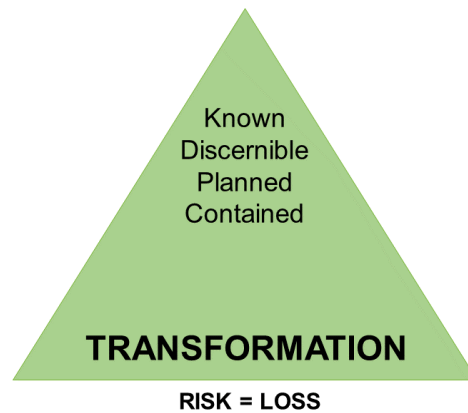
Note. Own work

These participants would have felt contained in the container but not as excessively contained as the participants who may have become stuck in neurotic panic (Schmid-Kitsikis, 2005) in defence against thought (see Figure 7.6). Participants who transformed did not defend against thought and development, they risked some loss in development. However, participants who transformed and risked loss would not have remained at the edge of knowing or not knowing for long. The planned for transformation meant that the focus was more on surface phenomena (Dimitrov, 2008; Naik, 2014) and maintaining the status quo (Finn, 1999) which extends the literature that transformation is possible at this level. It also provides evidence for why above the surface change may give rise to the miniscule change in comparison to large investment in managing change and sustainability when not considering the meaning of thinking and actions of individuals (see Dalle Pezze, 2006; Dimitrov, 2008; Heidegger, 1945/2010; Naik, 2014).

It would however seem as if some participants who were less risk averse were able to consider the meaning of their thinking and actions during the RIDE. These participants seemed to go beyond surface level transformation and transmogrified.

b   *Transmogrification at the RIDE*

Those participants who could work with the unknown and complexity and could tolerate feeling uncontained, in a container they trusted to contain the complexity, would most likely have transmogrified, see Figure 7.8.

Figure 7.8

Transmogrification
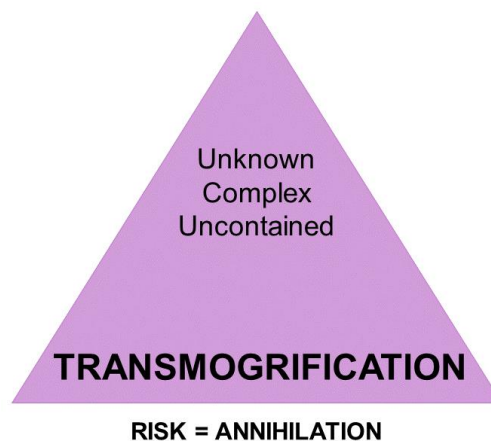
Note. Own work

How these participants worked with the risk of annihilation seemed to be about how aware they would have been of truth/reality in the present (Bion, 1967/2018; 2005/2018; French & Simpson, 2003). How much attention was paid to themselves and others as ever evolving "O's" (Bion, 2005/2018; French & Simpson, 2003; Sapochnik, 2020) while working with complexity and uncertainty. These participants were likely to remain at the edge of knowing and not knowing and meeting that edge time and again while risking annihilation (French & Simpson, 2003). Mimicry in the form of hellish masks may have provided these participants with the tools to work with disillusionment and tolerate loss (see section 7.5) consistent with the work of Kiel (2017).

Counter intuitively it may have been possible that envious attacks on others and the consultants during the RIDE may have enabled these participants to transmogrify as they worked with own helplessness as a precursor to envy (Hopper, 2009). Delaying the "gratification" of destroying others and the self in envious rage (Hopper, 2009).

These participants appeared to be able to oscillate between the fear of falling apart and fear of suffocation as described in Hopper (2009) basic assumption mentality Incohesion: Aggregation/Massification. There is no concrete evidence that a false self (Kiel, 2017; Ogden, 1986) did not emerge at the RIDE for participants who transmogrified. However, it may be that these participants were able to use normally developed defences (Ogden, 1986; Verwey & Knight, 2019) to both disavow an experience while unconsciously preserving the disavowed experience as their own. Evidence for this dynamic appeared in the findings when a participant disavowed responsibility for annihilating the enemy, stating a higher power commanded it, yet also looked around for supporters to kill the enemy and metaphorically wore hellish masks to hide the true self during the RIDE.

How the participants worked with transformation and transmogrification is the above the surface manifestation of the below the surface dynamics (see figure 7.6) of working at the edge of knowing and not knowing (see Figure 7.9) in a transitional space with an ever evolving "O".

Figure 7.9

Above the surface dynamics of the meaning of transformation and transmogrification
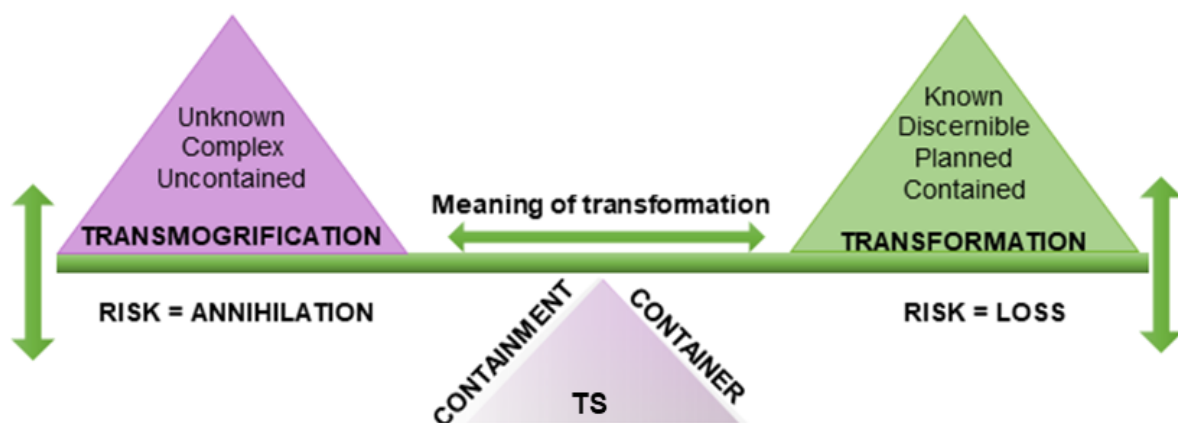
Note. Own work

Whether the participants transformed or transmogrified could be depicted as a scale balancing on the tip of the transitional space which held the below the surface

dynamics of the container and containment which could fall either way to use the words of a participant.

7.6.3.4   A holistic presentation of transmogrification at the RIDE

As indicated previously the whole of a system is more than the sum of its parts (Senge, 1990). Placing the different elements of the RIDE together as discussed thus far Figure 7.10 is the transmogrification model which depicts the RIDE participants wholistic experiences of the RIDE.

Figure 7.10

Transmogrification at the RIDE
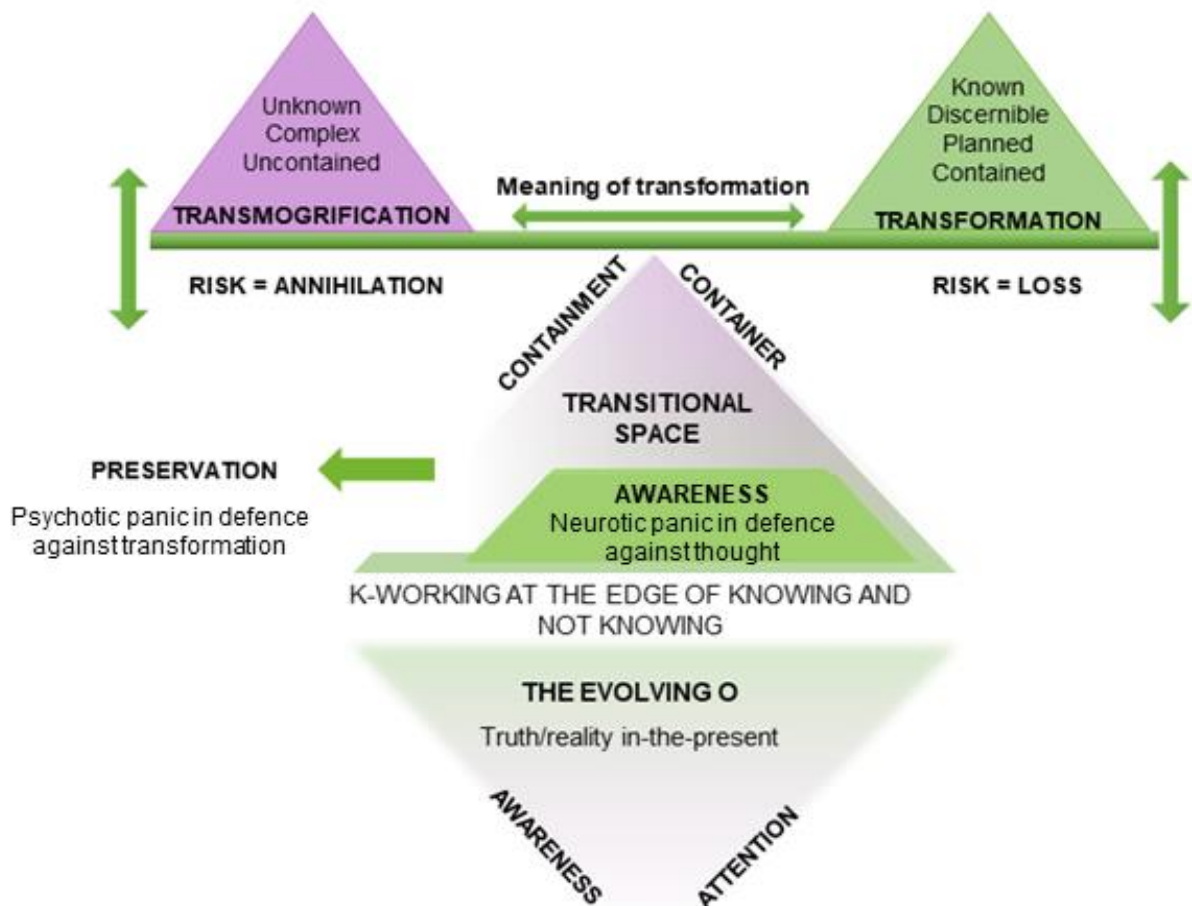
Note. Own work

Bringing together the different below and above the surface parts of the RIDE system the whole becomes more than the sum of its parts (see Figure 7.10). A glimpse is provided into the interconnectedness (Senge, 1990) of the below and above the surface meanings of participants experiences during the RIDE in the stories they shared with me.

Something which could not be seen, as the different parts of the RIDE system were described was that should the scale tilt too much to the left transmogrification comes very close to preservation (see Figure 7.10). It would seem if normally developed defences (Ogden, 1986; Verwey & Knight, 2019) were not enabled but, a false self, walled off to protect the true self as Kiel (2017) and Ogden (1986) described, emerged, preservation instead of transmogrification could be an outcome. Should participants not be able to oscillate between the fear of falling apart and fear of suffocation as described by Hopper (2009) and envy was used to destroy the self and other (Hopper, 2009) preservation could be an outcome of the RIDE experience. Whether a participant transmogrifies, or preserves would be influenced by the amount of risk, if any, the participant was willing to take to remain on the edge of knowing and not knowing, in a transitional space, the participant deems to have no meaning and untrustworthy. The transitional space as a good enough container or bad enough playground would be too traumatic to tolerate and escape would be the only recourse.

7.6.3.5   *Metaphorical space and infinite time*

As indicated previously the participants did not link their experiences to any particular event during the RIDE. It appeared as if the participants melded together their experiences of the different events during the RIDE into the LSG and SSG. Distinguishing between the different events was only possible at times based on what the participants were sharing with me, my experience of attending the RIDE and my experience with group relations conferences. For the participants it seemed as if they made no distinction between the formal and informal systems of the RIDE. A finding which is in line with the work of Short (2007) who states that these are two separate systems at group relations conferences.

According to Short (2007) the formal systems at group relations conferences are the conference and/or conference-like structures. In the context of the RIDE that would be

the design and structure of the RIDE which included the consultants to the event (see section 5.3.2). The informal system is defined as group and paired activities both inside and outside of the boundaries of the temporary institution (Short, 2007). In the context of the RIDE the informal system consisted of both conscious and unconscious processes which had become activated in the formal system. These were the participants experiences before attending the RIDE such as thinking they would be going on a holiday. The creation of own events such as a laughing event as described by the participants during the RIDE and experiences after the event.

It is then difficult to situate the participants experiences of the RIDE as depicted in the transmogrification model in any particular event or events during the RIDE. Basic assumption mentality begins in the informal system and continues in the formal system (Short, 2007). In the context of this research, it would appear as if basic assumptions of both the formal and informal systems of the RIDE continued long after the event into the interview. According to de Felice et.al. (2018) the concept of basic assumption mentality contains a process of collapsing into the emotional experience of any given experience. What this means is that time is infinite and space metaphorically one dimensional. The RIDE participants not being able to distinguish between different events and the difficulty with integrating the cognitive and emotional experience of the RIDE provides evidence for an emotional experience of the RIDE, collapsed into one dimensional space and infinite time.

In conclusion the conceptual model of transmogrification is new to group relations conference learning and extends the literature about learning by experience and transformation at a group relations conference with a new concept, that of transmogrification.

7.7   CONCLUSION

In this chapter I integrated my findings with those reported on in the scholarly literature. I presented what the participants experienced during the RIDE. Why the participants experienced the RIDE as they had and how they experienced the RIDE. My findings showed that the unconscious dynamics experienced at the RIDE were about pre-conception. This enabled the participants to connect to their reality through the mirror and view the anticipated shock but not yet experience that shock. An unintended

consequence was that some participants could then experience mutative interpretations and mutative transformation. What the participants experienced had implications for how they experienced the RIDE in a transitional space of becoming, their unconscious anxiety about learning by experience and the difficulty of integrating an intellectual and emotional experience. Social, individual, and fallback regression seemed to be employed in efforts to tolerate unconscious dynamics and consequences of change. Participants worked with the false self, the shadow, the true self, and paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions and this was the reason the participants experienced the RIDE as they had, namely that they worked with loss and what it meant for themselves. The outcome of the RIDE was different for different participants as they preserved, transformed and/or transmogrified. How transmogrification evolved during the RIDE was presented in a conceptual model of my and the participants understanding of transmogrification at the RIDE. A model developed from the data, integrated with the scholarly work on group relations conferences, and the theoretical lens of Systems Psychodynamics.

In Chapter 8 I present the implications of transmogrification for the participants by coming to interpretive and conceptual conclusions as well as addressing limitations, recommendations, and contributions of this research to theory and practice.

CHAPTER 8: IMPLICATIONS OF TRANSMOGRIFICATION AT THE RIDE

8.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the conclusions, contributions, limitations, and recommendations for further research are presented. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of members of group relations conferences, specifically the RIDE transmogrification and what this means for the individual and the organisation. The general aim of this research is described in Chapter 1.

This research evolved from a personal encounter at a group relations conference which made me wonder what members of such conferences take with them after attending these events. I sought to uncover the transformational and experiential learning experiences of members of these events. The shared foundationalist epistemology of the post-positivistic paradigm of critical realism (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Grix, 2010) enabled me to combine understanding and explanation of the participants' experiences, both above and below the surface (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Stamenova & Hinshelwood, 2018). I chose to explore the participants' experiences of the RIDE within the perspective of Hermeneutic Phenomenology (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kafle, 2013), as the qualitative approach to research allowed me to describe the participants' experiences through the art of interpretation and to uncover symbolic meanings of communication. The theoretical perspective of Systems Psychodynamics (Aram, 2010; Cilliers & Henning, 2014; Petriglieri, 2020) allowed me to explore the participants' experiences as individuals active in a system. The disciplinary perspective of Industrial and Organisational Psychology (May, 2010, Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010) shed light on participants' experiences in their work context, and how systems such as organisations influence the behaviour of individuals and groups.

In the next section I present the interpretive and conceptual conclusions I reached based on the findings, the former being the empirical aims and the latter the literature aims as described in Chapter 1. This is followed by conclusions about the trustworthiness of the research.

8.2   INTERPRETIVE CONCLUSIONS

Five empirical aims were considered in researching members' transmogrification at the RIDE. The following are the conclusions.

8.2.1 Specific empirical aim: Explore whether members transmogrify

Based on the findings of Chapter 6 and the literature review of Chapter 2 and Chapter 5, I defined transmogrification as "a form of abrupt change, a transformation to a higher element or thing and a change for something new or different yet maintaining an original form". Exploring participants' transmogrification of the RIDE was reported in the findings of Chapters 3, 4 and 6 and integrated with the literature in Chapter 7, culminating in the transmogrification model (see Figure 7.4).

What I discovered was that some participants, but not all, transmogrify. Transmogrification was a difficult and often painful experience which required participants to work with complexity and the unknown. Often working uncontained in which both the risk of loss and annihilation was probable (de Felice et al., 2018; Hopper, 2009). What meaning transformation held for the participants was dependent on how the participants worked with or defended against an ever- evolving "O" or reality in-the-present (Bion, 1967/2018; Bion, 2005/2018; French & Simpson, 2003).

Transmogrification was a process through the RIDE system as indicated in Chapter 6 and visualized in Figure 6.6. The Transmogrification model in Figure 7.4 indicates four key findings of transmogrification at the RIDE.

(1)   The path to transmogrification is not linear. It contains elements of preservation and transformation. It is an experience in which, to be equal to and do justice to the fullness and complexity of learning by experience, the fear of loss, fear of annihilation and experiencing loss, allows for venturing beyond the limits of the known into the unknown with the reassurance that boundaries are safe (Sapochnik, 2020), and the RIDE could be survived. An experience where achieving some form of integration is only lost again, as Sapochnik (2020) describes while working with an evolving "O" (Bion, 2005/2018), is at the edge of knowing and not knowing (French & Simpson, 2003).

(2) For some individuals, transformation is not possible. Survival is about escaping the container, breaking free from containment to avoid internalising the idea of the mind capable of thinking (Bion, 1962; Rustin, 2015); leaning towards preservation in defence against transformation (Bion, 1965/2018; O'Shaughnessy, 2005) and defence against thought (Schmid-Kitsikis, 2005).

(3) For others there is safety in the container and containment, a free(dom) from thought and anxiety (Stokoe, 2021), of the risk of loss and/or narcissistic injury (Ettin, 2003; Schafer, 2003). Boundaries of the container are not tested or broken. Yet transformation and its related risk of loss is a defence against thought; a state of mind in which participants find themselves swimming in awareness (O'Shaughnessy, 2005; Schmid-Kitsikis, 2005) without any understanding or integration of what they are aware of. An individual feels safe and contained in a narcissistic awareness and omnipotence of the self (Correa et al., 1981; de Goldstein, 2015).

(4) Literature suggests (Armstrong, 2007; De Gooijer, 2019; Sher, 2012) that transformation is possible for some individuals. Participants work at the edge of knowing and not knowing in an ever-evolving "O" as safely as they can. They work with what is known, not necessarily risking the unknown but rather being contained and planning transformation while risking some loss that might be tolerable. They work from a paranoid-schizoid position (Bion, 1961/2004; Klein, 1959; Rustin, 2015) towards a depressive position, integrating awareness and understanding. While transformation is possible, participants would only partly work with the false-self and the shadow and defend against working deeper with the trauma of the unknown and unknown thought (Bollas, 1987/2018; Ettin, 2003).

What differentiated the elements of the transmogrification process from one another was that:

- Preservation would mean that participants felt unsafe in the container and containment and needed to break free from the container for survival;
- Awareness would mean that participants felt safe in the container and containment and used the container and containment in defence against anxiety and transformation, a finding which leaves some pause for thought about group

relations conferences somehow perversely contributing to and colluding with the system and individuals' need not to transform in defence against thought;

- Transformation would mean that participants worked within the container and containment, planning their transformation safely based on planned outcomes; and

- Transmogrification would mean that participants would not break the container or escape containment. Working with complexity and the unknown would be risked, even if it meant annihilation (Hopper, 2009) in the safety of the container while experiencing being uncontained. In effect those who transmogrify would trust the container and containment, to create a capacity for a new creation of the self and of meaning within which to experiment in a good enough container (Winnicott, 1971/2005). These may be the participants who have worked with the container successfully towards transmogrification, resisting the group's desire to maintain the status quo (Finn, 1999; Petriglieri, 2020).

As a consequence of this research an additional finding which was not an aim of this research emerged. This secondary finding about transmogrification at the RIDE is its extension to literature and practice about the so-called casualties (Aram, 2012; Sapochnik, 2017) of group relations conferences, which resulted in a paradox about transmogrification. As seen in the transmogrification model Figure 7.4, if the scale is tipped to the left, depending on how participants work with the risks of loss and annihilation, it could be that they would rather preserve than transform or transmogrify. If participants preserve, they will most likely break out of the container as a form of survival.

As the findings of this research suggest, preservation would then not only be about individual disturbances alone, as Miller (1990) suggested. It could also be about the group's need to break containment using these individuals' valences (Aram, 2012) for preservation against learning by experience towards survival. It is unlikely that participants who remain in awareness in defence against thought, and those who transform and do not risk annihilation, would become casualties of group relations conferences according to the model.

In essence, participants who work with the process of transmogrification would fully engage with the experiential learning experience. These participants would, resist the group's desire to maintain the status quo, in order to preserve and act out its own defences, and the group's desire to defend against learning by experience. For those participants who excessively defend against transmogrification, boundaries would be seen as unsafe, and the RIDE could not be survived. Escape may be the only option.

8.2.2 Specific empirical aim: Explore members' learning processes

This empirical aim was reported on in the findings of Chapter 6 and integrated with the literature in Chapter 7.

What I discovered was that learning by experience was at first vehemently resisted on an individual and group level. It appeared that the individuals' and group's primary pre-occupation was to defend against learning by experience and its consequences for the individual and the group.

Learning experiences were about knowledge before experience, extending the literature about learning processes at group relations conferences. The participants' pre-conceptions or their potential awareness of infinite possibilities emerged, as Bion (1963/2018) suggested. This learning process meant that participants knew before knowing, even though only a limited amount of data was allowed to enter consciousness. The knowing before knowing and experiencing, added to the complexity of the learning process, as pre-conception seemed to give rise to mutative interpretations, which in turn gave rise to mutative transformation (Henderson, 2018; Rustin, 2015) in defence against learning by experience.

Mutative interpretations which resulted in mutated transformation seemed to be a defence against what the participants knew at an emotional level but were not yet able to think consciously about or test out on others (Newton & Goodman 2009). Bollas (1987/2018) describes the process as the unthought known which resides in all as assumed knowledge. As this research suggests, the participants were not ready at first to go any deeper than using the assumed knowledge of others through known visible diversity markers in their interactions with one another. The emergence of the false self may have enabled the participants to further defend against the unknown thought,

in initially not acknowledging publicly (Sher, 2012) what the group may have been thinking.

The distinction between knowledge to be consumed and knowledge to be possessed added a complex dynamic to participants' learning processes during the RIDE. This provides supporting evidence for Bion (1961/2004) that defence from learning is not simply a negative attitude of individuals, but rather a longing for knowing without training or development.

8.2.3 Specific empirical aim: Describe members' experiences during and after attending the RIDE

This empirical aim was reported on in the findings of Chapter 3,4, 6 and integrated with the literature in Chapter 7. A visual representation of participants' experiences was provided in Chapter 6, Figure 6.6 and the transmogrification model in Chapter 7, Figure 7.4.

As indicated in Chapter 6 the participants' experience of the RIDE was a five-day revolution of a tale of the vampires, "excuse me but your teeth are in my neck". Initially and aptly based on the context of the RIDE, it appeared as if the RIDE was experienced as a revolution, similarly to the sociological connotations of the word (Dictionary.com, 2021c). However, a deeper analysis revealed that participants were describing a movement of experience through the RIDE in which vampires feasted. Yet even more ominously, the threat of finding other teeth in a participant's neck seemed to be reacted to with both fear and affront. The split into good and bad parts (Klein, 1959), the narcissism of being affronted as part of a group (Hume, 2010) that could do such a thing, and the self-preservation (Freud, 1914 as cited by Nossal, 2007; Hume 2010) were manifested during the RIDE.

Conjuring up vampires enabled the participants to play out the two games during the RIDE, in which the participants could both calculate and negotiate the best possible outcome for themselves (Levin, 2002) while preventing others from taking the cake. According to the findings this was about the participants' need to possess knowledge (Bion, 1962; Bolingbroke, 2017; Schneider, 2005) not consume it, and to give into the emotional expressions of the basic assumption mentality (Bion, 1961/2004; Hume,

2010) of the group. In this way the participants were able to express the anxiety in the system, which threatened both individual and group survival (Green & Molenkamp, 2005). The vampires acted out what the participants could not, that being integration of the good and bad objects of themselves. The vampire allowed the participants to play the games and at the same time maintain the good object, as no responsibility had then to be taken. Yet participants could not remain in the fantasy for long even though they tried to keep their hellish masks on to hide the true self (Ogden, 1986). The hellish masks also played a role in preventing others from daring to peek under those masks. Yet participants could not escape reality as the mirror was just behind the mask (Jung, 1959/1990) and reflected that which was reflected into it. The participants could not escape what was seen, and what was seen was illuminated.

In defence against seeing, participants seemed to prefer not knowing (Bion, 1965/2018; French & Simpson, 2003) and not understanding which gave them a type of free(dom) not to look much deep(er) at the self and others, a defence against seeing the trauma (Dobosz, 2018; Hopper, 2009; Wallach, 2012) in the self and in the group. Preferring to be free from working with what was seen, in not knowing, is a form of survival (Schneider, 2005). Favourite convictions were not easily released, as letting go held far-reaching consequences outside the boundaries of the RIDE, which would require the participants to work with loss (Ribas, 2015; Winnicott, 1971/2005) and a possible gain, which may not always have been seen as favourable. The pressure cooker of the new dawn filled with unleashed vampires stewing in their own juices, suggested a hellish experience of preservation, transformation and/or transmogrification during the RIDE.

The outcome of the RIDE was such that the participants could not name it. It held far-reaching consequences for the participants, which meant that to avoid any transformation they became stuck in a pattern of regression and defences (see Figure 6.6) where nothing new or old could be birthed. Some participants tried to keep it light to "transform" as an outcome to have some form of meaning (Stokoe, 2021) for the experience. Keeping it light may have been the only way participants stuck in the paranoid-schizoid position (Klein, 1959; Nicolò, 2015; Ogden, 1986) could create meaning, as meaning was attached to perfect good and perfect bad (Stokoe, 2021). As the depressive position (Klein, 1959; Ogden, 1986) was not reached, the

participants in the paranoid-schizoid position were unable to face the reality of what was seen, both in the self and outside the self (Stokoe, 2021). OD light was the only option to have any kind of meaning for the RIDE. Those who could work with reality but not too much complexity in the depressive position took the middle ground and transformed with the least amount of loss, or only that loss which could be tolerated, feeling contained, secure in planned outcomes. Those participants in the depressive position who could face reality and work with complexity risked transmogrification with its elements of annihilation, transmogrified uncontained in a contained space with unplanned changes, risking not knowing.

These experiences seemed to influence participants after the RIDE, not only in the consequences of transformation/transmogrification for themselves but also in the basic assumptions they held of their organisations. For example, they could not transfer their learning because the organisation was not ready for that kind of learning. It would seem as if the rationalisation may have been based on learnt defences during the RIDE and the threat to survival (Schneider, 2005). During the RIDE, the temporary organisation (Aram, 2010; Armstrong, 2007; Wallach, 2010) provided the relative safety (Wallach, 2014; Struwig & Cilliers, 2012) to explore these experiences without serious consequences of possible exclusion, based on the experienced dynamics of threats had participants not conformed to the status quo during the RIDE. However, the fear of exclusion and threat to survival that the participants assumed or knew of their organisations, had they tested the status quo in the organisation, seemed to leave them hesitant to transfer the learning obtained during the RIDE to their organisations.

Integration of the participants' experience of the RIDE with the literature of Chapter 7 revealed that participants experienced the RIDE as a fight for survival (Schneider, 2005) to maintain the status quo (Bion, 1961/2004; Sher, 2003) initially in a nonlinear process of preservation, transformation and/or transmogrification. The participants were defensive of a RIDE during which participants fought over knowledge as a possession in defence of knowledge as a process which would lead to development (Bion, 1961/2004; French & Simpson, 2010). The mutative interpretations and mutative transformations which were initially created allowed the participants to disown their aggression and victimhood (Carlyle, 2010; McRae & Short, 2010) and defend against working on the primary task.

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The RIDE was experienced as a defence against learning by experience (Bahat, 2019; Bion, 1961/2004; Rustin, 2015) where participants defended against integrating their intellectual and emotional experience of the RIDE. How the participants worked with these defences was influenced by the participants' tolerance and consequence of change is suggested in this research. The RIDE was experienced by the participants as such, as they moved to and fro nonlinearly between the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. Some participants protected the self with false selves and worked or defended from the shadow in psychotic panic in defence against transformation and/or neurotic panic in defence against thought.

8.2.4 Specific empirical aim: Explore the impact of the RIDE on the individual and the organisation

This empirical aim was reported in the findings of Chapter 6 and integrated with the literature in Chapter 7.

What I discovered was that the RIDE had long-lasting effects for the participants, as it was remembered clearly many years after attending the data collection process. In addition, participants described reflecting on what they had learnt from the experience of the RIDE.

Being an experiential learning event, the impact of the RIDE on the participants was different for different participants, which supports the literature that the learning outcomes of experiential learning are not the same for all (McCallum, 2008; Schwartz, 2012) and everyone is responsible for their own learning (Miller, 1989).

This research may have only touched on the surface of the RIDE's complexity and impact on the RIDE participants, an impact which the participants may or may not have known. Participants spoke about taking no learning from the RIDE, yet the findings suggest that participants may have learned something and may have transformed, even if this was not their intention in the first place. It also seems that transformation and/or transmogrification were surprising for some participants. This means that the RIDE was a transformational experience whether participants wanted it or not, whether they defended against this transformation or not.

These findings support the literature that making meaning of experiences in group relations conferences is difficult for members (Wallach, 2010) and that members may be defensive subjects and not always tell their stories truthfully (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008), although saying this is not to judge the members of Group Relations Conferences and the participants of this research.

The impact of the RIDE on the organisation will be discussed as part of the limitations of this research. The participants shared that they could not transfer their learning to their organisations, but this may have been about the participants' own learned defences during the RIDE and basic assumptions of their organisations. From the findings and literature review I discovered that what participants learned at the RIDE, whether they preserved, transformed, or transmogrified, may have been projected onto and into their organisations afterwards as they related their experiences of the RIDE to those organisations.

Depending on their own level of risk aversion to challenging the status quo of the group during the RIDE, and how this was defended from, may have been related to basic assumptions of participants' organisations. The perceived risk to challenge the organisation could impact on their own survival in the organisation should the status quo be challenged. These assumptions could lead participants to be hesitant to transfer their learning to the organisation based on their own defences (Bion, 1961/2004; de Felice et al., 2018). This finding adds to the complexity, in that inappropriate learning may be transferred to the organisation, as Wallach (2014) cautioned. However, it adds another dimension in that it may not only be about inappropriate learning but about defences that influence the value of group relations conferences as an intervention tool.

8.2.5 Specific empirical aim: Explore the value of group relations conferences as an intervention tool

A group is defined by Bion (1961/2004) as consisting of three or more people, because it becomes an interpersonal relationship manifesting group dynamics. Group relations conferences study group dynamics, which are applicable to any group irrespective of its size and configuration (Garland, 2010; Lawrence, 1979).

Group relations conferences study these dynamics in the relative safety of the conference. In my view (based on the findings), the paradigm is not obsolete and group relations conferences are of value as an intervention tool. However, there may be room for improvement as will be recommended in a subsequent section of this chapter. The question whether theory and method about systems are interpreted as more personal than systemic by Dimitrov (2008) and Kets de Vries and Cheak (2014) may be answered in the defences around learning by experience and what this means to different participants.

The findings provide supporting evidence that learning is interpreted as being more personal than systemic. Whether from defended positions or projecting their own defences learned at the RIDE, some participants tried to take their learning back to the organisation whether they felt they would succeed in that endeavour or not. Those who said they experienced no learning reflected on what that meant on a systemic level in previous organisations or what it would mean to take such learning back to their organisations. It may be that systemic learning occurs outside the boundaries of a group relations conference such as the RIDE and may not be as visible as the personal learning during the event. The basic assumption mentality in a group relations conference may be so overwhelming that systemic learning is not possible. The findings show that the IG was not spoken about by any participants, other than those who were consultants, outside the RIDE event, even though the IG had been included into group relations conferences to bridge the gap between personal experiences and the world of work (Lawrence, 1979).

From the findings and the literature review I discovered that the concern about the paradigm becoming obsolete (Waddell, 2015) is unfounded. How the paradigm is used and in which context might be a more valid concern for group relations conferences. The findings support the hypothesis that what participants find at such conferences should be in line with their expectations as far as possible, as Joseph et al. (1975) and Papadopoulos (2018) suggest. The participants were expecting a holiday when they arrived on Robben Island, even though the island was chosen for its historic symbolism to study diversity dynamics (Cilliers & May, 2012). The expectation of a holiday may have included an additional dynamic such as a breach of a psychological contract,

which may or may not have negatively impacted experiential learning and transmogrification during the RIDE.

8.3 CONCEPTUAL CONCLUSIONS

Three aims in the literature were considered in researching members' transmogrification at the RIDE. The following conclusions have been reached.

8.3.1 Specific literature aim: Conceptualising Systems Psychodynamics

This aim of the literature review, related to the specific body of accumulated literature about Systems Psychodynamics, was achieved in Chapter 2.

Beginning with the seminal works (Bion, 1961/2004,1963/2018, 1965/2018; Freud, 1922/1949) and later works of contemporary theorists (Armstrong, 2010; Garland, 2010; Long 2011; Sapochnik, 2022; Waddell, 2015) a shift was evident in ideas and methods about how to study groups. Which saw a movement from the study of groups to the study of group relations. Systems Psychodynamics seemed to evolve from 1967 as a collective psychological behaviour within and between groups and organisations and coined as a term in a scholarly publication in 1999 (Fraher, 2004a; Neumann, 1999). In later years Systems Psychodynamics was conceived as a systems theory which understands the universe as a hierarchy of systems (Cilliers & Henning, 2014).

8.3.1.1 Conceptualising Systems theory

The epistemology of Systems theory of Systems Psychodynamics recognises a system as a whole comprised of systems within systems which includes individuals as systems in their own right (Shongwe, 2014). Interrelatedness between systems is of paramount importance to the systems survival (Miller & Rice, 1967). Boundaries within the system provide individuals and groups with a sense of control and safety (Wallach, 2014; Struwig & Cilliers, 2012) to contain anxiety and collaboration between systems in continuous mutual transactions (Miller & Rice, 1967; van Eeden & Cilliers, 2019). Boundaries enable individuals and groups to relate to one another Stapley (2006) and boundary management is a primary activity in all organisations and Group Relations Conferences (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012).

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Boundaries could be seen as the container which holds the task (Green & Molenkamp, 2005). Boundaries contain conscious physical boundaries and unconscious psychological boundaries of time, authority, task, role, and identity, together with the management of those (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). Boundary management happens between people and in the minds of people (Struwig & Cilliers, 2012). There are five key differentiating constructs that define boundaries in the minds of individuals and organisations according to Struwig and Cilliers (2012). They are boundaries, authority, role, task, and identity.

Authority is about the right to do the work (Green & Molenkamp, 2005) contained within the assigned role. Roles shift over time and can comprise formal and informal roles (Green & Molenkamp, 2005; Hirschhorn, 2017) individuals may take up. Task is the end toward work is directed (Hayden & Molenkamp, 2002; Mathur, 2020). The primary task is essentially the identity of any organisation according to Stokoe (2020). How influence is used amongst individuals and groups, the processes by which individuals and groups establish their identity and find meaning and expression of the self and become part of the group are constructs in the mind (Kelly & Gangjee, 2019). Individuals' sense of identity provides a form of containment according to Hayden and Molenkamp (2002) though identity is complex according to Wallach (2012). Its nature is fragmented, insecure and shifting (Fournier & Smith, 2006).

Systems thinking as an epistemology of Systems Psychodynamics provides a framework for understanding dynamics in groups but is not all that there is to understand group dynamics. The epistemology of psychoanalytic theory adds to the understanding of group dynamics enabling an exploration into tensions inherent in group life (Armstrong, 2010; Cilliers et al., 2004; Pretorius et al., 2012).

8.3.1.2   Conceptualising Psychoanalytic theory

Psychoanalysis does not operate within a sharp divide between those who are ill and those who are healthy (Beck & Visholm, 2014). Klein (1959) believed that to understand the behaviour of people in their social surroundings it is important to understand how an individual develops from infancy into adulthood.   Within psychoanalytic theory projections, phantasies, and transferences are some unconscious processes formed by repressed conflicts in childhood, which establish

themselves separately from thinking and consciousness; they break through a person's psyche, without further consideration in any situation (Beck & Visholm, 2014). The aim of psychoanalysis is to learn, to investigate and to a greater extent understand one's thoughts and feelings while in action in various situations (Beck & Visholm, 2014). In order to mitigate becoming captive to patterns of thoughts and feelings in similar situations.

Bion (1961/2004) expanded on Freud's theories of group dynamics incorporating the Kleinian theories of projective identification and the interplay between the paranoid-schizoid splitting of the good and bad objects (Klein, 1959) and depressive positions where aggression is managed. Within the theory of object relations (Bartle, 2015; Klein, 1959; Long, 2011), splitting, projection and projective identification are psychoanalytic concepts used to understand unconscious functioning in groups, as well as to describe defence mechanisms individuals use in interpersonal relationships and in groups to alleviate feelings of overwhelming anxiety (Klein, 1959; May, 2010; McCallum, 2008; McRae & Short, 2010). Processes which are studied in psychoanalytic groups where there are several others present not only a "single other" (Garland, 2010).

All individuals are part of groups and group psychology (Armstrong, 2010; Bion, 1961/2004; Hume, 2010). Individuals are at war with themselves and the group according to Bion (1961/2004). In a group, individuals are committed to learn, hate to learn, want to know all and experience pain in development (Bion, 1961/2004). According to Bion (1962), there are three instincts individuals possess in a group, Love, Hate and Knowledge (L+H+K), a process that individuals follow in the attainment of (K)nowledge. These processes fuel increased splitting, projection introjection and introjective identification when individuals find themselves in groups and organisations (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2012).

Group relations theory the third epistemology of Systems Psychodynamics aims at understanding how groups affect individuals for good or ill and vice versa (Garland, 2010). How groups succeed or not in carrying out their task (the reason for individuals joining groups) and how entire groups relate to one another.

8.3.1.3   Conceptualising Group Relations theory

No groups work optimally all the time, yet neither is any group entirely dysfunctional (French & Simpson, 2010). Each kind of group and every individual group will have its own character since each method of creating a group and running a group for a specific purpose will be unique to the interactions between the personalities of the organiser and those of the group members (Garland, 2010). In addition to joining a group to work on a task individuals come together in a group to preserve a group (Bion, 1961/2004). A dynamic which at times is in conflict with rational thought (Geldenhuys et al., 2012). Creating tensions or emotional situations in groups charged with feelings of confusion, frustration, and boredom according to Bion (1961/2004) and are relieved only through outbursts of exasperation between members of the group.

The often-chaotic drives which manifest in groups (Bion, 1961/2004; Freud, 1949/1922, 1955/1925) to contain destruction and destructiveness can be understood with the emergence of basic assumption mentality and work group mentality as theorised by Bion (1961/2004). Basic assumption mentality within a group determines whether and how a group function if at all (Bion, 1961/2004). Creating a push and pull between constructive and destructive forces in groups as individuals in groups work on the task (Hume, 2010). How the group works on the task is then at times obstructed and at other times assisted by the powerful emotional drives in the group. This is the basic assumption mentality of the group (Bion, 1961/2004; Hume, 2010). A group mentality which emerges when the primary preoccupation of the group is about survival (Green & Molenkamp, 2005).

There is no process of development during basic assumption mentality because any stimuli to development will be met with hostility (Bion, 1961/2004). If a group wishes to avoid development it only needs itself to be overwhelmed by a basic assumption mentality (Bion, 1961/2004). Despite the dynamic of basic assumption mentality which allows a group to avoid development, individuals are inherently orientated towards development according to Bion (1961/2004) as they connect with reality and search for truth. This gives rise to the workgroup mentality according to Bion (1961/2004).

There is no work group mentality without some basic assumption group mentality (French & Simpson, 2010). Both basic assumption mentality and workgroup mentality

co-exist in human interaction, but one tends to dominate at any moment according to Bion (1961/2004). The basic assumption mentality of the group and the work group mentality of the group contain unconscious and conscious processes (Bion,1961/2004; French and Simpson, 2010). The work group mentality uses the mentality of the basic assumption process in the service of its work (Bion, 1961/2004; Hopper, 2009).

The basis for the differences of the work group mentality and basic assumptions mentality lies in the group's relationship with reality (French & Simpson, 2010). The work group mentality is based on reality-based group tasks and objectives (Bion, 1961/2004; Lim et al., 2020). The basic assumption group mentality serves to ease the group's anxieties and avoid the pain or emotions further work may bring (Lim et al., 2020). The capacity to engage with both dimensions of reality, reality of action and psychic reality of the group life, is a key defining characteristic of work group mentality (French & Simpson, 2010).

Primitive emotion is dependent on its being contained by a container which would "detoxicate" it (Bion, 1965/2018). The study of group dynamics from the theoretical lens of Systems Psychodynamics happens within the boundaries of the container which holds the primary task (Green & Molenkamp, 2005). The application of Bion's conceptualisation of thinking, container-contained, maternal reverie and the development of thinking through alpha function is applicable to meaning making of group dynamics (Boxer, 2014).

8.3.1.4 Conceptualising the good enough container

Bion believed containment was important to internalise the idea of a mind capable of thinking (Bion, 1962; Rustin, 2015). Containment assumes a mental model within which what-is-going-on can be contained (Bion, 1970; Boxer, 2014) enabling unconscious processes to be given consciousness. The concept of the container-contained however shifted from the focus on the death drive of the Klein and Bion's theories to post Kleinian/Bion theorists such as Winnicott (1971/2005) who saw the concept of the container as a holding environment (Brady et al., 2012; Ribas, 2015) where growth and development is pre-programmed into individuals, holding supports environmental factors that enable K if the environment was facilitating (Ribas, 2015).

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Providing a good enough container according to Winnicott (1971/2005) would aid in the individuals and groups growth and development. A space in which individuals and groups could develop mature tolerance of their experiences in which unconscious phantasies were not killed too quickly so rigid defences did not set in (Davar, 2020). A good enough container in which individuals and groups could get in touch with difficult emotions and feelings (Hinshelwood et al., 2010). In which phantasies, reality and boundaries need free rein (Davar, 2020). The good enough container would create a space in which to explore unsafe experiences (Weinberg, 2016).

If the holding environment is not good enough and disruption emerges to the development of itself, experiences of trauma may emerge (Bollas,1987/2018; Ogden, 1986). A second reactive personality organisation such as the false self may then emerge (Ogden, 1986) providing an exterior behind which the true self is protected to maintain its integrity while adapting to the conscious and unconscious needs of the container. If there is no trust and no meaning could be ascribed to the container and traumatic experiences are too much to tolerate escaping the container may be the only recourse (Hopper, 2009).

8.3.2 Specific literature aim: Conceptualising Group Relations Conferences

This aim was achieved in Chapter 5. The plethora of research found on group relations conferences (Aram et al., 2019; Brunner et al., 2006; Lawrence, 1979) and its unique focus on the group as a system, as a unit of analysis (McCallum, 2008), was discussed. The degree to which the original paradigm of Systems Psychodynamics as a consultancy stance (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010; Mowles, 2017) applied at these events was investigated in Chapter 2, so as to gain insight into the role and impact of unconscious processes of anxiety and defences thereof on organisational, group and personal life (Armstrong & Rustin, 2015; Gould et al., 2001/2006; Straub, 2014).

What is missing is research on members of group relations conferences experiences of these events. Researchers rationalise that these are experiential events (Miller, 1989), individuals learn what they will, measuring is difficult (Miller, 1989), research will disrupt the dynamics of the conference and meaning making is difficult for members (Wallach, 2010). The literature review highlighted that this may be in defence of the community's own basic assumption where members could be treated as possessions

(Lawrence, 1979) and/or staff's own primal anxiety about being judged not good enough (Hills, 2018).

This research supports some of the hypotheses that the experiential nature of learning has different outcomes for different members of group relations conferences. However, exploring the participants of this research experiences provide rich data about individuality at group relations conferences and its impact at these conferences, in addition to how individuals learn from one another in groups that vary. There are differences in group relations learning, as groups which may seem homogeneous are not.

Conducting this research made me realise that researchers familiar with Systems Psychodynamics are well positioned to investigate meaning-making of members' group relations conferences experiences. Understanding of the theory would enable researchers to consider members and themselves as defended subjects (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). This research is consistent with the work of French and Simpson (2003) that truth in the moment is developed through an evolving "O" with another evolving "O", which in this context would be researcher and subject, opening the potential for learning. Making known that which is unknown or defended would enable participants to further reflect and attach meaning to their attendance at these events.

Not knowing members' experiences of group relations conferences blocks transformation of both the members and the organisers of these events, which may be why it has been asked in the literature whether group relations conferences have become obsolete (Straub, 2014; Waddell, 2015). This question has been asked from the late 1970s (Lawrence, 1979; Schafer, 2003) through to most recent times (Gertler & Hayden, 2015; Khaleelee & White, 2014). Most recently there have been questions about group relations conferences focusing more on contemporary issues of society than organisational issues (Gertler, 2019), a shift that may have led to a split between learning from experience for deeper understanding, and vision and swimming in the unconscious for its own sake (Gertler & Hayden, 2015).

Finding participants defending against thought in a neurotic panic, provides evidence for the phenomenon Gertler and Hayden (2015) identify as swimming in the unconscious for its own sake. This research suggests swimming (O'Shaughnessy, 2005; Schmid-Kitsikis, 2005) in the unconscious (Gertler & Hayden, 2015) as a defence against thought (Stokoe, 2021) is a defence against learning from experience for deeper understanding towards individual survival. Finding the participants "swimming" in awareness at the RIDE provides some evidence for conference organisers colluding with some individuals, in defence of learning by experience and deeper understanding, in defence of thought.

In addition, if the expectations of members are not clearly attended to or the boundaries of the conference are blurred between the traditional and non-traditional setting, pursuing a humanistic perspective (Khaleelee & White, 2014) of group relations conferences may be buying into the survival needs of the community itself, reflecting the survival needs of members who attend these events. Collusion with the need of members to defend from deeper understanding in defence of the pain of learning by experience, enables minimal loss in safety of learning and not risking the unknown.

8.3.3 Specific literature aim: Conceptualising Group Relations Conference learning

This aim was achieved in Chapter 5. The literature abounds with accounts that learning does occur at these events (Miller, 1990; Sapochnik, 2020; Wallach, 2019) but how this learning transfers outside of the organisation remains unclear (Hills, 2018; Stokoe, 2010; Wallach, 2010). In addition, Wallach (2014) observes that learning from these events may be more personal than systemic, an observation supported by this research. This is a contradiction, as systems learning is at the heart of group relations conference learning (Silver & Josselson, 2010) while members try to learn by experiencing (Sapochnik, 2015).

The findings of this research support Freud (1925/1955) that learning does not proceed in a linear fashion. Learning at the RIDE was about a tension between knowing and learning (Bion, 1962; Erlich-Ginor, 2006), and experimenting and repeating, where it seemed difficult for the participants to integrate the emotional experience of the RIDE with the cognitive experience. The tension between knowing, which seemed to be

about possessing knowledge, and learning, which seemed to be about processing knowledge, created a learning experience of experimentation and repetition. For those participants who risked learning by experience, experimenting and repeating included learning by regressing, evidenced in how the participants worked with the trauma of societal regression, and with individual and fallback regression to manage their own learning and the dynamics in the system.

Dynamics included the group having a lack of faith in such learning (Bion, 1961/2004), as shown by the participants initially resisting learning by experience during the RIDE. The research further supports Bion's hypothesis that it is not about a negative attitude to learning, but rather about consuming knowledge instead of processing knowledge. Processing knowledge requires making meaning of the experience through connection with what is known, and interaction with the environment, thus gaining a systems perspective and emotional investment as the participants interact with the self, the consultants, and the context. This dynamic is exacerbated by the basic assumptions and work group mentalities the participants found themselves in at any given time.

According to Hume (2010) fear in a group is seen as a group's attempt to make a rational investigation in the dynamics of the group. Stokoe (2010) considered that missing the shadow of development was due to members at these events not often asking themselves what the nature of the work group was. The findings support this hypothesis, in that the fear evidenced during the RIDE could be seen as the group's attempt to make a rational investigation into the dynamics of the group as individuals clashed to conform to group pressure (Hume, 2010).

Even though there is no evidence that the RIDE group consciously asked themselves what the nature of the work group was, the evidence suggests that participants did experience the work group mentality, which is the silent unconscious complement of the basic assumption mentality (French & Simpson, 2010). This is evidenced in the RIDE group's connection with reality, initially with pre-conception, with some participants being able to transform or transmogrify, which signals development, the aim of a work group mentality (Bion, 1961/2004, French & Simpson, 2010).

8.4 CONCLUSIONS ABOUT TRUSTWORTHINESS

As indicated in Chapter 1 it was not my intention to generalise the findings, but rather to elucidate the particular and the specific (Creswell, 2013) of the participants' transmogrification during the RIDE. The trustworthiness of the research in terms of credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is reported on in this section.

Table 8.1

Conclusions about Trustworthiness

Characteristic	Conclusions for the research
Credibility	In answer to the question posed at the beginning of this thesis about whether I got it right or was the wrong account of the findings published (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I relied on a multimethod approach (Knappertsbusch et al., 2021; Mik-meyer, 2020; Reis et al., 2017) of collecting data with face-to-face interviews and a focus group. Giving up some of my power as a researcher by giving the participants a voice and opportunity to create and analyse their own data. This enabled triangulation (Mik-meyer, 2020; Northcutt & McCoy, 2004; Reis et al., 2017) between the different data sources. My in-depth involvement with the research in line with the meta-theoretical paradigm of Critical Realism (Grix, 2010; Owens, 2011; Ron, 2010) adds to the credibility of the findings.
Authenticity	In this research different voices were heard (Creswell & Poth, 2018) those being mine and the participants. The research reflects my position and my ontological and epistemological perspectives as a qualitative researcher who chose a post-positivism framework for this research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Grix, 2010). Working within the meta-theoretical paradigm (Creswell & Poth, 2018) of Critical Realism (Grix, 2010), which bridges the gap between positivism and interpretivism (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Grix, 2010) towards understanding and explaining societal reality. Giving the participants voice and voice to the participants experiences the research reflects my concern with subjectivity, understanding and agency in how people construct their social worlds which involves complexity and elements of uncertainty.

Characteristic	Conclusions for the research
Transferability	I would say transferability (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba 1985; Terre Blanche et al., 2006) is highly probable, as I laid the foundations for transferability in the thick descriptions of the participants experiences throughout this research. This could enable readers to identify with the participants stories in the context of group relations conferences being universal entities (Garland, 2010; Khaleelee & White, 2014; Sapochnik, 2017). The reader would further decide whether the findings, the hypotheses and interpretations are relevant and could be transferred to other settings within their contexts because of shared characteristics (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
Dependability	The attention I gave to the data collection and analysis as described in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 in addition to the limitations of those as described later in this chapter should enable other researchers to replicate the research. A detailed description of the process, I followed in collecting and analysing the data was presented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
Confirmability	To establish confirmability (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the data, a thick description of the forms of data I had collected and the analysis of those were provided. Examples of these were presented in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and in the Appendices supporting the process of data collection and analysis towards dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These include an audit trail (Greckhamer et al., 2014) I have kept which include: o The raw data o Write-ups as I analysed the data in the form of whiteboard note taking. o Audit trail according to Braun and Clarke (2006) 6-step thematic data analysis o Audit trail of the IQA (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). o Further to the audit trail, confirmability will be established by the external examiners of this thesis.

8.5   LIMITATIONS

In this section I reflect on the limitations of the research beginning, with the literature review, followed by the empirical component, and lastly the theoretical model as presented in Chapter 7.

8.5.1 Limitations of the literature review

The literature regarding Systems Psychodynamics, Group Relations Conferences, and experiential learning at such conferences is substantial. However, exploring members' experiences is extremely limited, as the literature mainly focuses on consultants and researchers' views. When studies focusing on members' experiences were found,

these were from diverse viewpoints which did not relate to the context of this research. Attempts to explore the meaning of members experiences were found only recently in the works of Abrahams (2019), Hills (2018) and Short (2019).

Working with this limitation I did not only rely on my own research skills in searching for books, journals, and other types of work. I also employed the help of the librarian of the university I am affiliated to, to run search engines about the topic for me. This enabled me to keep up with the literature through the years as these came up and showed that more research has been done on members' experiences of Group Relations Conferences recently.

The concept of transmogrification in the social sciences literature is extremely limited. It is a concept mainly used in the political sciences. Only one paper was found in which transmogrification as a psychological concept was used, in the work of Bowker (2020). The definition of transmogrification in the English language and the meaning of transmogrification in the political sciences, particularly the work of Finn (1999), had much to do with change concepts in organisations. Systems Psychodynamics as a consultancy stance works with change and resistance to change in organisations (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010; Mowles, 2017). Concepts of change enabled me to apply the concept of transmogrification to this research, albeit a new concept in Industrial and Organisational Psychology.

8.5.2 Limitations of the empirical component

There are at least five limitations to the empirical component of this research. Firstly, the research design I chose meant that I did not check with the participants whether the SID was a true reflection of their experiences as is the norm of the IQA (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). However, triangulation was possible across all forms of data, which provided collaborating evidence for the SID.

Secondly, this research is the first attempt as far as I know to study group relations conferences with a modified IQA technique. The findings may have been different if the full IQA method was applied. As indicated in Chapter 3 my reasoning behind this strategy was that I wanted the participants to freely associate (FANI) their experiences of the RIDE as individuals outside any group dynamics (Smit & Cilliers, 2006) which

may have influenced their sharing of those experiences of the RIDE in a group. The reasoning about individuals' behaviour/dynamics in groups is supported by the literature as indicated in Chapter 2 and Chapter 5. Further research may be needed to test this hypothesis and investigate the IQA fully as a technique to study group dynamics and members experiences of group relations conferences.

Thirdly, not all the participants were part of the focus group. This made it difficult to say that all participants shared the focus group's experiences in the same way. However, that dynamic seemed to play into the dynamics of the RIDE itself, where participants may all be together in the LSG but not all would be part of the same smaller study groups. SSG usually study the dynamics of the LSG (Lawrence, 1979). Similarly in my mind the focus group was a smaller system in the RIDE studying the dynamics of the larger RIDE system. Studying systems in this way consultants and researchers work with those who are willing to participate and loose the inputs of those who are not willing to participate.

In addition, my own bias needs to be taken into consideration. At the outset of this research, I took note of Creswell (2013) suggestion about researchers bracketing themselves out of the study by identifying and discussing personal experiences with the phenomenon. According to Creswell (2013) researchers need to identify and discuss personal experiences of the phenomenon so readers may judge for themselves whether the researcher focused solely on the participants' experiences or how much of the researcher's experience influenced the study. Within the context of this research, I studied conscious and unconscious group dynamics, while simultaneously being part of those dynamics (Petriglieri, 2020). In light thereof I decided to bracket myself within the research as stated in Chapter 3. It would have been unrealistic to bracket myself outside of the research. Identifying and discussing my own experiences alone would not have sufficiently proved that bias on my part did not exist.

I agree with Reiners (2012) that impartiality is impossible in this context. As the research progressed, I came to appreciate Reiners (2012) comment that as we as researchers begin to understand our participants experiences, we become involved and as we become involved, we understand. This has much to do with the hermeneutic

spiral (Creswell, 2013; Vagle, 2014) of data analysis with which I engaged with holistically, deliberately, and consciously, reporting on my process in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 to persuade the reader of the plausibility of my arguments to avoid unconvincing analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

My research method was focused on giving the participants as much voice as possible. By conducting the data analysis before the literature research, I strove to contain my own bias of fitting participants experiences into the literature as far as possible. This meant I relied on what I already knew about Group Relations Conference from own experiences and Systems Psychodynamics at that time. This method allowed me to be surprised that I made similar observations of the dynamics in the system as researchers I had not yet consulted in the literature. Once I conducted an in-depth literature research the method enabled me to check my presumed bias with scientific evidence and identify implicit bias on my part justified and/or unjustified with scientific evidence. The role of my supervisor Prof May also proved invaluable in checking my bias. Her feedback on different chapters throughout left me pause for thought and able to identify bias I may not have been aware of.

My own journey with working with the unknown and attempt to learn through not knowing enabled me to listen more to both the participants and my supervisor as evolving "O's" (Bion, 1962,1965/2018). Learning from each other and engaging with the other helped me to be less biased. Patiently listening for the selected fact to emerge (Bion, 1962;1965/2018; Grotstein, 2003; Nossal, 2007) happens by eschewing memory, desire and understanding and waiting for patterns to emerge. A way to learn without knowing according to Bion (1962) and not to fit participants experiences into what is known (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). Personally based on my experience with this research I found this very difficult if not impossible at times. For me there was memory in my relatedness (Stapley, 2006) to and relationship with the other even in the object (Klein, 1958). However, understanding this dynamic enabled me to find and look a little closer at my own bias. Desire to find a specific outcome resulted in collusion with some participants initially. Understanding allowed me to identify the collusion and work with it to understand my own bias. Desire to produce a research "product" which did not "set fire to the ship" so I could move safely on makes me wonder about what

may or may not have been included in this research and if what was included and excluded was bias on my part or basic assumption mentality?

What I am saying is that it is impossible that there is no bias on my part in this research. Bias may exist of which I am unaware of or do not want to know of. However, I tried to mitigate bias as far as possible with my research design and methodology, taking note of research principles and the principles of studying group dynamics within the theoretical perspective of Systems Psychodynamics. What I learnt from this research is that there is no absolute truth (Gertler, 2019), truth is different for different people. However, the truth value of this research will be held in the emotional domain of how it makes me the researcher feel (Nossal, 2007) and you as the reader. Identifying and discussing my personal experiences of bias in this section makes me feel confident that I have mitigated bias on my part as far as possible towards the rigour of this research (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Lastly, I did not include the voices of the participants' organisations. Although this research does consider the impact of group relations conferences on organisations it is reliant on the voices of the participants themselves. Further research is needed to fully understand the connection between the learning of members at these events and the organisation.

8.5.3 Limitations of the theoretical model

The theoretical model of transmogrification synthesised the research findings and provided an overall picture of the RIDE participants' experiences of transmogrification. As there is no other model to my knowledge, it cannot be said that this model would be transferable between contexts without further research.

The model reflects the complexity of transmogrification at the RIDE, but it cannot depict the full complexity of understanding of the participants' experiences of the RIDE. It is not a step-by-step change model. Each time a group comes together it is different and produce different dynamics (Bion, 1961/2004). Also, larger groups differ substantially from smaller groups (Garland, 2010). Even though individuals and groups represent something in the system to each other, it cannot be said that this model would be applicable to all group relations conferences without further research.

The use of this model requires Industrial and Organisational psychologists, psychologists, and consultants to understand the below the surface unconscious dynamics of groups, the concept of transmogrification and Systems Psychodynamics. It can offer a starting point to understand the complexities of members' experiences of group relations conferences in addition to what transformation and its defences may look like. Further research is required to test whether it can be operationalised.

8.6   RECOMMENDATIONS

A concept which came through strongly in both the findings and the literature review (Correa et al., 1981; Sapochnik, 2015; Short, 2019) was the concept of integration. The findings provide evidence of the importance of integration for the participants at the RIDE, even though integration was also defended against because of the anxiety it provoked. The literature review of Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 highlighted that on a personal level splitting processes diminish the capacity to understand reality, to bring together contradictory impulses and to synthesise the good and bad aspects of the object (Klein, 1959) towards integration of the ego in normal development. Integration leads to the depressive position where aggression is managed by the superego, which controls dangerous impulses (Klein, 1959) and aids in development and learning. Without integration on an organisational level, organisations are prevented from acting on identified old assumptions, from moving towards a discriminating explanation and integration of new perspectives if rationalisation occurs devoid of understanding in a bid to avoid conflict (McCallum, 2008; Willerman, 2014).

The Tavistock Institute (2016) states that group relations conferences promote the integration of intellectual capacity and emotional intelligence. The use of psycho-analytic and systemic perspectives at these events assists members to move from fragmentation to integration (Sapochnik, 2015). However, the findings suggest that there was a discrepancy between the integration of the cognitive and experiential aspects of the participants' learning during the RIDE. The recommendations that follow are an attempt to bridge this gap based on the findings of this research.

8.6.1   Recommendations for group relations conference organisers

The clear boundaries of group relations conferences are in the mind of the participants and the staff before the event and long afterwards. To promote integration of the

cognitive and emotional experiences of conferences, and to bring into mind the nature of the work group as Stokoe (2010) suggests, the concept of pre-conception could be explored before or during the event. What this would look like needs further exploration by the group relations community. It is also outside the scope of this thesis.

The purpose of this exploration, however, is to assist the group to recognise the work group mentality (Bion, 1961/2004; Garland, 2010) and not to be totally overwhelmed by the basic assumption mentality. Or at the very least understand where the basic assumption mentality may be coming from and not drown in it. In addition, staff at these events would be able to work with the members, knowing before experiencing (Bion, 1962) and guiding the group to recognise reality from fantasy before fully engaging with the experience.

In this way the shadow of development Stokoe (2010) alludes to might not be missed, as the role of the work group at group relations conferences is given more space. Work group and basic assumption mentalities are only separate in theory; in practice a work group always contains some basic assumption mentality (Armstrong, 2010; Bion, 1961/2004). Giving attention to the reality principle at the edge of knowing and not knowing (Bion, 1965/2018; French & Simpson, 2003) at group relations conferences may enable the members and staff to take cognizance of the full measure of the unconscious at work in groups, limiting distortion in understanding and practice, about which Armstrong (2010) cautioned.

Apart from working with the concept of pre-conception immediately before or during a group relations conference, I concur that learning would not be served by presenting workshops before the event. Integration of members experiences of group relations conferences should be facilitated after the event, enabling members to explore where basic assumption mentalities and work group mentalities manifested, and enabling members of these events to integrate learning.

Based on the findings it may be prudent to present experiential workshops, listening posts or IQA after an event, to enable integration of awareness and understanding, which may require more prompting than leaving it to the individual to work out for themselves. While there are events during group relations conferences which have

been designed to this end, the overwhelming emotions experienced during these events may not allow for integration outside these dynamics. Members may become trapped in the emotional experience and basic assumption mentality outside the dynamics of the group itself.

Of interest was the finding that learned defences during the RIDE may have influenced the participants' perceptions of the risks of challenging the status quo. Participants' defences during the RIDE may have been projected onto their organisations, making them hesitant to transfer their learning to their organisations. It is recommended that group relations conference organisers keep in mind this dynamic about the impact of these events which transcend the boundaries of the event itself. Learned defences during a group relations conference may have a negative impact on organisations' change initiatives if not aligned with the organisation.

A similar dynamic occurs when members transfer inappropriate learning to the organisation (Wallach, 2014). Enabling members to integrate the emotional and cognitive aspects of their experiences of a group relations conference with an experiential workshop, listening post and/or IQA among others, which does not include the study of group relations and unconscious processes, may enable members to work with the unknown, whether defended or not. Dynamics of workshops such as these may also allow both participants and consultants to further understand the dynamics of the group relations event that had been attended.

Group Relations Conference staff are well positioned to present "conference exploration" events in which working at the edge of knowing and unknowing can be explored by both members and staff, exploring what it really means to work with the unknown. How this will manifest is out of the scope of this thesis but may enrich learning at group relations conferences. Presenting conference exploration events may test the myth that these events are purely exploratory and not training events, that both exploration and training could coexist at the edge of knowing and not knowing, where attention and awareness may be integrated with the evolving "O".

Lawrence (1979) recommends that conference organisers understand the expectations of organisations, and not only the expectations of the members, when

presenting traditional group relations conferences that focus on authority and political relatedness. This may not always be possible, yet it would add to group relations conference learning if expectations of both the participants and the organisation were aligned. For example, if participants had transmogrified during a conference, they may project this learning onto their organisation and want to transfer their learning of transmogrification to the organisation. However, if the organisation is not ready to transmogrify, such learning would be rejected by the system. The participant may be forced to carry the "guilt" of inappropriate learning (Wallach, 2014) and the system in defence may take the stance that the paradigm has become obsolete (Waddell, 2015).

Conference organisers should also take cognizance of the role of massive trauma and societal regression (Dobosz, 2018; Hopper, 2009; Wallach, 2012) at group relations conferences, specifically those conferences with designs that do not follow the traditional group relations conference design. Some conference themes and members expectations could amplify experiences of trauma. As with the RIDE, the location, and the impact it had on the collective unconscious must not be underestimated. This does not mean that massive regression and societal regression cannot be worked with, or that it would not be present at traditional group relations conferences. The recommendation is that participants' expectations and what they find at these events should be clarified. This additional dynamic of incongruence in the mind, such as expecting a holiday, and then in reality finding work, such as the participants of the RIDE found, may influence these events. This dynamic can be mitigated or be up for further exploration if recognised.

8.6.2 Recommendations for Systems Psychodynamic Practitioners

The recommendations in this section are for Systems Psychodynamics practitioners (SPP) who are knowledgeable about the systems psychodynamic paradigm, who may be industrial and organisational psychologists, psychologists, academics, consultants to organisations and coaches in the field working within the paradigm.

For these practitioners and others working in the field, the model describes the complexity in a system. The model explains why change could be misunderstood. Why mutative interpretations could arise, and consequences of change could be incorrectly predicted, misdirected, and incorrectly leveraged as Dimitrov (2008) suggested when

unconscious dynamics in organisations are defended against. It adds to the literature and practice of managing complex relationships and interconnectedness between different parts of the system (Miller & Rice, 1967; Stapley, 2006; van Eeden & Cilliers, 2019). Complex systems frequently produce failed change initiatives (as this research suggests), mutative transformation, or minute changes, considering the high cost of implementing change initiatives. A response is to restructure and restructure again, to transform the status quo with the hope of a different outcome, when in fact anxiety in the system is only increased (Braun, 2011).

Working with the concept of transmogrification, it is recommended that SPP and client specify at the outset whether the desired change an individual and/or organisation desires is transformation or transmogrification. It is also important to distinguish whether the desire is a fantasy or a reality. This must be clarified at the outset, as fantasising transmogrification, where in reality transformation is all that can be managed, puts any change at risk from the start.

The concept of the defended subject (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Hollway & Jefferson, 2008) could be extended outside a research project to understand the unconscious dynamics, as both the SPP and the client become co-producers of meaning making in the change process. The distinction between the two concepts (transformation and transmogrification) would lay the foundation for how change is managed. Based on the transmogrification model (see Figure 7.4), how different individuals and groups in the system could react to the transformation/transmogrification may be explicated. In addition, it may enable SPP to identify which individuals and groups could be best leveraged towards either transformation or transmogrification, and what kind of containment would be best suited to leverage and what change could be expected.

Whether an organisation transforms or transmogrifies, employees who cannot work with change and loss will always be found. SPP practitioners can assist organisations to identify these employees and perhaps use their preservation to an advantage in keeping some continuity and/or history alive in the organisation. Those employees who are able to work with loss and take risks in transformation/transmogrification may attach some meaning to this original form, an element of transmogrification in the

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turmoil of change. Based on this research, it is unlikely that these employees would derail the system, if managed correctly, as their motive is preservation.

The "false positives", as I name employees who may resort to adopting a false self to repress their anxiety about transformation towards survival in the system, may be a threat to systemic change. SPP could assist organisations to identify these employees who may exhibit defence against transformation, a defence against thought as this research suggests, like the participants of the RIDE stuck in awareness who would defend against transformation. Expressing ignorance about what is going on and repressing anxiety against transformation by not publicly expressing their concerns and going with the flow, could mean that these employees manipulate and control others in unhealthy (Braun, 2011) ways in defence against thinking, such as remaining in a basic assumption mentality (Bion, 1961), working in a paranoid-schizoid position, defending against work group mentality and defence against a depressive position. SPP could assist the employees and organisations to identify these behaviours and work with them.

It is recommended that SPP assist clients to create a safe environment in which change can be effected. Based on this research, if safety concerns become excessive it could be indicative of the anxiety in the system in defence against transformation/transmogrification. Safety should not be the focus of a change initiative. The number of risks individuals are willing to take should become the focus, as well as understanding that the change initiative does not reside only in the boundaries of the organisation. It also has implications for employees outside those boundaries which would affect their abilities to transform/transmogrify.

For those organisations that want to transmogrify in reality, SPP could assist their clients to identify those individuals who favour risk and who would be able to work with transmogrification. Based on this research the environment would probably be volatile, but this would not necessarily be a bad thing. As indicated in the introduction to this section, if the focus is to avoid conflict (McCallum, 2008; Willerman, 2014) and rationalisation or mutative interpretations, as this research suggests occurs, understanding of new transmogrifying perspectives would be very difficult. Safe and old assumptions would not be tested. The risk of preservation could increase or at the

very least employees would swim in the fantasy of transmogrification in defence against understanding what it is about, and the risks of loss and annihilation it would contain.

If SPP provide a safe enough container and the SPP/organisation allows employees to work with feelings of being uncontained, it will lead to transmogrification where the organisation and the employees challenge the status quo. Transmogrification would be possible as individuals and/or the organisation break free from the status quo for something new or different, while maintaining an original form, as the definition of transmogrification in this research implies. It may be that individuals and organisations could then work with products and services not yet thought about, which could put the organisation and its employees at a distinct advantage, if leveraged correctly.

To achieve sustainability of transformation/transmogrification, individuals and organisations must work with loss and mourn that loss. Mourning loss in organisations is not on the radar (Braun, 2011). As this research suggests, the risk of loss and annihilation is a huge part of the transformation/transmogrification process. How loss is defended against or worked with will influence whether employees would work with change initiatives. It is recommended that SPP promote the importance of working with the loss that a change initiative will bring, whether that be loss of task and/or loss of connections with others in the organisation or outside. A space for mourning must be created to enable employees to work with loss. Allowing for mourning, loss could be an important "symbolic" gesture to leverage change, sustain change and avoid repetitious patterns (Braun, 2011).

8.6.3 Recommendations for future research

According to Stamenova and Hinshelwood (2018) psychoanalytic research is a hybrid which exists from the clinical practice of psychoanalysis and social science. A clear qualitative method for psychoanalytic studies does not exist. Experimenting with the FANI (Abrahams, 2019; Hollway & Jefferson, 2008) and a modified IQA (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004) in this research made me realise that future research on members' experiences of group relations conference experiences may develop more techniques about how to research unconscious dynamics in groups based on the exploration. This would add to the body of information of how to access knowledge about the human

unconscious outside the clinical setting and investigate concerns in the literature (Stamenova & Hinshelwood, 2018) about the nature of the instrument of observation, from which researchers such as myself infer their findings.

The time allowed between a group relations conference and researching members experiences of these is varied in the literature. To name but a few, Abrahams (2019) conducted pre telephonic interviews just before the group relations conference, a focus group just after the event and FANI interviews directly, thereafter, exploring members' meanings. Hills (2018) applied participant observation and interviews during a group relations conference event and online surveys before, immediately after the conference and nine months later. According to Hills (2018), the response rate was high pre-conference but low afterwards. Wallach (2014) used surveys and interviews directly after a group relations conference, and one, three and six months thereafter, and lastly survey and interviews after a year (Wallach, 2014). As with Hills (2018) the response to the data collection diminished over time. The three and six month "rule" has been applied in other studies (see Joseph et. al.,1975; Klein et al.,1989; Short, 2019). While there seems to be a decline in responses to research projects over time, it is inconclusive in the literature why this may be the case. I also struggled to find participants, whether they had attended 16 years or one year after the event. Based on this research I would conclude that the time to conduct research projects is not important. Review of learning of these events can take place at any time. What was learnt does not seem to be affected by time. The phenomenon could also have something to do with the concept of basic assumption mentality containing a process of collapsing into an emotional experience and time being infinite according to de Felice et al. (2018).

The literature review highlighted a need to explore participants' hesitancy to take part in follow-up interviews after a group relations conference (Hills, 2018; Wallach, 2010, 2014). The findings of this research provide evidence for anxiety which may be present in remembering or reliving the experience, as three participants did not attend the focus group, citing rational explanations, although they had agreed to a focus group at the outset of the data collection process. Researching members experiences of group relations conferences with a focus group should bear this in mind. In addition, it should be considered that participants who do attend follow up sessions may be doing so to

resolve unfinished business, dynamics of which must be considered in terms of the data collection and analysis (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Hollway & Jefferson, 2008; Smit & Cilliers, 2006).

8.7   CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH

8.7.1   Contribution at a theoretical level

The research contributes on a theoretical level as it adds to the literature of group relations conferences (Miller, 1990; Sapochnik, 2020; Wallach, 2019) about members' experiences at these events. It expands on the literature about transformation (Aram, 2010; Armstrong, 2007; Wallach, 2019) at group relations conferences, offering a new concept, transmogrification (Bowker, 2020; Finn, 1999), linked to transformational processes (Finn, 1999; Petriglieri, 2020) yet distinct from these.

8.7.2   Contribution at a methodological level

As far as I am aware this study is the first in which the multimethod (Knappertsbusch et al., 2021; Mik-meyer, 2020; Reis et al., 2017) of data collection and analysis applying the FANI (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008) and a modified IQA (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004) were used to research members' experiences of a group relations conference. The research contributes to the literature of group relations conferences and Systems Psychodynamics (Cilliers & Terblanche, 2010; Mowles, 2017) by providing a theoretical model of participants' experiences of a group relations conference. There is no theoretical model of this kind in the literature, to my knowledge.

The research provides supporting evidence of unconscious processes manifesting during the data collection process where interviewees and focus groups can be defended subjects and not necessarily tell their stories truthfully (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). Researchers in all disciplines should accommodate for this phenomenon as Smit and Cilliers (2006) found. They should have a rigorous research process and not remain only at a discursive level of data analysis, as Braun and Clarke (2006) cautioned against.

8.7.3   Contribution on a practical level

As discussed in the recommendations (section 8.6.2) the theoretical model adds to the knowledge of Systems Psychodynamics in terms of how transformation below the

surface from a systems perspective could be managed in organisations (Armstrong, 2010; van Reekum, 2017). It provides a deeper understanding about why change may be resisted (Dalle Pezze, 2006; Heidegger, 1945/2010) by going deeper than surface phenomena. Based on this research, employees could be identified on a practical level for their capacity to transform and be accommodated in change initiatives to align with the organisation's transformational strategy.

The research contributes to understanding what transformation could look like at these events. It expands the literature on the blanket concept of transformation (Armstrong, 2007; Erlich-Ginor, 2006; Fraher, 2004b; Miller, 1990; Sher, 2012; Stokoe, 2010) with three distinct concepts, namely preservation, transformation, and transmogrification. On a practical level this contributes to the body of knowledge about idiosyncratic and unpredictable outcomes (Miller, 1989) in participants' experiences at group relations conferences, adding a dimension to experiential learning. As this research suggests, differences in conference learning are about more than how participants take up authority for their learning (Lawrence, 1979; Miller 1989). It is about how they might transform, the consequences of the transformation, and how defended against experiential learning they might be.

Group Relations Conference organisers can apply the conceptual model to gain an understanding of the experiences of conference members during these events. This research and the conceptual model highlighted how difficult it may be to integrate emotional and cognitive experiences during these events (Correa et al., 1981; McCallum, 2008; Wallach, 2019). The findings of pre-conception (Bion, 1962) as a concept to enable participants to connect to reality before experiencing contributes at a practical level. The group relations conference community could explore whether the concept would enable staff to guide the group to recognise the work group (Armstrong, 2010; Bion, 1961/2004) at the borderline between somatic and psychic life in order to recognise defences against learning by experience and rejecting development (Bion, 1961/2004, French & Simpson, 2010).

In addition, the research contributes to understanding group relations conference learning and the transference of that learning to the organisation. As this research suggests, learning acquired during these events could be projected onto the

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organisation in defence against challenging the assumed status quo (Lawrence, 1979; Long, 2011; Sher, 2015) of the organisation, which would have consequences for the participants' survival in the organisation. The research contributes to understanding these dynamics, which not only have consequences for the individuals but for the community at large. These learning experiences could be used by the larger system to discredit the paradigm in defence against systemic transformation/transmogrification.

The model could be used as a coaching framework for leaders to learn about the dynamics in groups (Tavistock, 2016) and how differences in risk taking by either themselves or their followers could lead to preservation, transformation and/or transmogrification, and also an understanding of which defences may be manifested. Understanding these dynamics could be leveraged towards sustainability of own and organisational transformation/transmogrification. Leaders could be coached on why some change may be unsustainable (Finn, 1999; Petriglieri, 2020).

8.7.4 Contribution on a personal level

This research has made me excited about my role as a researcher and teacher. As a researcher it has opened my mind to the possibilities of how we may study the unconscious and move away from defence against and resistance to studying that which is not easily seen.

As a teacher of thousands of students at undergraduate and postgraduate level, the knowledge I have gained about how we interact in groups, and the valences we act out, help me manage the mind of the student in group dynamics. I intend to teach these dynamics and bring into awareness how we get caught up in these dynamics, and how we need to be part of these dynamics. However, I respect the complexities and do not think I will always get it right. There is always room to learn.

While writing up this research I became aware that the institution I work at may be producing knowledge for knowledge's sake, and not attending to the consumption of knowledge. This has made me think about how this impact both the students and the lecturers, what we may be colluding, with and how a dynamic such as this works for us. The question is, is there room for transmogrification or more transformation, while maintaining the status quo?

8.8 SELF-REFLECTION

Throughout this research I have felt as if I have been part of a group relations conference these past six years. I have felt that my learning has been intertwined with the participants' learning experiences after the RIDE. I have felt part of the dynamics of the RIDE experience, which transcended its boundaries. I have also felt the weight of the community as I explored the participants experience of the RIDE. I wondered if this had something to do with introjection (Klein, 1959) of some of the participants' stories, such as that of Tavistockian looking over their shoulders, as obviously this was not true.

I often longed for knowing without training (Bion, 1961/2004), to come fully equipped with a PhD without the pain (Bion, 1961/2004; French & Simpson, 2010) of consuming knowledge and processing the learning, to create fertile ground on which others could work or weed out that which would be deemed superfluous, to really engage and work with not knowing (Bion, 1962; Brady & Cary, 2012) as my own learning experience provoked anxiety. I took courage from working with the dynamics of the RIDE participants and my descriptions of their experiences of working with the unknown (Nicolò, 2015; Winnicott, 1971/2005). In my struggle I attended some workshops on working with the unknown to try to understand the phenomenon and work better with it. I was disappointed when reflection was suggested. While this might be true, I was suspicious (from the research I was conducting) that reflection might be a defence.

I often became stuck in writing up parts of the findings. I kept having the feeling that I was working with the same dynamics the participants worked with in learning by experience, particularly when I worked with experiences of how participants became stuck in the RIDE system. I often had to sit down and reflect on what was happening. Was there some part of me that, perhaps perversely, did not want to let go this research, which had become so intrusive in my life? Or was I acting out the dynamics of the group (participants and myself)?

I am thankful that the work has enabled me to realise and in part come to terms with my role (Green & Molenkamp, 2005) in group dynamics, and manage to some extent what I can, out of defence, with awareness and understanding as far as possible. I realise I will always be part of those dynamics (Shongwe, 2014; Stapley, 2006; Stokoe,

2010) and need to play a part in those dynamics towards group and my own survival (Schneider, 2005). Yet I can also be separate from and part of the group at the same time, constantly learning in and from different groups, in my journey as a life-long learner, curious about unconscious dynamics in groups.

8.9   RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The general aim of this research was to explore participants' transmogrification during the RIDE. Based on the findings, the following research hypotheses are presented for future research.

8.9.1   Research Hypothesis 1

The RIDE provided a good enough container in which participants could preserve and defend from learning by experience, transform and create meaning towards a new self, or alternatively defend from thought, and/or transmogrify, creating meaning towards a new self, as participants learned by experience. Each participant took with them what they were prepared to learn of otherness amongst others, which transcended the boundaries of the RIDE itself.

8.9.2   Research Hypothesis 2

Knowledge before experience mitigates the shock of the hatred of learning by experience, enabling participants to work with both dimensions of reality. However, potential awareness of potential outcomes leads to the risks of mutative interpretations, and mutative transformation by maintaining the status quo and/or group expectations, in defence against the fear of knowledge perceived to be threatening to the coherence of the mind.

8.9.3   Research Hypothesis 3

Members' experiences of group relations conferences are complex. Exploring members' experiences may be at the edge of knowing and not knowing, represented, and held by those members who transform, transmogrify, or preserve towards survival. SPP practitioners familiar with the paradigm are well positioned to guide members in a good enough container towards learning by experience and integration of knowledge. SPP practitioners need to test their own basic assumptions and collusion with a system in defence against learning. SPP practitioners should become suspicious when

everything is done for the benefit of members or the community and rationalising that researching group relations conferences is difficult. Care must be taken to avoid the risk of treating participants as possessions to be studied in a laboratory setting for the benefit of those who study group dynamics.

8.9.4   Research Hypothesis 4

The good-enough container must allow for containment of the participants' anxiety, as they learn to handle that anxiety constructively, not destructively. The need for safety at group relations conferences is a defence and a desire for a regressive state of no learning on the part of members. Safety concerns can then be projected onto and into the staff of these events, in defence of learning in which safety will never be enough.

8.9.5   Research Hypothesis 5

Not knowing is a form of survival. Individuals attack knowledge in a competitive frenzy to possess knowledge in defence against processing knowledge which could entail sharing knowledge and loss of coherence of the mind should knowledge be processed. Knowledge is then attacked, to destroy the capacity to think when pain and envy are too intolerable.

A suggested research topic that best represents these research hypotheses is: Exploring the good-enough container to contain fear of knowledge perceived to threaten the coherence of the mind where safety is a defence against learning by experience.

In closing, although the generality of the findings must be established by future research, the present research has provided clear support for group relations conferences being transformational learning experiences – if not transmogrifying learning experiences – for members. They have long-lasting effects in members' personal and social lives, whether these were anticipated, expected, wanted or not.

8.10   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter concludes the thesis. Conclusions, limitations, recommendations, and the contribution to the research were discussed based on the findings and the literature review.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Approval letter to conduct research

This appendix consists of the approval letter granting permission to conduct the research by the organisation who hosted the RIDE group relations conferences.

TDCI Training & Development

Company reg: 2006/11687/23

115 Van der Merwe Str, Rietondale, Pta

E-mail: marius@tdci.co.za

URL: www.tdci.co.za

0832339936

To: Department of Industrial and Organisation Psychology   27 November 2015

For Attention: Ms L Ley

Conducting research: Robben Island Diversity Experience (RIDE)

1. The request to conduct research in regards to the Robben Island Diversity Experience refers.

2. You have our blessing to continue with the research as planned.

3. Please contact Thembi Kgengwenyane (thembi@tdcisa.co.za) if you need any further assistance in this regard,

4. Good luck with your study.

Kind Regards

Marius Pretorius

TDCI Training and Development

www.tdci.co.za

marius@tdci.co.za

012-3292472 / 083 233 9936

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APPENDIX B

Ethics Approval

This appendix includes the ethics approval for the research by the Unisa College of Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee.
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UNISA COLLEGE OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

01 December 2015 (Date of issue)
30 November 2020 (Date of amendment)

Ref #: 2015_IOP/CEMS_052

Student #: 34954775

Dear Mrs. Tonnelli

Decision: Ethics Approval Extended to 31 December 2021

Working title of research:

Group Relations Conference members experience of transmogrification: what does this mean for the individual and the organisation.

Qualification: Ph.D.

Thank you for the application requesting **amendments** to the original research ethics certificate issued by the Department of Industrial Psychology for the above mentioned research in December 2015. The approval of the requested amendment is granted/extended for the study for the period 1 December 2020 – 31 December 2021.

The low risk application was reviewed by the CEMs CRERC in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the University of South Africa using the expedited method.

The proposed research may now continue with the proviso that:

1. *The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
2. *Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the UNISA Research Ethics Review Committee. An amended application could be requested if there are substantial*

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APPENDIX C

Audit trail of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the IQA

This appendix focuses on phase one and phase two of the IQA of the RIDE.

Procedure:

Participants were welcomed as they arrived and offered tea and coffee. Facing the wall on which we would take part in the task of the IQA of the RIDE. Ms Vier took her position just behind me on the left-hand side of the table, where the laptop was positioned in front of us, for Ms Ses. Mr. Een took up his position opposite me on the right-hand side of the table. Mr. Drie positioned himself near the window also on the right-hand side of the table behind Mr. Een and very rarely sat down. Relaxed small talk and conversation was the order of the day while we waited for all to arrive. There was some regret that Mr Seven would not be joining by Mr Een as he said he would have liked to see him as they had worked in the same organisation previously. I informed the participants that Ms Ses would be joining us from the Western Cape via Skype and called her a few minutes before 10 am for participants to introduce themselves. We waited for Ms Mbini to arrive, when she did not, I started the IQA of the RIDE with participants at 10AM keeping to the time boundaries of the process.

- I started the IQA of the RIDE by welcoming the participants. The issue of limited confidentiality was stressed. Due to time boundaries the participants agreed amongst themselves that there would be no body breaks as they did not want to stay over 12 PM.

- I mentioned to the group, that I would be recording the event for my own research purposes and may take a photo of the information posted on the wall from time to time, not of the participants themselves.

- These notes were bound by the confidentiality of the process where no identifying information would be used or shared with any other person or group, outside of what we had already indicated in the confidentiality documents, signed by each participant.

- The participants agreed.

- I explained that the pens, pencils, markers, crayons, and cards on the table were for own to use. Participants could use any combination of these to write on the cards as they so wished.

- An opportunity was provided for questions before I explained the IQA process in more detail and started the session.

- During the two-hour IQA of the RIDE I removed the relevant information from my pack, as an example as and when necessary, as I facilitated the process. In essence keeping us on the same "page" and minimising possible time-consuming confusion. In this way, I added to the comprehension of the subject matter, and IQA process, minimising the impact on the time spent on the task itself (Northcutt & McCoy, 2014).

Without using unnecessary jargon, I informed the participants that the first part of the session would be conducted in silence.

- Participants could select any of the cards on the table in front of them and write words which came to mind on these.

- I informed participants that during Phase 1 of the IQA I would put on the earphones for Ms Ses to tell me what words she wanted written on her cards.

- Thereafter we would attach the cards to the wall during Phase 2 and clarify what these words meant.

- Before we started, I asked if there were any questions.

- Thereafter I posed the issue statement and asked the participants to think of the RIDE only. Something I thought necessary to highlight as it became evident during the FANI that some participants would refer to other group relations events they had been part of in addition to the RIDE.

- I referred to the printout containing the definition and synonyms of transmogrification and asked the participants to think what this means for them in terms of the RIDE.

- Once the participants had reflected for a while, I asked them to write down one word, two at the most on a card completing as many cards as they wanted. Ten minutes was allotted for this phase of the IQA.

- I put on the earphones and waited for Ms Ses to reflect and wrote down the words she gave me onto the cards.

APPENDIX D

Affinity Relationship Table (ART)

This appendix provides an example of an ART.

Affinity Name	Possible Relationships
1.	$A \rightarrow B$
2.	$A \leftarrow B$
3.	$A <> B$ (No Relationship)
4.	
5.	

Focus Group Affinity Relationship Table	
Affinity Pair Relationship	**Example of the relationship either in natural language or in the form of an IF/THEN statement of relationship**
1 2	
1 3	

431

1	4	432
1	5	
2	3	
2	4	
2	5	
3	4	
3	5	
4	5	

APPENDIX E

Audit trail of reviewing preliminary themes and themes

This appendix includes an audit trail of how I generated the themes not included in the text.

The hermeneutic spiral (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Vagle 2014) I engaged in meant that the 6 steps (Braun & Clarke, 2006) followed during the thematic data analysis were interconnected in as I read-through of the database continuously throughout, coding and organizing themes, representing the data, and forming an interpretation of them (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These steps are interconnected and form a spiral of activities all related to the analysis and representation of the data.

Some of the themes here are not described in detail in the thesis as these preliminary themes were generated, discarded then re-emerged in my mind as I continuously engaged with the data.

Table E1

Apprehension and Trepidation

Theme	Codes and domain summaries
Apprehension and trepidation	· **BOUNDARY** (Allow, Respect)
Ugly	· **LEADERSHIP** (Consultant, Facilitate, Authority)
Dangerous	· **ANXIETY** (Laugh),
Grotesque	· **TIME** (Five, Friday, Morning, Wednesday),
Group Power	· **AGGRESSION**: Anger, Attack, beaten, conflict, erupt, fight, furious ganging up, hostile, knife, rage, shout, Temper, threat, violence
Judgement	· **OTHERS**: Colleagues, enemies, foreign, friend, funny, game, group, joke, music, personalities, play, royal, trauma
Powerful force	**DIVERSITY** Age, black, female, race, similar, socio-economic level, white

Shock	· **COMMUNICATION**: Explain, listen, silence, speak
	· **EMOTIONS**: Bitter, cry, enjoy, fear, grieve, grudge, happy, hate, irritate, love, pain, sad, Euphoria
Shocking	· **INDIVIDUAL**: Attitude, beast, blood, depression, draining, exhausting, eyes, face, fist, head, identity, philosophy, physical, process, rebel, relax, role, skin, tired, value
	· **AWARENESS**: A-ha, Accept, Amazing, Bag, Confront, Discovered, Illuminate, Justify, Mirror, Realise, reflect, shedding light, See, Trap, Trust, Understanding, Watch
	· **SAFETY**: Cautious, home, expose, hiding, shields
	· **UNCERTAINTY**: Confused, weird
	· **PERCEPTION**: Know, overwhelm, powerful, problem, real, reality, sense
	· **JUDGEMENT**: Bad, beautiful, crazy, delirium, difficult, effective, enrich, extraordinary, first thought, good, intellectual, intimate, methodology, nice, normal, not fun, not nice, Tavistock, terrible, Wonderful, ugly.
	· **METAPHOR**: Cat amongst the pigeons, Penny dropped, Throw rocks, Miss the bus, Puppet, pulling strings, Dropped the bomb, Buttons pressed, Baggage in bags, mind

blowing, Keep the ship floating, Whole tootie, Bump into reality, Nutshell, Jumped off a cliff, Safety harness, Five-day revolution, Elephant in the room, Stewing your own juices, Runs like water off a ducks back, Walking in the black forest, Pot boiling over, peek under your own ask, Ouma swaddled in a white Blanket, Unmasking, New dawn one of those with the vampires

Table E2

The Lemniscate

The Lemniscate	Codes and domain summaries
New theme from the IQA and FANI data	FIGURE 8 pattern of influences between affinities
	· **FIRST FEEDBACK LOOP**: Shedding light, Consequences or Outcome, Dusk and Dawn
	· **SECOND FEEDBACK LOOP**: Consequences or Outcome, movement, Dusk and Dawn illuminate, awareness
Collapse:	**PATTERN**
Delirium of Movement and Shedding Light, the five-day revolution, patterns and splits	**IQA data from the silent nominal phase**
	• Clockwise spiral: mostly pink cards "Stereotypes" (inner card), "Clearing" (outer card).

• Anticlockwise spiral: mostly orange cards "Fun" (inner card), "Shock" (outer card).

• Yellow cards in the form of a Y: Birth, Understanding, Uncertainty, Illuminate, Transform, Anxiety

Affinity naming phase of the IQA

• 1st group of affinities: Apprehension and Trepidation, Dusk and Dawn, Movement

• 2nd group of affinities: Shedding Light, Consequence or Outcome

• Yellow cards in the form of a Y: Uncertainty, birth, dark to light, anxiety, transform, understanding, illuminate, awareness

SPLITS

Affinity naming phase of the IQA

• Movement and Shedding light

• Yellow cards: Uncertainty, birth, dark to light, anxiety, transform AND, understanding

CONSEQUENCE OR OUTCOME

·   *The member is partly or wholly responsible for what is happening where outcome is just a mechanism* (Calling; Destiny; Letting go; Long-lasting; OD "light" (entertainment); Purpose)

DUSK AND DAWN:

It has two sides, you always find both, sometimes dark and sometime light, it's not either or. (Birth, Clean and unclean, Clearing, Container, Dark to Light, Dawn, Eros and Thanos, Fun, Fussy and unfussy, Mirror, Real, Safety, Stereotypes, Uncertainty, Unmasking, Pain

MOVEMENT

·   *Can go either way, anyway, anywhere and sideways. Not like a pipe where you start in one place, and you're forced through to another place. Sometimes it is what happens in the move, you've got loss and gain but*

sometimes it is just the move itself which is a paradigm shift and a transformation. A process which is not funny or at times surprising (Anxiety, Deep(er), Freshness, Gain, Loss, not funny, Paradigm shifting, Regression, Surprising, Transform)

SHEDDING LIGHT

·   *The light can go on, but you do not need to move* (Awareness, Free(dom), Illuminate, Integration, Undeniable, Understanding)

·   **DIVERSITY** (Age, Black, Female, Male, Socioeconomic Level, White

·   **BOUNDARY** (Allow, Respect)

·   **LEADERSHIP** (Consultant, Facilitate, Authority)

·   **ANXIETY** (Laugh),

·   **TIME** (Five, Friday, Morning, Wednesday),

·   **AGGRESSION**: Anger, Attack, beaten, conflict, erupt, fight, furious ganging up, hostile, knife, rage, shout, Temper, threat, violence

·   **OTHERS**: Colleagues, enemies, foreign, friend, funny, game, group, joke, music, personalities, play, royal, trauma

·   **DIVERSITY** Age, black, female, race, similar, socio-economic level, white

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Table E3

A dangerous and delirious zero-sub game

Theme	Codes and domain summaries
Collapse:	FIGURE 8 pattern of influences between affinities in the SID

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Lemniscate New theme from the IQA and FANI data

Collapse:

Delirium of Movement and Shedding Light and the five-day revolution

· **FIRST FEEDBACK LOOP**: Shedding light, Consequences or Outcome, Dusk and Dawn

· **SECOND FEEDBACK LOOP**: Consequences or Outcome, movement, Dusk and Dawn illuminate, awareness

PATTERN

IQA data from the silent nominal phase

• Clockwise spiral: mostly pink cards "Stereotypes" (inner card), "Clearing" (outer card).

• Anticlockwise spiral: mostly orange cards "Fun" (inner card), "Shock" (outer card).

• Yellow cards in the form of a Y: Birth, Understanding, Uncertainty, Illuminate, Transform, Anxiety

Affinity naming phase of the IQA

• 1st group of affinities: Apprehension and Trepidation, Dusk and Dawn, Movement

• 2nd group of affinities: Shedding Light, Consequence or Outcome

• Yellow cards in the form of a Y: Uncertainty, birth, dark to light, anxiety, transform, understanding, illuminate, awareness

SPLITS

Affinity naming phase of the IQA

• Movement and Shedding light

• Yellow cards: Uncertainty, birth, dark to light, anxiety, transform AND, understanding

CONSEQUENCE OR OUTCOME

· *The member is partly or wholly responsible for what is happening where outcome is*

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just a mechanism (Calling; Destiny; Letting go; Long-lasting; OD "light" (entertainment); Purpose)

DUSK AND DAWN:

It has two sides, you always find both, sometimes dark and sometime light, it's not either or. (Birth, Clean and unclean, Clearing, Container, Dark to Light, Dawn, Eros and Thanos, Fun, Fussy and unfussy, Mirror, Real, Safety, Stereotypes, Uncertainty, Unmasking, Pain

MOVEMENT

· *Can go either way, anyway, anywhere and sideways. Not like a pipe where you start in one place, and you're forced through to another place. Sometimes it is what happens in the move, you've got loss and gain but sometimes it is just the move itself which is a paradigm shift and a transformation. A process which is not funny or at times surprising* (Anxiety, Deep(er), Freshness, Gain, Loss, Not funny, Paradigm shifting, Regression, Surprising, Transform)

SHEDDING LIGHT

· *The light can go on, but you do not need to move* (Awareness, Free(dom), Illuminate, Integration, Undeniable, Understanding)

· **DIVERSITY** Age, black, female, race, similar, socio-economic level, white

· **TIME** Five, three, halfway, night, Wednesday

Collapse:

Antidotes and scapegoats' preliminary theme

· **BOUNDARY** Allow, respect

· **LEADERSHIP** Authority, consultant, director, facilitate

There were a number of overlaps between the preliminary themes of Holding *grudges* and *cats amongst the pigeons* which developed into this theme

The Vampire

Overlaps with five preliminary themes

· **ANXIETY** Laugh

· **AWARENESS**: A-ha, Accept, Amazing, Bag, Confront, Discovered, Illuminate, Justify, Mirror, Realise, reflect, shedding light, See, Trap, Trust, Understanding, Watch

· **CONTAINMENT:** Comfort zone, comfortable, complacent, control, cook, coping, neutral, peace

· **EMOTIONS: Bitter**, cry, enjoy, fear, grieve, grudge, happy, hate, irritate, love, pain, sad, Euphoria

· **AGGRESSION**: Anger, Attack, beaten, conflict, erupt, fight, furious ganging up, hostile, knife, rage, shout, Temper, threat, violence

· **OTHERS**: Colleagues, enemies, foreign, friend, funny, game, group, joke, music, personalities, play, royal, trauma

· **SAFETY** Cautious, home, **expose**, hiding, shields

· **TRANSFORM:** Chaos, **death**, Eros and Thanatos, grow, let go, pull, push, richer

· **INDIVIDUAL:** Attitude, beast, **blood**, depression, draining, exhausting, eyes, face, fist, head, identity, philosophy, physical, process, rebel, relax, role, skin, tired, value

·	A Five-day

Revolution

· Apprehension
and Trepidation

· A dangerous
and delirious game

· Antidotes and
scapegoats

· A delirium of
Movement and Shedding
light

Table E4

Keep Moving: safety first! No fires on the ship

Theme	Code and domain summaries
Collapsed: **The day after the Revolution**	· **CONSEQUENCE OR OUTCOME** *The member is partly or wholly responsible for what is happening where outcome is just a mechanism* (Calling; Destiny; Letting-go; Long-lasting; OD "light" (entertainment); Purpose) · **TIME** Five, three, halfway, night, Wednesday · **ORGANISATION**: Culture, fire, task, work · **DIVERSITY** Black, female, male, socio-economic level, white **ANXIETY:** Laugh, tense **BOUNDARY:** Allow, respect, Intrusive, New frontiers **COMMUNICATION:** Explain, listen, silence, speak

CONTAINMENT: Comfort zone, comfortable, complacent, control, cook, coping, neutral, peace

DISCONNECT: Avoid, destroy, disrupt, leave, left, split

EMOTIONS: Bitter, cry, enjoy, fear, grieve, grudge, happy, hate, irritate, love, pain, sad, Euphoria

INDIVIDUAL: Attitude, beast, blood, depression, draining, exhausting, eyes, face, fist, head, identity, philosophy, physical, process, rebel, relax, role, skin, tired, value

INTEGRITY: Honest, lie, sceptical, truth

LEADERSHIP: Authority, consultant, director, facilitate

OTHERS: Colleagues, enemies, foreign, friend, funny, game, group, joke, music, personalities, play, royal, trauma

SAFETY: Cautious, home, expose, hiding, shields

TRANSFORM: Chaos, death, Eros and Thanatos, grow, let go, pull, push, richer

Table E5

Participants FANI preoccupations as preliminary themes

Free associated narratives (FANI)	Domain summaries and codes
Boundaries of time and race	☐ **TIME** Five, three, Friday, last day, night, Thursday ☐ **BOUNDARY** Allow, respect, new frontiers ☐ **DIVERSITY** Age, Black, Coloured, Disability, female, male, race, similar, socioeconomic level, white ☐ **OTHERS**: Colleagues, enemies, foreign, friend, funny, game, group, joke, music, personalities, play, royal, trauma
Of Royalty, entertainers, and polygamists	☐ **BOUNDARY** Allow, respect ☐ **LEADERSHIP** Authority, consultant, facilitate ☐ **DIVERSITY** Age, black, female, race, similar, socio-economic level, white
Nutshell	☐ **DIVERSITY** (Age, Female, Male, Race, Socio-economic Level, White), ☐ **LEADERSHIP** (Consultant, Facilitate) ☐ **OTHERS** (Colleagues, Foreign, Group, Personalities) ☐ **METAPHOR**
A Five-day Revolution	☐ **DIVERSITY** (Age, Black, Female, Male, Socioeconomic Level, White ☐ **BOUNDARY**(Allow) ☐ **LEADERSHIP** (Consultant, Facilitate) ☐ **ANXIETY** (Laugh), ☐ **TIME** (Five, Friday, Morning, Wednesday), ☐ **AGGRESSION**: Anger, Attack, beaten, conflict, erupt, fight, furious ganging up, hostile, knife, rage, shout, Temper, threat, violence

Holding grudges	**OTHERS**: Colleagues, enemies, foreign, friend, funny, game, group, joke, music, personalities, play, royal, trauma **METAPHOR** **BOUNDARY** Respect **TIME** Last day **DIVERSITY** Female, male, race, Socio-economic level, white **AGGRESSION**: Anger, Attack, beaten, conflict, erupt, fight, furious ganging up, hostile, knife, rage, shout, Temper, threat, violence **AWARENESS** A-ha, Accept, Amazing, Bag, Confront, Discovered, Illuminate, Justify, Mirror, Realise, reflect, shedding light, See, Trap, Trust, Understanding, Watch **EMOTIONS: Bitter**, cry, enjoy, fear, grieve, grudge, happy, hate, irritate, love, pain, sad, Euphoria **CONTAINMENT:** Comfort zone, comfortable, complacent, control, cook, coping, neutral, peace
A dangerous and Delirious Game	**DUSK AND DAWN:** Birth; Clean and unclean; Clearing; Container; Dark to Light; Dawn; Eros and Thanos; Fun; Fussy and unfussy; Mirror; Real; Safety; Stereotypes; Uncertainty; Unmasking; Pain **EMOTIONS**: **Bitter**, cry, enjoy, fear, grieve, grudge, happy, hate, irritate, love, pain, sad, Euphoria **INDIVIDUAL:** Attitude, beast, blood, depression, draining, exhausting, eyes, face, fist, head, identity, philosophy, physical, process, rebel, relax, role, skin, tired, value **COMMUNICATION:** Explain, listen, silence, speak **ANXIETY:** Laugh, tense **HELP:** Deity, intervention

	☐ **CONTAINMENT:** Comfort zone, comfortable, complacent, control, cook, coping, neutral, peace
	☐ **METAPHOR**
	☐ **SHEDDING LIGHT** Awareness; Free(dom); Illuminate; Integration; Undeniable; Understanding
	☐ **CONSEQUENCE OR OUTCOME** Calling; Destiny; Letting go; Long-lasting; OD "light" (entertainment); Purpose
	☐ **DIVERSITY** Age, black, female, Socio-economic level
Baggage inside our bags	☐ **BOUNDARY Allow**
	☐ **LEADERSHIP** Consultant facilitate
	☐ **METAPHOR**
	☐ **TIME** Five, three, halfway, night, Wednesday
	☐ **BOUNDARY** Allow, respect
	☐ **LEADERSHIP** Authority, consultant, director, facilitate
	☐ **ANXIETY** Laugh
	☐ **DIVERSITY** Black, female, male, socio-economic level, white
Cat amongst the pigeons	☐ **AGGRESSION**: Anger, Attack, beaten, conflict, erupt, fight, furious ganging up, hostile, knife, rage, shout, Temper, threat, violence
	☐ **AWARENESS**: A-ha, Accept, Amazing, Bag, Confront, Discovered, Illuminate, Justify, Mirror, Realise, reflect, shedding light, See, Trap, Trust, Understanding, Watch
	☐ **CONTAINMENT:** Comfort zone, comfortable, complacent, control, cook, coping, neutral, peace
	☐ **METAPHOR**

Table E6

The vampire a preliminary theme

Preliminary theme	Table 2.5: Domain summaries and codes
The vampire	☐ **AGGRESSION**: Anger, Attack, beaten, conflict, erupt, fight, furious ganging up, hostile, knife, rage, shout, Temper, threat, **violence** ☐ **AWARENESS**: A-ha, Accept, Amazing, Bag, Confront, Discovered, Illuminate, Justify, **Mirror**, Realise, reflect, shedding light, See, Trap, Trust, Understanding, Watch ☐ **OTHERS**: Colleagues, **enemies**, foreign, **friend**, funny, **game**, group, joke, music, personalities, **play**, royal, trauma ☐ **SAFETY** Cautious, home, **expose**, hiding, shields ☐ **TRANSFORM:** Chaos, **death**, Eros, and Thanatos, grow, let go, pull, push, richer ☐ **EMOTIONS**: **Bitter**, cry, enjoy, fear, grieve, grudge, happy, hate, irritate, **love**, **pain**, sad, Euphoria ☐ **INDIVIDUAL:** Attitude, beast, **blood**, depression, draining, exhausting, eyes, face, fist, head, identity, philosophy, physical, process, rebel, relax, role, skin, tired, value ☐ **SHEDDING LIGHT** *The **light** can go on, but you **do not need to move***

(Awareness, Free(dom), Illuminate, Integration, Undeniable, Understanding

- Anxiety:

Laugh, tense

- **METAPHOR:**

Cat amongst the pigeons, Penny dropped, Throw rocks, Miss the bus, Puppet, pulling strings, Dropped the bomb, Buttons pressed, Baggage in bags, mind blowing, Keep the ship floating, Whole tootie, Bump into reality, Nutshell, Jumped off a cliff, Safety harness, Five-day revolution, Elephant in the room, Stewing your own juices, Runs like water off a ducks back, Walking in the black forest, Pot boiling over, peek under your own ask, Ouma swaddled in a white Blanket, Unmasking, New dawn one of those with the vampires.

☐ **DUSK AND DAWN:** *It has two sides, you always find both, sometimes **dark** and sometime **ligh**t, it's not either or.* (Birth, Clean and unclean, Clearing, Container, Dark to Light, **Dawn**, **Eros** and **Thanos**, Fun, Fussy and unfussy, **Mirror**, Real, Safety, Stereotypes, Uncertainty, Unmasking, Pain)

☐ **MOVEMENT** *can go either way, anyway, anywhere, and sideways. Not like a pipe where you start in one place, and you're forced through to another place. Sometimes it is what happens in the move, you've got loss and gain but sometimes it is just the move itself which is a paradigm **shift** and a*

transformation. A process which is not funny or at times surprising (Anxiety, Deep(er), Freshness, Gain, Loss, not funny, Paradigm **shifting**, Regression, Surprising, **Transform**)