

https://dspace.org/

Understanding the experience of shame in students within a South African university setting: a mixed methods psychosocial approach

Neel, Sheryl

2021
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/32221

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

Understanding the experience of shame in students within a South African university setting: A mixed methods psychosocial approach

Sheryl Neel

Supervisor: Professor Katherine Bain

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by thesis in the field of Psychology.

February 2021

Abstract

Despite calls for more focus on affective processes at university, shame continues to be an overlooked emotion in higher education institutions and in the student experience research both globally and in South Africa. While there is a growing recognition in the psychoanalytic literature that learning environments fuel shame, there is unfortunately little work beyond the clinical realm. In education research, there has been an increasing acceptance of the profound impact that contentious contextual issues have on students' university journeys. Students and classrooms are currently understood to exist within educational institutions that are situated within particular sociohistorical systems. The challenge is now to understand the reciprocal influences of these affective processes and social contexts on student experience and to develop more sophisticated frameworks to understand student engagement. Accordingly, this mixed methods study aimed to explore how shame shapes the student experience at the University of the Witwatersrand through interactions between micro-level shame dynamics (incorporating unconscious intersubjectivity) and meso and macro-level structures and their respective ideologies. Three data sets were collected – 472 surveys, 265 short shame stories, and ten in-depth interviews. The Shame Inventory scale was used to determine the prevalence and gravity of shame in the sample and common shame triggers. A psychosocial narrative analysis was conducted on the narrative data to interpret how and why students employed particular discourses – including unconscious shame coping scripts – to construct multiple student subjectivities. Drawing on object relations theory and principles from the theory of the stratification of emotions, this study illustrates that students' complex intersubjective relationship to the educational institutional domain is central to an understanding of student shame. Results revealed student shame to be constructed as incompatible ideas of the self related to achievement, recognition and attachment at university. Shame emerged in the gap between the imagined and hoped for self and the struggling, rejected self, and appeared to be influenced by the unprecedented aspirational value of higher education, the power of the institution and peer group to sanction, and shame legacies rooted in racial and class stratification. Exposure of incompatible ideas of the 'self' was both a personal experience – driven by imaginative internalisation – and social, constructed through seven shame triggers identified as commonly occurring in the university context. Shame moves and countermoves were used to defend against multiple negative student identities. The findings illustrate how the confluence of micro, meso and macro social influences both produced and constrained shame resulting in a conflicted intermediate area of experience characterised by (mis)recognition, (mis)attunement, and (dis)engagement. Conflicted student positions were markers of the signal function of shame that can be used to understand how to disrupt psychosocial shame cycles in university contexts. This knowledge contributes to psychosocial accounts of how shame shapes the educational domain.

Key words: Shame, student engagement, psychoanalysis and psychosocial, shame defences, belonging and higher education, student alienation, South Africa, emotions and stratification, student identities

Declaration

I declare that:

Understanding the experience of shame in students within a South African university setting: A mixed methods psychosocial approach

is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Psychology) at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

_____

Sheryl Neel

_____

Date

In loving memory of my father

Graham Andrew Walker

1938 – 2019

Acknowledgements

To the students who participated in this study and to students everywhere.

To Professor Katherine Bain for your wisdom and guidance.

To Professor Maria Marchetti-Mercer for believing in me.

This thesis is dedicated to, and wouldn't exist without, Len.

To the University of the Witwatersrand for the Postgraduate Merit Award, 2015.

To the National Research Foundation for the Innovation Doctoral Scholarship. Opinions expressed and the conclusions arrived at in this thesis are, however, those of the author and are not to be attributed to the National Research Foundation.

Table of Contents

Abstract ii

Declaration iii

Acknowledgements v

Table of Contents vi

List of figures xv

List of tables xvi

CHAPTER 1 - SETTING THE SCENE: The psychosocial 'subject' and the research context 1

1.1. Introduction 1

1.2. A psychosocial lens on shame and subjectivity 3

1.3. The student experience 7

1.4. The research context 9

1.4.1. The convoluted higher education landscape in South Africa 9

1.4.2. Researcher positioning 12

1.5. Structure of the thesis 14

SECTION I: LITERATURE REVIEW 16

CHAPTER 2 – THE THEORETICAL FRAME: Theorising the concept of relationship in a psychosocial study of shame 17

2.1. Introduction 17

2.2. Object relations theory and the shame experience: The 'self' and the 'other' 18

2.3. Unconscious phantasy and the public versus private shame debate 19

2.4. Mitigating shame: Splitting and the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions 21

2.5. Projection: Prototypes of loving and hostile relationships 24

2.6. The True and the False Self in an intermediate area of experiencing 25

2.7. The origins of shame: Developmental perspectives 27

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCHING SHAME: From shame variants to its signal function 31

3.1. Introduction 31

3.2. Formulating the shame 'family' 31

3.2.1. Researching an elusive emotion: The language of shame 31

3.2.2. Shame's closest relatives: Humiliation and embarrassment 33

3.2.3. Distinguishing shame from guilt 35
3.3. The signal function of shame 36
3.4. Contextual shame triggers and multiple influences 38
3.4.1. The influence of meso and macro social structures: The stratification of emotions 39
3.4.2. Gender and shame: The jury is still out 43
3.4.3. Sexuality, sexual orientation and shame 45
3.5. Shame dynamics 47
3.5.1. Self-processes: The twofold nature of self-awareness 47
3.5.2. The ego ideal, shame conflicts and identity 49
3.5.3. Social comparison or the judgement of the good or bad – within or without? 53
3.5.4. Uncomfortable exposure: Seeing and being seen 55
3.6. Shame responses 56
CHAPTER 4 - THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: A review of the education literature 61
4.1. Introduction 61
4.2. The student experience: Possibilities for exploring emotions in research 61
4.2.1. How ideologies inform higher education research agendas 61
4.2.2. The limitations of 'student engagement' research 64
4.2.3. Remedying research on decontextualised students, devoid of emotions 67
4.2.4. The analytic leverage of student 'alienation': Potential, power and loss all in one word 68
4.3. Contentious belonging and disputed discourses at university: Possibilities for shame 70
4.3.1. Academic and social (un)belonging: Areas of contestation 71
4.3.2. The paradox of adolescence: The tug of war between 'self' and peers/society 74
4.3.3. Choosing one's role in society: The alienation of professional journeying at university 78
4.3.4. The paradox of student-lecturer relationships 80
4.3.5. Discourses of economics versus social justice: 'Marginality' and 'mattering' 83
4.3.6. Class-based social stratification and epistemological access: Blame and shame 86
4.3.7. Racial, class and language identifications in the academy: Contested belonging 91
4.3.8. Racial melancholia and the intergenerational transmission of shame 94
4.4. Chapter summary 97
SECTION II: THE RESEARCH STUDY 98

CHAPTER 5 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: A mixed methods psychosocial approach 99
5.1. Navigating this chapter 99
5.2. Aim and research questions 99
5.3. The changing landscape of emotion research 101
5.3.1. Shame as a product of multiple influences 101
5.3.2. The argument for the psychosocial subject and theoretical interpretation 103
5.3.3. Researching the seemingly irreconcilable: A mixed methods, pragmatic worldview 106
5.4. Organising structures used for this study 108
5.4.1. Organising multiple influences in emotion research 108
5.4.2. A Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods model 109
5.4.3. The psychosocial research design used for this study 112
5.5. Research setting, samples and ethical considerations 114
5.5.1. Research setting and sampling frame 114
5.5.2. Sample details for Part 1 (Quantitative strand – The Shame Experiences Survey) 115
5.5.3. Sample details for Part 2 (Exploratory qualitative strand – three open-ended questions) 116
5.5.4. Sample details for Part 3 (Psychosocial qualitative strand - in-depth interviews) 117
5.5.5. Ethical considerations 117
5.6. Study Part 1 – Quantitative element 120
5.6.1. Instrument used – The Shame Experiences Survey 120
5.6.2. The pilot study 123
5.6.3. Analytic procedures 125
5.7. Study Part 2 – The exploratory, qualitative element 129
5.7.1. Instrument used – Three open-ended survey questions 129
5.7.2. Producing an operational model to analyse shame in the text 130
5.7.3. Analytic procedures followed 132
5.8. Study Part 3 – The psychosocial qualitative element 136
5.8.1. Interviews - participant recruitment and engagement 136
5.8.2. Instrument used: Semi-structured interview schedule 136
5.8.3. Procedures followed 137
5.8.4. Research trustworthiness: Validity, reliability, ethics 141

CHAPTER 6 – PART 1 RESULTS: The Shame Experiences Survey (quantitative study strand) 145
6.1. Introduction 145
6.2. Survey demographics 145
6.3. Global Shame scale frequencies: Prevalence, severity and impact of shame 147
6.4. Situational Shame scale frequencies: Shame about what? 149
6.5. Correlation between global and situational shame scales 155
6.6. Demographic variables and shame scores 156
6.7. Belonging at Wits/Regard for Wits/Worry about financial situation variables and shame scores 158
6.7.1. Belonging – Academic and social belonging at Wits 159
6.7.2. Regard for Wits as an institution 160
6.7.3. Worry about financial situation 160
6.8. Derived clusters from the Situational Shame scale 161
6.9. Shame about financial disadvantage – Single situational shame item 163
6.10. Shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' – Single situational shame item 165
6.11. Participant 'trouble' with quantitative measures of shame 169
6.12. Chapter summary 172
CHAPTER 7 – PART 2 FINDINGS: Open-ended questions (Exploratory, qualitative study strand) 175
7.1. Introduction 175
7.2. Demographics for survey qualitative questions 176
7.3. A student dictionary of shame 176
7.4. Shame about failing 179
7.4.1. The 'hard work' dilemma 179
7.4.2. Positioning of the 'self' in failing narratives 180
The 'alienated self' *180*
The 'blindsided self' *181*
The 'supported self' *182*
7.4.3. Positioning of the 'other' in failing narratives 182
The 'parental other' *182*
The 'supportive other' *183*

The 'hostile other' *184*

7.4.4. Managing shame about failing 185

7.4.5. Synopsis: Shame about failing and the 'model student' position 186

7.5. Shame in 'comparison to peers' 187

7.5.1. The competitive 'edge' conundrum 187

7.5.2. Positioning of the 'self' in comparison narratives 188

The 'self in camaraderie' *188*

The 'odd one out' *189*

The 'ridiculed self' *190*

7.5.3. Positioning of the 'other' in comparison narratives 191

The 'supportive other' *191*

The 'hostile/judging other' *191*

7.5.4. Managing shame in comparison to peers 194

7.5.5. Synopsis: Shame about comparison and the 'competitive student' position 195

7.6. Shame about being ridiculed 196

7.6.1. The predicament of 'not knowing' 197

7.6.2. Positioning of the 'self' in 'being ridiculed' narratives 198

The 'victimised self' *198*

The "supported self" *202*

7.6.3. Positioning of the 'other' in 'being ridiculed' narratives 202

The wilful shamers *203*

The bullying group *203*

The silent bystanders *204*

7.6.4. Managing the shame of ridicule 205

7.6.5. Synopsis: Shame about 'being ridiculed' and the 'knowledgeable student' position 209

7.7. Shame about being rejected 209

7.7.1. The messiness of being alone and rejected 210

7.7.2. Positioning of the 'self' in rejection narratives 210

The 'disconnected self' *210*

The 'betrayed self' *213*

7.7.3. Positioning of the 'other' in rejection narratives 214
The 'rude other' *214*
The 'understanding other' *214*
7.7.4. Managing the shame of rejection 215
7.7.5. Synopsis: Shame about being rejected and the 'isolated student' position 216
7.8. Shame about acts of omission and commission 217
7.8.1. Guilt has reparative possibilities 217
7.8.2. Positioning of the 'self' in 'acts of omission and commission' narratives 217
The 'guilty self with agency' *217*
7.8.3. Positioning of the 'other' in 'acts of omission and commission' narratives 218
The 'observing/disapproving other' *218*
7.8.4. Managing guilt 219
7.8.5. Synopsis: Guilt, shame and the 'agentic, responsible student' position 219
7.9. Shame about class 220
7.9.1. The affliction of poverty whilst studying at an elite university 220
7.9.2. Positioning of the 'self' in class narratives 221
The 'poor self' *221*
The 'privileged self' *224*
7.9.3. Positioning of the 'other' in class narratives 224
The 'privileged other' *225*
7.9.4. Managing the shame of poverty 225
7.9.5. Synopsis: Shame about class and the 'disadvantaged student' position 226
7.10. Shame about race 227
7.10.1. The insider-outsider dilemma at Wits 227
7.10.2. Positioning of the 'self' in race narratives 227
The 'racist self' *228*
The 'threatened self' *229*
7.10.3. Positioning of the 'other' in race narratives 234
The 'vengeful other' *234*
7.10.4. Managing the shame of race 235

7.10.5. Synopsis: Shame about race and the 'threatened student' position....235
7.11. Synopses of shame triggers and chapter summary....236
CHAPTER 8 – PART 3 FINDINGS: Portraits (in-depth, psychosocial qualitative strand)....240
8.1. Introduction to portraits of shame: In-depth psychosocial interviews....240
8.1.1. Portrait 1 – Nofoto....240
8.1.2. Portrait 2 – Charles....248
8.1.3. Portrait 3 – Addison....256
8.1.4. Portrait 4 – Zanele....263
8.1.5. Portrait 5 – Thuso....271
8.1.6. Portrait 6 – Emma....279
8.1.7. Portrait 7 – Adele....289
8.1.8. Portrait 8 – Mandla....294
8.1.9. Portrait 9 – Tau....299
8.1.10. Portrait 10 – Natalie....308
8.2. Synopses of portraits and chapter summary....316
SECTION III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION....324
CHAPTER 9 – A PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENT SHAME: Discussion of the three data sets....325
9.1. Introduction....325
9.2. The frequency, intensity and impact of shame in the student sample....325
9.2.1. Who has got more shame? Do demographics tell different stories?....326
9.2.2. Shame and belonging, financial worry and regard for Wits....328
9.2.3. 'Trouble'talking about shame....330
9.2.4. Shame about what? Is there evidence for common shame triggers?....331
9.3. Students' discursive constructions of their shame experiences: Investment in particular discursive positions over others....332
9.3.1. The loss of the ídeal 'self' within the institutional domain: The precarious 'model student' position....333
9.3.1.1. "Wits and me": Idealisation and disillusionment....333
9.3.1.2. Incompatible ideas of the 'self'....335

9.3.1.3. Defending against injury and public disgrace: Closing down the intermediate area of experience 339
9.3.1.4. Creating a space for agency: Accepting the limits of reality? 341
9.3.2. The loss of the familiar childhood milieu and entry into a competitive world: The isolated and competitive student positions 342
9.3.2.1. The ambivalence of launching out and socialisation at university 343
9.3.2.2. The turbulent peer context: Friendship and romantic relationships 346
University can feel lonely and rejecting *346*
The downside of "the competitive edge": Sibling rivalry and inferiority *349*
9.3.2.3. Role confusion: Inferior degrees and roles in society 353
9.3.2.4. Discourses of 'society' and 'not being known' protect the True Self from shame 354
9.3.3. The loss of a safe 'transitional space' in the classroom: A 'victimised' student position 359
9.3.3.1. The price of commodified education: Being (mis)recognised in the classroom 359
9.3.3.2. No room for 'trial and error': Classrooms as sites of humiliation when acquiring 'knowledge' 360
9.3.3.3. How discourses of victimisation defend against shame: Denial, mimicry and faking. 363
9.3.4. The loss of an inclusive 'ideal' society at university: Shame legacies and multiple threatened student positions 365
9.3.4.1. Situating shame about class in an intersubjective context 366
The shame of lack: (Mis)attuned recognition in a social context on campus *366*
Structural poverty: (Mis)attuned recognition - the disadvantaged student position . *369*
9.3.4.2. The identity crisis of a generation 371
Adequacy and belonging: The double wounding of the disadvantaged *371*
Ideological (dis)unity: The paradox of social justice and meritocracy *373*
The contagion of racialised class-based shame on campus *375*
9.3.4.3. Defending against multiple threatened student positions: Shame moves and countermoves 377
Doer-done-to dynamics: When the shamed become shamers *377*
Denial and distancing: The shame of White privilege *378*
Moving in and out of social identities: The Black middle-class *380*
Failure of the 'environment mother': The reproach against government *382*

9.4. Shame defences and the relational fallout: Conscious and unconscious coping scripts 383
9.4.1. Resilience: Reaching out and drawing support 383
9.4.2. Biography and the tendency towards splitting 384
9.4.3. Emotional legacies and tenuous idealisation 385
9.4.4. Turning against the 'self': Shame and self-reproach 387
9.4.5. (Dis)engaging from others: Avoidance and withdrawal 388
9.4.6. Reproach deadlocks and contested belonging on campus: Shame, threat and a failure to mourn 390
CHAPTER 10 – CONCLUSION: Metacommentary and final reflections 394
10.1. Introduction 394
10.2. Summary of key quantitative findings and the psychosocial themes 394
10.2.1. Key findings from the quantitative survey 394
10.2.2. Key psychosocial themes from the qualitative analyses 395
10.3. Metacommentary 399
10.3.1. A conflicted transitional space: Micro, meso and macro influences employed in the construction of students' shame experiences 399
10.3.2. Repressed shame and the reciprocal influence of the inner and outer worlds 402
10.4. Recommendations for higher education 404
10.5. Study critique: Limitations 405
10.6. Recommendations for further research 407
10.7. Final words 408
References 410
Appendix A: Ethical clearance certificate 454
Appendix B: The Shame Experience Survey (including participant information sheet) 455
Appendix C: Overview of shame scales reviewed 474
Appendix D: Executive summary of pilot study 477
Appendix E: Interview participant information sheet 480
Appendix F: Interview informed consent 482
Appendix G: Interview schedule 483

List of figures

Figure 1: The Compass of Shame model 57
Figure 2: The three parts of the Shame Experience Study 101
Figure 3: An organising framework for the research questions: The stratification of emotions 109
Figure 4: Using a Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods model for The Shame Experience Study 110
Figure 5: The Qual-quant weighting used for the Shame Experiences Study 111
Figure 6: The psychosocial research design for the Shame Experience Study 114
Figure 7: Flowchart depicting the treatment of Situational Scale frequencies 127
Figure 8: The multiple psychosocial influences considered in the Shame Experiences Study 138
Figure 9: Frequencies for the prevalence of student shame 147
Figure 10: Frequencies for the intensity/severity of student shame 148
Figure 11: Frequencies for the negative impact of shame on students' quality of life 149
Figure 12: The correlation between Global and Situational Shame scores 155

List of tables

Table 1: Description of student demographics for face-to-face interviews (Study Part 3) 117
Table 2: Operational model of shame developed for the Shame Experiences Study 131
Table 3: Prevalence of shame cues in the Situational Shame scale 150
Table 4: Shame intensity of 'Did happen' shame cues – ranked from most to least shame 152
Table 5: Descriptive statistics for Global, Situational and Total shame scores by gender 156
Table 6: Descriptive statistics for Global, Situational and Total shame scores by sexual orientation 157
Table 7: Descriptives for 'Interpersonal shame' score by gender 162
Table 8: Descriptives for 'Feelings of inadequacy' score by gender 162
Table 9: Scheffe post hoc tests for Q25 shame about 'Could not afford something' and race 164
Table 10: Descriptives for Q25 shame about 'Could not afford something' and race 164
Table 11: Descriptives for Q47 shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and race 166
Table 12: Scheffe post hoc tests for Q47 shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and race 166
Table 13: Descriptives for Q47 shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and language 167
Table 14: Scheffe post hoc tests for Q47 shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and language 167
Table 15: The seven common shame triggers and associated student positions 175
Table 16: Failing: The 'model student' position 187
Table 17: Comparison to peers: The 'competitive student' position 195
Table 18: Being ridiculed: The 'knowledgeable student' position 209
Table 19: Being rejected: The 'isolated student' position 216
Table 20: Acts of omission and commission: The 'agentic, responsible student' position 219
Table 21: Class: The 'disadvantaged student' position 226
Table 22: Race-related shame: The 'threatened student' position 235

CHAPTER 1 - SETTING THE SCENE: The psychosocial 'subject' and the research context

1.1. Introduction

There is little doubt about the powerful effect that a university education can have on the lives of individuals and whole societies. Higher education promotes identity formation (Renn, 2004; Walker, 2006) and facilitates upward social mobility across generations (Attewell et al., 2007). Because of its relationship to economic growth, higher education is also seen as a way of alleviating national poverty (Bloom et al., 2014). A university degree has become a desirable commodity for young people from all walks of life around the world as widening participation policies have raised young peoples' aspirations to unprecedented heights (Burke, 2012). Considering the weighty expectation placed on the shoulders of universities and students, one can appreciate that higher education in the South African context is an emotive issue – especially given the remnants of historical inequalities. In education research, there has been growing acceptance of the profound impact that contentious contextual issues have on students' university journeys. Rather than isolated entities, students and classrooms are now located firmly within educational institutions that in turn are situated within sociohistorical systems (Schutz & Pekrun, 2007). Additionally, more than ever before, universities are regarded as sites of "personal transformations", "identity changes" and "culture crossings" (Roland Martin, 2007). A willingness to embrace context in higher education research has manifested in the growth of student experience literature that has moved beyond narrow views of teaching and learning towards an inclusion of the wider learning experience (Case, 2008; Jones, 2018). This shift is also evident in recent South African student experience research which engages with the contextually specific ways that students give meaning to their university journeys (Case et al., 2018; Swartz et al., 2017; Swartz et al., 2018; USAf, 2018).

In addition to context, since the mid-2000s there has also been a global call in education research to forefront the role of emotions in education (Schutz & Pekrun, 2007). In South Africa, a 2007 report by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) appealed for the inclusion of affective factors in student research (Scott et al., 2007). In their comprehensive research titled 'Going to University: The influence of higher education on the lives of young South Africans', Case et al. (2018) highlight how students' university journeys are "deeply emotional". Historically, emotions related to scholarship – like test anxiety and motivation – have been well researched in education but studies on students' experiences of unpleasant emotional states like "anger, frustration, shame, hopelessness, and boredom" remain neglected (Schutz & Pekrun, 2007, p. 324). The student experience literature has therefore been critiqued for touching on emotions tangentially rather than as a focus of enquiry. The focus on emotional experience, together with a growing acknowledgement of the need for more sophisticated frameworks to understand student engagement (Case, 2008; Jones, 2018; Kahu, 2013; Mann, 2001; Solomonides, 2013) forms the foundation of this study from the education perspective.

Psychoanalytic thinkers have highlighted an important connection between shame and learning environments. They argue that grading systems and issues of competence and efficacy potentially fuel shame (Lansky & Morrison, 2014). Furthermore, with the aspirational value attached to a university education, students who do not meet performance standards are vulnerable to feelings of inadequacy and failure (Burke, 2012). While it is clear that shame is implicated in students' challenges and possible alienation within education systems, the dynamics and impact of student shame have not been fully examined. This study hoped to fill this gap by exploring student shame from a psychosocial perspective and theorise the role of shame in negative student identities. The proposition that shame leads to student disengagement is based on understandings of shame as signifying relational threat that often leads to disconnection and alienation from the 'self' and 'others' (Lewis, 1971; Scheff, 1990). Disconnection has deep-seated implications within university contexts because education research has confirmed an indisputable link between student engagement and success (Cousin, 2006; Cureton & Gravestock, 2019; Strydom & Mentz, 2010; Thomas, 2012). Additionally, shame has the potential to impact the core of students' identities, becoming maladaptive when expressed inappropriately or disproportionately in relation to the situation (Blum, 2008).

The early work on shame – undertaken through a psychoanalytic lens, albeit from different schools of psychoanalytic thought – has greatly increased our understanding of shame dynamics (Jacobson, 1964; Kohut, 1977, Lansky, 1987; Lewis, 1971; 1987; Morrison, 1989; Nathanson, 1987; 1992; Wurmser, 1981). However, due to a privileging of the therapeutic space, the experience of shame in an education context has been somewhat neglected in the psychological literature in general. This leaves a gap in our understanding of shame, even more so because shame is notoriously context dependent (Lansky & Morrison, 2014). Contemporary psychoanalytic research that uses a psychosocial framework has shown great promise by developing bodies of knowledge that prize unconscious intersubjective experience in different contexts. A psychosocial framework can bring together intrapsychic, interpersonal and contextual dimensions (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013) which are essential to an understanding of a complex phenomenon like shame. The utility of a psychosocial approach for a study on student shame is also that it is a sophisticated framework suitable to better understanding the student experience.

In this chapter, I introduce core shame and student experience concepts used in this study that will serve as important signposts for the reader. In this process I also briefly address the diverse bodies of knowledge that were consulted to marry psychosocial understandings of shame dynamics and the concepts of student experience and engagement. Because of the unique sociohistorical milieu in which this generation of South African university students find themselves, I also thoroughly describe the context of this study. I further discuss my own positioning in relation to the research context and my study participants. Finally, I give an overview of the structure of this thesis by providing a brief outline of each chapter.

1.2. A psychosocial lens on shame and subjectivity

The central phenomenon under investigation in this study is 'shame'. A multiplicity of shame definitions exist (Blum, 2008), largely because emotions are experienced at multiple levels of reality including "biological and neurological, behavioral, cultural, structural, and situational" (Turner, 2009, p. 341). Using a psychoanalytic lens, shame is viewed in this study as a painful intersubjective experience involving incompatible ideas of the 'self' before oneself and/or 'others'. Because shame involves an interplay between the 'self' and 'others', a psychosocial lens is helpful to explore the reciprocal influences between the micro-level and more collective or macro dynamics. This link between micro, meso and macro-level shame dynamics is significant because shame is highly social in nature and ubiquitous in society, yet it remains the least understood emotion across a variety of disciplines (Scheff, 2015). However, there is a lack of mature theorizing of "how emotions are aroused in varying types of social structures, how they are distributed across members of a population, and how they lead individuals individually and collectively to respond to sociocultural formations" (Turner, 2010, p. 196). Because universities are social structures that have significant individual and societal consequences, this study makes use of Turner's (2010) 'road map' of the stratification of emotions which outlines how "a micro-theory of emotions can be linked to more collective and macro-level dynamics" (p. 196). Turner (2010) argues that emotions have the ability to bind individuals into meso-and-macrostructures, becoming forces behind either integration or alienation in society. Similarly, Izard (2010) contends that "Emotions have multiple and quite significant functions in motivating and focusing individual endeavours, social interactions, and the development of adaptive and maladaptive behavior" (p. 368). Furthermore, a considerable set of studies have shown that the maladaptive aspects of shame have important negative consequences not only for individuals but also for society at large, ranging from depression to violence (Blum, 2008). The theory of the stratification of emotions (Turner, 2010) therefore marries well with a psychosocial approach because it enables the researcher to highlight the links between micro, meso and macro shame dynamics which potentially impact the integration or alienation of students at university. The psychosocial approach requires a mix of psychological and sociological principles to focus on both intrapsychic shame dynamics and social organisation and influences – and acknowledges that these influences are reciprocal.

Shame is a nuanced emotion, considered variable in form because of the vast vocabulary that people employ to describe shame states (Retzinger, 1995). There is also a variety of shame states which can be considered members of a larger shame family (Lewis, 1971; Morrison, 1998; Scheff, 2003). Some of the more common members of the shame family used in this study are humiliation, embarrassment, failure, incompetence, inadequacy, inferiority, unworthiness, and rejection. Morrison (1986) argues that shame serves as a signifying affect because it subsumes related affects. Although there are clear differences between the terms affect and emotional experience, they are used interchangeably for the purposes of this study. "Affect usually refers to something more embodied and less symbolised (whereas emotion is symbolised)" (Hollway, 2011a, p. 60). This study adhered to the school of thought in which shame variants form a spectrum of experience, ranging from less to more intense shame states (Steiner, 2011; Weiss, 2015).

For example, humiliation, shame and embarrassment have "important and subtle distinctions along the spectrum, with discomfort generally lessening as one moves from humiliation through shame to embarrassment" (Steiner, 2011, p. 27).

When well-meaning people enquired about my study on 'shame', I was often met with puzzled contemplation, "shame about what?" Interestingly, this question is central to current understandings of shame as an emotion that has multiple influences. This study therefore explores the multiple influences which trigger student shame – "shame about what?" – and how relationships with the 'self' and 'others' play out in the shame experience. To do this, this study utilises a mixed methods psychosocial approach – starting with a shame scale that measures situational shame experiences – as this facilitates a broad exploration of multiple potential shame triggers. The study findings are then deepened through qualitative psychosocial analysis of student shame narratives. Camras and Shuster (2013) argue that current research agendas that endorse emotions as the product of multiple factors, represents a significant departure from an existing body of shame literature, largely under the auspices of evolutionary-based discrete emotion theory. Discrete emotion theory concerns a number of basic emotions that have biologically determined responses. This theory has, however, been widely criticised for failing to acknowledge variations and gradations of emotional experience as well as ethnic and cultural differences (Barrett, 2006; Russell, 2003). The advent of post-structuralism and social constructionism's focus on context and plurality has given momentum to the shift towards considering multiple influences in emotion research agendas (Camras & Shuster, 2013).

Throughout this study there is also what may seem a repetitive emphasis on the position of the 'self' and the 'other' in the student shame experience. This is because Helen Block Lewis (1971) – who is widely regarded, from diverse schools of thought, as a seminal shame researcher – has helped us to understand that the organisation of the 'self' is central to the shame experience. Lewis used the relationship between the 'self' and the 'other' as a foundational working concept in understanding shame (Lewis, 1971, as cited in Retzinger, 2014). The terms 'self' and 'identity' have been widely theorized in different disciplines, however, in this study the 'self' is characterized as a non-unitary defended subject positioned within social discourses and 'identity' is considered the dynamic ongoing product of both internal and external processes (Hollway, 2010). Within the American psychoanalytic school of thought, subjecthood is shaped by both recognition of the 'self' as separate and aligning the 'self' with loved 'others' (Hollway, 2010). Benjamin (1998) suggests that subjectivity is more than agency because it includes a sense of ownership or 'authorship'. 'Authorship' concerns one's own inner experience and an awareness of the feelings, states of mind and intentions of others – a space that exists between the 'self' and object that can be shared. Bringing these principles of the 'self' and 'other' together, shame is conceptualised in this study as an unconscious intersubjective experience, having both intra-and-interpsychic aspects that result in interacting worlds of experience (Stolorow & Atwood, 1992). This psychosocial view is influenced by British object relations theory and American relational psychoanalysis that share principles of conflictual unconscious dynamics and how dynamics move between people and are influenced by developmental history (Hollway, 2010).

These definitions indicate that, in this study, 'intersubjective' does not mean interpersonal relationships solely in the traditional sense: it is more than interpersonal relationships. The term 'interpersonal relationships' usually implies relations between two separate people (Loewald, 1980), whereas from an object relations and relational psychoanalytic perspective, intersubjectivity includes unconscious processes and a 'self' that can only be experienced through recognition of the 'other' (Fonagy, 2018). Scharff and Scharff (1992) contend that:

> We are constructed of dynamic, internalized relationships between self and object. In turn we externalize our inner worlds onto our outside relationships, which turn again to influence our inner organization throughout our development as children and adults (p. xviii).

This study leverages the principle of intersubjectivity in an attempt to curb the inevitable binary between internal and external, as well as relationality and connectedness on the one hand and autonomy and separateness on the other (Hollway, 2010). The premise of this approach was a potentially fruitful understanding of shame experiences that are ultimately characterized by connection or disconnection from the 'self' and/or the 'other'. Methodologically, unconscious iintersubjectivity is achieved in this study by conceptualising a psychosocial subject who is simultaneously the product of a unique psychic and a shared social world (Hollway, 2010). The psychosocial subject is based on object relations theory that prioritises the phenomenological experience of the person and their relationships with others (Fonagy et al., 2002). Lansky and Morrison (2014) encapsulate the self-other connection in their definition of shame which has been foundational in this study:

> Shame is the affect that signals the threat of danger to the social bond (Scheff, 1990) or to a sense of integrity and regard for the self. …. the self is defined as a self before others or the sense of self that results from a self-evaluation derived from internalizing that actual or imagined view of oneself before others (p. 19).

This definition highlights that shame always has an audience and that there is a threat of danger. When shame is triggered, the experience of a 'self' before 'others' results in a sense of being exposed and perceptually objectified (Morrison, 1998). Because this study adheres to a developmental perspective – that shame originates in the primary attachment relationship but generalises to other relationships (Herman, 2012) – a core focus of the study was to explore shame responses including perceived threats to social bonds (Scheff & Retzinger, 2000). In the shame experience, the threat is of being seen by the 'self' and/or 'others' in undesirable ways which is usually perceived as a relational threat that generates any one of a number of unpleasant emotional states (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) that often alternate, underlie or are absorbed by shame (Lewis, 1971; Morrison, 1986). The complex alternation of emotions further justifies the need to consider variants when studying shame. However, the important idea of exposure before an audience – both real and/or imagined – also necessitated a consistent delineation between the 'self' and the 'other' in this study because it helps to unravel how and why students invest in particular discourses over

others to construct their shame experiences – for both conscious and unconscious reasons. Lansky and Morrison's (2014) definition of shame calls attention to a 'self' who is capable of self-reflection and self-evaluation, qualities that give shame its unique distinction as a self-conscious emotion. The social psychology literature has also made an important contribution to our understanding of shame as a self-relevant emotion by expanding our knowledge of self-conscious emotions (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Although much of this research has used a cognitive appraisal theoretical lens which makes a clear distinction between cognition and emotion, this study adopts an object relations view that espouses that the links or relations between objects *is* emotion or feelings (Bion, 1962). Thinking is therefore conceptualised using Bion's hypothesis of 'thinking' as the process of 'knowing' oneself in relation to another, rather than more conventional understandings of cognitive processes of the brain or the tendency to juxtapose emotionality and rationality (Turner, 2009). Stated differently, it is an intersubjective 'knowing' of one's experience.

Returning to the signal function of shame, it is interesting to note that psychoanalysis is not the only school of thought that has conceptualised shame as a defence, evolutionary social psychology and sociology perspectives have too. These perspectives have added greatly to our understanding of the role of social threat in shame – usually through the mechanism of comparison – and shame as a signal function respectively. Evolutionary psychologists argue that shame is a primitive form of social defence and have emphasized how threats to the 'self' are not just physical but social in nature (Gilbert, 2003). In Gilbert and Procter's (2006) recent work – based on evolutionary and cognitive/behavioural principles while drawing heavily on attachment theory – they postulate that high shame and self-criticism are forms of safety behaviour rather than maladaptive schemas. The common theme in these conceptualisations of shame as a defence is the social dimension of shame. Social psychologists have argued that although ideals and standards are mutually established and shared among members of social ranking systems these often lead to negative social comparisons within the system and shame results. In the sociological sense, shame is a social warning system: warning about the possibility of losing esteem before others. Sociologists, like Scheff (1990), have promoted the signal function of shame which emphasizes the interpersonal dimension of shame and disruptions to social bonds. In the psychosocial sense used in this study, shame signals losses that are experienced intersubjectively. How students cope with or defend against shame (Lansky & Morrison, 2014) will therefore form an important part of this study and object relations theory outlines a collection of defences that can be used to interpret intersubjective coping/defensive strategies. These defences include denial, rationalization, projection, idealization and splitting. Additionally, psychosocial theory can facilitate an understanding of how defending against shame can potentially impact dynamic student identities (Hollway, 2010). In this study, a defence is not considered pathological of itself but necessary to protect the 'self' from anxiety, shame and pain (Steiner, 1993/2004). Defences against shame are conceptualised in this study as an integral part of the shame experience, and the study hopes to illustrate these defensive processes through participants' use of particular discourses to adopt different, often conflictual, positions within their shame stories. This study will draw on psychoanalytic principles to

address how both the signal function and emotional experience of shame can occur as conflictual experiences.

Because shame has not been focal in investigations in the student context, a brief overview will be provided as to where this study is positioned in the education literature, together with brief descriptions of the controversial concepts of 'student experience' and, more specifically, 'student engagement', 'belonging' and 'alienation'. This will help to introduce the reader to the analytical marriage between shame and the student experience used in this study.

1.3. The student experience

Research on the student experience and student engagement was brought to the fore in the past few decades because of high attrition and poor throughput rates in higher education (Wawrzynski et al., 2012). Student engagement is now widely considered fundamental to current understandings of the student experience, as a central mechanism for student success (Callender et al., 2014; Kahu, 2013). However, student experience research is somewhat controversial in some arenas because student engagement has come to be characterised by behavioural and cognitive models, epitomised by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and its many derivatives used in countries around the world, including South Africa (Solomonides & Reid, 2009). Critics of the NSSE argue that annual, cross-sectional surveys play into ideologies of students as consumers. This approach does not seem to sit well with many who adopt a developmental perspective on higher education where *the student is* the product (Pace, 1982). Additionally, behavioural and cognitive approaches have been criticised for failing to address the aforementioned contextual and emotional dimensions of student experience.

It would seem that many in education are left asking how to obtain richer descriptions of the student experience. The answer seems to lie in leveraging more comprehensive frameworks for understanding the complexity of student engagement that include the student (including the affective domain), the institution, and the socio-cultural context (Case, 2008; Jones, 2018; Kahu, 2013; Solomonides & Reid, 2009). Dall'Alba and Barnacle (2007) have suggested that in order to achieve richer descriptions, research in higher education requires an ontological turn that uses constructivist approaches to understanding the student as a whole person or 'who they are'. In a similar vein, from the perspective of the educational development community, Case (2008) documented concerns about the dominance of the 'approaches to learning perspectives' in student experience research because this approach also has its origins in cognitive psychology and has tended to favour cognitive and behavioural aspects of learning, often resulting in decontextualized students, without emotion. This study on student shame therefore hopes to align with the new thrust in student experience research through its unique focus on emotion, the inclusion of context and by drawing on a psychosocial framework to pull these complex elements together. In this study, 'student experience' is therefore viewed as a psychosocial process of 'student engagement' that is influenced by personal and institutional factors and embedded within a unique sociohistorical context (Kahu, 2013).

According to Kahu (2013) student engagement is a multi-level phenomenon. Ryan and Deci (2002) define engagement or relatedness as "feeling connected to others, to caring for and being cared for by others, to having a sense of belongingness both with other individuals and with one's community" (p. 7). Although engagement and belonging are different concepts, belonging is closely associated with student engagement in the education literature and includes the ideas of feeling accepted, valued, and included (Masika & Jones, 2016; Thomas, 2012). It is this idea of relatedness, from the student perspective, that Slaten et al. (2014) argue has not been sufficiently addressed in the literature. One way of understanding student relatedness is to consider its converse. Jones (2018) argues that alienation is the converse of student engagement. Another example is how Case (2008) leverages the concept of 'alienation' as the opposite of engagement by drawing on the seminal work of Mann in which alienation is defined as per the Oxford English Dictionary as "the state or experience of being isolated from a group or an activity to which one should belong or in which one should be involved" (Mann, 2001, as cited in Case, 2008, p. 8). One can further build on an understanding of alienation by using a psychosocial conceptualisation. Geyer (2001) does this by defining alienation as "a subjectively undesirable separation from something outside oneself … or even inside oneself" (p. 390). The notion of alienation as separation from something both outside or inside the 'self' aligns well with the psychosocial approach used for this study in which experience is viewed as a complex interplay between the inside (intrapsychic) and outside (interpersonal). In a similar vein, it has been argued that relationships have objects and that "the object of this relationship can range from self, to others, to society and its institutions" (Mehra, 1973, as cited in Case, 2008, p. 324). Most researchers in the field of emotions agree that emotions have objects (Nussbaum, 2003). Britzman (2015) helps us take this line of reasoning one step further by contending that affects such as love, hate and ambivalence – and let's include shame – are projected into current contexts and although difficult to symbolize, impact individuals and the group psychology of education. Seen in this light, an institution – like the University of the Witwatersrand – can become an object towards which defensive activities are externally appropriated (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

This study therefore aimed to fill a gap in the literature by understanding shame in a South African student context from a psychosocial perspective. The key objective was to explore how shame shapes the student experience and engagement through the interaction of micro-level shame dynamics (incorporating unconscious intersubjectivity) and meso and macro-level structures and their respective ideologies. Bharuthram (2018) contends that we can only impact education through an understanding of students' emotional experiences at university. This study therefore aimed to explore the 'what', 'how' and 'why' of student shame experiences. The 'what' examined the prevalence and intensity of global and situational shame in students. Additionally, discourses were analysed to explain 'how' students constructed their shame experiences and positioned the 'self' and 'other'. The 'why' involved the exploration of conflicted student positions, including the investment in a variety of positions and the need to defend against painful feelings of shame and the implications for student identities and connectedness. Because shame is a concept or abstraction, the challenge was to bring shame out of the conceptual realm and make it tangible. This study hopes to make it possible for you to feel, see, and hear what student shame feels like.

1.4. The research context

This section provides an overview of the contentious context in which the students in this study found themselves. It portrays the complex confluence of class, race and neoliberal ideologies in a post-apartheid higher education landscape. I will also explain my own positioning in the context of this study.

1.4.1. The convoluted higher education landscape in South Africa

This study was located at the University of the Witwatersrand (henceforth called Wits, pronounced *Vits*) in Johannesburg, South Africa. Wits is spread over 400 acres in the suburbs of Braamfontein and Parktown, has eleven libraries and eighteen residence halls that accommodate approximately 20% of the student population. The university is structured into five faculties comprising of thirty-three schools. In 2017 (the year of data collection) the total number of student headcount enrolments at Wits was 38 343. Of these, 54.86% were female, 56.33% were Black South African and 34.51% were postgraduates (University of the Witwatersrand, 2017). For the purposes of these statistics, "Black South African" students refers to African, Coloured, Indian and Chinese. This classification is a way of acknowledging that all the aforementioned racial groups were impacted by apartheid policies in South Africa and therefore share, to varying degrees, the experience of 'Black' as a political identity.

The South African higher education sector is embroiled in a throughput crisis. While there have been vast improvements in student access, both completion and throughput rates remain contentious (Swartz et al., 2017). This has left the sector grappling to unearth the nature of the problem so as to mitigate negative student outcomes. The South African Council for Higher Education (CHE) appointed a Task Team to investigate the crisis in the sector and three key factors were identified as impacting student performance, namely, material (socio-economic), affective (psychological and social support) and academic (educational processes) (Scott et al., 2007). The importance of affective factors was confirmed by the results of the South African Survey of Student Engagement (SASSE) from which it seemed evident that academic and educational processes cannot compensate for the unaddressed material or affective factors of students. Scott et al. (2007) warned that educational interventions could be neutralized by affective factors resulting in the alienation of students from institutions. The 2015/2016 national student-led protests formed a meaningful backdrop and seemed incredibly significant to this study because of their ability to highlight both the economic and affective factors facing students. The protests were dubbed #FeesMustFall and, unlike prior protests in South Africa, the sheer scale of the movement garnered the attention of politicians and ordinary citizens alike, not to mention controversial worldwide media coverage. Although students presented a variety of demands to university management, at the heart of the matter lay the affordability of higher education, particularly for poor Black students (Lange, 2017). Government funding for universities had decreased from 49% in 2000 to 40% in 2014. (Cloete, 2016) The difference was made up through increased student fees which it is estimated increased by 42% alone from 2010 to 2014. These increases were well over the country's inflation rate. University education in South Africa therefore remains highly affordable for the wealthy but dismally unaffordable for the poor. Because of historical legacies, students who are

struggling are majority Black students, as class and race collide in the South African university context (Singh & Bhana, 2015).

The stark reality of the South African higher education sector is that it must contend with the dreadful legacy of apartheid in which generations of Black students were denied access to universities for approximately fifty years. Case et al. (2018) describe this as "systematic educational inequality by political design" (p. v). One of the implications of historical inequality is that many poorer students are also first-generation university students which impacts their support structures (Case et al., 2018; Swartz et al., 2017; Swartz et al., 2018; USAf, 2018). Additionally, the inadequacy of the public schooling system means that students from public schools often bear the brunt of arriving at university and being labelled as "underprepared" (USAf, 2018). Although the emergence of the Black middle class is a hallmark of the evolving South African economy, post-apartheid South Africa has not necessarily resulted in change for many poor black South Africans (Seekings, 2008). The international literature on acculturation in education also sheds some light on the difficulties faced by students from diverse backgrounds who must adopt the norms and values of a university's dominant host culture. Acculturation difficulties relating to race, class and language abound in many countries and have been identified as sources of alienation, shame and embarrassment at university, often resulting in academic and emotional hardships for affected students (Slaten et al., 2014; Zhang & Moradi, 2013). However, in the South African context, diversity and acculturation in the university context also reflect the social character of the country. Dolby (2000, 2001, 2002) argues that although the economy is often used as the entry point for discussions around the role and challenges of higher education, it is the social character of the country entrenched in past discrimination which is central to future challenges. Dolby raises the pivotal argument that universities have become important spaces for equity and redress. It is no wonder that belonging at university in South Africa has become a contested political and social claim (Carolissen & Kiguwa, 2018). Because upward social mobility through higher education is a strongly held ideal in post-apartheid society, for many young South Africans a lack of access to and success at university translates into a lack of social mobility (Lange, 2017): higher education is seen as the door through which to enter into new ways of being.

The aforementioned legacy of educational inequality together with the emergence of the Black middle-class in South Africa have resulted in class and race playing an increasingly complex role in the South African student experience (Bhana, 2014; Singh & Bhana, 2015). Student research seems to indicate that while some Black students align more with the shifting of class positions in a post-apartheid South Africa, other students' racial positioning is continuous with historically held constructions (Singh & Bhana, 2015). From an institutional perspective, there is a wide class variation between institutions themselves in the higher education sector. Swartz et al. (2017) broadly categorised South African universities according to urban/advantaged, rural/disadvantaged and universities of technology. According to this framework, Wits, together with the University of Cape Town, the University of Stellenbosch, the University of Pretoria, the University of the Free-State and Rhodes University falls within the urban/advantaged category. Although the Universities of Johannesburg and KwaZulu-Natal fall partly within this category, they also include an

urban disadvantaged component due to former institutional mergers. Urban/advantaged universities have better infrastructure and are better resourced than their rural/disadvantaged counterparts and the universities of technology. However, perhaps the real significance of this categorisation from a student perspective is that because of widening access policies, Wits now attracts students from classes that are more disparate than ever before and poorer students are faced with the pressure of fitting-in and succeeding at, what is regarded by students, as an 'elite' university (Cross & Johnson, 2008). There is a limited but significant body of research that shows how poverty relates to shame in students, including psychological distress and negative social identities (Firfirey & Carolissen, 2010; Loveday, 2015; Reay et al., 2005).

What further complicates the higher education story in South Africa is the global embracement of neoliberal ideologies. In this study, neoliberal ideologies in education is understood as market, management and performance principles which have infiltrated the subjective experience of education (Ball, 2016). Some argue that the privatisation of higher education is one of the dangerous results of neoliberalism because it has resulted in universities becoming businesses conforming to market philosophies with an inordinate focus on measurements like ratings and rankings (Hemsley-Brown et al., 2016). Importantly, neoliberalism has a trickledown effect that impacts the student experience – students are treated like clients and find themselves in hyper-competitive environments. Traditional notions of universities as training grounds that "offer a gateway to adulthood as well as reasoned citizenship" are no longer deemed feasible (Goldberg, 2016, "Instant delivery", para. 20). Universities no longer foster personal growth and a sense of belonging for all students. Neoliberal thinking is so pervasive that even well-meaning institutions inadvertently perpetuate this stance. For example, the South African Council on Higher Education (CHE) states that: "The South African higher education system … is recognised as the best on the continent, with several institutions comparable to the best globally in a variety of international rankings" (CHE, as cited in Swartz et al., 2017, p. 17). Swartz et al. (2017) argue that neoliberalism legitimises and reinforces inequalities. Notably, this is not only a problem in South African higher education, it is a world-wide phenomenon (Burke et al., 2015). Burke (2012) argues that while meritocratic principles and promoting excellence appear to have an aspirational flavour, students end up bearing the brunt of a highly competitive environment. "Participation is replaced with competition in a world where there are always 'winners' and 'losers', the 'best' and the 'worst', 'us' and 'them'" (Swartz et al., 2017, p. 19). Well-entrenched neoliberal discourses assume that 'hard work' and 'applying yourself' are the answers to student problems. By implication, many students no longer engage because the environment is felt to be unsupportive. Swartz et al. (2017) argue that neoliberal discourses of individualisation do not do justice to what is actually at stake for poorer South African students. Neoliberal ideologies seem to stand in contradiction to education as social justice and have the potential to magnify difference. Swartz et al. (2017) produced an in-depth student-centred report, called *Ready or Not*, which comprised the results of a five-year longitudinal study exploring both agency and obstacles faced by students in a sample of seven South African universities. Significantly, the report contends that students themselves felt that education plays an important role in the emancipation of previously disadvantaged members of South African society. However, #FeesMustFall signalled a felt breakdown in emancipatory processes in higher education. This led to a heightening of

racial tension on campus (Eagle, 2018; Lange, 2017) and rigid othering. Zembylas (2008) contends that recognizing shame in diverse education contexts can help transcend the rigid othering taking place and create openings for authentic emotional connections.

1.4.2. Researcher positioning

This study conceptualises a multiplicity of selves and student positionings which intersubjectively interweave in complex ways. Therefore, I want to briefly discuss several of my positionings, pertinent to this study. Firstly, as a human being who is intimately familiar with the experience of shame, secondly, as a PhD candidate at Wits, thirdly as a researcher and research psychologist and fourthly, a researcher who has socially circumscribed categorical identifications. As a human being, I have no doubt that my shame narratives are finely interwoven throughout the chapters of this PhD story. Every story in this study has been coloured by my story. I know how shame can cause a relatively well-adjusted individual to retreat and cut themselves off from relationship. My experience has taught me that shame does not belong in the realm of pathology but forms part of people's ordinary, everyday experience. However, the difficulties we all experience in acknowledging and metabolising shame became particularly tangible for me during this PhD journey. For example, I recalled how I had spent several years in analysis and had always felt mystified by my seeming inability to make progress. It was upon discovering the work of Steiner (1993/2004) – psychic retreats – that I understood, at least in part, what had transpired for me emotionally during therapy. Shame had caused me to retreat from authentic connection with my therapist and had clouded our relationship. What feels significant for this study is that through my growing willingness and ability to process my own shame, I have felt more connected to my study participants. Speaking about shame (Brown, 2006) and listening to the language of shame (Morrison, 1998) have fostered greater empathy towards myself and for others.

Secondly, on a professional level, my pursuit of psychology has been propelled by my keen interest in developmental psychology and specifically the realm of emotions. Despite pursuing a university education at a more advanced age, the process has played a significant role in my developmental journey. My keen interest in a university student population was borne out of my conviction that education transforms not only what is known but "who that person is" (Roland Martin, 2007, p. 6). Also, I believe in the critical role that relationships play in transformative processes at university. However, my research psychology internship at the Student Equity and Talent Management Unit (SETMU) at Wits during 2014 had sensitized me to the difficulties faced by many students at university and of "unwanted or undesirable education transformations" (Roland Martin, 2007, p. 3). SETMU facilitates access to educational opportunities for previously disadvantaged young people through programmes like the Targeting Talent Programme (TTP) that aim to increase academic, social and psychological preparation for university (SETMU, n.d.). During my internship I participated in monitoring and evaluation of SETMU graduates currently studying at university. Amidst the many successes there were also stories of struggle, humiliation and pain. Although transformation through education is inherently conflictual, it was the emotive

outpouring of the #FeesMustFall movement during 2015 that seemed to be symptomatic of the current complexities around educational metamorphoses. Turner (2010) suggests that the sociological literature has tended to focus on the mobilisation of more practical resources while neglecting that *emotional* arousal is a crucial resource for the mobilisation of social movements. Rather than relegating the residual feelings from the 2015 #FeesMustFall movement to quarantine status, it should be embraced and understood because to ignore these symptoms is to risk the "alienation, fear, guilt, and shame that so often accompany even those metamorphoses that represent improvement" (Roland Martin, 2007, p. 3). Thirdly, as a PhD candidate during the emotionally charged #FeesMustFall protests, I experienced some discomfort – as did many White students and lecturers – because of the race-based 'us' versus 'them' polarisation that characterized the campaign. In the same way that research demonstrates shifting positions within the Black student group so too there seems to be a shifting within the White group. Eagle (2018) argues that many White South Africans are coming to terms with what it means to be White and middle-class in a post-apartheid South Africa and that this requires a capacity for interpretation. Although anger seemed to be the overt emotion, I was curious about the role of shame in all of our experience of #FeesMustFall and the impact on group dynamics. Lansky (2005) contends that problems that arise in the context of social disruption are often the result of shame dynamics. Volkan (2004) also argues convincingly that we should recognise the role of shame within individuals and concomitant implications for groups, institutions and even nations. Was this perhaps what I and others experienced? A web of shame that included micro, meso and macro elements? However, because talk of shame – the S-Word – is largely taboo in society (Scheff & Mateo, 2016), I realised that if students' experiences of shame at university were to be unearthed, I would need to join the conversation.

As a PhD candidate I brought to the PhD table a devotion to this topic but, on the downside, a good dose of perfectionism too. Having an idealised version of the research process often results in elements of various personal conflicts that become transferred onto the backdrop of research. In the early stages of this project my own ideas of research at a PhD level were just that: idealised. Creswell (2014) unpacks the complexity of different research approaches and argues that a chosen approach needs to be informed by the researcher's philosophical assumptions, the research problem, the research designs/procedures of inquiry and methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. Mindful of this complexity, I spent many hours trying to find the *one* template that would be the *perfect* fit for my study. This was doubtless a search to feel more in control of copious amounts of data, oceans of literature and the chaotic process – scientific and creative – that *is* a PhD. I agonised over whether I had chosen the best or the right approach for my research. However, I found some consolation in the suggestion by Shannon-Baker (2016) that researchers should be attentive and involved with effectively legitimising and operationalising *their* chosen approach. I therefore endeavoured throughout this study to engage intentionally with my choices and to document my chosen approaches. Another significant moment in the life of the study was the sense of powerlessness I felt when, due to technical difficulties, the Wits Computer Network Service (CNS) was unable to disseminate the survey via e-mail to all Wits students on my behalf. Once again, I was forced to confront my ambivalence around dependency which, significantly, features as a theme in this study.

My fourth positioning is that of being a 49-year-old, middle-class, female, White, PhD candidate. One of the key issues currently under debate in critical research circles is whether a White researcher can investigate Black experience (Simons & Usher, 2012). A number of Black academics have voiced concerns regarding White discourses relating to Black students (Agyeman, 2008). The premise of these arguments is that my whiteness situates me as representing the discourse of the oppressor, in contrast to a number of my study participants. For example, with respect to the interviews, in some cases my positioning may have influenced what was said to me as an interviewer or, how I heard what was said. I have attempted, however, throughout this report and at every stage of the research process, to weigh up for the reader conflicting dilemmas located within the research situation. This process required ongoing evaluation of my own values and integrity within the research process. This evaluative process was based on firstly, principles of situated ethics that purport that education research is a social practice and therefore cannot be universalized (Simons & Usher, 2012), and secondly, with regards to the emotional impact of the study, Cartwright's (2004) principles of countertransference were used extensively. During the interviews, most participants related to me as a fellow student and were highly supportive of the research process. Only two participants tended to position me as a form of authority, possibly in my position as a more senior postgraduate student. However, despite differences between participants and myself, all the interviews had "moments of meeting" (Fonagy et al., 2008, p. 790). Additionally, several participants communicated that the interview provided a welcome space to talk about conflicted experiences at university. I trust that my status as a fellow student and non-judgmental empathy allowed us to connect in unexpected ways.

1.5. Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into three sections. The first section consists of three chapters (Chapters Two, Three and Four) which collectively form a comprehensive literature review. Chapter Two explains the theoretical framework used for this study. This chapter is positioned first in the literature review because it outlines a theory of the 'subject' which is integral to an understanding of important seminal work about shame. The theoretical framework is built on an object relations theory foundation that describes a non-unitary, defended subject whose unconscious dynamics have the potential to influence the emotional and intellectual lives of students. Chapter Three examines the shame literature and considers the elusive and defended nature of shame which make it a difficult phenomenon to research. Current poststructuralist influences that have led to prioritising shame triggers/situations in research is also highlighted. In this study constructionist influences are viewed as an important call to include context in shame research. The intersubjective nature of shame is then explored through literature that traces the complex interplay of seeing and being seen in both the inner (self) and outer (others) worlds. Chapter Four moves to the education literature and begins by briefly tracking the history of student experience research and how ideological shifts and crises in the higher education sector have foregrounded a dire need to focus on students in unique contexts and, importantly, include students' emotional lives. This chapter also reviews contentious belonging at university by attempting to chart some of the more prevalent and disputed

discourses in the higher education sector such as economic versus social justice agendas and discourses of capability versus deficit. Literature about the vulnerability of the adolescent life stage is also weaved in between to position the complexity of identity formation at university. The sole purpose of Chapter Four is to sensitise the reader to the many possibilities that exist for student shame within a university context. This strategy was necessary because of the paucity of empirical research in higher education in which shame was the focus of the research.

Section Two contains the body of empirical research – called the Shame Experiences Study – in four chapters (Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight). Chapter Five documents the research journey: a mixed methods psychosocial approach, methods, analytic techniques used and why these were deemed appropriate. Chapter Six presents the results of Study Part 1, the quantitative study strand, which included the gravity of student shame (frequency, intensity/severity and impact) and differences in shame levels based on demographic variables. This chapter also includes patterns of prevalence and intensity of situational shame triggers as well as associations between levels of shame and feelings of 'Belonging to Wits as an institution', 'Regard for Wits' and 'Worry about financial situation'. Chapter Seven presents the findings of Study Part 2, the open-ended, exploratory qualitative questions. Seven common situational shame triggers are presented, they are: failing, comparison, being ridiculed, being rejected, acts of omission and commission, class, and race. Every shame trigger is delineated by using a variety of discursively constructed positions of the 'self' and the 'other' in the shame experience. A core student position is then outlined for each shame trigger which represents the central shame concern or discrepancy of the 'self' often requiring the student to defend against shame. Chapter Eight presents the portraits from Study Part 3, the in-depth psychosocial interviews. The portraits prioritise how unconscious dynamics impact the multiple ways in which students engage in socially shared meanings around shame experiences at university. The role of personal history in this process is also considered.

Section three is made up of Chapters Nine and Ten. Chapter Nine integrates the findings from Study Parts 1, 2 and 3 while comparing and contrasting the findings to the literature reviewed in Chapters Two and Three. Four key psychosocial shame losses are discussed using a Winnicottian (2005) understanding of the intermediate area of experiencing as applied to a university context together with Eriksonian (1968) principles of adolescent identity formation. The four losses are: the loss of the 'ideal' self within the institutional domain (the precarious 'model student' position); the loss of the familiar childhood milieu and entry into a competitive world (the isolated and competitive student positions); the loss of a safe transitional space in the classroom (a victimised student position); and the loss of an inclusive ideal society at university (shame legacies and multiple threatened student positions). These losses and associated student positions will be used to demonstrate both the common and idiographic nature of student shame. Because shame significantly impacts relationships, the discussion culminates with a section devoted to understanding the relational consequences of various shame coping strategies used in the institutional domain. Chapter Ten concludes the study with a summary of key findings, a metacommentary thereof and reflections on study limitations as well as recommendations for higher education and further research.

SECTION I: LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER 2 – THE THEORETICAL FRAME: Theorising the concept of relationship in a psychosocial study of shame

2.1. Introduction

Section I of this study – the literature review – aims to marry object relations theory and shame principles from various schools of thought and discuss their potential application within a student context. Chapter Two therefore describes how object relations theory can be used to theorise relationship in a psychosocial study of shame and is therefore a suitable theoretical framework. Chapter Three reviews existing shame literature from various disciplines and explains different aspects of the experience of shame and its defensive function. Chapter Four reviews the current status of the literature about student experience and potential shame gaps. The analytic marriage of object relations theory and shame was deemed necessary because firstly, a study of shame requires a theory of the 'self' (Lewis, 1971) and secondly, there is no comprehensive theory of shame (Womersley et al., 2011). According to Morrison (1986) the lack of theorising of shame in the classical psychoanalytic literature is largely because the 'self' – as a Freudian concept – lacked attention. However, I argue that one way of overcoming a lack of theorising of the 'self' in shame is to apply the principles of object relations theory and relational psychoanalysis to the student shame experience. Object relations theory was deemed highly suited to the study of a social emotion, like shame, because it positions people as relationship-seeking – with the aim of this seeking being 'objects' (people, places, ideas, institutions, and so on). Object relations theory can also accommodate both the intrapsychic and interpersonal dimensions which are regarded as crucial to understanding shame. Intrapsychic because 'objects' are felt to be inside the person (Hinshelwood & Fortuna, 2018). Interpersonal because both object relations theory and self-psychology (although representing two distinct schools of psychoanalytic thought) have the ability to connect the individual to their interpersonal and social environments (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Importantly, the premise of this theoretical framework is that the connection point between representations of 'others' and the 'self', both internal and external, *is* emotions (Bion, 1962). The shame literature is therefore reviewed using an intersubjective lens.

But, beginning with Chapter Two – the theoretical frame – I introduce some of the cornerstones of Kleinian object relations theory used for this study and discuss the proposed application of these concepts to shame. In particular, Kleinian (1997) splitting and the paranoid-schizoid position will be explained as central to normal everyday functioning, yet indicative of defending against shame. This theoretical review will also paint a picture of the application of shame to student identities using a Winnicottian (1965) lens of the True and False Self because firstly, object representations of people and relationships are deeply entwined in the process of identity formation (Hinshelwood, 2003) and secondly, shame is regarded as the genesis of negative unwanted identities (Ferguson et al., 2000; Lynd, 1958/2014). Lastly, because a psychosocial premise of this study is that personal histories matter, the developmental origins of shame will also be explored in the literature. This is important because although shame originates in primary

attachment relationships, it generalises to other relationships in the here and now and functions to regulate different forms of social life (Herman, 2012).

2.2. Object relations theory and the shame experience: The 'self' and the 'other'

A core component of this study is understanding the relational interplay between the 'self' and the 'other' in the shame experience (Lewis, 1971). Because of its focus on the primacy of relationships in experience – both conscious and unconscious – object relations theory provides a useful way of understanding the organisation of the 'self' in relation to others. The term 'unconscious' includes implicit or procedural levels of memory which influence not only how we continually relate to others in the external world but also how we relate to internal psychic representations of others (Schore, 2015). Waddell (2002) describes an important shift in psychoanalytic thinking from more instinctual approaches towards that of psychic life as the relational interplay between the 'self' and the 'other', coloured by emotions:

> Klein, and others, notably W.R.D. Fairbairn and D.W. Winnicott, traced a crucial developmental shift from anxiety about self-survival to concern for others, emotional responsibility and a desire to repair. With the linking of developmental to ethical concerns and matters of value, psychoanalysis became less instinct-bound and more interested in emotional life and meaning. This interest in the formative effect of early relationships became known as an "object relations" approach, a term which, albeit clumsy, stresses the significance of the nature and quality of relationship between self and other (p. xviii).

Waddell (2002) appropriately notes the "clumsiness" of the term 'object relations'. One may ask why a more accessible term was not used. However, Ivey (1989) clarifies that the significance of 'object' is because, in Kleinian theory, relationships are internalised and there is not necessarily a direct correspondence between people in the external world and the internal version of these people in our minds – 'objects' is therefore more encompassing of this dynamic interplay between internal and external relationships. The term therefore foregrounds the role that a person's developmental history plays in relating to others and how this history manifests in the present through internalised relationships and impacts identity. Ivey (1989) defines object relations theory as a:

> … psychoanalytic developmental account of how primary interpersonal relationships in the infant's external world become internalized, represented and metabolized, at the level of fantasy into a nucleus of personal identity (p. 3).

Additionally, Ivey (1989) suggests that 'object' is appropriate because, on a psychological level, people do not necessarily relate to the whole of another person but often relate to specific parts or functions of that person. Internal objects can be "people, things, ideas and values" (Davids, 2002a, p. 67). This 'part' object relating also applies to the self: "Parts of the self are seen in dynamic interaction with each other and complementary internal and external objects" (Fonagy, 2018, p. 93). Consequently, both whole and part

internal objects are continuously subjected to intrapsychic processes that have significance for the emotional and relational functioning of an individual.

2.3. Unconscious phantasy and the public versus private shame debate

Not only does object relations theory offer the ability to help interpret relationships involving the 'self' and the 'other' in the shame experience but also the complexity of the inner and outer world. Roth (2001) argues that an individual's feelings towards others are experienced through the lens of unconscious phantasies about relationships with existing objects. A person's experience is therefore formed from internal and external reality and this ultimately affects how the self is constituted (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Hollway (2010) contends that the Kleinian inner world of unconscious phantasies serves as a template for interactions and forms a useful analytic bridge between external and internal objects/worlds and identity formation that is derived from both agency and social formations. According to Clarke (2003), Kleinian unconscious phantasy is not about escaping from reality – like 'fantasy' spelled with an 'f' – but it is the mental expression of impulses and defences used to construct reality when attributed to incidents in the external world. Phantasy is potent and can alter feelings resulting in projection onto objects both real and in the internal world. Additionally, phantasy impacts our interpretation of others and real-world events:

> In these phantasies, people and parts of people live and die inside and outside the self; move around; give rise to enormous gratification and equally enormous fear, jealousy, or envy … In this way phantasies strongly influence expectations and interpretations of real events in the world (Segal, 1992, as cited in Clarke, 2003, p. 126).

The implication of phantasy to a study of shame is that "our perception of others is both effected and constructed by our emotional state" (Clarke, 2003, p. 128). For example, Stadter (2011) found that patients who had an inner world of shaming became connected to others by shameful thoughts and feelings resulting in multiple negative representations of the 'self' and the 'other'. He described this process as multiple pairings of the 'self' and 'others' connected by shame. In Kleinian theory, the 'internal world' of unconscious phantasies underlies all mental processes (Spillius et al., 2011). As such, the internal world is the source of well-being and creativity (Davids, 2002a). Thus, object relations have important implications for the intellectual life of students. The intellectual potential of students is often theorised in the student experience literature as the capacity for deep versus surface learning, however, Case (2008) argues that this topic is often approached from behavioural and cognitive perspectives which results in decontextualizing students and excluding emotions. Kleinian theory, however, gives primacy to feelings and object relations in mental processes (Clarke, 2003). People become psychologically transformed in our minds through phantasy – in ways that are meaningful to us, based on significant relationships in our unique developmental histories. Internal object relations are therefore not forgotten memories but psychic configurations of the 'self' and representations of the 'other' that have an ongoing effect on mental life:

> Infantile feelings and phantasies leave, as it were, their imprints on the mind, imprints which do not fade away but get stored up, remain active, and exert a continuous and powerful influence on the emotional and intellectual life of the individual (Klein, 1975, p. 290, as cited in Clarke, 2003, p. 124).

This means that personal history matters. Two important principles of unconscious phantasy used for this study are firstly, that Kleinian theory frames instincts within a relational context (rather than individually, biologically instinctual) and secondly, that there is always a reciprocal influence between phantasy and reality (Roth, 2001; Segal, 1992). Applied to higher education, this implies that the student must grapple to make sense out of the ongoing interaction of the external world at university and their internal object world and that the shame experience is a complex mix of the external and internal world: "To the original danger situation is added the shame anxieties and narcissistic conflicts that attend threat to adult integrity and social status – that is narcissistic conflicts involving shame" (Lansky, 1995, p. 1081). It is this irreducibility of the unconscious that Kleinians call the 'inner world' (Rustin, 1991). In Kleinian theory, object relating is therefore one of the most important functions of the ego where projection and introjection are used to construct objects, good and bad. These objects can become a source of stability or internal persecution. This idea of the external/internal and outside/inside is important to a psychosocial study of shame because it aims to avoid playing into longstanding dichotomies of private/internal versus public/external shame. Although some spheres of contemporary shame research do still hold to an internal/external dichotomy, research by Allan et al. (1994) demonstrated that there is a high correlation between the two forms of shame. For example, Gilbert (2000) argues that if a person believes they are inadequate (internal shame), they are also likely to believe that this is how 'others' see them (external shame). Morrison (1989) argues that the psychoanalytic concept of internalisation is a way to address the public/private or outside/inside debate as it relates to shame. Psychoanalytically, to experience shame we do not necessarily need an external shamer or even an audience – although they are often present – we need only that internal presence from which the judgements and values of internalised objects or 'others' operate unconsciously. Drawing on the work of Loewald (1980) and using a developmental perspective, Hollway (2010) therefore posits that "becoming" is a lifelong process in which both individuality and intersubjectivity are intertwined. She further argues that the conflicts that arise from the inherent tension between individuality and intersubjectivity result in "the many and changing expressions of identity that are evident across time, space, social differences and individuals" (p. 219).

The application of unconscious phantasy to this study of shame was therefore that students' experiences of shame at university were likely to be informed by complex interactions between their past experiences and subsequent expectations and their real-world interactions with others and the institution Understanding shame experiences therefore required an exploration of both psychic functioning and real-world interactions in the current context – a complicated mix of public and private shame. The significance of real-world context to understanding the student experience in higher education research will be further unpacked in the section titled "Remedying decontextualized students who are devoid of emotions". For

now, however, a brief discussion follows regarding Klein's (1997) conceptualisation of defensive psychic positions which are often used to defend against a number of painful experiences, including shame.

2.4. Mitigating shame: Splitting and the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions

If shame is both a private and public experience and permeates the inner and outer worlds, it gives rise to the question: How do people cope with or defend against shame? Klein (1997) developed the concept of splitting as a theoretic and analytic tool that can be applied to a variety of tensions including shame. Although hers was not a theory specific to shame, Hollway and Jefferson (2013) purport that central to the Kleinian approach is a subject who seeks to legitimate and mitigate painful experiences and defend against anxiety, guilt and shame. Klein's (1997) premise, in developing the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, was that human nature is characterised by contradictions and resulting tension. Klein (1997) termed a defence against painful anxiety and shame, splitting. She argued that individuals use splitting when in the paranoid-schizoid position – a mental position that is assumed when under psychic threat. You will recall that the first part of the definition of shame used for this study was derived from Scheff (1990) who argues that shame is a signal of danger and according to Klein (1997) there is, throughout life, an interplay between external and internal danger situations as well as external and internal sources of anxiety and shame. Klein (1997) differentiated between internal or more neurotic sources of anxiety and external or objective sources of anxiety. For example, she considered the infant's fear of the loss of the mother – while dependent on her to meet their basic needs – objective anxiety. Conversely, the anxiety stemming from the fear that the needed mother has or will be destroyed by the infant's own sadistic impulses is 'neurotic anxiety'. Although Klein (1997) considered the ability to differentiate between internal and external danger situations as a developmental achievement of the depressive position, she argued that the lines usually remain blurred because external reality and objects continue to be shaped by phantasies. Difficulties in differentiating between the inner and outer world mean that, even later in life, an external experience can arouse anxiety or shame that stems from intrapsychic sources.

What was Klein's solution to managing these sources of anxiety and shame? Klein (1952) argued that the way to manage anxiety and shame was through mourning and rebuilding the inner world following disappointments – ushering in the depressive position. Rather than correspond to depression, the mental health disorder, Klein's (1952) depressive position was suggestive of painful depressive feelings involved in facing loss and mourning and the capacity to acknowledge one's own aggression and hate. This is in contrast to depressive illness that may result as a defence against mourning. Klein further contended that a failure to mourn is usually characterised by splitting. Splitting is a psychological defence used to dichotomously divide different perceptions of the world (Holmes, 2013). For example, good and bad, supportive and unsupportive or hostile and hospitable. Parts of the 'self' that are feared bad or unacceptable, are split off and through the process of projection are identified as belonging to an outside person or object (Hinshelwood, 1991; Segal, 2006). Klein (1997) believed that splitting served a protective function, defending against the anxieties and shame that impact the development of the ego, super ego and object

relations. Klein's (1997) concept of splitting in the paranoid-schizoid position was built on Freud's (1938) proposition that the mind produces inconsistent thoughts and beliefs and adopts opposing points of view (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Waddell (2002) captures this Kleinian idea managing contradictions as follows:

> The realistic estimation of the actual qualities of the other, and an acceptance of what is found there; the capacity to bear the loss of the external presence but nonetheless to retain that presence internally in the face of absence, of doubt and uncertainty, of loss of trust, and even of fear of betrayal by the loved one. The defining element lies not in the fact of "good" and "bad" as such, but in the different capacities to relate to, and to make sense of experience, whether that be in itself good or bad (p. 192).

Hollway (2010) reconfirms a depathologised view of splitting by arguing that ongoing conflicts between internal and external experience are "something ordinary, inevitable and an underlying principle of life and change" (p. 217). Klein (1997) argued that the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions are on a continuum and that both are necessary at different times for the development of the ego. These positions necessarily arise through a muddling of good and bad during processes of introjection during development and result in the child splitting objects into good and bad. The developing ego becomes integrated or well-developed by taking-in and identifying with good objects. A good object is an object who can satisfy the infant; therefore it is not necessarily a reflection of the 'goodness' or 'badness' of the object per se (Roth, 2001). It is the taking-in of the good that enables the development of a robust ego that can effectively manage internal conflicts and the demands of the external environment. In other words, the more helpful and satisfying experiences a child has, the more capacity they have to function from a depressive position – which entails tolerance of psychic conflict and loss. In infancy, splitting is crucial to protect the ego and good objects from bad objects (Roth, 2001). However, as the ego becomes stronger it enables an individual to tolerate reality with its ambivalence, pain and an accompanying loss of omnipotence. The ability to process loss throughout life is therefore related to biographical history and in particular, the ability to bear psychic reality (Waddell, 2002). The question that arises is when splitting should be a cause for concern. Normal splitting is distinguished from pathological splitting via the level of intensity and inflexibility. While pathological splitting results in distortion of perceptions and volatile interpersonal relating, grounded in extreme states of fragmentation, helpful splitting is usually temporary and brings order to chaos, manifesting as a moving back and forth between idealised and persecutory states – a process that strengthens the ego and facilitates integration and tolerance of ambivalence. Helpful splitting is therefore the mechanism that provides structuring of the primitive ego.

Important to a study of shame, if the capacity for depressive position functioning is hindered, the result is a decreased ability to integrate good and bad as well as differentiate between inner and outer experiences. This is often felt as a residual confusion around 'me' and 'not-me' experiences. Roth (2001) describes how 'others' are perceived as dangerous and threatening during times of anxiety and the lines between the 'self' and the object become blurred. Particularly when projective identification is used, there follows a blurring

of the distinction between the 'self' and the object. This inability to differentiate between inner and outer experiences and 'me' and 'not-me' experiences echoes Lewis's (1971) description of diffuse boundaries that characterise the shame experience. For example, where an individual's own aggression is experienced as the aggression of the 'other' or where there is vicarious experience of the 'other'. The implication of blurred boundaries and misplaced aggression in the shame experience is that:

> While we may insist that others must be making malignant judgments about us, we can't know that for certain, and it remains our own eye looking inward that ultimately condemns us to these states of shame (Morrison, 1998, p. 24).

Klein (1997) further argued that splitting of objects is consequential because it is not possible to only split off the object; the splitting process necessitates a split in one's own ego, resulting in a depleted ego and less capacity to think. Klein (1946) claimed that with the repetitive use of splitting over time, the ego becomes poorly integrated. The implication of poor ego integration is that the memory of a good object becomes absent in the presence of a bad object. The good object is therefore felt to be replaced by a persecutory object. By keeping different phantasies apart, the individual splits not only the object but also her/himself. It is for this reason that splitting results in a somewhat precarious internal organization of the 'self'. The more severe the splitting, the more the badness of the 'other' is exaggerated as parts of the 'self' are projected outward and any form of goodness in the other is then overlooked. This process seems to parallel Nathanson's (1992) *Attack others* response to shame (to be discussed further, later in this chapter). In contrast, when splitting is less severe it often includes some form of mitigation towards the badness of the 'other'.

Although this short reading of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions may result in the depressive position sounding like the gold standard of psychological wellbeing, Hollway and Jefferson (2000) suggest that the depressive position can be difficult, if not impossible, for anyone to endure in the face of internal and/or external threats. Rather, individuals move between the depressive and paranoid-schizoid positions in attempts to preserve the good – especially during times of threat. Klein (1997) observed that when splitting was not available as a defensive function, individuals were at risk of being overwhelmed by primitive anxiety resulting in confusion, fear and even mental disorders. There is, however, a risk of over-use of the paranoid-schizoid position where the good may be preserved at the cost of reality because threatening and dangerous aspects are split off from the 'self' into objects (Temperley, 2001). However, individuals do not function exclusively from within either position in all spheres of their life: it is possible to respond from a paranoid-schizoid position in one area and a depressive position in another (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). It is also possible to function from a paranoid-schizoid position in one instance and a depressive position in the very next instance. This is the genius of Klein's work – that we can respond from a different state of mind from one moment to the next and from one situation to another over the course of a lifespan, with the paranoid-schizoid position more likely to be used during times of stress (Segal, 2004). In Kleinian theory, the depressive position is continuously achieved and then lost requiring re-instantiation (Temperley, 2001).

2.5. Projection: Prototypes of loving and hostile relationships

Recall that Britzman (2015) argues that affects in education contexts, particularly those that are difficult to symbolise, are projected into current contexts that impact individuals and groups. Object relations theory is a helpful lens with which to interpret shame in a student context because it views projection as one of the emotional connection points between the 'self' and 'others' – a form of intersubjective communication. Steiner (1990) describes projection in terms of prototypes of hostile and loving object relationships. When feeling safe, loving feelings are projected outward to form the prototype of a supportive object relationship. Conversely, the prototype of a hostile object relationship is formed when feeling threatened by persecutory internal sources which are projected outward. This finely orchestrated dance between one's own emotions and thoughts and the 'other' is described by Klein (1975c) as follows:

> We are [in certain states in mind] inclined to attribute to other people – in a sense, to put into them – some of our own emotions and thoughts; and it is obvious that it will depend on how balanced or how persecuted we are whether this projection is of a friendly or hostile nature (p. 252).

Healthy functioning therefore involves an ability to integrate different aspects of the 'self' without attempting to disown them through projection. However, the proviso is that this needs to happen without excessively disrupting one's psychic equilibrium on a day-to-day basis. For this to happen individuals are required to draw on 'common-sense' (Bion, 1962) – which is the ability to integrate different emotional perspectives of a relationship or a person. Klein's concepts of splitting and projection demonstrate how anxiety, shame and guilt impinge on the ways an individual transforms social reality through internalization (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). In this sense, splitting is an intersubjective process because perception always includes a projective element. Steiner (2011) cautions that the problem with projection is that it does not necessarily alleviate suffering, only feelings of responsibility for it. Roth (2001) suggests that a more constructive projection is when a person can distinguish between the subject and object and not reduce one to the other. When objects are experienced as whole objects, ambivalent impulses can be directed towards the object rather than splitting of the 'self' and the object (Steiner, 1990). This leads to the integration of experience and an important shift from concern about one's own survival to concern for objects on whom one depends. While object relations theory provides useful tools to understand intersubjective relating, Winnicott's (1965) theory of ego distortion in terms of True and False Self builds on our ability to conceptualise the organisation of the 'self' while paying particular attention to the environment. A theory that considers the environment was deemed particularly important to this study which explored shame in a university context.

2.6. The True and the False Self in an intermediate area of experiencing

While shame is not the focus of Winnicott's (1965) theory, Lansky (1995) intimates that shame is implicated in the development and later functioning of a False Self. According to Winnicott (1965), when an individual fails to develop an integrated sense of identity and autonomy, a rigid False Self develops, and the result is an inability to relate to others as separate from the 'self'. The False Self responds through conformance, compliance, agreeableness, submissiveness, self-acquiescence, hiding one's own gestures and even undermining one's own ability (Fonagy, 2018; Ivey, 1989; Winnicott, 1965). The consequence of this failure to develop one's own thoughts and feelings is that the individual lacks the ability to engage with others and feels disconnected (Ivey, 1989). In extreme forms of compliance, such as physical abuse, Fonagy et al. (2002) argue that "unbearable shame is generated through the incongruity of having one's humanity negated, exactly when one is legitimately expecting to be cherished" (p. 426). Otherwise stated, when one's expectations of being seen and understood as a unique individual – with thoughts and feelings that matter – are not met, it results in shame. However, under normal circumstances, feelings of objectification and devaluation are likely experienced on a continuum with varying degrees of ambivalence experienced towards external others while undergoing a crisis of one's sense of self. The role of environmental 'others' is therefore inextricably intertwined with one's sense of 'self'. Winnicott (1965) believed that the individual and the environment are interdependent. He argued that a primary function of the False Self was compliance to environmental demands to hide and protect an inner, sacred core, called the True Self:

> Although healthy persons communicate and enjoy communicating, the other fact is equally true, that each individual is an isolate, permanently non-communicating, permanently unknown, in fact unfound (p. 187).

Winnicott (2005) was particularly interested in the interplay between the outer and inner worlds of a person and his theory is credited for its focus on relationality as is evident in his portrayal of the ongoing conflict between individuality and sociality. He called this area of interplay the 'transitional space' – also called an intermediate area of experience or potential space. Winnicott (1965) claimed that the more healthy an individual, the greater the ability to live in an intermediate social space which requires on the one hand some compliance, but then the ability to discern when compromise is not acceptable to the True Self. Greenberg and Mitchell (1983) describe this interplay as follows:

> The continually hazardous struggle of the self for an individuated existence which at the same time allows for intimate contact with others (p. 190).

According to Winnicott (1965), too much compliance and the failure to develop the True Self results in increased splitting. In a similar vein, Frosh and Barraitser (2008) argue that one can only make sense of experiences when there is emotional authenticity. If authenticity is lacking, experience tends to be superficially accommodated in the personality or projected outwards. However, the False Self is often so convincingly adaptive that even psychotherapists may, in the course of therapy, respond to and mistakenly

work with the False Self (Ivey, 1989, Steiner, 1993/2004). However, Fonagy et al. (2002) argue that although the False Self structure may be superficially convincing – because of strong identification with the object – the individual is actually phenomenologically empty and vulnerable. It is suggested that this highly adaptive False Self may prove to be particularly problematic in a university environment where students are pursuing intellectual development because Winnicott (1965) discovered an association between the False Self and the tendency of some individuals to intellectualise rather than experience:

> When a False Self becomes organized in an individual who has a high intellectual potential there is a very strong tendency for the mind to become the location of the False Self, and in this case there develops a dissociation between intellectual activity and psychosomatic existence (p. 144).

The development of a False Self therefore obstructs the development of an inner world (Frosh & Barraitser, 2008). This is concerning because an inner world provides the much-needed resources for thoughtfulness and reflective activity when acquiring a university education. Additionally, it is only *recognition* of the True Self that promotes a sense of security about the acceptability of the 'self'. This allows for creativity because it facilitates an ongoing expectation that the True Self will be recognised. The benevolent cycle here is one in which feeling oneself to be acknowledged but not impinged upon, allows one to think of oneself and one's inner processes as having value rather than being disparaged and inadequate or destructive. Benjamin (1988) explains the centrality of recognition by the 'other' in the development of the 'self' as follows:

> The concept that unifies intersubjective theories of self development is the need for recognition. A person comes to feel that "I am the doer who does, I am the author of my acts", by being with another person who recognizes her acts, her feelings, her intentions, her existence, her independence. Recognition is the essential response, the constant companion of assertion (p. 21).

Conversely, if the False Self is recognised it leads to feelings of insecurity, unacceptability of the 'self', blocks creativity and sets up a malevolent cycle. Winnicott's (1958) paper on the capacity to be alone highlights how a child draws on the mother's thoughtfulness and her capacity to convey the state of being thought about. The child then feels free to be alone, to think their own thoughts, even troubling ones, to follow something through. Winnicott's transitional space is therefore an in-between place where the infant moves from a state of merger with the mother to that of separateness (Ivey, 1989). The safety net is in place; even if the child falls, nothing will be broken. It is the potential space for differentiation between the 'self' and the 'other'. It is the transitional space that moves the infant from phantasies of merger to the reality of separation. However, if this process is disturbed in infancy it results in an inability to integrate the ego, a lack of object constancy and disruption of transitional space that impacts one's outlook on other people. According to Gentile (2007) the ability to understand objects as external, signals the experiencing 'self' who experiences both desire and limit. Rather than live in a reactionary mode, the individual becomes the author of their own experience:

> Winnicott's account of transitional objects and that intermediate area of experience that is a relief from the strain of relating inner and external life, inscribes creativity (and with it agency) in the making of identity and rescues it from being either simply a product of social forces or of autonomous minds (Hollway, 2010, p. 230).

Hollway (2010) cautions that Winnicott's (2005) thesis of reality may be unacceptable to post-structuralists who argue that external reality is *only* mediated through discourse and therefore not directly accessible. However, Winnicott argued for an ongoing state of tension between the individual and the external world which does not seem to represent a view of reality that descends to a reductionist, unitary view of the individual. Hollway (2010) puts it this way: "To face external reality is always a strain because it does not conform to our wishes; it is outside our omnipotent control and giving up the illusion of omnipotence is hard" (p. 222). It is during this process of working through the illusion of control that Winnicott's transitional space comes into play – the space between undifferentiated experience and a separate identity. Transitional objects are therefore neither internal nor external but represent a "neutral area of experience" between reality and the illusion of omnipotence (Winnicott, 2005, p. 17). The foundation of developmental theories like that of Klein and Winnicott is that personal histories matter. Applied to this psychosocial study this means that personal histories matter in the context of current student shame experiences. A review will be provided of the literature that demonstrates how shame which originates in primary attachment relationships has a significant impact on future relationships.

2.7. The origins of shame: Developmental perspectives

Herman (2012) argues that shame originates in the primary attachment relationship and generalises to other relationships and functions to regulate peer relationships, social hierarchy and other forms of social life. Similarly, Hollway (2010) contends that "adult to adult intersubjectivity is different in degree but not in kind from infant-mother intersubjectivity because it is still based on the unconscious flowing of mental states between one person and another that constantly modifies them" (p. 223). However, there is currently a wave of the social constructionist school of thought in emotion research which is, to varying degrees, agnostic to the intrapersonal dimension of emotions (Scarantino, 2012). For example, Averill's (1980) influential social constructionist theory of emotion purports that "an emotion is a transitory social role (a socially constituted syndrome) that includes an individual's appraisal of the situation, and is interpreted as a passion rather than as an action" (p. 312). Agnosticism towards the intrapersonal dimension disregards the influence of personal histories of relating on current experience. However, Turner (2009) purports that while emotions adhere to some form of cultural and structural specificity, the activation of emotions is not completely circumscribed to sociocultural constraints, display rules and ideologies. In his sociological review of emotions, Stets (2010) also acknowledges the significance of the role of previous interactions for future interactions and that emotions are not always dictated to by cultural norms.

‘The still face experiment’ is a seminal study of shame in infancy which found that when infants were confronted with their mother who sat opposite and made eye contact but remained expressionless, the infant would attempt to make facial contact with the mother (Tronick et al., 1978). However, following continuous non-response from the mother, the infant would burst into tears or slump down, averting eye contact. The study hypothesis was that the dependent infant, fearing abandonment, attempted to rid itself of disappointment and fear through positive and reassuring interaction with the mother, but when not receiving this, experienced shame and anticipated rejection – should the mother know their real feelings. Kilborne (1992) suggests that research on the experience of shame in infancy means that infants are “shameniks” and is evidence that infants also attempt to escape from painful relationships: “they hide, imagine, deceive, and pretend” (p. 233). Similarly, Nathanson (1987) contends that Rene Spitz’s studies of stranger anxiety in infants can be extrapolated to shame. The implication is that the potential for the emotion of shame exists at birth.

Both vision and hearing are used from infancy to bridge distance in communication and have an important role in individual and phylogenetic development (Steiner, 2011). The proximity senses of taste, touch, smell and proprioception are phylogenetically older, more dominant and are used initially to express primitive mental mechanisms, however, it is vision that often supersedes these more primitive senses. Further to this, Steiner (2011) argues that it is through vision that associations with shame and humiliation arise later in childhood where fears of being seen as lacking or fears of exposure emerge. Because of this role of vision, a patient in the clinical setting for example, may feel observed when a clinician provides an interpretation and, even if the interpretation leads to increased feelings of being understood, the element of observation will likely result in feelings of humiliation. From a developmental perspective, Herman (2012) paints a vivid picture of a toddler who anticipates “sparkling-eyed pleasure” in the maternal gaze, only to be disappointed if met with an uncaring response. This corroborates Erikson’s (1963) second stage of psychosocial development – occurring between the ages of 1 and 3 years of age – in which the central developmental conflict is “autonomy versus shame and doubt”. Herman (2012) argues that true autonomy is not strictly possible for a toddler but that the developmental task is to “regulate body, affect, desire, and will in attunement with others” (p. 161). According to Herman (2012) if negative experiences are repeated often enough, the child does not learn to regulate emotional attunement and mutuality in relationships: instead the child learns to over- or under-regulate shame states.

Herman (2012) cites a longitudinal study by Lyons-Ruth (2003) of the Harvard Medical School in which it was found that disrupted maternal communication and disorganised attachment at eighteen months, separately predicted dissociation in adolescence. The study categorised three attachment styles: hostile, withdrawn and fearful. Herman (2012) argues that all three styles engender chronic shame states. The hostile style produces a shame state through criticism and ridicule whereas the withdrawn and fearful styles produce it through repeated rejection of the child’s attempts to connect emotionally. Herman (2012) suggests that longitudinal studies have shown that children with disorganized attachment systems experience difficulties with peer relationships and struggle to negotiate interdependence and co-operation.

She calls the long-term effect of disorganised attachment "shattered shame states" – this can be regarded as a pathological variation of the attachment system in which there have been no corrective relational processes. Additionally, she suggests that the role of shame should be included as part of the development of traumatic disorders together with Liotti's (2004) unitary perspective of trauma, dissociation and disorganised attachment as three strands of a single braid. Bowlby (1969) and Kohut (1984) both emphasized the importance of the early relationship with a caregiver and the resultant impact on the sense of 'self' (Schore, 2003). Bowlby (1969) identified two emotion regulating strategies that grow out of the disrupted attachment relationship: hyperactivation and deactivation. He characterised hyperactivation as a state arising from inconsistent or unreliable caregiving. The effect is infants who have inordinate needs for safety, are more anxious, are sensitive to distance between themselves and others, seek others to idealise and often seek reassurance from others (Marmarosh & Mann, 2014). Conversely, he hypothesized deactivation as due to emotional neglect and shaming responses to dependency needs, resulting in the infant splitting off dependency and pursuing self-sufficiency. Schore (2003) suggests that deactivation is a strategy used to minimise shame and distress and that the child adopts avoidant strategies in the hope of becoming unseen.

Kohut (1984) depicted three self-object transferences that form out of the relationship with the caregiver, they are: mirroring, idealizing and twinship (Marmarosh & Mann, 2014). Kohut was interested in the development of a cohesive sense of 'self' and he argued that attunement and optimal frustrations allowed the cohesive 'self' to develop – characterised by more mature self-object needs. However, a rejecting caregiver would likely result in shame around intense longings that are not only unmet but rejected. The result would be future relationships characterised by more primitive self-object needs. Lopez and Gormley (2002) argue that attachment avoidance leads to the avoidance of expressing a desire to belong (twinship) and avoidance of expressing idealising tendencies because of feeling vulnerable. Claesson and Sohlberg's (2002) study explored memories of early significant interactions with mothers and found that an ignoring mother was more highly associated with shame than a blaming/attacking mother. They suggested that a lack of attunement and communication contributes to painful social isolation that is characteristic of the shame experience. Although a blaming/attacking mother is a negative form of communication, it is nonetheless a form of communication. They also postulate that if experiences of shame are frequent it affects the view of the 'self' and interpersonal relationships. They argue that shame disrupts affective communication and restricts empathy and intimacy. The early years therefore can result in interruptions to positive affects that can lead to the transient or chronic experience of shame.

Nathanson (1996) argues that an accumulation of shame incidences results in more learned shame triggers. In line with Lewis's (1971) idea of the vicarious experience of the 'other', Banmen (1988) suggested that even when the original shame-provoking trigger is absent, the 'self' may tend to activate shame. The implication is that shame is experienced as originating from the outside even though the assessment occurred internally (Lewis, 2003; Trumbull, 2003). It is suggested that this is the result of images, voices and ideas internalised during childhood. These unconscious images are said to guide

behaviour with others and influence the relationship with the 'self' (Kaufman, 1989). Trumbull (2003) calls this internalisation of external interactions with significant others 'intrapsychic dialogues'. Lewis (1987) also speaks to the idea of shame as a form of mental representation: "The experience of shame often occurs in the form of imagery – of looking or being looked at. Shame may also be played out as an internal colloquy, in which the whole self is condemned" (p. 18). This echoes the Kleinian concept of the ongoing interplay between external and internal sources of anxiety and shame. Herman (2012) concurs that the attachment bond sets the stage for a child's internal working model of intimate relationships: "the child learns to imagine other minds and to be in dialogue with beloved caretakers" (p. 158). However, according to Trumbull (2003), if these external interactions involve the internalisation of an accusing or disapproving 'other', shame will likely ensue.

The aforementioned perspectives of the developmental origins of shame confirm why shame is regarded as an implicitly relational experience (Herman, 2012). As humans have evolved from more biological to relational ways of functioning, the attachment system prioritises emotional sharing and signalling as central to regulating secure attachments (Scheff, 2003). This means that from infancy humans seek out emotional attunement with caregivers and rely on emotional signals in the process (Herman, 2012). This includes learning to imagine – see with the mind's eye – how others think of us. This is what it means to become self-conscious which is an important feature of shame. Herman (2012) suggests that by age seven, unhealthy caregiving may underpin an impaired attachment system that is used by the child to regulate proximity to the caregiver and ensure that the shame of unrequited love is avoided. In a similar vein, Scheff and Retzinger (2000) argue that shame is used to regulate social distance: if others are perceived as too close one can experience it as violations of personal boundaries, however, if others are too distant it leads to the experience of alienation or ostracism.

According to Steiner (2011), our understanding of the developmental course of shame in infancy is sadly lacking. Similarly, Herman (2012) argues that we have a rudimentary understanding of the developmental trajectory of the role of shame in children who have disorganised attachment. While this theoretical framework has demonstrated the importance of considering histories of relating when studying shame, it is important to note that psychoanalysts who hold an interpersonal perspective on shame, caution against oversimplifying psychic danger situations to derivatives of childhood fears. According to Lansky (1995) although childhood fears linger into adulthood "to the original danger situation is added the shame anxieties and narcissistic conflicts that attend threat to adult integrity and social status – that is narcissistic conflicts involving shame" (p. 1081). It is for this reason that this study endeavoured to explore student shame within the university context and consider the role of situational triggers in the shame experience.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCHING SHAME: From shame variants to its signal function

3.1. Introduction

An investigation of current and historical shame literature reveals that understandings of shame are driven by different ontological and epistemological assumptions resulting in preference often being given to one or several features of shame at the expense of the others. Consequently there are seemingly irreconcilable differences in how to view shame. This chapter incorporates the following broad range of core features of the shame experience: a "stimulus (context), experience of a shame state, relationship between self and other, hostile reactions, and defences" (Retzinger, 2014, p. 300). Generally speaking, poststructural thinkers tend to prioritise shame as the product of multiple influences – even to the point of agnosticism towards the intrapersonal dimension of experience. Conversely, psychoanalysis has provided comprehensive understandings of shame dynamics, however, it has often failed to explore and translate these into contexts outside the clinical realm. However, this literature review aims to demonstrate that a more psychoanalytically inclined understanding of the subject as defended, a more poststructural view of context/situation, some focus on the experience of the shame state, and examination of the relationship between self and other are all integral features required to understand shame. This chapter will begin by explaining the elusiveness of shame and how this quality of shame has resulted in researchers formulating a shame family with variants and a shame language. It will be demonstrated that the elusiveness of shame illustrates that it is an emotion that is both experienced whilst simultaneously serving a signal or defensive function. The importance of considering the shame stimulus situation will then be discussed with a focus on gender, sexuality and sexual orientation as core examples of how societal norms shape historical contexts and shame triggers. From there the relevance of shame as a self-conscious emotion will be explored. This section considers the nuts and bolts of how shame works on both a personal and social level and how expectations of being 'seen' are central to the shame experience. Finally, possibilities of different shame management strategies will be discussed and how one's choice of coping strategies impacts on wellbeing.

3.2. Formulating the shame 'family'

3.2.1. Researching an elusive emotion: The language of shame

Shame is pervasive but its signal function indicates that it is also an elusive emotion. Retzinger (1991) argued that although shame is not alien to the ordinary person, it may be hidden. People tend to hide from shame and avoid talking about it because it is a painful emotion (Lewis, 1971). Tangney and Dearing (2002) confirmed this proposition in a student context where they asked 65 undergraduate students to write a short

story – describe and rate – about their experiences of shame, guilt, pride and depression. Their central finding was that shame experiences were both more difficult for the students to describe and more painful than guilt. Importantly, although language is an essential window for understanding emotions, it has grave limitations when it comes to the experience of shame (Lansky & Morrison, 2014; Lewis, 1971; Nathanson, 1992; Retzinger, 1995; Steiner, 2011). Scheff (2015) argues that the English language, in particular, tends to adopt a narrow meaning of shame. The result is that many shame experiences remain hidden because people tend to use alternative words to describe shame. Scheff (2015) compares English to French which is more nuanced in its definition of shame. In French, the word *pudeur* implies a sense of shame but is distinguished from *honte* which means 'disgrace shame', however, in English, 'disgrace' would be regarded as distinct from shame. "Therefore a French speaker might ask "Which kind of shame?" (Scheff, 2015, p. 112), whereas this would not be an intuitive question for an English speaker. Therefore, a central tenet to an understanding of shame when using the English language, is that shame has its own language. People tend to disguise shame and talk about it indirectly (Morrison, 1998). For example, "I'm pathetic; I'm ridiculous; I'm so weak; I feel like a freak; I'm such a loser; I feel stupid, dumb and idiotic; there is something wrong with me", are examples of phrases that indicate the unique, individual experience of shame, without necessarily using the word 'shame' (Morrison, 1998, p. 23). According to Morrison (1998) in the same way that individuals have unique fingerprints there are also personal signatures in the expression of shame. These signatures represent the subtle differences in the experience of the 'self' that engender shame. To the listening ear, it is a person's choice of phrases which may provide clues as to their personal shame signature.

Additionally, there are a variety of shame states that researchers often incorporate as part of a larger shame family (Lewis, 1971; Morrison, 1998; Retzinger, 1995; Scheff, 2003). Lewis (1971) encountered the elusiveness of shame early on in her work and argued that shame is inherently difficult to identify – particularly in text – because of its hidden nature and the prevalence of its many cognates and variants. Similarly, Morrison (1998) argued that "Shame comprises a large family of attributes, each of which plays a unique role in the shame experience" (p. 42) and compiled a shame taxonomy based on both word choices (language used) and the use of related feelings or shame variants – the shame family. The following are examples of shame variants that Morrison (1998) argues signal shame: Feeling like a failure, the shadow of inferiority, defectiveness, the stigma of unworthiness, the label of incompetence, weakness, dirtiness and messiness, loss of control, passivity, despair, depression, mortification, remorse, disgrace, apathy, low self-esteem, and unlovability. Because of the difficulties associated with using language as a window onto shame, theorists – from across multiple disciplines – have built on Lewis's (1971) seminal work and often approach shame using a wide, more inclusive shame vocabulary and variants (Morrison, 1998; Retzinger, 1995; Scheff, 2003). Lewis (1971) argued that it is likely the social nature of shame that results in a shame vernacular that is far more extensive than that of other emotions such as guilt or anger. Steiner (2011) concurs and contends that an extensive shame vocabulary seems to be significant for the individuals themselves to be able to talk about the nuances of their shame experiences. Speaking from a clinical context, he purports that "In a rough order of increasing severity the patient could describe himself as embarrassed,

thin-skinned, self-conscious, sensitive, vulnerable, disconcerted, awkward, blushing, ignominious, improper, indecent, unchaste, demeaned, ashamed, belittled, slandered, debased, defiled, disfigured, demoted, disgraced, dishonoured, degraded, contemptible, mortified, scorned, worthless, and humiliated" (p. 4) – all in the name of the experience of shame. Steiner (2011) argues that the unifying elements for these shame variants and vocabulary, are feelings of inferiority and imagery of being viewed with contempt, being ridiculed or looked down upon by others.

Consequently, the question that arises is, if shame has a vast vocabulary and many variants, where does one draw the line in terms of what is included as shame? Tangney and Dearing (2002) therefore caution about the "danger in overgeneralizing" (p. 8) and perceiving shame as the root of all negative experience. However, the central line of argument seems to be that the unifying element of variants of shame is that they describe the 'self' in relation to how one looks in the eyes of the 'other' – whether real or imagined (Lewis, 1971). Another way to avoid overgeneralising is by paying attention to the context of the shame experience. Lewis's (1971) working concept of the "stimulus situation" is currently receiving much attention in emotion research agendas albeit largely in poststructural and social constructionist forms. Crozier (2014) argues that limitations of emotion lexicons – due in part to cultural variation – has given rise to the hypothesis that contextual factors will help determine whether an experience is labelled as shame or a neighbouring emotion. Retzinger's (1995) shame taxonomy, however, includes both the importance of stimulus situations – or shame triggers – and the view of the 'self' in relation to 'others', thereby making use of two overgeneralisation checks. Additionally, Retzinger (1995) views the 'self' in relational terms in the shame experience as the object of: disappointment, defeat, rejection (or fear or rejection), betrayal, devaluation, discrimination, judgmental comparison, loss of face, exposure, reproach, rebuff, inattentiveness, unrequited love, disappointment, failure, defeat, errors or mistakes, disrespect, deficiency, scorn, ridicule, contempt, etc. In the social psychology tradition many researchers contend for a distinction between self-conscious emotions, whereas others consider variants as different positions on the same continuum (Crozier, 2014). The argument for positions on a continuum is supported by Lewis's (1971) contention that different feeling states can alternate, underlie or be absorbed by one another. People tend to experience a mixture of emotions rather than any one emotion in a pure form; however, one emotion is usually dominant in any given response to a situation (Tangney et al., 1996). Morrison (1998) rightly points out that if we are to understand the experience of shame, we must develop "an ear for recognizing shame in its various expressions" (p. 21). Therefore, it seems worthwhile to consider the important work that has been done by researchers who have attempted to differentiate between shame variants as it helps to illuminate the nuances of the shame experience.

3.2.2. Shame's closest relatives: Humiliation and embarrassment

Most researchers agree that the two emotions most undifferentiated from shame are embarrassment and humiliation. Morrison (1998) argues that embarrassment and humiliation differ in intensity, with humiliation being the more intense experience. In the humiliation experience, the 'self' becomes the object

of ridicule and the 'other' – as a real or an imagined presence – is a perpetrator. In a similar vein, Steiner (2011) and Weiss (2015) suggest that humiliation, shame and embarrassment are subtle distinctions along a shame continuum in which humiliation evokes the most discomfort and embarrassment the least. Miller's (1995a) noteworthy work on embarrassment defines embarrassment as "an aversive state of mortification, abashment, and chagrin that follows public social predicaments" (p. 322). Miller (1995b) conducted a study in which he analysed high school students and adult accounts of embarrassment. The central finding was that "normative public deficiencies", or social faux pas were the most common causes of embarrassment: situations like being absent-minded, clumsy, and unintended bodily-induced noises. Additionally, participants identified awkward social interactions and feeling conspicuous in front of others as embarrassing. Tangney et al. (2007) suggest that the common denominator in embarrassing experiences is these events "signal that something is amiss – some aspect of the self or one's behaviour needs to be carefully monitored, hidden, or changed" (p. 359). Steiner (2011) suggests that embarrassment may evoke less intense feelings than shame and humiliation because it is less impregnated by feelings of envy and contempt. Herman (2012) also subscribes to the view that shame ranges from milder to more extreme forms. She argues that more moderate feelings of shame are part of everyday life and that this range of shame emotions includes "shyness, self-consciousness, embarrassment and feeling foolish or ridiculous" (Herman, 2012, p. 162). In a similar vein to Morrison (1998), Herman (2012) argues that more extreme feelings of shame include "humiliation, self-loathing, and feelings of defilement, disgrace, or dishonor" (p. 162) and that this latter form of shame is usually in response to being demeaned.

Both Morrison (2008) and Steiner (1985) argue that humiliation follows an increased sense of exposure that causes greater feelings of discomfort. The increased intensity of humiliated shame seems to set this emotion apart and can be interpreted using Blum's (2008) argument that humiliation is experienced as being put into a powerless position by a more powerful 'other' and is therefore experienced less as a reflection on the 'self' by the 'self', as in shame. In other words, in the humiliation experience, the victim does not perceive any personal sense of blame and there is largely an absence of negative self-evaluation, at least initially (Lee et al., 2001). Donald Klein (1991) coined the phrase humiliation dynamic to show the connection between the victim, the perpetrator (humiliator) and bystanders (real or imagined) in the humiliation experience which he regarded as ubiquitous in everyday life. Another significant aspect of the humiliation dynamic is anger responses. When viewed through a cognitive appraisal lens, an internal versus external attribution of blame – following humiliation – has important consequences for where anger is directed (Blum, 2008). Although researchers may differ about the levels of affect intensity around shame, guilt, humiliation and embarrassment, all seem to agree that these emotions belong to a special class or family of 'self-conscious' emotions that share many features: similar interpersonal origins; alert one to social disapproval and rejection and the need to institute remedial responses; are negatively valenced; arise from self-evaluation of a personally relevant failure or transgression; involve some form of self-reflection and are substantial in intensity (Tangney et al., 1996). However, shame is considered the most problematic of the self-conscious emotions because it often serves the least adaptive function. Tangney et al. (1996) purport that embarrassment is a response to violation of social conventions and tends to promote

conciliatory responses, guilt serves an adaptive relationship-enhancing function in the event of interpersonal harm, whereas "the adaptive functions of shame are somewhat less clear" (p. 1267). They argue that because shame includes a more personal sense of failure that pertains to the organization of the 'self', it may result in withdrawal, externalization of blame, anger and other less helpful responses than embarrassment or guilt evoke. It is also suggested that shame may be the less differentiated feeling, fulfilling adaptive functions in early developmental stages.

3.2.3. Distinguishing shame from guilt

According to Tangney et al. (1996), historically, shame and guilt have been differentiated in two ways. Firstly, there is the anthropological view of shame as a public and guilt as a private emotion, however, this view has not been supported empirically. Both shame and guilt have been reported as experienced whilst in the presence of others and, conversely, both shame and guilt were felt as "solitary" experiences. Secondly, Lewis (1971) distinguished shame as a focus on the 'self' versus guilt as resulting in a focus on the behaviour. Put another way, Lewis (1971) noted that the experience of shame is directly about self-focus and evaluation whereas guilt is about the thing done or not done. Shame therefore includes a negative evaluation of the global or 'whole' self. Tangney and Dearing (2002) argue that Lewis's distinction between 'self' and behaviour, has received much empirical support across a broad range of methodologies. Leary and Tangney (2012) argue that although this seems to be a subtle distinction, the interpretive difference lays the foundation for very different phenomenological experiences. Many current shame and guilt researchers make use of the aforementioned distinctions between shame and guilt, in large part because of empirical support (Rizvi, 2010; Tangney et al., 1996). Interestingly, research has found a considerable amount of overlap between situation types that trigger shame and guilt irrespective of context, however, the shame experiences included a greater awareness of 'being observed' than did guilt situations (Tangney et al., 1996). These findings are consistent with the work of Lewis (1971) who reported that the significant differences between shame and guilt appears to be in the phenomenological experience and motivation for action rather than the actual situation type.

For this study, the distinction between shame and guilt is important because shame and guilt are not equally psychologically adaptive (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). Klein (1975b), much like Winnicott (1965), regarded guilt as linked to a capacity for concern. Additionally, because guilt leads to the reproach of a specific behaviour rather than the whole 'self', it is a less painful experience and one's identity or the concept of the 'self' is less threatened (Leary & Tangney, 2012). People who are experiencing guilt therefore feel less vulnerable and under attack. Consequently, guilt is the more helpful emotion leading to improved relationships through regret, remorse, reparation, confessing, apologizing, and increased empathy and perspective taking. Guilt has also been shown to motivate people to help those less fortunate (Zemack-Rugar et al., 2007). Guilt-proneness is related to the constructive management of anger through negotiation and corrective action. Tangney et al. (1996) contend that guilt is usually only maladaptive when mixed with shame: shame-fused guilt. This is usually when a person undergoes a guilt experience but then

magnifies and generalises the behaviour to the whole 'self' resulting in shame. Rather than engaging in reparative action the individual is left dealing with feelings of self-contempt and disgust. It goes without saying that it seems easier to resolve to do better in the future than try and transform a 'self' that is felt to be faulty. Shame also has hidden costs. Because of the emphasis on the entire self, the experience of shame is far more painful, leading to feelings of worthlessness, powerlessness and of the need to hide rather than amend (Leary & Tangney, 2012; Tangney et al., 2007). The more egocentric processes that underly shame lead to distress responses rather than empathic concern.

Returning to the topic of shame and anger, touched on earlier with regards to humiliation, there is an interesting empirical link between shame and anger. Lewis (1971) coined the phrase humiliated fury to describe the expression of anger and hostility in the presence of shame. From a review of the literature, Leary and Tangney (2012) concluded that shame proneness is positively correlated with anger, hostility and the propensity to blame because shame tends to lead to the externalisation of anger. Shame proneness was also correlated with direct and indirect aggression, self-directed anger, displaced anger and unexpressed anger. Unresolved anger resulted in negative consequences for the 'self' and relationships. Leary and Tangney (2012) suggest that the connection between shame and anger may seem counterintuitive but propose that it is likely an attempt to shift blame to re-establish a sense of control and even superiority. They argue that the cost is high because this behaviour is ultimately alienating. The one characteristic of shame which therefore seems to set it apart from other self-conscious emotions is its signal function that triggers defences.

3.3. The signal function of shame

The elusiveness of shame can be considered the great paradox of this emotion: shame is both an emotional experience and serves a signal function. Because shame signals danger, individuals are likely to struggle to articulate their experience because it feels too threatening. This is indicative of how shame represents the conflicted mind. Freud (1914) introduced shame related concepts like defensive splitting in the conflicted mind, the notion of 'the self' and 'the other' and the role of narcissism in shame and as far back as 1895. Additionally, Freud and Breuer's *Studies in Hysteria* (1895/2004) identified shame as a motive for defence. The work of Scheff (1990) seems to have reignited the signal function of shame which resonates with the psychoanalytic notion of defence (Lansky, 1995; Lewis, 1971; Nathanson, 1992). The implication of this defensive function is that shame is not limited to emotional experience but also serves as a signal of danger if awareness is not expelled from consciousness (Freud & Breuer, 1895/2004;. Lansky & Morrison, 2014). Thus, being an emotional experience and a signal function, shame fulfils important regulatory functions in the perception of danger and defence within the psyche. But what is the danger? Freud and Breuer (1895/2004) argued that the danger is self-exposure: the 'incompatible' idea of oneself with the view of others when behaviour, or simply being oneself is felt to expose failure or inferiority. However, unfortunately, Freud shifted from a focus on the incompatible idea of oneself and began to focus on desire and defence against *impulses*. Many psychoanalytic thinkers agree that this focus came at the

expense of furthering an understanding of the relationship between conflict and consciousness – a concept central to emotions like shame (Lansky & Morrison, 2014). By shifting the focus away from consciousness, Freud inadvertently also excluded the experience of self-consciousness which is now widely regarded as integral to an understanding of shame (See Self-processes: The two-fold nature of self-awareness). Lansky (1995) argues that as a result of this shift in focus, a psychoanalytic understanding of shame receded into the shadows for decades with the cost being a gap in our understanding of the psyche. However, two things emerged as potential game changers for this barren landscape in understanding shame. Firstly, object relations theory provided an intersubjective lens that prioritizes emotional life and meaning. From a psychosocial perspective, Klein's (1997) conceptualization of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions also provided pragmatic markers from which to evaluate defensive mechanisms in operation. To reiterate, although Klein's theory was not shame specific, it can be applied to the signal function of shame because her positions represent a "group of attitudes and mechanisms that work together to protect the individual throughout life" (Clarke, 2003, p. 124).

Secondly, in the 1970s Helen Block Lewis (1971) and Kohut (1971) reintroduced the centrality of shame conflicts in the psychoanalytic literature (Lansky, 1995). This was the theoretical revival that shame needed. Lewis's (1971) seminal work was largely built on Freud's foundations and although psychoanalytic in nature, it has appealed to a broad audience in diverse fields of study and Lewis has been credited for attempting to integrate psychoanalysis with psychology (Lane & Meisels, 2013). Lewis (1971) argued that the affect, shame itself, is not hidden but rather the anticipation of the psyche as to what its emergence will evoke – as it rises into consciousness (Freud, 1914). From a psychoanalytic perspective, shame therefore refers both to shame as affect and to the danger of the likelihood of its emergence: the signal function (Lansky, 2005). Lewis (1971) also coined the phrase 'unacknowledged shame' to describe shame that occurs outside of the person's awareness. She further described two types or formats of unacknowledged shame. Firstly, format one, *overt, undifferentiated shame* has the following characteristics: shame can be consciously felt as is evident in conscious content in the form of thoughts in which the self is the focus; the person cannot or will not acknowledge the shame; physical manifestations such as blushing, sweating and accelerated heart rate; denial by misnaming shame and using other words such as uncomfortable or foolish; and projecting from the inner to the outer world. Lewis (1971) argued that the central characteristic of overt shame is misnaming. This is likely why there are ongoing conversations in the shame literature about the use of shame language and variants when researching shame. Secondly, format two, *bypassed shame* describes when a person has minimal awareness of the emotional pain arising from their shame state (Lewis, 1971). When shame is bypassed, although the individual has cognitive awareness of the shame connected circumstance and there may be a repetitive replaying of the scene, the tendency is to hide the emotional pain. There is an absence of feeling and feelings are not allowed to develop. The primary characteristic of bypassed shame is the use of defences to distract from powerful negative feelings. Retzinger (1991) suggests that distinguishing between 'overt' and 'bypassed' shame is what made Lewis's (1971) work groundbreaking because it enabled researchers to identify shame states that had previously gone undetected. Overt shame is more intuitive because it is characterised by bodily arousal such as

blushing and increased heartbeat, misnaming and projection. In contrast, bypassed shame can only be detected through "thought processes and ideation of the self in relation to others" (Lewis, 1971, p. 43). However, both forms of unacknowledged shame are crucial to our understanding of the shame experience because they impact relationships.

3.4. Contextual shame triggers and multiple influences

The experience of shame usually begins with a circumstantial trigger or what Lewis (1971) called the shame stimulus situation. This is particularly important to shame which is regarded as an acutely social phenomenon which is dependent on context to a greater extent than other affects (Lansky & Morrison, 2014). Lewis (1971) identified the following working concepts to delineate the complexity of shame stimulus situations: disappointment/defeat, deficiency of the 'self', encounter with the 'other' and the 'self' as unable in an involuntary experience. She argued that both different circumstances and differences in the organisation of the 'self' result in disparities in negative self-evaluation and therefore variations in the way shame is experienced and responded to. While in some postmodern schools of thought external triggers of shame, in different contexts, are regarded as more novel than the experience of shame itself (Scarantino, 2012), thus subordinating or excluding the organization of the 'self' as a factor in understanding shame, other authors have supported the inclusion of the organisation of the 'self'. Building on Lewis's (1971) relational dimension of shame, Retzinger (1991) argued for the significance of the inclusion of the organisation of the 'self' because shame triggers usually include a message from the 'other' that feels injurious to the 'self' – this can be overt/real or covert/imagined. Retzinger (2014) argues that "The source of shame is a perceived injury to self: insult, rejection, rebuff, disapproval, unrequited love, betrayal, unresponsiveness, disrespect, criticism, imagined as well as real" (p. 298). The 'self' is then felt to be the object of "disappointment, defeat, rejection or fear of rejection, betrayal, devaluation, discrimination, judgmental comparison, loss of face, exposure, reproach, rebuff, inattentiveness, unrequited love, disappointment, failure, defeat, errors or mistakes, disrespect, deficiency, scorn, ridicule, contempt, and so on" (Retzinger, 1991, p. 44). According to Retzinger (1991), shame triggers can range from subtle forms such as a raised eyebrow to more blatant overt rudeness. Irrespective of whether the shame trigger is subtle or blatant it usually involves a sense that the 'other' is uncaring, alienated, abandoning and/or the source of injury. Brown (2006) conducted a study in which 215 working women were interviewed to identify their shame triggers as well as strategies used to develop shame resilience. Twelve shame triggers were identified for the women in the study: appearance and body image, motherhood, family, parenting, money and work, mental and physical health, sex, aging, religion, being stereotyped and labelled, speaking out and surviving trauma. Her study revealed that when women attempted to talk about their shame it often resulted in feelings of fear and judgement resulting in undesirable identities. Brown's (2006) findings therefore also corroborate Lewis's (1971) thesis that the shame stimulus situation is bound up in the organization of the 'self'. Thus, shame stimulus situations involve a trigger, a 'self' and an 'other' in various combinations. This makes shame a particularly complex construct to try and measure.

The Shame Inventory (Rizvi, 2010) is a relatively new shame measure that aims to, amongst others, explore a diverse range of shame cues or triggers quantitatively. The shame instruments that were reviewed for potential use in this study measured a wide variety of phenomena ranging from shame proneness, frequency of shame states (behavioural, cognitive and feeling), inward versus outward shame responses, shame about particular topics such as bodily shame, beliefs about 'other' evaluation, as well as measures used to distinguish between shame and its related constructs, especially guilt (Robins et al., 2007). A more comprehensive review of these shame measures is discussed in the methods chapter, however, The Shame Inventory is notable because of its focus on the situation. Unfortunately, this scale has not been used often and when used, it has been for disparate purposes making effective comparison of results difficult.

The scale was designed with a global (trait) measure of shame (Part 1) and a situational (state) component (Part 2); however, several studies have made use of only one or the other (Bilevicius et al., 2019; Dhuffar-Pottiwal & Griffiths, 2014; Keller et al., 2015) which likely impacts the reliability and validity of the results. Keller et al. (2015) used only the Global measure of The Shame Inventory to explore the moderating role of spiritual maturity between Christian fundamentalism and shame. Findings revealed that shame was significantly positively correlated with disappointment (with God) and instability (in one's relationship to God). Put another way, more shame meant more disappointment with God and instability in one's relationship to God. Bilevicius et al. (2019) used only the situational scale of The Shame Inventory and found that shame was a factor in the development of addiction for young adults who had high levels of vulnerable narcissism – the final sample comprised 210 students at the University of Manitoba, Canada. Bilevicius et al. (2019) reported that whilst The Shame Inventory provided a definition of shame, it seemed not quite able to capture the construct of shame in the specific context for which is was used. This finding highlights that situational shame stimuli are complex because there are usually multiple influences which need to be taken into account as described by Lewis (1971).

3.4.1. The influence of meso and macro social structures: The stratification of emotions

The varied social influences on emotions are succinctly captured in Turner's (2010) sociological roadmap detailing the stratification of emotions. Turner (2010) contends that to understand emotion dynamics at the macro-level one must consider emotions as distributed and stratified in society. Sociologists use the term 'stratification' of emotions to talk about societal systems where valued resources, including emotional energy, are distributed unequally resulting in social classes who share particular levels of resources (Turner, 2009). But what emotions make up emotional energy in societies? There are numerous theories about the range of human emotions, however, Turner (2010) identifies four primary emotions: satisfaction-happiness, aversion-fear, assertion-anger and disappointment-sadness. In his view, different mixes of the four primary emotions form first and second-order elaborations. For example, shame, guilt and alienation all comprise disappointment-sadness mixed with varying amounts of fear and anger. Applicable to this study is that emotions, irrespective of their kind, have a range of influences at different levels of social reality. Turner (2010) outlines three essential levels of human social organisation: the micro,

meso and macro. These levels are not only analytical but also represent social reality. At the micro-level, face-to-face encounters take place and incorporate emotions, cognitions and behaviours. The meso-level includes categorical units in society such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and life stage and so on. To be a member of a categoric unit is to hold a particular social identity relevant to that unit. The meso-level is also made up of corporate units that require a division of labour to pursue specific goals. In the university context this level could include faculties, schools and departments. "At the macro-level are institutional domains, stratification systems, societies, and systems of societies" (Turner, 2010, p. 170). The macro-level would typically include Wits, as an institution, and government. Importantly, these three levels of social organisation have reciprocal effects because they are embedded within one another. For example, the meso-level often constrains the macro-level whereas micro processes are confined within the limits of meso structures.

A central feature of Turner's (2010) theory is the institutional basis of social stratification and the role of emotional legacies in acquiring resources from institutional domains. Turner (2010) identified eight broad institutional domains in society namely, economy, polity, law, religion, education, kinship, science and medicine. Every domain is regarded as having a specific resource which is distributed via that domain. For example, the economic domain distributes money, polity distributes power, law–influence, religion–the sacred/supernatural, education–the transmission of knowledge, kinship–love/loyalty, science–verifiable knowledge/truth and medicine–health. Importantly, Turner (2010) argues that "the distribution of emotion is generated by the same institutional dynamics that distribute unequally other resources such as material wealth, power, and prestige" and that these "experiences within institutional domains generate a legacy of emotions" (Turner, 2010, p. 170). In other words, in the same way that one can receive a legacy of material resources, there are emotional legacies too. According to Turner (2010), within a population, those who have a negative store of emotional energy have a legacy of negative emotions that limit potential for securing access to resources in institutional domains. In this sense, emotional legacies play a central role in how individuals engage with an institution. Emotions therefore become a critical resource in and of themselves that pertain to all of the eight identified institutional domains. Another key feature of the stratification of emotions is that emotional legacies and the distribution of emotions corresponds to class systems within society. People within the middle-class system, and above, tend to experience love and nurture within families that are more stable and less stressed which increases their ability to acquire knowledge through education which in turn leads to higher-paying occupations and the ability to secure resources across all the institutional domains. Conversely, people in lower class families experience stress within the kinship domain, have less ability to acquire knowledge through education and therefore secure lower-paying jobs which typically limits acquisition of resources from other institutional domains. The latter group will also have likely experienced a legacy of negative emotions: "sadness, anger, and fear simultaneously causing them to feel shame" (Turner, 2010, p. 190). This legacy leads to alienation and dropping out of institutional domains, for example school and university. Turner (2010) is not suggesting that there is no shame at middle-class levels of society, rather he argues that there may be more collective shame and anger at certain levels of society because of legacies.

Due to the tendency of every institution to legitimate its own ideologies, both the institutional resources and the associated ideologies inadvertently legitimate the resultant inequality within a given domain (Turner, 2010). How this works practically is that when individuals enter an institutional domain they learn the standards and criteria of worth of that domain. This usually happens through institutional culture: "The culture of an institutional domain always reveals an ideology about what ought and should occur in a domain" (Turner, 2010, p. 172). These institutional standards are then used by individuals to evaluate the self and others which causes emotional arousal. Turner (2009) suggests that there are two general conditions of emotional arousal: "receipt of positive or negative sanctions" and "meeting or failing to meet expectations". When the self receives positive sanction or meets expectations then satisfaction and happiness ensue. However, negative sanction and failure to meet expectations result in negative emotions, like shame. Essentially, success is used to verify the self which arouses positive emotions whereas when the self is not verified, negative emotions like shame and anger ensue – this is the premise of attribution theory (Turner, 2009). Attribution theory holds that humans need to obtain harmony between their self-cognitions and the response of others. Turner (2010) suggests that "the biography of any person is a movement through chains of face-to-face encounters in corporate units lodged in institutional domains where each individual has met or not met expectations for resources and has received varying profiles of positive and negative sanctioning" (p. 188).

Turner's (2010) theory describes how emotions can serve to maintain social structures because individuals who are successful in one domain tend to be successful across multiple institutional domains, resulting in positive emotions and feelings of being valued. The converse also applies where an individual who struggles in one domain often experiences negative emotions and institutional domains in general are therefore experienced as punishing. The result is increasing levels of negative emotional arousal. Turner (2010) therefore contends that the overall effect is that positive and negative emotions become stratified along similar lines to the distribution of other resources in society – money, transmission of knowledge, power, prestige and so on. However, Turner (2010) understands that emotional dynamics are not as straight forward as they may seem. For example he notes how, at times, a lack of resources in institutional domains may trigger a negative emotion, like shame, however, the shame serves to propel the individual to secure resources in the future. Conversely, positive emotions do not necessarily always secure success or resources. For example the individual who loses positive emotions in one domain, causing a ripple effect and losses of resources in other domains. Turner (2010) argues that this lack of predictability of emotions is because people are often unaware of their own emotions and that cognitive awareness can precede or follow an emotional trigger. Turner (2010) therefore includes the concept of defences as central to his stratification theory because defences must be considered when attempting to understand the distribution of emotions. This is particularly true for shame which is a painful emotion and notoriously defended against (Lewis, 1971).

Turner (2010) suggests that displacement, projection, reaction formation, sublimation and attribution are all evidence of repression and the defence against painful emotions. He suggests that persistent

experiences of a negative emotion, like shame, result in repression where shame likely intensifies, transmutes into anger and seeks a target. At this juncture, Turner's (2010) theory aligns well with object relations theory because of its emphasis on repression and the object seeking nature of the emotion. However, a unique twist in his theory is where Turner (2010) includes 'attribution' as a defence mechanism. One could argue that there is some overlap between 'projection' and 'attribution' because both serve to push negative emotions away from the self. However, Turner (2010) differentiates between the two defence mechanisms to indicate that the target of 'projection' is the dispositional states of others whereas the target of 'attribution' is corporate or categoric units. Attribution also indicates that the emotion has transmuted into greater levels of anger than is true for projection. By including 'attribution' as a defence, Turner (2010) successfully foregrounds how meso and macro-units can become the target of negative emotions which ultimately break social bonds and impact meso and macrostructures. Turner (2010) purports that attribution dynamics are where "blaming" potentially shifts from the micro-level to meso and macrostructures and culture. This is particularly so if the micro-level does not allow for the healthy expression of negative emotions which transmute and intensify at the next levels. Turner (2010) contends that attribution is both a normal part of cognitive functioning and a defence mechanism, however, the shift from normal functioning to defence comes into play when an emotion is repressed from consciousness and "transferred to safer objects like corporate and categoric units" (Turner, 2010, p. 187). Turner (2010) suggests that "there is a constant pressure for negative emotions to migrate outward toward meso and macrostructures; and it is for this reason that legitimacy of macrostructures is often difficult to sustain in highly stratified societies" (p. 187). This is also because micro-encounters remain a scarce but primary source of positive sanctioning. In order to protect these anger is often pushed outward toward the institutional domains. Because the anger is experienced as diffuse it is often directed towards devalued categories in society such as minorities etc. This strategy perpetuates anger at meso and macrostructures whilst preserving essential positive sanction and emotions experienced at the micro-level of interaction.

"The exercise of authority can also work to remind individuals that whatever expectations they may have had for success in these structures have not been fully realized, thus adding an additional level of insult and emotional injury to self" (Turner, 2010, p.191). Meso and macrostructures therefore can serve as safe targets of shame-filled anger, ultimately protecting the self. Those who benefit from a legacy of positive emotions will also tend to make an external attribution to the institutional domain for their success. The result is that those above the mid-point of the stratification system are more likely to legitimate macrostructures in society. This results in contrasting responses to institutions because on the one hand those above the mid-point are legitimating institutions but those below don't. This contrast in the legitimating process becomes particularly noticeable when there are huge disparities between resources in the stratification system. If an institution has a larger number of individuals from the lower classes it will result in negative emotions towards the institution being more volatile. The risk is that individuals within the lower classes may be blind to the source of their anger. When individuals higher up in the stratification system do not meet expectations they also experience shame and anger but often mixed with guilt. Turner (2010) suggests that their anger may be greater because they had higher expectations to begin with. This

anger is then directed towards any number of institutional and societal domains or other ethnic groups. The greater the rate of failure in the institutional domain, the greater the intensity of negative emotions with the potential for acting out or alienation and withdrawal. Turner (2010) contends that repressed shame manifests as alienation where individuals will distance themselves from their roles in institutional domains but foster positive emotions in other spheres like the family and other forms of community.

The novelty of Turner's (2009) sociological theory, which incorporates elements from both psychoanalysis and cognitive psychology, is clearly its ability to move much of the early sociology of emotions outside of the dominant macro realm and include a connection to micro social processes. Turner (2009) suggests that thinking in terms of micro social processes "scares sociologists who often think that reductionism will obviate sociology" (p. 341). In a similar vein, one could argue that in some psychoanalytic schools of thought the social world has been feared as foreclosing on that of the intrapsychic. Turner's (2009) theory of the stratification of emotions is therefore a masterful psychosocial treatise in which he has combined psychological and psychoanalytic concepts (the micro-level) of emotions with sociological principles (the meso and macro-levels of society) without reducing one to the other. In this way he has retained the strengths of a sociological perspective which is its "broad view and focus on patterns of social organisation" (p. 341) – rather than descend into cultural determinism (Turner, 2009). Additionally, with respect to psychological theory, he has moved beyond the dominance of cognitive psychology's appraisal theory, which has historically been more acceptable to sociologists because it makes room for sociological criteria like cultural vocabularies and normative codes, to include psychological theories that consider the complexities of emotion in greater depth.

The next section will be used to review the categorical identifications and associated social identities of gender and sexual orientation and how these function as meso-level influences on the shame experience. There are many meso-level categoric units that have relevance to this study, however, because race, class and systems of injustice in higher education are prolific in the education literature, these have been included as part of the review of the education literature in Chapter Four.

3.4.2. Gender and shame: The jury is still out

Categorical units in society have important implications for understanding shame. Research suggests that men and women experience shame differently, largely due to women's investment in relatedness, greater receptivity to connection, concern over letting others down and cultural and societal norms (Brown, 2006; Gross & Hansen, 2000). In the statistical social psychological literature, males and females are typically classified based on biological sex, however, differences are usually interpreted with regards to role-related characteristics associated with masculine and feminine gender (Ferguson & Dempsey, 2000). Brown's (2006) study focussed on women and she contends that women experience and process shame differently to men and that they identify shame triggers differently – for women it appears to be more about who, what and how they *should* be. Miller-Prieve (2016) corroborated the finding that shame is more predominant in women due to societal expectations that results in negative self-evaluations when

expectations are unmet. Additionally, research has shown that women have more intense feelings of shame than men, likely due to greater negative evaluations of the self (Sanftner McGraw & Tantillo, 2011). Lewis (1971) argued that because of traditional feminine roles, women have been cast in inferior roles with "societally inculcated feelings of passivity, helplessness, and reliance on others for their own self-definition" (p. 256). The female gender stereotype therefore results in women's increased sensitivity to the threat of loss of relationship and the need to be well thought of. In contrast, men are stereotyped as autonomous, competitive and dominant. However, in their study of shame in men who are depressed, Shepard and Rabinowitz (2013) argue that socialisation experiences may leave men more shame prone when confronted with challenges and, that they may not seek help because help-seeking is often regarded as a sign of masculine weakness. In their review of the psychometric properties of The Compass of Shame Scale (CoSS), Elison et al. (2006) found male-female differences in three of the four scales. Men displayed more Avoidance than women (t=1.98, d=.24) whereas women displayed more Attack Self (t=5.04, d=.61) and more Withdrawal (t=5.07, d=.61). The results for Attack Other were not statistically significant. Brophy and Kruger (2013) argue that whilst stereotypes and role-related expectations may serve to inhibit the expression of shame in men, women – particularly in patriarchal societies like South Africa – may have increased susceptibility to shame because of social oppression.

Benetti-McQuoid and Bursik (2005) undertook a quantitative study involving 104 European American undergraduate students, to establish whether guilt and shame are a function of self-identified gender. The young adults completed the Bem Sex Role Inventory, a guilt subscale from the Guilt Inventory, The Test for Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA) and the Guilt and Shame Vignettes to assess experiences and reactions involving shame and guilt. The results showed that women reported a higher tendency for feelings of guilt and shame than men. Using Grounded Theory, Efthim et al. (2001) conducted a study that explored the relation that stress has to shame, guilt and externalization and the role of gender – 207 college students took part, both men and women. They found that gender roles that stereotype the expected role of women – living up to female gender norms – tended to result in shame proneness. The implication is that stress and shame around stereotypical gender norms may lead to ineffective coping strategies.

However, when it comes to measuring shame quantitatively, it would seem that the jury is still out in terms of gender differences because many of the most widely used instruments present hypothetical scenarios that elicit situation appraisal based on the aforementioned socialization processes thus resulting in gender-related differences (Ferguson & Dempsey, 2000). Ferguson and Dempsey (2000) conducted an extensive meta-review of gender-related differences in quantitative shame research and found that the findings were strikingly dependent on the type of instrument used. They argue that a number of instruments tend to focus on behaviours that impact the integrity of female identities. For example, self and other report measures about behaviour e.g. The Emotional Attributes Questionnaire (EAQ) revealed that shame behaviours are seen as more characteristic of females. Also, hypothetical incidents or likelihood measures – for example the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA) and the Self-Conscious Affect and Attribution Inventory (SCAAI) – tend to consistently yield higher shame ratings for female adults, older adolescents

and children. The implication is that, in all likelihood, shame measures are not capturing the types of situations that involve central, self-organising features for males. It is possible that males may be more shame prone in certain kinds of circumstances that tap into constructed unwanted male identities such as being physically weak or crying in front of others.

Else-Quest et al. (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of gender differences in studies concerning self-conscious emotional experience. Gender stereotypes have long cast women as experiencing more shame, guilt and embarrassment versus men being more prone to pride. The meta-analysis substantiates the stereotype that women experience more shame and guilt than men. The meta-analysis comprised 697 effect sizes and included 236 304 individual ratings of self-conscious emotion states and traits from 382 journal articles, dissertations and unpublished data sets. The findings of the meta-analysis showed that there were small gender differences for shame and guilt (Guilt d = - 0.27 and shame d = - 0.29). They contend that there were greater gender differences for trait versus state scales and scales that made use of situation or scenario-based items in contrast to adjective or statement-based items. This supports the proposition that scenario/situation-based items tend to tap into gender stereotyping. For this reason, gender differences in domains like the body, sex and food tended to be more pronounced. Else-Quest et al. (2012) therefore argue for the use of state-based scales using adjectives or statements or risk the perpetuation of indiscriminate stereotypes regarding the increased emotionality of women. They caution that the use of scenario-based items in a trait scale will likely result in an overestimation of gender differences.

However, the exception to this principle of gender difference in shame testing, seems to be the use of self-reports of the intensity of real-life incidents. Ferguson and Dempsey (2000) conducted a study where college students were asked to narrate a shame experience from their own lives – the students also rated how much shame they felt immediately after the incident and several days later. The only statistically significant gender difference was that male students reported feeling more intense shame than females directly after narrating the incident. In summary, the caution by Ferguson and Dempsey (2000) is that "actual observations of young children, adults' beliefs about shame-relevant behaviors, and methodologically solid assessments of adults' likelihood or intensity judgements of hypothetical scenarios generally show greater indications of shame in females than in males" (p. 263).

3.4.3. Sexuality, sexual orientation and shame

Sexuality and shame also have a long history in the literature and the associations between them has been identified as having both developmental and socially constructed roots (Shadbolt, 2009). In this study 'sexual orientation' refers to the sex of others to whom one is sexually and romantically attracted (American Psychological Association, 2012, as cited in Moleiro & Pinto, 2015). Heterosexual is used to describe attraction to the opposite sex, homosexual – lesbian and gay – describes attraction to the same sex and bisexual describes attraction to both sexes. An individual's self-concept of their gender, irrespective of biological sex, is regarded as gender identity. In addition to the gender identity categories of male and female, there are a number of terms used to describe sexual minorities: monosexual, lesbian, gay,

plurisexual, bisexual, pansexual, queer, and fluid (Moleiro & Pinto, 2015). Mereish and Poteat (2015) conducted a study among 719 sexual minority adults (LGBT) and found that shame had a negative effect on relationships, loneliness and health. Although there has been increased acceptance of sexual minority groups, LGBT individuals are still subject to negative attitudes and social stigma. Research confirms that shame is a common emotional response to being stigmatized (Henry, 2020). The term 'internalised heterosexism' is often used to describe how lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals internalise negative societal attitudes about homosexuality (Szymanski et al., 2008). Internalised heterosexism can lead to feeling that one is inferior to heterosexuals as well as a rejection of one's own non-heterosexual identity (Chow & Cheng, 2010; Hequembourg & Dearing, 2013). Because these evaluations are internal, global and negative they are indicative of shame and often lead to withdrawal and/or hiding. Longhofer (2013) argues that individuals may keep their stigmatised orientation hidden from others because of perceived possible rejection and threats to relationships. Similarly, in her work on mental health in gay, lesbian and bisexual populations, Meyer (2003) described how "some LGB people, for example, may be vigilant in interactions with others (expectations of rejection), hide their identity for fear of harm (concealment), or internalize stigma (internalized homophobia) (p. 677). In the South African context research indicates that 61% of South Africans said that homosexuality should not be accepted by society (Pew Research, 2013). In their article titled "Walking on eggshells to not offend people", Lesch et al. (2017) argue that rules and expectations on South African university campuses are predominantly heteronormative, leading to hiding behaviour in LGBT individuals to avoid negative stigmatisation. Mwaba (2009) conducted a study at the University of the Western Cape and found that 71% of participants viewed same-sex marriages as strange and approximately 40% supported discrimination against homosexuals. In a qualitative study conducted to explore the connection between sexual identities and self-destructive behaviours in young people in the UK, it was found that LGBT youth had to manage being positioned as abnormal, dirty and disgusting (McDermott et al., 2008). In order to negotiate homophobia, these LGBT young people used the following shame avoidance modalities: minimizing homophobia, maintaining a sense of adult responsibility and constructing proud identities.

The importance of considering meso influences on the shame experience such as socioeconomic class, gender and ethnicity is further borne out by research conducted by Womersley et al. (2011). Although their research was concerning a female survivor of rape in the Western Cape, Womersley et al. (2011) reported ubiquitous manifestations of shame and documented how it unfolded in the research relationship. In a similar vein to Turner's (2010) stratification of emotions at the meso and macro-levels, they argue for the reflexive location of shame within racialised, gendered and institutionalized relationships because these form a complex matrix which inform public identities. For this study the multiple meso and macro-level influences on manifestations of shame – race, language, faculty, institution, and so forth –will be situated and discussed within the review of the education literature as it applies to university students within the current higher education context.

3.5. Shame dynamics

Modern theorists suggest that because of the complexity of shame, it is too ambitious to attempt to devise an over-arching theory of shame (Lansky & Morrison, 2014; Scarantino, 2012). According to Morrison (1986) the lack of theorising of shame in the classical psychoanalytic literature is largely because the 'self' – as a Freudian concept – lacked attention. However, by drawing on the principles of object relations theory and relational psychoanalysis, it is possible to piece together a picture of some of the core features of shame. Whilst object relations theory and self-psychology represent two distinct schools of psychoanalytic thought, Hollway and Jefferson (2012) purport that both schools "are more psychosocial than traditional psychodynamic theory" (p. 65) because they connect the individual to their interpersonal and social environment. For this reason, theorists from both schools of thought have been used to form the theoretical framework for this study. Importantly, these perspectives argue that the connection point between representations of 'others' and the 'self', both internal and external, *is* emotions (Bion, 1962). This worldview allows us to understand the phenomenological reality of the student whilst privileging the role of emotions, like shame. Object representations, or mental representations of people and relationships (or places, ideas, institutions etc.), are deeply entwined in the process of identity formation (Hinshelwood, 2003). This allows us to paint a picture of the implications of shame for student identities. Ferguson and Dempsey (2000) argue that 'an unwanted identity' is the genesis of shame.

It is the human capacity to reflect that distinguishes us as being capable of feeling (Frosh & Baraitser, 2003). It is also reflection that allows for the attainment of the Kleinian depressive position, which is the ability to face reality, including painful, conflictual ideas that need to be confronted, understood and worked through. In contrast, in the paranoid-schizoid position, ideas and feelings are "thrown out of the mind" or projected and disowned. Whereas cognitive views of self-conscious emotions, like shame, tend to separate thinking and feeling, from a psychosocial perspective, with its incorporation of object relations theory, thinking and feeling are tied together. Discussing Bion's view, O Shaugnessy (1981) states:

> His [Bion's] concern is with thinking as a human link - the endeavour to understand, comprehend the reality of, get insight into the nature of, etc., oneself or another. Thinking is an emotional experience of trying to know oneself or someone else (p. 81).

3.5.1. Self-processes: The twofold nature of self-awareness

One of the most significant features of shame is that it involves self-consciousness. In the social psychology tradition, shame – together with emotions like empathy, guilt and pride – hold a place in a special class of emotions called self-conscious emotions (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). According to Leary & Tangney (2012) self-conscious emotions steer people towards behaving in moral and socially appropriate ways by providing immediate and salient feedback on their social and moral acceptability – their worth as a human being. According to Lansky (2005) because shame is inherently tied to social relationships, a central feature of shame involves self-viewing from the perception of one's own and the other's point of

view. Tangney and Dearing (2002) support a cognitive perspective of self-conscious emotions where complex self-evaluative processes are believed to both elicit self-conscious emotions and form part of the more distal evolutionary causes of emotions. They differentiate between self-awareness – inner-directed attention or self-focus within any given "moment" (state shame) – with the self-consciousness "tendency" to be self-aware (trait shame) (Duval & Wicklund, 1972, as cited in Tangney & Dearing, 2002, p. 64). Self-consciousness or trait shame includes both public and private processes. The public process concerns the impression one makes in front of others. In contrast, private self-conscious process are about paying attention to one's own thoughts and emotions, including reflection and insight. However, recall that Gilbert (2000) argues for a high correlation between public and private processes and that Morrison (1998) purports that the object relations principle of internalization challenges the public/private debate. The interweaving of private and public self-conscious processes are also evident in the Kleinian theoretical framework used for this study because the development of the 'self' is contingent on positioning of oneself in relation to the 'self' and 'others' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). According to Lewis (1971) shame has the potential for reflexive loops because it involves self-viewing from the perception of the other's point of view often leading to feeling traps that comprise episodes of multiple emotional reactions built upon one another. Lewis (1971) argued that self-consciousness becomes high during a feeling trap and the ensuing feedback loops vary in intensity and duration with the potential to become lengthy sequences. Herman (2012) suggests that because shame is a self-conscious emotion, the 'self' is "split" because it involves the additional imagining of the 'self' in the eyes of the 'other'. Psychoanalytically this split resulting from shame can also be understood using Broucek's (1991) developmental theory of the 'self'.

According to Broucek (1991) when "one's status as a subject is ignored" – also called 'objectification' – shame ensues (p. 8). Broucek's (1982) theory sought to explain the connections among shame, the 'self' and narcissism. He proposed a two-fold nature of self-awareness: SUBJECT-object and subject-OBJECT. While his conceptualization of shame is built upon object relations foundations, his line of argument was unique because he incorporated Tomkin's (1962) affect theory and the assumption that interpersonal communion produces interest-excitement or enjoyment-joy which he regarded as the basis of healthy narcissism (Auerbach, 1995). This conceptualization is considered by some as a variation of self-object or transitional phenomena used by Winnicott (Szajnberg, 1995). Put another way, a person is always a subject and an object, however, selfhood is effectively organized when subjectivity is acknowledged by another subject. Failure to recognize one's subjectivity leads to narcissistic impairment as one struggles to see oneself and others as independent subjects. According to Broucek (1991), healthy childhood experience would include parental mirroring of the 'self' as both subject and object but especially as subject. Broucek (1991) called parental/caregiver sensitivity and responsiveness 'interpersonal communion' and argued that if a child feels objectified in a manner that is chronic and pervasive, it can lead to disturbances of object relations and self-esteem. Thus, in Broucek's conceptualisation, narcissism is a relational, representational concept which includes reflexive self-awareness. Normal narcissism is thus the ability to move between a subjective and objective sense of self i.e. two poles of self-reflexivity. On the other hand, pathological

narcissism represents a disturbance in reflexive self-awareness leading to self-preoccupation either idealised or devalued. Broucek suggested a typology of pathological narcissists: 1) the egotistical type – who uses grandiosity; 2) the dissociative type – who cannot escape self-objectification and is prone to shame; 3) the turbulent type – who oscillates between grandiosity and self-abasement (Broucek, 1982). Broucek (1991) also identified three different types of shame experience, namely: consciously experienced shame, unacknowledged (suppressed) shame and bypassed (repressed) shame.

3.5.2. The ego ideal, shame conflicts and identity

Another implication of self-consciousness or the human capacity to reflect and know one's experience is the capacity for conscience which has both moral and nonmoral expressions. In the social psychology tradition, the self-conscious emotions are considered moral emotions (Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Tangney, et al., 2007). According to Lansky (2005) standards can be moral or non-moral. This distinction has important implications for understanding shame, however, this distinction was lost somewhat in the psychoanalytic literature. Originally, the psychoanalytic theory of conscience included the twofold function of firstly, a *superego* for the purpose of prohibition and secondly, an *ego ideal* that fulfilled a more aspirational function (Lansky, 1995). However, historically the propensity was to use the term *superego* to denote the idea of conscience in its entirety. This muddied the water in understanding shame because phenomena such as prohibition and retaliation – concerns of the superego proper – were given preference, to the neglect of understanding the functioning of the ego-ideal. However, current thinking is that whereas guilt arises from the superego and is concerned primarily with morality in the form of transgression and prohibition, shame is the result of "conflict with the set of standards, ideals, and role expectations that we refer to as the ego-ideal" (Lansky, 2005, p. 878). Put another way, the ambiguity around the ego ideal resulted in a privileging of guilt and associated fears of retaliation and punishment over the experience of shame which centres around a failure to meet ideals and concerns and the ensuing signal of threat. Because shame is not dependent on morality per se, for the purposes of this study, 'morality' is considered within a broader framework of concerns:

> Our lives are organized around concerns. By concerns we mean whatever is important to us, whatever we are interested in, and whatever engages us. Moral concerns constitute a subset of our concerns, namely those that are oriented toward justice rights, and welfare- in short, our concerns for the well-being of others (Dahl et al., 2011, p. 147).

Dahl et al.'s (2011) definition indicates that both moral and non-moral concerns include issues of importance for ourselves as well as concerns for the well-being of others. Similarly, Gilbert (2000) outlines three categories of concerns or ideals which resonate with shame theory. The first concern is ideals about others and includes "The wish to be worthy and loved, and to avoid inferiority and unworthiness". The second is concerns about ourselves and "The wish to be strong, superior, secure, and to avoid being weak and insecure". The third is concerns about our experience in the world and "The wish to be loving and good and not aggressive, hateful or destructive" (Bibring, 1953, as cited in Gilbert, 2000, p. 180). Gilbert's

(2000) understanding of non-moral concerns therefore brings us closer to an understanding of how the 'ideal' functions in the shame experience. The distinction between the 'ideal 'or longed for and 'real' self has been popularised in many schools of thought because of its explanatory power around an emergent gap in one's experience. Morrison (2007) describes this gap as:

> The conviction of a gap between ideal self (the self as I would want to be, toward which I aspire) and actual self (the self as I really am, the self that I am "stuck with") (p. 167).

However, using an ego psychology framework, Morrison (2007) takes this argument of the ideal one step further and purports that the gap forms the confluence for shame because "ideals also set the standards that lead to shame, through potential inflexibility and unattainable loftiness" (p. 67). Morrison (1994) describes this mechanism for shame as the construction of an image, an ideal 'self' characterised by perfection and worthiness. This created image then becomes the goal towards which we strive and in this process we set up criteria around failing which become the internal criteria for shame. Morrison's (2007) reference to "unattainable loftiness" is in line with many psychoanalytic thinkers who regard the shame gap as a form of narcissistic injury. Recall that narcissism was central to Broucek's (1991) theory about the 'self' and that narcissism is not necessarily pathological but is dependent on levels of self-awareness and the ability to move between a subjective and objective sense of 'self'. Similarly, Kilborne (1992) argued that "any discrepancy between the ideal self and the real self is, ipso facto, a narcissistic conflict, felt as shame" (p. 237). Kilborne (1992) further contended that "The more demanding one's ideal of oneself, the more subject to shame one is and the more vulnerable to narcissistic injury, which leads to heightened shame reactions" (p. 237). Wurmser (1987) shared this view that "the more ambitious and peremptory (narcissistic) the ego ideal is, the more painful is the wound about failing and the more pervasive is the narcissistic anxiety" (p. 76). Ego and superego conflicts "develop from discordance between wishful self images which embody the narcissistic goals of the ego and a self that appears to be failing, defective, inferior, weak, contemptible in comparison. These narcissistic conflicts are apt to evoke feelings of inferiority and shame" (Jacobson, 1964, p. 154, as cited in Morrison, 1989, p. 40).

Although the concepts of the 'ideal self' and 'ego ideal' are often used interchangeably in literature, from a psychoanalytic perspective, there is a difference. Ego psychology's 'ideal self' is useful as a broader umbrella concept to understand how disparities result in shame. However, it is the psychoanalytic 'ego ideal' that underpins the mechanisms of shame in the face of such discrepancies by explaining the roles of the ego ideal and the super-ego in the shame experience. In 'Mourning and Melancholia', Freud (1917) introduced the concept of the 'ego ideal' as part of the super-ego and elaborated on how "one part of the ego sets itself over against the others, judges it critically, and, as it were, takes it as its object" (p. 247). In this sense, the ego ideal fulfils a mafia type role (Hinshelwood & Fortuna, 2018) and sets itself up against other parts of the ego, resulting in objectification and harsh judgement of the 'self', with ensuing shame. Although the term ego ideal tended to disappear in Freud's later work, he retained the important idea that there is an agency by which the ego measures or critically judges itself.

Importantly for a study on shame, the power of the superego to humiliate is ubiquitous. Steiner (2011) argues that the critical superego has assigned roles and maintains that "Praise or blame, and reward or punishment, are functions of the observing object and come to be incorporated in the classical formulation of the superego" (p. 30). Thus, broadly conceptualising the 'ideal' versus 'real' self as purported by ego psychology lacks the explanatory power of the psychoanalytic roles of the ego, ego ideal and superego. Tangney and Dearing (2002) advocate that distinctions between the ego, ego ideal and super-ego were used in shame research by post-Freudian theorists in an attempt to differentiate between shame and guilt. Understandably, the practical applicability of neo-Freudian structural distinctions has been criticized, however, Frosh's (1991) suggestion to focus on processes rather than structural distinctions per se, seems helpful to add to our understanding of shame. Frosh (1991) contends that there are two processes belonging to the ego ideal and super-ego that interact. The first process is primary narcissism that originates from the 'ego ideal' and endeavours to recover lost omnipotence. The second process is the Oedipus complex which originates from the super-ego – as the outcome of the working through of the castration complex – and allows for realistic structuring of the social world. When the ego ideal attempts to regress and re-establish illusion, the superego plays a mediating role by promoting reality – through the castration complex. Frosh (1991) explains how these two processes are important for accepting separation and difference:

> But it is not the ego ideal in itself which is regressive; rather, it is the pursuit of the ego ideal without the mediation of reality represented by the Oedipus complex – without, that is, acceptance of separation. (p. 85).
>
> What makes the ego ideal regressive is the denial of difference. The setting up of the super-ego not only institutes the order of reality; it also relieves some of the pressure for immersion in the other and the loss of boundary which the ego ideal imposes. (p. 86).

In other words, the super-ego institutes the order of reality and facilitates healthy separation. Although the ego ideal appears to be the proverbial villain in this story, it has the potential to foster creative striving grounded in the search for the archetypal mothering experience. The developmental mechanism is that the super-ego serves to separate the mother and the child whereas the ego ideal propels them towards fusion. Important in understanding shame, the outcome of these processes is the ability to value 'difference' and to tolerate one's own feelings of dependence and helplessness. If all goes well, the ego ideal is characterised by a loving rather than a punitive quality. Recall the significance of how prototypes of hostile and loving object relationships have the potential to play out in current experiences of shame (Steiner, 1990)? Interestingly, it is the experience of loss that gives rise to the ego ideal, identification with loving internalised objects and psychological differentiation whereas to subject oneself to the demands of the ego ideal is to make oneself vulnerable to the narcissistic danger of inner emptiness and to abandon boundaries leading to the fear of engulfment (Frosh, 1991). The mechanism of the Oedipus complex is therefore to introduce distinctions and a sense of one's goodness so that one no longer feels in danger of fragmentation.

Lansky and Morrison's (2014) strongest criticism around Freud's contribution to shame is that he failed to elaborate clearly that the standards of the ego ideal are potentially a defence against states of shame and inferiority, in other words, narcissistic injury. Frosh (1991) purports that the attempts of the ego to merge with the ego ideal is tantamount to the narcissistic denial of difference in which the individual opts for an imagined world where there is no separation, loss nor unmet desires. The ego ideal which usually fulfils a reality function by postponing pleasure and instituting plans and hopes, is now seduced by the promise of a return to earlier states of fusion. If the ego-ideal is co-opted by the ego in this way, it becomes a carrier of regressive rather than creative urges. A relational perspective on these processes highlights that narcissism is at the expense of interaction with others. Broucek (1991) seems to have begun theorizing this gap by arguing that interpersonal inefficacy, self-objectification and the experience of rejection or being unloved during infancy, cause an overinvestment in the ideal self throughout the course of one's development, becoming major sources of shame. In a similar vein, Winnicott (1965) argued that aspects of the self that are experienced as unacceptable to the (m)other become devalued.

Although Klein departed somewhat from Freud's structural theory, she retained the concept of the ego ideal and argued that the ego is made up of experiences with internal and external objects (Hinshelwood & Fortuna, 2018). According to object relations theory, loss or disappointment to the ego is the equivalent of the loss of a good internal object and a sense of a good 'self'. Klein (1997) maintained that in the ego's attempts to maintain stability and a sense of personal identity, objects are pushed and pulled from the outside to the inside of the ego boundary and vice versa. This movement is used to maintain stability by taking all that is good into the ego and ejecting all that is bad. It is perhaps here that one can draw a clear connection between Klein's (1997) concept of impending ego instability and Kilborne's (1992) idea of conflicts between the 'ideal' and 'real' that can render the subject vulnerable to shame. In other words, the 'bad' – that is representative of the shameful discrepancy between wishful self-images and the failing self – must be pushed out. The discordance between wishful self-images and a failing 'self' can therefore result in an ego that precariously teeters between the two positions. This is particularly so when the desired 'self' is called into question by others.

According to this view, a person's inner world is dynamic, coloured by stories of relating to good and bad objects. This movement of objects and taking in of the good and pushing out the bad also indicates a conviction of the need for the 'self' to be good and adequate (Hollway, 2010). This is particularly relevant to the shame experience in which the whole 'self' is felt to be bad (Lewis, 1971). According to Klein, loss or disappointment involves a sense of the ego as having lost a good internal object and a sense of the good 'self' (Temperley, 2001). Therefore, in Kleinian terms, the loss of a good internal object results in the ego being destabilised and personal identity experienced as under threat. This has important ramifications for identity because the existence of the ego is felt to correspond to the existence of the good object (Hinshelwood & Fortuna, 2018). If the balance tips towards more bad internal objects than good, encouraging objects, a feeling of badness accumulates, and the ego experiences this hostility from within (Hinshelwood & Fortuna, 2018). This leads to compromising feelings about oneself, rendering one

vulnerable to shame situations both from within and in the external environment. The person is left with confused and painful mixed feelings and aggression that impede mourning of the lost object or ideal.

The interplay of either being lived-in by good or bad objects occurs throughout one's life resulting in lifelong emotional investments which continue to impact or leave their mark on the current composition of the ego (Klein, 1997) The internal world is therefore made up of memories of emotional investments in objects that are felt to help or harm the 'self' in the present. According to the principle of unconscious intersubjective dynamics, the process of identification allows the movement of objects between the inner and outer world and this ultimately impacts identity. Hollway (2010) calls this the "two-way traffic between internal and external worlds" (p. 223). The underlying principle of shifting identities is that these challenges are conflictual – internal and external – requiring constant shifting or reformation of identity. The key is to appreciate the dynamic tension in intersubjectivity and its role in identity formation (Hollway, 2010). Additionally, the psychosocial approach espoused for this study contends that biography – as it represents the early origins of psychic elements of anxiety – is also crucial for identity formation because anxiety provoking events and patterns of unconscious defences are bound up in unique histories (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). In the face of external danger, an individual is likely to deal with anxieties by experiencing familiar emotions and using the well-worn defences that make up the object relational patterns in their internal worlds: a repetition whereby current experiences are dealt with in the same way as they were in the past (Klein, 1952). The individual responds to both the present and the past, therefore shame is not just psychological but psychosocial. Hollway and Jefferson (2013) argue that the 'social' in the psychosocial approach examines three components, firstly, discourses (systems of meaning), secondly, intersubjective processes and thirdly, external events. Defences will impact the way that individuals position themselves in relation to discourses, others and events, as well as the discourses individuals choose to perceive and use to make sense of important events in their lives (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

3.5.3. Social comparison or the judgement of the good or bad – within or without?

Ideals do not function in a vacuum. Standards and ideals are largely derived from people and society (Gilbert, 1989). Social comparison is therefore used to establish whether ideals are met or not. According to Retzinger (2014), when comparisons reveal that ideals are not met, it results in shame that is characterized by a sense of inferiority. Morrison (1998) contends that inferiority is "the experience of failure that results from comparison" (p. 43). Kaufman (1989) goes as far as to call shame the "affect of inferiority" (p. 16). According to Compton (2005) we make two essential kinds of comparisons. Firstly, we compare ourselves to others and this can be lateral, upward or downward – upward comparisons usually trigger shame. Secondly, we compare ourselves to our own internal standard. Morrison (1994) defines the internal standard as judgement based on an *internalised ideal*.

Morrison (1989) takes the role of comparison in shame deeper and advocates that the precipitant of shame is envy and that envy arises because of comparison. Because the envied 'other' is 'seen' to be prosperous and thriving in comparison to one's own neediness, lack of status and felt deprivation, the

'other' is experienced as a competitor or rival. However, it seems that the impact of rivalry between adults is often overlooked. Steiner (2011) argues that whilst most discussions of the Oedipus complex concern rivalry between father and son, rivalries between other parties are equally important and, irrespective of differences in age, gender, size, and so forth, rivalries are often not experienced by individuals as a normal, painful part of reality and this therefore gives rise to feelings of exploitation and injustice. Steiner (2011) qualifies that in the clinical interaction, judgement calls around feelings of exploitation and injustice are difficult to make because these are indeed very real experiences, not necessarily arising solely from oedipal rivalries. Irrespective, the concept of rivalry is highly relevant because although difference is central to development it can also provoke envy and shame. Steiner (2011) puts it this way:

> A tolerance of difference is necessary for development and for creativity, but difference can also provoke envy, and it is often when this is attached to injustice that the destructiveness becomes so magnified (p. 113).

The reality is that when shame is nuanced with envy it can threaten to humiliate the subject (Steiner, 2011). Psychoanalytically speaking, comparative processes occur by means of the function of judgement and involve both internal and external objects. Hinshelwood and Fortuna (2018) explain the two roles of judgement from a Kleinian object relations perspective:

> The function of judgement is important in assessing two things: (i) whether some object is felt to be good or bad; and (ii) whether it is 'inside me' or 'outside me' (p. 54).

In the experience of shame, however, the judgement mechanism is slightly altered – the ego ideal turns against the 'self', leaving the 'self' feeling objectified and self-judgement follows. To be objectified is to be seen in specific, negative ways by others. The role of 'gaze' is significant in the experience of being objectified and has a role in the development of a sense of 'self' (Steiner, 2011). Steiner (2011) argues that both Winnicott (1967) and Kohut (1971) claimed that the mother's approving gaze was important to the development of a child's self-esteem, although Kleinians have been somewhat reluctant to accept this form of mirroring. However, he argues:

> That it is important to recognise that these affirmative views of the self reflected in the gaze of the object may allow negative aspects to be split off. This is also implied in Klein's idea (1957) that the good object depicted by the breast, and especially by the mother's face, should take away feelings of badness (Steiner, 2011, p. 43).

Steiner (2011) explains that split-off negative views of the 'self' can also be the result of experiences of an accusing and frightening other. This is problematic because they can "come to characterise the hostile aspects of the relationship with the [other], who may then be felt to embody a persecuting, ego-destructive superego" (Steiner, 2011, p. 43). Thus, an approving maternal gaze, necessary for development of a self, when lacking or persecutory, can also be experienced through the superego as a hostile, disapproving gaze.

3.5.4. Uncomfortable exposure: Seeing and being seen

The concept of 'public self-consciousness' in Leary and Tangney's (2012) model, discussed previously, also addresses the human concern with the impression of the 'self' on others. Goffman (1967) called this a self-monitoring tool for the self in a social context. The key idea in the literature is a sense of public exposure in the shame experience. Kaufman (1989) postulates that:

> Phenomenologically, to feel shame is to feel seen, acutely diminished. Exposure is an inherent feature of the inner experience of shame (p. 28).

Lynd's (1958/2014) thesis was that shame comprises the lethal combination of self-wounding *and* disgrace in the eyes of others – an understanding of how shame is associated with the loss of honour. Lewis (1971), who drew from the work of Lynd, contended that shame can result not only from negative self-evaluation but also negative evaluation by the 'other'. Her psychoanalytic proviso was, however, that this experience could be real or imagined. Kilborne (1992) effectively links the role of ideals ("the way one wants to appear") with exposure:

> Associated with the discrepancy between the way one fears one will be seen and the way one wants to appear, shame is often experienced as exposure, vulnerability, fear of what we do not want others to see in us (p. 231).

Herman (2012) purported that "shame also mediates attunement to indices of social value or status" (p. 162). The common denominator of exposure is therefore that feeling negatively evaluated by others results in feeling devalued in some way. Steiner's (2011) remarkable thesis on 'seeing and being seen' explains how the mechanism of gaze is central to the shame experience:

> The infant also discovers that eyes have a seductive power with which he can draw the mother into a position of admiration as an important means of countering humiliation (p. 38).

Steiner's (2011) starting point is the desire for admiration and that, as humans, this is drawn initially from the mother – through the eyes. But Steiner (2011) also contends that the shame experience is far more than just vision, or what information the eyes can take in about the outside world; it is about being vulnerable to humiliation when observed by others. In other words, exposure. Steiner (2011) gives a practical example of the role of observation or gaze in shame from his therapeutic work where a patient assigned him, the analyst, into the position of observer. The 'watching', 'looking', 'observing' analyst was then no longer felt to be a participant in the interaction but was ascribed a superego-like role of critical observer. The inevitable outcome was that the patient feared being looked down upon by the analyst.

Steiner (2011) advances a useful distinction between 'seeing' and 'being seen', arguing that objects that are not separate cannot be 'seen' properly. Only through separateness can one 'see' objects realistically, enabling a confrontation of unwanted elements such as envy, frustration, guilt, remorse, etc. However, if separateness is not achieved, unwanted elements remain "hidden". Steiner's (2011) concept of 'hidden'

object parts links to the well-established principle in the shame literature that the shame experience involves 'hiding' or the desire to 'hide'. This typically manifests in defensive behaviour such as projection and splitting. Ironically, feelings of being invisible and disregarded are also tell-tell signs of shame (Morrison, 1998). This suggests that there is a continuum of being seen and not seen, with uncomfortable exposure (being seen too much) at one end and disregard (not being seen enough) at the other and a comfortable middle range in between. Managing the painful gap between the 'self' and the ideal experienced at either end of the continuum often entails the use of omnipotence as a defence (Steiner, 2011). According to Kernberg (1985) omnipotence manifests as a denial of dependency on external objects – whether external proper or an internal representation thereof. The rationale is that we will not be loved if we are vulnerable and needy, therefore, to avoid rejection we must identify with strength, independence, attractiveness and so on. The ultimate goal of omnipotence is self-sufficiency with the result that some representations of the self may be split off and devalued in others:

> I do not need to fear that I will be rejected for not living up to the ideal of myself which alone makes it possible for me to be loved by the ideal person I imagine would love me. That ideal person and my ideal image of that person and my real self are all one, and better than the ideal person whom I wanted to love me, so that I do not need anybody else any more (Kernberg, 1970, p. 55).

Kernberg (1970) argues that during this process the actual and ideal 'self' and the ideal 'other' become mixed up. This is in contrast to normal differentiation of the ideal 'self' and 'other' as well as the tension inherent in ideal versus actual 'self' images. Primitive superegos require ongoing mitigation by nurturing 'others' which is likely to prove problematic in the shame experience because common shame responses include pushing others away – withdrawal, avoidance and attacking (Nathanson, 1992).

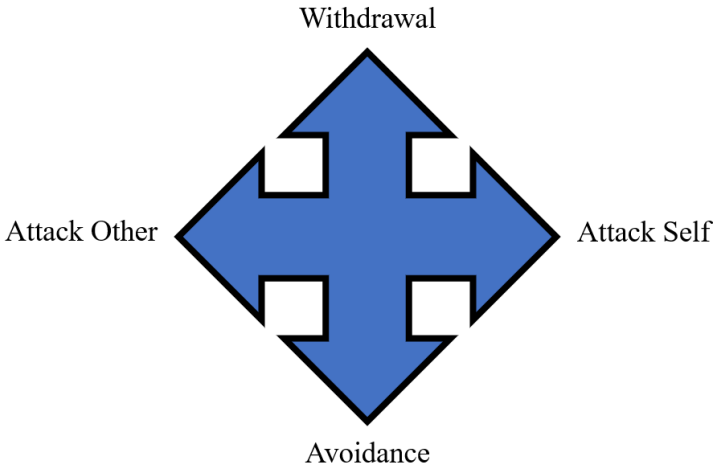
3.6. Shame responses

According to Gilbert (1997), shame responses serve an appeasement function in social hierarchies. In this sense shame allows an individual time to withdraw from social threat until the situation changes. Similarly, evolutionary psychologists like Izard (2010), have long argued that shame has an adaptive function and regulates relationships within social groups. According to Herman (2012), shame is a disorganising emotion. Retzinger (1991) purports that when the 'other' is felt to be a source of personal injury they are experienced as mocking, laughing, ridiculing, hostile, unjust and unresponsive. She argued that when an individual is in a state of overt shame, they may feel helpless or paralyzed and resort to more childish forms of coping such as crying. There may also be unpleasant bodily arousal such as blushing. On the other hand, when shame is bypassed it is more evident in conscious content such as thoughts of deficiency of the 'self' and individuals often play out scenarios in their minds of what *should* or *might* have happened. Brown's (2006) study revealed that women's responses to shame were about 'who', 'what' and 'how' they think they *should* be/behave according to society's expectations. Conscious content and

scenarios often include comparisons where the 'self' is experienced as inferior to others in some way whether regarding intelligence, beauty, social status and so on. (Retzinger, 1991). According to Herman (2012) shame responses include hiding, escaping or lashing out at 'others' before whom one feels ashamed. Shame has been correlated with anger, defensiveness, denial, a desire to escape, powerlessness and worthlessness (Leary, 2007; Smith et al., 2002).

But, perhaps the most comprehensive approach to shame responses in the literature is Nathanson's (1992) *Compass of Shame* model. According to Elison et al. (2006), Nathanson's scripts are the equivalent to recursively defined schemas. Nathanson (1992) argued that coping scripts are triggered in response to a shame stimulus situation. In an ideal world, an individual would attend to the source of shame and evaluate how to address the situation, however, people tend to use multiple scripts to reduce, ignore or magnify/project shame rather than address its source. The Compass of Shame was therefore developed to characterize a multiplicity of shame coping scripts represented by four poles, namely: Withdrawal, Avoidance, Attack Self or Attack Others.

Figure 1: *The Compass of Shame model*



Note. Adapted from *Shame and Pride* (p. 312), by D.L. Nathanson, 1992, Norton.

This item is copied in terms of Fair Dealings in Section 12 of the current Copyright Act.

Coping styles are used to avoid, reduce or project shame experiences. Importantly, Elison et al. (2006) argue that the poles of the compass are not independent as individuals frequently use multiple scripts – simultaneously or successively – in response to a shame situation. They argue that research has found that choice of coping style is affected by the situation variance and that this is likely the case for shame. *Withdrawal* is physical removal from the situation or reduction of contact and spontaneity. *Avoidance* is the denial or overriding of shame with other affects (including positive affects) to reduce conscious awareness. *Attack Self* includes self-directed anger, blame, criticism and conformity. Erikson (1963) defined shame as rage turned against the self. *Attack Other* is to project onto another or even attack others, whether in thought or behaviour. Nathanson (1992) purported that the *Withdrawal* and *Attack Self* scripts

denote conscious awareness of shame, the *Attack Other* script denotes reduced consciousness of shame, and the *Avoidance* script speaks to the disavowal of shame which operates outside of awareness. *Withdrawal* is the acceptance of the shame message as valid and a physical removal from the situation or reduction of contact and spontaneity. Elison et al. (2006) give the example of student withdrawal where the student does not participate in class discussions or, in more extreme cases, may drop out. The phenomenological experience of *withdrawal* includes anxiety, fear and sadness; together with a cognitive awareness of feeling uncomfortable around others. Importantly, the individual may not be able to identify the experience as shame, however, the behavioural motivation is to limit exposure by withdrawing.

The *Attack Self* pole includes an acknowledgement of the experience; however, anger, blame, and criticism are turned inward toward the 'self'. For example, the student who feels self-directed anger for being "stupid" (Elison et al., 2006). The phenomenological experience includes disgust, contempt and other emotions that magnify shame. Shame may or may not be identified explicitly, however, the individual is motivated to control feelings of shame by winning the approval of others. This is achieved through conformity, showing deference to others, self-criticism and self-deprecation. The *Withdrawal* and *Attack Self* poles both include acknowledgement of the negative experience and internalization of shame messages where the 'self' is found lacking. The significant difference between these two responses is that at the *Withdrawal* pole individuals pull away from relationships, whereas at the *Attack Self* pole the individual conforms and suffers shame to maintain relationships. At the *Avoidance* pole, shame is denied with attempts to distract the 'self' from feelings of shame with other affects (including positive affects) to reduce conscious awareness. Distancing also characterizes the avoidance pole. For example, the student who jokes about a shameful situation such as failing or who denies that peers are important. Denial is used to minimize conscious experience and there is therefore limited cognitive awareness of feelings of shame or one's own actions or qualities. Shame is also minimized to show that one is above feeling shame.

At the *Attack Other* pole there is also a refusal to accept shame's message – like the *Avoidance* pole – however, the strategy is to project shame onto someone else or even attack others whether in thought or behaviour to make the 'other' feel inferior. For example, the student who blames the teacher. According to Nathanson (1992) the *Avoidance* and *Attack Other* poles both include a limited awareness of shame and attempts to minimize shame. In his treatise on the universality of shame, Pines (1995) described how the fear of exposure results in distancing defences that include counterattacking the 'other' using sarcasm, belittling, projection and intellectualizing. The 'shamed' rid themselves of shame by putting the shame back on the 'shamer' – this encompasses a psychology of underlying vengeful feelings and rage toward those who have not received what was needed to become loved and respected persons (Lansky, 1995). Lewis (1971), Retzinger (1991) and Scheff (1990) all address the relationship between unacknowledged shame and rage. At the *Attack Other* pole, anger is directed outwards at what is felt to be the source of the shame and cognitions include the actions or faults of 'others' in an attempt to reinforce one's own position. Lewis (1971) described humiliated fury – motivated by shame – as initially self-directed but, with the potential to be redirected towards a rejecting other. For example, the shame of powerlessness, contempt

and helplessness can lead to actions that afford an experience of power (Lansky, 2005). However, this strategy drives shame into hiding and unless the underlying shame is acknowledged it will be hidden by shame dynamics involving vengeful behaviour, destruction and resentment. According to Retzinger (1995), any type of hiding behaviour, anger, violence, repression and negation of 'others' are possible defences against shame states. These defences can, however, also be used to identify shame states.

Lewis (1971) cautioned that denial, repression or failure to deal with shame in many way leads to symptom formation. It is not an inevitability that shame is toxic because when shame can be tolerated it leads to increasing tolerance of others and the strengthening of human bonds (Kilborne, 2005), however, a considerable set of studies have shown the maladaptive aspects of shame to have important negative consequences for individuals and society at large (Blum, 2008). In an extensive review of the shame literature, Leary and Tangney (2012) found a myriad of studies that consistently report a positive relationship between shame proneness and psychological symptoms and that this relationship appeared to be robust across a range of measurement methods and across diverse age groups and populations. The suggestion is that shame is usually part of the clinical picture of psychological maladjustment. Shame is often part of mental health diagnoses including depression, anxiety, substance use disorders, eating disorders and PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) (Brown, 2006; Gutierrez & Hagedorn, 2013; Kaufman, 1989; Morrison, 1984; Scheel et al., 2014). Shame also seems to have a particularly close association with depression at both subclinical and suicidal levels (Allan et al., 1994; Kim et al., 2011). The propositions for the association between shame and depression are that this is due to the ruminative nature of shame and self-attacking thoughts (Greenberg & Iwakabe, 2011; Orth et al., 2006). Morrison (2011) has also argued that shame is difficult to differentiate from depression. Similarities between the two states are feelings of deficiency, failure, inadequacy and helplessness (Cochran & Rabinowitz, 2000). Shepard and Rabinowitz (2013) argue that for the individual experiencing psychological distress, the question of differentiating between shame and depression is likely a semantic one.

Scientists are discovering psychobiological correlates of self-conscious emotions, like shame (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). This is done by examining biological responses to laboratory manipulated situations that are designed to threaten the social self (Dickerson et al., 2004). Shame has been linked to elevated cortisol and cardiovascular reactivity (Dickerson & Kemeny, 2004; Lewis & Ramsay, 2002). Dickerson et al. (2004) conceptualized a "social self preservation model". They found that shame and negative self-evaluation caused psychobiological changes – increases of cortisol and proinflammatory cytokine activity – when participants were exposed to social threat in embarrassing test conditions, like public speaking. The threat situations were designed around various losses – the loss of social status and/or acceptance and the real or imagined threat of rejection. Ongoing shame-related cognitive and affective states also predicted negative health outcomes. In a study by Rohleder et al. (2008) trait shame was associated with inflammatory activity. The autonomic response of fight, flight and freeze have also been associated with shame (Longhofer, 2013; Roth et al., 2014). Brown (2006) also conceptualised shame responses for women as fight, flight or freeze – used to protect themselves from greater harm. The

implication of psychobiological correlates is that shame is a somatic event that is mediated by the autonomic nervous system.

When shame forms part of a mental health issue it exacerbates symptoms and complicates treatment (Gutierrez & Hagedorn, 2013). For example, victims of abuse who experience shame that leads to hiding or self-attack including self-harm and aggressive behaviour. Dearing and Tangney (2011) caution that the stigma associated with mental health problems may also result in perceptions of help-seeking as shameful. The individual may feel deficient and assume that others view them as flawed, weak and unable to cope. Individuals who seek help may have shame that underlies the presenting issue, but they are unable or unwilling to talk about shame (Gutierrez & Hagedorn, 2013; Scheel et al., 2014). It is then up to the therapist to listen for the way in which the person talks about themselves or others to ascertain whether shame is implicated. For example, people suffering from anxiety experience increased self-criticism resulting in increased shame when they feel they do or say something wrong. Shame has also been found to manifest as thoughts and feelings of being weak and at fault in PTSD patients (Gutierrez & Hagedorn, 2013).

CHAPTER 4 - THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: A review of the education literature

4.1. Introduction

Understanding shame in a student context is a neglected area of research in both psychology and education. In this chapter the focus shifts from shame theory to the education literature and examines how shifting ideologies have informed higher education research agendas and promulgated student experience research. This review will attempt to position emotion research within the ambit of current student experience research agendas. It will be demonstrated that the prevailing ways of undertaking student experience research – the dominant behavioural and cognitive frameworks – have often led to decontextualised students that exclude the emotional realm. The efficacy and significance of dominant frameworks for researching student experience will therefore be critiqued and emerging viable alternatives that promote the study of students' emotional lives in context will be discussed. Whereas the first section of this chapter argues for the necessity of prioritising student emotions and context within research agendas, the second section will cover a broad range of higher education literature pertaining to contentious belonging and hotly disputed discourses in education so as to demonstrate a multitude of possibilities for experiencing shame at university.

4.2. The student experience: Possibilities for exploring emotions in research

4.2.1. How ideologies inform higher education research agendas

Neoliberal ideologies have shaped the world we live in, leaving neither individuals nor institutions untouched. According to Mann (2001, 2008) neoliberalism has changed the higher education landscape, resulting in a schism between economic and managerial imperatives and a student-cantered social justice agenda. She argues that a neoliberal agenda impacts teaching and research at universities causing tension that is often alienating for students, academics and institutions. Universities find themselves in an uncomfortable position between the global free market economy – driven by developments in communication technology and performance-related research funding – whilst simultaneously facing increasing student enrolments to fulfil mandated social justice agendas, amidst dwindling government funding (Kreber, 2006; Maassen & Cloete, 2006). Universities have become service providers with multiple stakeholders – government, staff and students – and are under duress to remain financially viable and competitive whilst simultaneously being held accountable to widen university access and provide inclusive curricula (Maassen & Cloete, 2006). Mann (2008) argues that the push and pull of different stakeholders' interests is characterised by competing discourses of the tension inherent in a social justice versus economic agenda in higher education:

> Between those of 'access', 'widening participation', 'inclusion', 'diversity', 'collegiality', 'inquiry', 'enhancement' and those of 'market', 'efficiency', 'performance', 'enterprise', 'employability' (p. 1).

The neoliberal shift has sparked debates about the very purpose of higher education in society today. In a notable, longitudinal study, Attewell et al. (2007) found that by increasing the higher education access of disadvantaged students, it reduced educational gaps across multiple generations. The study showed how the opportunity to pursue higher education not only benefitted the original 1970s cohort of poor and minority students – who had been accepted under the City University of New York's open admissions policy – but future generations proved more likely to succeed at school and complete college degrees themselves. However, Read et al. (2003) draw attention to an unwelcome paradox: although higher education facilitates upward social mobility it leaves many working-class students feeling alienated and struggling at universities that adopt middle-class cultures. Students themselves feel caught between conflicting ideologies of social justice, inclusion and development versus the performance and economic demands of the commercialised university experience (Mann, 2001, 2008). Ideological dilemmas therefore present challenges to students' sense of belonging and identity at university (Mercer & Saunders, 2004). From a psychoanalytic perspective, D'Amour (2020) contends that "Ideology deals in certainty, privileging one imaginative construal over idealizable others, insisting on its objective reality, whilst refusing any disillusioning of a singular view on how things must be. Ideology thus occludes alternative possibilities. It forecloses imagination" (p. 178). Conflicting ideologies is likely to be particularly problematic in the South African context where class disparities have been exacerbated by apartheid, resulting in a pressing widening participation agenda to redress historical inequalities (Dolby, 2000, 2001; Motala, 2017).

Additionally, despite widening access in universities worldwide, social inequality stubbornly persists in higher education (Mann, 2008). On the South African front, although access has unquestionably been extended, throughput rates are worrying (Wawrzynski et al., 2012). Core debates in higher education have therefore broadened to include retention – including managing diversity – and throughput. South Africa's story is not dissimilar to her global counterparts. For example, in the US, there are ongoing concerns of both under-representation of ethnic minority groups at universities and throughput problems (Carter, 2006). It is this sense of urgency to get to grips with retention and throughput problems that has manifested in the rise of student experience surveys. Students are, after all, – within a neoliberal mindset – key stakeholders in higher education. Williams (2013) contends that student experience surveys have become the data source of choice for quality assessment in higher education and provide evidence-based research on institutional performance. The data is used by universities for marketing, recruiting and benchmarking against peer institutions. Some in education claim that global neoliberal shifts in education fuelled the rise of student experience surveys: to establish measurable outcomes for universities to ensure that they are competitive (Klemencic & Chirikov, 2015; Kreber, 2006). However, although student experience surveys were designed to ask students directly about their experience – rather than rely solely on retention, throughput, and graduation rates – the contradiction in this method has become self-evident. Research that aims to

inform institutional performance inevitably ends up transforming students into consumers. It is therefore not surprising that the term 'student experience' is somewhat controversial and approached with caution by some sectors within the education community (Solomonides, 2013). But perhaps, more concerningly, the measurable outcomes of student experience surveys is a reflection of how a university education has gradually narrowed to that of achieving learning outcomes and producing employable graduates. This comes at the cost of the more holistic development of students (Bryson, 2013), a crucial part of which is relationships (Roland Martin, 2013; Scott, 2014).

In an article titled "Student experience is the new buzzword, but what does it mean?", renowned British educationalist, Peter Scott (2014), cautions that the term 'student experience' represents "market-speak". He argues that the danger of marketisation is that "experience can no longer be realised just through professional and personal (and maybe private) relationships between students and their teachers. Instead, it becomes a goal that must be managed corporately" (para. 2). The marketisation and commodification of education has therefore reduced relationships in universities to business transactions and performance measures. Scott (2014) cautions that if universities adopt a "one-size-fits-all" approach, based on the proliferation of student experience data, it could lead to an over-reliance on survey data that undermines the "intangibles of fit and feel" which have historically guided students' choices. This is concerning, particularly in a climate of increasing diversity where issues of fit are more important than ever before. Further to this, the commodification of education runs counter to a social justice agenda. In her ground-breaking work, Roland Martin (2013) paints a picture of what education as social justice looks like and argues that education for social justice ought to be viewed as an 'encounter', with a focus on individual learning and cultural transmission. This is, however, only possible through a relational lens, as proposed by Scott (2014). Roland Martin (2013) further argues that education for social justice involves a bi-directional exchange between the individual and the institution rather than the individual being changed through a unidirectional experience with the institution. Baron and Corbin (2012) argue that despite the increased focus on student engagement, university students seem to engage less with their fellow students, staff and institutions than ever before. This includes both academic and community engagement which run parallel.

Although Scott's (2014) warning about the marketisation and commodification of education should be heeded, it would seem that the current focus on student experience – albeit subject to constraints and limitations – is actually evidence of some attempt to get to grips with Roland Martin's (2013) notion of bi-directional exchange between the individual and the institution. However, it appears that the complexity of the issues at hand and the ideological schism in the education literature also seem to confound the task. In many instances, in the education literature, the terms 'student experience' and 'student engagement' are used interchangeably, however, they are different constructs. In their report "Focusing the student experience on success through student engagement", Strydom and Mentz (2010) skilfully argue that student engagement has provided a useful window onto the student experience. 'Student engagement' therefore seems to provide an organising framework for what could otherwise be an overwhelmingly complex arena

considering that the student experience comprises individual, group, institutional and societal factors that intersect. Krause (2012) concurs that student engagement is a useful indicator of the quality of the student experience and of teaching and institutional performance. What still seems to be missing is the idea of an 'experiencing' student (Solomonides, 2013). Student engagement research can have a tendency to descend to a transactional level with research that aims to show that students who engage on multiple levels within the system are more likely to experience learning, personal development and ultimately success. However, if one is to consider the student as an emotional, experiencing being, within a given context, then it is helpful to consider student engagement as a meta-construct as advocated by Zepke (2015). As a meta-construct, student engagement therefore considers the holistic experience of the student as well as possibilities for transformation, as is succinctly described in the extract below by Bryson (2013, p. 180):

> SE [student engagement] is the sense of being and the will and disposition to 'become' rather than 'have' (Fromm, 1977) that enables persistence, personal and educational development, and transformational learning (Perry, 1999). Each student is unique – in what they bring to HE [higher education] in terms of goals, aspirations, values and beliefs and how these are shaped and mediated by their holistic experience whilst a student. SE [student engagement] is constructed and reconstructed through the lenses of the perceptions and identities held by students and the meaning and sense a student makes of their experiences and interactions.

Bryson (2013) argues that 'student engagement' is more than transactional, it is about a sense of being and meaning making. This type of student engagement forms the pivot on which learning and development turn and differentiates between learners who 'become' – are transformed – versus those who 'have' merely acquired/purchased an education. Roland Martin's (2013) version of transformational education echoes this argument and indicates the dire consequences of current narrow, commodified views of education as opposed to more traditional views. The key to navigating student experience literature therefore requires acceptance of the reality that differing ideologies and intellectual roots play out in current student engagement research (Klemencic & Chirikov, 2015).

4.2.2. The limitations of 'student engagement' research

The current enthusiasm around 'student engagement' research is likely because of the fundamental premise that students who actively participate in a range of educationally-purposeful activities – involving teaching and learning – will have a better outcome (Klemencic & Chirikov, 2015; Zepke, 2015). Student engagement is a predictor of retention in higher education (Kuh, 2009) and is positively correlated with critical thinking, cognitive development, self-esteem, student satisfaction and better grades (Pascarella et al., 2010). If one considers the well documented retention and throughput crisis in higher education and findings pertaining to the critical role of student engagement to success, student engagement research seems to have much to offer to increase our understanding of the student experience. The flagship student engagement survey is undoubtedly The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), with its local

adaptations around the world. Kuh et al. (2008) define student engagement as "both the time and energy students invest in educationally purposeful activities and the effort institutions devote to effective educational practices" (p. 542). From this perspective, 'effort' and 'activities' are the cornerstones of 'student engagement'. This idea of 'active' students was partly a response to historical conceptualisations of students as passive recipients of university services – used in what is now considered outdated student satisfaction surveys. This view was heavily criticised. In contrast, the NSSE comprises forty-two key questions against which students rate themselves or their perceptions based on five benchmarks of effective educational practice: level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student staff interaction, enriching educational experiences and a supportive campus environment (Solomonides, 2013). The NSSE has gained extraordinary traction in localised adaptations around the world that Kezar and Kinzie (2006) suggest that it is often cited as a definitive definition of student engagement.

However, using an educational development lens, Case (2008) cautions against the "buzz word" status of 'student engagement' and calls for increased rigour and alternative perspectives in higher education. She argues that this is only possible by using more sophisticated theoretical tools. Kahu (2013) summarises the four perspectives from which student engagement research in higher education can be conducted: the behavioural perspective (effective teaching practice), the psychological perspective (internal, individual process), the socio-cultural perspective (context) and the holistic perspective (a combination). However, many within the educational development community would agree that behavioural and cognitive approaches have tended to dominate student experience research agendas, resulting in gaps in our understanding. For example, Case (2008) argues that the 'approaches to learning perspectives' – a cognitive approach that has its origins in cognitive psychology – has tended to dominate understandings of the student experience in higher education. This dominance came about in response to students' poor quality learning experiences and, for educators, is partly about deep versus surface learning approaches. Educators were concerned about an undue focus on memorisation in the learning process whilst understanding seemed to remain absent. However, according to Case (2008), by using factors like personality, learning style and learning approach as primary characteristics of the student experience, it has led to student experience research that is decontextualized. Solomonides (2013) argues along similar lines, suggesting that the problem with survey-based student engagement instruments is that they tend to be based on curricula and extra-curricular activities, possibly leaving out items that could be of help in understanding student engagement in more depth. Survey items tend to measure student engagement against established pedagogic practices rather than on 'how' students experience engagement.

On a more promising note, however, Temple et al. (2016) argue that adapted versions of student engagement surveys around the world tend to reflect different understandings of student experience and that while some countries, like the United Kingdom, still tend to prioritise *academic* learning experience, many others have moved towards incorporating a broader understanding of the student experience, including engagement with the institution, lecturers and peers. Temple et al. (2016) cite the South African Survey of Student Engagement (SASSE) (Strydom & Mentz, 2010) as one such example that adopts a more

holistic view of student engagement. Other countries that have adopted a more holistic approach are Australia (Coates, 2010), New Zealand (Radloff, 2011) and the USA. The SASSE encompasses four student engagement themes: academic challenge, learning with peers, experiences with staff and the campus environment. The questionnaire collects information about the following: students' participation in dozens of educationally purposeful activities; students' interaction with lecturers and their peers; the degree to which they engage with diversity; the way students perceive the university environment; estimates of educational and personal growth since starting higher education; and background and demographic information. Strydom and Mentz (2010) have argued that, from a South African perspective, increased student engagement leads to a better student experience, enhancing success. They define student engagement as a two-part process, firstly, "what students do" and secondly, "what institutions do". This resonates with Roland Martin's (2013) principle of education as a bi-directional exchange between the individual and the institution. However, the problem is that research on student engagement in the South African context remains scant (Wawrzynski et al., 2012).

Although student engagement research in South Africa is somewhat lacking, the latest national administration of the SASSE – 2015-2017 – does present useful findings regarding student engagement in the South African context. The 2015-2017 SASSE administration was in fact in response to concerns raised by the Teaching and Learning Strategy Group (TLSG) of Universities South Africa (USAf) about the levels of student engagement across South African universities. USAf found that many member institutions were conducting student survey research but for disparate reasons. This sparked the implementation of two multi-institutional, longitudinal SASSE surveys. These were conducted in partnership with the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at the University of the Free State which supplied the BUSSE (Beginning University Survey of Student Engagement) and SASSE (South African Survey of Student Engagement) content. The BUSSE targets first years and includes high school experience and expectations; the SASSE targets all undergraduate students. The BUSSE data was administered from 2015-2017 and included students from nine institutions (including four universities of technology). The SASSE was administered over the same period and included 20 120 students from twelve institutions (including six universities of technology). The results from the study were published by the University of the Free State (UFS) in a three-part publication series titled *Understanding Students* Issue 1, March/April 2018; Issue 2, October 2018 and Issue 3, December 2018 (USAf, 2018). The aim of the study was to understand the current South African student body and facilitate a better match between student needs and the environment. Some of the findings that are potentially relevant to this study will be presented in this literature review, however, rather than present the findings as a clinical list they will be integrated together with appropriate findings from a broader spectrum of literature that covers similar themes.

Solomonides (2013) contends that despite the utility of student engagement surveys, the NSSE and its derivatives continue to be characterised by the behavioural and cognitive perspectives, resulting in too narrow a focus of the student experience. Importantly for this study, the psychological dimension of engagement, including students' emotions, is not represented (Wefald & Downey, 2009). The sense of

urgency to include this aspect of experience is borne out by students themselves who viewed engagement as affective in nature (Solomonides & Martin, 2008). But the concern extends beyond the absence of emotions in student experience research. The problem is also that the 'who' – students as emotional 'beings' in a given context – tends to be under-theorised in student experience literature resulting in inadequate explanations of how the 'self' is organized. Using a constructivist approach Dall'Alba and Barnacle (2007) also argue that higher education must engage the entire person including "who they are" (p. 689).

4.2.3. Remedying research on decontextualised students, devoid of emotions

If the mainstream view of student engagement research is too narrow and privileges cognitive and behavioural models, then what would an alternative form of research look like? Zepke (2015) argues for a more emancipatory form of student engagement research that is contextual, critical and engaging. This moves student engagement beyond the classroom into a more critical, holistic realm where engagement is the thread that interweaves personal background, classroom, and the wider community as important factors in learning. Similarly, Solomonides (2013) presents an evolving model in which 'sense of transformation' and 'sense of being' are central to understandings of student engagement thereby enhancing sensitivity to the intersections of different facets of students' lives. Research by Case and Gunstone (2006) confirmed the dangers of decontextualized research in education. Their research of second year engineering students attributed an inability to use the deep learning approach to time pressures and assessment context. However, follow-up interviews revealed that the heart of the matter was students' lack of identification with the engineering profession. This led to conflict that hindered learning potential. These were broader social reasons that impacted student learning that had not previously been factored in. Case (2008) suggests that this is an example of the inability of the student learning perspective to speak to multiple influences of the student experience. This type of scenario has resulted in many in the educational development community returning to a focus on frameworks like Mann's (2001) framework of alienation and engagement, which provides a more contextual view of the student learning experience.

Drawing on Mann's (2001) work, Case (2008) therefore offers a more holistic framework – as an alternative to behavioural/cognitive models – which she hopes will help to achieve a broader or different scope in student experience research. Her framework comprises three categories or domains of the student experience namely, *entering* (reasons for going to university), *fitting into* and *staying* (attempts to succeed) in the higher education community. Case (2008) argues that the student learning perspective has tended to focus more on staying in the system, to the neglect of entering and fitting in. I would argue that the proliferation of literature on the first-year experience indicates that entering university is receiving adequate attention but would agree that research on *fitting into* the higher education community, particularly through a lens of emotions, is lacking. According to Meeuwisse et al. (2010), feelings of not belonging in learning environments are often talked about as "not fitting in". Jones (2018) has also developed a conceptual framework of student experience that depicts seven key influences which impact the student experience, they are: expectations – pre-university; transition – settling into student life; university peer and friendship

groups; social background; the degree programme; extra curricula activity; and preparing for life after graduation. The strength of Jones's (2018) framework is that it seems to capture the spectrum of student life stages ranging from application to post-graduation and everything in between. Furthermore, student experience is constructed as a set of ongoing interactions between the student and their environment. Including multiple interactional levels is important to student experience research because it acknowledges the role of bi-directional exchanges between individuals and institutions in student success. For example, on the negative side, one must consider that institutions have social and cultural biases inherent within their systems which can have detrimental effects on the student experience (Thomas, 2002). This rise of a socio-cultural perspective in understanding the student experience also seems to point to an ontological turn that has found expression in the proliferation of student identity literature (Kahu, 2013). Kahu (2013) claims that a socio-cultural perspective is more successful in answering the 'why' of student engagement or alienation. Part of this ontological turn includes viewing student engagement as both the experience and construction of being a student (Bryson et al., 2009). In this view, engagement is dynamic and requires qualitative analysis. The psychosocial framework adopted for this study embodies this ontological turn and its significance for education research.

While the foregoing frameworks prioritise context and relationship in the student experience, it is Kahu's (2013) proposed framework that places *affect* centre stage. Kahu's (2013) conceptual framework of engagement includes the affective, cognitive and behavioural domains of student engagement together with contextually grounded antecedents/influences and consequences. By including affect as a focus for investigation within a sociocultural framework, Kahu also seems to have spearheaded a broader movement in education research in which emotions are viewed as social rather than individual phenomena (Ratner, 2007; Zembylas, 2007). Kahu's (2013) model can be described as a socio-cultural ecological perspective in which student engagement is not the outcome of one but multiple influences which interact in complex ways. Engagement is therefore embedded within context. In other words, every aspect of the student experience is subject to socio-cultural influences. Kahu (2013) acknowledges that it would be impossible for any research project to include all elements, however, a focus on any one aspect requires acknowledgement of the relation to other aspects. She further argues that there is a dire need to include emotion in student engagement research and that this includes *how* emotions impact or influence the other dimensions in the model. Kahu (2013) argues that this requires the use of narrower populations in education research and cites single institutions as an example. Her line of reasoning is that by looking at multiple influences within a single institution, there is a possibility of improving student engagement within that institution. In line with Kahu's suggestion, this study focuses on a single institution, students at the University of the Witwatersrand and its unique socio-cultural influences.

4.2.4. The analytic leverage of student 'alienation': Potential, power and loss all in one word

Students do not learn in a vacuum. The value of the socio-cultural or more holistic research perspectives lies in their ability to address the critiques of the purely psychological perspectives of student

engagement research and, in particular, the neglect of the interplay between the individual and their context (Kahu, 2013). However, Case (2008) argues that by leveraging the concept of alienation, together with engagement, it allows for a more robust contextual view of the student experience. Mann's (2001) justification for the use of alienation, albeit complex, is highly applicable to a study of shame and has its origins in differentiating between the processes of learning and studying. Learning is an implicit engagement of 'natural psychological processes' that result in understanding, whereas studying includes the educational practices of reading, writing, assessment and so on. Mann (2001) regards the tension between these two processes as critical to the student experience because of the current institutionalization of 'learning' as 'studying'. The central line of argument becomes apparent when contrasting the student who adopts a surface learning approach, characterised by passive fulfilment of learning requirements, versus a strategic approach that is characterised by active engagement in perceived requirements. This distinction has the potential to fundamentally impact the student experience. It is at this junction of learning and studying that Mann (2001) argues that education can either be engaging or alienating resulting in the opening up or the closing down of the individual respectively

Put another way, alienation is equivalent to the shutting down of the very processes of learning with which a student must engage. Although Mann's (2001) argument is complex, it aligns with the transformational view of education espoused for this study, as opposed to learning as a commodified product. Recall from the introduction chapter, that this study uses Geyer's (2001) conceptualisation of alienation as a subjective experience that can be internal and external. The implication is ongoing interaction between the inner and outer worlds of the student. In his seminal review of alienation, sociologist Melvin Seeman (1975) outlined the following varieties of alienation which encompass both internal and external experience: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, cultural estrangement and self-estrangement. These variants of alienation correspond with shame responses. In particular, social isolation, cultural disengagement and self-estrangement would fit comfortably within Nathanson's (1992) Compass of Shame model. Although Seeman's (1975) thesis is an older body of work, it does much to further an understanding of alienation variants as attributes not only of an individual's intrapsychic state but also of a social system. Seeman's (1975) ability to address alienation as both an inside and outside experience resonates with the psychosocial and shame literature where shame is regarded as an intersubjective emotion. Mann (2001) also considered the alienation of students as the interplay between the 'self' and context and highlighted seven different theoretical perspectives that could potentially be used to explain experiences that are potentially alienating for students (as cited in Case, 2008, p. 325):

1. Alienation as a result of the post-modern focus on utilitarianism, functionality and competence.
2. Alienation as a result of the ways in which academic discourse constructs student identity.
3. Alienation as a result of the experience of being an 'outsider' in an academic world.
4. Alienation as a result of a context which requires compliancy rather than creativity.

5. Alienation as a result of disempowering assessment practices.
6. Alienation as a result of assessment practices which impose power and docility by means of examinations, learning journals, learning contracts, etc.
7. Alienation as a strategy for self-preservation, to avoid engagement with the risk taking that learning entails.

Mann (2001) acknowledges that whilst some postmodern critics do not subscribe to the term 'alienation', it proved to be a useful focus in education in response to the world-wide student movements in the late 1960s. Alienation also seems significant to this study considering the recent #FeesMustFall movement in South Africa, which forms an important backdrop to this study. In fact, during the 2000s the world witnessed history repeating itself with a new wave of world-wide student movements in a number of countries of which #FeesMustFall was just one. Mann (2001) argues that alienation is pertinent to an understanding of student "potential, power and loss all in the one word" (p. 13). "Potential" and "loss" seem profoundly significant to a study of student shame, precisely because of the paradox inherent in attaining a university education: amidst much potential for development, there is also much that can be lost in the process.

In summary of this section which has critiqued student experience research agendas, it is noteworthy that some researchers regard this fairly-new focus on the 'student experience' as positive – despite the drawbacks – because it is moving education research beyond the confines of the classroom and into the realms of a more holistic student experience (Ainley, 2008; Jones, 2018). However, the Shame Experiences Study aims to adhere to the newfound calls to advance a more holistic focus by including a 'sense of being' which prioritises the emotional realm and context (Jones, 2018; Kahu, 2013). Because of the potential multiplicity of influences on students' shame experiences, the focus for this study will be on a single institution and will make use of a sophisticated mixed methods psychosocial framework to ensure an in-depth exploration of shame (Kahu, 2013). In the next section, student experience research, together with several key studies from within the social psychology tradition – both local and international – will be discussed to help paint a picture of the current contentious higher education context and how this ushers in possibilities for student shame.

4.3. Contentious belonging and disputed discourses at university: Possibilities for shame

The dearth of research on shame in a student context has left a gap in our understanding of student shame triggers, how shame is managed and/or defended against and ensuing student identities. While there are a few studies that discuss shame as a finding, these offer limited understanding of shame dynamics because shame was not the focus of the investigation. Because of the lack of empirical shame specific research in an education context, a broad range of literature pertaining to contentious belonging and

discourses of deficit in higher education was reviewed and will be discussed. This literature covered the following areas: a lack of academic and social belonging; the paradox of emerging adulthood; the alienation of professional journeying; the paradox of lecturer-student relationships; discourses of economic versus social justice agendas; the confluence of racial, class and language identifications; and melancholia. The literature included in this review was selected to provide a comprehensive range of possible sources of student shame, including the variants used for this study: alienation, humiliation, embarrassment, failure, incompetence, inadequacy, inferiority, unworthiness, and rejection.

4.3.1. Academic and social (un)belonging: Areas of contestation

If we are to take seriously the call by education researchers to examine students in context – including emotions – a good point of departure is to consider belonging at university. When reviewing the education literature, it becomes apparent that belonging, engagement and student success form a formidable trio in the student experience literature and that feelings of belonging are integral to student retention and success at university (Cureton & Gravestock, 2019; Thomas, 2012). Belonging has been well researched as a predictor of students' academic and psychosocial success but concerningly is widely regarded as on the decline (Slaten et al., 2016). Belonging is important to a study of shame because its opposites, feelings of separation, exclusion and rejection, are integral to the shame experience (Lewis, 1971; Morrison, 1998; Retzinger, 1991). Brown (2006) considers belonging as central to the shame experience and goes as far as to define shame as "the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging" (p. 45). However, belonging is a complex phenomenon in higher education because of the vast range of relationships and social groups available to students. Additionally, research on belonging at the collegiate level is regarded as in its infancy and has largely been an area of neglect (Slaten et al., 2016). According to Halse (2018) there is an "endless range of modes or ways of belonging to any particular place, space or social group. These differ according to the type of relationship, social solidarity or context in which individuals are positioned" (p. 6). Halse (2018) contends that there are more formally recognised relationships such as being a member of a family or a citizen of a country as well as modes of belonging that involve the emotions and sentiments of fitting in and attachment – this type of belonging is characterised by an emotional connection. The key thought in Halse's (2018) theorising about belonging that seems relevant to a study of student shame is that a young person is no longer constrained by a single social solidarity with one set of values and practices. Rather, young people are able to consider multiple social solidarities characterised by diverse modes of belonging based on that particular social group and how individuals move in and out of varied social solidarities.

In Slaten et al. (2016) literature review of belonging at both a school and university level, they found that the most commonly cited definition of belonging in the school context – translatable to the university context – was Goodenow and Grady's (1993) definition of belonging: "the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment" (as cited in Slaten et al., 2016, p. 3). In their extensive literature review of belonging in higher education,

Cureton and Gravestock (2019) found that "the term 'belonging' is a key characteristic of human behaviour that has a long history within the psychological literature" (p. 2). 'Belonging' was characterised in the literature as an individual's need for affiliation, relatedness, social connectivity, positive regard and affection.

Similarly Maunder et al. (2010) state that "Student experience seems to involve entering into and maintaining bonds with social groups" (p. 53). However, from a shame perspective, Lewis (1971) purported that shame is intimately associated with *disconnection* of the social bond. As the bond is threatened, shame is provoked and the person feels alienated (Retzinger, 1991). As previously discussed, a breakdown in student engagement is tantamount to alienation (Case, 2008; Mann, 2001; Seeman, 1975). Retzinger (2014) argues that alienation is symptomatic of insecure bonds and is often characterised by feelings of despair and rage. She describes alienated states as excruciatingly painful and as feeling cut off from others. According to Retzinger (2014) shame can occur due to feelings of exclusion and invisibility as well as from being negatively exposed/invaded by another. Whereas healthy social bonds are characterised by feelings of pride and joy, threatened bonds give rise to a range of unpleasant emotional states, such as shame, insecurity, sadness and anger (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Retzinger, 2014). Emotions, like shame, play a central part in the experience of threatened bonds because they communicate the status of the bond to the 'self' and others (Retzinger, 1991). Using an intersubjective lens with elements from Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory Retzinger (2014) puts it this way: "Emotions are a way to monitor relationships between self and other, separateness as well as togetherness" (p. 297). Interestingly, cutting people off and inordinate dependency – although markedly different states – both signify alienated states. Alienation corresponds to rigid bonding systems, whereas differentiation characterises more flexible bonding systems. From a developmental perspective, Waddell (2002) argues that shame aroused in childhood – stemming from early Oedipal anxieties and difficulties of relating to 'threeness' instead of 'twoness' (feelings of exclusion) – can persist well into adulthood, causing developmental problems that affect later relationships and the capacity to grow emotionally. She maintains that "the locus of this struggle, whether in the four-year-old, the fourteen-year-old, the forty or the eighty-year-old, characteristically becomes the triangular relationship in which, over and over again, these matters of love, hate, possession and separation have to be negotiated" (p. 65). The implication of Waddell's (2002) developmental propostition is that relationships in the university context are continuously being renegotiated. However, belonging in education needs to be considered not only from the micro but also the meso and macro perspectives because students engage in multiple levels of interaction.

Cureton and Gravestock (2019) argue that the micro-system at university includes relationships with friends and peer group, the meso-system comprises educational relationships between the student, peers and teachers and the macro-system includes the student's relationship to the educational institution. Slaten et al.'s (2014) qualitative study similarly identified multiple levels of interaction pertaining to Asian international students' feelings of belonging at a university in the United States. Four themes of belonging were identified from the students' perspective: valued group involvement (e.g. being a member of an

organisation on campus, meaningful group work), meaningful personal relationships (e.g. having similar experiences as others, having healthy relationships with faculty/staff), environmental factors (e.g. global sense of university culture and/or pride, classroom environment) and interpersonal factors (e.g. intrinsic motivation to seek out relationships with others, opportunities for self-awareness and growth). Their study corroborated the proposition that belonging at university includes a sense of connection and loyalty to one's academic institution – belonging at the macro level (Schlossberg et al., 1989). However, from an object relations perspective, belonging to the institution also has implications for identification – a sense of the 'self' and one's identity. In a study exploring Wits students' responses to institutional changes and diversity, Cross and Johnson (2008) found that Wits students carried preconceived images about the status of Wits that shaped not only their image of the university experience but that these images were also suggestive of idealised images of their own identities. Wits students were portrayed as "witty", "hardworking", "intelligent", "focused" and "sharp" (p. 308). Some students felt that they belonged and were accepted at Wits because their good performance at school level matched the prestige of Wits and other Wits students. Dutton et al. (1994) argue that when there is a perceived similarity between an organizational identity and the self-concept, continuity is enhanced and there is greater identification. This principle of identification with the institution was borne out by Ndofirepi's (2015) study where students' reported that studying at Wits was considered prestigious and that if you study at Wits you are regarded as intelligent: "being a 'Witsie' it makes you to say, it's an achievement, in a way to say, this is an institution that everyone wants to be part of but only a few are selected" (p. 125). Ndofirepi's (2015) research also sensitises us to the downside of the prestige of being a 'Witsie' because students felt obligated and pressured to both keep up appearances and defend their honour by striving to prove that they were accepted at Wits because "there is something special about you" (p. 131).

Importantly, the education literature consistently differentiates between social and academic belonging and highlights the complexity of the entanglement of these two spheres of life are entangled for the student. Tinto's (1997) pioneering work on dropout from higher education set the stage for the importance of distinguishing between academic and social integration factors for university belonging. Tinto's (1997) line of reasoning was that the shared experiences of learning communities cement friendship as well as "bridge the academic-social divide that typically plagues student life" (p. 610). He cautioned that the two spheres – academic and social – are usually areas of contestation causing students to feel torn between two worlds. For success, students must be able to "meet the two without having to sacrifice one in order to meet the other" (Tinto, 1997, p. 611). Cousin (2006) argues that when students experience a disconnect between subject matter and their own values and attitudes it may result in 'faking it' or 'mimicry'. The implication is that students may 'pass' but there remains a lack in understanding of their identity, emotions, of the world and others (Meyer & Land, 2005). In other words, education has not been transformative.

One must also consider belonging to a broader community, including and beyond the university community – the macro level. This concept is emerging in the literature as a form of 'active citizenship',

arising out of the socio-cultural ecological approach to student experience (McMahon & Portelli, 2012). According to Carolissen and Kiguwa (2018) citizenship is about relationships between members of communities at an individual, community and national level and it carries with it connotations of rights and obligations. In the *Going to University* study, Case et al. (2018) found that students had a keen awareness of societal inequalities and their own experiences of privilege. Zepke et al. (2010) developed a framework for student engagement which consists of six elements: motivation, transactional engagement with teachers and with each other, institutional and non-institutional support, and active citizenship. The sixth element – active citizenship – comprises how "students and institutions work together to enable challenges to social beliefs and practices" (p. 3). It concerns students' abilities to engage effectively with others and especially those who would usually be marginalised or regarded as the 'other'. Kahu (2013) also saw fit to include citizenship as a distal social consequence of effective student engagement. The inclusion of citizenship in models of student engagement and belonging seems to be reflective of a need to address conflicted ideologies in higher education and how this leads to (un)belonging at university. Active citizenship is a philosophy of engagement that has a democratic-critical flavour and a view of students as active citizens within their university communities and society at large. However, because this study of shame attempts to consider multiple influences of shame, it must be borne in mind that belonging at university is also uniquely confounded by the life stage of many students. In particular, adolescence and young adulthood will be considered for this study because these stages are often coloured by identity issues and the struggle to belong (Erikson, 1963). Erikson (1963) argued that adolescence is characterised also by the readiness to isolate, which implies that student alienation at university is likely exacerbated by life stage.

4.3.2. The paradox of adolescence: The tug of war between 'self' and peers/society

Erikson's (1963) fifth psychosocial stage, adolescence, was deemed relevant to a study of student shame because a vast number of Wits university students fall within this life stage. Although adolescence occurs from about 13 – 19 years of age, Erikson (1963) regarded this age range as fluid, serving only as an approximation. This stage requires the resolution of identity versus role confusion and the existential questions asked during this stage are typically, 'Who am I?' and, 'Who can I be?' Identity is particularly relevant to a study on student shame because of the possibility of developing negative or unwanted identities. Lynd (1958/2014) argued that "The close association of shame with the self suggests also why further study of experiences of shame may lead to more understanding of the meaning of identity" (p. 26). Ferguson and Eyre (2000) purport that "Shame involves a focus on one's global self—who I am and who I do not want to be—with its source being an *unwanted identity*" (p. 254). Classrooms, university campuses and residences are important institutionalized spaces in which students are given identities (Eng & Han, 2000). Experiences involving social identities may either be congruent or conflicting for the student and have implications for the experience of shame (Lansky & Morrison, 2014). According to Erikson (1968) a central part of young people's identity is grounded in how one looks or comes across to peers and others:

> [Young people] are sometimes morbidly, often curiously, preoccupied with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are … (p. 128).

Erikson's (1968) use of the expression "in the eyes of others" is significant to the experience of shame and resonates with Steiner's (2006) thesis that gaze is a hallmark of the shame experience. Additionally, Erikson (1968) refers to young people being "preoccupied with what they appear to be", which suggests 'social comparison', a central feature of the shame experience. In her theory of shame, Lewis (1971) also introduced the idea of reliance on external cues from others in the form of a two-pole cognitive style continuum: field dependency and independency. Field dependency describes a person's reliance on social information and their attempts to merge with the surrounds to establish self-esteem (Morrison, 2014). Lewis (1971) argued that field-dependency leads to shame proneness where shame functions as a protection against a loss of boundaries and an attempt to maintain a separate identity. In contrast, field-independent individuals tend to be more guilt prone and rely on self-generated responses.

Erikson (1963, as cited in Miller, 1993) considers the development of identity as a conflicted period due to doubts around roles, which can lead to shifting states between an increasing capacity for intimate relationships and feelings of isolation. Gorard et al. (2006) conducted a study to address barriers to participation in higher education in England and found that students who struggled to make friends felt socially isolated. Maunder et al. (2010) showed how relationships with friends formed a significant part of the university experience in the United Kingdom. This seemed to be particularly marked during the transition from school – life shaped and supported by family – to university, where one has to become more independent from family and depend on friends. Maunder et al. (2010) argue that friends at university often served to fill the gap for students whose families were further away. A central finding of their study was that having a network of friends facilitated access and sharing of important resources at university. Without friends, students felt lonely and insecure and these feelings often translated into feelings of inadequacy about academic life. Case et al. (2018) also found that South African students who leave their family and community of origin for extended periods of time to go to university are at increased risk of feeling lonely and isolated. They suggest that first-year students were still learning how to form friendships outside the family structure and arrive at a balance between giving and receiving love and support with trusted others. Cheng (2004) conducted a study at a private university in the city of New York to explore student perceptions of community life on campus and found that students' feelings of loneliness on campus had the most negative effect on sense of community. The findings indicated that feeling part of the university community was closely associated with feeling accepted, cared for and valued as an individual. The study further concluded that connections with others on campus resulted not only in feelings of belonging but also of personal worth. Astin (1993) has long suggested that peers have the most influence on student's college outcomes. The importance of peer groups was also corroborated in a large quantitative study conducted by Johnson et al. (2007) in the USA. They argue that whilst most studies over the past 30 years have promoted the importance of faculty-student interaction for student success, their study did not find any significant relation between first-year students' levels of interaction with lecturers and sense of

belonging. The importance of peer group is concerning in light of current research which indicates that peer relationships are becoming increasingly compromised because of neoliberal ideologies of meritocracy, excellence and individuality. Burke et al. (2016) conducted a mixed methods study at three South Australian universities in which they examined constructions of capability and belonging and identified individual and personalised constructions that students have of their capability. One of their findings was that competition amongst students negatively affected students' individual sense of capability. They also found that teaching staff reported competing discourses of collaboration and competition amongst students. On the South African front, Swartz et al. (2017) caution that competition has replaced participation and that in the competitive world of universities there are discourses of 'winners' and 'losers', the 'best' and the 'worst', 'us' and 'them'. A competitive university environment therefore seems to hamper feelings of belonging and mutual peer support.

Erikson's (1963, 1968) proposition of the adolescent risk of isolation is also applicable to the young adult phase (approximately 20 to 39 years of age) because of the central imperative to form intimate relationships during this important time. The young adult phase is the time for falling in love – the process of projecting one's diffuse ego image onto another and the reflection thereof allows for further clarification of the self and one's own identity. Because young adults are still keen to fit in and to merge their identities with peers and desire reciprocal love, it means that the threat of rejection often looms near. According to DeYoung (2015), when an individual feels vulnerable to rejection in a relationship – that they may somehow fail to meet standards set by the 'other' in the relationship – it leads to rejection and shame. The process of seeking and finding healthy intimacy is therefore fraught with hazards. Miller (1993) reminds us that Freud proposed that the adolescent rebellion against parental standards and beliefs may reawaken primitive fears of being rejected, inferior and unloved. Erikson (1963) aptly called the counterpart of intimacy distantiation or, the readiness to isolate, which resonates with the shame responses of avoidance and withdrawal (Nathanson, 1992). Failure to achieve intimacy may result in young adults who are either self-contained and walled-off or, needy and dependent (Erikson, 1963): both are considered shame states (Retzinger, 2014). The inherent problem faced by emerging adults is the paradox of retaining one's own identity whilst still feeling that one belongs to a group or various groups. Erikson (1963) argues that in-and-out groups are particularly relevant to young people as they struggle to establish their identities:

> Young people can be remarkably clannish, and cruel in their exclusion of all those who are 'different', in skin colour or cultural background, in tastes and gifts, and often in such petty aspects of dress and gesture as have been temporarily selected as *the* signs of an in-grouper or out-grouper (p. 262).

Erikson (1963) argued that when a young person is experiencing identity issues, rather than developing an appreciation of difference it may often be attacked in 'others' as a defence against confusion. In his influential work entitled "Looking through the keyhole", Manganyi (1981) paints a similar picture of the difficult realities of belonging in society. He addresses the paradox of identity in society and how, seemingly counter-intuitively, it is the experience of excluding 'others' and being excluded by 'others' that

becomes an inevitable part of the process of forming a well-articulated identity. In the extract below Manganyi (1981) addresses how identity is achieved by setting oneself apart as unique whilst also being dependent on belonging to community:

> When the chips are down, individuals as well as nations become introverted like the text-book adolescent because they require an inner sense of direction. A preoccupation with identity during moments of crisis in a life history and in history are of significant diagnostic value. This introversion and preoccupation with distinctiveness is not in any way a spurious manifestation. It defines identity for us for it tells us forcefully that identity, as an attribute either of individuals or groups, thrives on exclusion. In the preceding statement we have come face to face with a paradox that is of unusual social significance. The individual whose identity is well-articulated must necessarily lose some of his appreciation of the value of others since his distinctiveness thrives on exclusion (p. 66).

It is suggested that this proposition of 'othering' to establish one's own identity may prove problematic in current university contexts which are more diverse than ever before and is likely to result in conflict or compliance. Retzinger (2014) argues that in communities where social bonds are weaker or, have not been established, there can be an increase in conflict proneness and an escalation of conflict. However, conflict can also be disavowed and met with compliance. Winnicott (1965) purported that individuals who lack self-definition develop a false subsystem that responds with compliant conformity to social and vocational demands. However, Waddell (2002) argues that the significant task of the adolescent is to move from conformance or resemblance to identity in adulthood. The university journey is clearly an important part of this developmental process for students. Difficulties often arise because society is concerned with status and hierarchy and "there is a cruel and insistent pressure to conform to the dominant ethos", in what has become a "culture of personalities", resulting from conformity and occurring at the expense of individuality (Waddell, 2002, p. 198). The implication is that students who lack self-definition may resort to a form of conformity or mimicry and pass through the university system but remain lacking in an understanding of their identity and the world and others.

Considering the tumultuousness of the adolescent phase, the question that begs is what will it take for the student to achieve a sense of self-definition or identity at university? From an object relations viewpoint, the student predicament of 'becoming' whilst simultaneously managing societal pressures at university can be described as follows:

> Martha Harris was particularly aware of the complexity of the relationship between the individual and institutional and societal groupings. Gnomically she wrote, "It is difficult enough to become the person one is without positive encouragement from the establishment towards conformity and deception" (1981, p. 327). She described the tension between "man as a social animal dependent upon, and with obligations to,

> society; and man as a developing individual with a mind that grows through introjecting experiences of himself in the world, impelled to think in order to retain internally relationships with needed and valued objects in their absence" (Harris, 1981, as cited in Waddell, 2002, p. 198).

Waddell (2002) argues that when earlier patterns of engagement are coloured by difficulties, these will be re-experienced with others – between the individual, institutions and societal groupings – in different settings. In cases where these patterns involved early traumas or severe setbacks, repetition may occur largely outside of consciousness. For those who have been able to understand early difficulties, these will be integrated into the personality allowing the person to move forward. Ivey (1989) calls this the "developmental struggle to attain a secure sense of selfhood in the face of interpersonal impediments and their internal representation" (p. 43). According to Kleinian theory when the sense of 'self' experiences ambivalence regarding external others that have become internalized it leads to powerful negative feelings:

> A phenomenon of ambivalence towards something inside the self creates a crisis over one's own sense of self – in particular there ensues a sense of self-condemnation and self-hatred (Hinshelwood & Fortuna, 2018, p. 65).

This sense of self-condemnation and self-hatred is characteristic of the Attack-Self response to shame (Nathanson, 1992).

4.3.3. Choosing one's role in society: The alienation of professional journeying at university

A big part of adolescent identity confusion arises from changing roles in society (Erikson, 1963). Because the task of a university is to prepare students for their future roles in society, the university journey necessarily conflates a student's struggle for identity. Erikson (1963) understood that, for young people, the promise of a career was also about searching for "sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (p. 261). This echoes Schlossberg's (1989) theory of 'mattering' where the questions asked by young people concern whether one matters *to* others and how one can matter *for* others. During childhood, the relational landscape is much simpler, and the ego identity is the sum of childhood identifications, however, during adolescence all former sameness and continuities are questioned – including the continuity of one's meaning for others (Erikson, 1963). All at once, a lifetime of childhood identifications no longer feels sufficient for the adolescent who seeks to reconcile him/herself with society's expectations. This emergent self requires active shaping and the integration of past experiences and identifications with aspirations and hopes for the future. An important part of the adolescent's future aspirations is career opportunities and the attainment of the necessary skills and knowledge whilst at university to pursue those aspirations. According to Schlossberg et al. (1989), because of transitioning between former and new roles, students are in a state of disequilibrium and, the greater the perceived discrepancy between these roles, the greater will be the feelings of disequilibrium and marginality. Although this potential disequilibrium applies to anyone acquiring new roles in life and society, it is particularly characteristic of the adolescent and young adult

life stages. Important to a study of shame, Erikson (1963) argued that 'fidelity' concerns the implications that chosen roles in society have on one's social standing before others and sense of belongingness in specific spheres of society. The university environment therefore plays a substantial part in shaping emergent adult roles, including aspirations of belonging to chosen spheres of society. The variety of roles that students occupy at university can be represented as different levels or types of belonging (Halse, 2018): belonging to one's cohort at a course level, the school/faculty level and a broader network related to the student's chosen subject or profession (Araujo et al., 2014).

Students enrolled for different courses in different faculties are required to navigate the unique roles required by their chosen field/profession. Research has shown that students who enter professions that have a high social status tend to have a clearer picture of their future roles compared to those whose professional path and future roles are vague (Reid et al., 2008). The perceived social status of different professions also seems to impact students' identity formation and engagement at university. However, irrespective of degree choice, Mann (2001) argues that all students are subject to alienation arising from the experience of being the student as outsider. She uses the analogy of students as strangers in a foreign world. Although Mann (2001) contends that non-traditional students will experience stronger feelings of alienation, she argues that more traditional students also succumb to the experience of alienation when entering the academy. Her thesis is that alienation is inevitable at university because it is preparation for an unknown vocational world. Mann (2001) is talking about the difficult road of professional journeying. She compares matriculation to the checkpoint at a border crossing whereafter the student enters a new country but with limited knowledge of the language and customs. In this sense, the student position is therefore always in some ways like that of the colonised – or a migrant from a colonised land – because those in power have the authority to impose the ways of the university on the student. Mann (2001) submits that it is this colonising experience that feels alienating to students. Students face the task of bridging their known world with an unknown world which can often feel meaningless due to the focus on discipline and rationality.

With regards to different disciplines, Mann (2001) argues that "disciplines form boundaries which include and exclude, and position and support, identities" (Becher, 1989, as cited in Mann, 2001, p. 11). Brint et al. (2008) found that student experiences differed based on disciplines and faculties resulting in discrepant experiences of "different cultures of engagement within the same university" (p. 383). For example, the humanities are considered to have less consensus of knowledge than the hard disciplines such as engineering and the sciences, where there are fixed theories and methods. According to Leathwood (2008) there are also particular associations around different subjects of study and capability. Burke et al. (2016) also found that recognition of 'capability' at university is dependent on particular fields of study and that discourses and practices within different fields can have either inclusive or exclusionary practices and implications. Hockings et al. (2007) conducted a study in which they demonstrated how teachers who operate within clearly specified subject areas tended to expect students to acquire legitimate communication practices acceptable to that subject. They found that whilst communication practices may further the discipline it often marginalised students who felt that their knowledge as 'outsiders' to the

discipline was side-lined. The result was feelings of exclusion and alienation. Mann (2001) argues that, from a psychoanalytic perspective, alienation in the academy is symptomatic of the repression of desire because at times the demands of learning academic discourses and processes requires students to repress "the very selves which they may need for engaging in learning" (p. 12). Students are caught between the need to conform to the demands of their professional journey – a vocational rite of passage – whilst maintaining connection with their own voice and desire. This is the complexity of Winnicott's (1965) intermediate area of experiencing within a university context. While the foregoing sections have reviewed the significance of peer relationships and role clarity and the implications for shame, the next section will demonstrate how lecturers can unwittingly become embroiled in the student shame experience due to the nature of the liminal space in learning between process and outcome.

4.3.4. The paradox of student-lecturer relationships

There is a significant body of research which argues that student success is largely associated with faculty-student interaction (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). However, large classes at university have resulted in less student-lecturer contact and human interaction in general at university (Cranmer, 2006). In 2013, Bilham conducted a qualitative study that aimed to establish student views on independent learning. The study consisted of approximately sixty students at a university in the United Kingdom who took part in focus groups. Of the many results obtained from the study, Bilham (2013) was most surprised to uncover the gravity of the impact of a lack of student engagement. Students described feeling like nameless and faceless numbers at university. Psychosocially, feelings of objectification and disconnection often give rise to shame because of unfulfilled expectations of being recognized or seen (Frosh & Barraitser, 2008). Research in the South African context has served to re-emphasize that student-lecturer interaction and interaction amongst students themselves – including beyond the classroom – is critical for student engagement and success (USAf, 2018). It is therefore concerning that both the BUSSE and SASSE results pictured a decline in students' perceptions of student-lecturer and peer relationships (USAf, 2018). Moreover, Issue 3 of the Understanding Students report, states that declining relationships have been exacerbated by the #FeesMustFall movement:

> According to research funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, while the #FeesMustFall movement influenced some positive changes in student-lecturer relationships during the time of the protests in 2016, the emotional impact of the turbulence on students and staff – including feelings of anxiety, alienation, confusion, uncertainty, exhaustion, being overworked, frustration and demoralisation – did not contribute positively towards better relationships between students, lecturers and other institutional role players (USAf, 2018, p. 6).

The report qualifies that declining relationships are concerning because healthy pedagogical relationships are considered essential to quality learning. However, as previously discussed, student engagement is a complex phenomenon that is interpreted in many ways. For example, Solomonides and

Martin (2008) found an interesting tension between teaching staff and students' understandings of engagement. Teaching staff tended to focus on students' effort, preparation and participation levels, as was indicated by the following teacher descriptions of students' disengaging behaviour: passivity, detachment, alienation and distraction. On the other hand, students used highly emotive, self-relevant language to talk about student engagement: confidence, imagination, self-knowledge, being supported, having clear objectives and how their studies would benefit them. The researchers suggest that whilst staff tended to focus on cognitive and conative factors of education, students focused on emotive and affective factors related to their personal and creative identities. They argue that these results are suggestive of the liminal space between process and outcome in learning. Meyer and Land (2005) describe liminal space as 'liquid' space and argue that it is "simultaneously transforming and being transformed by the learner as he or she moves through it" (p. 380). Because education is inherently transformative and developmental in nature, one can imagine how liminal spaces have the potential to impinge upon a student's sense of self and become spaces of conflict. It seems that the lecturer-student relationship may be particularly vulnerable in the liminal space because of adolescents' ongoing development in their ability to relate to 'others' as separate from the self, whilst retaining a sense of authenticity. This is perhaps why Winnicott (2005) intimated that healthy development and movement from dependence to independence "also continues as one of the tasks of parents and educators" (p. 17). Tangney and Dearing (2002) concur that the paradox of the role of the lecturer can be likened to that of parents. They argue that because of the sensitive nature of the lecturer-student relationship and the complexity of learning processes, lecturers should try to avoid causing shame:

> They are there to learn things that they don't know. As a consequence, this context of new challenges and experiences has great potential for causing shame. Faced with unfamiliar territory, setbacks and failures are inevitable. Learning and failure go hand in hand, and an important part of a child's education is learning how to cope effectively with failure (p. 187).

In this psychoanalytically informed study of shame a 'liminal space' in education can also be viewed as part of the transitional space in which knowledge is defensively acquired by the False Self. This is best understood by using Bion's (1962) theory of thinking which discriminates between the acquisition of two different types of developmentally significant knowledge, K and -K. A helpful form of knowledge acquisition includes "a thirst for knowledge and understanding (K)", however, its converse, is "the kind of intrusive curiosity which stems from defensive desires, those which seek to control, to triumph, to exercise power or deny littleness etc. (-K)" (Waddell, 2002, p. 161). Put another way, the pursuit of intellectual development can be undertaken by students at the expense of the experiencing 'self' as students engage the mind defensively in the pursuit of knowledge, often in a desire to be 'all-knowing'. Defensive pursuits of knowledge have relational implications for student-lecturer relationships at university as will be demonstrated by using the case study of a patient of Waddell (2002), called Simon. Simon was a psychology student who had turned to intellectual over-valuation to avoid dealing with issues of dependency, need and jealousy – Winnicott's (1965) False Self organisation. The student used his mind to

master, rather than experience feelings. Significantly for lecturer-student relationships, Simon projected superior and sadistic feelings into professors, however, for Simon, these projections were usually triggered when feeling ignorant and threatened, which were unrecognisable as parts of the 'self'. In these moments Simon would then experience his professors as belittling, thus reinforcing his need to defend. Waddell (2002) paints a picture of how Simon was drawn to the academic world in the first place because it served to reinforce rigid projective tendencies as he struggled with issues of resemblance (the False Self) rather than engaging with his authentic identity (the True Self). Simon's desire to imitate and identify with clever and superior, high-ranking individuals – such as his lecturers – was therefore defensive behaviour. The trouble was that it was leading him to becoming an 'all-knowing' pseudo-adult. Steiner (2013) argues that the fusion of the real and ideal self and the ideal object – for example a lecturer, or the institution – serves to enable a grandiose representation of the 'self'.

According to Kleinian theory it is important to internalise the ideal good object because it forms a foundation for hope and belief in goodness and trust, however, it is not possible to omnipotently achieve the ideal by acquiring knowledge defensively. Rather, the ideal must be wholesomely aspired to through understanding. However, to differentiate between the omnipotent ideal and the aspired to ideal, requires the ability to mourn the loss of the idealised object, together with a sense of omnipotence that made possession of it possible (Steiner, 2013). If mourning does not take place, grandiose representations will likely be used by students, like Simon, to compensate for underlying and denied negative self-representations, characterised by emptiness and feelings of inadequacy and badness. Additionally, these grandiose representations will further serve the function of denying dependency on objects perceived as rejecting or depriving. Waddell (2002) argues that other indicators of resemblance instead of authenticity in the university context are students who pass exams but are still left with the "fear about absence of internal qualification" and that this "threatens the security of the external role" (p. 161). Because of the relative 'success' of different modes of resemblance, Waddell (2002) concurs with Winnicott that one can function adequately in a projective mode and it may go undetected by others. However, it comes at a high cost to the real self.

Waddell (2002) goes on to describe how Simon experienced increasing levels of anxiety because of the felt discrepancy between the external version of himself and his inner world that was riddled with self-doubt, fear and humiliation. For Simon, his adolescent struggles – of seeking to reach stability yet remain flexible – shifted when he was able to differentiate and experience his maternal and paternal figures as both separate and in relation to one another. Waddell (2002) argues that the flexibility of the therapist is key to developmental changes in patients like Simon because the person needs freedom to be him/herself yet still be contained. The implication is that university students who are riddled with shame may require some form of containment at university to shift from defensive to more helpful modes of being and knowledge acquisition.

Bion's (1962) theory of containment purports that a mother contains her infant when he/she is experiencing painful or intolerable feelings by feeling the emotion herself (Bronstein, 2001). Importantly,

the mother figure should not *react* but rather *give* the feeling back to the child in an adapted and contained form. This process enables the child to repossess and reintegrate the emotion as its own. Although Bion's (1967/2018) theory of containment was modelled on the mother-infant relationship, Hollway (2006) suggests that it also has implications for adult subjectivity. Steiner (2013) further argues that shame is notorious in the gaps created by power differentials such as between patient and analyst and adult and child, because we imbue our objects with omnipotence. This principle can also be applied to the lecturer-student relationship. Waddell (2002) contends that ongoing emotional work is necessary for development because before there can be changes in external relationships there needs to be some sort of shifting of internal relationships or a reworking of unhelpful internal representations or gaps, so that a different relational outcome can be achieved. While some students achieve this reworking, others may continue to struggle with unresolved tensions with authority figures. The lesson that can be drawn from Simon's case study is that unless students can own disowned parts of the 'self' through effective containment, these bad parts will continue to be attributed to 'others' in the university environment – lecturers and peers – contributing to repetitive, unhelpful shameful encounters. Liminal spaces will therefore remain spaces of conflict.

In addition to Bion's (1962) theory of containment, Kohut's (1971; 1977) self psychology theory of mirroring is also a useful way of understanding students relationships with lecturers and peers. Kohut (1971, 1977) identified two types of shame reactions: first, a self-conscious reaction at the possibility of faulty mirroring by significant others and second, a reaction to not measuring up to the grandiose standards of the 'self'. Kohut argued that a lack of mirroring results in a lack of transformation of grandiose and unrealistic fantasies into more realistic, mature goals and ambitions. This results in a disavowal or splitting off of fantasies in order to conform to social standards of behaviour. In university settings, this could result in either a student's narcissistic anxiety because of vulnerability to this self-fragmentation (extreme sensitivity to lecturer critique), or alternatively intrusive feelings of superiority to others (which hampers their capacity to learn from lecturers or peers). These narcissistic disturbances thus impair regulation of self-esteem, leading to responses that range from grandiosity to shame. Morrison (2008) purports that "the antidote to the experience of shame is the quest (or struggle) for acceptance-of the flawed self, by self or other" (p. 65). However, the theory of the 'False Self" demonstrates that the struggle to accept and receive acceptance of the flawed self is a lifelong challenge (Winnicott, 1965) and likely one that students will have to wrestle with at university.

4.3.5. Discourses of economics versus social justice: 'Marginality' and 'mattering'

According to the seminal work of Schlossberg (1989), questions like "Will I fit in?", "Will I make friends?" and "Do I belong here?" are common in learning environments. She contends that although everyone feels out of place from time to time, when students feel out of place, they also feel that they don't matter and are not recognised. 'Not mattering' impinges on the experience of the 'self' and according to the relational psychoanalyst Emmanuel Ghent (1990), our deepest longing is to be known and recognised by others and to reciprocate:

> The superstructure of defensiveness, the protections against anxiety, shame, guilt, anger are, in a way, all deceptions, whether they take the form of denial, splitting, repression, rationalizations, evasions. Is it possible that deep down we long to give this up, to "come clean", as part of an even more general longing to be known, recognized? Might this longing also be joined by a corresponding wish to know and recognize the other? As to the developmental origins of such longings I would locate them as being rooted in the primacy of object-seeking as a central motivational thrust in humans (p. 109).

The desire seems to be to be known by others in an undefended way, something akin to Winnicott's (1965) notion of the True Self. Schlossberg's (1989) theory on 'building community for students', positions 'marginality' and 'mattering' as opposites on what can be seen as a continuum of feelings of belonging and engagement on the one end versus alienation on the other. In this sense, Schlossberg's theory aligns with Mann's (2001) thesis of engagement versus alienation. 'Mattering' is "the feeling that one commands the interest or notice of another person" (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981, p. 164). In shame language, this is the equivalent to Steiner's (2011) conceptualisation of 'being seen'. Being seen is so fundamental to human relationships that Fonagy et al. (2002) argue that the early attachment context creates an "expectation of being seen" (p. 426), understood and respected. Difficulties arise when this expectation is not met, the person feels objectified and dehumanised and pain ensues of which shame is a higher order product. Schlossberg (1989) argued that not fitting in academically and/or socially could furthermore lead to feelings of worthlessness and increased self-consciousness – both of which are important features of the shame experience. According to Schlossberg et al. (1989), feelings of belonging/engagement also influence students' loyalty to the institution where they are studying:

> We are connected by the need to matter and the need to belong. The creation of environments that clearly indicate to all students that they matter will urge them to greater involvement. Clearly, institutions that focus on mattering and greater student involvement will be more successful in creating campuses where students are motivated to learn, where their retention is high, and ultimately, where their institutional loyalty for the short- and long-term future is ensured (p. 5).

If 'mattering' results in institutional loyalty, then the converse is also true; students who do not feel like they belong, will likely not experience institutional loyalty. This principle of 'mattering' demonstrates the bidirectional relationship between the personal and the institutional and resonates with the object relations framework used for this study. Recalling how relationships have objects, including institutions and even whole societies, and that these objects can become the target of defences (Britzman, 2015; Case, 2008; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013), one can also extrapolate this principle a step further as it pertains to the reciprocal influence of the personal and the sociopolitical. One could argue that Schlossberg's (1989) thesis of marginality and mattering also applies to how students are personally impacted by current sociopolitical ideologies of neoliberal/economic versus social justice agendas in higher education. The literature indicates that conflicting ideologies, which can take many forms, have been amplified since widening participation

emerged as a policy concern in the higher education sector. One such form is Burke's (2016) utilitarianism versus social justice which represents differing orientations to widening participation in higher education. In the utilitarian approach the emphasis is on employability, entrepreneurship and economic competitiveness with a focus on individual student attitudes and a prevailing discourse of "excellence'. These ideologies translate into deeply personal experiences for students, which can be demonstrated through a careful reading of research about marginalised students. For example, research has shown that students who "do not perform personhood in ways that might conform to expectations of 'excellence' are vulnerable to shaming, internalised disappointment with self and feelings of failure or inadequacy" (Reed et al., 2007, p. 19, as cited in Swartz et al., 2017, p. 17). Additionally, Burke (2016) argues that those individuals who cannot meet neoliberal ideologies and expectations of 'excellence' are put into compensatory remedial frameworks assigned to social justice agendas. The result is that the student ends up bearing the brunt of conflicting agendas and is often tainted with a discourse of deficit. O'Shea et al. (2018) concur that the gist of the 'deficit discourse' in higher education is that historically under-represented students – who lack the required skills and knowledge for university – are painted as requiring remedial support and it becomes the student's responsibility to attain the necessary skills for success.

According to Burke (2012), part of the problem impacting marginalised students is that neoliberal strategies and discourses of widening participation have resulted in "raising aspirations" of young people and have oversimplified aspiration formation: by ignoring "that aspirations are formed in and through complex structural, social, economic, and cultural inequalities, relations and identities" (p. 3). In other words, students arrive at university with high aspirations only to discover that they lack the resources that facilitate educational attainment and success. For this reason, many argue that the neoliberal prestige culture of higher education institutions – with its perceptions of recruiting only the best and the brightest – is concerning rather than helpful to individuals (Swartz et al., 2017). Clarence (2018) therefore argues that deficit discourses obscure both systemic inequality and privilege in higher education by portraying autonomous students who can achieve success through hard work. The 'hard work' argument tends to downplay or ignore the structural and systemic constraints that poorer students face, and these students are subsequently labelled as 'unprepared' for university and are doomed to inevitable feelings of marginality. Therefore, neoliberal education policies characterised by "meritocracy and 'hard work' as pathways to success are regarded by many as problematic (Gillborn, 2014, p. 27). Clarence (2018) suggests that deficit discourses need to be carefully deconstructed. She acknowledges that "all students and academics have some kind of 'deficit' in relation to the expectations set for achievement and success" (p. 208) and that this is the very reason for learning and development. However, what must be opposed, is the way that deficit discourses are politicised and uncritically accepted based on ideological assumptions. It must be opposed because ideologies that are uncritically adopted have important consequences for individual students. In their study, Burke et al. (2016) found that "sensibilities of belonging are formed in relation to constructions of capability; to belong in a field such as higher education, the student must be recognised as having the capability to belong" (p. 18). Put another way, when students feel that they lack capability, they feel like they don't belong, and experience associated feelings of fear, shame and anxiety. In their study of racial

integration in historically white universities, Bazana and Mogotsi (2017) also found that a sense of belonging correlated with students' academic performance and engagement at university. This finding was concerning because Black students in their study were found to carry the added burden of dealing with social identity issues which had a direct bearing on their academic performance and psychological well-being at university – lack of belonging led to feelings of "loss, loneliness and disconnection". It is therefore not surprising that Carolissen and Kiguwa (2018) argue that current notions of belonging in higher education are troubling and "fraught with contradictions, tensions and ideological discord" (p. 5). The education literature leaves us with no doubt that much of the trouble in education concerns contentious issues of race, class and culture. However, what is often missing in the literature is a psychosocial understanding of the confluence of these matters and particularly in the South African context. The next section therefore explores how class has the potential to stratify the student experience and then builds on this complexity by adding race and culture.

4.3.6. Class-based social stratification and epistemological access: Blame and shame

According to Reay et al. (2005) the widening of access in the higher education sector in the United Kingdom has only served to deepen class-based social stratification which has implications for student and wider social identities. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that widening access has resulted in increased consciousness of deepened class-based stratification in society. Reay et al. (2005) argue that class subjectivity and related feelings of authenticity are essential to understanding student experiences in the higher education sector. Although not student specific, a growing body of literature is demonstrating that shame within a context of poverty has important implications for the undermining of social solidarity (Ray et al., 2004; Reay et al., 2005; Scheff, 2000, 2003). Chase and Walker (2013) explored the intersection of shame and poverty amongst adults living in poverty in the United Kingdom. and found that poverty-induced shame not only compromised human dignity but also generated divisive tendencies within communities who differentiated between 'us' and 'them' and in so doing produced a fragmented 'us'. Sayer (2005) describes a similar phenomenon in his concept of moral boundary drawing based on class and identifies shame as "a powerful element of the experience of class" (p. 948). He cautions that to exclude an understanding of class and its implications for identity and culture would result in an "alienated account of subjectivity" (p. 949). Loveday (2015) explored the experience of shame in students from working-class backgrounds who were studying and working in the higher education sector in England. She found that participants reported experiencing judgements of deficiency due to their working-class affiliation and that this impacted the students' sense of value, and generated shame. Firfirey and Carolissen (2010) conducted a qualitative study at a university in the Western Cape and found that poor students experienced significant psychological distress about their poverty and tried to hide their poverty to avoid the stigma of being labelled as 'poor'. Some students chose to terminate their studies rather than risk stigmatisation by revealing their poverty through seeking assistance.

Letseka and Maile (2008) contend that there are two main reasons why students drop-out of university in the South African context. The first reason is an inability to sustain daily living expenses at university. Even students who obtain some funding for registration through student loans and the NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme) find themselves unable to afford daily living expenses at university. The SASSE (USAf, 2018) found that 70% of students reported not being able to afford food on campus, 68% were unable to afford study materials and 62% disclosed that they could not afford to participate in campus-based social and academic activities. In response to the #FeesMustFall movement the Financial Stress Scale was added to the SASSE and the results indicated students' high levels of stress and anxiety about money. Approximately a third of students indicated that they worry daily about paying their university fees and living expenses. 40% of students mentioned tuition fees as a reason for considering dropping out of university and 30% mentioned living costs. This was in contrast to 28% of students who cited personal reasons, 18% who mentioned poor academic performance and 20% who cited a lack of belonging as a reason for potentially dropping out. Between 2016 and 2018, the University of the Free State (UFS) conducted a study to understand how students' conceptualise poverty (Ruswa, 2019). The study included 2 306 students and was an exploratory sequential mixed methods case study, with an initial qualitative inquiry followed by a quantitative phase. The study found that student poverty was multidimensional and included the following categories: basic needs (food, own accommodation, basic healthcare), learning resources (resources to pay fees), living conditions (accommodation that is conducive to studying, safe transportation, safety on campus), psychological wellbeing (social support to succeed in studies), and participation (the ability to participate in study and leisure related activities). Interestingly, with regards to the psychological wellbeing category, 43.4% of participants reported that "I am sometimes ashamed of who I am because of what I have or do not have" (Ruswa, 2019, p. 3).

According to Sayer (2005) emotions, like shame, to be a form of normative emotional reasoning by which people make evaluative judgements of how they are faring and being treated by others, based on what is valued. Sayer (2005) contends that class can be regarded as inequality of access because the poor lack access to the ways of living they and others have come to value. These inequalities are not based on personal merit or worth of the individual, however, they do have a profound impact on achievement possibilities, which can, in turn, result in increased recognition and self-respect. This is where culture also becomes embroiled with socioeconomics and class because what we value and are concerned about is acquired from culture. What may be cause for pride in one culture is cause for shame in another. For the purposes of this study, culture is considered a fluid construct, as opposed to a static category. In this sense, culture is seen as adapting and changing with time and contact with other cultural ideas (Ajrouch, 2015). The education literature is clear that society values education. However, recall the argument by Burke et al. (2016) that discourses of 'aspiration' are problematic because the aspirational value of higher education has blinded many to the complex problems around achieving academic success? This brings us to Letseka and Maile's (2008) second reason that is often given for why students drop out of university in South Africa: inadequate preparation.

Motala (2017) paints a picture of high levels of failure and dropout rates persisting in South African higher education, despite widening access and the academic potential of university goers. She argues that the reasons most often cited for this dire situation are the lack of articulation between schooling and the higher education sector – the schooling sector produces matriculants who are underprepared for the challenges of university. However, it is a complicated mix of factors which Clarence (2018) delineates by drawing on the distinction between formal/institutional versus epistemological access. In the South African context, epistemological access is difficult for many Black students to achieve because of multiple influences around finance, family support, educational preparedness and home literacy background. The argument is therefore that epistemological access is not only about difficulties in paying university fees but that the ability to leverage the 'goods' distributed by the institution is another matter entirely. What is at stake is skewed success rates at South African universities because some students' home and school backgrounds are less congruent with university practices than others. Case et al. (2018) also argue that families with a higher socio-economic status are able to provide home environments that better prepare their children for university. They suggest that cultural capital is partly about deep practices in the home that cultivate factors necessary for success in school and at university. According to Duckworth et al. (2016), cultural capital includes "ways of speaking, behaving, and interacting, which are learned through interactions with family and social institutions such as home and schools" (p. 264). Issues around epistemological access have resulted in many universities designing and running programmes like the Targeting Talent Programme (TTP) at the University of the Witwatersrand which aims to "increase the academic, social and psychological preparation of academically talented learners, primarily from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds for admission to South African universities" (SETMU, n.d.).

Donnelly (2018) conducted a study at a research-intensive university in the north of England to tease out how implicit social rules of engagement perpetuate inequalities in higher education. His research evaluated 'outreach' programmes conducted to build capacity of underrepresented groups at university and explored relationships between students, their families and the higher education system. Donnelly (2018) used Bernstein's (1975) sociological theory as an interpretive lens which uniquely divides education into an 'expressive' order, which concerns conduct, and an 'instrumental' order, which is about acquiring skills and knowledge. Bernstein's (1975) theory sheds light on how families understand the 'rules of the game' in educational institutions differently by linking social class and education together with the mediating role of higher education institutions. He purported that problems arise when families highly regard education and desire the outcomes but do not understand the processes in which their children must engage as students. These families do not understand hierarchical rules and orders of educational institutions, often resulting in fear and feeling paralysed to help their children. Problems arise when students arrive at university and their lack of exposure and family support means that they are unable to identify with what is expected of them. In Donnelly's (2018) research, he reports how some participants "struggled to imagine themselves studying at university, as they perceived there to be a gulf between their own identity and the image they had of those studying at university" (p. 328). He found that not all young people had the benefit of parents who teach their children 'legitimate' dialogue and how to relate to lecturers and fellow students

at university. Donnelly (2018) also found that separate fields of specialization had different identity components for students and therefore boundaried disciplines produced disciplinary identities, for example, the doctor, the lawyer, the teacher. Disciplinary identities therefore raises additional questions of personal fit within a chosen arena. Bernstein (1975) contended that because universities have different areas of specialisation it is likely that 'expressive' and 'instrumental' orders can differ within the same university e.g. different professional degrees within different faculties. This is in contrast to schooling where students are accustomed to greater homogeneity at all levels of their experience.

Cross et al. (2009) conducted a study amongst Wits students to investigate the distinction between formal and epistemological access. They identified three social conditions which impact epistemological access: student background (including class, language and culture), the Wits learning environment, and individual ability to negotiate the university system. Their premise was that Wits tends to be dominated by performance-driven strategies resulting in high individual performance but low participation. They found three groupings of students which they divided heuristically as 'the Witsies', 'the Survivors' and 'the culturally displaced students'. 'The Witsies' were characterised by learning orientations which matched those of Wits and having sufficient individual resources (material and symbolic) to engage meaningfully. 'The Survivors' lacked some of the learning orientation required and had knowledge gaps from school, however, they worked hard, improved language competence and tried to find the necessary resources required. 'The Survivors' were also able and willing to ask for help. However, Cross et al. (2009) also noted that "when they feel vulnerable or not confident they choose to hide away and keep a low profile" (p. 37). The last group, 'the culturally displaced students' seemed to experience no shared learning orientation, had significant knowledge gaps from school and lacked the resources required to negotiate for themselves. This group experienced alienation, anger and ultimately withdrew. The response of the latter two groups in the study is characteristic of Nathanson's (1992) withdrawal and hiding shame responses. Retzinger (2014) contends that separation and shame are interrelated; shame exacerbates separation and when unacknowledged it generates a form of self-entrapment in one's state of isolation.

One of the primary manifestations of the lack of articulation between family of origin, school and university, in the student experience literature, is students' unrealistic expectations of the university experience. Ochse (2005) conducted a study at the University of South Africa to explore race differences in academic expectations and perceptions of ability in relation to actual achievement. He found that students were often unrealistic about the standards at a university level and that there were mismatched expectations about the amount of effort that would be required. This overconfidence or mismatch led to students feeling frustrated, angry and experiencing negativity towards their studies and the institution. Ochse (2005) also found that students – from all racial and gender groups – who overestimated their future success tended to experience lower levels of achievement. Interestingly, the psychological mechanism used by students who overestimated future success was downward social comparison. Students in the overestimation group, tended to regard themselves as somewhat 'elite' because they were accepted at university based on stringent acceptance requirements. This seemed to lead to feelings of superiority and an inclination to assume an

above average ability. This study highlights how being accepted at university was felt, by students themselves, to be an elite experience.

The SASSE (USAf, 2018) also documents expectation gaps and calls it "the Freshman myth" with regards to the first-year experience. This term originated in the United States in the 1960s and refers to students who overestimate their own abilities and underestimate the difficulties faced at college. According to the SASSE report, although most students who attend university did not achieve an average of 70% or higher at school, they expected to achieve these results at university. Additionally, it was found that 77% of students surveyed expected to achieve average marks of over 70% in the first year, however, less than a third achieved this. The SASSE report acknowledges how unmet expectations leads to 'major disillusionment' in students and can have negative repercussions. This mismatch of expectations is described as a "disconnect between reality and expectation" and is suggested to be the result of dysfunctional schools, poverty and being the first in the family to attend university (USAf, 2018, p. 8). The concern around unmet expectations is the associated discourse of lack of preparedness and "explicit and implicit blame":

> In South Africa many students carry the added burden of inadequate basic education systems, adding fuel to complaints about their lack of preparedness, their unresponsiveness to traditional teaching methods, the erosion of critical thinking skills and basic literacy. All of these complaints carry explicit and implicit blame which is often unfairly directed towards the students themselves. Recent research emerging from an on-the-ground survey of first-year students confirms that it's time for South Africans within the academy and beyond to acknowledge a collective responsibility (USAF, 2018, p. 5).

The SASSE and BUSSE therefore support the argument that neoliberal ideologies, expectations and compensatory remedial frameworks result in students bearing the brunt of discourses of deficit (Burke, 2016; O'Shea et al., 2018; Reed et al., 2007) or, in the South African context, 'lack of preparedness'. These students are not 'recognised' as having the 'capability' to belong. The "explicit and implicit blame" (USAf, 2018, p. 5) documented in the extract is suggestive of the enormous potential for shame around epistemological access to university in South Africa. Burke et al. (2016) found that discourses of blaming tended to fuel feelings of incapability in both teachers and students. It is significant that Burke et al. (2016) use the term 'misrecognition' with regards to capability. They give the example of a student who may be 'misrecognised' as incapable when in fact they are struggling because they live in a remote area with a lack of access to Wi-Fi. Burke et al. (2016) argue that lived experiences of misrecognition are felt as injuries to the 'self' and often result in feelings of shame and fear. According to Winnicottian theory, if the True Self is not recognized it promotes a sense of insecurity about the acceptability of the 'self' (Frosh & Barraitser, 2008).

From a shame perspective, Morrison (1998) argues that failing or feelings of inadequacy are core components of the shame experience. The work of Blum (2008) gives us some insight into how epistemological access and inadequacy are likely experienced as humiliation, powerlessness and victimisation. It would seem that in the South African scenario, all parties involved experience a sense of powerlessness but the blame and shame are often shifted onto the affected students. However, Burke et al. (2016) found that approximately one third of students interviewed at the end of their first year of study did not feel confident about their academic ability. They therefore argue that access to education will not, in and of itself, overcome disadvantage and inequality because "capability is deeply entwined with identity formations that are produced within, across and between different social contexts and spaces" (p. 7). They argue that over the years 'capability' has become a decontextualized attribute with the assumption that it can be directly translated and assessed across histories, cultures and societies. Burke et al.'s (2016) study significantly contributed to making discourses of 'capability' and 'incapability' more explicit by highlighting how capability is intertwined with identity formation which is a product of social context, culture and history.

4.3.7. Racial, class and language identifications in the academy: Contested belonging

However, crucial to an understanding of the potential for class-based shame in the South African student body is the intersection of race and class based on historically contingent categories. Singh and Bhana (2015) conducted five individual interviews and eleven focus groups in a study at the University of KwaZulu Natal which comprised only African under-graduate students from working and middle-class backgrounds. The study aimed to explore how participants understood race and class within a university context. They concluded that whereas some students' racial positioning was continuous with historically held constructions of being Black and poor in South Africa, other students aligned more with the shifting of class positions in a post-apartheid South Africa. Singh and Bhana (2015) found that hybrid identities resulted in a divide between Black students: those who felt comfortable using the English language and did not regard it as a power investment versus Black students who resisted fitting into the university environment by not using the English language. Student constructions of the 'coconut' or 'oreo' (black on the outside, white on the inside) were used to describe the hybrid identities of those Black students who identified with aspects of a White identity, such as the English language. Fanon's (1952) influential work on Black shame documents how Black assimilation involves performance of whiteness which he regarded as maladaptive behaviour resulting from Black subjugation. Importantly, Singh and Bhana (2015) found that class differences manifested in the study through an urban/rural divide, language and a discourse of taste. Although an acknowledged limitation of the study was the exclusion of other races, their study serves to highlight how class is a crucial distinction at university that can fracture student relationships, including intra-racial relationships.

Torres and Massey (2012) conducted a qualitative study at an urban university in the United States which has a large Black student body. Their research aimed to explore the experiences of Black students

from more integrated versus segregated backgrounds. Firstly, they found that Black students from more integrated backgrounds were comfortable in White settings whereas their counterparts from segregated contexts viewed same-race peers as a 'refuge' from a perceived White and hostile world. Secondly, they found that Black students from an integrated background were taken aback to discover that they were unfamiliar with the urban Black culture of their segregated counterparts and felt uncomfortable interacting with them. Thirdly, the students from segregated backgrounds were surprised how little they had in common with students from integrated and often affluent backgrounds. The authors of the study describe a sense of 'let-down' as same-race peers began to comprehend the realities of intraracial diversity. The lifestyle and values of the 'other' often felt alien and assumed Black identities were now experienced as troublesome. This confirmed the findings of a qualitative study conducted by Harris and Khanna (2010) which was documented in their provocatively titled article "Black is, black ain't: biracials, middle-class blacks, and the social construction of blackness". Although their research comprised working participants who were between the ages of 23 and 40, the study also demonstrated the simultaneous resistance and acceptance of nuanced positions of Black identity from a same-race perspective. The study authors concluded that "narrow notions of "authentic" blackness challenge group cohesion and threaten to splinter the black community along class and ethnic racial lines" (p. 639). Significantly, their study uncovered more tolerance for racial than class diversity. Returning to the South African front for comparative purposes, Canham and Williams (2016) conducted a qualitative study in a working adult population that explored the pressures that confront a group of Black middle-class professionals in Johannesburg, South Africa. They found firstly, a hegemonic White gaze that proliferated race discourses and secondly, a marshalling Black gaze which seemed to police the boundaries of acceptable blackness. They further argue that the Black gaze resulted in Black middle class professionals' perceptions of selling out to whiteness and abandoning long-held notions of blackness. They contend that although racialization continues to shape notions of Black lives, less rigid identity possibilities for blackness have also emerged.

Walker (2005a, 2005b) documented how White students within a still white dominated university tended to erase race and, in a similar vein, Black students tended to ignore race inequalities. Notably, denial and avoidance are significant shame coping strategies. Concerningly, when shame and destructive feelings are ignored, it leads to engulfment or isolation and is characterised by fragile social bonds (Retzinger, 2014). Frosh and Barraitser (2003) argue that simply seeing the 'other' as different may also be a defence against recognising the need for relatedness. This type of 'othering' can often lead to ethnic and racist hate because it becomes a source of social hatred by alienating the 'other':

> Racial identifications are never non-racist, as in the Rainbow Nation fantasy, but, according to Stephen Frosh, 'both contain and exclude' and, further, 'contain within them a hidden and denied series of repudiations and wishes' (Frosh, 2002, p. 62). A sense of 'racial' identity is derived through constructing the 'racial' Other, which becomes a fantasy structure on to which difference is projected—a peg onto which fears or desires can be hung (Frosh, as cited in Pattman, 2007, p. 480).

Pattman (2007) argues that one must acknowledge connection to the 'other' for purposes of 'bridging' rather than for 'invasion' or 'incorporation'. The difficulty is that shame can lead to a 'taking over' the 'other' to stabilise the sense of 'self' thereby precluding authentic connection. The art of relationship is therefore "remaining in a distant-enough relationship to allow something separate to flower, yet also in sufficient connection to not "let the other die alone" (Frosh & Baraitser, 2003, p. 786). The other cannot be reduced but neither can they be owned. The issue is that the other is required for the self to exist, however, there must be ethical proximity. The capacity to think begins with the acceptance that the other exists.

An interesting feature noted in the South African student experience literature is how race manifests through proxy devices such as language and schooling, rather than presenting as an autonomous phenomenon (Swartz et al., 2017). For example, in the *Ready or Not* study, Black students reported a hierarchy among students based on proficiency in the English language (Swartz et al., 2017). The hierarchy ranged from English as a mother tongue, to Black students who attended private schools and speak with "good accents" through to those who are left struggling with English. An observation is how language becomes the focus of difference rather than an integration of ethnicity, race and class. According to Finchilescu et al. (2007) language serves as a proxy for group membership and is seen by students as an obstacle to mixing. In the *Going to University* study, Black students reported not only being disadvantaged and marginalised because of their inability to use English proficiently but also feeling ashamed (Case et al., 2018). Brown (2016) conducted a study at Stellenbosch University and found that the Afrikaans language helped to form a sense of belonging for some students at the historically White South African university – where Afrikaans is the dominant language – whilst excluding others. In the study conducted by Johnson et al. (2007) around epistemological access, ethnic minorities felt positioned as the 'other' and struggled to negotiate their identities within the dominant culture. A theoretical lens that has been widely used to explore belonging in intercultural university contexts is acculturation theory. Acculturation is the process of adopting the norms and values of a dominant host culture (Zhang & Moradi, 2013).

Slaten et al. (2016) conducted a qualitative study – at a university in Midwestern United States – that aimed to identify ways to promote a sense of belonging for Asian international students. This particular study has been carefully selected because the results considered multiple psychosocial influences on the student experience. Five factors were identified as influencing participants' sense of belonging, or lack thereof, on campus: interpersonal interactions (valued group involvement, meaningful personal relationships, opportunities for bonding), campus environment or resources (classroom interactions, campus facilities, university resources, university pride), acculturative experiences (acculturative stress, discrimination, positive aspects of host culture), emphasis on academic achievement (influence of social engagement, pursuing long-term goals), and intrapersonal factors (social self-efficacy, personal growth). With regards to acculturative experiences, students reported that friendships with students of similar origin tended to increase their feelings of belonging – because of emotional closeness and the experience of feeling cared for. Yoon and Lee (2010) have termed this ethnic social connectedness as opposed to mainstream social connectedness. Although students desired both forms of alliances – friendships with US

and fellow Asian students – and found both adaptive and increasing a sense of belonging on campus, these alliances functioned in different ways.

Students also reported that the acculturation process was over and above adapting to academic culture. In this sense 'academic culture' could be regarded as the equivalent of Mann's (2001) concept of academic journeying used in this study. Students also reported that a primary source of embarrassment related to acculturative experiences was language difficulties. This was a fear of speaking English incorrectly as well as fear and frustration at not being able to express good ideas in English. Another finding was how students' sense of belonging on campus was intimately tied up with academic achievement. Study participants regarded academic failure as failing to belong both academically and socially to the university. To make matters worse, students reported that poor academic performance resulted in feeling not 'valued' by the university. A significant finding was, however, how most of these students also referenced intrapersonal factors as affecting their ability to connect on campus. This included social self-efficacy or the desire for a stronger sense of social self-efficacy. Students with lower self-efficacy described themselves as 'shy' and felt that this inhibited their ability to connect and that this was further exacerbated by language barriers. From the South African perspective, Carolissen and Kiguwa (2018) argue that belonging continues to be a contested political and social claim, however, one can argue for how this translates into students' personal experiences about belonging at university, particularly when academic performance is called into question.

4.3.8. Racial melancholia and the intergenerational transmission of shame

In contrast to class shame, racially based shame is not as much about what one has, but who one is. Eng and Han's (2000) understanding of melancholia and Volkan's (2004) theory of shame within groups, institutions and nations have been selected as potentially useful theories for interpreting group identifications within this study. Race is significant in a post-apartheid South African university context because according to Eng and Han (2000) the suspension of groups of colour's assimilation into what is regarded as mainstream culture can result in national melancholia. The difference between mourning and melancholia is that in mourning, a lost object is declared lost whereas in melancholia the loss is unavowed (Fiorini et al., 2009). In the process of mourning, the world is regarded as poor whereas in melancholia it is the ego itself that is felt to be poorer (Eng & Han, 2000). In mourning the loss can be of a person or a country and even concepts like liberty (Freud, 1917), but in the case of melancholia, what is experienced is the loss of an ideal (Butler, 1997). For arguments sake, one can include the aspirational value of education as subject to individual and collective losses when it does not materialize as hoped or promised. Eng and Han (2000) propose a depathologised view of Freud's (1917) concept of melancholia for understanding the everyday conflicts arising from assimilation and racialization from the vantage point of group identifications. Rather than pathological, Eng and Han (2000) regard racialization as a fluid moving between melancholia and mourning:

> To the extent that ideals of whiteness for Asian Americans (and other groups of colour) remain unattainable, processes of assimilation are suspended, conflicted and

> unresolved. The irresolution of this process places the concept of assimilation within a melancholic framework (p. 671).

Although Eng and Han's (2000) work focused on the assimilation of Asian Americans into American society it can be useful for understanding shame in any group of colour. According to Suchet (2007), racial melancholia is an affliction not only of the oppressed but also of the oppressor. Her focus is on the racial melancholia of whiteness which includes limited access to whiteness as real power, the loss of the ideal of whiteness and recognition that whiteness results in being an involuntary beneficiary. In a similar vein, Straker (2004) purports that shame manifests via melancholia specifically with regard to how whiteness has betrayed cherished values and ideals for many White South Africans through involuntary forced association with the apartheid regime. That many wish that these painful issues could be magically resolved is evidenced in Walker's (2005a) study published with the title "Race is nowhere and race is everywhere". where White students within a still white dominated university tended to erase race and, in a similar vein, the Black students tended to ignore race inequalities. However, Woodward (2000) suggests that racial shame can be traumatic or chronic in nature, resulting in Lewis's (1971) feeling traps whereby shame becomes recursive, looping back on itself unable to be transformed into knowledge. Herman (2012) describes this as feeling ashamed of feeling ashamed. This unexpressed shame and anger block off the possibility of reflection resulting in a confused and divided self. Eagle (2018) noted that the #FeesMustFall movement resulted in heightened racial tension on university campuses in South Africa and that there was a limited capacity for interpretation which is indicative of unexpressed anger and shame. The predominant mode of dealing with tension was retreat rather than retaliation or interpretation.

However, the problem is not going to go away unaddressed. According to Suchet (2004), ambivalent assimilation – characteristic of melancholia – creates a gap which is regarded as a wounded attachment that requires negotiation of loss or risk racialised identities becoming dissociatively split off from general identity formation (Suchet, 2004). Woodward (2000) purports that in this sense shame is not experienced as a felt emotion but becomes a condition in which one lives, and cites the example of shame experienced by African Americans who may not believe themselves to be inadequate, yet perceive that they are regarded as inadequate in the eyes of White Americans. This results in a divide between the internal and external, between object and ego (Eng & Han, 2000). In some instances, hate for the other is transformed into self-hatred, similar to Butler's (1997) formulation of 'the turn'. If losses suffered by one generation are not resolved through mourning and assimilation, and if there is no investment in new objects then transgenerational melancholia may ensue (Eng & Han, 2000).

According to Davids (2011) racist responses are triggered by anxieties related to dependence, loss and humiliation and these anxieties are sensitive to the social meanings of difference. He suggests that there are three steps to the racist response: firstly, actual differences between the self and other such as accent, skin colour, secondly, projection of split-off parts of the self into the other and thirdly, activation of the internal template of circumscribed roles to ensure safety. He further argues that when there is a demand for equality, the balance of superiority and inferiority becomes disturbed leading to threatening responses.

Clarke (2003) argues that the use of projection can range from an attack resulting in destructiveness at one end of the spectrum to a form of communication that leads to empathy and understanding at the other. The contents of this projection are repressed images of the 'self' that are felt to be unacceptable and therefore the 'other' is projected upon and devalued. This is illustrated in the therapeutic work of Davids (2002b), in which he paints a picture of a Black patient who feels misunderstood by a White analyst who imposes views felt to be "refracted through a white lens" (p. 362). From the analyst's point of view the patient's response is possibly regarded as a form of resistance to the anxiety triggered by the interpretations. The result is a deadlock or political correctness. Polarised positions become established and communication breaks down. This can be regarded as a reproach deadlock. Roth (2001) cautions that if an individual cannot or will not contain projections it results in increasing levels of projective identification. Although Davids (2002b) work did not address the affective dimension per se, he acknowledges how uncontrollable affects are split off into a racially identified 'other' and that this allows for inner equilibrium of the 'self' as the split off parts of the 'self' remain hidden – this phenomenon holds true for all races. In cases like these, it then becomes important for the therapeutic couple to tease out the analyst's real 'white lens' from the patient's perception of this lens, as coloured by his own projections.

Theorists such as Volkan (1977, 2001) have begun to include shame in an understanding of collective violence which also has a generational component. Volkan's (2004) theory includes four steps: a chosen trauma, the failure to mourn, entitlement to revenge and collective regression. This particular emphasis on the failure to mourn resonates with Eng and Han's (2000) understanding of melancholia as the outcome of the mourning process inherent in unprocessed losses. Volkan (2004) added a fifth element to his theory – humiliation or shame – to highlight that shame results when the trauma was experienced as humiliation and the group therefore experienced a failure to mourn. This feeling of shame leads to the construction of a differentiated 'us' versus 'them'. This path can lead to revenge, which is captured in many of the shame-anger and shame-rage psychoanalytic theories of shame (Lewis, 1971; Retzinger, 1991; Scheff & Retzinger, 2001). The significance of Volkan's (2004) work is that it considers the complexity of emotion dynamics and the increasingly recognised role of shame within groups, institutions and nations. Scheff (1990) contends that shame, together with the emotions of anger, fear and humiliation potentially play a role in generating support or opposition for collective violence. By taking cognizance of emotion dynamics it becomes possible to see how race, class and social institutions play a part in the intersubjective world. If groups within organisations suppress vulnerable emotions such as shame, either withdrawal or violence may ensue. Volkan (2004) further speaks of the transgenerational transmission of trauma which leads to continuing enmity between groups. This is in contrast to the theory of reparation: restoring in one's mind those we have hurt, and then expressing that reparative urge with actual others, including the creation of objects of art (Segal, 1952). Reparation is to make amends through concern and care and requires the depressive position. Segal (1952) purported that the ability to create reflects an important emotional capacity to acknowledge one's own destructive impulses, and to confront one's phantasies of damaging, destroying and hurting, e.g. when we are very angry with somebody.

4.4. Chapter summary

This chapter has charted the shift in student experience research agendas from the dominant behavioural and cognitive to the more holistic frameworks that seek to understand *who* students are – including their emotions – in context. A review of empirical work that included student shame was conducted, highlighting issues of identity, contentious belonging and disputed discourses in the university context. This chapter also highlighted the complicated confluence of racial, class and language identifications in the South African university context, including possibilities for the intergenerational transmission of shame.

SECTION II: THE RESEARCH STUDY

CHAPTER 5 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: A mixed methods psychosocial approach

5.1. Navigating this chapter

In this chapter I justify the choice of a mixed methods psychosocial approach to explore student shame by highlighting the tension between the organisation of the 'self' as central to an understanding of shame versus using more contextualised shame instruments that view shame as the product of multiple influences. This study endeavoured to step into this research gap and explored both situational shame stimuli in the university context and student subjectivities, by using a unique mix of study elements. I also advance the rationale for partnering mixed methods with the psychosocial approach by embracing pragmatism as the larger philosophical worldview espoused for this study. I elaborate on how philosophical movements like the psychosocial approach have brought together an alternative blend of constructionism and interpretivism in emotion research and how this frees psychoanalysis from its confinement to the clinical realm (Emde & Fonagy, 1997). I also describe how the psychosocial subject has been conceptualised in this research and argue why this resonated with the object relations interpretive lens chosen for this study and discussed in Chapter Two. The chapter details why a Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods model was considered a suitable research design because it provided a logical structure for the multiple study elements. The three parts of the study are then delineated with a description of how each method complied with the scientific procedures and standards unique to that approach. Throughout this chapter the reasons behind analytic choices will be discussed. The chapter concludes by confirming the centrality of ethics and reflexivity used in this research.

5.2. Aim and research questions

The primary aim of this mixed methods study was to understand the experience of shame in university students from a psychosocial perspective. Using quantitative methods, this study aimed to examine the prevalence and gravity of student shame and multiple shame triggers. Using qualitative methods – drawing on object relations theory and principles of psychosocial discourse – this study aimed to explore, first, how students employ discourses to understand their shame experiences and construct student subjectivities, and second, their unconscious defensive reasons for investment in particular discursive positions over others. The key objective was to explore how shame shapes the student experience through interactions between micro-level shame dynamics (incorporating unconscious intersubjectivity) and meso and macro-level structures and their respective ideologies.

Research questions:

Part 1 - Quantitative study strand – shame frequencies, differences and associations

1. What is the prevalence and gravity of student shame?
    a. How much shame do students report experiencing – frequency, intensity/severity and impact?
    b. Who has got more shame? i.e. Is there evidence for differences in levels of shame based on demographic variables: age, gender, faculty, year of study, sexual orientation, race and language?
    c. Is there evidence for an association between levels of shame and feelings of 'Belonging to Wits as an institution', 'Regard for Wits' and 'Worry about financial situation'?
    d. Is there evidence for common situational shame cues? i.e. What are the most frequently occurring shame cues and related levels of shame intensity reported by students? Are any patterns evident?

Part 2 – Exploratory psychosocial qualitative study strand

2. How do students discursively construct shame triggers in the university context?
    a. What are the patterns and associated features of discursively constructed shame triggers?
    b. How do students discursively position the 'self', the 'other' and meso/macro influences in the shame experience?
    c. What are the conscious and unconscious defensive reasons ('shame coping scripts') for investing in particular discursive student positions over others?

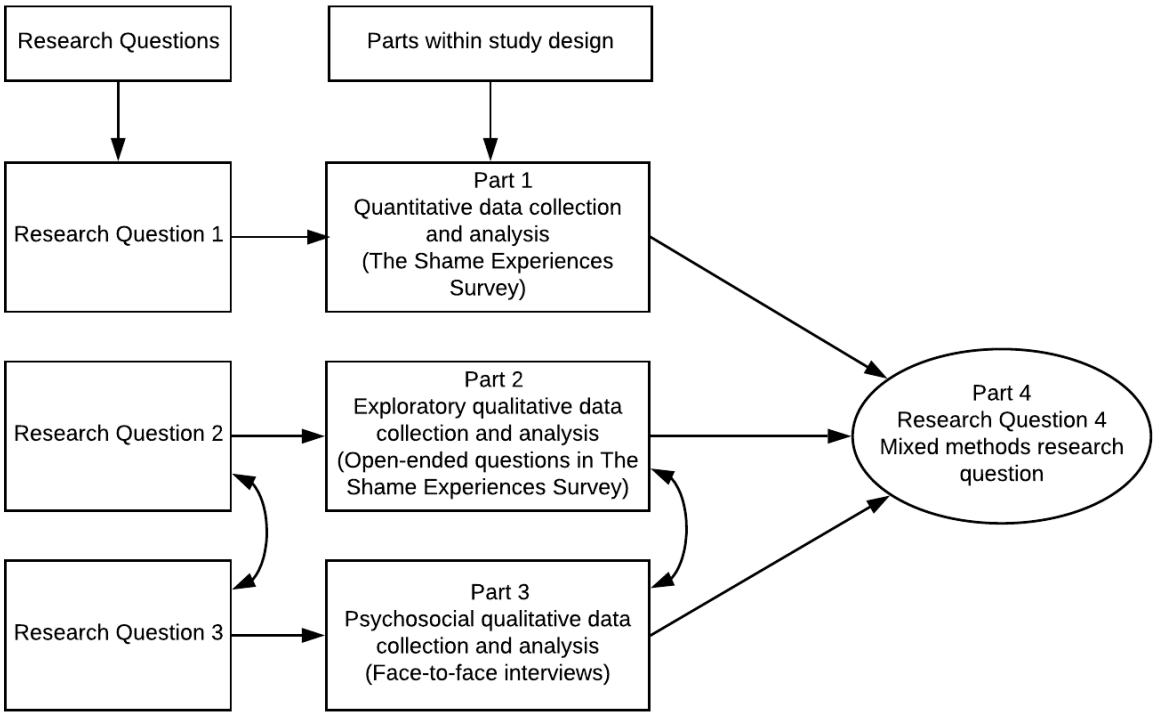
Part 3 – In-depth psychosocial qualitative study strand

3. How do micro-level shame dynamics have a reciprocal effect on meso and macro-level structures?
    a. How do students discursively position the 'self', the 'other' and meso/macro influences in shame narratives?
    b. What are the conscious and unconscious defensive reasons ('shame coping scripts') for investing in particular discursive student positions over others?
    c. How do student's biographies and emotional legacies play out in the shame experience?

4. Mixed methods questions - bringing it all together
    a. How do the three datasets converge or diverge and add to an understanding of student shame?

Figure 2 was drawn to help visualise how the four research questions correspond to the different elements/parts of the mixed methods design. Part 1 is the quantitative strand and corresponds to question one. Parts 2 and 3 are both qualitative study strands – there was therefore some synergy in interpretive analytic procedures used. Part 4 is the mixed methods research question used to compare and integrate the results from Parts 1, 2 and 3 for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

Figure 2: *The three parts of the Shame Experience Study*



5.3. The changing landscape of emotion research

5.3.1. Shame as a product of multiple influences

It has been argued that the failure of the 'natural kind' models of emotion research – basic emotion theory and appraisal theory – is an inability to account for variability in emotional experience. According to Camras and Shuster (2013), current emotion research thrusts are following a social constructionist wave with the aim of investigating shame as a product of multiple influences and prioritising the circumstances of the shame experience. Using this lens, the research focus has therefore shifted to the function of the emotion, giving greater credence to context specificity and the situation rather than the distinctiveness of the emotion itself (Scarantino, 2012). Psychoanalytic shame researchers also contend that one of the important elements of shame is the situation in which the experience is anchored (Lansky & Morrison, 2014; Lewis 1971; Morrison, 1983; Retzinger, 1995). However, social constructionism's influence on emotion research concerns differing levels of willingness to embrace the intrapersonal dimension. This can be viewed on a continuum for example, Averill (1980) has argued – using social constructionist theory – that an emotion is only transitory and social in nature – "a socially constituted syndrome" (p. 312). On the other hand, although Mesquita and Boiger (2014) contend that emotions are a function of the sociocultural context in which they occur, their sociodynamic model does not preclude a description of emotions at the intrapersonal level but rather is agnostic towards this dimension. Their model aims to capture firstly, that emotions occur in the context of relationships and therefore emotions and interaction form a type of system

and secondly, that emotional responses are a functional match (usually rewarding) within the relevant sociocultural context. However, the agnosticism of social constructionist models towards the intrapersonal level seems to be particularly problematic with regards to self-conscious emotions, like shame, where the subject who is central to the experience of shame is lost in the research. Stets (2010) argues that although culture is important for expectations, experience and expression of emotions in different situations, some of the issues which require specification in current research are indeed "the underlying processes that facilitate or impede proper expression. When improper expressions of feelings occur, what are the consequences for the self and others in situations?" (p. 265). This omission of the intrapersonal is concerning because whilst emotions are required to be adaptive to serve important social functions, the converse is emotion-related difficulties which affect healthy functioning (Kring, 2010). Scarantino (2012) provides a balanced critique and argues that constructionist models paradoxically succumb to the same scope problems as the natural kind models.

However, constructionist approaches have reignited the necessity of understanding the context and circumstances surrounding an emotion. Recall how Turner's (2009, 2010) theory of the stratification of emotions documents how emotions operate at different levels of reality and have a range of influences. Education researchers are also considering multiple influences on emotion by foregrounding socially constructed meaning, multiple transactional levels in education and the fluidity of whole transactional systems due to changing socio-historical contexts (Schutz & Pekrun, 2007). Lansky and Morrison (2014) argue that the 'multiple influences' notion is central to a study of shame because it is a social emotion and therefore particularly context dependent. However, the theoretical assumption for this study is that shame is widely regarded as a self-conscious emotion which includes self-viewing processes (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). The implication is that central to an in-depth understanding of shame situations and influences is how one views the 'self' and the 'self' in relation to 'others' within a given context (Lansky, 2005; Retzinger, 1995). As previously discussed, situational shame influences and the organization of the 'self' are bound up together. Lewis (1971) argued that both different circumstances and differences in the organisation of the 'self' result in disparities in self-processes which result in variations in the way shame is experienced and responded to. The implication is that a study of shame that excludes either stimulus situations or the organisation of the 'self' will not provide a deeper understanding of student shame because shame involves multiple influences, a 'self' and an 'other' in various combinations.

When considering various analytical approaches suitable for this study, psychoanalysis was considered because its interpretive principles provide a useful lens for an understanding of shame dynamics that few approaches are capable of (Lansky & Morrison, 2014). At the 2004 Winter Meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association, panellist Strenger stressed how psychoanalysis has the potential for positive influence on public discussions of experiences of shame (Levine, 2005). However, psychoanalysis has fallen into disrepute for curtailing its theory to the clinical realm (Emde & Fonagy, 1997), leaving a dearth of research in different contexts, like the student context. Cartwright (2004) warned about the continued isolation of psychoanalysis from other disciplines, both intellectually and therapeutically, if it

did not embrace different forms of methodology. This study required an approach that would enable the researcher to leverage psychoanalytic principles of shame but include contextual influences and so marry a theory of the 'self' and the 'circumstances' of the shame experience or the social dimension. For this reason I turned to the psychosocial literature as a possible approach to add to an understanding of shame in a student context. The strength of the psychosocial approach is that it theorises a psychosocial subject who "is constituted in and through its social formations, yet is still granted agency and internality" (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008, p. 349). For this study 'psychosocial' therefore referred to a research agenda that cares about the value of personal experience, affect, agency, interconnectedness, intersubjectivity and embodiment whilst recognising that this agenda is produced and maintained by the 'other' because the "inner world" is fragmentary (Hook, 2008).

The additional utility of a psychosocial approach is that psychosocial subjectivity is conceptualized utilizing either Lacanian or Kleinian psychoanalytic paradigms (Saville Young, 2009; Saville Young & Jearey-Graham, 2015). The former paradigm has been influenced by structuralism and post-structuralism which privileges the role of the discursive in producing the subject (Walkerdine, 2008). In contrast, the latter privileges relationality and the defended subject which is said to arise from a dynamic unconscious, including the processes of identification, projection and introjection (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). These unconscious dynamics are central to an understanding of the signal function of shame. Recall also that Hollway and Jefferson (2013) argue that Kleinian object relations theory and self-psychology lend themselves to a psychosocial tradition. As is to be expected, the use of psychoanalytic concepts is not without dissent even within the broader psychosocial community itself (Wetherell, 2003, 2008). It spawns debates about which of the many psychoanalytic theories should be used to conceptualise the psychosocial subject. Although this study adopts a more intersubjective, Kleinian approach, it is important to remember that the roots of the psychosocial approach do not lie solely in psychoanalysis. The psychosocial approach has been influenced by a confluence of many fields ranging from "sociology, applied social studies and social work, critical social psychology, poststructuralist theory, social constructionism, queer theory and feminist social research" (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008, p. 348). However, because of the intersubjective definition of shame used for this study, Kleinian object relations theory and its formulation of psychic positions was deemed to be a suitable frame within the psychosocial lens used for studying shame in context (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

5.3.2. The argument for the psychosocial subject and theoretical interpretation

The psychosocial approach is itself a testimony to the importance of situating subjects and research within an appropriate historical context because it has in many ways served as a countermovement to the far-reaching post-structuralist movements of the 1970s. The question that begs is 'How did we get from 'there', Foucault's (1980) discourses of power and dominance and Discursive Psychology, to 'here', the psychosocial approach, and what is the relevance for this study on student shame?' Importantly, the psychosocial approach advocates for the resuscitation of the lost psychological subject in research and,

more specifically, a psychoanalytically infused subject. Thomson (2007) has argued that a frustration against the dominance of post-structuralist influences on social science research agendas manifested as an emotional turn in research, fuelling growth and interest in a new psychosocial tradition. However, I argue that the other way of looking at it, is that post-structural movements played a vital role in the germination of the psychosocial approach.

Both the poststructuralist and social constructionist movements rejected structuralism's ahistorical and deterministic philosophical views. Post-structuralist thinkers attempted to overcome structuralism's perceived deficiencies by valuing functionality, historicity, contextuality and multiple meanings. Probably the most influential of the post-structuralist thinkers, with far reaching consequences for psychological research, was French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault. Foucault's (1972) conceptualisation of subjectivity gave preference to discourse and power relationships. He viewed knowledge as a material element of society and claimed that discourses are "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (p. 49). Butler (1997), heavily influenced by Foucault, produced seminal work on discourse and performativity and both theorists then popularized the notion that people have a range of discourses available to them and that these discourses have their bearings in specific historical, social, political, cultural and economic contexts. These useful concepts of multiple discourses and contextuality have been effectively incorporated into the psychosocial approach which looks at how individuals employ socially circumscribed discourses in a given context.

However, Discursive Psychology (DP) also played a role in the genesis of the psychosocial approach. In the late 1980s Potter and Wetherell (1987) developed a form of social constructionism called Discursive Psychology (DP). The DP movement rejected the post-structuralist view that discourse constitutes objects and served to challenge the dominance of cognitivism in psychology. Recall how education researchers also began to challenge the dominance of cognitivism and behaviourism in student learning and experience research? (Kahu, 2013; Mann, 2001; Solomonides, 2013). The origins of DP theory lie in micro-sociology and ethnomethodology hence the focus on what people 'do' in an interaction. DP's contribution to the genesis of the psychosocial approach are, in my estimation, the concepts of firstly, subject positioning (there are many available ways to understand our own position in relation to others and to participate in a discussion); secondly, identity categories that are historically contingent, context dependent and change over time, and thirdly the notion of the 'dilemma', (a person's own interpretive repertoire can be contradictory as people are not always consistent). I argue that these concepts bear some resemblance to the conflict or defences evident in different positionings of the psychosocial subject. However, the difference is that DP's focus remained exclusively concerned with 'how' these personal accounts and contradictions were constructed and what role they played. Plausible 'why' explanations or attempts to account for contradictory and conflictual positions did not seem to be a priority (Frosh et al., 2000).

New movements are usually founded on the rejection of the ideologies of former movements and research philosophies and agendas are no exception to this rule. DP and its poststructuralist and social constructionist counterparts are being critiqued for the failure to acknowledge the significance of the

individual psyche thereby leaving psychological questions unanswered. The psychological subject seems to have been swallowed up in an analysis of discourse and systems leaving a conceptual cavity for the analysis of a critical subject. For the psychosocial researcher a purely discursive approach seems unacceptable because of the lost essence of a psychological subject who has agency and internality. In this sense, DP aligns with social constructionist theories of emotions which are largely agnostic towards the intrapersonal level of emotions, prioritising the social context instead. Discursive researchers have also been criticised by their psychosocial counterparts for prizing the face value of a story by seeking to only 'give voice to the participants' or 'telling it like it is'. From a psychosocial viewpoint, the potential problem with this type of discursive analytic stance is the insufficient attention paid to the contradictions that arise in the data. The 'tell it like it is' researcher ends up reproducing the rationalising self-descriptions produced by the participant. This would be particularly unhelpful in a study of shame because technically the participant, rather than researcher, becomes the interpretive check and inconsistencies and contradictions dispersed throughout the text fall by the analytic wayside. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) also caution that by exclusively analysing the overt account or substantive content presented by the participant the danger is that it "eliminates any meaningful distinction between description and theoretical interpretation" (p. 58).

Importantly for this study, Gough (2004) argued that discursive psychology has failed to adequately address the emotional dimension of identity. Gough (2004) championed the idea of reading and analysing interview transcripts with a view to identifying where emotion, especially anxiety was possibly present. Frosh et al. (2003) call this gaining "clues to what structures discourse at the level of the 'personal'" (p. 42). They argue that whilst one can occupy a variety of subject positions made available through culture, the emotional investment may not necessarily be articulated by the discourse per se but may depend upon cultural experiences lodged within subjectivity. The potential for unspoken or unspeakable events is particularly significant to the shame experience in the form of unacknowledged shame (Lewis, 1971). Many have championed the use of psychoanalytic concepts to challenge a purely discursive psychological approach purporting that the presence of defences can be used to interpret conscious and unconscious reasons for individual's investments in how a position is accounted for or framed to make sense (Gough, 2004; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

The conceptualisation of the psychosocial subject is a linchpin in a psychosocial research design. For this study the psychosocial 'subject' is built on the foundations of Kleinian object relations theory. The psychosocial subject is therefore a 'non-unitary defended subject' whose unconscious dynamics shape how the subject positions him/herself within social discourses. In this study, the 'non-unitary defended subject' corresponds to a student's unique life experiences in which multiple unconscious dynamics shape how the student functions within a university context, positioned within a host of social discourses. The 'subject' uses these unconscious dynamics to determine their relation to external reality and so engage in socially shared meaning, interactions and situations. Because it is an intersubjective process, unconscious dynamics will influence connections to and perceptions of external reality and simultaneously be impacted by hegemonic discourses and material conditions. The notion of the 'defended subject' is therefore essential

to understanding 'how' and possibly 'why' the student connects to external reality in particular ways. This continual shaping of the subject by the omnipresent dynamic unconscious and positioning within multiple discourses is the conundrum which I, as a psychosocial researcher, sought to unravel in this study. Another important piece feature of the 'defended subject' is that it is non-unitary. Hook (2008) explains this concept by describing the inner world as fragmentary. This means that most people hold multiple viewpoints that are usually contradictory in some way or the other. This principle is true not only for thoughts but also for feelings and behaviours. For example, the student who both loves and hates her fellow students who can be both gratifying and withholding of desired support.

5.3.3. Researching the seemingly irreconcilable: A mixed methods, pragmatic worldview

Whereas a psychosocial approach would help the researcher to address the problem of agnosticism at the intrapersonal level and enable a thorough examination of shame dynamics, it would not sufficiently enable an exploration of the gravity of student shame nor would it allow the research to establish whether there are common shame triggers. At times it felt like the desire to explore both the breadth and depth of this subject were irreconcilable through a psychosocial lens, however, the argument to identify shame triggers and multiple influences felt highly significant to be able to understand student shame when researching one specific university context. It was therefore decided to use a combination of study elements or study parts – mixed methods – to achieve a broad in-depth understanding of student shame in this context. Burke Johnson et al. (2007) define mixed methods research as a combination of elements of quantitative and qualitative research approaches in order to obtain "breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration" (p. 123). According to Creswell (2014), the "core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone" (p. 4). Mixed methods was therefore used to attenuate the limitations posed by more dichotomous studies by allowing for the comparison of different perspectives and the development of a more complete picture of the phenomenon of shame. Mixed methods research includes: the collection of both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (closed-ended) data; specific timing of data collection (concurrent or sequential); the use of rigorous procedures for both forms of data collection; analytic integration of data through merging, connecting or embedding the data; determining the weighting or emphasis given to each database and finally, all the aforementioned are underpinned by a chosen philosophical worldview.

When reviewing the historical positioning of mixed methods within the current research climate, it was evident that for several decades, in academia, there has existed a notorious "paradigm war" characterised by opposing factions vying for the supremacy of either quantitative or qualitative research. The distinction between the two was understandably viewed by many as a metaphorical divorce. However, in the late 1980s and early 1990s a marriage of the two approaches became imminent and there originated a third research movement called the 'mixed methods' approach. Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzi (2004) argue that "there is now a trilogy of major research paradigms: qualitative research, quantitative research,

and mixed methods research" (p. 24). The mixed methods approach has also been labelled under the banner of integration, synthesis, multimethod, mixed methodology and quantitative and qualitative methods. It was this kind of integration or synthesis that was required to be able to explore the gravity of student shame, multiple influences, shame stimulus situations and the organisation of the 'self' and the 'other'. Mixed methods did in fact have much earlier origins as is evidenced by the work of, amongst others, psychological researchers Campbell and Fiske (1959) who developed the multi-trait, multi-method approach. Campbell and Fiske (1959) are regarded as pioneers in the use of multiple methods within a single study in order to understand complex psychological phenomena. However, it was only later that the philosophical position of the mixed methods approach called into question the long-held view of the incompatibility of quantitative and qualitative research approaches within a single study. As the idea of a possible overlap in worldviews entered mainstream research arenas, quantitative and qualitative approaches were viewed as different ends of a continuum with mixed methods justifiably in the middle because of its unique combination of two strands of research (Newman & Benz, 1998). The proposition that mixed methods allowed for a more holistic view of research problems, provided in-depth and rich understandings of the topic and encompassed both numbers and stories to engage wider audiences, gained traction across research disciplines. Education researcher Shulman (1986) was perhaps a forerunner in his thinking regarding research philosophies and was a key proponent in pursuing research methodologies that were tied more closely to the purpose of the research because it allowed for more responsivity.

But, what kind of a worldview does mixed methods encompass? By worldview I mean "a basic set of beliefs that guide action" (Guba, 1990, p. 17). Creswell (2014) explains how the term 'worldview' has also been characterised in the literature as paradigms, epistemology and ontology and even more broadly as research methodologies. The four worldviews that are widely debated in current literature are: postpositivism, constructivism, transformative and pragmatism (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2015). For the sake of clarity I have included a short synopsis of worldviews as depicted by Creswell (2014, p. 6): Firstly, postpositivist assumptions are perhaps regarded as the most traditional scientific method characterised by determinism, reductionism, empirical observation and measurement and theory verification. Secondly, constructivism, which is often mixed with interpretivism, is characterised by understanding, multiple participant meanings, social and historical construction and theory generation. Thirdly, the transformative worldview is power and justice oriented, collaborative, political and change oriented. Fourthly, the pragmatic worldview, espoused for this study, is identified as problem-centred, pluralistic, real-world practice and consequence oriented. Morgan (2007) succinctly postulates that pragmatism disrupts the "dichotomy between "complete objectivity" and "complete subjectivity" (p. 71). It is this disruption of dichotomy which resonated so well with the psychosocial approach and which would allow seemingly irreconcilable research questions to be answered. Pragmatism is one of four philosophies regarded as well suited to mixed methods research, the others being transformative worldview, critical realism and dialectic pluralism (Creswell, 2014). The following established pragmatic principles characterised this study: both the 'what' and the 'how' were considered consequential for research; the researcher was cognisant of the

fact that research is conducted in social, historical and political contexts and there was consideration of both "an external world independent of the mind as well as that lodged in the mind" (Creswell, 2014, p. 11).

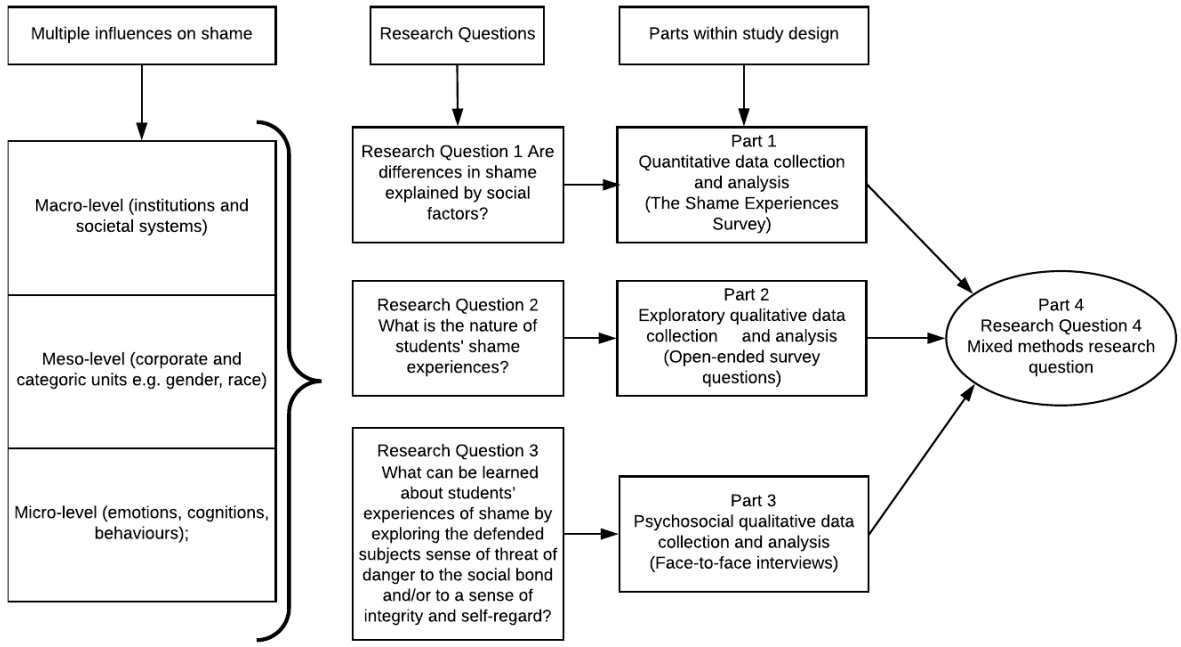
5.4. Organising structures used for this study

5.4.1. Organising multiple influences in emotion research

The mixed methods psychosocial approach used for this study aimed to provide a more sophisticated framework that has been recommended to conduct student experience research (Case, 2008; Jones, 2018; Kahu, 2013; Mann, 2001; Solomonides, 2013). This approach also uniquely placed an emotion, namely shame, centre stage. By looking at micro, meso and macro influences on the shame experience and the organisation of the 'self', this study formed part of a movement in education research that views emotions as social rather than only individual phenomena (Ratner, 2007; Zembylas, 2007). Because interacting multiple influences can be difficult to visualise, Figure 3 sets out Turner's (2010) model of the stratification of emotions as applied to the Shame Experiences Study and which delineates the micro, meso and macro levels of influence on shame. Although the levels are interrelated, each of the three parts of this study, and their corresponding research questions, was designed to foreground a particular level of influence.

Research Question One (the quantitative study strand) was aimed predominantly at the macro and meso-levels and produced a comparative element to the study which allowed for the analysis of similarities and differences of frequencies, intensities and severity levels of shame both within and between societal groups/categories. The groups used were faculty, year of study, gender, sexual orientation, race, language as well as variables pertaining to levels of financial worry, belonging to Wits and regard for Wits. Both qualitative strands aimed to increase an understanding of how the different levels cohere in the experience of shame. Research Question Two (the exploratory qualitative strand), was designed to spotlight patterns in the shame situation type and, based on Lewis's (1971) working concepts of shame, it was expected that all three levels of social influence would feature. Research Question Three (the psychosocial qualitative strand) was designed to foreground how the micro, meso and macro levels interact with an emphasis on biography. Research Question Four tied the research questions together by managing the tensions between the common and the unique, the social and the biographical and the discursive and the defended subject (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

Figure 3: *An organising framework for the research questions: The stratification of emotions*



Note. Adapted from The stratification of emotions: Some preliminary generalizations, by J.H. Turner (2010), Sociological Inquiry, 80(2), p. 171. This item is copied in terms of Fair Dealing in Section 12 of the current Copyright Act.

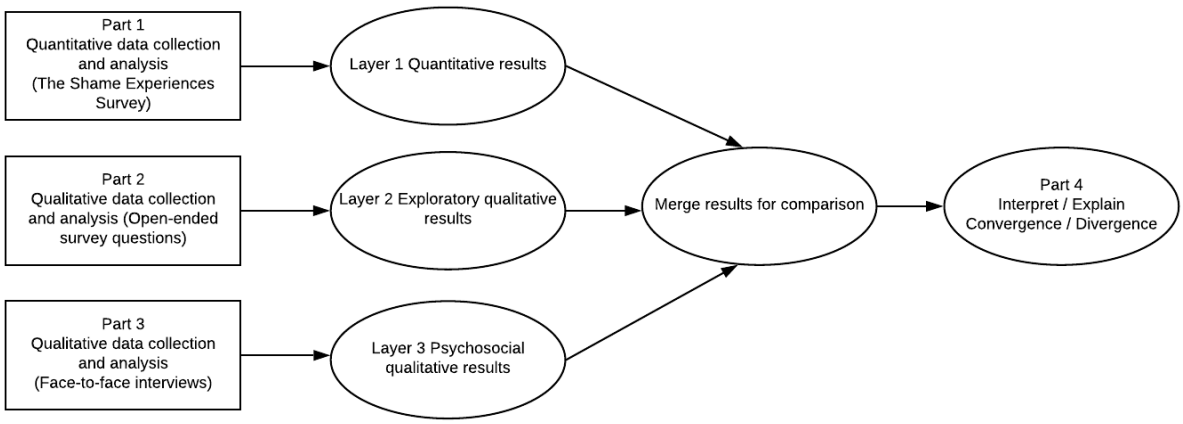
5.4.2. A Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods model

Because the 'mixed methods' umbrella is so broad, it is helpful for a researcher to position and clarify their choice of mixed methods model. A Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods model was selected as the most suitable for this study. Key decisions when choosing a mixed methods design are the level of interaction between the quantitative and qualitative components, the priority afforded to each component, the timing of the components and where and how to mix the quantitative and qualitative components (Creswell, 2014). However, the literature is littered with inconsistencies in design classifications. This appears to be largely due to the different disciplines invoking discipline specific terminology as well as differences in emphases on design features (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Creswell's original classification of four overarching mixed method designs seemed useful to this study, they are: the Triangulation Design, the Embedded Design, the Explanatory Design and the Exploratory Design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2006). Each of these broad designs also includes a number of useful variants. The Triangulation Design seemed most suitable for this study as it aims "to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic" (Morse, 1991, p. 22). Additionally, the Triangulation Design is well suited to an "umbrella" philosophical viewpoint such as pragmatism that allows for the marriage of quantitative, 'how much' or 'how many' questions and qualitative, exploratory 'why' questions (Patton, 1990). The variants within the Triangulation Design are the Convergence Model, the Data Transformation Model, the Validating Quantitative Model and the Multilevel Model. It should be noted that Fetters and

Molina-Azorin (2017) recommended that the term 'triangulation' be dropped from mixed methods literature because it had acquired a vast array of disparate meanings over the years. I decided to use the original classification to position this study because triangulation is an intuitive and user-friendly concept for most people. However, when using an updated version of the mixed methods classification system, the design for this study would be called a Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design. It is a type of concurrent design in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected at the same time. The datasets are analysed separately and the results of the analyses are then merged for comparative purposes to explain items of convergence or divergence (Creswell, 2008). The goal of a convergent design is to validate the qualitative and quantitative findings should the two strands of datasets agree and/or engender insights for further research should they differ. Two important criteria that must be met when using a Convergent Parallel Design are that neither portion of the study should have any influence on the other (the data must be collected and analysed independently) and the same construct must be used in both forms of data collection (Creswell, 2014). This study met both of these criteria because the data collection for the datasets was independent and the construct was consistent, namely 'shame'.

Figure 4 is a schematic representation of the Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design (Creswell, 2014) used for this study. The diagram depicts the three layers of data collected. Part 1 is the quantitative strand of the study, Parts 2 and 3 together formed the qualitative strand. The three layers or datasets were collected concurrently, analysed separately, results were then merged and the combined results were explained/interpreted in the discussion. The term 'layer' is helpful to understand how the three datasets yielded different types of data namely, descriptive statistics, exploratory and narrative. Collectively this provided different layers of understanding of the phenomenon of shame. This process was like peeling an onion layer by layer with the intention of exposing more and more of the onion. The layers are separate and undeniably 'onion' but collectively they form a whole onion. In the same way, the different facets of shame were uncovered layer by layer and explored individually and collectively.

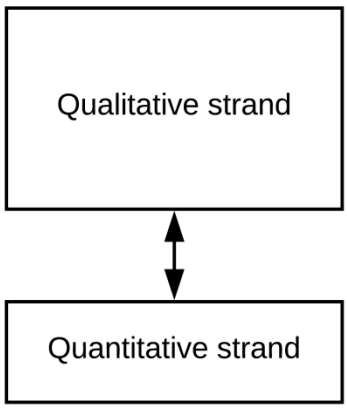
Figure 4: *Using a Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods model for The Shame Experience Study*



Note. *Adapted from* Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches *(p. 220), by J.W. Creswell, 2014, Sage. This item is copied in terms of Fair Dealing in Section 12 of the current Copyright Act.*

Convergent Mixed Methods designs usually give equal preference to both strands of research, however, it is not unheard of to give preference to one over the other (Creswell, 2014). This study is a 'Qual-Quant study' because it was primarily a qualitative study where the quantitative data was used to frame the qualitative findings. Figure 5 provides a visual of the increased weighting given to the qualitative part of the study. This decision around weighting was pragmatic because firstly, The Shame Inventory had not been used previously in a South African population and therefore normative data and psychometric properties had not been established for this instrument. Although it cannot be claimed that the instrument produced findings generalizable to the student population it did, however, provide useful indications of shame frequency, intensity and severity within the sample. Additionally, because the instrument is an inventory of shame cues it enabled an examination of different types of shame triggers prevalent in the sample. The second reason why it was deemed appropriate to have a greater qualitative weighting for the study was because there were two large qualitative data sets. The first qualitative component – the open-ended questions in the shame experiences survey – was more exploratory in nature. The use of open-ended questions within a survey is regarded as a useful variant within a Convergent Parallel model. (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The second qualitative component – ten face-to-face interviews – provided an additional layer of understanding of shame with an emphasis on portraits of the psychosocial subject.

Figure 5: *The Qual-quant weighting used for the Shame Experiences Study*



Note. *Adapted from theory in* Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches *(p. 229), by J.W. Creswell, 2014, Sage.*

Four basic procedures were used to implement the Convergent design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018):

Step 1 – Design the different strands. The quantitative strand was designed by formulating the research questions for Part 1 and the most suitable approach was decided upon. Permissions were obtained, the sample identified and data collected using appropriate instruments. The same steps were used to design the qualitative strands, Parts 2 and 3, of the research design.

Step 2 – Analyse the quantitative and qualitative data sets. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and effect sizes. The qualitative data was analysed using procedures specific to the chosen qualitative approach.

Step 3 – Establish the point of interface. Content areas represented in the three data sets were identified and compared, contrasted, and synthesized in a discussion. Differences were identified within one set of results based on dimensions within the other sets and the differences were examined according to the dimensions. Some procedures were developed to transform one type of result into the other type of data (e.g. themes in the open-ended survey questions were turned into counts). Additional analyses were also conducted on newly derived clusters/themes of shame cues in the Situational Scale of The Shame Inventory.

Step 4 – Interpret the merged results –- the separate results were summarised and interpreted in three separate chapters whereas throughout the discussion it was noted how the datasets converged, diverged and produced a more complete understanding of shame.

The convergent design used in this study proved to be fruitful in studying shame because it yielded layer upon layer of understanding of the phenomenon and its multiple influences.

On the downside, some of the challenges faced as a mixed methods researcher which have been well documented by Creswell (2014), were:

- Engaging in an extensive data collection process.
- A substantial amount of time was required to analyse both quantitative and qualitative data.
- The study required both quantitative and qualitative research expertise. Combining 'mixed methods' and a 'psychosocial' approach required copious amounts of reading to position myself within these arenas.
- Managing the contradictions in the quantitative and qualitative results.
- Managing the complexity of the design and merging the three different datasets. However, the complexity of the design was also rewarding in terms of my own growth as a researcher.

5.4.3. The psychosocial research design used for this study

There were many practical implications to researching a complex subject who is simultaneously discursive and defended. I saw my role as a psychosocial bricoleur and endeavoured to use a unique mix of psychoanalytic interpretivism and constructionism to explore the simultaneously defended and discursive subject. The following three basic procedures were used:

Step 1 – The analysis of defences was prioritized in the psychoanalytic interpretation of narrative. A non-unitary defended subject meant that the interpretive role of the researcher – using psychoanalytic

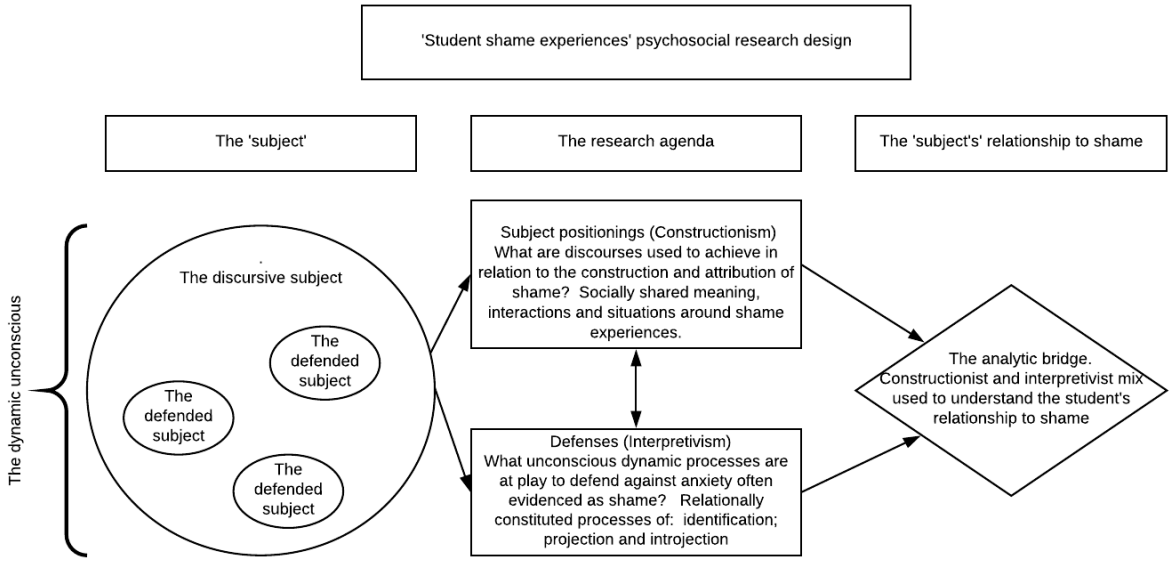
theory – was integral to a psychosocial approach. The defended subject holds contradictions often managed using unconscious defences (identification, projection, introjection) that ward off difficult feelings. These feelings can also be managed through psychic splitting and projection in which unwanted feelings can be attributed to the 'other' and attacked. Contradictory or conflicted positions – arising from the use of unconscious defences – were useful to explore because it revealed material that was troubling to the participant and had not yet been processed sufficiently through repeated use. These defences signified the relational constitution of the subject which is an important principle in a psychosocial understanding of shame. Because the defended subject employs unconscious defences, it is also assumed that she/he will experience difficulties in recounting unsettling events because anxiety – which often manifests as doubt, omnipotence or shame – and the desire for recognition and acceptance influence how we remember and retell our stories (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

Step 2 – Subject positionings were explored through discursive positions adopted in the narrative. People can and do mobilise a wide variety of discursive positions. Frosh et al. (2000) describe contradictions as fault-lines showing where a participant may move between desires and anxieties which compel and propel the participant to make certain choices in their accounting of experience. This requires a discursive agenda which analyses discourses in terms of the emotional work or investment that discursive positions achieve. This subject positioning can also be described as dynamic identities (Frosh et al., 2003). Whether a participant constructs or guards against a certain identity usually hinges on the context. By exploring subject positions this research built an analytic bridge between the psychoanalytic concept of defences and a constructionist form of discursive psychology.

Step 3 - Bringing the two together. In this step defences and discursive positionings were explored as a whole to understand the student's relationship to shame. According to Hollway and Jefferson (2013) one must explore 'parts' of stories presented by the subject whilst keeping the 'whole' in mind. Put another way, the structure needs also to be understood in order to have insight into the components.

Figure 6 presents an overview of the psychosocial research design used for this study. The psychosocial subject is depicted as comprising of two layers. The inner layer is 'the defended subject' – the 'subject' who is motivated by unconscious investments that defend against anxiety. However, these defended parts do not function within a vacuum but are simultaneously positioned within an outer layer – the 'discursive subject' who is positioned within social discourses (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). These two layers are inextricably intertwined.

Figure 6: *The psychosocial research design for the Shame Experience Study*



5.5. Research setting, samples and ethical considerations

5.5.1. Research setting and sampling frame

Because the purpose of the research was to explore shame in a unique context with a distinctive population, one university was selected. The University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) was a logical choice because I regard Wits as my intellectual home. The sample sizes achieved for this study were:

Part 1 – Quantitative Shame Experiences Survey: 472

Part 2 – Exploratory qualitative (open-ended questions in survey: 265

Part 3 – Psychosocial qualitative (face to face interviews): 10

The sampling frame for the Shame Experiences Survey included the entire Wits student population registered in 2017 – approximately 38 343 students. Although this was a large sampling frame it was an intentional bid to buffer the high non-participation and drop-out rates in survey research (Fowler, 2014). Some mixed methods researchers attempt to collect data from comparative sample sizes for both the quantitative and qualitative study elements. This would typically mean increasing the qualitative sample size or weighting the qualitative cases to equal the number of participants in the quantitative database. However, many mixed methods researchers do not regard unequal sample sizes as problematic because the purpose of the study strands differ (Creswell, 2014). This study adhered to the latter principle because the quantitative strand was used to explore the breadth of shame in terms of frequency, intensity and severity whereas the qualitative strands were used to gain a deeper understanding. Additionally, from a cost and time perspective it was not feasible to increase the qualitative sample size any further.

Permission was granted by the Dean of Students to contact students via their student e-mail addresses inviting them to participate in the online survey and also to conduct ten face-to-face interviews on campus. The correct protocol was to then forward the e-mail to the Wits Computer Network Service (CNS) department who would disseminate the e-mail on my behalf. The use of an electronic survey was considered the most appropriate research strategy because the Wits student population are computer literate, have access to computers on campus, have some degree of English reading and writing skills, and there are university wide e-mail addresses. The skills required by participants for this self-administered approach was therefore not considered a risk factor for this study. However, the level of interest in the topic was a risk factor (Fowler, 2014). The broad dissemination plan therefore seemed flawless in terms of both economics and time, however, at the time of data collection the university began rolling out an extensive computer network upgrade and the implication for my study was that the CNS department was unable to send the survey out on my behalf. After a four-week delay in the dissemination process, my Supervisor negotiated with the Dean of Student's office and it was agreed that I individually contact the Dean of each faculty and request permission to send the survey out and also to connect me with contact details of Heads of Schools who could assist me with the dissemination process in that faculty. This was a difficult process and required a great deal of follow-up procedures. Unfortunately, this more inconsistent approach likely had an impact on students access to the survey as some faculties tended to be more organised than others in terms of electronic distribution lists to students. The only school that declined to disseminate the survey was the School of Education within the Faculty of Humanities. Due to the newfound concerns about the ability to give all students a fair chance to participate in the survey it was decided to also put up posters across campus. Additional ethics permission was obtained and approximately fifty, A3 sized posters were designed, printed and pinned to school notice boards and in public areas such as libraries – on all three Wits campuses. Due to the more complex dissemination process and the desire to give all participants an opportunity to participate, the survey remained opened from 26 September until 24 December 2017. The sample details for each of the three study parts will now be discussed.

5.5.2. Sample details for Part 1 (Quantitative strand – The Shame Experiences Survey)

Non-probability sampling was used for the Shame Experiences Survey. All students enrolled at the University of the Witwatersrand for the 2017 academic year were therefore eligible to participate in the study. The only exclusion criterion was that students had to be 18 years of age and older to participate – this was for ethical reasons. Although non-probability sampling is an economical and convenient procedure, it did limit the generalisability of the findings (Salkind, 2010).

A minimal sample size of $n = 164$ was required for Part 1, the quantitative study, to achieve an effect size of 0.25, statistical power $(1 - \beta)$ of 0.8 and an $\alpha = 5\%$, however, a sample size of 472 was achieved. The survey sample consisted of 297 (63%) female and 174 (37%) male students. N = 231 (48.7%) identified themselves as Black; followed by White $n = 132$ (27.8%), then Indian $n = 83$ (17.5%) and finally, Other $n = 28$ 5.9%. With respect to Faculty, 29.1% ($n = 138$) of the sample belonged to the Faculty of Humanities,

23.6% (*n* = 112) to the Faculty of Commerce, Law & Management, 22.6% (*n* = 107) to the Faculty of Health Sciences, 16.0% (*n* = 76) to the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment and 8.6% (*n* = 41) to the Faculty of Science. Regarding Year of Study, 178 (31.5%) were first year; 109 (19.2%) second year; 136 (23.9%) third year; 37 (6.5%) fourth year; 42 (7.4%) honours; 33 (5.8%) masters; 32 (5.6%) doctoral students. 81.1% of the sample comprised undergraduate students (first to fourth year) versus 18,8% postgraduate students (honours, masters and doctoral). In terms of age, 298 (52.3%) participants were between 18-21 years of age; 222 (38.9%) were between 22-29; and 50 (8.8%) were above 30 years of age. In other words, 91,2% of participants were under the age of 30. With regards to sexual orientation, 391 (83%) students self-identified as heterosexual and 81 (17%) as having another sexual orientation. In terms of language, frequencies pertain to language/s spoken as the home language. 241 (51%) participants reported speaking English only as their home language, 146 (31%) an African language only; 39 (8%) English and an African language, 31 (7%) English and Afrikaans/Afrikaans only and 15 (3%) specified a language other than English, African or Afrikaans e.g. German and Hindi.

A Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods design would customarily include the same participants in the quantitative and qualitative samples (Creswell, 2014). This is based on the premise that the purpose of the mixed methods research is to draw comparisons between different databases and therefore the more similar the databases are, the more fitting the comparison is likely to be. This principle was applied to this study as the sample for Part 2 was derived from Part 1 and the sample for Part 3 was derived from Part 2.

5.5.3. Sample details for Part 2 (Exploratory qualitative strand – three open-ended questions)

The open-ended qualitative questions of the Shame Experiences Survey were completed by 265 respondents. The sample consisted of 66.7% (*n* = 177) female and 32.0% (*n* = 85) male students. 50.9% (*n* = 135) identified themselves as Black; followed by White 27.5% (*n* = 73), 13.9% (*n* = 37) identified as Indian, 4.1% (*n* = 11) as Coloured, 2.6% *(n* = 7) as multiple ethnicities and 0.7% (*n* = 2) identified as Asian. Approximately 34.3% (*n* = 91) of the sample belonged to the Faculty of Humanities, 21.8% (*n* = 58) to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, 18.4% (*n* = 49) to the Faculty of Health Sciences, 16.2% (*n* = 43) to the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment and 9% (*n* = 24) to the Faculty of Science. Regarding Year of Study, 32% (*n* = 85) were first year; 16.2% (*n* = 43) second year; 23.3% (*n* = 62) third year; 6.4% (*n* = 17) fourth year; 8.3% (*n* = 22) honours; 7.5% (*n* = 20) masters; 5.6% (*n* = 15) doctoral students. This means 78.0% of the sample comprised undergraduate (first to fourth year) versus 21.4% postgraduate students (honours, masters and doctoral). With respect to age, 47% (*n* = 124) of participants were between 18–21 years of age; 44% (*n* = 117) between 22–29; and 9% (*n* = 24) were above 30 years of age. In other words, 91% of participants were under the age of 30. With regards to sexual orientation, 3% (*n* = 8) of students self-identified as asexual; 7% (*n* = 19) as bisexual; 87% (*n* = 230) as heterosexual, 1% (*n* = 3) students selected ‘other’ and 2% (*n* = 5) ‘prefer not to say’.

Of the 265 respondents who completed the open-ended survey questions (Part 2), 29% (44) were willing to provide a contact number and be contacted regarding the possibility of an interview (Part 3).

5.5.4. Sample details for Part 3 (Psychosocial qualitative strand - in-depth interviews)

From the inception of the study design it was the intention to use the survey to facilitate the recruitment of ten students for face-to-face interviews. 44 (9.3%) of the total of 472 survey respondents provided a contact number. The 44 volunteers had all completed the survey, including the three open-ended survey questions, which provided some detail of their personal university related shame experience. The initial plan was to use this available pool to carefully select a cross spectrum of interview participants based on demographics and diversity of shame incidents. However, it soon became apparent that, despite initial indications of willingness, follow-through was rare and to be valued by the researcher. I consequently ended up contacting all 44 students who had provided contact numbers telephonically and was able to secure 11 interviews. This number was later reduced to 10 as one participant fell away. Most of the participants who declined interviews were forthright and expressed a change of heart, however, a number were hesitant, hedging the issue and suggested that they would still be willing to participate in the study but would only be available at a later stage. I did not pursue the latter because I felt that this may be an infringement on participants' right to decline. Table 1 documents the demographics of the sample for Study Part 3.

Table 1: *Description of student demographics for face-to-face interviews (Study Part 3)*

PART 3 – SAMPLE				
	Faculty	Year of study	Gender	Race
P1	Humanities	1st	Female	Black
P2	Engineering and the Built Environment	1st	Male	Black
P3	Humanities	1st	Male	White
P4	Commerce, Law and Management	4th Hons	Female	Black
P5	Commerce, Law and Management	2nd	Male	Black
P6	Humanities	1st	Female	White
P7	Health Sciences	Doctoral	Female	White
P8	Commerce, Law and Management	1st	Male	Black
P9	Commerce, Law and Management	3rd	Male	Black
P10	Health Sciences (Medicine)	5th	Female	White

5.5.5. Ethical considerations

The motivation for ethical research is to protect the rights of the participants by minimizing any potential risks and if possible, maximizing benefits (Fowler, 2014). Because of the sensitive nature of the topic and the possibility of eliciting distress, contact numbers for counselling services were supplied to all study participants. The ethical researcher is obligated to obtain the necessary permissions from relevant institutions, obtain participant informed consent and put procedures in place to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of participants. I fulfilled these obligations by receiving ethics clearance from the University of the Witwatersrand's Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-medical) – protocol number H17/06/42

(See Appendix A) – and gaining site access permission from the Dean of Students, having informed consent and using pseudonyms and password protecting electronic data.

With regards to the survey – Study Parts 1 and 2 – a participant information sheet was disseminated as a covering e-mail to respondents. The information sheet included the name of the institution, the researcher and a description of the research purpose. Respondents were also properly informed about their rights to confidentiality, assurance that participation was voluntary and that there would be no negative consequences in the event of non-participation (Fink, 2016). Assurance was also given that a question/s could be skipped should the respondent not wish to answer (Fowler, 2014). Participants were advised that completion of the survey – clicking 'done' – implied informed consent to participate. The following procedures were taken to maintain confidentiality of survey data (Fowler, 2014): Survey identifiers were not activated on SurveyMonkey; the researcher remained sensitive to potentially identifying information in the presentation of data and quotations used; the survey database was stored on a password protected computer for the duration of the project; anonymized data will be archived in the personal databases of the researcher and her supervisor following publication of the research. The anonymity of the survey was especially important with regard to some of the items in The Shame Inventory scale used for the study, which required participants to indicate whether they have ever engaged in behaviours that may, in some instances, be illegal (as well as potentially shameful). Examples are items such as: 'forcing/coercing someone to have sex with me', 'hurting others', 'hurting animals'. The anonymity of the study implies that the researcher, who would otherwise be under obligation to report criminal behaviour/risk to others, could not do this, protecting both the researcher and the participants.

For Study Part 3, participants who provided contact numbers in the survey were contacted telephonically to confirm their willingness to participate in an interview. The choice of those participants who subsequently opted to decline was respected. Participants displayed a keen understanding of their freedom to withdraw from the study at any point. A *Participant Information Letter* and an *Informed Consent Form* (including audio recording consent) was given to participants and at the commencement of the interview and the researcher discussed the contents of these documents with participants to ensure mutual understanding of the research process. As a precaution, at the end of the interview, the researcher asked participants if there was any disturbing content that had come up during the interview which they may wish to raise. None of the interviewees displayed untoward signs of emotional disturbance, however, interviewees were encouraged to seek the suggested free counselling services should the need arise. A number of procedures were put in place to protect the anonymity of interview participants: a signed confidentiality agreement by the research assistant who aided with data transcription; pseudonyms were used in the transcripts and any potentially identifying information removed; the research supervisor only had access to anonymised transcripts so as to prevent any conflict of interest that may have arisen in the supervisor's role as an employee of the university; interview material was kept in password protected files; anonymity was provided in transcript material contained within the research report; and only anonymized data will be archived following publication of the research.

Although all the boxes for ethical guidelines were ticked for this study, the depth of analysis that was required because of the psychosocial theoretical framework, and specifically the use of psychoanalytic theory, raised several ethical dilemmas which required ongoing thoughtful consideration. The two specific ethical considerations that I wish to contemplate and which are documented in the psychosocial literature are the role of informed consent and the use of psychoanalytic interpretation and its implications for the products of the research (Saville Young, 2009). The first ethical discomfort concerned the informed consent process. From a psychosocial perspective, traditional informed consent is inherently restricted because it is not possible for the researcher nor the participant to know how the interview will affect the course of the narrative (Saville Young, 2009). Hollway and Jefferson (2000) therefore argue that in psychosocial research it is more meaningful to rather focus on "guarding against harm" than informed consent (p. 88). In this sense, the onus is on the researcher to create an ethical relationship and a safe space for the participant – characterised by honesty, sympathy and respect. I also concur with Hollway and Jefferson (2000) that understanding and respect may not necessarily equalise power dynamics between the researcher and participant but "it makes it negotiable" (p. 85). These principles seem particularly important for a study on shame, an emotion which by nature signals threat to social bonds resulting in defensive behaviour. However, researchers who subscribe to a theory of subjectivity that involves conflict and ambivalence expect participants to have some ambivalence about their participation (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). One way of guarding against participant's ambivalence around exposure was to keep the gathering of personal history – the quality and nature of personal relationships – to a minimum. This strategy did pose some limitations on the use of biography to interpret shame experiences, however, because of the multiple data sets and copious amounts of data this was not felt to detract from the study. Additionally, pseudonyms were used from the outset of all transcriptions as well as the choice to forego some bits of information that could possibly compromise the anonymity of the participant. However, what bears thinking about for future research is how one could inform participants about the kind of research that one is undertaking in ways that are meaningful to someone who has no prior exposure to psychoanalytic theory as a means of scientific enquiry (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000).

The second, and more disconcerting consideration, was the use of psychoanalytic interpretation to analyse the data. This raises the ethics of subjectivity. Saville Young (2009) writes candidly about her own experience of ongoing fear and anxiety at potentially offending her interview participants should they come across her thesis or publications and feel pathologized by the analytic interpretations. I too continue to experience this fear regarding my thesis because I do not wish to disrespect the very students who willingly gave of their time and ultimately made this thesis possible. It is significant that this study of shame has informed me that my central concern around participants coming across my work is that they may consider some of the interpretations to place them in a negative light – this is shameful. For this reason, every attempt was made to provide balanced, honest portraits that demonstrated how every participant moved between more paranoid schizoid and depressive modes of functioning. The theoretical premises used for this study had a number of ethical implications. First, individuals were considered as constantly shifting positions and using defensive splitting and projection as normal forms of intersubjective communication and

development (Bion, 1962; Klein, 1997). Second, some defensive functioning was expected in the university context because individuals usually revert to more paranoid modes of functioning during times of stress (Klein, 1997). Third, ongoing shifting between positions resulted in multiple student identities. No single identity represented the entirety of any given individual's identity but rather indicated tensions and contradictions in the student shame experience.

Nevertheless, despite the ethical implications of the theoretical underpinnings of the study, shame research teaches us that our human desire to be seen or 'recognised' by others in an unequivocally good light is powerful. However, I want to suggest that perhaps we should also give our research participants more credit. In this study, several participants talked about their understanding of how the confluence between their inner and outer worlds made it difficult to fully make sense of their experience of shame. The willingness to participate in an interview about shame in the first place also possibly indicated some sort of search for clarity. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) argue that humans search for "true recognition". The findings from this study confirmed students' longings to be seen and known for who they truly are – imperfections and all. In this sense, one could argue that when using psychoanalytic interpretation the onus is on the researcher to ensure that recognition in the data is guided by honesty and respect and in so doing represents "true recognition" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). "A 'truthful' analysis may not be able to avoid distress to the participant, but it does not automatically follow that distress is harmful" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, p. 97). Hollway and Jefferson (2000) also note that "Recognition is not about reassurance" but "it depends on the feeling that the other can be relied upon to be independent, to reflect back a reality which is not compromised by dependence or avoidance. To strive after this as the basis for an ethical relationship in research is to pursue the values of honesty, sympathy and respect" (p. 99).

5.6. Study Part 1 – Quantitative element

The quantitative part of the study was non-experimental and exploratory in nature (Creswell, 2013). Non-experimental research does not allow for causal conclusions to be drawn; it is however useful for characterising real-life phenomena. Although quantitative research limits understanding of participant's subjective experience (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), the purpose of this quantitative element was to assess whether differences in levels of shame could be explained by demographics and belonging variables and to establish the prevalence and intensity of different shame cues/triggers.

5.6.1. Instrument used – The Shame Experiences Survey

There were essentially three sections in the Shame Experiences Survey (Appendix B). First, demographic information was sought, and questions asked relating to students' sense of belonging at Wits, their regard for Wits as an institution, and their levels of worry about their financial situations. Second, The Shame Inventory scale (dependent variable) and third, the three exploratory open-ended questions comprising Part 2 of this study. A tentative list of survey questions was initially derived from literature and supervisor input. Design of question wording and ordering was tackled using Fink's (2016) suggestions for

effective survey design. With regards to question ordering, it is usually recommended that demographic questions come first to allow participants to move from more objective to subjective questions within the survey. Because the questions relating to specific shame experiences at university were the most sensitive in nature, these were placed in the middle of the survey. The Shame Inventory scale is a Likert-type scale and, although also sensitive in nature, it was placed at the end of the survey because it was relatively easy and required less effort to complete. The question format was designed to facilitate self-administration and functionality in terms of access via different technologies including smartphones which seemed imperative for a student sample (Couper, 2000). A brief synopsis of the different sections of the survey follows.

Section 1 - The independent study variables included the following demographic indicators: age, gender, faculty, year of study, sexual orientation, race and language. Additionally, Likert-type questions pertaining to belonging to Wits, regard for Wits and financial worry were also included. ('Academically, I feel a sense of belonging to Wits'; 'Socially, I feel a sense of belonging to Wits'; 'I regard Wits as a good university to study at'; 'In the last 6 months, how often have you worried about your financial situation'). These questions were sandwiched between the demographic questions and The Shame Inventory scale. The 'belonging' and 'regard for Wits' scales are Likert-type scales with a score that ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A Total belonging score was also computed, comprising a composite score of the two belonging items taken together (Academically and Socially). The worry scale has a score that ranges from 1 (all the time) to 5 (never).

Section 2 - The Shame Inventory scale - the dependent study variable was the average score students attained on measures of Global Shame, Situational Shame and Total Shame scales. The rationale for using The Shame Inventory was to use a more contextually sensitive instrument. The shame instruments that were reviewed for this study measured a wide variety of phenomena ranging from shame proneness, frequency of shame states (behavioural, cognitive and feeling), inward versus outward shame responses, shame about particular topics such as bodily shame, beliefs about 'other' evaluation, as well as measures used to distinguish between shame and its related constructs, especially guilt. A comparison of various shame measures was conducted (see Appendix C for overview of shame scales). Most of the reviewed shame scales were designed in the 1980s and early 1990s and thereafter a gap was evident in the literature. The year 2000 then heralded the introduction of the Test of Self-conscious Affect 3 (TOSCA 3) (2000), the Experiential Shame Scale (ESS) (2002), The Shame Inventory (TSI) (2005), the Guilt and Shame Proneness scale (GASP) (2011) and the Compass of Shame Scale (COSS) (2006). The choice of The Shame Inventory was partly because it was one of the newer measures available but also because it embraces current thinking around a more idiographic approach to the study of shame (Rizvi, 2010). Shame researchers seem to now largely agree that there are no universal shame triggers or common antecedent events for the shame experience (Clore & Ortony, 2013; Tracy & Robins, 2006). Rizvi's (2010) use of multiple shame cues was therefore designed to cater for diverse shame experiences rather than a limited number of scenarios which are often not broadly applicable (Rizvi, 2010). This idiographic approach was also in line with the partly constructionist characterisation proposed for this study.

Shame instruments usually make use of one of the following scale formats: situation based (pre-selected situations are used and participants rate the extent to which they would feel shame); scenario-based (participants read hypothetical scenarios and choose a set of responses most likely to be performed); statement-based (respondents rate the degree to which they experience different thoughts, feelings and related behaviours in a given statement) and adjective based (respondents rate the extent to which a feeling is experienced) (Robins et al., 2007). The Shame Inventory uniquely combines a statement and situation-based format and is therefore considered both a trait and state measure. Part 1 of The Shame Inventory is the Global Shame (trait) measure comprised of three statement-based questions to ascertain general feelings of shame frequency, intensity, severity. (*"How often* do you typically experience shame?"; "Indicate the *intensity or severity* of shame that you typically experience"; "To what extent does shame negatively affect the quality of your life?"). The response format is a 5-point Likert scale. The range is from 0 (never, none, no effect) to 4 (always, extreme, extreme effect). Part 2 is the situational shame (state) measure incorporating 49 potential shame cues (events, behaviours, personal characteristics). These are situations related to the shame experience. For example: "Was laughed at in front of others"; "Told a lie"; "Could not afford something"; "Being a certain race/ethnicity"). Participants rate each situation/cue on a 0–4 scale to indicate the intensity of their current levels of shame about that event or characteristic or, to indicate if they have never experienced the event/behaviour/characteristic. The Situational score has a range from 0 (no shame); 1 (slight shame); 2 (moderate shame); 3 (considerable shame) to 4 (extreme shame). The Total Shame score is the average rating on all 53 endorsed items in the Global and Situational scales and ranges from 0 to 4 with 4 indicating higher degrees of shame.

Although The Shame Inventory is a relatively new measure, preliminary studies demonstrated good psychometric properties with high internal consistency (for the 53 items) $\alpha = 0.84$ and test-retest reliability of $\rho = 0.85$, $p < .001$) (a Spearman-Brown correlation coefficient was used). The Shame Inventory also demonstrated good convergent validity with the shame subscales of TOSCA and PFQ which are well established existing trait-based measures of shame. As stated previously, The Shame Inventory has not been used in a South African population and therefore normative data and psychometric properties have not yet been established for this instrument. However, the mixed methods nature of this study allowed for different methods of data collection and facilitated the checking of the consistency of findings generated by the different data collection methods. Reliability is based on the assumption that a study can be repeated and that two or more researchers would achieve a similar interpretation by using the procedures and categories outlined in the study. The following steps were taken to try and increase the reliability of the study: clearly stated quantitative study objectives, the use of measurable hypotheses, conducting a pilot study, conducting a meaningful data gathering process, supervisor input and checks, consultation with several colleagues with statistical expertise and lastly, clearly detailing possible restrictions and limitations of this study. However, error is necessarily a part of any quantitative methodology and it is therefore important to minimize, measure and disclose possible sources of error within a study.

Regarding the sample, error in survey research concerns errors associated with 'who answers' and with 'the answers themselves' (Fowler, 2014). The first type of error identified in the Shame Experiences Survey concerning 'who answers' was possible interference due to the convenience sample used for this study. In other words, the non-probability sample used may reflect systematic bias that would otherwise not have been reflected had participants been randomly selected from the total student population (Fowler, 2014). A second source of error, also associated with *who* answers, was possible systematic underrepresentation based on the following: students who were less likely to respond to an electronic survey were underrepresented; students in faculties where the survey was not effectively disseminated to all students versus students in faculties who were actively encouraged to participate; students in the School of Education who did not receive the survey because permission was not granted. The next potential source of error pertained to validity or errors associated with 'the answers themselves'. Self-report measures are known to have priming effects especially because survey participants were e-mailed the survey link together with a document explaining the nature and purpose of the research. Priming effects are however difficult to avoid when conducting research in an ethical manner that requires full disclosure to participants. It is also possible, and particularly in research on shame, that socially desirable responses were over-reported and undesirable responses under-reported. Additionally, given the painful nature of shame, participants may have defended against shame in ways not discernible to the researcher. The converse is also true, that bias may have also occurred in more responses from shame-prone students, who were attracted to the survey topic because they hoped to gain greater understanding of their feelings of shame or some assistance with their feelings. An additional check was put in place by asking survey participants directly whether any of the survey questions were difficult and if yes, to please specify why. These responses shed some light on possible areas of systematic distortion: 69% (183) of survey respondents reported that they did not find the survey questions difficult to answer. Of the 31% (77) who did find the survey questions difficult to answer, 57% (44) did not state any specific reason, 25% (19) cited the emotional demand of the questions and 18% (14) cited more practical reasons pertaining to the nature of The Shame Inventory scale. Error in survey research demonstrates why it was useful to include qualitative elements in this study as these were designed to complement the quantitative element and served as a form of triangulation or a validity check.

5.6.2. The pilot study

A pilot study was conducted on 10 and 11 August 2017 to ascertain the appropriateness and clarity of the survey, ease of navigation and any possible risk factors. The pilot study was conducted using principles from Fowler's (2014) survey guidelines. Participants were randomly chosen – with a view to obtaining a good cross spectrum of race, gender and year of study – on the Wits East Campus and asked if they would be willing to participate in the pilot study for the Shame Experiences Survey. Participants were advised upfront that it was a pilot study and therefore their data would not form part of the survey results. The purpose of the pilot was explained to participants. Participants were asked to 'think out loud' regarding each of the questions, provided that they felt comfortable to do so. Due to the sensitive nature of some of

the items in The Shame Inventory I did, however, avert my gaze at times to allow participants a bit of space. Concerningly, the Wits Wi-Fi was not responsive due to an ongoing upgrade and the survey took several minutes to open. Several participants therefore opted to use their own device and data and one participant took me up on my offer to use my cell phone and data. After completing and submitting the on-line survey each participant was verbally asked three questions regarding survey difficulty, length and sense of satisfaction. Throughout the duration of each survey completion I carefully observed participants for any signs (verbal and non-verbal) of distress. Although no participants showed signs of undue distress, all were reminded of the free counselling services available (as detailed in the survey) should the need arise. All the participants were aware of the free counselling services offered by the Wits Careers and Counselling Unit (CCDU).

Participants seemed to have a limited understanding of what shame 'is' or put another way 'shame about what?' Prior to taking the survey one respondent commented that 'shame is not a problem at Wits'. Encouragingly, although the abstract concept of shame did not seem to resonate with participants at the beginning of the survey, on completion of the Shame Inventory, all respondents seemed to move from a place of 'not knowing' or 'not understanding' to a place of being able to identify with some shame related experiences in their own lives. The Shame Inventory scale, likely because of the realistic shame cues provided, proved to be an integral part of the survey, triggering a deeper understanding of shame. The Shame Inventory was also experienced as the more meaningful part of the survey. Several participants reported that the survey triggered the ability to think in a different way about themselves, the role of shame in their experience and that they found the survey somewhat therapeutic. The pilot study reconfirmed the importance of emotion research and the potential utility of this study for increasing students' language of emotions.

However, the pilot unearthed the following three critical risk factors pertinent to survey response rates: Firstly, the risk of low response rates due to the slow Wi-Fi network on campus. All participants reported unusually slow response times on campus over the past weeks/months due to the ongoing network upgrades. Students described often resorting to using their own data as a result. The situation was so bad that when attempting to access the survey hyperlink via the Wits Wi-Fi students were unable to open the survey, however, when accessing the survey via other data options the survey opened immediately. Although the survey was designed to minimize data usage, the speed of the Wits Wi-Fi connection remained a concern. Secondly, dropout due to survey length was a concern. Survey dropout is a potential risk at any point in a survey. Participants may drop out if they come across a question that they don't understand and feel they can't answer or if the survey becomes too lengthy. Statistically 26 - 30 questions usually take an average respondent 9 - 10 minutes (an average of 19 seconds per question) to complete. The Shame Inventory alone contained 53 items. Most respondents in the pilot considered the survey too long and two respondents said they would only consider completing it if they had free time available. Lengthy surveys also lead to satisficing or speeding through the survey which can affect reliability (Fowler, 2014). Dr Steinberg the proposal reader for this PhD commented on the length of the proposed survey and

suggested that as a survey respondent, she would not have completed the survey. I believe the pilot confirmed her hunch, however, perhaps on the upside, younger generations of students are smartphone savvy. Thirdly, surveys rely on the goodwill of participants. Students were required to move through many demographic, and experiential questions before arriving at The Shame Inventory scale which did appear to be the more meaningful part of the survey for participants themselves. Three of the pilot respondents reported that there was no sense of satisfaction in completing the survey whereas three reported experiencing satisfaction and therapeutic benefit, particularly after completing The Shame Inventory scale.

A report was produced from the pilot study which included respondent's observations about the different questions; ease of navigation and researcher thoughts and observations regarding the process (Appendix D). Thereafter all survey questions were revisited and recommendations were made for changes to certain questions. The report was reviewed by my supervisor and it was decided that despite being lengthy, The Shame Inventory scale was non-negotiable because it was the dependent study variable. Demographic indicators were also deemed essential to enable some form of comparison of differences in shame scores between categories/groupings of students. However, it was decided to condense the belonging-type questions from seven to two questions in an attempt to reduce the length of the survey. Additionally, because the scaffolding used in the open-ended questions were considered by participants to be repetitive, these were reconfigured and reduced to three questions. The open-ended questions were also repositioned at the end of the survey – after The Shame Inventory scale – allowing more freedom for those students who chose to omit this section. It would seem that this strategy paid off because 44% of participants chose not to complete the open-ended questions yet still submitted the survey.

5.6.3. Analytic procedures

The following steps were followed for the quantitative data analysis:

Step 1 - Cleaning and coding of data. Data cleaning was treated as an important part of the research design because of implications for reliability and validity. This step included exporting data from SurveyMonkey to Excel, designing a code sheet, refining the coding of data in Excel and exporting the data into IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25 for analysis. This process included deleting responses where participants did not complete The Shame Inventory scale as this was the main variable of the study. 100 responses were deleted which translates into a 17.5% dropout rate. Missing values were also assigned to incomplete items in The Shame Inventory scale to ensure that results were a true reflection of the score. A score sheet for The Shame Inventory was designed as it was not readily available. Because the published journal article – that details the psychometric properties of the scale – stated that the 50 shame cues were comprised of possible events, behaviours and shame characteristics (Rizvi, 2010), I contacted the developer to enquire whether these three categories or shame cue types had been used as sub-scales. This would have been useful to determine reliability (internal consistency), however, the scale developer confirmed that this was not the case. For clarity, the different treatment used for the various quantitative research questions will be outlined in sequential steps.

Step 2 – Treatment of the Global Shame (trait) scale. Using Excel, frequencies were calculated for each of the three Global Shame questions to ascertain how much, the intensity and severity of shame reported by students.

Step 3 – Correlating the Global and Situational Shame scores. A correlation was run for the Global and Situational shame scores using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25.

Step 4 – Treatment of demographic variables. Descriptive and summary statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum and frequencies) were used to describe the sample and data for all demographic variables. Because The Shame Inventory claims to test trait and state shame, tests were run using the Global, Situational and Total Shame scores as the dependent variable. Tests of normality were conducted to establish whether the data was normally distributed allowing for parametric tests to be conducted. The one-way ANOVA was the test of choice because there was only one dependent variable, there was usually three or more groups of the independent variable and I was interested in looking at the mean differences across the groups. The ANOVA is also widely regarded as robust to violations of normality assumptions. However, the more rigorous adjusted F-test, Brown-Forsythe, was also used when the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met. For purposes of maintaining consistency of treatment across demographic variables ANOVA was used for all independent demographic variables, including gender. The ANOVA produces an F-ratio and calculates the ratio of the actual difference to the difference expected due to chance alone. If the between variation is much larger than the within variation, the means of different samples will not be equal, leading to a significant result.

Hypotheses and decision rules were documented for each independent variable, a significance level of 0.05 (corresponding confidence level 95%) was used. The following three assumptions of ANOVA were considered for each independent variable: normality of distribution, homogeneity of variances and independence of observations. The Levene test was used to calculate homogeneity of variances. If the result of the Levene test was significant the Brown-Forsythe test was used to interpret the result. Where the ANOVA result was significant, a Scheffe posthoc test was conducted to compare means and effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's (1988) guidelines for ANOVA effect sizes.

Step 5 - Treatment of belonging/regard for Wits/worry about financial situation variables. Spearman's rank correlation coefficients were calculated for these variables. Because these items are single Likert-type items – rather than a more comprehensive scale – these items were treated as ranked or ordered data and therefore Spearman's rank correlation coefficients were used to analyse the association between shame scores (Global, Situational and Total) and the belonging/regard for Wits/worry about financial situation variables. In addition to the use of ordinal variables, the second assumption of Spearman's rank correlations is a monotonic rather than linear relationship.

Step 6 - Treatment of the Situational Scale (state) shame items (situation by situation). As the name implies, The Shame Inventory scale was designed, in part, as a checklist or count, comprising a list of 50 possible shame situations or cues. It was decided that if The Shame Inventory (Rizvi, 2010) was to be used

to full advantage, it would require that the situations be unpacked item by item. This would help establish what types of shame situations the student sample reported as prevalent (frequency) and relevant (intensity) – and whether there were any evident patterns.

Figure 7: *Flowchart depicting the treatment of Situational Scale frequencies*

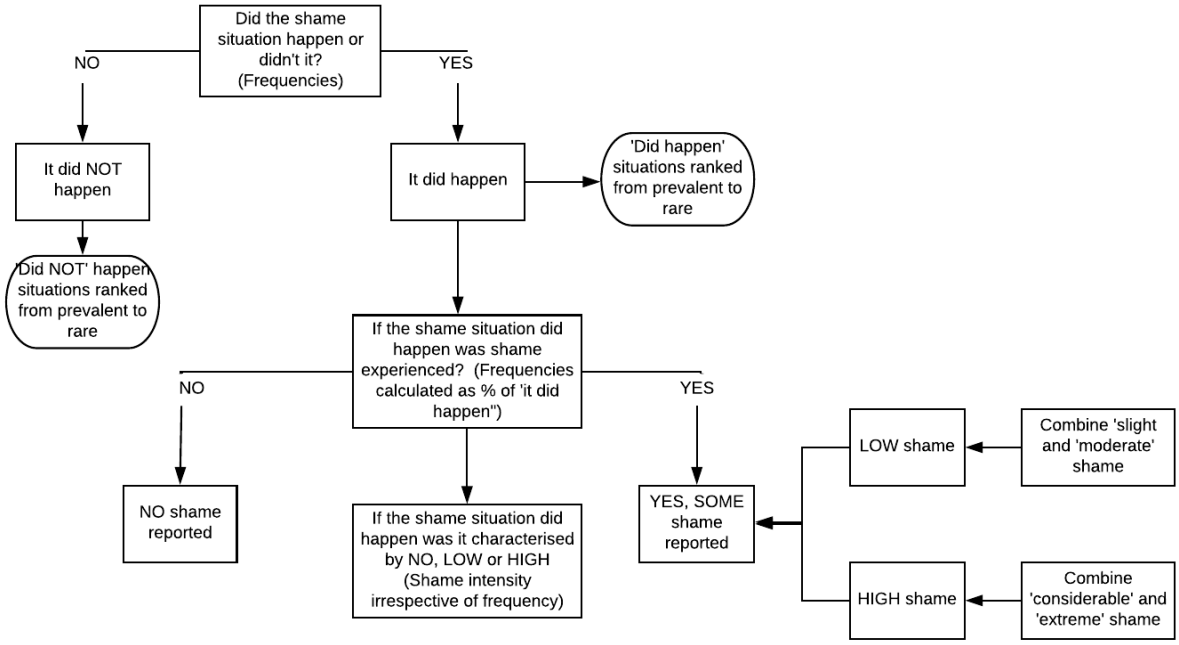


Figure 7 is a flowchart depicting the three analytic possibilities which the inventory posed. Firstly, 'Did the shame situation happen, or didn't it?" This count was to establish frequencies of 'Did happen' versus 'Did not happen' of the situation as reported by students. The 'did not' and 'did happen' categories were then separately ranked to establish the most and least prevalent situations reported. The underlying assumption of this analytic probe was the multiplicity of potential shame experiences.

After a baseline had been established of whether a situation did in fact happen, a second useful analytic possibility seemed to be to evaluate whether the situation invoked shame or not. In other words, "Was there shame, 'yes' or 'no'?" If a situation 'did happen', did the student experience 'no' shame or was 'some' shame experienced? At this point in the analysis the 'did not happen' frequencies were not included in the calculations and frequencies for the differing levels of shame experience (No, High, Low) were calculated as percentages of the 'did happen' score. The underlying theoretical assumption at this point was the idiosyncratic nature of experience. Put another way, that which is shameful for one student may not necessarily be shameful for another or, there may be differing levels of shame. To operationalise this analytic probe more effectively, four of the shame scale response options were collapsed as follows: the 'slight' and 'moderate' response options were combined to form a category called 'low' shame and 'considerable' and 'extreme' shame were collapsed to form 'high' shame. The 'no' shame response option remained as is. Taken together, the low and high shame categories represented a 'some' shame score to be able to answer the question "Was there shame, 'yes' or 'no'"? The 'some' shame therefore represented the

'yes' option. Once again, situations in the 'no', 'high' and 'low' shame categories were ranked to ascertain the most to least prevalent situations.

The third analytic probe of the Situational Scale was to evaluate the reported intensity of the shame experience per situational item, irrespective of frequency. Once again 'no', 'low' and 'high' shame scores were calculated as percentages of the 'did happen' score. The score for each situation was then reviewed to establish whether 'high', 'low' or 'no' reported shame tended to predominate that specific situational item. This allowed for an analysis of situations that possibly had lower reported frequencies in the population but, when experienced, were reported as highly shameful. The converse was also established – situations that had lower reported frequency in the population but were experienced as invoking 'no shame'.

Step 7 – Creation and treatment of derived composite scores – 'Interpersonal shame' and 'Perceived incompetence'. The analysis of frequencies of situations, in Step 6, provided some clarity about the types of situations that students tended to report as firstly, having been experienced (it did happen) and secondly, as invoking shame (some shame). However, during the process, it was noted that because the Shame Inventory includes a large number of situations, the instrument seemed to lack sensitivity to shame situations prevalent in this unique student context. Situations that were reported as highly relevant to the student experience were therefore potentially lost in the broader mix of shame situations. Seeking to tease out the items that seemed pertinent to students, two sub-categories/themes within the Shame Inventory were created and called 'Interpersonal shame' and 'Perceived incompetence'. These derived themes included items with high reported frequencies (it did happen) and shame intensities (some shame) in the student population. The choice of these themes was also informed by results obtained from the exploratory qualitative analysis of the survey open-ended questions.

Interpersonal shame comprised a composite score of the following four Situational Shame Scale items: Q1 (Was laughed at in front of others); Q2 (Was criticized in front of others); Q21 (Knew someone talked badly about me behind my back); Q41 (Had a private aspect of myself exposed). Similarly, perceived incompetence comprised a composite score of seven items: Q5 (Lost something important); Q11 (Didn't know the answer to a question I felt I should know); Q14 (Missed an important appointment); Q16 (Didn't live up to a really important standard of mine); Q17 (Didn't live up to others' standards); Q26 (Was slow to learn something); Q32 (Was afraid to do something). It was decided to run statistical analyses to establish if the results from the newly formed situational themes were more sensitive to group differences. To do this, ANOVAs were used for the demographic variables and Spearman's rank correlation coefficients for the belonging/regard for Wits/worry about financial situation variables.

Step 8 – Treatment of single item Situational Scale items. Social and political shame cues appeared to have been subordinated to the more 'personal' in the Shame Inventory. Since shame around class and race issues were coming through clearly in the qualitative data, it was decided to use the situational items Q25 (Could not afford something) and Q47 (Being a certain race/ethnicity), as stand-alone Likert-type items

and test for group differences. The same analytic treatment was used as in Step 7. The results were informative and are documented in the Findings Chapter.

5.7. Study Part 2 – The exploratory, qualitative element

5.7.1. Instrument used – Three open-ended survey questions

While The Shame Inventory was selected based on its ability to provide some indication of a variety of shame cues – prevalence and intensity – it was felt, based on the seminal work of Lewis (1971), that further qualitative probing would be required to establish a fuller picture of shame stimulus situations. This section details the third section of the Shame Experiences Survey which comprised three exploratory open-ended questions about shame stimulus situations:

Please explain an incident at Wits in which you felt shame:

> *What was the specific incident? An incident is any experience you've had at Wits, social or academic, in which you felt shame?*
>
> *If others were involved, what characteristics/behaviours did he/she/they display?*
>
> *How did you manage the feelings and thoughts going through your mind at the time?*

The exploratory questions were designed to elicit the full range of working concepts for shame stimulus situations which included some form of disappointment/defeat, deficiency of 'self', encounter with the 'other' and an experience that was perceived as involuntary with the 'self' unable (Lewis, 1971). Lewis (1971) argued that both different circumstances and differences in the organisation of the 'self' lead to differences in how the self is evaluated and therefore result in differences in the way shame is experienced and responded to. This conceptualization of shame stimulus situations resonates with the intersubjective nature of this study which holds that people are engaged in interacting worlds of experience and that conflictual unconscious dynamics move between people (Hollway, 2010). With these principles held in mind, the first question was asked to establish the main plot of the story, as constructed by students. These were utilised to identify discourses involving socially shared situations, meaning and interaction around shame experiences at university. The second question was designed to tease out how subjects positioned the 'self' and 'others' in their shame stories. The assumption was that this positioning represented various forms of identifications and object relations, including conflicted ideas of the 'self' before oneself and/or 'others'. Including the role of the 'other' is significant to this study because shame about disappointment or defeat is often provoked by an encounter with the 'other'. The third open-ended question was developed to probe for the ways that students constructed their responses to the shame experience. Although there were three distinct questions it became apparent during analysis that participants provided different pieces of their story in a more haphazard, rather than linear, way. For example some participants provided so much detail in question 1 that questions 2 and 3 became obsolete.

Overall I felt comfortable that the three questions had collectively served a scaffolding purpose in assisting students to provide more nuance about their shame experiences. This gave the researcher more analytic leverage because, when analysed together, the questions formed a more coherent whole and better represented a full range of working components for the shame stimulus situation (Lewis, 1971).

5.7.2. Producing an operational model to analyse shame in the text

When faced with the daunting task of analysing copious amounts of valuable data, the question that begged was 'how am I going to 'systematically' identify and describe student shame experiences using the text?' Izard (2010) suggests that discrete emotions, like shame, should be operationally defined to avoid misinterpretation and confusion. This is important because operationalising shame has implications for reliability and validity. It was therefore decided to produce an operational model of shame for this study. However, the central challenge faced, which has been frequently documented in the literature, was that shame experiences are highly variable in form. Firstly, people employ a vast vocabulary for shame states compared to other emotions (Lewis, 1971; Morrison, 1998; Retzinger, 1995). The implication for this study was that participants would not necessarily directly refer to 'shame' but rather use phrases representing shame and its context because shame talk can take on a language of its own. Secondly, Baumeister and Leary (1995) claim that perceived relational threats, such as those that characterise the shame experience, potentially generate any one of a number of unpleasant emotional states resulting in a broad spectrum of shame experiences (Steiner, 2011; Weiss, 2015). The implication was that participants would talk about any number of shame variants (Lewis, 1971) or what Morrison (1998) calls members of the shame family. Thirdly, these different feeling states can alternate, underlie or be absorbed by one another (Lewis, 1971). This suggested that participants would adopt different positionings within their shame stories, including identifications and possible disowning of such identifications. Mindful of this variability it was decided that an effective way to systematically analyse a spectrum of shame experiences was to create an operational model of shame using reputable shame taxonomies. Bernstein (2000) aptly affirms that "without a model, the researcher can never know what could have been and was not" (p. 135). For this study, I combined the work of three influential shame researchers namely, Lewis (1971), Retzinger (1991), and Morrison (1998) to produce a comprehensive operational model of shame (See Table 2).

Lewis's (1971) working concepts for shame formed the basis of the operational model because it allows for a holistic exploration of the shame experience: examination of the 'self', the 'other', situational shame triggers and possibilities for defending against shame. Additionally, Lewis (1971) observed that certain types of words were used repeatedly by individuals to explain the experience of shame and she therefore used a content analysis scale (verbal and nonverbal) designed by Gottschalk et al. (1969) as a scientific foundation for coding emotional vocabulary in transcribed interview data. In 1995, sociologist Retzinger combined the work of forerunners Gottschalk et al. (1969) and Lewis (1971) and devised a taxonomy of paralinguistic cues to identify shame which included code words/phrases representing shame and its context. Lewis (1971) and Retzinger's (1991) taxonomies are, in principle, relational, because they

combine perceptions of the 'self' and the 'other' in the shame experience. This relational dimension proved to be particularly congruent with the theoretical framework used for this study. Morrison's (1998) taxonomy was also invaluable in describing students' feelings which were closely related to the shame experience – shame's 'next of kin'. Although each taxonomy added its own unique dimension, there was also a healthy degree of overlap which is not surprising because Lewis (1971) is widely regarded as one of the most authoritative voices in psychoanalytically infused shame research and many researchers have used her work as a foundation. The use of these models allowed for broader identification of shame, especially hidden or denied shame, in the students narratives..

Table 2*: Operational model of shame developed for the Shame Experiences Study*

Working concepts for shame
Shame triggers:
Disappointment or defeat
Deficiency of self (proximal stimulus)
An encounter that takes place with the 'other/s' or in relation to 'other/s'
Conscious content:
Painful emotion
Automatic reactions (awareness of the body)
Loss of control – uncontrolled outbursts of crying, showing vulnerability in public or outbursts of rage
Connections to past feelings
Fewer variations of cognitive content because the 'self' is focal in awareness (monothematic)
Identity thoughts
Shame experience, including the position of the 'self':
The 'self' is focal in awareness.
The 'self' is experienced as the object of scorn, contempt and ridicule.
The 'self' is experienced as paralysed, helpless and passive.
Assailed by noxious body stimuli – rage, tears, blushing
The 'self' has a poor ability to function as an agent or perceiver – permeable boundaries result in confusion between imagining the 'self' and/or the 'other'.
Vicarious experience of the 'self' and 'other'.
Position of the 'other':
The evaluative gaze of the 'other'.
The 'other' is perceived as a source of scorn, contempt and ridicule (laughing, ridiculing and powerful).
The 'other' is perceived as abandoning or rejecting.
The 'other' appears intact compared to a weak 'self'.
There is shame at the experience of legitimate need for love, support, and attention from the 'other/s'.
The 'other' shows pity and concern.
Management of hostility:
Humiliated fury with potential for shame spirals.
Discharge blocked by guilt and/or love for the 'other', discharge turned inward on 'self'.
Guilt – righteous indignation and discharge on 'self' and/or 'other'
Characteristic defences:
Denial; Repression; Affirmation of the self; Rationalisation; Idealisation; Splitting

Shame vocabulary (includes shame variants and alternative ways of expressing shame)

Direct indications of shame: embarrassed, humiliated, ashamed and disgraced. Note: humiliation is more public in nature, involving a perpetrator who observes and degrades – whether real or imagined. Disgrace is the expectation of public shaming and contempt for a failure or impropriety.

Indirect indications of shame:

Failing/failure – when failing is experienced in all or nothing terms. Can be around failure to attain a desired state pertaining to multiple domains - intelligence, beauty, wealth, physical prowess and so on.
Inferior – results from upward comparison and ensuing feelings of failure. Also arises from failing or falling short of an ideal.
Inadequate/incompetent – the feeling that one is not competent enough to complete a task. Includes feeling clumsy, stupid, lacking in talent, and unqualified. Incompetence can feel like a label that is given by others who judge or by judgement of the 'self'.
Defective – often experienced around perceptions in relation to physical appearance.
Abandonment. Includes statements that indicate feelings of not belonging or being separated from significant 'others': alienated, alone, deserted, detached, distant, disconnected, dumped, rebuffed, rejected, split, withdrawn.
Unlovable – the fear of missing out on being seen, loved and admired by 'others'
Unworthy – also related to failure, feeling unlovable and inferior when falling short of an idealised image of the self.
Ridicule - words or phrases about being emotionally hurt or threatened by another person: put down or made to look foolish or different
Despair – a sense that something will never change and one will be plagued by ongoing shameful inferiority and/or incompetence. May result from the need to hide the perceived shameful flaw.
Powerlessness - a sense of being powerless and dependent on seemingly stronger, more successful or parental 'others'
Low self-esteem – characterised by self-judgement and negative appraisal of the whole 'self' following shame trigger

---

Note. Adapted from the following sources:

Shame and guilt in neurosis (p. 88 – 91), by H. B. Lewis, 1971, International University Press.

Violent Emotions: Shame and rage in marital quarrels(p. 69), by S.M. Retzinger, 1991, Sage.

The culture of shame (p. 40 – 57), by A.P. Morrison, 1998, Random House.

These items have been copied in terms of Fair Dealing in Section 12 of the current Copyright Act.

5.7.3. Analytic procedures followed

Silverman (2000) encourages researchers to address the contingent nature of the data chosen in qualitative research. Similarly, Henning et al. (2004) suggest that researchers explicate how they arrived at their theoretical insights. By documenting the research process as thoroughly as possible the hope was to illuminate the original logic of this research process – a valuable commodity which is often lost in published manuscripts. Therefore the steps below indicate how the analysis was structured and the choice of themes. Some research processes begin with open coding, others use an intuitive hunch, whilst still others grow out of the literature (Henning et al., 2004), however, this study used a nuanced mix of literature that formed a conceptual lens through which to view the data, while simultaneously allowing the data to challenge and extend the conceptual lens.

Step 1 – The operational model for shame was developed from the literature.

Step 2 – Thematic analysis of social constructions. The point of entry into the data was to thematically group shame stories by using the substantive content. In other words, the type of shame incidents that students constructed and how these were socially constructed? Working in an excel spreadsheet, using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013) the following twelve themes for students' shame stories emerged and were colour coded: academic failure, no shame, race and ethnicity, managing difficult emotions/emotional states, feeling like you are the object of scorn/contempt, rejection/betrayal, not knowing/having the answers, gender and sexuality, embarrassing mishaps/omissions/commissions, poverty and privilege, having a disability/health/weight issues, society's expectations. This initial thematic analysis revealed three classes of themes. Demographics (e.g. gender, race, poverty), academic performance issues (e.g. failing, not knowing the answers) and emotion related themes (e.g. rejection, feeling like you are the object of scorn). However, then I realised that these themes reflected an unwitting disconnection of the emotion from the content of the stories. It is the ease with which this analytic disconnect occurs that likely makes shame research inherently difficult and which possibly fuelled the social constructionist call to embrace the 'situation' as an inherent part of the emotion in shame research. Upon re-immersion in the data, ways to create more integration between the situation and the elicited emotion were explored. The stories were unpacked in more detail (Step 3) by leveraging the operational model.

Step 3 – Unpacking the stories.

Step 3A Exploration of the 'other' – Using the operational model of shame as a rubric, I explored the position and characterisation of the 'other' in shame stories by creating the following headings in an excel spreadsheet: Others involved – Yes/No; Primary others – Who?; Others' characteristics/behaviours; Secondary others – Who?; Secondary others' response; Others as supportive/nurturing; Others as hostile, and vicarious experience of others. An unpacking of the 'other' sensitized the researcher to the relational nature of students' shame stories and a pattern of a hostile characterization of the 'other' emerged. Several participants stated that there were no 'others' involved in their shame experience and yet the data indicated the vicarious experience of 'others'. A column for 'vicarious experience of others' was therefore included. A column called 'The self' was also included, but later discarded because it became apparent that characterisation of the 'self' was often only possible through interpretation of the participant's characterisation of the 'other' in their story. Characterisation of the 'self' was eventually included in a later stage of the process in a more holistic and interpretive manner.

Step 3B – Construction of a shame dictionary – Because the literature indicated that it would be unlikely that participants directly reference 'shame', a column called 'the shame dictionary' was added to the spreadsheet, to capture the words participants used to signal feelings of shame. This included any form of emotional content whether it be a direct or indirect reference to shame (e.g. 'feeling stupid', 'embarrassed', 'after a while I just felt dead inside'). Taxonomies 1 and 2 were used as rubrics to delineate inclusion criteria for what qualified as shame codes, phrases or references to shame's 'next of kin'. To

clarify, the shame dictionary did not include behaviours that were not emotionally referenced in some way. For example, a story that cryptically indicated that the shame experience was 'failing' was not included in the shame dictionary whereas a story of 'feeling like a failure' was included. This provided useful information on 'how' students tended to tell their shame stories. This process led to an evaluation of those stories that did not meet the shame dictionary's inclusion criteria to establish why. Was there a lack of emotional referencing? What was this lack of emotional referencing about? Were there patterns of disowning emotion e.g. through the use of denial or avoidance of shame?

Step 3C – Steps 3A and 3B then prompted me to probe further using all the remaining categories in the operational model of shame which were inserted as columns into the Excel spreadsheet – phrases or sentences were copied and pasted to the appropriate column as textual evidence. The prevalence of feelings of abandonment/separation/isolation, ridicule and incompetency/inadequacy emerged. Frequency counts were included for the following: abandonment/separation/isolation; ridicule; incompetence/inadequacy; physical discomfort and confused/indifferent.

Step 4 - The turning point in the analysis - from coding to global, interpretive analysis. At this point in the process several distinct features of the student shame experience were beginning to emerge. It became evident that something more was required in addition to the detailed coding of the data. Only using fragments of the data did not facilitate interpretation of the situation, subject positioning (the 'self' versus the 'object') and the felt emotion – all of which collectively inform an understanding of emotional experience. Henning et al. (2004) distinguish between qualitative analyses that require detailed coding of data versus the use of techniques that enable a more global analysis of a wide range of themes in the data. A detailed coding process – as conducted in Steps 1 – 3 – involves assigning detailed codes to slightly different aspects of the data (Henning et al., 2004). On the other hand, a global analysis makes use of "triangulation, ordering and sorting categories, analysing discrepant or negative evidence, constructing visual representations, and conducting logical cross analyses" (McMillan & Schumacher 2006, p. 396). It became apparent that a global analysis was more suited to move the analytic process forward and identify patterns in the data. This part of the analysis did not use codes for data fragments but instead preferenced the networking of patterns of themes and concepts. "Interpretive abilities" (Henning et al., 2004) were used to fashion a new whole. "Patterns are plausible explanations when they are supported by data and alternative patterns are not reasonable" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 396).

Step 5 - Revisiting the shame narrative themes using global analysis. Armed with the knowledge of using more global analytic principles, the original themes in the shame narratives were revisited. Themes were revised by considering the whole story and new themes were assigned codes. The codes formed anchor points for the organisation of data. For example, shame stories constructed around money, finances, class, and poverty were coded as SES and numbered SES1, SES2, SES3 and so on. The difference in theming this time around was that the knowledge gained from Step 3, the 'unpacking' process, was used, as well as a greater understanding of how the previously determined shame taxonomies could be utilised to explicate the shame experience without disconnecting the emotion from the situation.

The following 'global analysis' headings were used to unpack each of the 265 coherent stories:

- Vocabulary used – this could be emotive language or cognitive content used
- Characterisation of the 'other' (positioning) – how was the other characterised?
- Characterisation of the 'self' (positioning) – how was the 'self' represented as subject and object, particularly in relation to the 'other'?
- Hegemonic/counter-hegemonic discourses – what wider discourses of shame in society did participants draw upon? What shared meanings were evident?
- Situation management – how did student's report managing the situation?
- Psychodynamics – was a disowning of emotion through projection and other defences evident in the text?

The most important principle applied to the global analysis was to consider the 'whole' rather than any 'part' of a story. This approach allowed for more coherent interpretation of the data and the provision of plausible explanations for analytic choices made. Some students' stories were dense with multiple plots and in these cases multiple categorization of themes was utilised. The process of revisiting the initial themes was lengthy and involved layer upon layer of refinement. Eventually, after several months of analysis, the use of systematic global analysis as a form of ordering and sorting of categories, and the inclusion of discrepant or negative data paid off. Patterns began to emerge and seven themes or shame triggers/situations were refined. The themes were: failing, comparison, being ridiculed, being rejected, acts of omission and commission, class, and race. This time around the themes were representative of socially circumscribed situations and the emotional patterns and subject positionings pertaining to that type of shame trigger in a university context began to emerge.

Step 6 – Identification of core characteristics and the emotional concerns of the shame experience, per theme. This step involved establishing the core characteristics and primary shame concerns for each shame trigger. For example, a central concern in shame about failing was 'inadequacy' whereas comparison was coloured with inferiority. This enabled a logical cross analysis to show the complexity of the nature of the shame experience based on situation type.

An important consideration throughout this process was trustworthiness, which comprises credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study has attempted to meet the requirements of trustworthy research by giving a detailed description of participant selection, instruments used, and analytic procedures followed for each of the three parts of this mixed methods study. The qualitative strand comprised two parts, therefore, to avoid duplication, a more detailed discussion of trustworthiness has been provided at the end of Part 3 using Merriam's (2002) principles. However, an important step taken to increase the trustworthiness of Part 2 of this study was to use seminal shame taxonomies because this added to the reliability of the operational model developed for this study. Also,

the process of the derivation of analytic categories has been specified in as much detail as possible, to allow for transparency. The analysis has also been grounded in copious amounts of direct quotations that will enable a reader to discern the fit between the data and interpretation – demonstrating trustworthiness (Willig, 2013). Additionally, validity was further established through supervisor inputs and checks as well as triangulation of the study's three data sources.

5.8. Study Part 3 – The psychosocial qualitative element

5.8.1. Interviews - participant recruitment and engagement

Ten semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted for Study Part 3. The interview venue and times were negotiated with each participant to suit their schedules. Nine interviews were held at the Wits Emthonjeni Centre, situated on the Wits East Campus. One interview was conducted at the Wits Parktown Campus. The Emthonjeni Centre is a multidisciplinary space that has a number of private rooms. Those students who were unsure of the location of the venue were personally met at a well-known campus landmark, the Wartenweiler Library. Participants were assured that I was interested in hearing their personal experience. Each participant was reminded that their anonymity would be protected and that they could refuse to answer any question and/or withdraw from the interview at any stage. Participants were given an information sheet (see Appendix E) and signed a consent form to be interviewed and for the audio recording of the interview (see Appendix F). Several participants remarked on how much 'better' the interview was than they had expected, considering the nature of the topic. Because the interview topic was likely to be anxiety provoking for participants, the interview schedule was designed to allow participants to talk freely about themselves and so aid a more natural flow of conversation. I also used non-verbal forms of communication such as head nodding and acknowledgements such as 'uh huh' throughout the interview to build rapport with participants.

5.8.2. Instrument used: Semi-structured interview schedule

A semi-structured interview schedule was designed and used for the interviews (see Appendix G). The design of the schedule was informed by Hollway and Jefferson's (2000) principles to elicit participants' stories. Introductory questions concerned personal history, participant's current university stories and overall experience of university life. This was in keeping with a psychoanalytically inflected narrative interview approach. Predetermined guiding themes were derived from the literature but were applied flexibly during the interviews. As far as possible, data production was based on the principle of free association. The themes were designed to draw a story from participants about a variety of their experiences of shame at university as well as the shame of 'others'. My positioning was also included in the analysis and interpretation of data because the researcher forms an integral part of the interactional dynamic of the interview and can therefore be regarded as an extension of the research instrument (Emerson & Frosh, 2004; Izard, 2010).

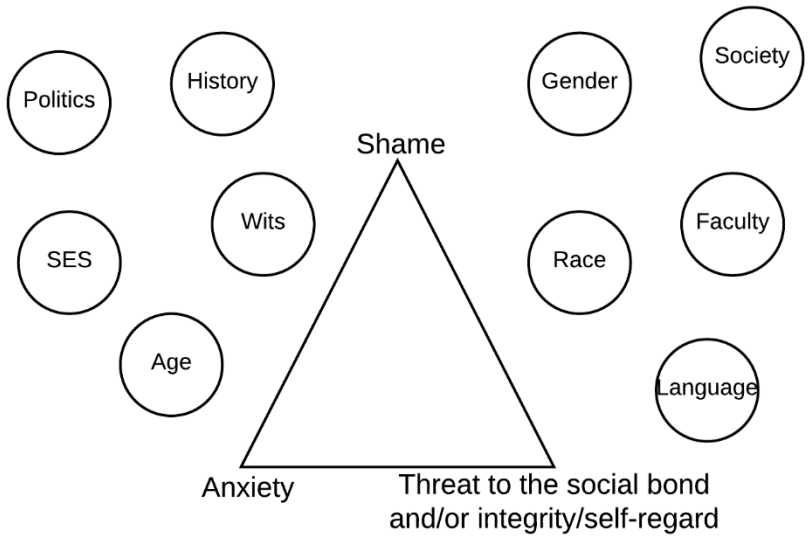
5.8.3. Procedures followed

Psychosocial research is intellectually diverse (Walkerdine, 2008), however, this study was influenced by the work of Hollway and Jefferson (2000, 2013), Cartwright (2004) and Emerson and Frosh (2004). Hollway and Jefferson (2013) present a cogent and user-friendly approach concerning how to treat narratives as situated events within surrounding discourse – rather than as isolated units. Emerson and Frosh (2004) seem to furnish the more 'critical' of the three approaches and served as a reminder to explore each narrative as a socially circumscribed co-construction within hegemonic/counterhegemonic discourses, identified in relation to subject positioning. Principles from the three approaches were synthesized and the strengths of each used to outline a thirteen-step analytic procedure for Study Part 2.

Step 1 – Defining a theory of the 'subject'. The point of departure of a psychosocial analysis is an understanding that psychosocial data analysis is based on interpretation and therefore necessitates a theory of the 'subject' that emphasizes the centrality of defences (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). It was expected that defences would be widespread in the shame data. A defence is not a thing. A defence is a collection of feelings, thoughts and/or actions which operate like a roadblock to block out, muffle or mute other feelings, thoughts and/or actions. Because the content of shame may be conscious or unconscious the concept of defences was crucial to a psychosocial understanding of shame. Defences afforded the researcher the analytic space to differentiate between content of the shame situation and process. Evaluating content helped to answer the question 'what *is* the shame experience?', whereas an evaluation of process, was about 'what is the function of the feeling, thought or experience?' In other words, a psychosocial view of the subject enabled me to address not only the discursive aspects of shame but also the intersubjective processes related to shame. Bringing the ideas of content and process together, Frosh et al. (2000) claim that identities are created by positions that draw on cultural meanings linked to social positioning – these positions are fuelled by emotional needs which may be conscious or unconscious.

Step 2 – Understanding the psychosocial research focus. In order to explore shame in this particular context, acknowledgement was required of anxiety as inherent in the learning environment and the threat of danger to the social bond that this constitutes. Using an intersubjective ontology and epistemology shame is a relational construct with conscious and unconscious elements and similarly learning, by its very nature, includes a temporary regression to states of anxiety (Britzman, 2015). This study also included the multiple influences on the shame experience at a micro, meso and macro level (Turner, 2009). The tension that was therefore explored in the research was how participants' unique object relations and multiple developmental and contextual influences affected their shame experiences. How does a person's unique life experience affect their experience of shame?; What is the meaning of shame for participants? What emotional purposes does shame serve?; What identity purposes does shame serve in the university context?

Figure 8: *The multiple psychosocial influences considered in the Shame Experiences Study*



Step 3 – Conduct semi-structured interviews. Researcher intervention was kept to a minimum to allow the participant to freely associate (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). The tension was to allow for free association whilst confining the process to an interview schedule or, risk veering completely off the topic and adding no value to the phenomenon under study.

Step 4 – Transcription. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. Because of the large volume of data in this study, a research assistant was hired to assist with transcription. For ethical reasons a signed confidentiality agreement was entered into with the research assistant. All participants were given pseudonyms and potentially identifying information was disguised in ways that remained true to the participant's significant positionings. Because narratives were treated as socially circumscribed co-constructions, all contributions made by the researcher were also transcribed verbatim (Emerson & Frosh, 2004).

Step 5 – Data immersion. Transcripts were read and reread to familiarize myself with the data. It was helpful that I had personally conducted all ten interviews as I felt "inhabited" by participants – it captured my imagination and fantasy (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). During these readings each transcript was given a wide, right hand margin for notes. The notes margin was divided into three columns called: construction of the 'self', construction of the 'other' and 'intersection' of the self/other. This allowed the researcher to grapple with the participant's relational constitution – processes of identification, projection and introjection.

Step 6 – Produce participant portraits to explore the 'whole' or 'Gestalt' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Ten in-depth portraits were written. The focus of the portrait was not to produce an explanation of the participant's whole life – like a biographer would – but rather to explain the student's relationship to a series of personal shame narratives in a university context and how these shame experiences relate to the

participant's unique psychic structure and social positioning i.e. who the person is. The focus was therefore the participant's relationship to shame and to the 'self' and 'others'. A portrait also has value because it aids the reader who does not have access to or the time to read the raw data, to form a picture of the participant. A key principle used in producing the portraits was to embrace inconsistencies or seemingly unconnected elements as these were accounted for in the research process.

Step 7 – Select and reduce personal shame narratives from lengthy raw transcript text. In conjunction with Step 6, discrete shame stories – which have a beginning and an end – were identified in the text. Cartwright (2004) calls this process 'finding the key narratives'. At face value this was finding the discourses involving socially shared meaning, interaction and situations around shame experiences at university. However, it is important to bear in mind that although discrete stories can be completely detached from the surrounding discourse, this study also treated narratives as situated events (Riessman, 1993) by 'making the links' described under Step 11.

Step 8 – Explore the subject positionings of the discursive subject. Discrete shame stories were then analysed to explore subject positionings. In other words, how the participant located or positioned themself within the narratives through various forms of identifications and object relations (Cartwright, 2004). Emerson and Frosh (2004) encourage the researcher to consider why the narrator shifts positions or points of view and if any patterns emerge in the shifting. This study used principles of depth hermeneutic analysis and therefore considered 'what' was said (the discourses) and also 'how' it was said (the feeling or tone of text) and 'why' it was possibly said in that particular way.

Step 9 – Use the text to explore object constellations, corresponding fantasies and defences. This step concerned exploring conflicting feelings or the ambivalence around university shame experiences as portrayed by the student. The theoretical framework was used to interpret defences evident in the data, for example, splitting. This was possible because a defence invokes different representations of the 'self' as a subject and object and possible disowning of various emotions and identification through projection, splitting and other defences (Cartwright, 2004). Analytic prompts that were used by the researcher: What feelings is the student experiencing? What is the students' awareness of these feelings? What are the missing feelings and their potential functions? What is the cost of this relation with reality? Attention was also given to the structuring of sentences, omissions and affect content of material.

Step 10 – Scenic understanding. The assumption for this study was that both the researcher and participant were subject to projections and introjections of ideas and feelings during the interview process derived in situ and from personal histories. However, histories may not always be consciously accessible to either or both parties involved, but feelings can help provide some understanding of the research relationship (Hollway, 2013). Lorenzer's (2016) notion of 'scenic understanding' was useful to access some of the feelings that were not originally consciously accessible during the interviews. Hollway (2013) describes scenic understanding as "a process by which cultural texts and research data are reflected upon through affective and embodied experience" (p. 22). Hollway (2015) concurs with Lorenzer and argues

that “through scenic understanding it is possible to access the embodied societal-cultural and bring it to symbolisation” and that this is achieved by being cognisant of and using provocations in the text (p. 27). In this study, scenic understanding allowed me to include unconscious intersubjectivity, including societal collective processes that affected the production and analysis of the data. This included psychoanalytic observations which were holistic, tacit and tapped into societal-cultural unconscious knowing (Hollway, 2011b) in the South African context.

This process was not easy and included recording thoughts and impressions before, during and after the interviews to retain a sense of the emotional impact of the interview (Cartwright, 2004). It required a more holistic kind of tacit knowledge which Hollway (2015) calls an “unthought known” (p. 74). Hollway uses the analogy of a film or theatre piece, “like engaging with any good drama, involves being able, at least sometimes, to tolerate the “absence of a consistent story” or a “muddle” (Balint, 1993, p. 11 as cited in Hollway, 2011b, p. 95). Possible transference and countertransference processes were documented because these were important discrete thought and feeling states evoked during the interview process – in myself or the participant – that may have influenced what was considered significant in the interview (Cartwright, 2004). Analytic prompts that were used in this process included: What is my, the researcher’s relationship to shame? What is my relationship to the participant both in the interview and as he/she comes through from the transcripts? What strong feelings were evoked in the participant during the interview? What strong feelings were evoked in me during the interview and at the time of data analysis? Were these feelings possibly reflective of warded off feelings in relation to the substantive content? Can I access my own warded off feelings? It should be noted that my analytic identifications shifted somewhat after the interviews due to increased awareness of emotional and discursive links represented both explicitly and latently in the data. This is a common occurrence in psychosocial research which positions interpretive work after the interview and not during. This additional analytic time taken did, however, prove useful in uncovering some of my own defences (Gadd & Corr, 2017) which were not always immediately evident because they are, after all, defences. The utility of scenic knowledge for this study was to maintain contact with emotional experience so crucial to the study of shame. The alternative would have been the production of more abstract formulations of shame experiences.

Step 11 – Making the links. Hollway and Jefferson (2013) describe making the links as exploring the links made by participants through free association. This exploration of links included consideration of how the narrative took form and the way that I, as the researcher, facilitated this (Cartwright, 2004). This helps the researcher to piece together a ‘form’ or ‘Gestalt’ of the participant’s account. The ‘Gestalt’ principle is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts which enabled sense making of pieces of data that might otherwise have been rejected as inconsequential. This process was an iterative moving back and forth between part and whole or what Riessman (1993) calls situated events within surrounding discourse. The material gathered in all the previous consecutive steps were taken together and analysed to make narrative sense of a person’s unconscious life and personal investment in problematic shame positions (Hollway & Jefferson, 2005). The key idea was bringing together the seemingly contradictory elements by

making links to the person's biography more generally. Making the links was about a commitment to holistic interpretation – any parts of the data or discrete shame stories were only interpreted by using the whole of the data to understand that extract. Tracing of the analytic 'parts' which led to specific holistic interpretations was also important because it served as evidence for claims made. Analytic prompts that were used included: What does the person have an inability to acknowledge but is evident through a broader look at the whole of the evidence? How can this evidence then be interpreted?

Step 12 – The psychosocial proposition. A psychosocial proposition about the participant's relationship to shame in a university context was then produced by combining evidence, theory and interpretation (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Analytic prompts: What is this participant's relationship to shame? What parts of the account does this imbue significance into and what subsequent links can be made? What is the wider interpretation? Because the study is psychosocial in nature, the links were characterised by psychological and social explanations and principles of intersubjective object relations.

Step 13 – Identify patterns across the ten interviews. Identification of similar and different patterns of shame experiences across the ten interviews was then undertaken because the semi-structured interviews allowed for some equivalent data on each participant. For example: were there similarities in types of shame situations, 'objects' identified in the shame experience and/or the nature of the conflict? The analysis of patterning is cognisant of common experiences in the university context whilst paying homage to the fact that people's experience is unique, personal and individual. Riessman (1993) cautions against fracturing the data at this point and descending into some sort of theorizing across cases. This comparison was cognisant of not taking out elements and fracturing the data, nor losing the wider context nor distorting the whole. Taken together, the whole forms a more faithful representation of participants' accounts and meanings. Hollway and Jefferson (2013) argue that this is being faithful to the gestalts of respondents. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013) was also used to establish any potential patterns or anomalies across the ten interviews. Analytic prompts that were used at this stage of the analysis included: What were the similar and different patterns of shame experience? Were there clearly identifiable hegemonic/counterhegemonic shame discourses identified in relation to subject positioning across narratives? Can anything about the contribution of demographic factors to the experience of shame be suggested from the narratives?

5.8.4. Research trustworthiness: Validity, reliability, ethics

The paradigm wars left no aspect of research untouched, including the use of evaluative criteria. Historically, quantitative researchers have long upheld the criteria of validity, reliability and generalisability but qualitative researchers have sought to redefine these criteria within a framework of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Over many decades, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness – which comprises credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability – became the gold standard to evaluate qualitative research. However, Long and Johnson (2000) argue that validity and reliability have "the same essential meaning", regardless of research tradition (p. 31). Mishler (1990) contended that

evaluative criteria 'must be understood as particular ways of warranting validity claims rather than as universal, abstract guarantors of truth' (p. 419). The literature seems to indicate that psychosocial researchers are comfortable with the concepts of validity and generalizability because specific ways have been developed to justify psychosocial validity claims.

Contestation around psychosocial validity claims centre around the interpretive nature of the research. Critics of a defended subject have raised the issue of whether it is even possible to access this intrapsychic world of others (Wetherell, 2005). However, the psychosocial approach asserts that it is possible due to the unique theorisation of the subject and the use of psychoanalytic interpretation which provides the vehicle to access the lived but sometimes inexpressible experiences of others (Hollway, 2011c). For those who agree with this psychosocial ontological and epistemological view of the subject, this form of interpretation has two main implications for research validity. The first, is a tendency to over interpret. Wengraf (2001) argues that because the researcher is themself a defended subject, this lends itself to over-interpretation. The second implication for validity is managing the tension between the voice of the participant versus the researcher's interpretation. Executed incorrectly this can be tantamount to the researcher hijacking the voice of the participant whilst engaging with the text in an interpretive manner (Emerson & Frosh, 2004). In order to remain cognizant of these potential pitfalls, Mishler's (1990) three guidelines for validity were used for this study: the original text was displayed, analytic categories were clearly specified and theoretical interpretations focused on structures of relationship. With regards to displaying the original text, an abundance of original text was included to justify interpretations. This allows the reader to be able to judge for themselves how the method was applied and the interpretations offered. The plausibility of a given interpretation therefore becomes a basis for judgement rather than proof of truth. Willig (2013) concurs that grounding research in examples or direct quotations from the narratives enables the reader to discern for themselves the fit between data and interpretation thereby demonstrating trustworthiness. Importantly, the display of original text also pertained to the inclusion of the interviewer in the transcription and analysis which helped to increase interviewer transparency and accountability (Emerson & Frosh, 2004). This documented feedback loop served to enhance and retain participant's meaning in the meaning-making process in which both myself and the participant engaged. Concerning the clear specification of analytic categories, the step-by-step procedures used in this study have been clearly spelled out for the reader. Where deemed appropriate, analytic categories included paying attention to micro-processes such as how the text was said within the context of the interview which can also be regarded as a methodological commitment to reliability and validity (Emerson & Frosh, 2004).

Mishler's (1990) third guideline for validity that was applied to this study was that theoretical interpretations focused on structures. In other words, analytic categories were employed to interpret patterns or structures of relationship. This was documented under procedures as 'making the links' between the parts and the whole. This study was therefore cautious around decontextualizing transcription. According to Hollway and Jefferson (2000) patterns or structures of relationship are "like throwing a stone in a pond, if an interpretation 'works' the ripples reverberate through the rest of the analysis. When

interpretations do this, when they illuminate other data beyond their starting point, our faith in their robustness can increase correspondingly" (p. 60). In this study the ripple effect or patterning was then linked to dominant social discourses which were used as discursive tools for specific subject positionings and the restraint of alternative subject positionings. Importantly, the claim is therefore not that this study provides the only possible interpretation but rather one of a number of plausible interpretations which can contribute to an understanding of student shame. This form of psychosocial validation is one way of making sense out of the data (Emerson & Frosh, 2004).

Merriam (2002) purports that validity is established through triangulation of data sources and methods, participant checks, peer review and analysis of variant cases. The use of triangulation was a strength of this mixed methods study. The study produced three different datasets which were triangulated and enabled interpretation and explanation of areas of convergence and divergence. This was particularly informative because of the different kinds of data that each method produced. With regards to peer review, my supervisor's inputs throughout the analytic process proved invaluable and served as a credibility check (Willig, 2013). Merriam (2002) also addresses the issue of external validity which concerns the application of findings from this study to other studies. I have endeavoured to provide as much detail as possible about the unique context of this study to form a useful backdrop for other researchers who evaluate this study and may pursue similar studies in their own contexts.

A drawback was that I did not make use of participant checks in this study. Rather, participants were informed that a copy of the study would be made freely available to them on request. There are those who have argued that psychoanalytic interpretation potentially exacerbates the power dynamics between the researcher and the participant (Sondergaard, 2002). However, this perception likely exists because of the failure of some researchers to differentiate clearly between a clinical and a research situation (Branney et al., 2009; Frosh & Emerson, 2005). Clinical psychoanalysis privileges interpretation during an interaction where feedback is possible, whereas psychoanalytic research seeks only to interpret after the interaction with the participant (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). However, the psychosocial tradition is unique in that while it incorporates psychoanalytic thinking it broadens the scope of interpretation to include the external world and is an approach developed for use in research settings. Although I do not discount the caution against exacerbating power dynamics, as a psychosocial researcher, it is acknowledged that my interpretation of a participant was only made up of the data accumulated from one interview and it is impossible to fully know another person from one interview (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). This brings us back to the somewhat circular argument that all research is in some way, shape or form ultimately reliant on interpretation. Ettorre's (2013) counterargument to the claim of a power dynamic inherent in psychoanalytic interpretation includes clearly documented evidence of how researcher reflexivity – in particular exploration of countertransference – can result in increased empathy towards participants. This was my personal experience throughout the research process. Additionally, participants themselves reported finding the interview beneficial despite high levels of self-disclosure about sensitive issues. As a researcher I believe that an inherent power dynamic between researcher and researched is unavoidable. The

core issue is ‘how’ one chooses to manage this dynamic and that is why an ethical researcher is a reflexive researcher which impacts the trustworthiness of the research process (Merriam, 2002).

Merriam’s inclusion of ethical issues as a component of trustworthiness in research is in line with research trends which have seen a move towards linking validity directly to ethics and more specifically the ethical, reflexive researcher (Gergen & Gergen, 2000). In this view research is valid when it prizes self-critical reflection, authenticity and does justice to the situation at hand. In a similar vein, Simons and Usher’s (2012) notion of ‘situated ethics’ in education research prioritises the use of researcher reflexivity tools as the foundation of ethical research. Because of the central role of psychoanalytic interpretation used in this study and the susceptibility to over interpret particular attention was paid to researcher reflexivity. From a psychosocial perspective researcher reflexivity in the form of scenic understanding also formed an important component in explaining otherwise contradictory material (Hollway, 2011b). Using reflexivity also helped to guard against bad interpretations and promote valuable ones. Although reflexivity cannot substitute the use of appropriate theory to interpret, it can serve to bolster trustworthiness (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). I have therefore disclosed and described in detail my choice of research questions, preferred theories, values, interests, chosen interpretive strategies – all of which formed a complicated interaction between myself and the research process (Gergen & Gergen, 2000; Riessman, 1993).

In this chapter an argument has been made for the utility of a mixed methods psychosocial approach to explore the complexity of shame in a student context. A combination of mixed methods and psychosocial principles was deemed necessary, particularly in light of seemingly irreconcilable emotion research agendas that have tended to focus either on the organisation of the ‘self’ or multiple influences on the shame experience whereas this research combined both. I have also described how the growing utility of mixed methods and the move to reintroduce some form of interpretivism into post-structuralist thinking about subjectivity have opened up the playing field for the creation of hybrid projects like this one. A Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods model was deemed the most appropriate research design and allowed for the logical structuring and organisation of the multiple study elements. The methods adopted and procedures followed for the different research elements were given in detail and the centrality and application of ethics and reflexivity in psychosocial research was also highlighted.

CHAPTER 6 – PART 1 RESULTS: The Shame Experiences Survey (quantitative study strand)

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the quantitative results of the Shame Experiences Survey. This analysis sought to establish how much shame students were experiencing, what types of cues/situations/events were perceived by students as shame triggers, as well as whether different levels of shame could be explained by demographic and/or belonging/regard for Wits/worry about financial situation variables. The analyses conducted were extensive as The Shame Inventory allowed for multiple analytic possibilities, but for the sake of brevity, only significant findings are presented in this chapter. However, several non-significant findings deemed important for further research will also be noted. Firstly, in this chapter, the frequencies of the Global Shame scale are examined, which explicate the prevalence, perceived intensity/severity and impact of shame more generally in the student sample. Thereafter the frequencies of specific shame cues/situations in the Situational Shame scale will be presented to gain an understanding of what type of cues/situations were prevalent in the sample and the perceived shame intensity of the different triggers. The correlation between the Global and Situational Shame scales, for this sample, will then be reported followed by the presentation of results of the Global, Situational and Total shame scores in relation to demographic variables. Spearman's rank correlation coefficients will be reported in relation to the variables of 'Belonging (Academic and Social)', 'Worry about financial situation' and 'Regard for Wits as an institution'. Thereafter, I will discuss how the Situational Shame scale was used in a more exploratory fashion to derive two novel shame clusters namely, shame about 'Interpersonal exposure' and shame about 'Feelings of inadequacy'. The findings of differences and associations between the derived clusters and demographic and belonging/regard for Wits/worry about financial situation variables will also be presented. Lastly, students' perceptions about the Shame Experiences Survey are presented to demonstrate participant 'trouble' with using a quantitative measure of shame. These survey perceptions will ultimately feed into a discussion around some of the advantages and limitations of using a quantitative level of analysis for a study of shame.

6.2. Survey demographics

Some important aspects of the survey demographics for the Shame Experiences Survey described in Chapters One and Four will now be revisited. The total number of student headcount enrolments at the University of the Witwatersrand for the 2017 academic year was 38 161 (University of the Witwatersrand, 2017). The minimum sample size required for statistical power for this study was calculated as 164 participants. A sample size of 472 participants was achieved. That means, approximately 1.2% of the entire 2017 student population participated in the survey. This low participation rate was disappointing but

expected based on warnings in survey literature (Fowler, 2014). The 2017 Wits headcount enrolments was 55% female and 45% male and the gender representation for this study was 63% female and 37% male. Achieving a 37% male sample is considered an asset to this study considering documented difficulties in recruiting young men for mental health research and treatment (Ellis et al., 2014). 81.1% of the study sample were undergraduate and 18.8% postgraduate students. This is in contrast with a 65% versus 35% undergraduate versus postgraduate ratio for all 2017 enrolled students. The study sample comprised 31.5% first years and 19.2% second years. This high representation of first and second years can be explained, in part, by the suggestion of several participants that students experience more shame in their earlier years at university. With respect to race, 82% of all 2017 Wits student enrolments were Black (African, Chinese, Coloured, Indian) and 18% White. Comparatively speaking, for this study sample, 72% of the sample were Black (all races taken together except White) and 28% White. The study sample groupings for race were highly nuanced and originally included a Black, White, Indian, Asian, Coloured and multiple ethnicities group. However, due to low sample sizes for the Asian, Coloured and multiple ethnicities groups these were combined into a category called 'other'. The final race groupings for the study sample therefore comprised 48.7% in the Black group, 27.8% in the White group, 17.5% in the Indian group and 5.9% in the 'other' group. This indicates how difficult it can be to capture sufficiently large samples for minority racial groupings.

The Wits student enrolment by faculty for 2017 was as follows: Humanities 26%; Commerce, Law & Management 25%; Engineering & the Built Environment 20%; Health Sciences 16%; and Science 13%. This was in comparison to survey participation rates per faculty which were as follows: Humanities 29.1%; Faculty of Commerce, Law & Management 23.6%; Health Sciences 22.6%; Engineering and the Built Environment 16.0% and Science 8.6%. Looking intuitively at these figures, there seems to have been a fairly representative spread amongst respondents, with a particularly good response from the Faculty of Health Sciences. Notably, this appears to correspond to participant reports of a high degree of shaming within the Faculty of Health Sciences. Finally, a brief look at the age of the student population in comparison to the sample age. 38% of the Wits 2017 student population were under the age of twenty, followed by 28% in the 21-24 age category, 21% in the 25-34 age category and 13% 35 and over. With respect to this survey sample, 52.3% were in the 18-21 age category, 38.9% were between 22-29 years old, and 8.8% were above thirty years of age. In other words, 91.2% of sample participants were under the age of thirty. The sample therefore captured a large percentage of young adults which is useful for an understanding of shame from a developmental perspective and seems to be a good reflection of the student population at Wits. Concerning sexual orientation, for statistical purposes, 'homosexual', 'bisexual', 'asexual', 'other' and 'prefer not to say' were combined into one category called 'other sexual orientation'. This produced a comparably sized group to the heterosexual group so as to conduct analysis of variance. The rationale for including 'sexual orientation' as a study variable was based on literature that sexual minority groups at university are subject to stigma (Lesch et al., 2017; McDermott et al., 2008; Mwaba, 2009). The response options for language were also collapsed from twelve response options to four so as to create more sizably comparative groups. The rationale for including 'language' in the survey was to

tease out if language played a role in shame experiences, and if so, could specific language groupings be identified as problematic.

6.3. Global Shame scale frequencies: Prevalence, severity and impact of shame

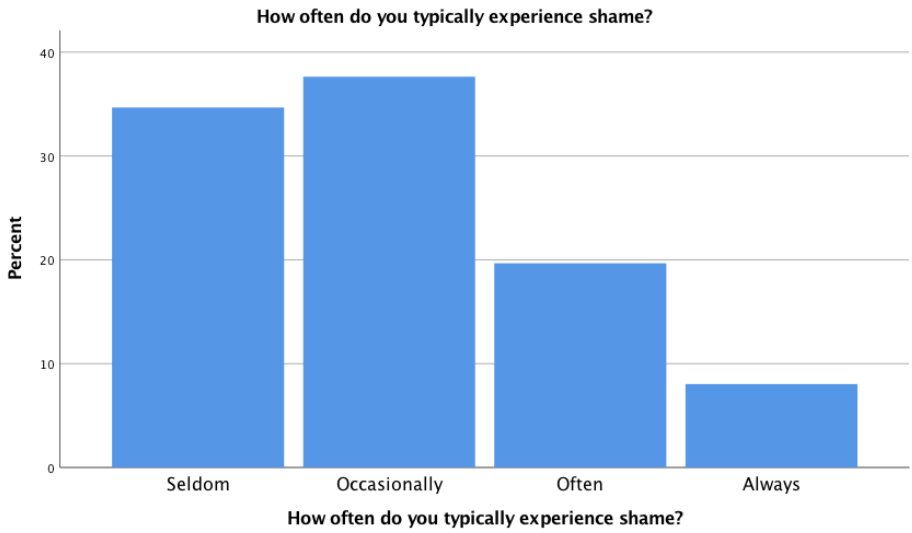
The questions that this section sought to answer were, 'How much shame is experienced in the student population?'; 'What is the reported severity/intensity of shame experiences?'; and 'To what extent does shame negatively impact quality of life?' This section involved calculation of frequencies of the Global Shame scale items which comprised three questions, each of which included four response options. The results below include the original survey question, the response option range and frequency counts expressed as a percentage of the number of valid responses for that question (for accuracy of reporting, frequency counts have been included in parentheses).

Question 1: How often do you typically experience shame? (Prevalence)

Response options range: 0 (Never); 1 (Seldom); 2 (Occasionally); 3 (Often); 4 (Always)

Frequencies: 0% (0) Never; 35% (164) Seldom; 38% (178) Occasionally; 20% (93) Often; 8% (38) Always.

Figure 9: *Frequencies for the prevalence of student shame*



Note. *Frequencies expressed as valid %.*

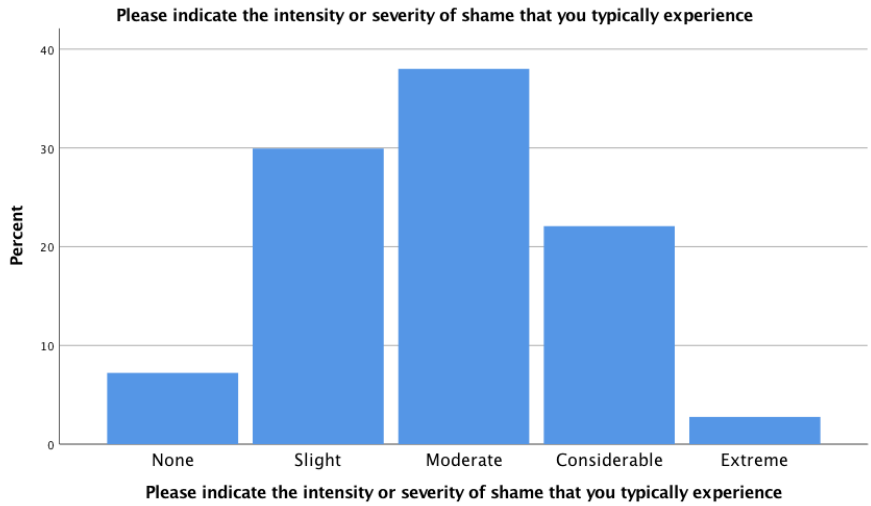
Incidentally, 0% of students reported that they 'never' experience shame which provides some indication of the validity of this question in the student sample. 20% of students reported experiencing shame 'often' and 8% indicated that they 'always' experience shame which is indicative of chronic shame.

Question 2: Please indicate the intensity or severity of shame you typically experience?

Response options range: 0 (None); 1 (Slight); 2 (Moderate); 3 (Considerable); 4 (Extreme)

Frequencies: 7% (34) None; 30% (141) Slight; 38% (179) Moderate; 22% (104) Considerable; 3% (13) Extreme.

Figure 10: *Frequencies for the intensity/severity of student shame*



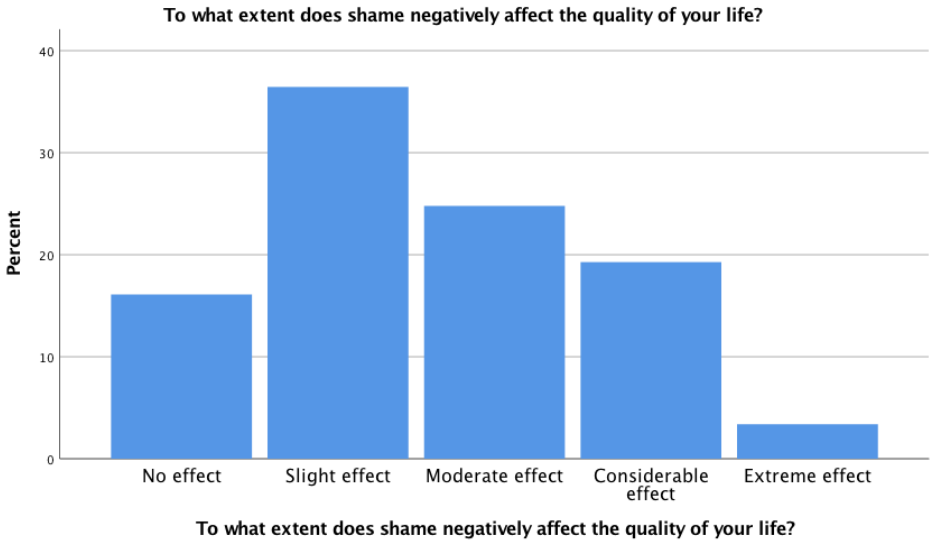
Question 2 was designed to probe the felt intensity or severity of the experience of shame. Whilst 37% of students reported very little or mild intensity, 38% reported moderate intensity, 22% reported experiencing considerable intensity and 3% extremely intense shame. One must consider the possibility of some students who reported 'no' or 'slight' shame intensity as being unable to access their emotional experience. In some of these instances participants potentially disassociated from shame as a protective mechanism. This proposition is supported to some extent by several participants who documented emotional 'trouble' when answering the survey questions. This is discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter.

Question 3: To what extent does shame negatively affect the quality of your life? (Impact)

Response options range: 0 (No effect); 1 (Slight effect); 2 (Moderate effect); 3 (Considerable effect); 4 (Extreme effect)

Frequencies: 16% (76) No effect; 36.4% (172) Slight effect; 25% (117) Moderate effect; 19% (91) Considerable effect; 3.4% (16) Extreme effect

Figure 11: *Frequencies for the negative impact of shame on students' quality of life*



25% of students reported a moderate impact, 19% a considerable impact, and 3.4% an extreme effect of shame on their quality of life. These three response options taken together indicate that 48%, in other words, just under half of all survey respondents, perceive that shame has more than a slight impact on their quality of life. This is a significant result.

The Global Shame scale frequencies therefore confirm that shame is prevalent in the student sample, that there are, at times, noteworthy levels of shame intensity and that this is perceived by students as negatively impacting their quality of life. These results have implications for the well-being and connectedness of students on campus. Now that the presence of shame in students has been established, the question that comes to the fore is 'shame about what'? In other words, 'What' is triggering shame in students or what is the source of this shame? This question will be answered by explicating frequencies of shame cues/situations in The Situational Shame scale.

6.4. Situational Shame scale frequencies: Shame about what?

Figure 7 in chapter four outlines the model used for the analysis of the situational item frequencies. Participants were asked to rate each of 49 situations/cues as 'does not apply to me' or, if the situation 'did apply', to then indicate the intensity of their current levels of shame about that event. The question read as follows, 'Below is a list of situations and behaviours that may or may not be related to the experience of shame for you. Please select the option which indicates the intensity of your shame about that event or indicate if the statement does not apply to you'. The response options ranged from 'does not apply to me' to 0 (no shame); 1 (slight shame); 2 (moderate shame); 3 (considerable shame) and 4 (extreme shame). Because this scale is designed as an inventory or checklist it was decided that the first step to finding out 'what' is triggering shame for students, is to differentiate frequency counts for those shame situations/cues that 'did not happen' ('does not apply to me') versus those that 'did happen' (ranging from 0 (no shame) to 4 (extreme shame)). In other words, has the student had exposure to the shame cue/situation or not?

Table 3 sets out frequencies of 'did happen' items from the Situational Shame scale together with their rank order. 'Did happen' items are expressed as a percentage of the total number of respondents for that situational item and are also ranked from most to least prevalent.

Table 3: *Prevalence of shame cues in the Situational Shame scale*

Shame cue/situation	% 'Did happen'	Rank order
Was slow to learn something (Q26)	95	1
Didn't know the answer to a question I felt I should know (Q11)	93	2
Didn't live up to a really important standard of mine (Q16)	93	2
Received a compliment (Q22)	93	2
Saw a picture of myself/saw myself in a mirror (Q31)	93	2
Told a lie (Q18)	91	3
Was afraid to do something (Q32)	91	3
Was criticised in front of others (Q2)	90	4
Could not afford something (Q25)	90	4
Didn't live up to others' standards (Q17)	89	5
Knew someone talked badly about me behind my back (Q21)	89	5
Broke a promise (Q19)	88	6
Lost something important (Q5)	86	7
Hurt someone emotionally (Q27)	86	7
Overate or ate unhealthy/high fat food (Q13)	85	8
Found out someone I cared for didn't feel the same way (Q23)	85	8
Lost a friendship (Q34)	83	9
Was laughed at in front of others (Q1)	82	10
Failed at work (Q33)	82	10
Being a certain race/ethnicity (Q47)	81	11
Was betrayed by someone I care about (Q38)	80	12
Had sexual/kinky fantasies (Q36)	77	13
Feeling unattractive/ugly (Q45)	76	14
Cried in front of others (Q3)	75	15
Missed an important appointment (Q14)	75	15
Was turned down for a date/request to spend time with someone (Q24)	70	16
Was caught saying negative things about others (Q12)	68	17
Not being in an intimate relationship (Q42)	65	18
Made a scene in public (Q4)	63	19
Was praised for something I didn't do (Q15)	62	20
Hated a family member (Q39)	59	21
Had a private aspect of myself exposed (Q41)	56	22
Not having a good career (Q48)	51	23
Had fantasies of violence or death (Q35)	50	24
Betrayed a friend (Q37)	47	25
Not having children (Q43)	43	26
Hurt someone physically (Q28)	38	27

Shame cue/situation	% 'Did happen'	Rank order
Hurt an animal (Q29)	35	28
Having a mental disorder (Q46)	34	29
Made a suicide attempt/threat or harmed myself on purpose (Q10)	32	30
Had an affair/was unfaithful/was sexually promiscuous (Q8)	28	31
Was sexually harassed (Q9)	28	31
Had sex with someone when I didn't want to (Q6)	26	32
Committed a crime (Q20)	23	33
Was physically or sexually abused (Q30)	22	34
Being gay/lesbian/bisexual (Q44)	15	35
Had an abortion (Q40)	9	36
Forced/coerced someone to have sex with me (Q7)	7	37
Being adopted (Q49)	5	38

The first item in Table 3 shows that 95% of students reported that they had an experience where they were 'slow to learn something' ('did happen'). By definition, 5% of students reported that they have not experienced this event ('did not happen'). In other words, 95% of students have been exposed to this shame cue/situation whereas 5% have not had exposure. Explicating the last item in Table 3, only 5% of students reported 'being adopted' therefore 95% of students indicated that they were not adopted.

When considering shame cues/situations with a 'did happen' prevalence of 80% and higher within the student sample, two patterns begin to emerge in the data. Firstly, there is a high prevalence of shame cues that are interpersonal in nature, for example: 93% 'received a compliment'; 90% reported being 'criticised in front of others'; 89% 'didn't live up to other's standards; 88 % 'broke a promise'; 85% 'found out someone I cared for didn't feel the same way'; 86% 'hurt someone emotionally'; 83% 'lost a friendship'; 81.8% of students reported being 'laughed at in front of others'; 80% were 'betrayed by someone I care about' and 80% 'knew someone talked badly about me behind my back'. These items tend to reflect a shame experience of the 'self' in relation to an 'other'.

The second pattern that emerges, is the high prevalence of shame cues/situations relating to perceived personal inadequacy, for example: 95% reported that they were 'slow to learn something'; 93% 'didn't know the answer to a question I felt I should know'; 93% reported that they 'didn't live up to a really important standard of mine'; 91% were 'afraid to do something'; 86% 'lost something important'; 82% 'failed at work'.

The four additional items above 80% that did not fit into the two identified themes, but which still constitute important themes relate to body image and self-control, race/ethnicity and socio-economic status. These items were: 'Saw a picture of myself'/saw myself in a mirror' (93%); 'Could not afford something' (90%); 'Overate or ate unhealthy/high fat food (85%)' and 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' (81%).

By conducting a 'did happen' versus 'did not happen' analysis it becomes evident that some cues/situations in the Shame Inventory will, by their nature, be less prevalent in the population. For

example, the five least prevalent shame triggers in the student sample were: 22% of students reported that they were 'physically or sexually abused'; 15% reported 'Being gay/lesbian/bisexual'; 9% 'Had an abortion'; 7% 'Forced/coerced someone to have sex'; and only 5% reported 'being adopted'. For this reason, although Table 3 gives an indication of frequency or prevalence of shame cues/situations, the question that arises is, 'If the shame situation 'did happen' was it experienced as shameful, and if so, how intense was the feeling?' In other words, prevalence and intensity of shame situations do not necessarily correspond.

Table 4 therefore teases out all responses for 'did happen' items. In Table 4, frequencies for 'did not happen' items have been discounted and new percentages have been calculated based only on 'did happen' frequencies using a 'no shame' and 'some shame' score. For the 'some shame' category, Table 4 ranks these situations from most to least shame. This enables one to determine at a glance which cues/situations triggered the most shame (intensity) whilst taking cognizance of high and low frequency (prevalence). Table 4 also breaks the 'some shame' score down into low (slight/moderate) and high (considerable/extreme) shame scores. Low and high shame scores that are above the 50% mark are highlighted in yellow and scores between 40 and 50% are highlighted in orange. This helps to ascertain moderate versus high intensities of shame whilst considering prevalence. Ultimately, this helps to establish whether there are certain cues/situations that are both prevalent and trigger shame for students.

Table 4: *Shame intensity of 'Did happen' shame cues – ranked from most to least shame*

Shame cue/situation	Prevalence Rank Order	No Shame	Some Shame	Low Shame	High Shame
Didn't live up to a really important standard of mine (Q16)	2	3.9	96.1	28.6	67.5
Was physically or sexually abused (Q30)	34	4.8	95.2	30.8	64.4
Broke a promise (Q19)	6	5.3	94.7	48.1	46.6
Hurt someone emotionally (Q27)	7	5.9	94.1	34.5	59.6
Betrayed a friend (Q37)	25	6.4	93.6	44.7	48.9
Missed an important appointment (Q14)	15	6.8	93.2	42.2	51.0
Committed a crime (Q20)	33	7.3	92.7	46.4	46.4
Had a private aspect of myself exposed (Q41)	22	9.6	90.4	42.9	47.5
Failed at work (Q33)	10	9.6	90.4	38.1	52.3
Didn't know the answer to a question I felt I should know (Q11)	2	9.9	90.1	49.3	40.8
Was caught saying negative things about others (Q12)	17	10.2	89.8	49.1	40.7
Had sex with someone when I didn't want to (Q6)	32	10.6	89.4	26.8	62.6
Told a lie (Q18)	3	11.0	89.0	56.8	32.2
Hurt someone physically (Q28)	27	11.0	89.0	36.8	52.2
Was criticised in front of others (Q2)	4	11.3	88.7	49.2	39.5
Had an affair/was unfaithful/was sexually promiscuous (Q8)	31	12.0	88.0	39.8	48.1
Was sexually harassed (Q9)	31	12.0	88.0	39.8	48.1

Shame cue/situation	Prevalence Rank Order	No Shame	Some Shame	Low Shame	High Shame
Was praised for something I didn't do (Q15)	20	12.3	87.7	51.0	36.6
Forced/coerced someone to have sex with me (Q7)	37	12.5	87.5	34.4	53.1
Hurt an animal (Q29)	28	13.3	86.7	31.5	55.2
Was laughed at in front of others (Q1)	10	14.5	85.5	54.8	30.6
Made a suicide attempt/threat or harmed myself on purpose (Q10)	30	15.8	84.2	36.2	48.0
Made a scene in public (Q4)	19	16.3	83.7	49.0	34.7
Feeling unattractive/ugly (Q45)	14	19.3	80.7	48.3	32.4
Found out someone I cared for didn't feel the same way (Q23)	8	19.4	80.6	36.1	44.5
Was slow to learn something (Q26)	1	19.5	80.5	42.5	38.0
Lost something important (Q5)	7	20.8	79.2	43.8	35.4
Was afraid to do something (Q32)	3	21.0	79.0	52.4	26.6
Was turned down for a date/request to spend time with someone (Q24)	16	21.9	78.1	43.5	34.5
Cried in front of others (Q3)	15	22.6	77.4	39.3	38.1
Had an abortion (Q40)	36	23.3	76.7	23.3	53.5
Was betrayed by someone I care about (Q38)	12	23.5	76.5	32.3	44.3
Didn't live up to others' standards (Q17)	5	26.1	73.9	37.2	36.7
Could not afford something (Q25)	4	29.5	70.5	40.3	30.2
Having a mental disorder (Q46)	29	30.0	70.0	38.1	31.9
Not having a good career (Q48)	23	30.2	69.8	37.6	32.2
Lost a friendship (Q34)	9	30.4	69.6	39.4	30.2
Overate or ate unhealthy/high fat food (Q13)	8	31.8	68.3	40.3	28.0
Had fantasies of violence or death (Q35)	24	34.5	65.5	39.5	26.1
Hated a family member (Q39)	21	34.6	65.4	41.1	24.3
Knew someone talked badly about me behind my back (Q21)	5	36.1	63.9	35.9	28.0
Saw a picture of myself/saw myself in a mirror (Q31)	2	41.9	58.1	38.5	19.6
Had sexual/kinky fantasies (Q36)	13	51.2	48.8	34.3	14.4
Being adopted (Q49)	38	52.0	48.0	36.0	12.0
Being a certain race/ethnicity (Q47)	11	55.8	44.2	32.6	11.6
Not being in an intimate relationship (Q42)	18	55.9	44.1	25.3	18.8
Being gay/lesbian/bisexual (Q44)	35	57.1	42.9	27.1	15.7
Received a compliment (Q22)	2	66.5	33.5	26.8	6.7
Not having children (Q43)	26	84.2	15.8	8.4	7.4

When examining Table 4, several patterns and anomalies become evident in the data. The first pattern to emerge was that some items that were highly prevalent tended to also be reported with a high shame intensity. For example, 'didn't live up to a really important standard of mine' ranked 2nd in terms of prevalence (93% of students), however, of the 93% of students who reported that this situation 'did happen',

96% experienced some shame (67.5% high shame and 28.6% low shame) whereas only 4% reported 'no shame'. Therefore 'not living up to an important standard of mine' was both prevalent and provoked high levels of shame. The anomaly to this first pattern was a high prevalence situation but with low shame intensity. 'Receiving a compliment' was ranked second in terms of prevalence (93% of students) yet 66.5% of students did not experience 'receiving a compliment' as a source of shame (no shame). Only 33.5% of the student sample reported that this experience was shameful (26.8% low levels of shame and 6.7% high levels).

The second pattern was that some shame cues/situations with the lowest prevalence also tended to be characterized by high shame intensity. For example, only 26% of students reported having 'had sex with someone when I didn't want to' yet 62.6% of these students experienced this situation as highly shameful. Only 22% of respondents reported being 'physically or sexually abused' yet 95.2% reported shame (64.4% high shame and 28.6% low shame). 23% of students reported 'committing a crime' with a low and high shame intensity score of 46.4%. In other words, 92.7% of respondents who 'committed a crime' experienced shame. The anomaly to this second pattern was of a low prevalence and low shame intensity situation. 'Not having children' had a prevalence of only 43% yet 84.2% of respondents reported no shame, 8.4% low shame and only 7.4% high shame. This response can likely be explained by developmental norms as most adolescents pursue a university education before having children, largely for financial reasons.

I suggest that pattern one is indicative of situational items which can be regarded as common or universal shame triggers in the student sample. Reviewing the top twenty prevalent items in Table 4 it seems intuitive, at face value, that these cues/situations are likely experienced by students on a daily or weekly basis at university. For example, being 'Slow to learn something'; not knowing 'The answer to a question'; not living up to 'Really important standards'; being 'Afraid to do something'; being 'Criticised in front of others'; 'Not being able to afford something' and so on. These items resonate with a learning environment which is characterized by ongoing evaluation and concomitant uncertainty.

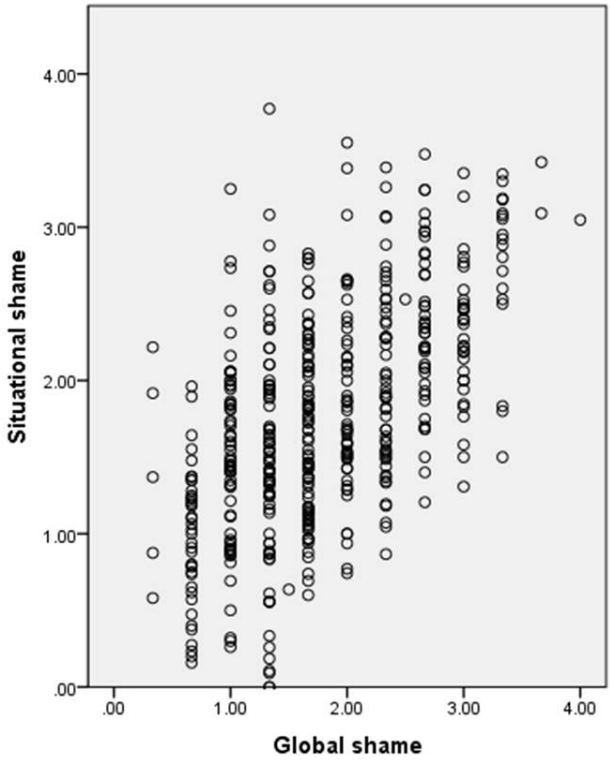
On the other hand, it is suggested that pattern two provides some evidence for a more idiographic picture of shame experiences in the student sample. 'Being adopted', having 'an abortion', 'committing a crime', 'being physically or sexually abused' or having a 'mental disorder' are rarer in the general population. Some students may never be exposed to these shame triggers, however, less prevalent shame triggers seem to have had a profound impact on levels of shame intensity which may be indicative of chronic or residual shame.

The Shame Inventory therefore provided both a universal and idiographic picture of shame experience within the student sample. This may not be true for other contexts in which the Shame Inventory is used, however, many of the questions in the scale lend themselves to a learning environment. The question that is left unanswered by this type of scale is, however, how shame cues/situations intersect with personal, social and contextual factors in each student's personal world.

6.5. Correlation between global and situational shame scales

Before I proceed to explore differences and associations between various variables and the Total Shame score it is prudent to establish the correlation between The Global and Situational Shame scales for this sample. Shame measures usually measure either trait or state shame whereas a unique feature of The Shame Inventory is that it comprises a Global and Situational Shame scale thereby measuring both trait and state shame. The Global and Situational shame scores are subsequently combined to obtain a Total Shame score. The two scales are distinct, with entirely different scale formats and if the scores proved to be substantially different this would pose concerns regarding the reliability of the measure. Therefore the relationship between the two was assessed for the sample to explore the difference (Figure 12).

Figure 12: *The correlation between Global and Situational Shame scores*



Despite the small range of scores obtained, moving from left to right, the scatterplot data shows an uphill pattern indicating a positive relationship between Global and Situational Shame scores. Overall there was a positive, moderate correlation between Global and Situational Shame scores, r = 0.568, n = 473, p = 0.000. In other words, increases in Global Shame scores were correlated with increases in Situational Shame scores. According to Cohen (1988), the effect size is regarded as small which is indicative of a substantial relationship between the two scales. Having established the relationship between the two shame scales, Analysis of Variance was used to establish the relationship, if any, between Global, Situational and Total Shame scores and key demographic variables.

6.6. Demographic variables and shame scores

The demographic variables used for this study were age, gender, faculty, year of study, sexual orientation, race and language. There were no statistically significant differences for age, faculty, year of study, race and language. The lack of significant results for race and language was puzzling, particularly because of qualitative literature (Bhana, 2014; Singh & Bhana, 2015; Soudien, 2010) which highlights the relevance of race, ethnicity and class in current university environments. There were statistically significant differences, however, between the 'female' and 'male' group means and the 'heterosexual' and 'other sexual orientation' group means on all three shame scales which will now be explained.

The statistically significant difference between Female and Male group means on all three shame scales was determined by one-way ANOVA:

Global Shame Score*Gender $F(1,468) = 6.541$, $p = 0.011$

Situational Shame Score*Gender $F(1,469) = 44.445$, $p = 0.000$

Total Shame Score*Gender $F(1,469) = 41.388$, $p = 0.000$

Table 5: *Descriptive statistics for Global, Situational and Total shame scores by gender*

Means and Standard Deviations of Global Shame Score by gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Female	297	1.87	0.78
Male	173	1.69	0.71
Total	470	1.8	0.76

Means and Standard Deviations of Situational Shame Score by gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Female	297	1.93	0.71
Male	174	1.52	0.66
Total	471	1.78	0.73

Means and Standard Deviations of Total Shame Score by gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Female	297	1.93	0.68
Male	174	1.52	0.64
Total	471	1.78	0.70

To conclude, the null hypothesis is rejected for all three scales. There are significant differences between Females and Males for Global, Situational and Total Shame scores. The female population had higher scores on all three (Global, Situational and Total) Shame scales.

Global Shame scale - The Female group had a higher mean score than the Male group (1.87 versus 1.69).

Situational Shame scale – The Female group had a higher mean score than the Male group (1.93 versus 1.52).

Total Shame scale – The Female group had a higher mean score than the Male group (1.93 versus 1.52)

Cohen's (1988) guidelines for ANOVA effect size reveals that the practical significance of the results for Global Shame is small, while that for Situational and Total shame is moderate. There was a very weak Effect Size $\eta = 0.01$ for Global Shame. Approximately 1.4% of the change in the Global Shame score (dependent variable) can be accounted for by gender (independent variable). There was a moderate Effect Size for Situational and Total Shame ($\eta = 0.09$ and $\eta = 0.08$ respectively). Approximately 8% of the change in the Situational and Total Shame scores can be accounted for by gender. It should be noted that every time gender was used as a variable in this study there was a statistically significant difference, albeit small, between the Female and Male groups. These results have the potential to play into pervasive stereotypical portrayals of women as experiencing greater emotionality than men (Else-Quest, Allison, Higgins, & Morton; 2012), however, the complexities around scale type and the interpretation of gender differences when using measures for self-conscious emotions, like shame, will be addressed in the discussion chapter.

There was also a statistically significant result in the 'heterosexual' and 'other sexual orientation' group means. The original survey question was 'What do you consider yourself to be' with the following response options: heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual, other and prefer not to say. Because the heterosexual group was the only group which had a reasonable sample size it was decided to combine all other response options into one category called 'other sexual orientation'. Despite this course of action there was still a violation of the homogeneity of variance principle for the Global and Total Shame scales and therefore the more rigorous Brown and Forsythe Test was conducted. There was a statistically significant difference between 'heterosexual' and 'other sexual orientation' for all three scales as determined by Brown and Forsythe.

Global Shame Score*Sexual Orientation $BF(1,105.709) = 9.722$, $p = 0.00$

Situational Shame Score*Sexual Orientation $BF(1,108.418) = 4.253$, $p = 0.04$

Total Shame Score*Sexual Orientation $BF(1,106.912) = 5.119$, $p = 0.03$

Table 6: *Descriptive statistics for Global, Situational and Total shame scores by sexual orientation*

Means and Standard Deviations of Global Shame Score by sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	N	Mean	SD
'Other' sexual orientation	81	2.07	0.85
Heterosexual	390	1.75	0.73
Total	471	1.81	0.76

Means and Standard Deviations of Situational Shame Score by sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	N	Mean	SD

'Other' sexual orientation	81	1.94	0.79
Heterosexual	391	1.75	0.71
Total	472	1.78	0.72

Means and Standard Deviations of Total Shame Score by sexual orientation

Sexual orientation	N	Mean	SD
'Other' sexual orientation	81	1.95	0.77
Heterosexual	391	1.75	0.67
Total	472	1.78	0.69

To conclude, the null hypotheses are rejected for all three scales. There are differences between the 'heterosexual' and 'other sexual orientation' group means on all three of the Global, Situational and Total Shame scales.

Global Shame scale - The 'other sexual orientation' group had a higher mean score than the 'heterosexual' group (2.07 versus 1.75).

Situational Shame scale – The 'other sexual orientation' group had a higher mean score than the 'heterosexual' group (1.94 versus 1.75).

Total Shame scale – The 'other sexual orientation' group had a higher mean score than the 'heterosexual' group (1.95 versus 1.75)

The calculated effect size reveals that there was a statistically significant but weak ES $\eta = 0.025$ for Global Shame. Approximately 2.4% of the change in the Global Shame score (dependent variable) can be accounted for by sexual orientation. An even weaker ES ($\eta = 0.01$ and $\eta = 0.013$) was found for Situational and Total Shame scores respectively. Approximately 1% of the change in Situational and Total Shame scores can be accounted for by Sexual Orientation.

To summarise, the demographic variables which produced statistically significant results on shame scores were the 'Female' versus 'Male' groups and the 'heterosexual' versus 'other sexual orientation' groups.

6.7. Belonging at Wits/Regard for Wits/Worry about financial situation variables and shame scores

The aim of this part of the survey was to ascertain how different levels of shame are associated with the variables of feelings of 'Belonging at Wits', 'Regard for Wits as an institution' and 'Worry about financial situation'.

6.7.1. Belonging – Academic and social belonging at Wits

'Belonging' was considered an important variable for this study for two reasons. Firstly, from a developmental perspective, late adolescence and young adulthood are important periods for the development of a healthy identity and intimacy which are characterized by feelings of belonging (Erikson, 1963). Secondly, shame research from different theoretical orientations endorses a close link between shame and feelings of alienation (Erikson, 1963; Lewis, 1971; Retzinger, 1991; Tomkins, 1962). Therefore feelings of belonging have important implications for student wellbeing at university. During the pilot phase of this study several questions were included about belonging but it became evident that students drew an important distinction between 'social' and 'academic' belonging at Wits. In the final version of the survey, this distinction was made. The revised belonging survey items consisted of the following two statements: 'Academically, I feel a sense of belonging to Wits' and 'Socially, I feel a sense of belonging to Wits'. The Belonging scales are Likert-type scales with scores that range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). When taken together, the 'Academic' and 'Social' belonging scores also comprise a composite 'Total' belonging score. Spearman Rho (r_s) was used to analyse the association between students' sense of Belonging to Wits (Academic, Social and Total Belonging Scores) and the Global, Situational and Total Shame scores respectively.

There was a statistically significant negative association between Belonging (Academic) and Global, Situational and Total Shame scores respectively as determined by Spearman's rho:

Global Shame Score*Belonging (Academic) $r_s = -0.15$, $n = 472$, $p = 0.00$

Situational Shame Score*Belonging (Academic) $r_s = -0.1$, $n = 473$, $p = 0.03$

Total Shame Score*Belonging (Academic) $r_s = -0.11$, $n = 473$, $p = 0.02$

There was a statistically significant negative association between Belonging (Social) and Global, Situational and Total Shame scores respectively as determined by Spearman's rho.

Global Shame Score*Belonging (Social) $r_s = -0.15$, $n = 473$, $p = 0.00$

Situational Shame Score*Belonging (Social) ($r_s = -0.12$, $n = 474$, $p = 0.01$

Total Shame Score*Belonging (Social) $r_s = -0.13$, $n = 474$, $p = 0.00$

There was a statistically significant negative association between Belonging (Total score) and Global, Situational and Total Shame scores respectively as determined by Spearman's rho.

Global Shame Score*Total Belonging $r_s = -0.17$, $n = 473$, $p = 0.00$

Situational Shame Score*Total Belonging $r_s = -0.13$, $n = 474$, $p = 0.00$

Total Shame Score*Total Belonging $r_s = -0.14$, $n = 474$, $p = 0.00$

The null hypotheses are therefore rejected for all the aforementioned 'Belonging' hypotheses. There is an association between sense of Belonging (Academic, Social and Total score) and the Global, Situational and Total Shame scores respectively in the underlying population. The relationship between the independent and dependent variables can be described as monotonic. It is a negative association, albeit small, whereby as the value of the one variable increases, the other variable value decreases i.e. more feelings of belonging are associated with less feelings of shame and less feelings of belonging are associated with more feelings of shame.

6.7.2. Regard for Wits as an institution

'I regard Wits as a good university to study at' is also a Likert-type scale with a score that ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Because this study uses a Kleinian object relations framework, the premise is that shame will be experienced in relation to "objects" which can include institutions, like Wits. There was a statistically significant negative association between regard for Wits as an institution and Global, Situational and Total Shame scores respectively as determined by Spearman's rho:

Global Shame Score*Regard for Wits r_s = -,0.11, n = 471, p = 0.02

Situational Shame Score*Regard for Wits r_s = -0.04, n = 472, p = 0.40

Total Shame Score*Regard for Wits r_s = -0.05, n = 472 , p = 0.29

This relationship is inverse which means that a higher shame score is associated with less regard for Wits or, conversely, a lower shame score is associated with a higher regard for Wits.

6.7.3. Worry about financial situation

The third item in this section questioned: 'In the last six months, how often have you worried about your financial situation?' Response options included: All the time; Most of the time; About half the time; Once in a While and Never. This was included in the survey because of education literature that highlights the pressing financial issues that South African university students are facing (Case et al., 2018; Firfirey & Carolissen, 2010; Swartz et al., 2017; USAf, 2018), as well as the psychosocial literature that explores shame about poverty – albeit in the general population (Chase & Walker, 2013). Additionally, the contextual backdrop to this study, the #FeesMustFall movement, has forefronted the plight of poor students.

There was a statistically significant negative association between 'Worry about financial situation' and Global, Situational and Total Shame scores respectively as determined by Spearman's rho.

Global Shame Score*Worry about financial situation r_s = -0.23, n = 472, p = 0

Situational Shame Score*Worry about financial situation r_s = -0.16, n = 473, p = 0.001

Total Shame Score*Worry about financial situation r_s = -0.18, n = 473, p = 0

The null hypotheses were rejected for the aforementioned hypotheses related to 'Worry about financial situation'. There is an association between 'Worry about financial situation' and the Global, Situational and Total Shame scores respectively in the underlying population. The relationship between the independent and dependent variables can be described as monotonic. Less 'Worry about financial situation' is associated with less shame and more worry is associated with more shame. This is suggestive that financial disadvantage or poverty is associated with more shame at university.

6.8. Derived clusters from the Situational Shame scale

The Situational Shame items cover a wide range of shame cues/situations, however, to allow for more nuance in the analysis it was decided to combine a variety of individual cues/situations into two new clusters or themes entitled shame about 'Interpersonal exposure' and shame about 'Feelings of inadequacy'. This process involved input from and ongoing consultation with my supervisor. Creating separate clusters and using single shame cues/situations as standalone items does have statistical implications as these items now fall outside of the proven reliability and validity established for the scale itself. However, this approach was deemed acceptable because this study was non-experimental and therefore aimed to characterise shame as a phenomenon rather than establish causality (Smith & Mackie, 2000). This more exploratory approach was followed to tease out items that seemed important to the student sample within its unique context. The two new shame situation clusters were derived based on item prevalence and intensity as well as shame literature which foregrounds personal exposure (Steiner, 2011; Stolorow, 2013) and failing/inadequacy as core components of the shame experience (Morrison, 1998). Furthermore, initial analysis of qualitative survey data gave an indication that these clusters are highly relevant to the student experience.

The shame about 'Interpersonal exposure' cluster is comprised of a composite score made up of the following cues/situations: Q1 (Was laughed at in front of others); Q2 (Was criticized in front of others); Q21 (Knew someone talked badly about me behind my back); and Q42 (Had a private aspect of myself exposed). All the aforementioned questions concern a 'self' who is exposed before 'others' in a negative light. Analyses were conducted to establish whether there were any differences or associations based on demographic and Belonging/Regard for Wits/Worry about financial situation variables using the new shame about 'Interpersonal exposure' cluster. Statistically significant differences were found for Gender and Social belonging.

The statistically significant difference between Female and Male group means on the shame about 'Interpersonal exposure' score was determined by one-way ANOVA. Women reported feeling more shame about 'Interpersonal exposure':

Interpersonal exposure Shame Score*Gender $F(1, 462) = 28.71$, $p = 0.00$

Table 7: *Descriptives for 'Interpersonal shame' score by gender*

					95% CI			
Gender	N	M	SD	SE	LL	UL	Max	Min
Female	293	1.9443	1.00053	.05845	1.8292	2.0593	.00	4.00
Male	171	1.4293	.99509	.07610	1.2791	1.5796	.00	4.00
Total	464	1.7545	1.02798	.04772	1.6607	1.8483	.00	4.00

The Female group had a higher mean score than the Male group (1.94 versus 1.42).

There was also a statistically significant difference between shame about 'Interpersonal exposure' and 'Social Belonging' as determined by Spearman's rho:

Shame about 'Interpersonal exposure' *Social Belonging $r_s = -0.14$, $n = 466$, $p = 0.002$

The relationship is inverse which means a higher shame score for the shame about 'Interpersonal exposure' composite shame score is associated with less of a sense of 'Social Belonging'.

The second theme or cluster derived to allow for a more nuanced analysis was the composite score for shame about 'Feelings of inadequacy'. The questions which comprise the 'Feelings of inadequacy' cluster are: Q5 (Lost something important); Q11 (Didn't know the answer to a question I felt I should know); Q14 (Missed an important appointment); Q16 (Didn't live up to a really important standard of mine); Q17 (Didn't live up to others' standards); Q26 (Was slow to learn something); and Q32 (Was afraid to do something). These seven questions reflect typical university performance scenarios that students face on a daily basis. Statistically significant differences were found for both Gender and 'Academic belonging' on the shame about 'Feelings of inadequacy' scores.

With regards to Gender, there was a statistically significant difference between Female and Male group means on the shame about 'Feelings of inadequacy' score as determined by one-way ANOVA:

Shame about 'Feelings of inadequacy' Score*Gender $F(1, 15.125) = 20.394$, $p = 0.00$

Table 8: *Descriptives for 'Feelings of inadequacy' score by gender*

					95% CI			
Gender	N	M	SD	SE	LL	UL	Max	Min
Female	296	2.1891	.88094	.05120	2.0883	2.2899	.00	4.00
Male	174	1.8176	.82642	.06265	1.6939	1.9412	.00	3.86
Total	470	2.0515	.87882	.04054	1.9719	2.1312	.00	4.00

The Female group had a higher mean score than the Male group (2.19 versus 1.8). In other words, women reported more feelings of shame about 'Feelings of inadequacy' than men.

There was also a statistically significant difference between the shame about 'Inadequacy' composite and 'Academic Belonging' scores as determined by Spearman's rho:

Feelings of inadequacy*Academic Belonging $r_s = -0.91$, $n = 472$, $p = 0.048$

The relationship is inverse therefore a higher shame score for the shame about 'Feelings of inadequacy' composite shame score is associated with less of a sense of 'Academic Belonging'. There were no significant findings with regards to shame about 'Feelings of inadequacy' and race, faculty, financial disadvantage nor age.

In summary, the results from the derived situational shame clusters are suggestive of the finer nuances of the shame experience and students' feelings of belonging at Wits. Both of the newly derived shame clusters were associated with feelings of belonging at Wits. However, the type of situational shame triggers seemed to impact which facet of 'belonging' was impacted. Shame cues/situations that are interpersonal in nature and involve shame about negative public exposure impact feelings of 'social' belonging, whereas shame about feelings of inadequacy influence a sense of 'academic belonging' to Wits. These results demonstrate that the type of shame trigger has more nuanced implications for feelings of belonging at Wits.

6.9. Shame about financial disadvantage – Single situational shame item

Once more, in order to allow a more nuanced analysis, in terms of this unique South African university sample, it was decided to single out Question 25, shame about 'Could not afford something', for further analysis. This was decided because firstly, it is the only cue/situation in the Situational Shame scale that pertains to financial disadvantage. Secondly, the variable 'Worry about financial situation' did yield a statistically significant negative association with the Global, Situational and Total Shame scores respectively. In other words, more financial worries is associated with more shame. Thirdly, Question 25 ranked ninth in prevalence on the Situational Shame Scale – 90% of students reported being unable to afford something at university. Of those students who reported that this situation 'did happen', 29.5% reported 'no shame', 40.3% 'low shame'; and 30.2% 'high shame'. This indicates that financial disadvantage is often experienced by students as shameful. Because of these three indicators, it was decided to test for association between shame about 'Could not afford something' and the Global, Situational and Total shame scores respectively.

The following statistically significant association was determined by Spearman's rho:

Global Shame Score*shame about 'Could not afford something' $r_s = 0.35$, $n = 426$, $p = 0.00$

Situational Shame Score*shame about 'Could not afford something' $r_s = 5.2$, $n = 427$, $p = 0.00$

Total Shame Score*shame about 'Could not afford something' $r_s = 0.52$, $n = 427$, $p = 0.00$

A high score on Q25 shame about 'Could not afford something' is therefore related to a higher Global, Situational and Total Shame score respectively.

Additionally, Question 25 was used in analyses to establish if there were any differences/associations between shame about 'Could not afford something' and demographic and Belonging/Regard for Wits/Worry about financial situation variables. The significant findings of interest to this study were 'Race', 'Regard for Wits as institution' and 'Academic belonging'.

Race - the statistically significant difference between race group means on Q25 shame about 'Could not afford something' as determined by one-way ANOVA:

Q25 shame about 'Could not afford something' score*Race $F(3, 7.27) = 3.80$, $p = 0.01$

Scheffe Post hoc tests showed that the significant difference is between the Black and White Groups. The Black group mean was higher at 1.77 versus a mean of 1.33 for the White group. In other words, Black students reported experiencing shame at 'Not being able to afford something' more than the White student group. Table 9 depicts the Scheffe Post hoc tests for the different groups.

Table 9: *Scheffe post hoc tests for Q25 shame about 'Could not afford something' and race*

					95% CI	
Race/Ethnicity (I)	Race/Ethnicity (J)	MD (I-J)	SE	*p*	LL	UL
Black	Coloured	-.439	.331	.624	-1.37	.49
	Indian	.209	.197	.773	-.35	.76
	White	.440*	.157	.051	.00	.88
Coloured	Black	.439	.331	.624	-.49	1.37
	Indian	.648	.362	.362	-.37	1.66
	White	.880	.342	.086	-.08	1.84
Indian	Black	-.209	.197	.773	-.76	.35
	Coloured	-.648	.362	.362	-1.66	.37
	White	.232	.214	.759	-.37	.83
White	Black	-.440*	.157	.051	-.88	.00
	Coloured	-.880	.342	.086	-1.84	.08
	Indian	-.232	.214	.759	-.83	.37

Note. Multiple comparisons. Dependent variable: Shame about 'could not afford something' and race.
* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 10: *Descriptives for Q25 shame about 'Could not afford something' and race*

					95% CI			
Race	N	M	SD	SE	LL	UL	Max	Min
Black	214	1.77	1.501	.103	1.57	1.97	0	4
Coloured	19	2.21	1.437	.330	1.52	2.90	0	4
Indian	64	1.56	1.233	.154	1.25	1.87	0	4
White	121	1.33	1.227	.112	1.11	1.55	0	4
Total	418	1.63	1.398	.068	1.50	1.77	0	4

There was also a statistically significant difference between Q25 shame about 'Could not afford something' and 'I regard Wits as a good university to study at' scores, as determined by Spearman's rho:

Q25 shame about 'Could not afford something'*Regard for Wits r_s = -,0.13, n = 425, p = 0.01

The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient showed an inverse relationship of -0.13. As the shame score for Q25 shame about 'Could not afford something' increases so regard for 'Wits as a good university to study at' decreases or, a higher regard for 'Wits as a good university to study at' is associated with less shame about 'Not being able to afford something'.

Lastly, there was also a statistically significant difference between Q25 'Could not afford something' and 'Academic belonging' scores as determined by Spearman's rho:

Q25 shame about 'Could not afford something Score'*Academic belonging r_s = -0.17, n = 426, p = 0.001

A Spearman's rank correlation coefficient showed an inverse relationship of -0.17. As the shame score for Q25 shame about 'Could not afford something' increases so a sense of 'Academic belonging' to Wits decreases or, a higher sense of academic belonging to Wits is associated with less about financial disadvantage.

In summary, the results for the single situational item, shame about 'Could not afford something' shows that more black students reported experiencing shame about financial disadvantage at Wits university in comparison to their white counterparts. The intimation is that not only does financial disadvantage have instrumental implications for students at university but the resultant reported shame may have implications for psychological wellbeing. Also, students who experienced shame about financial disadvantage tended to feel less of a sense of belonging to Wits academically and less of a 'Regard for Wits as an institution'. The implication is that poor students, and in particular, poor Black students, feel like they do not belong academically at Wits university and hold less regard for the university. This also has implications for racial cohesion.

6.10. Shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' – Single situational shame item

In a similar vein to Question 25, it was decided to probe Question 47 – shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' – further. This decision was firstly, because it is the only item in the Situational Shame scale pertaining to race/ethnicity. Secondly, there was not a statistically significant association between the demographic variable 'Race' and the Global, Situational and Total shame scores: this was surprising because the qualitative literature addresses highly emotive issues around both class and race in the South African student context. Thirdly, stories of shame about race were scattered throughout the qualitative data in Study Parts 2 and 3. The results showed that 81% of students reported having had the shame-related experience of 'Being a certain race/ethnicity'. Of those students who reported that this situation 'did happen', 55.8% reported 'no shame' about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity', 32.6% reported 'low shame';

and 11.6% 'high shame'. That means that potentially 44.2% of students are experiencing some level of shame about their race/ethnicity at one time or another during their university experience.

It was decided to probe further to explore possible differences and associations between shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and the demographic groupings of race and language as well as the Belonging/Regard for Wits/Worry about financial situation variables. Firstly, it was established that there was a statistically significant association between Q47 and Global, Situational and Total Shame scores respectively as determined by Spearman's rho:

Global Shame Score $r_s = 0.22$, $n = 380$, $p = 0.00$

Situational Shame Score $r_s = 39$, $n = 380$, $p = 0.00$

Total Shame Score $r_s = 0.39$, $n = 380$, $p = 0.00$

A high score on Q47 shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' is related to higher Global, Situational and Total Shame scores respectively.

A statistically significant difference between Race group means on Q47 shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' was determined by one-way ANOVA:

Q47 Shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity'*Race $F(3, 6.10) = 4.8$, $p = 0.00$

The Scheffe posthoc test showed that the significant difference is between the Black and White groups. The White group had a higher mean score of shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' at 1.06 than the Black group at 0.65. In other words, White students reported experiencing more shame about being White, especially when compared to their Black counterparts.

Table 11: *Descriptives for Q47 shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and race*

					95% CI			
Race	N	M	SD	SE	LL	UL	Max	Min
Black	178	.65	1.080	.081	.49	.81	0	4
Coloured	66	.73	1.031	.127	.47	.98	0	4
Indian	26	1.31	1.436	.282	.73	1.89	0	4
White	110	1.06	1.160	.111	.84	1.28	0	4
Total	380	.83	1.139	.058	.71	.94	0	4

Table 12: *Scheffe post hoc tests for Q47 shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and race*

					95% CI	
Race (I)	Race (J)	MD (I-J)	SE	*p*	LL	UL
Black	Indian	-.076	.162	.975	-.53	.38
	Other	-.656	.236	.053	-1.32	.01
	White	-.412*	.136	.028	-.79	-.03

Indian	Black	.076	.162	.975	-.38	.53
	Other	-.580	.260	.175	-1.31	.15
	White	-.336	.175	.297	-.83	.15
Other	Black	.656	.236	.053	-.01	1.32
	Indian	.580	.260	.175	-.15	1.31
	White	.244	.245	.803	-.44	.93
White	Black	.412*	.136	.028	.03	.79
	Indian	.336	.175	.297	-.15	.83
	Other	-.244	.245	.803	-.93	.44

Note. Multiple comparisons. Dependent variable: Shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and race.
* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

There was also a statistically significant difference between Q47 shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and Language as determined by one-way ANOVA:

Q47 shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' score*Language $F(3, 4.116) = 3.3$, $p = 0.02$

The Scheffe posthoc test for Language showed that the significant difference is between the 'English only as home language' and 'African language only as home language' groups. The 'English as home language' group had a higher mean shame score at 0.94 than the African language as home language group at 0.56.

Table 13: *Descriptives for Q47 shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and language*

					95% CI		
Language	N	M	SD	SE	LL	UL	Min
English	197	.94	1.157	.082	.78	1.11	0
African language	110	.56	1.054	.100	.36	.76	0
English and African	35	1.03	1.224	.207	.61	1.45	0
English and Afrikaans / Afrikaans	28	.68	.983	.186	.30	1.06	0
Total	370	.82	1.132	.059	.70	.93	0

Table 14: *Scheffe post hoc tests for Q47 shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and language*

					95% CI	
Language (I)	Language (J)	MD (I-J)	SE	*p*	LL	UL
English	African language	.381*	.134	.045	.01	.76
	English and African	-.084	.206	.983	-.66	.49
	English and Afrikaans / Afrikaans	.266	.227	.712	-.37	.90
African language	English	-.381*	.134	.045	-.76	-.01
	English and African	-.465	.218	.209	-1.08	.15

	English and Afrikaans / Afrikaans	-.115	.237	.972	-.78	.55
English and African	English	.084	.206	.983	-.49	.66
	African language	.465	.218	.209	-.15	1.08
	English and Afrikaans / Afrikaans	.350	.284	.679	-.45	1.15
English and Afrikaans / Afrikaans	English	-.266	.227	.712	-.90	.37
	African language	.115	.237	.972	-.55	.78
	English and African	-.350	.284	.679	-1.15	.45

Note. Multiple comparisons. Dependent variable: Shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and language.

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

This result seems to be counterintuitive, particularly in light of literature concerning the difficulties that non-English speakers experience when engaging in higher education when English is the dominant language (Case et al., 2018; Swartz et al., 2017, 2018). Why then would the 'English home language' group experience more shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' considering that English is the dominant language in the university context? Should this not give these students an advantage? This likely indicates some correspondence with the literature about the hybrid identities of some black students who are fluent in English (Singh & Bhana, 2015). However, several psychosocial propositions that utilise the qualitative data from the study will be put forward in the discussion chapter as other possible explanations.

Moving on to the Belonging/Regard for Wits/Worry about financial situation variables, there was a statistically significant negative association between Q47 shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and 'I regard Wits as a good university to study at' as determined by Spearman's rho:

Q47 Shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity'*Regard for Wits $r_s = -0.16$, $n = 378$, $p = 0.002$

This relationship is inverse meaning that a higher shame score for shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' is associated with less 'regard for Wits as a good university to study at' or, a higher regard for Wits is associated with less shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity'.

There was also a statistically significant negative association between Q47 shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and 'Academic Belonging' as determined by Spearman's rho:

Q47 Shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity'*'Academic belonging' $r_s = -0.12$, $n = 379$, $p = 0.017$

This relationship is inverse which indicates that a higher shame score for 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' is associated with less 'Academic Belonging' at Wits or, a greater sense of academic belonging is associated with less shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity'.

Lastly, there was a statistically significant negative association between Q47 shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and 'Social Belonging' at Wits as determined by Spearman's rho:

Q47 Shame about ‘Being a certain race/ethnicity’*’Social belonging’ $r_s = -0.12$, $n = 380$, $p = 0.013$

The inverse relationship means that a higher shame score for ‘Being a certain race/ethnicity’ is associated with less ‘Social Belonging’ at Wits or, a greater sense of ‘Social Belonging’ is associated with less shame about ‘Being a certain race/ethnicity’.

In conclusion, the results for the single situational item, Q47 shame about ‘Being a certain race/ethnicity’ show that the White student group experience more shame about their race/ethnicity than their Black counterparts. Additionally those students whose only home language is English reported experiencing more shame than students whose only home language is an African language. Perhaps even more concerning is that higher levels of shame about ‘Being a certain race/ethnicity’ tend to be associated with a lower regard for Wits and less feelings of both social and academic belonging at Wits. In other words, shame about race/ethnicity results in a sense of alienation from Wits. The implication is that certain races/ethnicities feel that they ‘belong’ less at Wits than others.

6.11. Participant ‘trouble’ with quantitative measures of shame

Several of the current debates in the shame literature, particularly around quantitative assessment of shame, were inadvertently raised by participants when asked the question, ‘Were any of the questions difficult to answer?’ And ‘If yes, please specify’. The range of responses to this question illustrate the ‘trouble’ that some participants experienced in answering questions about shame. Firstly, difficulties were reported by participants in accessing their own emotional experience and secondly, the issue of context was raised in relation to the shame scale. I have grouped these reported ‘troubles’ into two themes. The first theme is ‘Emotional trouble’ and covers the emotional demands of the topic and the second theme is ‘Conceptual trouble’ and concerns the difficulties encountered with the shame scale itself.

Theme 1 – ‘Emotional trouble’ - disclosing shameful experiences

This first theme highlights the sensitive nature of the topic. Although this theme contains the responses of only seventeen students, in some ways it serves as a microcosm of this thesis on shame:

> Admitting shame is essentially shameful, which makes it difficult.
>
> Personal questions were asked.
>
> I don’t often talk about my shame experiences with any person that I have not come to know and trust explicitly due to when people find out they treat me differently.
>
> They made me realise that I’m not as okay as I may have thought or liked to think.
>
> I don't like talking about my shame because shame is the reason I began self-injuring in the first place. But I wanted to be brave so I did the survey anyway.

I have to confront this issue but I really hate the idea and I just feel so worthless when it comes to the subject. I feel different and repulsive when I think about it. It's also really bad because I hate talking about it. Talking about it notifies people that I am imperfect and flawed in that way.

These are thoughts that I bury, topics I try not to think about even though I experience shame in some form or another every day. Because it's not something I want to think about it was difficult to verbalise.

They made me relive terrible moments of my life.

Revisiting shameful experiences reminds me of the thoughts, emotions and specific event.

The account of my shameful experience, in a way made me feel those emotions again.

They're uncomfortable especially the one's about abuse.

I had to think sometimes before answering some of the questions.

I am afraid if this gets to the lecturer, he will know who made the complaint and he might target me, affecting my grade and whether I pass or not.

It is hard to admit to feeling shame from certain things even though nobody can see me

They required remembering and reflecting on different parts of my life. Some incidents were more difficult to remember than others. Also, because people are not always 100% self-aware, I sometimes was unsure if my answer was a true reflection of who I really am.

All the times I felt shameful were too many to list.

It showed me how shameful I really am.

Thinking about experiences where you felt ashamed of yourself are never fun to relive.

About being sexual harassed, and about being raped, as it brought up emotions that are hard for me to cope with.

A number of these students reported how difficult it is to talk about shame. Several participants described the survey process as a 'reliving' or 'revisiting' of shameful experiences. It is as if talking about shame stirs up shameful feelings which one desires to 'bury' or hide from because it is a reminder of unfinished business and unmetabolised pain. For some participants the questions also invoked imagery of 'others' as untrustworthy with the power to inflict shame on the 'self'. One student displayed persecutory anxiety through his fear of being identified by a lecturer and subsequently targeted for bad grades, despite the survey being anonymous. The implication of these extracts is that shame is best kept a secret, because

‘sharing’ shame experiences makes you more, not less vulnerable. This is encapsulated in the participant’s words, “admitting shame is essentially shameful”. This is indicative of a society that considers talk about shame taboo. These responses are by students who were able to communicate their distress, however, there may have been students who were unable to access feelings of shame at all and defended against these conflicted feelings. Using a quantitative measure does not allow one to ascertain the extent of this possibility. As a researcher I was ‘troubled’ by the extent of trauma in the sample, as seen in the comments of my fellow students, particularly those who possibly revisited traumatic experiences through completing the survey. I can only hope that students in need of support responsibly made use of the free counselling services made available to survey participants, the details of which were provided at the end of the survey. While these comments highlight the risk associated with the study of painful emotional experiences, they also serve to foreground the need to break the silence around shame and to alleviate the hiding that characterises shame.

Theme 2 – ‘Conceptual trouble’ – difficulties encountered with the shame scale

The first issue which several students raised was around a conceptual understanding of shame:

> It is difficult to classify the feeling of shame as it is usually a mix of emotions, therefore I found it difficult to identify when I would have felt shame.
>
> I'm not very sure my understanding of shame was correct, but in most cases I understood it as embarrassment. Also, it is difficult to remember exactly how I had felt according to the five actions given.
>
> The introductions should give a more specific definition of shame.

This conceptual trouble is likely because shame is closely related to several other emotions. The literature regards shame as a ‘mix of emotions’ and ‘embarrassment’ would be regarded as being one of the many members of the shame ‘family’ (Morrison, 1998). The one participant’s desire for a clearer definition of shame, touches on a methodological debate that was considered when designing the online survey. It was eventually decided that the provision of a definition of shame upfront might foreclose on related student experiences. Leaving this open for students to determine for themselves was felt to allow for richer data, from which students’ experiences and constructions of shame could emerge.

Secondly, the issue of context specificity emerged:

> In some questions like violence or death, in what context is one supposed to answer the question? If you violate me I may fantasise about hurting you. Or suicide is the death one may fantasise about if depressed and so forth. And it may be one has faced that a long time ago and it is not applicable now, or or or. What I am saying is, some questions were a bit ambiguous and not as detailed or specific as I would have liked.

> Only because some of the questions could be interpreted in more than one way. That way I wasn't sure if it applied to me or not.
>
> Not difficult however some questions appear to require context. e.g. I would not feel shame in committing a "crime" if I were stealing an animal from an abusive owner but would feel moderate shame if bumping someone's car and driving off without leaving my details.
>
> Some of the questions required a clearer, exclusive context in order to give an accurate and appropriate response.
>
> Some of the questions were not entirely clear context wise.
>
> Too general in some cases.
>
> Also, for the rating of shame for different scenarios was difficult if that incident-type has happened more than once and you've improved with time.

A number of students reported that the cues/situations were 'too general', 'ambiguous' and 'unclear' in terms of context. It was felt that this left some questions too open to interpretation. A final point raised by students was that some cues/situations may happen 'more than once' and makes it difficult to pick which one to report on in the inventory. While the issues of emotional defences, differing interpretations and lack of context are common critiques of questionnaire-based survey research, these concerns supported the researcher's decision to use a mixed-methods approach. The qualitative strands of this study attempt to elicit and foreground students' unique shame experiences and understandings within their individual contexts.

6.12. Chapter summary

In this chapter, the results of a variety of analyses from The Shame Experiences Survey were presented. Frequency calculations of The Shame Inventory's Global Shame scale support the argument that shame experiences are prevalent in the student sample. Taken together, the prevalence categories 'occasionally' (38%), 'often' (20%) and 'always' (8%) indicate that 66% of the student sample have experienced shame whether sporadic or more persistent in nature. Regarding severity or intensity of the shame experience, 60% of students perceived the intensity of their experience as ranging from moderate to considerable shame and 3% experienced extreme shame. Importantly, with respect to the impact of shame on quality of life, 25% of students reported a 'moderate', 19% a 'considerable', and 3.4% an 'extreme' effect of shame on quality of life.

Furthermore, frequency counts for shame cues/situations within the Situational Shame scale were used to explore what 'type' of situations triggered shame for students. In other words, shame about 'what'? Several patterns began to emerge based on both situation prevalence and intensity. The first pattern

comprised situations reported as both highly prevalent and shameful. This pattern, together with an intuitive look at the cue/situation types, was indicative of common or universal shame triggers in the student sample. The second pattern included shame situations which had the lowest prevalence yet were reported as highly shameful. These cues/situations were suggestive of more idiographic shame experiences. These patterns in the data suggest the need for a more equivocal approach to universal versus idiographic shame triggers, particularly using quantitative measures.

Analysis of variance was then used to establish if levels of shame could be explained by demographic variables. The demographic variables which produced statistically significant results on all three shame scores (Global, Situational and Total shame scores) were Gender and Sexual Orientation. The 'Female' group had a higher mean score than the 'Male' group and the 'Other sexual orientation' group had a higher mean score than the 'Heterosexual' group on all three shame scores. These findings are well supported by existing shame literature, however, it was surprising that neither race nor language produced statistically significant results. For this reason more nuanced analyses were conducted to tease out these issues.

Spearman's rho was used to ascertain whether different levels of shame could be explained by the Belonging/Regard for Wits/Worry about financial situation variables. All three of these variables produced statistically significant results on the Global, Situational and Total shame scores. More shame was associated with less Belonging (Academic and Social) and less 'Regard for Wits'. Less 'Worry about financial situation' was associated with less shame and more worry was associated with more shame. 'Worry about financial situation' therefore provided some indication of association between shame and poverty or class. Using shame cues/situations that seemed to be more universal or appropriate to the everyday student experience, two novel shame clusters – shame about 'Interpersonal exposure' and shame about 'Feelings of inadequacy' – were derived and used for further exploratory analyses. These cluster analyses are suggestive that 'type' of shame cue/situation seems to influence the finer nuances of feelings of belonging at Wits. Shame about 'Interpersonal exposure' was associated with decreased feelings of social belonging at Wits whereas shame about feelings of 'Feelings of inadequacy' was associated with a decreased sense of academic belonging at Wits. Furthermore, the Female group also seemed to bear the greater burden of shame for both these shame clusters.

Shame about 'Could not afford something' and shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' were the two situational items singled out to try and unpack race/ethnicity and financial disadvantage. Further exploratory analyses showed that the Black student group reported more shame about 'Could not afford something' compared to their White counterparts. Further to this, students who experienced shame about financial disadvantage tended to feel less of a sense of belonging to Wits academically and also have less of a 'Regard for Wits as an institution'. The implication is that students who are experiencing shame about being unable to afford university expenses, particularly Black students, feel less belonging to Wits and less regard for Wits. The single item analysis based on 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' indicated that the White student group experience more shame about race/ethnicity, particularly in relation to their Black counterparts. In other words, White students are likely feeling shame about their Whiteness. These results

seem to reflect shame about historical White privilege and the lack of economic transformation in a post-apartheid society. This argument will be developed by triangulating the different data sets in this study. With regards to ethnicity, results were also suggestive that speaking 'English only' as ones' home language may be associated with more shame about one's race/ethnicity. This result also speaks to conflicted racialised and ethnic identities on campus. Increased shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' also tended to be associated with less feelings of both academic and social belonging to Wits as well as less 'Regard for Wits as an institution'. I argue that although these single item results are not generalizable to the student population, they do serve as indicators that shame about poverty, race and language and the resultant associations with student belonging seem to be important elements in the construction and positioning of shame experiences in a South African student context.

CHAPTER 7 – PART 2 FINDINGS: Open-ended questions (Exploratory, qualitative study strand)

7.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from Part 2 of the study which comprised three open-ended, exploratory questions in the Shame Experiences Survey. The three questions, which taken together represented the 'what', 'who' and 'how' concerning student shame experiences, were combined during analysis to form a cohesive shame story. Stories were then analysed using the operational shame model and psychosocial principles of the dynamic unconscious, as described in Chapter Five. Each shame story was delineated according to the following analytic units: discourses used, positioning of the 'self' and the 'other', and situation management. It is helpful to think of these analytic units as an analysis of the different voices in a story. In any good story, there is always the character's speaking voice, his/her internal voice, and the author's voice. Using these multiple voices, the following seven themes/categories of shame triggers were identified: failing, comparison, being ridiculed, being rejected, acts of omission and commission, class, and race. Some stories in the data were cryptic, however, longer, more colourful stories enabled the researcher to explore the characters' voices in more depth including different positionings adopted within the story, identifications and feeling states. From this analysis each shame trigger was assigned a corresponding student position based on patterns identified in the data (See Table 15).

Table 15: *The seven common shame triggers and associated student positions*

Shame trigger	**Core student position/The shame gap**
Failing	The 'model student'
Comparison to peers	The 'competitive student'
Being ridiculed	The 'knowledgeable student'
Acts of omission and commission	The 'agentic/responsible student'
Being rejected	The 'isolated student'
Class-related shame	The 'disadvantaged student'
Race-related shame	The 'threatened student'

The chapter begins with a recap of key demographics of students who participated in the open-ended survey questions (Study Part 2). A 'student shame dictionary' is then presented which describes the language of shame used by Wits students. Thereafter a comprehensive analysis of the seven shame triggers together with corresponding student positions is presented.

7.2. Demographics for survey qualitative questions

The demographics for the open-ended survey participants were documented in detail in Chapter Five. It was pleasantly surprising, considering the length of the survey, that 56% (*n* = 265) of survey respondents took the time to complete the open-ended questions. Approximations have been given as indications of prevalence of the different types of shame sources identified. These figures are approximations only, because some stories straddle multiple shame triggers. However, as far as was possible, stories were categorised according to the predominant shame construction intended by the narrator. It should also be noted that there were several stories of shame about disability, sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual identity, however, these stories have not been included in this discussion because it was felt that they are sensitive and require more thorough investigation.

To recap, the gender spread was 68.0% (177) female and 32.0% (85) male respondents. Representation along faculty lines replicates that of the broader survey sample with the notable standout item being a particularly high response rate from the Faculty of Health Sciences. This is possibly due to medical students increased exposure in the hospital training environment and ensuing feelings of inadequacy as reported in stories of 'shame about being ridiculed'. With regards to race, 51% (*n* = 135) of participants were Black, 28% (*n* = 73) White, 13.9% (*n* = 37) Indian, 4.1% (*n* = 11) Coloured, 2.6% (*n* = 7) multiple ethnicities and 0.7% (*n* = 2) Asian. The racial demographic indicates that a nuanced approach to race in surveys is helpful to capture the stories of racial minorities.

7.3. A student dictionary of shame

For many students, speaking about emotional experiences is not an easy task. Additionally, based on the argument that shame is taboo in society (Scheff & Mateo, 2016), an assumption for this study, was that some participants would be particularly reluctant to use the word 'shame'. The purpose of a student dictionary of shame is therefore to highlight the different strategies used by students to talk about, or avoid talking about, their shame experience. Strategies used can be summarised as follows: firstly, some students did not speak about emotional experience at all, but rather documented a cryptic 'factual' experience. Secondly, a number of students approached their feelings of shame indirectly, speaking about difficult emotions through portrayals of the 'other' seemingly involved in the shame experience. Thirdly, there were students who did talk about shame directly and/or members of the shame family like embarrassment, rejection, inadequacy and so forth. Fourthly, several students used words depicting intense negative emotional states. Fifthly, some students portrayed a painful evaluative gaze indicative of self-consciousness and shame and sixthly, the expressed desire to escape or hide. Examples will be given for each approach.

Strategy 1. Omitting talk about shame or related emotional states in the shame experience.

> I failed many of my 3rd year modules and was re-registered as an MBR[1] student in 2017. [Others' response]: Nothing out of the ordinary.

If one considers the gravity of the consequences of failing a year at university and the painful feelings this evokes, one can appreciate that this participant is likely avoiding difficult emotions by rationalising. Omitting to talk about emotional experience is suggestive of avoidance and/or a lack of emotional awareness.

Strategy 2. Vicariously speaking to emotions through vivid portrayals of others involved in the shame experience. For the most part these participants did not use an 'I' perspective and talk about subjective experience. Rather, the 'self' was objectified as conveyed through the emotional content of the 'other'.

> Failing comp maths and stats, nearly being excluded from wits while doing a B Com and switching to a BA. [Others' response]: They displayed disgust at my "laziness" and "failure".

Strategy 2 tended to indicate potential projection at work in the shame experience.

Strategy 3. Directly using the word 'shame' and/or members of the shame family. These participants seemed to display greater levels of awareness of their emotional experience, however, this was not necessarily indicative of the ability to metabolise shame.

> This shame still haunts me up to now even though no one at Wits knows about it except myself.
>
> It's still embarrassing to think about.
>
> I felt extremely ashamed; it was essentially one of the worst feelings I have ever experienced.
>
> I was overwhelmed with feelings of guilt and embarrassment …
>
> From the shame at seeming so incompetent in front of everyone … I have never felt more ashamed in my entire life.
>
> I also felt embarrassed and confused.

Strategy 4. Using words that indicate intense negative emotional states. Although these students did not use the 'S-word' per se, negative emotional states are symptomatic of shame and the implication is that the experience impacted the whole person.

> I felt really shit inside
>
> Made me feel kak [Afrikaans-derived word meaning 'shit']

[1] MBR is a Wits registration code 'exclusion waived-must return to the same year of study'

I recall feeling upset and useless and not understanding why …

My anxiety got really bad … the feelings were not pleasant and it is still a bit traumatic

I cried a lot

My self-esteem felt lower than normal

Many dark thoughts were running through my mind

Some self-depreciating thoughts

I felt like a loser

Strategy 5. Portrayals of an evaluative gaze – being watched, pressured or held captive by 'others'. This approach also included the use of comparative language as students would intimate 'seeing' others and 'being seen' by others through the mechanism of comparison to peers.

Everyone looks at me strange

Held hostage by a language that is not our own.…

I got flustered and felt intimidated. I then made a few embarrassing and critical mistakes

I feel pressured to …

Everyone was uncomfortable and avoided eye contact, and looked somewhat sorry for me

Many did not do well

Their averages were higher than mine

Knowing I'm not the only one

Strategy 6. Talking about the desire to escape the feeling – physically and/or emotionally. This approach was symptomatic of avoidance and withdrawal strategies that are common to the shame experience.

My mind froze from the unexpected onslaught.

I have never wanted to hide and sit in one corner so much.

I wanted to just disappear.

I hid myself in the library.

After a while I just felt dead inside and stopped feeling.

Just ignoring those feelings.

The six strategies employed by students and captured in the 'student dictionary of shame' demonstrate that students employ a varied vocabulary to express their experiences of shame. The shame dictionary also highlights that the absence of emotion vocabulary is as informative as its presence. This findings confirms themes in the literature about the elusiveness of shame and the necessity of including shame variants in a study of shame (Lewis 1971; Morrison, 1998; Retzinger, 1995; Steiner, 2011).

7.4. Shame about failing

In this category, approximately 65 students (24.5% of the qualitative question survey respondents), reported failing academically as a source of shame. Stories of failing ranged in gravity from failing a test, to failing a year, to academic exclusion. An interesting feature of these stories was that the intensity of shame experienced did not necessarily correspond to the gravity of the failure. For example, several participants reported failing a test yet experienced intense feelings of shame: "I failed a test really badly…I saw a psychologist"; "When I failed [an] economics test I was so ashamed". Failing a year was constructed as having particularly shameful academic ramifications such as: "Failing the year, being excluded", "Failing repeatedly. Losing my bursary due to failing", "Failing at my original degree I was pursuing, having to drop out and then come back a year later to start another course, only to fail again, repeatedly". Stories of failing often included constructions of an evaluative gaze which fuelled shame, for example, a student who returned to university to repeat a year and found himself surrounded by a new cohort whereas old friends and acquaintances had moved on. The evaluative gaze in these kinds of stories extended beyond peers to interactions with institutional representatives including lecturers, administration staff and selection/re-admission committees. For this source of shame, talk about 'hard work' and the 'need to be strong' represent aspirations of something akin to an idealised or 'model student' position. However, the precarity of this position will be shown through constructions of a 'blindsided self' who is left grappling with shame after falling short of lofty ideals, despite hard work.

7.4.1. The 'hard work' dilemma

A central, explicit discourse scattered throughout the data was the 'hard work' discourse. Examples of this were, "I could've done better had I tried harder" and that one has the ability to "prevent" yourself "from failing". The most prevalent use of this discourse was to position a 'self' who was guaranteed of success by means of working hard. The implication is that hard work overcomes all barriers to student success. However, a discourse of being 'blindsided' was employed by some students, coloured by surprise and even shock, which hinted at the fallacy of this idealised view of studentship. Herman (2012) purports that an "initial shock" (p. 160) is a characteristic of the subjective shame experience and that thereafter there is a flooding of conflicted emotion. Shock and conflicted emotions are demonstrated in the following failing excerpts: "Not getting a mark I felt I should, after putting in the hours"; "Being surprised by my marks, expecting a pass and finding a fail"; "I have very high expectations of myself, so when I did not meet those expectations, even though the event was minor and unimportant, I felt disappointed and a bit of

shame". The element of surprise in these stories seems to capture the experience of a gap between the 'ideal' and the 'real' experience of academic performance and ensuing feelings of inadequacy.

Another prominent discourse in stories about failing was the 'need to be strong' because failing or allowing failure to be the end of the story, would be 'weak': "I tried to work through the emotions, I tried to tell myself I was stronger than what others thought of me", "I convinced myself that failure makes you stronger and that it was just a learning curve". Discourses around being a 'failure' and a 'university drop-out' haunted stories rather than being directly engaged with. There was also an unspoken threat that failing could mean the loss of a dream and no longer belonging to the university community. One participant expressed some of this fear:

> I would come home crying lots every day. I would have anxiety attacks and shake before Maths tests. I felt embarrassed and even thought I was stupid as I wasn't on the academic level as my peers. I believed I would never be successful and would struggle through life.

7.4.2. Positioning of the 'self' in failing narratives

There were three unique themes in the positioning of the 'self' in stories about failing: an 'alienated self', a 'blindsided self', and a 'supported self' who must work harder.

The 'alienated self'

Many students reported their shame about failing with a notable absence of an 'other' and perhaps more significantly an absence of 'self' – the 'alienated self'. The researcher's request for a description of the shame story was met with enigmatic responses like: "When I failed my second year"; "When I failed 2 modules last semester" and "Failing a year". These were stories that were narrated in a detached way that symbolise alienation from the 'self'. "Failed …", "Failing …" and "Repeating …" were used to begin many of these shame stories. The subjective 'self' was withdrawn or removed from the story as if to couple 'I' to 'failing' would be painful in itself. In instances where the 'I' was included, the story was devoid of detail. The subject appeared to become lost when shame could not be metabolized. The researcher's countertransference responses to these 'lost subject' stories was: "I'm not feeling anything? I'm not understanding why this is shameful. What are/were you feeling? What does it mean for you?" These were the questions left unanswered by the lost subjects. An alienated self was also depicted as a 'self' struggling with overwhelming negative feelings in isolation. In many of these scenarios the 'other' was not specified or the role of 'others' was described as "not applicable". While some of this isolation emanates from the use of avoidance and withdrawal strategies (discussed further below), it seemed to largely be an attempt to hide from shame:

> I once failed at the college that I was before I came to Wits and when I saw my results I was overwhelmed with feeling of guilt and embarrassment and thing led to dark

> thoughts of depression and slight contemplation of suicide. It was even worse when I had to repeat the course and attend class with students who were a year behind me. This shame still haunts up to know even though no one at Wits knows about it except myself and is a constant cause of lack of self-confidence.

In the 'shame still haunts' story, the painful feelings associated with failing are kept secret, but the secret "haunts". The spelling error made by the student in this quote might be an example of a 'Freudian slip', where an error in expression reveals an unconscious truth (Freud, 1901/1914). The phrase: '…still haunts me up to now' is written as "…still haunts me up to *know*". If this is a Freudian slip as opposed to an issue of poor grammar or spelling, it suggests a wish to deny knowledge of this failure because to 'know' haunts and causes intense pain. This alienated form of self was often depicted as abandoned both by the self and others, in attempts to deny or distance the self from the shame.

The 'blindsided self'

These stories embodied the 'blindsided' discourse and were characterised by a 'self' grappling with the discrepancy between actual levels of academic performance and one's perceived capabilities: "Failing modules numerous times when I knew that I could have done better to prevent myself from failing", "Failing 2 of my courses when I knew I could've done better had I tried harder". Note how the 'hard work' discourse is used in conjunction with the positioning of the 'blindsided self' to retain a more agentic, capable sense of 'self'. The rationale for failing then becomes not having tried or worked hard enough. What is implicit but a prominent theme in the dataset, are feared feelings of being incapable and incompetent. The discourses of being 'blindsided' and 'hard work' are therefore suggestive of attempts to distance the self from the shame of failing and its connotations of incompetence.

Some stories of being 'blindsided' were not necessarily related to failing, but rather not achieving as well as anticipated or desired: "Got a bad mark on an essay I was convinced I had properly prepared and written" and "When a performance I did in front of my class and drama lecturers didn't live up to my expectations, in fact was far below them". It's as if the student 'sees' a standard in their mind's eye, however, a mismatch occurs between the expectation and the actual results achieved. This mismatch seemed to lead to a 'self' who shifts into feeling states of inadequacy, often intensifying negative responses to the failure. One student who was struggling with feelings of inadequacy showed a tendency to be overcome by negative feelings: "Being surprised by my marks, expecting a pass and finding a fail. I felt suicidal but I had support from friends and family". The suicidal ideation can be understood as an attack-self response to shame where the student feels split off from her more adequate self. Her unexpected results appeared to move her from a feeling state of adequacy to inadequacy. However, she resolved these feelings by talking to supportive others. By incorporating understanding from the outside and integrating it into the 'self', feelings of inadequacy and self-blame were alleviated. Similarly, another student reported how 'others' had "a more understanding approach" which brought some relief to feelings of shame from failing several modules numerous times.

In contrast, however, several participants who were "blindsided" were unable to integrate more helpful responses and were overcome by feelings of inadequacy and adopted withdrawal approaches, characterised by splitting:

> I dropped out because I felt incapable. I found a job and used that as a way to develop my sense of confidence.
>
> An incident where I had to do a presentation and did not understand the topic and was too nervous to present. I felt as though I would fail and so I opted not to do it. I just stayed home and cried the whole day and night and for the rest of that week. I had to go back to my hometown in order to feel better. I battled with suicidal thoughts too.

In the first 'I dropped out because I felt incapable' story, the student "found a job" and entered a different environment where he could build confidence. This suggests that the painful feelings of shame were so overwhelming that Wits no longer felt like a safe space. In the second 'opting out' vignette, the student aborted the task at hand, overcome by shame anxiety. The mismatch between what was required of her in reality and her feelings of inadequacy led to withdrawal from the situation. While she was able to go home to process feelings of shame and helplessness, this story highlights that living far away from family or a hometown may hamper the processing of difficult feelings for some students. These two stories demonstrate how the shock of poor performance at university can necessitate withdrawal from an environment to metabolise shame.

The 'supported self'

Some students positioned a 'supported self' who could manage feelings of shame and inadequacy through positive self-talk, and often with support and motivation from others: "I promised myself that I will study hard and do better on a following test"; "Managed them by thinking of ways to make my life better and get back to Wits"; "I tried to find outlets for stress and relied on my close friends for comfort". The 'supported self' is characterised by agency and the capacity to change the situation in the future: "so it's up to me to do better next time..."; "determined to work harder"; "I told myself this is my battle which I will win". However, this version of the self also tended to fuel idealised views of studentship and negate the reality of internal and external barriers to success.

7.4.3. Positioning of the 'other' in failing narratives

There were three clear themes of the 'other' in the 'shame about failing' narratives. Firstly, a 'parental other', secondly a 'supportive other'; and thirdly, a 'hostile other'.

The 'parental other'

For some students, stories of failing included the role of parents in the shame experience. The 'parental other' was represented in the data set with ambivalence . While in some respects, parents were perceived

as supportive, there was a clear sense that this particular 'other' was also experienced as demanding. The 'self' was presented as conflicted, torn between facing and working through the realities of failing and dealing with the wish to please one's parents. Emotional support from parents seemed to be important in the management of conflicted feelings around failing and many stories depicted supportive parents: "Repeating first year chemistry…continued on despite negative feelings…emotional support from my mother"; "I failed a section of a test I wrote to convert to Medicine…support from my Mom and Dad helped me manage the stress". Having a family that understood the pressures of university and failing seemed to help: "Failing at my original degree I was pursuing, having to drop out and then come back a year later to start another course, only to fail again, repeatedly…I was relieved as soon as family understood my situation"; "Failing first year. It was my first time failing. I felt useless and thought of suicide…I was relieved [that my] family understood my situation".

However, several students depicted parents who imposed a particular demand to succeed: "My parents expressed concern but a part of me feels as though it may be slight disappointment"; "I failed my first year of university … My parents were disappointed", "My family was extremely disappointed"; and "Failing a year, and in so doing letting my parents down…[they displayed] initially support but ultimately pressure to succeed".

> I achieved seven distinctions in matric and assumed I'd adapt well to the work load in university but now that I'm struggling to pass, I experience a sense of shame in the prospect of disappointing my parents and failing to uphold the standard required of me academically.

The last story, 'shame in the prospect of disappointing my parents', demonstrates a student's need for parental approval. It should also be held in mind that for many of these students, the chance to go to university represents a larger opportunity for transformation and liberation in a post-apartheid South Africa – this would likely add to the pressure to succeed .

The 'supportive other'

In some narratives the 'other' was depicted as non-judgmental when failing: "I had a lot of support from family and friends"; "I saw a psychologist"; "talking to others"; "sympathy … support from friends"; "they felt sorry for me"; "they were sympathetic towards me". These shame experiences were characterized by an 'other' perceived as supportive and facilitating the metabolism of shame. Having recovered from an experience of failing, a fourth-year student, reflecting back on the painful experience, noted: "When I failed first year…I had a lot of support from family and friends, and I prayed a lot too".

Sometimes the student acknowledged mixed responses from 'others' when failing: "The lecturer was positive. But the admin was negative"; "Some showed support and some were accusing me of not being serious".

The 'hostile other'

The theme of rejection and/or abandonment experienced when failing was commonly portrayed by an insensitive or ridiculing 'other': "they pitied me"; "have been looked down on", "treat me differently somehow as a failure", "made condescending comments"; "some condescension", "insensitivity". Several of these stories of a 'hostile other' when failing were also flavoured by feelings of abandonment by Wits. For example, "Wits doesn't care about my situation…". Perceptions of the hostility of the 'other' ranged on a continuum from apathy to overt aggression. The 'they were disgusted' story shows how the 'self' becomes positioned as an object of ridicule and contempt :

> Failing comp maths and stats, nearly being excluded from Wits while doing a BCom and switching to a BA. [They displayed] disgust at my "laziness" and "failure", they pitied me. I tried to work through the emotions, I tried to tell myself I was stronger than what others thought of me.

The words "nearly being excluded" and trying "to work through the emotions" suggest potential feelings of abandonment and isolation. The term "disgust" indicates the gravity of the felt shame. Because of the profoundly social manifestation of this source of shame, the student also seems to experience disgrace with an expectation of contempt and humiliation from the observing student public. The story is likely an example of defensive projection triggered by shame. The student may feel self-loathing and be struggling to integrate the powerful negative emotions triggered. The "disgust" of the 'other' is suggestive of how a perceived 'hostile other' is often accompanied by a reciprocal alienated 'self'. This seems to indicate the danger of failing as a source of shame at university.

Assuming that the ridicule felt by many students when failing is a mix of projective elements and overt ridicule, a student who reported his friend's response to his failing as that of "shock and laughter" possibly provides a clue as to the reasons behind insensitive responses from peers. The word "shock" suggests that failure is a shared fear amongst students and that upon reporting failure to a friend, the initial, momentary response is one of fear for their friend who has failed, and perhaps even a fear that this could happen to them too. The laughter is likely an attempt to distance the experience and make light of what feels frightening. This theme of the 'shared fear of failure' was also evident in the following extract: "Well I was with my friend and we both failed so we were under the same pressure so he was also ashamed on both of us".

Although a 'supportive other' was often characterised by non-judgementalism, stories of the 'hostile other' were coloured by a 'fear of judgement' when failing. Even when the 'other' does not behave in overtly hostile ways, the fear of judgement appears to haunt relationships as indicated in the following 'I would be scared, they were judging me' and 'being perceived as unsuccessful' stories:

> Failing a test or exam caused me a large amount of shame due to the hard work put into to prepare for the particular test. They [peers] would not do anything, but I would be

> scared that in their mind they were judging me due to the test/exam marks from June. You feel worthless and very low.
>
> Being perceived as unsuccessful when taking longer to complete my degree and not getting into honors. [Others' response]: Pity. I knew I did my best but wish things were different.

The student's use of the phrase "that in their mind" is suggestive of a degree of projection, where the unconscious truth is that the student is possibly judging him/herself and projecting this state into others. Fear of judgement also suggests that failing leads to increased exposure thereby highlighting the relational nature of shame.

7.4.4. Managing shame about failing

When failing is a source of shame students leverage a number of approaches to manage negative emotions. Students acknowledged that failing is "hard to accept". Shame often resulted in physical withdrawal from both academic and social situations as well as avoidance of emotions associated with the situation: "I tried to ignore everything and kept to myself"; "I cried at first but after a while I just felt dead inside and stopped feeling"; "Having to repeat a module in first year…upon finding out I cried a lot and when the academic year started I focused all my energy on my studies and forced myself not to think about it"; "… not having graduated yet, extremely ashamed of this…[managed through] push[ing] them [the feelings] away"; "The fact that life is moving and just ignoring those feelings... moving on". A few students used humour to cope: "I laughed about it with my friends and I told everyone that the test chewed me". According to Lewis (1987) good-humoured laughter and restoring eye-contact with others is a way of discharging shame. Whilst humour is often associated with more mature coping, in most instances in the narratives it seemed more an attempt to hide feelings of shame:

For some students, the desire to escape manifested in the decision to leave university: "But when I knew I hadn't passed my courses, I decided to deregister and take a break away from university until the end of the year". When temporary and used as a time to regain confidence, taking a break can be helpful, as it was for this particular student who returned to complete her studies. Sometimes the avoidance of emotion was consciously attempted through "drowning them out through other activities". This included self-destructive means such as: "substance abuse, binge eating and isolating myself". This desire to avoid and escape was so strong in some students that suicidal ideation was reported as indicated in following 'the 4th time repeat' story:

> …been looked down on by my previous classmates, many my age have their degrees and are working and treat me differently somehow as a failure. Also [the] course coordinator in my current course which I'm repeating for the 4th time having made condescending comments about the successes and failures in the course with specific inference to failures (like myself)…I didn't manage. Have been battling suicidal

> thoughts and ideation this whole year, even attempted suicide a few times with pills and alcohol only to wake up the next day groggy, and disoriented and quite frankly disappointed at still being here.

The above story is a reminder that recalling a shame experience can elicit intense emotions. The researcher was however aware of the ethical imperative of making help available to all survey and interview participants, should the need arise. Although it is hoped that this student did make use of the free counselling resources, the details of which were provided at the end of the survey, due to the anonymous nature of the survey it was impossible to know whether this student did access help. Reading this excerpt, the researcher was left with feelings of sadness and concern, and a notable sense of helplessness, which is likely partially indicative of the mental state of the author of this excerpt. This story demonstrates that in cases where failure has become a real threat to the self, a paranoid-schizoid state of mind is reinforced, and the student becomes acutely vigilant to the judgement of others. Due to defensive splitting, previous classmates and the current course coordinator are perceived as hostile and demeaning, leading to increasing feelings of humiliation and likely rage, which in this case, is directed towards the 'self' through suicidal ideation.

Splitting was a common defensive strategy utilized by students, especially when 'others' were perceived as judgmental. There was a notable presentation of a split view of, particularly fellow students, who were hostile and ridiculing: "Bad mouthing me behind my back pretending like they are my friends". The feelings associated with failure were, at times, experienced as an 'attack' on the 'self', and in some instances, students then perceived attacks as coming from the 'other'. Sometimes, even when others were attempting to be supportive, this could not be heard by the student: "Others told me it was normal to fail but a trait I found hard to accept".

Rationalisation through the discourse of the 'need to be strong', was also a common coping strategy: "I told myself that it's life and it happens"; "I tried to be positive…"; "I convinced myself that failure makes you stronger and that it was just a learning curve"; and "made me stronger". Those who were able to tolerate the shame of failing without having to avoid and withdraw tended to be those who perceived 'others' as more supportive and sympathetic and generally tended to have more of a sense of agency: "When I failed 2 modules last semester…They were sympathetic towards me…I accepted that I failed and worked towards improving my marks"; "I tried to stay calm and find a solution"; "Processed the emotions slowly and attempted to right the wrong". Talking to 'others' who were perceived as being sympathetic was often noted as helpful, as was "praying", which suggests that for many students a relationship with a God whom they perceive as supportive and protective was a source of comfort: "Talking to others, praying, motivating myself"; and "Prayer, optimism". A few students mentioned accessing professional support services to manage the negative affect: "Went to see a therapist on campus".

7.4.5. Synopsis: Shame about failing and the 'model student' position

Table 16: *Failing: The 'model student' position*

	Shame source: failing Student position: the 'model student' position
Discourses	Hard work; blindsided; need to be strong; make your parents proud
Positioning of the 'self'	The 'alienated self'; the 'blindsided self'; the 'supported self'
Positioning of the 'other'	The 'parental other'; the 'supportive other'; the 'hostile other'
Shame features identified	Inadequacy; abandonment by peers and Wits; being judged
Key stories	'Shame still haunts'; 'shame in the prospect of disappointing my parents'; 'I dropped out because I felt incapable'; 'I felt as though I would fail so I opted out'; 'I would be scared, they were judging me'; 'being perceived as unsuccessful'; 'they were disgusted'; '4th time repeat'
Situation management	Avoidance; withdrawal characterised by splitting (the adequate/inadequate self); physical withdrawal; metabolising shame through acceptance

7.5. Shame in 'comparison to peers'

Another common source of student shame was 'comparison to peers'. Approximately 25 students (9.4% of qualitative question survey respondents) constructed their primary shame trigger as a comparison of the 'self' to their peers. Comparisons were denoted through the use of comparative forms of language such as "not looking as"; "higher than mine"; "they have better"; "they were better at …"; "much smarter"; "not looking as thin as" and "makes me feel less than". Three sub-themes were identified in the comparison category: social comparison; comparison of degree/career choice and academic comparison. Social comparison stories concerned social desirability such as having lots of friends, wearing trendy clothing, being thin, beautiful, and/or clever. These stories were coloured by a 'self' experienced as defective, inferior and/or unworthy: "I generally feel stupid at varsity"; "I feel pressured to always look good"; "I feel ugly and inferior to everyone else" and "WITS' students sometimes makes me feel less than my worth". Comparison of degree/career choice stories ranged from feeling shame because of not having clearly specified career objectives to the shame of doing a BA General degree. The third sub-theme, academic comparison often depicted stories of 'failing', however, it was felt to keep this separate from the 'shame about failing' category because comparative constructions resulted in a more nuanced experience of shame in relation to peers, characterised by inferiority. The shame in comparison to peers category will therefore be used to demonstrate how talk about 'the competitive edge', 'the evaluative gaze' and the 'BA General degree' represent a precarious 'competitive student' position characterised by inferiority.

7.5.1. The competitive 'edge' conundrum

The most prevalent discourse in the comparison to peers category was 'the evaluative gaze'. There was an implied sense of being both watched and watching others. Explicit constructions of the evaluative gaze were at times evident through the use of direct language such as: "not looking as" and "if I see others".

However, watching 'others' was more often evident through the use of comparative language and an intuitive 'knowing' about 'others': "everyone knew about", "the people around me are"; "knowing I'm not the only one"; "many did not do well"; and "their averages were higher than mine". With all the 'watching' going on, it is not surprising that another core discourse was having 'the competitive edge'. While Wits' current slogan is "Wits gives you the edge", in these narratives talk of 'having the edge' was also akin to the old adage of 'keeping up with the Joneses and Motsepes' except, in this instance, it is also applicable to outdoing 'others' in an academic sense. One survey participant described it as "the social and academic hierarchy projected by WITS students". The use of the word "hierarchy" implies the existence of a ranking system. That this hierarchy is referred to as "projected" suggests that it feels thrust upon students. The idea of a contest was also present in the discourse of 'the BA General degree'. Several students undertaking "BA General" and teaching degrees positioned students from other faculties as acting superior to and ridiculing of the BA degree. Although this discourse was less prevalent in the data, when present it carried powerful emotional connotations and in all cases the student identified with worthless feelings and humiliation around their academics: "I felt extremely ashamed thereafter to tell people what I was studying because I did not feel good enough" and "being ridiculed for studying teaching before my current degree".

Another significant discourse is 'the odd one out' which depicts a 'self' who is involuntarily misaligned from the rest of the group due to failing – whether it be a test, subject or a year. For example, "Everyone I started first year with are doing their honours"; "I was the only one who didn't" and "everyone else passed". 'Being the odd one out' seemed to heighten feelings of shame and inferiority. In contrast there was also a discourse of 'camaraderie' or of being more aligned with peers when the shame was shared: "also failing"; "nothing out of the ordinary"; "I had failed too"; and "knowing I'm not the only one". Alignment seemed to bring some comfort to students. The idea of being aligned or misaligned to others, in terms of social and academic performance, highlights the largely implicit theme which appeared throughout the 'comparison' data, that of feeling rejected and abandoned versus recognised. The discourse of the 'need to be strong' was also used to buffer a more worthy sense of 'self' in the face of competition.

7.5.2. Positioning of the 'self' in comparison narratives

Across all three comparison sub-themes, three clear positionings of the 'self' were evident: a 'self in camaraderie'; 'the odd one out' and the 'ridiculed self'.

The 'self in camaraderie'

Poor performance or outright failing tended to result in the student experiencing a conflict or contradiction around self-representation. This discrepancy often caused feelings of shame and, in some cases, students managed this shame by forming a representational in-group with which they could identify.

> When you come out of a lecture not understanding a thing! I was comforted knowing I'm not the only one, but concerning that its Black people. I was emotional, thinking of all my money that I'm putting into this course.

In the story above called ‘concerning that its Black people’, the student portrays an “emotional” self who rationalises the situation by “thinking” about the financial implications of studying. “Not understanding a thing” has likely triggered feelings of inadequacy resulting in high states of anxiety. In attempting to make sense of her negative emotions, the student is temporarily comforted by the fact that she is not alone. The student uses a discourse of race to position an in-and out group. In other words, to make sense of her experience and likely ward off feelings of shame she splits the class into two clearly defined groups. The first group is the group who understands whereas the second group does not. She then further characterizes the second group as ‘Black people’. From the brief story it is not possible to know whether this racial comparison is a further source of inferiority (as in ‘I belong to a group who does not understand’) or, whether her concern about it being only Black students who do not understand is one that questions the teaching system. It is possible that both interpretations might be relevant. With regards to the “comfort” she felt, it is this rapport or togetherness which has been termed the ‘self in camaraderie’. This positioning fulfils a defensive function for the student. The extracts below also demonstrate students who take comfort in not being the only one in a certain predicament.

> Not performing well in a semester. No shame if many did not do well. To conform to the group that did not do well.

> I failed many of my 3rd year modules and was re-registered as an MBR student in 2017. Nothing out of the ordinary.

An anomaly to the ‘self in camaraderie’ position was the student who reported that he had “Failed everything. [Others are] also failing. Alcohol and sadness”. Despite the comparison to peers who are also failing, the student in the ‘alcohol and sadness’ story seems to be feeling overwhelmed by negative feelings and so resorts to “alcohol” and “sadness”. “Failed everything” has important implications for the student’s ability to continue at university therefore this student likely also experienced helplessness and depression.

The ‘odd one out’

The common phrases in stories that positioned the ‘self’ as the ‘odd one out’ were “everyone else”, “my friends had …”. The extract below, called “I was the only one who didn’t pass”, demonstrates a student who feels alone and grappling with difficult feelings:

> There was an incidence when everyone in class passed a particular test and I was the only one who didn't. They were all surprised that I would fail what was apparently an easy test. I was upset and cried for a while but I finally accepted that these things happen.

Being the only one who failed seems to increase sensitivity to feelings of shameful incompetency and the responses of others. The “surprise” of her peers is possibly indicative of the student’s own feelings of exposure – the gap between the ideal and the real has caught her by surprise. The extract below highlights how comparison can trigger feelings of abandonment leading to alienation at university:

> Failing my test that everyone else passed. They didn't care really. Cried at home.
>
> After my first semester in Wits I felt 'shame' in a way that I thought I tried doing my best only to find out that I failed one module and also my friends were complaining about their marks while their averages were higher than mine. That made me feel down. Motivate me to try harder and keep working, could see they were trying to just make me happy. I don't think I did manage it because even now it's still there about how I failed. Trying to prove it wrong would help.

The above story, called 'even now it's still there about how I failed', is indicative of lingering feelings of shame. This story relates to the theme 'stories that haunt' (in 'shame about failing') but includes the overt element of comparison. This student also seems to be trying to gain equilibrium following a discrepancy between the ideal and the real. His use of the word "it", in "trying to prove it wrong", is possibly indicative of needing to prove to 'others' that he is not a failure. In other words, the discrepancy is shameful resulting in a more global negative evaluation of the 'self' rather than remaining circumscribed to the specific event.

The 'ridiculed self'

The 'ridiculed self' included stories of comparison nuanced with humiliation. This is likely because the comparison triggered the whole 'self' ("I") being called into question, which is characteristic of shame: "I felt undesirable"; "I feel stupid" and "I did not feel good enough". Many such stories included phantasies of a defective self who is being 'watched' and judged negatively leading to feelings of unworthiness, deserving of rejection and abandonment.

> Not looking as thin or well-dressed as the other students. I felt particularly undesirable to my partner. I kept them to myself and would berate myself for looking the way that I do. I was ashamed and upset with myself.

The 'I felt undesirable' story above demonstrates how comparison to others can lead to shame that begets more shame (Lewis, 1971; Morrison, 1989). Unable to process feelings of shame arising from comparison the student seems to withdraw into the 'self' with escalating levels of self-reproach. A comparison to others can also result in a 'self' who feels "inferior" and likely unworthy, resulting in splitting:

> I generally feel stupid at varsity. I feel the people around me are much smarter and that I don't belong here. I feel ugly and inferior to everyone else. I still haven't dealt with them [the feelings].

The student in the 'I generally feel stupid at varsity story' splits the "people" at university into 'smart' and 'stupid' and 'beautiful' and 'ugly'. Of significance for this study is that these feelings of shame translate into a sense of not belonging at Wits.

7.5.3. Positioning of the 'other' in comparison narratives

It is significant that there is a lack of clarity of the 'other' in the 'shame about comparison' data corpus, particularly in stories about career comparison. The 'other' is talked about as a diffuse 'other', out there: "all the other people"; "the people around me are"; "if I see others"; "everyone knew about", "everyone else passed"; "many did not do well"; "everyone else passed". This is suggestive that the 'self' is more focal in awareness (Lewis, 1971). Although the 'other' is diffuse, he/she is a 'watching other' who is often depicted as a rival. The two positionings of the 'other' in comparative shame stories were: the 'supportive other' and the 'hostile/judging other'.

The 'supportive other'

These stories depicted a supportive, nurturing 'other' whom the student was able to take in and use to metabolise feelings of shame, despite comparison:

> Failing 2 modules and having to tell my friend who is really smart. They were really nice and supportive about it. I just tried to be calm and honest.

> I failed a test in second year that my best friend had done really well in. We had studied for the test together and I had expected to get a similar mark to her. [Her response was of] sympathy and support. I vowed to work smarter for the next test.

It is important to note that the presence of empathic others was not always helpful to students caught in the grips of shame. For example, the student in the 'they felt quite bad' story below seemed to have difficulty receiving her friends support, as she then feels the need to relieve their discomfort through joking. In this instance joking can be seen as an attempt to avoid the negative feelings and move on:

> Receiving a bad grade and having my friends be around me at the same time and they have better marks. They felt quite bad. I joked about it.

The 'hostile/judging other'

A number of 'shame in comparison' stories included a 'hostile other' characterised by a condescending, competitive, judgemental 'other'. The imagery was of a 'superior, belittling other' and the 'self' as an object of inferiority in comparison:

> A peer boasted about finally beating me academically in a test where I had suffered a back injury a few days before the test which resulted in my grades dropping. They just laughed. I just made it up in the next test in that subject and came first in my year.

> Failing a test. [Others' were] asking how did you do on the test. Why are they asking me about my test results, are they maybe comparing themselves with me?

> When someone said I was confused with my career objectives since I jumped from courses to courses. [Others' response] arrogance and being smarter than I am and patronizing. I was furious at first then remembered am not what people think of me at the end of the day.
>
> Studying a BA. [Others' response] Superiority. [I] walked away.
>
> Being ridiculed for studying teaching before my current degree, as people see it as an "easy" degree. I reminded myself of my self worth, and people can have their own opinions, but the only person's opinion about myself that matters is my own.

The aforementioned stories capture the sense of competition, both within and between students, where the gaze of the other is experienced as threatening. Student responses to feeling inferior include anger, aggression and perhaps, at times, paranoia. However, some are able to reframe the situation and position themselves differently – outside of the competition or comparison. The 'I didn't win' story below, shows how a student found himself the object of ridicule when competing, however, he was also able to metabolise shame.

> I was competing to be in the house committee at the university residence and we had to debate. I gave non-convincing answers during the debate and many people laughed at me. It took me a while to get over it however I was amazed that people had moved on immediately after the event. Unlike in high school, no one teased me about what happened and that shame quickly subsided and I was able to move on. The res house committee debates are called a circus. Basically people are expected to indicate how they will run the house committee if elected. It is expected that people will laugh and indeed they laughed. However, I now realise it wasn't meant to be hostile. I slept over it. At the time of the session I was embarrassed and felt extreme shame. However, after a day or so it was over. I still had to get over the fact that I didn't win a seat in the elections.

Although the student initially experienced 'others' as hostile, his capacity to acknowledge his role in the incident and to put the situation into perspective was helpful. The student reports a corrective emotional experience by contrasting his experience of teasing at high school to his university experience. The student is able to integrate the bad aspects of the experience, "the debates are called a circus" and "it is expected that people will laugh" with more positive aspects of how "people had moved on immediately". He also relates how not winning a "seat in the elections" was a loss that needed to be faced. This story demonstrates that, through reflection, what felt like a 'hostile/judging other' was ultimately transformed. This was however, a more rare occurrence in the data set. Evidence for the student's processing of shame lies in the fact that he did not portray a 'self' (a global self) who was lacking but rather focussed on the event within a given context. The student therefore did not use the 'other' to impose shame on the 'self' nor did he engage in self-reproach. His acknowledgement of not "winning", suggests the many levels at which

students are required to compete in the university environment and for many this leads to identification with worthless feelings as previously shown. ‘The BA General’ story below, is another story which corroborates student’s identification with worthless feelings when competing at Wits:

> Constantly having to keep up with this social and academic hierarchy projected by WITS’s students sometimes makes me feel less than my worth. At the beginning of the year, I was posed with one primary question, "What are you studying?", when having met new people. Because my response was a, "BA General", my intelligible capability was undermined by someone who was studying engineering or accounting for example. Their reactions to my responses were somewhat condescending. I felt extremely ashamed thereafter to tell people what I was studying because I did not feel good enough. I did not feel as though I was bound to future success. It was essentially one of the worst feelings I have ever experienced. I guess all those who are studying the same thing as I am and were present at that moment in time also showed a sense of shame and resistance. I felt hopeless and worthless. At the moment, I wanted to react in terms of defending myself, but because it had been a constant response over a short while, I felt as though giving up was my number one option. I could not find it in me to react and instead chose to ignore those patronizing individuals.

In this story, the student describes feelings of worthlessness, inferiority and hopelessness when disclosing her degree choice to others. This student is the only participant who clarified the ‘other’ in a shame about degree choice story. She depicts a divide between a ‘BA General’ and ‘other’ degrees, for example Engineering or Accounting. The implication is one of in- and out-groups on campus hinged on faculty membership and/or one’s future profession. ‘Other’ students, studying other types of degrees, are portrayed as condescending with perceived superiority. However, this student also employs a discourse of ‘camaraderie’ and draws comfort from fellow BA General degree students who are drawn into an in-group. Together, the psychological safety of the in-group enables resistance to the ridicule of the ‘other’ and the return of some form of ego stability. Portrayals of the ‘self’ and ‘other’ are suggestive that the incident likely triggers fear of loss of regard for the self.

The ‘I should have registered’ story below provides an example of a student who had reservations about her original career choice yet, is able to process feelings of shame rather than resort to projective defences:

> I am ashamed of not pursuing the career I wanted earlier. I should have registered for a university degree long time ago but always procrastinated on the idea. I lived in denial.

The key factor that distinguishes the above story from others in this category is that her story is characterised by personal remorse. This is indicative of the acceptance of loss and mourning and the student therefore does not attribute her feelings of shame to patronising or superior others. She seems to have taken

full responsibility for her choices and their consequences. This story links to discourses about a more agentic 'self' in the shame experience.

7.5.4. Managing shame in comparison to peers

Students used a wide variety of strategies to manage comparison as a source of shame. It has been demonstrated that students frequently use rationalisation to position a 'self in camaraderie' thereby forming a safe in-group: "To conform to the group that did not do well" and "We tried to help each other out". Camaraderie likely serves as an effective strategy to ward off imminent feelings of inferiority and abandonment, leading to alienation. Further to this, rationalisation through the use of the 'need to be strong' and 'hard work' discourses were once again used to buffer a more worthy sense of 'self', for example: "I tried to tell myself I was stronger than what others thought of me"; "I reminded myself of my self worth", "Just had to tell myself I will do better next time"; "people can have their own opinions"; "I just tried to be calm and honest"; "I was furious at first then remembered am not what people think of me at the end of the day" and "I vowed to work smarter for the next test".

Another common strategy was to withdraw from the situation: "I could not find it in me to react and instead chose to ignore those patronizing individuals"; and "I walked away". Several students adopted an avoidant strategy when unable to process the shame: "Alcohol and sadness"; "I still haven't dealt with them [the feelings]"; "I don't think I did manage it because even now it's still there about how I failed". Some students reported experiencing overwhelming negative emotions and demonstrated an 'attack-self' approach to managing the situation: "I would have anxiety attacks and shake before Maths tests"; "I would come home crying lots every day"; "I kept them to myself and would berate myself for looking the way that I do", and "I was ashamed and upset with myself".

Defensive *s*plitting was demonstrated in numerous stories throughout this category resulting in portrayals of 'smart' and 'stupid' students, 'beautiful' and 'ugly' students and 'winners' and 'losers'. A tendency to defend against the shame that comparison evoked using projection was also evident. The 'she's sooo dumb' story below is an example of a student who is left struggling with feelings of inferiority and incompetence and projects her self-judgement onto others:

> Didn't know anything about a course that everyone knew about. [Other's think], she's sooo dumb. [I] buried myself in more work to make up for it.

Similarly, in the 'they felt better about themselves for failing too' story below, the student projects and minimises to reduce feelings of shame:

> I failed an assignment in my major and when people asked about my mark I was ashamed to say I had failed too given my consistency in achieving firsts. They felt better about themselves for failing too. I downplayed the significance of the assignment.

Being a distinction candidate has likely enabled this student to feel a sense of security and achieve some fulfilment of the wish for certainty. The student also portrays an ideal 'self' who consistently achieves "firsts". However, excellent grades are not able to eradicate the uncertainty that learning brings and the student resorts to defending against shame by reinterpreting the significance of the event from the vantage point of the 'other' – "they felt better about themselves for failing too". It is most likely the student himself who feels better for not having failed alone. Additionally, the student minimises the "significance of the assignment" in an attempt to reinstate the competent/adequate 'self' in both his own eyes and the eyes of 'others'.

However, several students demonstrated an ability to move past initial defensive positions and metabolise the shame of comparison, thereby demonstrating ambivalence regarding the 'competitive student' position. In the 'they were better at art' story below, the student is able to accept that it is not always possible to be the best at everything:

> Not being able to produce good art compared to the rest of my colleagues. They were better at art. I just had to focus on my own growth and let my shame motivate me to do better.

The acceptance of loss in the face of competition allows for functioning from a more depressive position. By choosing to focus on her "own growth" the student removes some of the element of comparison in the task, which likely reduces feelings of inferiority and thereby lessens feelings of shame. Similarly, another student reported: "I was upset and cried for a while but I finally accepted that these things happen". The 'I didn't win' story also showed an ability to accept the loss of not 'winning', which allowed shame to dissipate and facilitated better functioning.

7.5.5. Synopsis: Shame about comparison and the 'competitive student' position

Table 17: *Comparison to peers: The 'competitive student' position*

	Shame trigger: Comparison to peers Student position: The 'competitive student
Discourses employed	The competitive edge, the evaluative gaze, the BA General degree, the need to be strong, camaraderie, the odd one out
Positioning of the 'self'	The 'self in camaraderie'; the odd one out; the 'ridiculed self'
Positioning of the 'other'	The 'supportive other'; the 'hostile/judging other'
Shame features identified	Inferiority; in and out groups; rejection and abandonment
Key stories	'concerning that its Black people'; 'I was the only one who didn't pass'; 'even now it's still there about how I failed'; 'I felt undesirable'; 'I generally feel stupid at varsity'; 'I didn't win'; 'the BA General degree; 'I should have registered'; 'they were better at art'; 'they felt better about themselves for failing too'; 'she's sooo dumb'
Situation management	Rationalisation through camaraderie and 'the need to be strong'; Withdrawal – the odd one out; Self-reproach; Splitting - in-and-out group representation

through camaraderie (students who understand/those who don't); Projection characterised by splitting (clever/stupid; beautiful/ugly); Metabolising shame - cannot always win/be the best

7.6. Shame about being ridiculed

Approximately 59 students (22.3% of the qualitative question survey respondents), reported shame experiences in which the primary source of shame was being the object of ridicule in a public university space. Incidents were usually witnessed by fellow students. These stories ranged from not knowing the answer to a question, to asking a "stupid" question in class, to the inability to converse with peers/staff in an academically appropriate manner, to feeling disapproved of by 'others' when interacting in class. Some examples are:

> When a lecturer picked on me to answer a question and when I tried, it was ridiculed.
>
> When I asked a question in class and people laughed.
>
> I failed to answer a question that I should have known in tutorials. The tutor emphasized that I should've known the answer acting like she is shocked that I didn't know, almost as if she was in disapproval of me.
>
> In class when other students communicate with lecturer fluently in terms of answering questions or discussion whereas I do not have an idea.
>
> He [professor] doesn't really think much of me.

The intensity of the shame in these stories ranged from mild forms of embarrassment to humiliation. This category will be used to demonstrate how talk about 'I was made a fool of' and 'I should have known' are largely used to defend a more 'knowledgeable student' position. However, the precarity of this position will be shown through the discourses of 'I feel inadequate', 'I don't know the answers', 'whose voice counts?' and 'face talk'. The discourse of 'hard work' was again invoked, as in other categories, however, it was used more in the context of working harder to avoid the dreadful fate of being publicly ridiculed. "I worked harder to make sure I was better at simulation, but simulation has always made me feel fearful"; "Telling myself that I need to study hard" and "Promised myself to do better and never did". A fascinating discourse that emerged was the use of 'face' talk'. 'Face talk' was used by several students to communicate shame management strategies: keeping a "straight" face, putting on a "brave" face and "since he doesn't know my face" –- the upside of not being known personally at university. 'Face talk' is suggestive of conforming to perceived norms of limiting emotional expression at university. However, the contagion of shame in the student environment will be demonstrated by discourses of 'the bullying group' and 'silent bystanders', who seem to fear that their inadequacy may be exposed next.

7.6.1. The predicament of 'not knowing'

The prevalent discourses in 'shame about being ridiculed' stories were 'I was made a fool of' and 'wilful shaming'. In this category, story plots included antagonists whose tyrannical behaviour was colourfully described. By positioning 'others' as wilfully shaming, the 'self' was reciprocally positioned as a victim. Every story in this shame source contained imagery of perceived discrepancies between what is ideally expected in terms of performance at university and the painful reality of mixed levels of performance in the classroom on a daily basis. Although a frequently used discourse was 'I should have known', this was not used in the sense of an agentic 'self' but rather to position the 'self' as the victim of an impossibly high standard instituted by 'shamers', not the 'self'. This positioning of 'others' as setting the standard and holding the power to shame therefore served to create some distance between feelings of inadequacy and dependency triggered by less than perfect performance in front of peers.

Feelings of inadequacy were not always overtly talked about by students but coloured most stories. The underlying mechanism was the ever-present evaluative gaze and uncertainty of how others would receive one. Students seemed to cringe at the idea of being evaluated in a negative light as it was felt to expose an 'inadequate self'. For example: "they were shocked and it made me look bad" and "feeling like a failure, a public failure". This judgement of the 'whole' self is indicative of shame (Morrison, 2008). The most pertinent examples of 'being ridiculed' were from stories of medical students in the Health Sciences Faculty. The majority of these survey participants openly expressed ongoing feelings of shameful inadequacy, fears of incompetence and anxiety around performance. These stories were narrated in the context of medical students' practical training in which tutorials are conducted within a hospital setting – with bona fide patients – and supervised by consultant doctors and specialists who are employed by teaching hospitals. These unique circumstances, which combine a training environment and a real-world setting, seemed to be particularly shame provoking for students: "I think particular to my degree is the feeling that you don't know as much as the next person and you're often put on the spot to showcase your knowledge"; "It made me so much more nervous, and I was worried with so many doctors and my colleagues watching over me, as opposed to last time when it was just the other volunteer, the (unconscious) patient and me". The complexity of these shame experiences is depicted in the following story:

> I was made a fool in front of my group members (class mates) and a patient at hospital during a tutorial session with a consultant. I couldn't think of the proper English to answer her [the consultant doctor] as the patient was severely handicapped and crying and I felt myself experiencing a full on anxiety attack, and she wouldn't stop asking me things I told her I didn't know.

The students seem caught between a student identity characterised on the one hand by being a novice and an apprentice and on the other hand, a professional identity which is characterised by self-reliance and official qualifications.

Additionally, a significant discourse used when ridicule was identified as the shame trigger was that of 'Whose voice counts?'. This discourse shows that an important part of 'knowing' is the ability to communicate knowledge in an academically appropriate manner. This included talk about confidence to "voice" intellectual opinions as well as proficiency in the English language. Shame was evident in situations where the student was: "… not able to intellectually voice out what I was thinking"; "In class when other students communicate with lecturer fluently in terms of answering questions or discussion whereas I do not have an idea"; and "… my English turned out not to be so good". Imagery of being unable to converse fluently and display knowledge was conveyed as a deeply painful and shameful experience.

7.6.2. Positioning of the 'self' in 'being ridiculed' narratives

There were two distinct positions of the 'self' when 'being ridiculed' was the primary source of shame namely, the 'victimised self' characterised by dependency and the 'supported self', characterised by camaraderie.

The 'victimised self'

In these stories the self is focal in awareness, depicted as an unsuspecting object/victim of contempt. There is a sense of being unfairly singled out and emotionally hurt or threatened by others. For example, the 'I got yelled at' story below demonstrates how a student felt deliberately put down and made to look incompetent in front of his peers:

> During a simulation, I made a mistake, and got yelled at by a professor in front of 15 of my peers. I felt extremely embarrassed. I felt it was unfair, as I did not understand my mistake, all I heard was him yelling at me. [He/she displayed] ridicule, superiority, impatience. I worked harder to make sure I was better at simulation, but simulation has always made me feel fearful.

The student describes feeling "extremely embarrassed" which is likely equivalent to humiliation which is evidenced through the student's portrayal of an extremely hostile 'other' as well as lingering fears of repeated exposure in the simulation environment. Again, this story conveys the idea of shame that "haunts".

Another story, in this category, depicting shame that haunts is the 'held hostage' story:

> In first year, I asked a question in class but my English turned out not to be so good. I couldn't directly translate it from how I wanted to ask it in vernac[ular]. The class moaned. Some laughed. It took me a while to ask questions again in class. It's still embarrassing to think about. Held hostage by a language that is not our own. I almost cried but I managed to stop myself. I just told myself I'll go ask the lecturer afterwards.

This postgraduate student's vivid recall of a shame experience from first year is suggestive of the haunting memory of shame even years later. Her experience is coloured by humiliation and she was likely

also mortified as she reports the experience as "still embarrassing to think about" and "it took me a while to ask questions again in class". Mortification carries with it connotations of shock and horror. This idea of horror is evidenced in the data by the student's use of a hostage analogy in which the 'self' is depicted as not having the freedom to take action. In this instance the 'self' was restricted by a language, English. and the English language was the student's captor. However, the shame seems to have been managed by splitting the classroom into two, those who call English their own and those, like herself, who don't. The situation likely felt alienating, however, by creating her own in-group she positions the 'self' as not isolated. However, the classroom no longer felt like a safe, facilitating environment but a place of humiliating torture. The student was held hostage by the eyes of the 'other', belonging not to herself but to them (Stolorow, 2013). This likely triggered unwanted feelings of powerlessness ("I almost cried") against the attack. In a South African context, the implication of this story is that those proficient in English (historically White people) still have the power to keep 'us' (historically non-English speaking, Black people) powerless through language. This student felt excluded and imprisoned by the ethnicity of another. Of note in this story, however, is that it was her fellow classmates who were the hostile 'other' – the bullying group in the classroom – while the lecturer was perceived as safe to approach after class. In the 'not being able to intellectually voice out' extract below, the student also reports an inability to "voice out" her opinions publicly:

> Being asked a question about work (especially in group work) and not being able to intellectually voice out what I was thinking, or not knowing enough information about what was asked. [Others' acted] very informed and defensive counter opinions to what I had answered after being asked a question. [Situation management]: Not very well.

In this story, the student also splits the classroom into knowledgeable versus unknowledgeable students. She relegates herself to the latter group and portrays herself as both unable to "voice out" and unknowledgeable. The shame experience therefore is likely coloured by feelings of incompetence and inadequacy, similar to the 'shame about failing' category. She appears to experience her peers' "defensive counter opinions" as attacking and deliberately shaming. It seems that being seen as "not knowing enough" in a university group setting is a shared fear and that perceived hostile responses may be heightened by competition and comparison.

Although bullying peers played a pivotal role when 'being ridiculed' was the primary source of shame, several students also narrated interactions with a representative (staff member) of Wits, in which a victimised 'self' was portrayed as required to conform or risk discrimination. In these instances, a discourse of 'wilful shaming' was employed to position a 'self' who is dependent on the goodwill of both the lecturer and the institution. For the purposes of this study, the term dependent does not pertain to a student's level of independence with regards to the learning process. Rather, the term is used in a Winnicottian psychoanalytic sense of the interplay between dependence and independence and the resulting interdependence between the individual and the environment (Winnicott, 1965). The university (the environment) reserves the right to confer a degree on a student (the individual) but on condition that the

student meets all the requirements as set out by the institution. These requirements are a mix of standards, rules and goals (SRGs). The assessment of whether requirements have been met is a complex process because it involves both written examinations as well as more subjective evaluations by the university's designated authorities, lecturers. Examples of the latter are the marking of essays and practical examinations, both of which include a fusion of personal and professional judgement. In this sense, for the university student, independence is not absolute, and students appear sensitive to how they may be held in mind or thought about by lecturers. This principle of the victimised 'self' characterized by dependency will be demonstrated in stories below, some of which were written by medical students such as the following 'I will apologise and become more quiet' story:

> As a medical student we are expected to present patients to consultants and registrars and often if a mistake is made they will correct us in such a way that it embarrasses the student or makes them doubt their knowledge. There have been instances where I have not managed to control my emotions and cried in those situations. However, generally I will apologize and become more quiet in order not to embarrass myself. On later reflection I will still be ashamed.

In this story, the conflicted student acquiesces ("apologize"; "become more quiet") to those in authority. This type of conformance appears to be a form of withdrawal and avoidance. Similar examples of conformance reported by students are: "Just keep a straight face and apologize"; "I internalised everything and tried to put on a brave face to hide my embarrassment and shame"; "I tried to control myself not to openly show how hurt I was". The 'face talk' used by students portrays what is 'seen' by others. The implication is that neither lecturers nor fellow students are equipped to deal with the expression of emotions. Emotions must therefore be suppressed at university. This is suggestive of many masks or defences used to maintain a semblance of safety and control in a seemingly chaotic academic environment. The 'I'm afraid I might get failed for saying this' story below also demonstrates a withdrawal and avoidant strategy:

> I'm afraid I might get failed for saying this but a lecturer called me by name in class regarding a question I asked him in a private email, and mocked me saying I should not expose my stupidity to him, and should not ask stupid questions. [I] internalised it, pretended I wasn't there since he did not know my face.

The story hints at a 'self' who feels betrayed by the lecturer for breaking confidence because the email was sent in "private". His shame is confirmed by the desire to hide or "pretend I wasn't there". "The lecturer did not know my face" is suggestive of wishing to remain 'faceless' or invisible rather than risk further exposure. It is not possible to establish from the data whether the student took the blame in, or rather that he has remembered 'the lesson' of this interaction and it now colours all his future interactions. The paranoia triggered by this institutional dependency is evident in the words, "I'm afraid I might get failed for saying this …" - as if a critique of one lecturer would not be tolerated and could come back to punish

him. The experience indicates conflict around testing the limits of the learning environment whilst also being desirous of receiving some sort of protection from the institution's representatives.

The theme of blame being passed around was also common in this category. Blame shifting appeared to reinforce a victim-perpetrator dynamic:

> My supervisor was accusing me of slowing down the progress of my project. She seemed annoyed and in a rush. It affected me for several days. I know I take pride in my work and that it was not my fault but hers (she is often absent) but I was still ashamed. I just kept telling myself that I have to just get on with it.

In this 'my supervisor was accusing me' story, the blame is passed around, however, the slow progress is likely a combination of both parties. In other words, the student is "slowing down" progress and the supervisor is possibly not readily available. The 'self' is depicted as a victim as evidenced by the feedback being interpreted as unfair and accusatory. Conflicted feelings around dependency on the supervisor are evident in the retributive words "she is often absent" as well as the portrayal of an abandoned 'self' who is expected to function independently, "I have to just get on with it".

Rejection of an application to pursue a postgraduate degree in a chosen field also seemed to be a source of disapproval and shame. One student reported how shameful it was when she was not accepted into a postgraduate course even though she "met all the requirements". In her 'to prove to the people who rejected me' story, the student reports feeling "like a failure" and "embarrassed" because she was not accepted into the programme of her choice:

> I internalised everything and tried to put on a brave face to hide my embarrassment and shame. I also pushed myself harder to achieve more to prove to the people who rejected me that I was worth more than they thought. I also wanted to prove to myself that I was not a failure.

The above extract demonstrates how the student experienced an application process as a personal rejection. Her shame is evidenced in her need to "prove" her "worth" to the people who "rejected" her. Perhaps the student gives us a clue as to the projective nature of such situations by saying "I also wanted to prove to myself …". This demonstrates how the inner and outer world of the shame experience collide.

While there is evidence of some instances of bullying and shaming perpetrated by lecturers, in other instances, it appears that the victimised 'self' is defensively employed to defend against painful feelings of humiliation, inadequacy and unworthiness. However, one student's story about 'not getting a distinction' demonstrates an ability to integrate and metabolise conflicted feelings of shame when engaging with Wits systems:

> Not getting a distinction on my course work that will meet requirement for cum laude and having to ask and negotiate to be allowed to do an additional course to make up my mark. Bureaucracy gave me the run around and interpreted rules very pedantically.

> [Others' response:] Always blaming the system, that can't do something.... [Situation management:] Frustration, but keep on knocking on doors and driving the process since I really wanted it. Put pride in my pocket ...

The student positioned herself as constrained by Wits systems in meeting her desire to achieve a distinction. However, she also portrayed an agentic 'self' who was willing to "ask and negotiate". The student was able to bring together the two ideas of being dependent on the institution – which requires compliance to rules and regulations – whilst retaining a more independent, agentic self who can navigate within the system. The 'self' was therefore positioned as functioning interdependently within the university environment. Her expression of humility is indicative of acceptance of loss and the ability to metabolise shame.

The "supported self"

Several students portrayed a 'self' who managed feelings of shame by actively seeking input and support from others: "later consulted others for their opinions on the matter"; and "We chatted via email, they seemed understanding". One medical student described the supported 'self' as follows:

> On a weekly basis I have felt intense academic shame in the hospital setting. Usually this is based on the hierarchy in medicine which allows senior medical practitioners such as registrars or consultants to ridicule students based on their responses to academic questions. I can't narrow it down to a single experience as it happens too frequently. [They show] disdain and cruelty. A general air of condescension. I just took refuge in the fact that the situation would be over soon and that I would have the support of my colleagues once the situation had ended.

The student describes taking "refuge" in the knowledge of support from peers. This resonates with the theme of camaraderie in the 'shame about comparison' category. "Refuge" is suggestive of safety and protection; a refuge provides a place for the 'self' to hide. In contrast, and by implication, the student's training environment is exposing. Shame is usually triggered by unwanted exposure. Although several students portray supportive 'others', many paint a picture of fellow students who are not supportive but rather shamed into silent witnesses themselves.

7.6.3. Positioning of the 'other' in 'being ridiculed' narratives

In the shame narratives around 'being ridiculed' three well-defined positions of the 'other' emerged. Firstly, 'wilful shamers', who were portrayed as deliberately picking on the student to humiliate him/her; secondly, 'the bullying group' who wilfully joined together in the shaming incident and represented a group bully in the data and thirdly, 'the silent bystanders' who represent a group who witness but seem silenced by fear. In these positionings of the 'other', two ingredients, namely public exposure and a sense of others' co-participation in the shaming event, seemed to join forces to ignite powerful feelings of humiliation.

Stories portray students in classrooms, tutorials and training interactions with a high level of exposure to the lecturer, tutor and/or an entire audience of peers who co-participate in the shame experience.

The wilful shamers

Narratives of wilful shamers depicted a perpetrator who desired to inflict harm leaving the 'self' feeling objectified. Descriptions of perpetrations included: "Ridiculing me"; "mocked me saying I should not expose my stupidity to him"; "got yelled at by a professor"; "ridiculed me for asking a question in class", "she laughed and ridiculed me for almost 10 minutes"; "asked me if I 'even speak English'"; "gave me patronizing winks and smiles while standing over my shoulder"; "embarrassed me in front of the whole class"; "shaming as a form of teaching in the Medical Faculty". It was evident in the data that because medical student interactions involved patients, shameful feelings tended to be magnified as student and professional identities were in a constant state of flux. The following 'she laughed and ridiculed me' story is an example of how a student experiences a lecturer as launching an unprovoked personal attack.

> A lecturer once ridiculed me for asking a question in class, which according to her should have been covered in the previous year syllabus. I did not recall learning it before, and she laughed and ridiculed me for almost 10 minutes. My friends displayed anger and ignored her; the rest of my classmates laughed with her. I recall feeling upset and useless and not understanding why she picked on me, despite encouraging the class to ask questions. I thought it was an attack at me personally.

The above vignette was written by an Indian, postgraduate, male student. Although the student portrayed imagery of supportive friends, the "rest of my classmates" were depicted as joining in the ridicule forming a type of 'group bully' as described below. The student reports "not understanding why she picked on me" and experienced the situation as a personal "attack". The student struggled to reconcile being "encouraged" by the lecturer to ask questions yet being ridiculed upon doing so and his inability to make sense of the reason for the attack appeared to heighten his sense of threat.

The bullying group

In some cases, a bullying group 'other' was reported as either directly or vicariously persecuting by joining together. The following story is an example of a group who were experienced as directly persecuting:

> During O-week, one of our house committee members punished me in the presence of my fellow first years in university residence. Apparently this is something they do to all first years at Wits who live at school residences. There is a number of events I can talk about but all I can say is that we were mistreated and were treated like dogs. All they could say was that they are preparing us for the EDGE wits gives you. Well the house committee didn't seem to feel anything, it seemed as if they were enjoying

> torturing us. But most of the first years were unhappy and couldn't wait to get over and done with O-week. I used to cry a lot, that was the only way I could release all the hurt I was feeling. I also took the decision to report the house committee to our hall co-ordinators at res.

The 'they are preparing us for the edge story' demonstrates how ideologies of competition at university can become clouded by ridicule. The ill-treatment of first years by older students is suggestive of induction into a particular ethos characterised by competition. This is further suggestive of a dynamic whereby older students are identified with the 'Wits staff perpetrators'. Talk of punishment, being "mistreated", "treated like dogs" and "torturing" create imagery of victims at the mercy of abusers.

In contrast, there are other instances in the data where the group are experienced as silent bystanders who become linked with the perpetrator by association. Morrison (2008) explains that because an audience serves to trigger the experience of failure, the audience *becomes* the 'perpetrator'. Examples of this principle are as follows: "Some of the learners looked at me as if I was wasting their time", "They did not empathise with my feelings, and thus did not understand the extent of their mockery, and action", "Very informed and defensive counter opinions to what I had answered after being asked a question", and "Judgemental attitude, they belittled me". When others were perceived collectively as an aggressive and insensitive group, the 'self' was reciprocally positioned as alone and vulnerable. The group was depicted as displaying solidarity and the 'self' would typically withdraw to manage shame. For example, one student who was "unable to answer a question which was considered easy" reported that "they all laughed at me". The words "they all" constructs an explicit distinction between the 'self' and a group 'other' who all become associated with the perpetrator role. The student's response of "many dark thoughts were running through my mind", suggests withdrawal and self-attack. However, some students seemed to attempt to re-join the group after feeling 'othered', perhaps to defend against momentarily feeling abandoned:

> When a lecturer picked on me to answer a question and when I tried, it was ridiculed. Lecturer; disappointed, irked. Students: Amused. [I] just laughed along.

The laughter in the above story does, however, seem more of an attempt to hide in the hope that the moment will pass quickly. The rationale is possibly that if one laughs along, the exposure will end sooner and one will no longer be 'seen' in a negative light. The laughing is also possibly representative of an attempt to rejoin with the 'laughing' group.

The silent bystanders

Unlike stories of the bullying group 'other' which portray students as actively mocking each other – possibly in order to distance from the feeling of shame – stories of the silent bystanders portray silence and a sense of 'knowing' based in fear. It is likely that students feel relief that it is not them being picked on at the time as is indicated in the follow portrayals of students as 'bystanders':

> Drs who come down hard on medical students. Everyone else is always silent in fear they will also get into trouble. [I] just keep a straight face and apologize.
>
> Everyone was uncomfortable and avoided eye contact, and looked somewhat sorry for me and also distressed because the patient wouldn't stop crying. When someone tried to answer in my stead she [the consultant] told them to be quiet, she asked the questions of me, not them.
>
> As a medical student, I've often been made to feel shame by the lecturers and doctors. They often ask questions continuously until you don't know an answer and when you don't, they put you down, telling you you are going to fail and you need to go read more. Their intention seems to be to decrease our confidence within ourselves. We are all subjected to similar treatment and usually the others in the tutorial keep quiet.
>
> I think it was last year, we had a student and she was presenting a patient and you stand around the bed and she wo…just talks about the patient and what they have, what disease they have, and, um, the doctor just kept interrupting her all of the time and, uh, so she…eventually, she started crying and then that's the point when…he actually started laughing at that point and he just thought it was so hilarious, and he has a reputation for doing that kind of thing. So I just felt…at that point, I just felt ashamed to be a part of the…that kind of system and, also, my…I didn't know what to do. I felt so ashamed 'cause I thought should I say something to him? Should I say something to her? What should I do? I just felt, like, really powerless in that situation because I just didn't know what exactly I should do. So, um, like, I…I often think, actually, back to that because I just…it's a very complex situation, I felt. Like, the best I could, at that time, that I thought of was to go and get her tissues, but, you know, I didn't know what else to do.
>
> I was belittled by a tutor who because I had barely passed a test, stated to the whole tut class that I need to schedule a help meeting. [Others were] Belittling. Class was quiet. [I] went into one of my dips in depression. Feeling like a failure, a public failure...

While stories of bullying peers contained elements of competition and sibling rivalry, bystander stories seem to suggest a dynamic similar to that found in families with an abusive parent. An image is evoked of siblings afraid to defend each other and ultimately joining in a shared, helpless silence in the face of a chronically abusive/tyrannical parent.

7.6.4. Managing the shame of ridicule

It is worth reiterating that when 'being ridiculed' was a source of shame, stories tended to be characterised by strong negative feelings which seemed difficult for participants to manage both in the moment and to metabolise later. It is therefore not surprising that a common strategy evident in many

stories was withdrawal and avoidance: “I pretended I wasn't there since he did not know my face”; “Some of the learners looked at me … I tried to ignore the tension which was now in the room but it was hard to do so I just kept quiet”; “I just sat and tried to ignore what happened, waiting to move on to something better”; and “I suppressed them”. These shame responses demonstrate that withdrawal or hiding has a visual element, for example: ‘pretending’ not to be in the room and therefore not be seen; being ‘faceless’; choosing not to ‘see others’ by going into ‘your own world’ where you control what you see; and, not seeing or acknowledging your own feelings but rather ‘suppressing’ them. The story below called ‘there was a lecture where I opened up’, is an example of a student who “opened up” to peers only to be “laughed at” and mocked, which resulted in ‘hiding’:

> There was a lecture where I opened up about being afraid of being in a neighbourhood-where there were men of different cultural or ethnic backgrounds. I said that I would be intimidated by this situation and the people around me just laughed off the fact that a foreign situation like this would be so traumatic for me. They did not empathise with my feelings, and thus did not understand the extent of their mockery, and actions. I just sat and tried to ignore what happened, waiting to move on to something better.

The researcher’s identification with this story led to an assumption of similarity. It was therefore surprising to learn that this was the story of a young, white, male student. The student’s choice of words such as “opened up”, “being afraid”, “intimidated” tapped into the researcher’s own version of hegemonic female discourses. The student revealed usually unspoken male vulnerability, and instead of being validated and supported, he is met with mockery. The result is a teaching environment that feels unsafe as well as painful feelings of separation from the rest of the group.

Some students reverted to an attack-self strategy when feeling ridiculed: “Went into one of my dips in depression. Feeling like a failure, a public failure... “; and “Many dark thoughts were running through my mind”. The attack-self strategy tended to be used by students who experienced a more isolated sense of ‘self’ where there was no indication of supportive ‘others’ or the ability to access a more nurturing ‘self’. Splitting was common in these instances, where the self is portrayed as deficient and not knowing versus ‘others’ who have all the knowledge, for example: “I also feel shame when I don't know answers everyone else has”. When the ‘self’ feels ridiculed it often seemed to stir up intolerable feelings resulting in splitting as demonstrated in the ‘I do not have an idea’ story below:

> In class when other students communicate with lecturer fluently in terms of answering questions or discussion whereas I do not have an idea. [Others’ have] self-esteem. Telling myself that I need to study hard and at the same time listening to others.

The above shame experience is characterized by feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. The student ‘sees’ others as fluent, knowledgeable and skilled communicators whereas the ‘self’ is positioned as “not having an idea” and lacking self-esteem versus others who ‘know’ and have self-esteem. This splitting indicates a negative judgement of the whole self.

Rationalisation was a helpful strategy that was also used by a number of students to process difficult feelings: “I tried seeing it as a learning experience. It motivated me to do better next time, which I did. There was a huge improvement”; “I just kept quiet and reassured myself that it’s okay not to know answers to questions, it’s part of the learning process”; “I kept calm and told myself that it will pass”; “By looking at the positives and trying to understand where I went wrong and how to correct it. Also calming my emotions through logic”.

Several students reported a regressive experience, either crying in front of others or resisting the urge to cry: “There have been instances where I have not managed to control my emotions and cried in those situations”. This was particularly common in stories told by medical students in response to feelings of disgrace in public hospital settings. Due to the presence of patients who are often very sick and anxious and the more general anxiety in any hospital setting, feelings of uncertainty and dependency appeared to be heightened for these students:

> I didn't manage it at all. I felt like I was going to cry and then run off if the consultant wouldn't stop grinding me over topics I didn't know. I admitted it. She refused to accept that answer and kept grinding me. Eventually I managed to put some sentences together, and she seemed satisfied and resumed the tutorial as if nothing had happened.

Rationalisation was also often employed to manage the more regressive ‘self’: “I felt like running away and crying in front of everyone at the same time but I told myself that these people don't deserve to see you cry and that helped me to keep myself together”. The ‘self’ who wanted to “run away” and hide was a common experience when intense feelings of shame were experienced publicly. However, an acceptance of continued shaming and a withdrawal strategy of acquiescence or conformance to an all-powerful ‘other’ was a concerning feature of the medical student narratives. While it is an effective strategy to adopt in order to ‘get through’ the training, it raises questions about the transmission of relational trauma that appears to be passed through generations of doctors.

The ‘my mind froze’ story below depicts a regressive episode following a negative registration experience. This is notable due to the student’s report of confusion:

> The academic officer I queried with raised her voice at me, in front of a considerably large crowd, for not completing my application forms. (A fact that was later revealed was untrue and that I had completed all the necessary forms. The problem with my application was a system error. I was unable to convey this at the time because my mind froze from the unexpected onslaught). [I] had to walk away and ended up crying in the backseat of my parents' car for a moment. (I'm only admitting to this because this is an anonymous survey). I'd like to think that this uncharacteristic outburst, for me, was just a result of nerves.

In this story the participant's "mind froze", which demonstrates the effect that the 'other' had on the 'self'. This is a rare description in the data, however, it falls within Retzinger's (1991) code words for 'confusion' that represent shame. The student not only felt humiliated on the day but seemed to have lingering feelings of shame regarding her regressive outburst. The fact that she cried in the "backseat of [her] parents' car" and is only willing to admit this "because this is an anonymous survey" is suggestive of shame and the need to hide. It is a story that haunts.

Projection was another common coping mechanism, particularly in stories which portrayed an 'all bad', vilified 'other'. In Lewis's (1971) seminal work on shame she documented the vicarious experience of the 'other' in the shame experience. It is suggested that this is equivalent to a projective experience as demonstrated in the 'they were dumb assholes' and other stories below:

> Asking a question in a lecture and I could tell people were irritated that I asked a question. [They showed] irritation and impatience. I thought they were dumb assholes and moved.
>
> While tutoring/teaching I once/twice couldn't explain something properly. I felt they began to question my competence, but I am not sure if their behaviour changed. I just kept on talking and moved on to the next subject.
>
> In a tutorial I asked a question and didn't know what was happening. For weeks it bugged me as to what must people think of me. Through this there's always the voice of argh they don't even know you but it stays that they think I'm not smart enough, I'm a horrible person. Yet you know this is irrational. In the moment you don't even see others you just go into your own world. Constant back and forth of no one cares and they all think you're stupid... rational and irrational thoughts.

Vicarious experience or projection is suggested in the three extracts by the words: "I could tell", "I felt" and "they think", respectively. In the first story, perhaps the student himself feared others thought he was a 'dumb asshole' but projected this into his fellow students. The questioning of competence, which is clearly felt by the speakers is shifted into and perceived as originating from the 'other'. These stories of projection demonstrate how the uncertainty of learning and difficulties in gaining knowledge can feel threatening, rendering the student vulnerable to feelings of shame and rejection from fellow students. The threat is the fear of not being good enough which looms large for all. This idea is corroborated in the second extract where the students' projection is evident in the statements: "I felt they began to question my competence" and in the third extract "they think I'm not smart enough, I'm a horrible person … they all think you're stupid". When students see someone 'make a mistake' or 'ask a stupid question', their own fear of that situation leads to the need to defend against this form of anxiety through distancing themselves from it, hence the judgement, belittling, laughing of the 'other'. However, this distancing then leaves the student in question feeling inadequate, alone, abandoned, singled out and 'othered'. It is likely that the aforementioned students would have had a similar response when witnessing another student make a

mistake, so therefore assume (probably fairly accurately) the response of 'others' when it happens to themselves.

While most coping strategies used when ridicule was the primary source of shame involved management of an unsafe 'other', in contrast, some students demonstrated an ability to metabolise difficult feelings in the presence of a more empathic 'self' and in some instances supportive 'others': "I tried to control myself not to openly show how hurt I was and later consulted others for their opinions on the matter". This 'working through' seemed to include regulating emotions during the situation whilst retaining an ability to acknowledge hurt feelings and later comfort the 'self' or consult supportive others. This indicates a capacity to hold onto the idea that others can be empathic.

7.6.5. Synopsis: Shame about 'being ridiculed' and the 'knowledgeable student' position

Table 18: *Being ridiculed: The 'knowledgeable student' position*

	Shame trigger: Being ridiculed Student position: The 'knowledgeable student'
Discourses employed	I was made a fool of; wilful shaming; I should have known; hard work; I feel inadequate; I don't know the answers; whose voice counts?; face talk
Positioning of the 'self'	The victimised 'self'; The supported 'self'
Positioning of the 'other'	The wilful shamers; The bullying group; The silent bystanders
Shame features identified	Shared fears (not knowing, being inadequate); Vicarious experience of others; Conforming and dependency at university; Taking refuge; Wits is not an emotionally safe space; Application processes can feel humiliating and rejecting
Key stories	'I got yelled at'; 'held hostage'; 'not being able to intellectually voice out'; 'I will apologise and become more quiet'; 'I'm afraid I might get failed for saying this'; 'my supervisor was accusing me'; 'not getting a distinction'; 'I just took refuge'; 'she laughed and ridiculed me'; 'the best I could do was to go and get her tissues'; 'they are preparing us for the edge'; 'I just laughed along'; 'there was a lecture where I opened up'; 'my mind froze'; 'I do not have an idea'; 'they were dumb assholes'; 'they began to question my competence'; 'they think I'm not smart enough'
Situation management	Regressive episodes; Avoidance and withdrawal – often characterised by rationalisation and conformance based in fear of dependency; withdrawal has a visual element; Vicarious experience as evidenced through projection; Catastrophic splitting - of student and professional identities; of knowledgeable and ignorant students; of whole classrooms

7.7. Shame about being rejected

Approximately 35 students (13.2% of qualitative question survey respondents), reported shame in which the primary source of shame was being alone, not having friends or being rejected/betrayed on campus. These stories often lacked detail and it is suggested that this is due to the personal nature of the experience and difficulty in accessing and/or sharing such complex feelings. Many stories were coloured

by feelings of embarrassment, humiliation and occasionally anger. Similar to the 'shame about being ridiculed' category, the stories in this category demonstrated how shame alerts a student to the possibility of social disapproval or judgement which signals a threat of rejection and/or exclusion (Tangney, 1995), followed by concomitant feelings of shame. This category will be used to demonstrate how discourses of 'being alone on campus', 'having no friends', 'being misjudged' and 'rejection/betrayal' represent constructions of an 'isolated student' position. The precarity of this position will be shown through constructions of a disconnected 'self' as well as the abrupt withdrawal and cutting-off of relationships with peers. Although 'failing', 'comparison' and 'being ridiculed' were more prevalent sources of shame in the data, 'shame about rejection' provides a unique lens to understand shame in the relational world of the adolescent and young adult life stages.

7.7.1. The messiness of being alone and rejected

The core discourses in this category were 'being alone on campus', 'having no friends', 'being rejected/betrayed' and 'being misjudged'. These discourses were employed by some students to position a 'self' who feels insignificant and vulnerable to the judgement of peers. According to Morrison (1998), feeling insignificant is often a tip-off to shame. In this category, feelings of insignificance seemed to be triggered by being seen alone on campus, whilst peers seem to be surrounded by friends. This shame trigger involved relational comparisons and was therefore nuanced with feelings of rejection and abandonment. A central discourse of this shame trigger, both explicit and implicit was of 'withdrawal and cutting-off of relationships'. The implication is a loss of relationship on campus. A core implicit discourse was the fear of being unlovable. Put another way, stories were about the shame of being perceived by 'others' as unworthy of recognition, respect, admiration and love.

7.7.2. Positioning of the 'self' in rejection narratives

There were two distinctive positionings of the 'self' when rejection was the primary shame trigger: the 'disconnected self' and the 'betrayed self'.

The 'disconnected self'

The 'disconnected self' was usually positioned as separate, disengaged, misjudged and isolated from peers on campus. These stories were often about not having friends and being alone on campus: "Not having many friends"; "Finding good friends"; "I am ashamed of my social life"; "When I had no friends I felt like a loser" and "I felt a lot of shame cause I was alone and all the other people on the stands had friends with them". The students in these stories are yearning for belongingness to a group of friends. The student who reported that he "felt like a loser" because he had no friends was clearly experiencing shame as this is a judgement of the whole 'self' and leads to self-chastisement. Comparison of the 'self' to peers who do have friends often seemed to exacerbate feelings of lack. Paradoxically, having no friends on campus often resulted in a 'self' who felt more visible and exposed because of being alone. It is as if a

group covers the 'self', providing some sort of refuge and 'hiding'. A number of stories of a disconnected 'self' were also characterised by feelings of insignificance. The following student encapsulates how a big university environment can feel rejecting and excluding leading to feeling disconnected and insignificant:

> Walking into an area where people know one another and knowing that I'd have to find a place to sit by myself. Nobody really cares when they don't know you. I remind myself that I'm here to get an education and knowing people shouldn't be my priority.

In the 'nobody really cares' story above, the disconnection and shame likely result in the student splitting off the two ideas of firstly, getting an education and secondly, enjoying relationships with others at university. In this sense, "education" becomes an inanimate process to be endured, devoid of "care" and nurture for the 'self'. This split representation likely heightens the student's feelings of alienation. "Knowing people shouldn't be my priority" is indicative that the desire for connection and the experience of need have triggered shame. The student likely feels 'needy' or 'pathetic' for having such longings for care and comfort while at university.

In some stories of rejection, feeling misjudged preceded feeling disconnected. The 'I left the conversation' extract below shows how the student felt misjudged by peers and so felt inadequate or flawed. Shame was triggered and it led to immediate disconnection:

> My friends and I were discussing past relationships but I haven't ever been in a relationship and I was embarrassed. [They showed] Curiosity, pryingness, confidence, all-knowing. I left the conversation.

Erikson's (1963) theory is useful to understand the complexity of the above student's shame experience because the adolescent search for identity involves a delicate balance between a unique identity whilst still fitting-in with the group. In order for this balance to be achieved, the 'self' needs to be well defined, including how you want 'others' to perceive you. In the vignette above, the student experienced the 'self' as inadequate in the eyes of her peers. Her felt exposure and positioning as inadequate triggered shame. The shame is indicated in the student's need to promptly withdraw from her friends – "I left the conversation". However, withdrawal likely only temporarily alleviated the shame and the student is left grappling not only with conflicted feelings around romantic relationships but also isolation.

Some students also seemed to grapple with mild feelings of being inadequate or different to others, whereas others tended to experience powerful feelings of being defective. Below is a heart-rending story called 'Once I am part of the working world'. It is the story of a Black, male, postgraduate student who felt shameful, judged, misunderstood and isolated:

> I'm so ashamed of my imperfection I really do not want to mention anything about it. I do think it's an irrational fear but it is a fear and a point of shame for me nonetheless. Well I revealed this aspect to someone once and they were quite surprised I guess. They accepted me thereafter but their response made me feel like it is such a big issue that I

> even thought they would reject me for it. I have actually longed to be with people, to be intimate with someone, but this thing holds me back. I hate having to reveal myself that way. It definitely feels like a waste of life. I'm really lonely and it is definitely unhealthy at this point. I felt some anxiety and it has definitely made me less inclined to get to know people in future. I also just felt like an eyesore. I did not really manage the feelings. I just kind of went through the motions and surprisingly they were okay with it. I am less brave to reveal myself that way now. But I do think that once I am part of the working world and an actual adult, things will change for me... Or at least I hope.

Whilst the student does not disclose the nature of his "imperfection", the words "I also just felt like an eyesore" suggests it is physical. Irrespective of the type of defect, the story reflects a 'self' who believes that 'there is something wrong with me'. In other words, 'I' am defective. According to Morrison (1998) "having something wrong" implies that there is a "something right" that is the standard of comparison" (p. 33), and that the ideal is not attainable. In this type of shame experience the sense of feeling 'wrong' is usually characterised by the need to keep something private or a secret such as this student's reluctance to "reveal myself". This non-disclosure is indicative of the need to protect the 'self' from the shame which may accompany further revelations about the 'self'. This shame experience is so overwhelming that although the student longs for relationship, he seems unable to imagine relationships as comforting and covering, but rather fears them as exposing and humiliating. This is in contrast to the analogy of the "refuge" in the 'shame about being ridiculed' category. The student defines the whole 'self' based on his defect. He has in fact become the defect. His gaze and focus have turned inward. He is unable to access positive qualities or accomplishments (he is a postgraduate student) which become irrelevant in the light of the defective self. The student likely has introjected objects who are punitive and reproachful. This extreme threat is characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid position. The student speaks of "longing" to be with people, "to be intimate with someone", and he "hopes" that things will change in the future in the working world when he is an "actual adult", however, he seems to be caught in a spiral of shame. This extract demonstrates how the anticipation of rejection, likely due to previous experience and subsequent internal object relations, can have serious implications for students' abilities to form social bonds with peers at university. In other words, personal history matters.

The 'I make sure that I experience bad emotions at home' story below, shows a perceived sense of threat of self-exposure on campus:

> I make sure that I experience bad emotions either at home or where people don't see me. I feel like people always portray me as a strong person. And I always talk myself through it if I feel bad at university so that I can get back to my old self.

Whilst it is prudent for students to maintain healthy boundaries at university, the concern in this story is the expressed rigidity of boundaries. The student experiences bad emotions "at home" or "where people don't see me" which is indicative of the need to hide feelings whilst at university or, possibly a sense of

shame at having negative emotions in the first place. The implicit message is that vulnerability and shame are dangerous at university. This echoes the lack of emotional safety portrayed in the 'shame about being ridiculed' category.

The 'betrayed self'

A number of students reported experiences of being betrayed by peers and/or friends. One of the main characteristics of stories of being betrayed, was a feeling of increased negative exposure as in the examples below:

> Probably when my close friend had exposed an embarrassing secret of mine to some people I didn't want to know. The friend did not really take responsibility for her actions or apologize. I cut my friend off.

> My so called best friend published my naked picture.

In academic related stories about group work at university, the shame experience tended to be characterised by a strong sense of feeling humiliated and excluded from peers:

> When I had done something for my peers and they had laughed in my face at the effort I put into doing the thing for them. My friends didn't stand up for me and bended to the will of the rest of the class. At the time I didn't manage them well and had to leave the room to sort through the feelings of hurt and betrayal.

> I felt shame when I was betrayed by my Sociology 2 assignment group members. We were supposed to prepare and submit our essay and few of them did not bother to contribute a worthy effort. They did not care about the essay or getting poor marks. I calmed myself down through talking to my wife. She reminded me that not everyone view work the same way.

In these stories of betrayal, differences of opinion about task related issues resulted in a sense of disconnection from peers. Peers were then often depicted as disloyal perpetrators moving the 'self' into the position of the victim.

In terms of stories of personal rejection or unrequited love, the feeling of public exposure and having friends "know" about the situation seemed to heighten feelings of embarrassment. In the 'he didn't feel the same' story below, the student seems able to access an empathetic 'other' despite dealing with feelings of embarrassment:

> Tried expressing interest in a guy I liked and I think he didn't feel the same and all our friends knew I liked him. I just felt embarrassed but they seem empathetic. I moved on from it and concentrated on studying.

Although her peers were supportive, the student still resorted to avoidance to gain some sort of emotional equilibrium.

7.7.3. Positioning of the 'other' in rejection narratives

In stories of rejection and betrayal, the 'other' was most often depicted as rude and unnecessarily harsh, however, several stories portraying a more understanding 'other' will also be discussed.

The 'rude other'

Several survey participants reported experiences of rejection on campus where the 'other' was portrayed as rude or withholding, with no provocation by the 'self':

> Got rejected by a first year. She was rude when she didn't need to be. I just brushed it off.
>
> Finding good friends. [Others are] anti-social. Kept it to myself or talk to my mom.
>
> When I had roommate issues and I cried in front of the house committee based on the things she said. She was aggressive. I cried.

These stories of a rude 'other' vicariously lead to the experience of the 'self' as rejected and shamed. Learning to cope with rejection seems to be a key part of peer relationships at university. The 'I was talked badly about' story below is indicative of feelings of powerlessness associated with being humiliated:

> I was talked badly about in front of me. [Others' response] Aggression. [I] Laughed them [the feelings] away.

The story indicates that some students experience difficulty in expressing their own anger – "laughed the feelings away". Typically the anger is pulled back into the 'self' as a safer route to avoid further exposure, humiliation and rejection.

The 'understanding other'

An interesting feature in stories of rejection that positioned an understanding 'other', was that despite portrayal of 'others' as non-judgemental, the student still tended to institute distance between the 'self' and any 'others' involved in the situation. This was likely due to residual feelings of shame resulting in a desire to hide. In other words, it is a paradox that understanding 'others' often seem to exacerbate rather than alleviate feelings of shame when the source of shame is rejection. The implication is that vulnerability to shame can result in an inability to receive comfort from 'others'.

> Being turned down for a date. She felt sorry for me, which made it worse. There's little that one can do besides accepting the situation.

The inability to process the empathy of an understanding 'other' is also likely due to the inevitability of narcissistic injury which is part of the human terrain of rejection. This principle is demonstrated in the 'being turned down' story below:

> Being turned down by someone I really care about and having to see them everyday. Generally kind, respectful and understanding. Angry at first and then fell into a pretty bad depression that lasted for about two years.

Despite portraying the 'other' as "generally kind, respectful and understanding" the student experienced anger at the rejection, followed by a longstanding depression. Anger and depression are both stages of Kübler-Ross's (1969) model of grief, therefore the student's response is indicative of an experience of loss and mourning. It seems this student metabolised the shame and eventually reached a place of acceptance of the loss.

7.7.4. Managing the shame of rejection

The use of splitting and projection in stories of rejection has, to some extent, been demonstrated in preceding excerpts, the most notable of which is how education can feel split off from and devoid of caring relationships. In terms of projection, the 'people laugh at me' story below demonstrates how the experience of a hostile 'other' can have a strong element of projection:

> People laugh at me because of how I look/talk; because I'm mostly alone and because I don't go out. [Others are] Bullying, judgemental, critical, mean, hurtful, ignorant. [Situation management] Prayer, make myself less visible, focus on studies to distract me.

The depth of this student's shame is evident in its seemingly chronic nature and a negative global self-evaluation. In other words, the student is likely experiencing ongoing shame as she does not provide a clearly delineated moment of shame when telling her shame story about rejection, as did other participants. The desire to be invisible is also suggestive of 'hiding' which is characteristic of shame. According to Morrison (1998), 'invisibility' is often used as shame language when individuals are grappling with their own imagined qualities of abnormality. For example, the student reports being laughed at because of "how I look/talk". This student possibly feels like a 'freak', however, being unable to process these painful feelings results in "people" becoming the receptacle for aggression and anger. The projection thus serves to empty the 'self' of monstrous feelings of shame, defectiveness and self-reproach and in so doing the 'other' becomes demeaning – "judgemental, critical, mean, hurtful, ignorant". The student appears unable to access a more supportive part of the self and/or 'others' to provide comfort and nurture.

Again, avoidance and withdrawal strategies demonstrated students' lack of emotional skills to work through the shame of rejection. These strategies were ultimately characterised by the loss of relationship: "I just brushed it off"; "Kept it to myself"; "I left the conversation"; "I cut my friend off"; "knowing people shouldn't be my priority"; "I moved on from it and concentrated on studying"; "I just got over it, I never

responded" and "it has definitely made me less inclined to get to know people in future". For several students, withdrawal and avoidance strategies were accompanied by an attack-self strategy, which appeared characterised by depression and anxiety rendering some students vulnerable to substance abuse:

> Not having many friends. Didn't manage them [my feelings] well and fell into a slight depression.

> When someone came in between my relationships with people based on an assumption that she made. [Other's response]: A lack of loyalty. I isolated myself, slit my wrists, cried myself to sleep and used drugs to help me cope.

Underdeveloped interpersonal skills appear to make it harder for students to adopt an approach strategy. For example, the extract below demonstrates a passive 'self' who seems powerless to initiate conversation and friendships:

> When I have no one to sit with in lectures. [Others response] Almost came to sit with me but then didn't. [Situation management] Suppresses them [feelings].

Whilst the student in the 'I have no one to sit with' story above suppresses and seems to remain stuck in the shameful feelings triggered by being alone, the student in the 'I was all alone' story below was able to rationalise that 'others' were not necessarily "even paying attention". She therefore metabolises feelings of shame, concluding that her "shame was irrational".

> Don't have that many friends in my course, and the ones I did have stayed at home or were nowhere to be found. So I was sitting on the stands alone waiting for my next class. I felt a lot of shame cause I was alone and all the other people on the stands had friends with them. The other people on the stands didn't even pay attention to it, so my shame was irrational. [I] just listened to music and tried to ignore them for as long as possible.

7.7.5. Synopsis: Shame about being rejected and the 'isolated student' position

Table 19: *Being rejected: The 'isolated student' position*

Shame trigger: Being rejected Student position: The isolated student	
Discourses	Being alone on campus; having no friends; being rejected/betrayed; withdrawing and cutting-off relationships
Positioning of the 'self'	The 'disconnected self'; The 'betrayed self'
Positioning of the 'other'	The 'rude other'; The 'understanding other'
Shame features identified	Insignificance; defectiveness; narcissistic injury; supportive 'others' can exacerbate shame
Key stories	'I was alone'; 'nobody really cares'; 'I left the conversation'; 'once I'm part of the working world'; 'I make sure I experience bad emotions at home'; 'my

	friends didn't stand up for me'; 'I felt shame when I was betrayed'; 'he didn't feel the same'; 'got rejected by a first year'; 'people laugh at me because of how I look/talk'; 'she felt sorry for me, which made it worse'; 'I have no one to sit with in lectures'
Situation management	Avoidance and withdrawal – cutting-off relationships; hiding; Wits is not an emotionally safe space
	Attack-self – anxiety and depression
	Projection and splitting – education as devoid of relationships; others as demeaning (even supportive others can exacerbate shame). Projection of lack of internal safety onto Wits as not a safe space.

7.8. Shame about acts of omission and commission

Stories about 'acts of omission and commission' were less prevalent in the data set, however, the stories in this category provide an analytic opportunity to distinguish between guilt and shame states and clarify how the two states often co-exist. Approximately 18 students (16.8% of qualitative question survey respondents), reported shame stemming from acts of omission and commission pertaining to academic standards, rules and regulations. Some examples are missing tutorials, classes and meetings; not carrying out tutorial homework; not meeting submission deadlines and arriving late for class. This category demonstrates an 'agentic, responsible student' position where a 'my bad' discourse seems to indicate feelings of guilt rather than shame.

7.8.1. Guilt has reparative possibilities

The central discourse in these stories is aptly described by the colloquialism 'It's my bad'. The old-fashioned way of saying this would be, "I'm guilty of wrongdoing". Some examples of 'acts of omission and commission' in the academic environment are: "I came late", "I hadn't read" and "I did not meet the deadline". "It's my bad", together with 'the need to be strong' discourse, were used to position an agentic 'self' who is willing to take responsibility thereby demonstrating the reparative potential of guilt.

7.8.2. Positioning of the 'self' in 'acts of omission and commission' narratives

The 'guilty self with agency'

For the most part, when present in the story, the act itself tended to be portrayed as focal in awareness rather than the 'whole' self being judged as inadequate or incompetent. The tendency to engage in a negative appraisal of the act is suggestive of guilt as the more predominant emotion in these stories, as opposed to shame. This is demonstrated in excerpts where students describe some form of impropriety or wrongdoing and a concomitant desire to remedy the situation, for example: "There was a time when I was asked a question which was really simple but I hadn't read so I didn't know the answer … I was so embarrassed but it taught me something"; "When I was asked why I did not carry out my tutorial homework

… By being honest and truthful as well as humbling myself and apologizing"; "I did not meet the deadline for submission of [my] research project … this is something I can control"; "Came late for my morning class … I told myself that it [is] only the first time and last time this happens". The 'remedies' proposed by students to rectify their wrongdoing are largely centred around learning a lesson and exercising more control over the situation in the future.

One 'act of commission' in which the participant reported that both he and his friend "felt shame" together with guilt, was an instance where the pair were "kicked out of class for being late". In this story, the negative exposure in front of the whole class likely triggered public disgrace. Significantly, the narrator does not include a hostile 'other' or antagonist in the story, therefore the plot of the story reads more as a guilty transgression ("being late") and the need to bear the consequences of one's misdemeanour.

The following story demonstrates Morrison's (2008) argument that guilt differs from shame in its object, origination, result and resolution:

> When I was asked why I did not carry out my tutorial homework. [Others' response] They were shy and begrudging. [Situation management] By being honest and truthful as well as humbling myself and apologizing

The object of the guilt in the above story is not the 'whole self' but the act itself. Guilt is triggered because of the misdemeanour and is resolved through confession and seeking forgiveness from the offended party. Guilt can usually be effectively processed, however, Steiner (1985) contends that this is not the case if shame and/or humiliation are also involved in the mix. The implication is that students may experience difficulty processing feelings of guilt at university if shame is also present.

7.8.3. Positioning of the 'other' in 'acts of omission and commission' narratives

The 'observing/disapproving other'

In stories of 'acts of omission and commission', the 'other' is depicted as an observing 'other' ("they looked at me and the lecturer complained"; "looked at me blankly") and/or a disapproving 'other' ("shy and begrudging"; showed "shock/disappointment"). There is, however, a notable absence of an overtly ridiculing 'other', as typically depicted in many of the shame about 'failing', 'comparison' and 'being ridiculed' stories. For example, the following student who reported a transgression that plainly involved public disgrace did not paint a picture of a hostile other: "I arrived late at class and I used the front door and students laughed at me because the class was almost over". The student's willingness to acknowledge the misdeed seems to take precedence over the ridicule emanating from peers. This is likely because the student experiences guilt originating from the misdeed and the laughter of his peers is deemed justifiable.

7.8.4. Managing guilt

Rationalisation was a predominant coping strategy when guilt was triggered by 'acts of omission and commission': "Had to pick myself up, and keep going. [I have] been through worse things in my life that I didn't have control over and this is something I can control"; "I told myself that it [is] only the first time and last time this happens"; "Quickly went outside for some fresh air to calm down myself". One student actively sought to make reparation with others involved in the situation: "By being honest and truthful as well as humbling myself and apologizing".

However, another student's story portrays 'self-loathing' because of "missing a meeting". The student portrays a "disappointed" 'other' and experiences self-attack and difficulty tolerating feelings of shame: "Initially self-loathing, but later acknowledgement and acceptance". The word "self-loathing" indicates that the student initially experienced a judgement of the whole 'self' resulting in shame co-existing together with guilt. However, the student was able to shift focus away from the whole self to the transgression and through "acceptance" of the situation metabolise the shame.

Another example of an 'act of omission' which carries clear traces of both guilt and shame is the 'it made me look bad' story:

> There was a time when I was asked a question which was really simple but I hadn't read so I didn't know the answer. [Others' response] They were shocked and it made me look bad. I was so embarrassed but it taught me something

This scenario provides an example of how easy it is for a student to move from 'the thing I did is bad' to 'I am bad' (Morrison, 1998). However, in this case, the term "it made me look bad" suggests that the student was able to separate 'being bad' from 'looking bad' because of failing to undertake the required reading. This further corroborates how guilt and shame co-exist. A guilty but more agentic 'self' was "taught" something whereas a shamed 'self' would likely have been left grappling with feelings of badness.

7.8.5. Synopsis: Guilt, shame and the 'agentic, responsible student' position

Table 20: *Acts of omission and commission: The 'agentic, responsible student' position*

	Shame trigger: Acts of omission and commission Student position: The agentic, responsible student
Discourses	'My bad'; 'the need to be strong'
Positioning of the 'self'	The 'guilty self with agency'
Positioning of the 'other'	The 'observing/disapproving other'
Shame features identified	Guilt and shame covary
Key stories	'Kicked out of class for being late'; 'Initially self-loathing'; 'It made me look bad … but it taught me something'

7.9. Shame about class

Stories where 'class' is the primary shame trigger show how poorer students at university feel vulnerable to being devalued through constructions of the evaluative gaze of others. Approximately 11 students (4.2% of qualitative question survey respondents) portrayed 'class' as a source of shame. For example, "I wore torn shoes and still wear a torn bag and everyone looks at me strange". The imagery in this excerpt is of being 'watched' which is indicative of a self-conscious shame state – a state used to gauge feedback on our social acceptability and even our sense of worth (Tracy & Robins, 2004). The data suggests that students are using class to monitor their worth and social acceptance at university. This category will therefore be used to demonstrate how talk about 'I don't have' and 'poverty marks you' represent a 'disadvantaged student' position. The conflict inherent in this position in a university context will be shown through discursive constructions of 'Wits is elite' and 'whose voice counts?' In other words, poorer students are faced with the dilemma of desiring the aforegoing 'model', 'competitive' and 'knowledgeable' student positions whilst feeling at a distinct disadvantage to their middle-class and wealthy counterparts.

7.9.1. The affliction of poverty whilst studying at an elite university

The 'I don't have' discourse was used to talk about lacking basic necessities whilst studying at university and/or the markers of the middle-class lifestyle such as cars, stylish clothes and money for socialising with friends. An additional discourse of 'poverty marks you' was also used to construct poorer students' feelings of conspicuousness on campus. It positioned the self as unable to 'hide' from the shame of being poor because of visible social signifiers, like clothing. Simply put, you can't keep your class a secret at university. This discourse highlights the paradox inherent in class shame: being simultaneously 'seen' and 'unseen'. Is it better to remain 'unseen' so that your poverty goes undetected or to be 'seen' and disregarded/disrespected? In both cases the student is left feeling shamefully devalued. The data indicates that shame about class tends to be experienced as more intense and involve feeling 'transparent' or conspicuousness, compared to the exposure of failing or being ridiculed. This is likely because poverty is experienced as more pervasive as compared to a once off incident of failing. Furthermore, a 'Wits is elite' discourse was used to construct university systems and peers as favouring wealthier students and disadvantaging the poor. Portrayals of the elitism of Wits were also used to express disillusionment and feelings of not belonging to Wits – a prestigious university – despite having been accepted to study at Wits. The 'Wits is elite' discourse was reinforced by a discourse of 'whose voice counts?', where several disadvantaged students talked about difficulties in expressing their own 'voice' in academically acceptable ways. Embedded in this discourse is the unfair advantage afforded to students who attend private schooling prior to university.

7.9.2. Positioning of the 'self' in class narratives

The 'poor self'

Five stories that clearly reference class have been carefully chosen to explicate positioning of a 'poor self' at university. The first story is about not having a car on campus and how this can feel persecuting. The second story is about how low socio-economic status can impact the most tender of a student's interpersonal relationships and exacerbate feelings of rejection. The third story is a hopeful story of how a student resolves feelings of shame by questioning the importance of wealthy trimmings in defining one's identity. The fourth and fifth stories show how students from disadvantaged backgrounds can experience a profound sense of powerlessness which can manifest on campus as an inability to "speak" up and converse fluently using university "jargon".

The story below, called 'my feet hurt' is a survey participant's vivid portrayal of the impact of not having a car to get to university and how the university system is perceived as unsupportive of poorer students. It also demonstrates how shame occurs in the gaps between split representations of the 'self', 'others' and the system.

> Most recent one [shame experience], yesterday I was exhausted from everything happening in my life, so much; my feet hurt. Apparently, I had forgotten my student card. The security guard at the Jan Smuts gate made me feel kak, and told me to go to Senate entrance. I felt unseen and disregarded. At Senate one of the guards there asked me what my visit was, I said class. He asked if I wanted to sign in, I replied with I'm told I must. He gave me the book. And his colleague took over and defended the guard who told me to come to Senate House by accusing me of being "too smart, knowing too much and being too educated" and I didn't take his tone, insinuations and accusations kindly. We got into a quarrel. He is an elder and I had to tell him off. While others thought I did well and in that moment I was relieved, deep down I didn't like that [that] had to happen. I wished there was a way the system would protect me from such unnecessary confrontations and tediousness where a walk in student suffers and a mobile student [in a car] is not even questioned, ever. [Others' response] Disdain, disregard, disrespect, 'attitude', abuse of power/position. Situation management: I reacted. I called him out. And I vented and was not able to do my assignment.

The writer begins by introducing herself as the main character in her story and significantly mentions that her *"*feet hurt*"*, secondly; she explains the setting of her story (trying to gain access to campus at the Jan Smuts gate, not being allowed access and summarily being sent to the security guard at the Senate House gate, which is a long walk away and where she would be required to sign in), thirdly; she details the story's conflict (she had an altercation with the security guard), fourthly; the plot is revealed when she poignantly states "I wished there was a way the system would protect me …". The student feels

discriminated against because she can't afford a car and that this is a direct consequence of her lower socio-economic status. The 'self' is therefore portrayed as "unseen and disregarded". The student compares her situation to other students who own cars, are mobile and are "not even questioned, ever". This latter statement suggests that students who drive cars are felt to be both seen and regarded when engaging with Wits's systems whereas students without cars are punished.

The student is justifiably angry with the rude guard, however, blaming the whole system is an example of splitting and displacement. The whole university system becomes bad, when in fact, it is only some elements of the system which are not acceptable – like the security guard and the policy that all pedestrians have to enter through the Senate House gate. Other elements of the system are in fact supportive of poorer students. Her aggressive response to the security guard is likely a defence against feelings of public humiliation and victimization. The storyteller's expression of remorse at her treatment of the security guard is also indicative of some complicating identification with the guard who, she indicates, is likely of a similar race and social class. However, she now also contends with feelings of guilt and added shame because of how she managed the situation.

In addition to cars, a number of survey participants mentioned the significance of the type of clothing worn by students on campus and how this is widely regarded as a signifier of wealth or poverty. The 'I wear bad clothing' story included below, speaks to a sense of increased exposure and shame about poverty –identifiable or signified through clothing:

> Someone I love told me she doesn't feel the same way. I wore torn shoes and still wear a torn bag and everyone looks at me strange. I am not that attractive. I wear bad clothing. [Others' response] Concern, sympathy and disrespect. I just moved on. That's the only thing I can do really.

In this instance the shame experience becomes framed within an interpersonal context and the ensuing feelings of rejection and humiliation. The above participant is a male, presumed to be of a very low socio-economic status. Although rejection is a normal part of the young adult life phase because of the search for intimacy, it is significant that the shame of being rejected seemed to trigger and amplify the participant's shame about poverty. In the student's meaning making process he appears to link the rejection to his "torn shoes" and "torn bag". He also portrays some ambivalence regarding the rejecting 'other' who is described as both showing some "concern" and "sympathy" but also "disrespect". The overriding feeling seems to be of conspicuousness: "everyone looks at me strange". The choice of the words "disrespect" and "strange" allude to exposure to a scornful or contemptuous 'other' and is indicative of feelings of humiliation at the exposure of his poverty. How do you hide torn shoes and a torn bag on campus? It is possible that the participant is projecting some of his own "disrespect" for himself and feelings of being "strange" onto the 'other' due to the shame provoked. "I just moved on" is evidence of the adoption of an avoidant coping strategy. The tragedy of this story is the theme of despair, "that's the only thing I can do really", that colours the student's unresolved feelings of shame. It alludes to a feeling of powerlessness to effect change.

However, the third story is a hopeful story of a student who felt exposed on campus but was able to metabolise the shame experience. I have called this story, 'clothing doesn't define me'. Taking the data at face value, this student does not seem to experience the same level of deprivation indicated in the previous extract, however, this story is useful to demonstrate the impact of shame about poverty on identity:

> Sometimes if I see others wearing trendy clothing I feel pressured to always look good, dress well and have an air of wealth and style. I realised that clothing doesn't define me and that nobody was actually deliberately watching what others wore or making them feel bad about it and my clothes are actually quite fine so there is no reason to feel insecure.

The experience of pressure to "dress well and have an air of wealth and style" as a definition of herself portrays how this student is grappling with identity issues. To portray the 'self' as feeling "insecure" based on not "looking good" and having "an air of wealth and style" is indicative of the participant's contemplation as to how these trimmings could help "define" a better version of herself. Thus the whole 'self' is brought to bear on the situation. However, she goes on to acknowledges the discrepancy or the shame gap between the ideal or desired and the real 'self' based on feeling pressure to conform. Whereas the previous participant experienced shame and despair because of the enormity of the gap, exacerbated by extreme poverty, this participant engages in a process of working through and acceptance. She acknowledges that others are not "deliberately watching" which is suggestive that it is often the 'self' who does the "watching" and not necessarily the 'other' when experiencing shame. In other words, it is a self-monitoring process concerning one's social standing. Through self-acceptance this student integrated feeling "insecure", experienced a lessening of a sense of exposure to 'others' and of shame itself. By metabolising shame, the gap between the ideal and the real lessened.

The three stories thus far have demonstrated how poverty is a shame trigger. However, a further theme of the 'poor self' captured in the fourth and fifth stories, indicates an acute sense of powerlessness which manifests as a form of voicelessness when on campus. This theme is also captured under the 'being ridiculed' and forthcoming 'shame about race' categories and seems to be significant from a student perspective. The following stories called 'I don't fit in' and 'we struggle with the university jargon' highlight how shame about poverty can unfold as feeling 'voiceless' on campus:

> I didn't fit in because I didn't have material things such as nice shoes, fancy hair. They might feel pity, sympathy or shame that I don't fit in or being able to speak my own opinion. I just sit and observe because I just believe in karma that what you do to others shall also be done unto you.

> As Black students from rural/township schools we struggle with the university jargon (which others may be familiar with from elite schools) especially during first year. It was always frustrating. We might have been accepted to an elite university but traces

> of non-elite primary and high schooling have always followed us. I think its extreme shame when someone denies White privilege … I'm usually really saddened.

In the 'I don't fit in' story the student seems to experience her material deprivation as firstly, rejecting, "I don't fit in" and secondly, as a sense of powerlessness which manifests in the inability to "speak" her "own opinion". To clarify, the participant does not invoke an 'other' who discounts her opinion but rather that the 'self' feels unable to speak and give an opinion. This conjures up images of shameful silence due to a sense of unworthiness and a perceived lack of agency. In the second story of voicelessness, the student portrays a split representation of an idealised vision of belonging to Wits through employing the 'Wits is elite' discourse. The implication is that if you belong to Wits, by association you will also be elite. In this sense, a university education is signified as the equaliser of inequality. The wish is that the past is wiped away, it is a clean slate and everybody at Wits becomes "elite". However, this ideal seems to have come crashing down around this participant. Speaking on behalf of all "Black students from rural/township schools" her narrative suggests that she is not entirely alone in her shame. Her meaning making process has become exemplified in an inability to use "university jargon" which serves as a painful reminder that non-elite schooling always "follows" you. The implication is that 'poverty marks you'. "Acceptance" has turned to rejection – Wits, the once idealised object, now feels excluding and additionally, the racial divide between Black and White students becomes amplified. This can be regarded as a split representation. In this type of shame experience, the 'self' is viewed as undesirable or what Gilbert (1989) would call an "unattractive social agent". The experience is of a loss of status and no student wants to be perceived as having poor social standing.

The 'privileged self'

Only three participants positioned the 'self' as privileged in the open-ended survey data. These participants did not embellish their stories making it difficult to ascertain the shame mechanisms. The participant below does however give an indication that privilege can trigger shame leading to withdrawal:

> During the protests being very privileged made me feel ashamed. I tried to suppress the feeling at university but at home I would speak about it.

The implication of this extract is that campus does not provide a safe space to address contentious issues at university, like race. Also of note is that the 'other' is not clearly specified therefore the reader is left guessing about the antagonist in the story. A diffuse 'other' is, however, a signifier of shame (Lewis, 1971).

7.9.3. Positioning of the 'other' in class narratives

Stories of the 'other' highlight that class is understood by students on a continuum ranging from the super wealthy, to the well-off middle-class, to those in-between who may be struggling to make ends meet

but still regarded as middle-class, to the poorest of the poor who lack the basic necessities for life on campus.

The 'privileged other'

Several, seemingly middle-class survey participants, give us a window onto the world of feelings of shame and exclusion when having even wealthier friends at university. One such student rationalises "feeling awkward" when you are unable to afford the lifestyle of wealthier friends:

> I have felt ashamed when having to decline social events because of a lack of money at the time. Friends are understanding and did not push the issue. Attempted to ignore them and rationalize that feeling awkward was unnecessary.

In the extract above, in spite of feelings of shame, the student experiences the more 'privileged other' as supportive. However, the student is still left needing to manage feelings of being excluded. The student resorts to rationalisation and avoidance to manage these difficult feelings. In the 'shame in not being as wealthy as other students' story below, this self-identified "lower middle class" respondent portrays how shameful class distinctions can feel on campus:

> Shame in not being as wealthy as other students, shame in not having a car and driving to campus. With the cars and wealth and the opulence - they present a pomposity, and haughty behaviour, a very definite and groundedness in their wealth whereas in my lower middle class there is a constant state of uncertainty ... "Whiteness has benefited them, it's okay, you're the first of the family to go to university. Your time will come".

The extent of his humiliation is evidenced in portrayals of a contemptuous 'other'. His positioning of the White 'privileged other' as perpetrator is indicative of a 'self' who is represented as a powerless victim, possibly rooted in emotional trauma from historical injustices. The story ends with a resolve to succeed, however, the emotional undertone of the vignette seemed to be coloured by anger aroused by a persecutory 'other'. Most angering to this participant appears to be the air of confidence he perceives as afforded by wealth. The student's self-talk ("Your time will come"), suggests that wealth and confidence are things he himself desires, which implies feelings of envy. The anger and criticism directed towards the wealthy students point to the more destructive elements of envy, where one devalues that which is envied in order to tolerate not having it.

7.9.4. Managing the shame of poverty

The most significant finding around the management of shame about class was that it tended to lead to avoidance and/or withdrawal behaviours. For example several students reported: "I think I ignored them"; and "I suppressed them and focussed on studies". Another strategy used by students was self-attack. One participant reported experiencing shame due to being poorly dressed in comparison to others and expressed distressing feelings which led to self-attack: "kept them [these thoughts] to myself and would

berate myself for looking the way that I do. I was ashamed and upset with myself". The self-reproach seems to escalate inwardly with an inability to metabolise shame. This shame experience seems to remain locked within the student's inner world setting up a shame cycle.

At times, positioning of the 'self' as poor went hand in hand with a demeaning 'other' and this seemed to correspond to heightened feelings of shame, powerlessness and rejection. The deep humiliation triggered by poverty often led to projection characterized by splitting into superior/inferior, the elite/the poor, the advantaged/the disadvantaged and the desirable stylish/the undesirable drab. In the vignette below, the student's portrayal of the 'other' is likely a projection of her own anger and a desire to hide (avoid):

> When I realise I have no clothes and keep on wearing the same clothes over and over and someone notices and asks me about it. [Others' response] Avoidance behaviours, anger, superiority. I suppressed them [my feelings] and focused on studies.

The student's contradiction of "someone notices and asks me about it" and that 'others' display "avoidance behaviours" implies that she feels both 'seen' and 'unseen'. On the one hand she feels 'seen' but exposed in a negative light ("superiority" of the 'other') and on the other hand she feels the pain of being 'unseen' or disregarded ("avoidance behaviours" of 'others').

7.9.5. Synopsis: Shame about class and the 'disadvantaged student' position

Table 21: *Class: The 'disadvantaged student' position*

Shame source: Class Student position: The disadvantaged student position	
Discourses	I don't have, poverty marks you; Wits is elite; Whose voice counts?; privileged others are perpetrators
Positioning of the 'self'	The 'poor self'; The 'privileged self'
Positioning of the 'other'	The 'privileged other'
Shame features identified	The transparency of the poor; feeling devalued (unworthy), disadvantage and exclusion; Who's watching who?; powerlessness and despair; the impact of poverty on identity, envy
Key stories	'my feet hurt'; 'I wear bad clothes'; 'clothing doesn't define me'; I don't fit in'; 'we struggle with the university jargon'; 'having to decline social events'; 'shame in not being as wealthy as other students'
Situation management	Avoidance and withdrawal characterised by powerlessness and/or despair; attack-self i.e. self-reproach; projection characterised by splitting - superior/inferior, the elite/the poor, the advantaged/the disadvantaged and the desirable stylish/the undesirable drab. Split worlds – where I come from/an elite university.

7.10. Shame about race

Approximately 20 students (7.5% of qualitative question survey respondents) narrated shame experiences where the primary source of shame was race related. For this study, racism is acknowledged as an historical pattern of economic and social practices and structures. The result of these patterns is a legacy of political, economic and educational injustices in society. It is also acknowledged that as a result of these patterns many students hold specific ideological positions which are connected to institutionalised features of racism therefore anger, hatred, revenge and the intergenerational transmission of trauma were intimately tied up in several of these shame stories. This category will be used to demonstrate how talk about 'racial hatred on campus', 'history matters', 'the shame of being White', 'whose voice counts?' and 'Wits is not a safe space to talk about race' were all used to construct a 'threatened student' position. The shame gap will be shown through representations of a devalued and excluded 'self', characterised by projection and splitting.

7.10.1. The insider-outsider dilemma at Wits

A significant discourse in this category was talk of 'racial hatred on campus'. The following are two examples of blatant racism on campus:

> In 2013 a white guy was rushing (I think to submit an essay) at Umthombo, he was running and a Black girl didn't make way for him. He called her Kaffir... at Wits university. It broke me, he shamed us for being Black.

> I was pointed out in a lecture as the White, Afrikaans girl and was immediately told I was racist.

For the most part, stories of 'shame about race/ethnicity' portrayed the 'other' as racist or demeaning. This served to position the 'self' as the victim of discrimination and/or devaluation and the 'other' as perpetrator. In the data set racist stories had no colour bounds with both Black and White students being portrayed as perpetrators and victims of racism. However, discourses of 'history matters' and 'the shame of being White' demonstrate the uneasiness of memories of the apartheid era and how this plays out differently in the experience of shame for Black and White students on campus. White participants talked about how the #FeesMustFall movement had heightened racism on campus. This bolstered White students' positioning as the object of hatred and feelings of being unwelcome at university. For Black students, the discourse of 'whose voice counts?' served as a proxy to talk about the nuances of Black shame.

7.10.2. Positioning of the 'self' in race narratives

Two positionings of the 'self' were identified when race was the source of shame. Firstly, the 'racist self', and secondly, the 'threatened self'.

The 'racist self'

The intentional positioning of the 'self' as blatantly racist was rare in the data, to this end, the two stories below called 'stupid and stinky' (written by a White student) and 'racial hatred' (written by a Black student) are unique:

> Had to sit next to other races. Stupid, stinky, not self-aware, bringing their habits and ideology wherever they go, not assimilating, bringing us down, being immoral. Built up my anger and awaited for the world to become a better place and for someone to stand up for us.

> Racial Hatred. Let myself down on something I worked hard at. Not really wanting to be friends with those who considered me as such. Being forced into friendships. [Others' response] Forcibly being with me at all times. Forcing me to go places with them. Overbearingness. Audaciousness. Annoyance. Crudeness. I stop[ed] being friends with these people. Withdrawal. Suppression.

The student in the 'stupid and stinky' story demonstrates a violent expulsion of affect. This form of projection is synonymous with the paranoid schizoid position. Imagery of having to "sit next to other races" who are "stinky", alludes to issues around physical boundaries of the body. Douglas (1966) argues that physical boundaries are symbolic of societal boundaries in which differences are magnified to create order and that through this process others are excluded in structures of discrimination. Clarke (1999) further adds that "The notion of the polluting 'other' represents the stimulus which instigates the construction of boundaries. The fear associated with this constructed character is central to the way in which the structures of society are maintained and protected" (p. 22). The student has split society into two, his own race and all "other races". Wright (2003) argues that "White racism is a complex phenomenon because of the mixture of irrational long-standing, and defensively influenced internalized schemas and perceptions of actual events and circumstances" (p. 243). The student's defensive behaviour is evidenced by an inability to reflect on how his perceptions are based in shame and unconscious anxieties and phantasies. Defensive splitting has removed an ability to know about the fear and there is a concomitant loss of insight and ability to see reality. There is a loss of capacity to think about his feelings. His accusations of other races as "not self-aware" and "not assimilating" can therefore be regarded as projective. The student believes that his shame is the result of having to interact with "other races", however, his suggestion of waiting "for someone to stand up for us" is indicative of feelings of victimisation, dependency and helplessness which are suggestive of the underlying reasons for his experience of shame. Wright (2003) contends that this type of 'old-fashioned' racism corresponds to Rosenfeld's (1987) defensive psychic organisation which he termed 'thick-skinned narcissism'. Wright (2003) further contends that "sneering, jeering, rejecting before being rejected, impenetrable superiority, are some of the hallmarks" of this type of thick-skinned narcissism (p. 244).

The researcher's countertransference response when reading the overtly racist extract written by a White 4th year student was of extreme shame in being identified with the White race. My phantasy was to erase this survey response and pretend that it never happened. Whilst reflecting on my feelings, I realised that a number of White survey participants seemed to share a similar sentiment in wishing they could eradicate apartheid from the annals of history and 'undo' the suffering, perhaps in order to relieve the 'shame by association'.

With regards to the second 'racial hatred' story, it would have been helpful if the writer had been more clear as to 'who' the 'other' is. A possibility is that he is referencing students towards whom he feels racial hatred – perhaps White students. However, in the shame literature a diffuse other is characteristic of a 'self' that is more focal in awareness and is therefore indicative of feelings of shame. His shame is likely about his powerful feelings of hatred and seeming inability to set boundaries. The suggested link between these two stories is that both participants seem to be struggling with separateness and shameful feelings of powerlessness. Both experience an invasive, intruding 'other' but resort to avoidance and withdrawal strategies to manage the situation. The participant in the 'racial hatred' story uses imagery of being someone's hostage or captive ("being forced", "forcibly", "forcing me" and "overbearingness"). The participant in the 'stupid and stinky' story portrays a powerless 'self' who is passively waiting for "someone to stand up for us". Splitting is evident in both stories through a vilified 'other'. There is evidently a great deal of unresolved anger which is suggestive of shame-anger spirals in the shame literature (Scheff & Retzinger, 2001). These stories hint at how discourses of 'racial hatred' reinforce racial polarisation whilst conflicted emotions, like shame, remain unmetabolised.

The 'threatened self'

This section begins by examining stories of how both home and professional languages can be triggers of shame. The discourse of 'whose voice counts?' has already featured in several shame categories, however, in these particular stories the participants have themselves foregrounded race and/or ethnicity as the primary source in their shame experience. The clue to participants' fears of exclusion, based on language, are found in descriptions of the response of 'others' to the 'self' when struggling with language: "most people understand"; "the patients are understanding"; "the way I would be viewed"; "kids would tease me because of the way I spoke" and "other people noticed and they felt sorry for me". The central shaming mechanism in these excerpts is indicated as the evaluative gaze and perceptions of being devalued in the eyes of the 'other'. The 'I don't understand Afrikaans' story below is an example of how language can feel painfully excluding:

> When my colleagues spoke in Afrikaans to our teacher yet I had informed them that I don't understand Afrikaans. My colleagues didn't seem to care but other people noticed it and they felt sorry for me and did things for me out of pity and it just added to my shame. I just told myself I can handle this and I'll be fine.

The student in the extract above is a Black female who identified isiZulu as her only home language. The incident likely triggered feelings of humiliation as the student describes how colleagues "did things for me out of pity". Another example is the 'others find it awkward' story below, written by a Black female whose home language is Northern Sotho:

> Not able to communicate well in English because where I am coming from English is not considered to be the language of communication. Most people understand where I am coming from but others find it very awkward. It was frustrating.

It seems that for some students, there is loss involved in gaining proficiency in the English language. The loss can be viewed two ways. Firstly, the loss of not being able to use one's own language to express oneself at university and the "frustration" of having to gain proficiency in English. Secondly, perhaps language comes to represent the loss of entering into another world where English is valued – at least in so far as attaining a university education is desirable – yet, knowing that it is not necessarily of value where you are "coming from". For these two students language seems to impact a sense of academic belonging. Of note is that these two students are able to integrate non-supportive and supportive 'others' who are experienced as empathetic and understanding of the situation. This is characteristic of the depressive position.

Significantly, the data indicates that it is not only ethnic groupings, identifiable through language, that can feel excluding at university but also professional groupings. You may recall the student in the 'shame about being ridiculed' category who, during a hospital ward round, found herself unable to "think of the proper English" when in the presence of a severely handicapped patient and a 'hostile' consultant. The student felt humiliated and began to experience an "anxiety attack". The extract below provides a similar example but brings together the experience of exclusion based on both ethnic and professional groupings:

> I feel shame when I can't speak fluently in isiZulu to patients in the hospital when doing practicals. The patients are understanding. The nurses display an attitude and are unwilling to help. I just remembered that I had to get the work done and there was no time to dwell on the shame.

The student in the extract above is a Black female who self-identifies isiZulu as her home language yet she reports difficulty speaking fluent isiZulu when doing hospital ward rounds. Although the student does not clarify exactly where the communication difficulty lies, the implication is that her struggle is due to medical terminology which is difficult to communicate to a lay person, let alone translate into another language. The student's shame is suggestive that, at times, her professional identity as a doctor in training may conflict with her racial and ethnic positioning. Her shame is therefore likely tied up in a sense of loss. The loss is possibly related to how her solidarity with the world of medicine has simultaneously opened up doors of service to humanity and become exclusionary. The shame likely lies in the fact that she herself now plays a role in excluding the 'other', in this case, her patients. This exclusion is towards someone with whom she likely feels she should be more closely identified. This story demonstrates how shame about

race/ethnicity is highly nuanced. To present a racialised only view of language would be to deny the complexity of the matter for university students. The implication is that English proficiency at university is also tied to ideas of aspired to professional identities. This is likely where the shame gap lies, in that not speaking English proficiently triggers shame and fears about not achieving a desired professional identity. The proposition is therefore that, at university, there is conflict between one's identity as an aspiring professional and one's other identities and that this can manifest as language proficiency. Although university students are in the process of being trained and groomed for the professional world, there remain additional levels of uncertainty about how one belongs or fits into his/her chosen profession and about how one will fit into previous identities once a professional identity has been achieved.

The story below called 'you as a White researcher', shows how some Black students experience shame in "not being as eloquent and audible as Whites". The student in this extract self-identifies as being of multiple ethnicity and male. This story addresses how exclusion, through apartheid, has left deep scars on some in the born-free generations:

> Being in a lecture venue with White people being the majority race, there's always a shame of not being as eloquent and audible as Whites, lecturers like hearing White opinions and so my opinions are withheld and I feel shameful for expressing myself in a White lecture. Shame in not being as wealthy as other students, shame in not having a car and driving to campus. Shame in looking different from the majority of people (being racially ambiguous makes me stand out and thus everyone looks at me and I immediately assume it's because I'm ugly). [Other's response] Their Whiteness, Whiteness is the most condescending behaviour and one cannot help but feel shame for not being white (Frantz Fanon 'Black skin white masks'). Whiteness is humanness - there is shame in being the Other. With the cars and wealth and the opulence - they present a pomposity, haughty behaviour, a very definite and groundedness in their wealth whereas in my lower middle class there is a constant state of uncertainty. People exude their pride and haughty personas when they graduate, so some people rub that "I did it and you didn't" bullshit in your face and that makes it hard to be a supportive friend and thus there's shame in failing, in not graduating and shame in jealousy. I think I ignored them - I gave myself valid reasons for the occurrence. For example, not graduating I gave myself a pep talk of "Everyone moves at their own pace". For wealthy students "Whiteness has benefited them, it's okay, you're the first of the family to go to university. Your time will come". With Whiteness I think I didn't really manage the feelings because I still feel shame in a White dominant class/lecture (So you as a White researcher you can pat your back and utter the words "The status quo has been maintained").

This vignette provides a compelling example of the intergenerational transmission of racial trauma (Volkan, 1977, 1998, 2004), and I would argue, of shame, because for many there remains a shame in being

Black that is due to the trauma of apartheid. Retzinger (1991) and Scheff and Retzinger (2001) have documented how shame and anger result from protracted conflict which alienates relationships and impedes communication. In this extract, the student, in anger and out of a desire for revenge, projects this unbearable shame onto White students and his peers who have graduated. The message is one of revenge where White students should also feel shame about their race. This message is also communicated to me, the "White researcher", who was accused of maintaining the "status quo". As a researcher analysing this extract, I abruptly found myself confronted by the legitimate hatred of a Black person (Eagle, 2018; Hooks, 1996; Straker, 2013). Although many writers have used the term 'rage', Eagle (2018) prefers to use the word 'hate' because it has object seeking connotations which seem appropriate for this study on shame. My countertransference feeling was of being objectified. According to Lewis (1971) feeling objectified is a core characteristic of shame. Fanon (1952) wrote "… and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects" (p. 109). My participant had successfully turned the race tables, so to speak, and I now experienced the pain of being objectified, of not being given the opportunity to demonstrate who I am as a subject, irrespective of my race. Whilst editing this work, I was amused to note that in my response, I too have quoted Fanon (1952) to justify my position and thwart my accuser. My response now seems reactionary, possibly retaliatory. I wish I could have been able to say to this participant, "I'm sorry". However, I'm comforted by the words of Eagle (2018) "While regret, mourning, guilt and reparative need are difficult feeling states to engage, hatred unsettles us in ways that are perhaps even more difficult to appreciate and absorb" (p. 281). This story is therefore a good example of the power of unsettling projections.

The themes of intergenerational shame and the projection of shame onto White students were corroborated numerous times in the data. This was largely achieved through a discourse of 'the shame of being born White':

> Felt shame of being born White during a silent protest at Wits to promote equal and fair learning for Black students. [Others' response] Unsure. [Situation management] Had to channel the guilt into the reality that race is not a choice and that I can't change that I am White but I can change my thoughts and actions.

This story shows how projected shame can be internalized by White students. Shame is not being resolved but rather passed around like the proverbial 'hot potato'. Below is a story called 'disregarded for being White' which shows how a White student disengages from fellow students and feels excluded based on race:

> Not being able to express who I was, and being disregarded for being White. Almost not allowed to have a different option than feeling guilty about apartheid. [Others' response] Hate, resentment and disregard. Told myself to keep calm. That they do not know me at all.

This story demonstrates the paradox in the data, that both Black and White students draw on a discourse of 'whose voice counts?', however, the discourse is employed for different purposes. White students tend to draw on the discourse to position the 'self' as threatened at Wits, as demonstrated in the 'these white bitches' story:

> I was about to be late for one of my tests (I got the venue mixed up with the wrong diagonal) so I was pretty much running to class and I asked this one crowd (mainly Black girls) going up the steps if they could please just make way for me to pass quickly. When I passed by them eventually, I overheard the one girl saying "these White bitches are always in a rush" and I also heard another girl saying something along the lines of 'White people shouldn't be allowed to come to Wits' and then the crowd started laughing. It was horrible being judged and called names based on my skin colour. And then it was terrible because after my test I had a lecture and we were generally speaking about race and gender and the one student said that Black people cannot be racist and White people have no right to speak about racism because they've never experienced it. That made me feel even worse, because I had just experienced something that proved otherwise. [Others' response] Rudeness. Arrogance. Hatred. Racism. Entitlement.

This student's experience of the comments made by Black students is one of hurt, exclusion and anger. Her description of their responses to her as arrogant, hateful, racist and entitled indicate a degree of splitting and perhaps even some projection. "White people shouldn't be allowed to come to Wits" is an example of revenge and projection of shame onto White students. The implication is that 'you can now feel what it is like to be excluded'. The story demonstrates a reproach deadlock in which Black and White students accuse one another of being racist. These discourses fuel splitting and projection which compounds relationship breakdown and fuels shame.

Below is another example of what appears to be a student's shame triggered by race, however, this story demonstrates how race, religion and sexual orientation can become entangled in a students' attempts to forge an identity:

> We were a multiracial group doing schoolwork and the work became stratified in a seemingly racial manner. Some of my contributions were hidden as they were viewed as unimportant and I ended up feeling less worthy, though I did much work. It often happens when working on presentations, even along religious lines. Another event was about a female lab partner whom is seemingly crushing on me and went to the extent of asking if I was gay. I responded by saying I am bisexual. Though she tried concealing her thoughts, I perceived a derogatory view of LGBT+ people. I have to navigate my Christian beliefs and my orientation, yet another layer is added to the task that isn't easy to traverse. I normally keep quiet and pretend as if all is well.

The clues to the experience of shame in this vignette is that the student reports his work as "viewed as unimportant", "feeling less worthy" and "I perceived a derogatory view". The student's struggle with feelings of unworthiness, inferiority and not belonging are entangled with feelings of devaluation based on categorical identifications such as race, religion and sexual orientation. While the female lab partner may well have had negative feelings towards LGBTI+ people, it is possible that some of the feelings attributed to her were projected. The student reports struggling to reconcile conflicted feelings around his sexual orientation and religious orientation, therefore this conflict is defensively experienced as the reproach of the 'other'. The imagery of hiding ("my contributions were hidden" and "I normally keep quiet") is suggestive of difficulties receiving support from others and metabolising shame.

7.10.3. Positioning of the 'other' in race narratives

The 'vengeful other'

A few extracts have been chosen to demonstrate how racial hostility, rooted in South Africa's socio-political history, manifest as a shame reproach deadlock. In these stories the 'other' is portrayed as vengeful, fuelling shame and powerlessness.

> When I was falsely accused of receiving preferential treatment by one of my peers for being White. [Others' response] Aggression. [Situation management] I knew that it was not true, so it didn't bother me for long.

> I made a course-related post on my class's Facebook page - and through this was accused of racism. A number of students believed I only took note of a White student's concerns and not the concerns of a Black student. I was initially angry at the accusation, but thought better of retaliation. Instead, I apologised for unintentionally hurting the Black student.

> Being White at the fees must fall protests. Other people act as if you shouldn't be there. I stuck to what I believed was the right thing to do.

The theme which the above extracts share is accusation, either explicit or implied through the experience of tone. In the last extract a White student reports supporting the #FeesMustFall movement yet feels rejected and alienated for doing so. Below are extracts in which a White and Indian student respectively experienced feelings of alienation around the #FeesMustFall movement:

> Racial animosity during protests. [Others' response] Aggressiveness, intolerance. [Situation management] Walked away, told myself it didn't matter.

> Discriminated against for trying to leave university during fees must fall protests. I remained calm and walked away.

7.10.4. Managing the shame of race

Splitting and projection were common occurrences in the 'shame about race' data as has been demonstrated in the foregoing sections. Additionally, the majority of students reported withdrawal and avoidance strategies when dealing with shame triggered by race/ethnicity. "I normally keep quiet and pretend as if all is well"; "Withdrawal. Suppression"; "I think I ignored them - I gave myself valid reasons for the occurrence"; "I just don't participate in the discussions etc"; "I remained calm and walked away"; and "Walked away, told myself it didn't matter". It is significant that several students reported physically walking away from the situation, disengaging from classroom discussions and not attending certain classes to avoid foreseeable racial animosity.

Rationalisation, through a 'need to be strong' discourse was a common strategy to cope with shame experiences where race/ethnicity was invoked: "Told myself to keep calm. That they do not know me at all"; "I just remembered that I had to get the work done & there was no time to dwell on the shame"; "I stuck to what I believed was the right thing to do"; "Had to channel the guilt into the reality that race is not a choice and that I can't change that I am White but I can change my thoughts and actions" and "I just told myself I can handle this and I'll be fine".

One student portrayed a reparative stance; however, this was less frequently reported in the survey data: "I was initially angry at the accusation, but thought better of retaliation. Instead, I apologised for unintentionally hurting the Black student". This short vignette demonstrates how reproach – "accusation" – often triggers anger. However, by apologising the student shows capacity for empathy toward the 'other' which is characteristic of the depressive position.

7.10.5. Synopsis: Shame about race and the 'threatened student' position

Table 22: *Race-related shame: The 'threatened student' position*

Shame trigger: Race Student position: The threatened student	
Discourses	Racial hatred on campus; history matters; whose voice counts?; the shame of being White; Wits is not a safe space to talk about race; the need to be strong
Positioning of the 'self'	The 'racist self'; The 'threatened self'
Positioning of the 'other'	The 'vengeful other'
Shame features identified	Language and professional identity can feel threatening and excluding; Anger and hatred; reproach and revenge; the intergenerational transmission of trauma; reparation; identity
Key stories	'stupid and stinky'; 'racial hatred'; 'I don't understand Afrikaans'; 'others find it very awkward'; 'I can't speak fluently in isizulu'; 'you as a White researcher'; 'shame of being born White'; 'disregarded for being White'; 'these White bitches'; 'we were a multiracial group'
Situation management	Withdrawal; reproach deadlocks characterised by anger, hatred and revenge

7.11. Synopses of shame triggers and chapter summary

In this chapter, I have shown that participants constructed the following seven shame triggers that seemed common to the university student experience: shame about failing, comparison to peers, being ridiculed, being rejected, acts of omission and commission, class, and race. For each shame trigger I explored how students used discourse to position the 'self' and 'others' and how the shame situation was managed or defended against. I have illustrated a core conflicted student position for each shame trigger which represents the shame gap because shame lies within sites of ambivalence around idealised constructions. A synopsis of each shame trigger and associated student position follows.

When failing is a source of shame, the tension or shame gap seemed to lie in constructions of the 'model' versus the 'real' student positions. Consequently, failing seemed to trigger conflict and primitive fears of shameful inadequacy and abandonment. The core discourses of 'hard work' and 'the need to be strong' represented agency that characterised the 'model student' position. This talk was used to distance feelings of shameful inadequacy and construct a 'capable self'; guaranteed of success at university. The precarity of the 'model student' position was most evident in portrayals of the 'blindsided self'. All students appeared to agree on the imperative of 'hard work' to succeed at university, however, the reality of barriers to success, and of failing as a normal part of the university journey, were not integrated by most students. For this reason, these discourses, as well as the 'make your parents proud' discourse, seemed to reinforce feelings of shame. The construction of the evaluative gaze also fuelled feelings of being judged by 'others' and for many this resulted in the need to hide experiences of failing, withdrawal (including physical withdrawal) or vilification of 'others' through projection. Withdrawal was often characterised by splitting of an adequate and inadequate 'self'.For the 'comparison' shame trigger, the core discourses of 'the competitive edge', 'the evaluative gaze', and the 'BA General degree, collectively represented a 'competitive student' position. This position was characterised by inferiority resulting from upward comparisons and, occasionally, superiority from downward comparisons. The ambivalence and precarity of the 'competitive student' position was demonstrated through evidence of the use of primitive defences, namely splitting (stupid/clever, ugly/beautiful, shabby/stylish and winners/losers) and projection. Rationalisation through discourses of 'the need to be strong' and 'camaraderie' were common coping strategies. Discourses of 'camaraderie' and the supportive 'other' were used to construct a more 'collaborative student' position when facing competition. Collaboration seemed to facilitate receiving support through the formation of an in-group thereby aiding metabolising of shame. In contrast, constructions of 'the odd one out' and 'hostile others' reinforced the alienating effect of competition among students. Avoidance, withdrawal and self-reproach were also common strategies employed to manage shame triggered by comparison. However, several students demonstrated an ability to metabolise shame triggered by comparison – through mourning the loss of not always winning but still feeling like a 'good enough' student.

The shame of 'being ridiculed'. At face value, the prevalent discourses of 'I was made a fool of' and 'wilful shaming' portrayed a 'humiliated student' position. Talk was used to construct the 'self' as a victim

and the ‘other’ as ridiculing. The ‘I should have known’ discourse also served to reinforce impossibly high standards imposed by ‘others’. However, through exploring the plausible contradictions in these stories another picture began to emerge. Talk of ‘imposed’ standards represent idealised images of a cherished ‘knowledgeable student’ position which, when not attainable, was defended against through the ‘humiliated student’ position. This proposition is corroborated in the data by split representations emerging from the shame gap of the ‘knowledgeable student’ position. A knowledgeable student is a student who comes across as well-informed, intelligent, learned and well-read. A knowledgeable student will therefore be admired and honoured by peers and staff alike. A knowledgeable student will also not feel needy dependence on another. The discourses of ‘I feel inadequate’, ‘I don’t know the answers’, ‘whose voice counts?’ and ‘face talk’ therefore reinforced the precarity of a desired ‘knowledgeable student’ position. The tension lies in difficulties integrating the ambivalent position of ‘not knowing’ and learning. Students felt that they are either knowledgeable or ignorant – there seemed to be no room for a student who is learning and may make mistakes and feel a bit foolish. A student is either knowledgeable and sufficiently eloquent to prove it or “stupid” (“sooo dumb”) and inarticulate. These splits indicated that unconscious striving seems to embody a demanding superego which fuels the shame of ‘never being enough’ and ‘never knowing enough’. It is possible that ‘wilful shamers’ and ‘the bullying group’ then become, at least in part, shame scapegoats who are used to create distance from feelings of inadequacy. The contagion of shame is also apparent through peers who are portrayed as a bullying group and/or a group of silent bystanders who fear that their turn to be exposed is next. Discourses of ‘face talk’ reinforced constructions of how powerful negative feelings like shame and inadequacy must be denied at university. Only a handful of students leveraged ‘others’ as a refuge in the mess of the imperfect ‘self’ learning and growing at university.

In the ‘being rejected’ theme, the core discourses of ‘being alone on campus’, ‘having no friends’ and ‘being rejected/betrayed’ represent the ‘isolated student’ position. This talk positioned the ‘self’ as vulnerable to the judgement of others and alienated at university. These discourses fuelled shame ranging from feeling unseen and insignificant to unlovable and defective. In some instances, there was an inability to experience connection with others, even in the presence of empathetic ‘others’. Explicit discourses of ‘withdrawal and cutting-off relationships’ appeared to position the ‘isolated student’ position as a choice, and/or necessary in order to succeed at university. In these instances split representations of education and relationships at university were presented in which education was portrayed as incommensurate with relationships. However, woven throughout the data was a longing for connection. The central fault line or shame gap when rejection is a source of shame therefore lies in a student’s desire for connection but inadvertently finding themselves isolated.

When acts of omission and commission were the sources of shame, the discourses of ‘my bad’ and ‘the need to be strong’ were used to position an ‘agentic, responsible student’ who is both willing and able to undertake reparative measures in the future. Although shame did at times co-exist with guilt in these stories, the ‘my bad’ discourse tended to reinforce feelings of guilt rather than shame.

In the category of class related shame, the core discourses of 'I don't have', 'poverty marks you' and 'whose voice counts?' collectively exemplify a 'disadvantaged student' position. These discourses reinforce constructions of a relentless evaluative gaze and shameful conspicuousness. The 'poor self' is often cast into the role of an unworthy 'self' who doesn't fit in at university. Some students were able to metabolise the shame of poverty and rationalise that class does not need to define your identity. However, the precarity of the 'disadvantaged student' position or the shame gap was most evident in constructions of 'Wits is elite' and 'whose voice counts?' These discourses were used to position belonging to Wits as a desired ideal clouded by the daily reality that poorer students often feel disadvantaged and powerless (voiceless) at Wits, especially compared to their middle-class counterparts. Students who were pulled into discourses of the 'disadvantaged student' position were faced with the dilemma of feeling unable to compete with peers.

When race featured as the focus of shame, the discourses of 'racial hatred on campus', 'history matters', 'the shame of being White', and 'whose voice counts?' were used by students to construct a 'threatened student' position characterised by racial threat. These discourses were employed to position a devalued and excluded 'self' on campus. The 'threatened student' position was evident in two different ways. Firstly, the discourses of 'the shame of being White' and 'history matters' were used to construct a vengeful Black 'other'. Secondly, discourses of 'whose voice counts?' and the positioning of a threatened 'self' represented constructions of the intergenerational transmission of shame, stemming from apartheid. The 'threatened' student position exacerbates racial polarities and seems to fuel a reproach deadlock with accusations shifting back and forth between Black and White students. Avoidance and withdrawal, including physical withdrawal and non-participation, were the dominant coping strategies employed by students. There were, however, intermittent traces of the reparative 'self' in the data which provides a window of hope around students' ability to metabolise shame about race.

In summary, I have argued that every shame trigger represents a conflicted site in which students' ideations of ideal studentship – both academic and social – are at times disrupted, triggering shame. I have called these conflicted positionings the 'shame gap' because the gap between positions is the site where shame is triggered Additionally, these disruptions were symptomatic of conflicted positionings within the 'self' and/or the 'student self' in relationship to 'others' at university. The situation management data was particularly informative about the impact of shame on student wellbeing and relationships. It demonstrated the construction of an evaluative gaze which fuels the shame experience. At times it was the 'self' who was doing the 'watching' and at times the 'other', however, either way, it tended to result in the need to defend the 'self' when a situation triggered feelings of shame. In the 'shame about failing' category it was argued that employing discourses of 'hard work' and 'the need to be strong' at times exacerbates student shame when failure is experienced, thereby disrupting the 'model student' position. With regards to the 'comparison to peers' shame trigger, I contended that the conundrum of desiring the competitive edge results in a 'competitive student' position fuelled by discourses of comparison to peers that often negate the value of collaboration. I further argued that constructions of 'shame about being ridiculed' actually

represent a precarious ‘knowledgeable student’ position lending itself to the contagion of shame and fear amongst students. The three aforementioned shame triggers namely, failing (the ‘model student’ position), comparison to peers (the ‘competitive student’ position) and being ridiculed (the ‘knowledgeable student’ position) together represented an unattainable picture of ideal studentship. I argued that poverty felt like a shameful source of affliction leaving some students feeling unable to compete with peers and resulting in a ‘disadvantaged student’ position. I further argued that shame about race positioned both Black and White students as ‘threatened’, raising questions of whose voice counts and who rightfully belongs at Wits. Stories of ‘shame about rejection’ were the most personal in the data and were symptomatic of an ‘isolated student’ position. The shame triggered by these conflicted student positionings tended to be managed by unhelpful shame coping strategies such as avoidance, withdrawal, self-reproach, projection and splitting.

CHAPTER 8 – PART 3 FINDINGS: Portraits (in-depth, psychosocial qualitative strand)

8.1. Introduction to portraits of shame: In-depth psychosocial interviews

In Chapter Six – findings from Study Part 1 – I demonstrated the 'what' of student shame experiences. Chapter Seven – Study Part 2 – was used to unpack 'how' students construct their shame experiences, to identify common shame triggers, and, to some extent, to begin to answer the 'why' of student shame experiences. In other words, *why* students invested in particular subject positions over others. However, the ability to ascertain the 'why' in Part Two was largely dependent on the amount of detail that participants provided in their stories as well as the recognition of patterns across the data. The findings showed that discourses were used to portray a number of conflicted positionings of the 'self' and the 'other' and that positionings were, to some extent, associated to the type of shame trigger. However, because of the type of data collection instruments used, Parts 1 and 2 of the study lacked explanatory power – and could only provide a limited understanding of the 'why' of student shame. However, the findings from Part 3 of this study, which used the psychosocial framework outlined in chapter four, provided more in-depth understandings of the reciprocal effects of shame at the micro, meso and macro-levels and in so doing built on Study Parts 1 and 2. The findings for this chapter are presented as ten portraits or case studies, crafted from the in-depth interviews conducted with students on campus. As you read the portraits hold in mind the significance of the psychosocial subject who is a unique mix of the emotionally invested discursive and the psychoanalytically defended subject. Each of the ten in-depth interviews was therefore analysed to explore subject positions within social discourses relevant to the current student context. The analysis of defences was prioritised in order to explore unconscious dynamics that impacted the student's relationships to external reality and their engagement in socially shared situations and meanings. Also, note the role of personal history in understanding the *why* of the student shame experience. Importantly, recall that a unique pseudonym has been used for each participant and identifying information has been disguised as far as possible without compromising the 'truth' of the story.

8.1.1. Portrait 1 – Nofoto

Nofoto is a first-year Black, female student in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand. She grew up in a close-knit family in a small town, surrounded by extended family members, friends and neighbours. Despite not being graduates themselves, Nofoto's parents highly prize a university education. She recalls her parents' words, "education, like, surely, it will get you somewhere …". Nofoto's parents and sister are an integral part of her "support system" and "without them, I don't know, like, how would I survive and all that? … they just play a very important role". Nofoto consistently

portrayed a highly nurturing and supportive parental 'other'. However, Nofoto also draws on a discourse of growing independence from her family of origin:

> …yeah, being on my own, you know, like, my parents not being here, and I can't be calling them all the time and saying, no, like, I'm struggling, I'm not coping and all that. So, like, that has been very difficult, you know … I have to figure out…things out [sic] on my own times … Like, I believe I can solve my problems. If then I can't [solve my problems], that's when I go to them or …
>
> It feels like you [sic] alone and nobody is there to come to your rescue. So, like, you need to figure it out, if you wanna do this or if you can do this or you can't.

In the vignettes above, Nofoto draws on a developmentally appropriate discourse of independence with a 'self' who is depicted as moving from levels of parental dependence to greater independence. This discourse seems to be used to buffer Nofoto's anxieties about her abilities to cope on her own at university. Nofoto also draws on a discourse of 'Wits is a big university' and admits that she feels intimidated but again uses the discourse of her growing independence to position a coping 'self': "good because it makes me to feel independent in a way". Additionally, Nofoto has internalized several good objects who are models of healthy coping. For example, her sister, who has successfully completed a university degree and, in Kleinian (1997) terms, likely represents the good breast or a prototype of maternal goodness, patience and generosity. Nofoto portrays her sister as an enriching object, who instils hope and confidence in her ability to navigate university:

> Well, I'm motivated. Like, she inspires me. Like, even when I feel down, she's, like, the first person I would call. You know, like, um, I'm overwhelmed and all that and then she would tell me it's how it is, it's how life is but then you have to hold on. It's gonna be worth it at the end. You know, like, there are obstacles along the way, and then, sometimes, you feel like, you know what? This is not cut out for me but then just hold on. Like, she's like that. She's…she's so inspirational, she's motivating …

According to Klein (1975a) "It is these phantasies and instinctual needs that so enrich the primal object that it remains the foundation for hope, trust and belief in goodness" (p. 180). The countertransference feeling was that, like her sister, I too wished I could protect Nofoto and provide help along the way. At the end of the interview I felt like hugging Nofoto and telling her what a huge success she already was. The feeling was so pervasive during the interview that I did in fact say as much once the audio recording was switched off. I interpreted this as my phantasy of being the nurturing mother that was unconsciously aroused by Nofoto during the interview. Nofoto was warm, humble and engaging and portrayed a mature, brave 'self' who draws on the support of others.

However, using a Kleinian lens, even in the depressive position – which characterised Nofoto's shame experiences – one remains susceptible to anxieties around ambivalence, guilt and loss. Therefore, despite

Nofoto's introjected loving objects, she experiences Wits and university education as an ideal object which triggers some persecutory anxiety and the threat of impending shame as evidenced in three ways during the interview. Firstly, her portrayal of a friendship gone wrong because of envy of her association with Wits, secondly, the fear of "messing up" at university and thirdly, interacting with "intimidating" lecturers and 'watching' peers.

Firstly, Nofoto narrates how going to university has provoked the envy of an "ex-friend" from school. Nofoto experienced conflict with this friend after expressing concern that the friend was being negatively influenced by peers. The friend – who attends a local college – interprets Nofoto's concern as a form of one-upmanship. She further accuses Nofoto of "making myself better" because of "going to Wits and all that":

> Well, if other people can see that as a threat…I mean, like, it is true that Wits is a better institution. Like, it is…yeah, it is best ranked, yeah, across Africa, I…I think and then why should I feel bad about it? I mean, I worked hard to get here.

Some defensiveness is evident in Nofoto's comment 'I worked hard to get here', implying that, at times, she may see herself as undeserving of belonging to a "best ranked" university – a fear that she may harbour when she feels she is not coping. This is the only time that Nofoto invokes the 'hard work' discourse. She further reports that 'other' friends who are also at university "don't have a problem with that and they see [it] as something motivating because of Wits's status". Nofoto positions herself and her friends at other universities as "at the same level". In other words, going to university allows one to enjoy an experience of triumph and superiority, feelings which can also be difficult to manage. This reinforces a split of students who are deserving/belonging and undeserving/not belonging, with a 'self' who falls in the former category.

Secondly, Nofoto positions the 'other' well-meaning people back in her home community as exerting a form of societal pressure on her in relation to her university performance. The indirect implication in the extract below is that if you "mess up" you will be a public failure and lose social standing in the eyes of the community: that is shameful.

> … even the family members, when…when I went home to visit, how is school? Like, are you doing well and all that? You know you're gonna pass. So, like, you…joh…joh, man, pressure. They're just putting much pressure on you and…yeah. Even the society, the neighbours, you know, are like it's how they are. How is school? How is Jo'burg? So, like, [LAUGHS] it…it's overwhelming at times because what if I mess up? What if I don't come back? You know, like, those thoughts …

I have called Nofoto's discourse of pressure from society, 'society is the baddie', because it emerged as a dominant theme throughout the interview. There is some evidence in the data that the aforementioned

"pressure" from 'society' and 'the neighbours' is somewhat projective in nature because, when asked how she would feel if she "messed up", Nofoto reported:

> Disappointing. Actually, disappointing, like, to me, firstly, because I have, like, yeah, goals that I need to achieve and I need to achieve them, like, in record time, you know, according to my timeline.

Nofoto's repetition of pressured words like "I need to achieve" and having a "timeline" for success are indicative of a 'self' who feels pressurised to succeed and achieve high standards at university. It is suggested that the 'society is the baddie' discourse is employed by Nofoto to help manage the uncertainty inherent in the education process and the potential shame of failing, by projecting this felt pressure onto 'society'. However, Nofoto also acknowledges that she will be the first person to be "disappointed" should she fail. This is suggestive that Nofoto's educational ideals are not coloured by an omnipotent ideal but are more aspirational in nature, reflective of an aspired-to ideal. This is indicative of less rather than more shame. Put another way, although Nofoto splits the pressuring 'other' (society) and a 'self' who feels pressure, she is also able to bring the two ideas together at times.

Thirdly, Nofoto's talk about difficulties interacting with lecturers who look "intimidating" seems to indicate intermittent persecutory anxiety and feelings of shame. Here's an example of this discourse, called 'you're intimidating':

> … the lecturers, they…they…they don't even know me. Well, to be honest, um, it's good and bad. Well, in…in a way…in a bad way, it's that it's hard to…to engage with them, you know, because some look intimidating and all that and then, in a way, it is good because it makes me to feel independent in a way, like, to get used to this thing because it's how life begins. Like, when you move to another place, you [sic] gonna meet new people and some people will…will not even care about yourself, about where you come from, and what you want. So it's about, yeah, being independent.

By using the word "intimidating", Nofoto alludes to imagery of frightening persecutory objects which many students seemed to bring into interactions with lecturers and fellow students. Psychoanalytically this is suggestive of reproachful objects that have been introjected (Temperley, 2001). This idea is corroborated by Nofoto's response to my follow-up question about what an "intimidating" lecturer would look like:

> I don't know how to explain it but some just look intimidating, like, you can't even ask questions because they look intimidating or maybe you feel a bit shy because of the…the other students in class and all that …

An "intimidating" lecturer seems difficult to describe and what's more, Nofoto alludes to the idea that it is not only lecturers who are intimidating but the watchful gaze of "other students in class" is too. This is suggestive of a 'self' who feels daunted and at times, frightened in the university classroom. The 'self' feels intimidated and a "bit shy" in front of peers, however, the shame is projected outward onto an

‘intimidating other’ - the split is represented by an “intimidating” other and a “shy” self. Although this brief comment about shyness may seem to be tangential, especially because Nofoto herself minimises the experience (“a bit shy”), this idea is corroborated later in the data when Nofoto portrays introversion as inferior. Nofoto’s portrait is one of the few examples in this study of a student who engages directly with the complexities of dependency on lecturers and the Wits system and the transition to becoming a more independent person that characterises young adulthood. Although there were traces of persecutory anxiety, Nofoto also speaks from a more depressive position as she is able to encapsulate the ambiguity of being unknown, dependent on lecturers and developing a sense of independence, in the face of her insecurities.

Nofoto returns to draw heavily on the discourse of ‘society is the baddie’, however, this permutation of the discourse is around pressure to ‘conform’. The previous configuration was of pressure to ‘succeed’. This part of the conversation begins when Nofoto conceptualises shame as, “when somebody, like, feels isolated because of he or she did something that is violating acceptable behaviour. Like to the society, you know”. When asked to give a personal example, Nofoto initially provided a hypothetical shame scenario of a lecturer asking a question and how “some people may feel ashamed that they got it wrong” and “society would perceive that as wrong”. Using a hypothetical scenario to paint ‘society as the baddie’ was possibly a strategy to create distance between the ‘self’ and the shame experience which is suggestive of some defensiveness. This seems likely because this particular scenario seems close to Nofoto’s heart as she has already talked about ‘intimidating’ others at university. However, after some hedging Nofoto presented a personal example of this type of shame trigger involving a fellow student:

> Well, it wasn’t really orally but then, like, we were given a task in class. So, like, we were in a pair, like, we had to do a task in pairs, we were two, and then, like, I got an answer wrong and then I felt disappointed, like, ashamed, because it was a very easy question, then I just thought too much about it and got it wrong. So, yeah.

When I asked Nofoto “What did you think she [the other student in the pair] was thinking about you?” she responded:

> I don’t know, to be honest, but most people…and sometimes, to me, it occurs, it crosses my mind because some questions are very easy or some yeah, like, some perceptions or views are just easy but then, like, when you think about it too much, that’s when you get it wrong. So maybe she thought what’s wrong with her? Like, was that really necessary or…? Yeah, so something like that.

To ask what’s ‘wrong’ with the ‘self’ is characteristic of shame ideation because it represents engagement of the whole ‘self’. The question in the story was deemed “easy” which seems to have increased Nofoto’s sense of personal exposure, resulting in greater levels of felt reproach concerning incompetence. “Was that really necessary?”, “What’s wrong with me?” and “they will perceive me as some sort of an idiot” are ideas that contradict Nofoto’s otherwise consistently held position of not feeling pressured to conform to “society”: “let me just be myself”. This contradiction is significant because it

shows that the discourse of 'society is the baddie' is not always effective in warding off shame. This contradiction therefore demonstrates a split between a pressurising, demanding 'society' – with high standards – versus a 'true self' who desires authenticity. It is suggested that at the juncture of this split is where the shame fracture lies. The less acknowledged feeling is the burden of managing the shame gap between the ideal and the reality of university experience. However, some respite from shame is likely achieved when 'society' becomes the persecutor/the inflictor of the burden and the 'true self' moves into the position of the proverbial shame scapegoat. The 'society is the baddie' discourse reflects the urge to purge oneself of the burden of the pressure to perform at university

The shame in Nofoto's hypothetical scenario also includes constructions of the evaluative gaze: "other people saw that". Portrayals of a watched 'self' are suggestive of ambivalence around the potential exposure of a less than ideal 'self' at university. It is an uncomfortable feeling. However, Nofoto manages the ambivalence of having a 'real' or flawed 'self' exposed, for example "Like, we have to be wrong along the way in order to get it right. That's how we learn, right?" Nofoto's ambivalence confirms how humiliating getting it 'wrong' in class can be for a student who is trying to forge their own identity. Embedded within the discourse of 'society is the baddie' is the split of a True Self ('be true to yourself') versus a False Self (rather than having to "pretend" to be someone you're not). A discourse of a True Self is proffered by Nofoto as a 'solution' to the conundrum of felt pressure to succeed and perform. In other words, a True Self is used to mitigate a 'self' who is vulnerable to the negative judgement of others. For example, in the extract below Nofoto describes a pushing back against 'society' and finding the courage to retain her own identity:

> So, at times, you feel like, no, you know what? Let me just be myself because I've seen other people, like trying to change their i…identities in order to fit in. So …yeah. I tried, um, to find myself, you know, to be happy the way I am and, eh, it actually worked because I now have friends that are comfortable with me, like, they know who I and where I come from than being with people who…who I have to pretend when I'm wi…with them. So, yeah.

Imagery of being true to oneself also served to position Nofoto as less vulnerable to racial discrimination at university. This was demonstrated when I asked Nofoto how it felt to be interviewed by a White woman for this study:

> Interviewer: So what do you think…I…I'm sitting here as a…as a White woman, um, and you're a Black woman. Uh, what do you think, uh, you know, potentially I'm thinking about you then? You said that your…your classmate or your roommates always thinks [sic] the White tutorial people think that they [sic] better.
>
> Nofoto: Well, what you think about me does not really matter to me because you may think negative things about me and, at the end of the day, I'm gonna start changing or I'm gonna start affecting myself because of your perceptions and those things m…may

> not be correct. So it's how people are. Like, maybe somebody ca…may call me an idiot because I'm Black and then I take that thing and put it in me and live it. So that thing is…is damaging because, the next time, I won't be able to talk to another person because that person will think I'm stupid because of one person that said I'm stupid. So, yeah, what…what…what you think about me does not really matter. Yeah.

Nofoto's use of the word "damaging" to describe racial stereotyping such as being called an "idiot because I'm Black", hints at feelings of shame and unworthiness that racial slurring can trigger. However, by positioning the 'self' as valuing authenticity and pushing against society some measure of control is retained and shame about race and other vulnerabilities are kept at bay.

The most explicit split representation in Nofoto's interview was, however, her use of an introvert/extrovert dichotomy and portrayals of introverts as socially inept:

> Interviewer: So what sort of, um, groups of people at Wits do you think experience more shame than others? Do you think there are some groups that do? Some people, some kinds of people?
>
> Nofoto: Yeah, introverts. Because they can't even socialise, they can't even, yeah, engage with other people. So I feel like, if every maybe they…they've done wrong, they would feel really, really depressed other than somebody who's just used to people, you know. Even when you get something wrong, you…you just deal with it. So, like, it's easier to deal with that thing, you know, ju…just to tackle it. So, yeah. … Yeah. Because you won't a…you won't even be able to consult with the tutors …with the lecturers and all of that. So, yeah, you [sic] the one who's damaged or who's affected, in a way. So, yeah.

Nofoto talks about the importance of "engaging" with others, mostly in the context of being willing to ask others for help at university. She positions introverts as unable to effectively engage others and consequently not receive much-needed help and support. Asking for help is a significant example in a study of shame because it represents an acknowledgement of need and some awareness of potentially shameful feelings of dependency. That there is a part of Nofoto that also experiences shameful feelings of dependency on 'others' for acknowledgement and support is evident by allusions to herself as "shy" in front of peers. However, these more dependent parts of herself are, at times, denied and substituted by a 'self' who is extroverted and able and willing to engage at university. Introversion therefore symbolises social dependency and inadequacy in students and, must remain 'out there'. For example, Nofoto portrays a fellow student who is failing but unwilling to ask for help, however, the implication in this story is that her friend is unable to acknowledge feelings of dependency:

> They're studying, they're progressing, like, they're passing th…their modules and here you are, you may be failing or you are failing but then, like, you can't even ask help

> from them because they know, you know. So, like, she would use, um, excuses about, no, because their parents, like, are privileged, maybe others are accountants. So, like, that's how they kn…but, if you, as…as….as a person, you…you see that you're struggling, then you ask to get help, like, despite of how other person is …

The plot in this story has an interesting twist because Nofoto's friend uses the "privilege" of 'others' as an "excuse" to disengage rather than confront her difficulties. The story therefore confirms that multiple discourses and positions are employed by students to defend against feelings of inadequacy and dependency, when triggered in the university context.

However, it is in Nofoto's own core shame story called "high expectations – led to disappointments" that her own ambivalence around failing and dependency needs comes together. Whilst Nofoto talks freely about becoming independent from familial ties, it is the discourse of newfound dependency needs at university which seem to be conflictual and remain more implicit. Nofoto narrated failing a test and experiencing shame because she "had high expectations, you know, and that led to disappointments". Nofoto therefore draws on a discourse of 'the blindsided self' which serves to position discrepant views of the 'self'. Her two primary responses to the incident were depression and hiding. Depression is evidenced in that she tried to avoid thinking about the situation and "slept" as much as possible. This suggests how difficult it is for students to process failing and falling short of ones ideals. Hiding was evidenced in that Nofoto only told her two closest friends several days after the event: "I think I told them after three days". However, Nofoto was able to process the shame and loss and also reached out to a second-year student who had successfully passed the subject. Through her engagement with this fellow student she experienced emotional support, offers of help and gained the ability to reflect and "just laugh" about the situation. Nofoto portrays a 'self' that coped due to a willingness to acknowledge dependency needs and reach out for help. The data indicates that Nofoto's feelings of shame are transient because the subject at hand was the focus rather than the whole 'self' being judged as a failure – which would be characteristic of more long-lasting shame: "I realised where I was lacking or where I was struggling".

Further evidence of Nofoto's ability to integrate loss is her acceptance of the passing away of her grandmother and a close friendship that went awry. Nofoto recalls the pain she felt at the loss of these significant relationships. These losses seemed to have strengthened Nofoto's ability to negotiate current difficulties and setbacks: "Well, I've been through a lot in my life and I've got used to such things, you know, like, yeah, being disappointed and all that". Throughout Nofoto's interview there is a constant sense of grappling with complex issues of loss. Even when speaking about contextual issues like the #FeesMustFall movement, Nofoto is able to conceptualise and speak about the 'sadness' of the protestors. Identifying the sadness of students and not just anger and frustration is suggestive of some understanding of the mourning process:

> …and they're sad, in a way because they want to improve their standards of living but then they can't do that because they're being oppressed, in a way so…and they feel like

> they need to, like…they need to act on how they feel in order for their concerns to be heard, you know, their grievances to be considered. So, like, they need to act on it. Yeah … when you are alone, you realise how things are, like, because when…whenever you're in a group, maybe somebody may trigger your anger.

Nofoto further builds on this idea of students' loss as a sense of betrayal, presumably by government:

> Like it…it…it's really…it's really bad. Like, you can't really say I have a right to have a house but then you can't give me the keys to that house. So that means I don't have a right at all.

In this excerpt she refers to students' hopes (the house), but they lack access, in this case the academic and emotional support required to navigate the university journey (the keys) and empathises with their disappointment and anger. In summary of Nofoto, according to Miller (1995a) self-consciousness can be integral to the shame experience and although Nofoto seems to experience some self-consciousness – particularly in classroom interactions and when failing a test – her introjected objects are largely felt to be loving and not coloured by reproach. Thus, there is not a severe sense of threat by internal objects as characterizes the paranoid-schizoid position. Nofoto is able to maintain a helpful mental representation of the 'self' which is a sign of ego integration. The work of mourning has resulted in growth. Functioning predominantly within the depressive position has afforded Nofoto resiliency, in which splits, although sometimes present, do not have to be rigidly maintained.

8.1.2. Portrait 2 – Charles

Charles is a young Black man from a significantly economically disadvantaged family and community. Charles lost both his parents by his mid-teens. His higher education trajectory has been beset with difficulty and failure. I have called Charles' core shame story 'Alone and failing'. Several years prior to this interview Charles had commenced a degree in engineering at Wits but was academically excluded by mid-year of his first year of study. He had failed some subjects, deferred others and was "advised to take the rest of the year off". The official term for this is academic exclusion. The following year Charles enrolled at a college and "was working my way back to Wits". During his time at college, Charles successfully appealed to the Wits Re-admissions Committee, won the appeal and registered at Wits the following year. At the time of the interview he was in first year, however, he had no source of funding, mounting debt, was experiencing anxiety issues and it seemed unlikely that he would meet the performance requirements to continue into second year. He briefly mentioned being "worried" about his current "performance" because of "studying on conditions".

I found it difficult to piece Charles' portrait together. His story lacked clarity and nuance and was like looking at the knots and loose ends at the back of a tapestry. At times Charles' speech was incoherent as he moved back and forth between story fragments. For the first thirty minutes he virtually spoke without interruption. By the time I began to steer the interview I had developed a sense of the severity of his

situation and, his vulnerability. I softened my questions, hedging more than usual when asking about feelings of shame. Charles did not particularly attempt to engage me during the unfolding of his story and it was only during analysis that I realized he had in effect presented his treatise to me, providing copious amounts of detail to present his case. Would I be like his peers who "misunderstand" his situation or, worse, judge and accuse him of making "excuses"?

My feelings towards Charles moved from empathy to pain as I experienced Charles' pain of abandonment and the shame of his failure and poverty. The incident that triggered an awareness of pain was the death of a beautiful crested barbet which had been sheltering in my garden at the time I was analysing the interview. The fledgling showed no outward signs of injury but was unable to fly. As a keen birder I have had my fair share of successful fledgling rescues; usually the parents feed the baby whilst it remains in a secure enough area and within twenty-four hours the fledgling gains enough strength to fly. However, this particular fledgling called for her parents for several hours using a characteristic vocal trill but to no avail. The next morning, the baby bird was still in the garden but was weak and had tucked her head under her wing. Concerned that there was still no sign of the parents I fed the fledgling using a tube and although she seemed to respond well, several hours later she died.

My imagery was of the abandoned baby bird relentlessly calling for her mother the afternoon before, but her call for help had been in vain as neither her mother nor father came to her rescue. She had been abandoned. The extent of my pain gave me a deeper understanding that I too was identifying with the abandoned baby bird. I then realized that my interviewee, Charles, was the baby bird. It is interesting to note that Charles recounted to me how a peer had used the analogy of how he should be able to "fly" to someone for help: "Then he was like, yes, I understand but there should be someone in your life that you have to fly to, someone who should help me with something". Charles' monotonous voice and repetitive speech were suggestive of the injurious nature of his personal history, his current circumstances and a hiding of emotional pain. Hiding signifies shame. However, Charles' predicament feels intractable because he is now not only hiding the pain of his early abandonment but also the pain of failure and academic exclusion.

The first half of Charles' interview was characterized by avoidance as there was a notable omission of the use of words like "failed", "failing" and "academic exclusion" when talking about his situation. It was only later in our conversation – at my prompting for clarity regarding what had transpired in his first year – that Charles began to speak more directly about his situation. For example, he then used the term "academic exclusion" rather than "taking a year off". It is also possible that as the interview progressed Charles felt more comfortable with me. However, there was also an absence of emotional content as Charles presented as somewhat numb. Avoidance is a significant finding because failure is associated with feelings of shame and is often accompanied by hiding behaviour (Morrison, 1998). For example, Charles was hiding from the shame of prior academic exclusion and positioned his year at college as all-positive:

> What can I use…like, how can I use everything that I've acquired as knowledge, experience, and everything that I have been exposed to better my life now?

This positivity appears defensive against the shame of public disgrace associated with academic exclusion and the threat of not being able to return to Wits. Charles depicts the year at college as a continuation to his degree rather than a disruption:

> So, I never stopped studying. Even right now, I don't stop studying in a sense that, when I study, that's the only time I feel happy, despite everything that is happening. It gives me hope.

The effect of positioning himself as actively studying towards his degree – even whilst not registered at Wits – serves to preserve the idealised object, Wits, and that of becoming a Wits graduate. For the most part Charles seems to experience bypassed shame, evident because he shows some cognitive awareness of multiple shame connected events but demonstrates minimal awareness of resultant emotional pain (Lewis, 1971). It is proposed that idealisation serves a defensive function to ward off unconscious shame and anxiety and mitigate the harshness of losing his parents, ensuing homelessness, poverty and academic failure and exclusion. Below are a number of quotations which demonstrate Charles' idealisation of Wits and becoming a Wits graduate:

> … Wits, to me, in South Africa, is the only platform to complete the picture that I have painted for myself.

> The fear…the fear of losing Wits education because …it is the most important than everything.

> I don't show the skills of a professional-to-be. But I can change everything for the better because Wits does not only grant a degree or something but it grooms an individual to be an exceptional being, maybe, in future, in the workplace and with…

> I believe that I'm getting closer, it's just that I only have to acquire a degree first and then take action.

Charles' talk of 'Wits is elite' portrays an overvaluation of a Wits education which seems to serve as a defence against anxiety that Wits is also an abandoning 'other', like his parents, and doesn't give him the "warmth" that he needs either. Of all the participants in the Shame Experiences Study, Charles' story most clearly demonstrates the elitism with which Wits is associated and the accompanying threat of losing this elite status: "Wits education is everything. Once you have a degree your life begins". Charles speaks of having to "cherish" the opportunity to study at Wits and that he fears "if I risk this opportunity, I don't know …". Charles portrays a Wits education as his only hope for a better future. Rather than being facilitative of effective functioning at university, however, idealisation seems to serve to maintain a split between the idealised object (Wits) and a small, impoverished 'self' in comparison. Feelings of inferiority arise from the experience of falling short of an ideal, which in turn triggers shame. For Charles, a Wits

education has likely been set up in place of the ego ideal (the ego ideal is that part of the superego which undertakes self-conscious appraisals). When discrepancies between self- appraisals and aspirations and lovability and competence exist, it generates shame that signals the threat of danger to attachments and to one's assessment of the 'self' regarding personal ideals. These discrepancies are evident in Charles' story through denial, splitting and projection to defend against shame. These defensive strategies will be demonstrated in firstly, Charles' avoidance of following up the status of his NSFAS application; secondly, his denial around a lack of sponsorship; and thirdly, fantasised identification with postgraduates whilst scapegoating undergraduates.

Firstly, Charles reports returning to Wits and commencing the academic year oblivious that NSFAS had rejected his funding application. "So, uh, one thing that I was not really aware of, uh, is that, uh, after registration, NSFAS rejected my application and everything". Charles had no other source of funding. "Then, from there, like, I started getting ongoing communication about how am I going to pay for my fees?" and "The debt was piling up, piling". Charles reported getting sick during this period, 'So I got sick in a sense that I had, uh, anxiety problem'… I'm sick but I don't really understand what is going on right now'. He deferred a test because he arrived late ("I got late for the test because I had a runny tummy and everything"), and, feeling confused and anxious, consulted a doctor at a local clinic and began attending weekly sessions for his anxiety. The doctor advised Charles to seek a 'social community' for support and prescribed sleeping tablets for insomnia. Charles believes that the 'NSFAS problem … made me to be more introverted'. Charles draws on the discourse of 'introverts versus extroverts', to try and make sense of his growing anxiety and sense of isolation at Wits. "I have a problem, as it, with personality, this year, because, uh, I am…like, from birth, I am an introverted person in a sense that, every time I need to do something, I have to be around the people that I really feel warmth and everything". However, Charles' ability to reach out to others is inhibited as he seems preoccupied with himself as defective in some way: "what is going on with me?, What is wrong with me?" The 'self' is focal in awareness, indicative of shame.

Secondly, upon realising that the NSFAS funding did not materialise, Charles approached an engineering company for sponsorship, however, despite no conclusive offer, Charles clings to the hope of receiving an offer that will secure his future:

> …I'm getting closer to my goal, as it, my dream because I was not really aware because, uh, [the engineering company], uh, recruitment team did activate an account. They said, like, they should…they said I should, uh, include a cover letter and some of my experiences, as it, what have I done up to this far, and then apply for a job so that the recruiters could have access to that and maybe they may hire or…I don't know what they would have for me.

Charles' positioning of himself as a recipient of financial support from the engineering company, despite no concrete offer, is further evidence of denial. The denial has serious consequences for his tenuous academic performance as he shifts his focus onto a "job": "started working more on preparing for a job,

than an exam but there is a very close relation between the two". Charles' mounting debt and anxiety are split off as he repeatedly returns to positioning himself in union with Wits, pushing reality out of his mind.

> …up to this point, I wouldn't have acquired this knowledge if it wasn't for the dream that I'm having and I wouldn't have come this far if it wasn't for the dream that I'm having. And I strongly believe that [the engineering company] also wouldn't have opened a door for me if it wasn't for this dream. So it is the only thing that drives me, the only thing that…makes me happy, and, every time I study, I study, I've, like…I have this faith that, okay, even if things are not going okay now but, should it happen or when it happens that I'm given a…an opportunity, I'm going to use everything that I've acquired to build a better future and everything.
>
> …should it happen that Wits allow [sic] me to register, I'm going to change my life and help my grandmother and build a better life.

Thirdly, Charles also used projection to align himself with the postgraduate experience and disown identification with current first-year peers. His academic world is split into postgraduates (who are experienced and with whom he desires common ground) versus first years (who are lacking his level of experience and are therefore likely to experience shame):

> So the only time I feel like, okay, now I can be in a position to socialise is when I communicate with someone who's doing postgrad [INDISTINCT] because, like, when we are…we discuss about the cause (sic), the future, and everything, we reach the common ground somehow and it makes me feel like, okay, yes, right now I feel better

Charles' interactions with postgraduates likely serve an identity imagery function. Identity imagery is often evoked in shame because of the self-focus of shame. This identity imagery allows Charles, in some sense, to perceive the postgraduate experience of 'others' as his own, thus leading to a type of duality of experience. Charles also seems to be experiencing some form of duality of experience in relation to admired Wits lecturers. During the interview, Charles made reference to two specific lecturers he admires and a quick google search revealed that one of the two hails from similar circumstances to Charles. However, despite seemingly impossible odds, the lecturer achieved success at university. Not only did Charles identify with the postgraduate experience but he also disidentified with the "younger stage" – first-year students. Charles associates shame with the first-year experience (when asked whether certain groups of people at Wits are more likely to experience shame than others). The contradiction is evident in that Charles is himself registered as a first-year student. However, despite currently being re-registered as a first-year student, he takes great pain to position himself as older, more experienced, responsible and 'not' a first year. The effect is to distance himself from feelings of shame, incompetency and dependency and project these onto first-year shame scapegoats:

> I'm not sure because I believe the shame that I'm experiencing is quite different because, like, right now, I'm twenty-two. Someone who's experiencing shame from high school, like, coming directly from high school to Wits will be different to the one that I've experienced because, like, I'm getting stronger and stronger, I've got a whole lot of experience than they do.

The defensive nature of identification with the postgraduate experience was further corroborated when Charles explained how he had focused on postgraduate course content during his stint at college, despite being a first year:

> because, like, I remember this year, uh, I was like, okay, I now see things differently, but I believe that the…the problem was that, last year, I focussed more on the postgrad content because, like, I was working my way back, as it…because, like, I was working my way up

This vicarious experience of himself as a postgraduate likely also serves as a fantasy gratification. However, the result is permeable boundaries of the self and confusion between fantasy and reality. Permeable boundaries also fuel shame (Lewis, 1971). Throughout the interview, Charles' positioning was predominantly characterized by paranoid-schizoid splitting which is evidence of ongoing confusion between fantasy and reality. When a more reality-based view emerges it must be quickly defended against. For example, when I asked Charles if there are times, at Wits, when he feels he needs to hide his story, Charles provided the following reality-based response: "…I don't know, how can I put this one? I don't show the skills of a professional-to-be". This short excerpt shows that Charles has some idea of reality – that he is not coping and risks academic exclusion for the second time. However, this position is quickly defended against and he promptly shifts position with the following: "…I can change everything for the better because Wits does not only grant a…grant a degree or something but it grooms an individual to be an exceptional being, maybe, in future, in the workplace …". Denial, by means of unwarranted optimism, was a common tactic used to smother doubts and questions about reality. This process – which involves splitting – seems to have the effect of maintaining Charles' uncertainty and anxiety as he is disconnected from a more coherent sense of himself and his situation.

However, Charles is not only disconnected from 'self' but also 'others'. Apart from identification with the postgraduate experience, the interpersonal dimension was largely unaccounted for in Charles' narrative. The omission seems symbolic of the absence of a personal support structure. In answer to my question about how other people at Wits see him, Charles took great pains to make a distinction between his two different first-year cohorts. This distinction is significant because Charles reported experiencing a greater sense of emotional well-being around his original cohort (his first registration), than currently: "I felt at home, even though I was disturbed" and "Everything … ja, everything was okay in [that year]". Charles' sense of loss of his original cohort was tangible during the interview:

> And the fact that, uh, the people I used to socialise with are no longer around me anymore, it's like…it becomes more difficult to discuss, as it, my future career or something like that.

Charles has experienced the loss of a cohort who are no longer "around" him. His original cohort has moved on, without him. He is separate, left with difficult feelings of rejection and abandonment. Losing a cohort seems to have exacerbated the public nature of failing a year at university, thus fuelling feelings of unworthiness and, when linked to his family history, of unlovability. There seems to have been a short window – prior to academic exclusion – where Charles interacted more comfortably with fellow students. This was likely because the cloud of shame and rejection triggered by failure and academic exclusion had not yet descended upon him. In his own way, Charles is grappling with these difficult feelings but ends up attributing them to social anxiety and introversion. He portrays an expectation of rejection from peers which seems to heighten feelings of shame. Shame begets shame as he feels shame for his feelings of being unloved and alone at university (Morrison, 1998). This idea is corroborated through Charles' story of being misunderstood by peers because of his socio-economic circumstances. The following discourse of poverty demonstrates feelings of exclusion, rejection and of being misunderstood as a result of poverty:

> Yes. They don't really get to everything, like…they…they don't understand the way I view life and the way, uh, I…I don't know, I've experienced life because, like, everything here, at Wits, is, like, moving too quick. You need this, then you consult person B and C, then you get it. Then, if it…let…let's say a students [sic] needs, um, money to buy a stationery or something like that, that is very important to them, they have, uh, someone to rely on or someone to rely to. So, should it happen that I come up with something like that, it sounds like an excuse or something like…like, nah, man, it's…you are not the first person to experience that or there should be someone because, like there was one…there was this one student who was like, man, I know that I'm experiencing problems. I don't want to make an excuse for that. I need to make a point that I work hard to get out of the situation. Then he was like, yes, I understand but there should be someone in your life that you have to fly to, someone who should help me with something. Then I was like there is no…there is no such person at the moment. So, like, if this person, uh, stressed the point that there should be someone then it shows how mi…how he misinterpreted everything that I'm going through, despite the fact that he has pity or shows pity for me and, like, no-one really understand [sic] what I'm going through, like, at a greater depth.

Charles' pain about being misunderstood is evident in his words: "they [his peers] don't understand the way I view life"; "he misinterpreted everything that I'm going through" and "no-one really understand what I'm going through". Charles' portrait demonstrates how bypassed and unacknowledged shame, triggered by failure, and exacerbated by poverty, can lock a person into a melancholic state leading to anxiety and despair. The result of Charles' withdrawal and 'hiding' is that it becomes difficult for the good

to be taken in from ‘others’ to support and nurture the ‘self’. In the following excerpt, Charles builds on the theme of being misunderstood through a discourse of ‘they don’t know me’:

> Interviewer: How do you understand shame and what…what does shame feel like for you? And why do you think…why do you think you feel shame? What sort [sic] of things do you feel shame for?
>
> Charles: Okay. Shame. Okay. Okay. I’m not really good at c…uh, like, with verbal communication and I think one other thing that contributed to that is that, sometimes, when I have to say something, I have to think it through first. So the fact that I don’t have that time to spend time with my thoughts, I don’t function well somehow in a sense that, every time I try to address my problems, they sound like an excuse. So it makes me feel like, even if I have to, uh, confront someone about my problems I’m not gonna put it in a way that it is, I mean, understandable. So…but, in so doing, it does contribute to the social anxiety thing because, like, I have to, like…for ev…every audience is different and every time I address a different audience, I should be in a good state to say what I have to say, what I need to say. So, uh, the fact that I ca…I…I don’t have…I didn’t have time to spend with myself and my thoughts, I lost…I, like…I would say I did not function but the fact that I’m getting help from the church, I have…I have come up with a strategy as how am I gonna change all this. Because, like, every time I have a problem, when, uh…like, I mean, your social group and everything, should it happen that I don’t have…I don’t get a chance to spend time with my thoughts, revitalise my inner demon I don’t function well. Every time I try to raise an important point or issue, it won’t come out well in a sense that it would sound like an excuse. So the more it happens that way, the more I feel like I don’t belong or, eish, I…I…I can’t…I don’t know, like…ja, I feel like I don’t believe, I feel like…I don’t know. How can I explain this right? I feel like, mm, everything that I will try to raise is an excuse, despite the fact that it is different, that’s how I feel.

A discourse of poverty positions the ‘self’ as weak, alone and shamefully dependent, the knowledge of which Charles tries to deny through a discourse of ‘hard work’. There is the one part of Charles that feels his history has hurt him – hurt his sense of a capable and supported self – which others do not understand. However, he denies this part of himself – does not face that he is hurt and in fact, may be too hurt to cope at university. The trouble is that he is in a double bind – to get the help and support he requires, he needs to admit he is not coping, but ‘not coping’ is divorced from his sense of self – it cannot be integrated, rather it is split off into sickness, anxiety and defended against with idealised dreams. Having to admit he is not coping would be so shameful and alien to the sense of ‘self’ constructed around being a capable ‘Wits student’. The fear is that admitting he is not coping will cause a complete collapse, so he keeps on defending.

Charles indicates that he is vaguely aware that he cuts off from his feelings and the confusion this creates in him – he experiences this as not having 'a chance to spend time with my thoughts'. He knows that when he cannot understand and come to terms with his experience, it 'revitalise[s] [his]inner demon', which is his knowledge that he isn't "function[ing] well" – so he avoids it. My questioning about his experience of shame put Charles straight in touch with the very feelings he defends against – and it has disorganized him – as can be seen in the incoherence of the narrative, unfinished sentences and frightening metaphors. Charles' verbal stammering and hesitancy is evidence that needing to continually justify himself is exhausting, feels threatening and it is most likely also difficult to talk with me about it too.

Charles is also feeling powerless regarding academic performance because he is not in a strong bargaining position and financially he does not have the ability to stand on his own two feet. Nor does he have a stronger parental figure to rely on, like other students have. I suggest that this sense of dire financial need is foundational to Charles' shame experience. This level of need leaves Charles feeling isolated, vulnerable and exposed and the defence against this often results in a refusal to recognize or to reveal the need for love and support. Weakness "relates to shame through the experience of need" (Morrison, 1998, p. 49). This suggestion is further confirmed through Charles' constant portrayal of himself as taking "responsibility" for his life, which seems to simultaneously give him a sense of agency and serve to remind him of his 'orphan status'. Four times during the interview he speaks of taking "responsibility" for himself. I have called this a discourse of 'independence' because it bears some relation to the discourse used by other participants, however, it also provides a unique perspective of what 'independence' looks like when one is financially deprived. The last time Charles used this phrase, he pronounced 'the only thing that keeps me going is that I can take responsibility of some of the things'.

8.1.3. Portrait 3 – Addison

Addison is a White first-year student in the Faculty of Humanities. He is the eldest of several siblings and positions himself as middle-class and struggling to cover his university expenses with "my own money". Early on in his interview Addison opened up about the painful memory of repeating Grade one:

> I don't know. Just, um, ja, it didn't…it doesn't seem like a big deal now but, like, it kind of really affected me having to repeat [the] grade, like I wasn't, like, clever enough or something.

Addison's sense of shame is evident in feelings of inferiority: "like I wasn't, like, clever enough". The whole 'self' is focal in awareness, judged and found inadequate. However, Addison's story indicates that he has attempted to understand and ameliorate this early shame experience; he rationalises how starting school at the young age of six was perhaps "a bit too early" and likely impacted his schooling trajectory. Addison's shame in Grade one was further exacerbated by peers teasing him about "being short". Underlying shame can also be experienced as feeling small and weak (Morrison, 1998). He also wasn't "very sporty" and lacked "co-ordination when it came to sports. So that also bothered me". His feelings of

shame therefore moved beyond the boundaries of academics and seeped into the domain of physical appearance and prowess. Addison's reflections on the trauma of childhood teasing seemed to help him make sense of current relational difficulties at university. Teasing has left Addison feeling different and weird, leading to ongoing feelings of insecurity around peers. Teasing also conjures up images of others who humiliate, judge and dismiss. Talking to the researcher about these shameful childhood experiences seemed to rekindle conflicted feelings for Addison: "it doesn't seem like a big deal now but…", "it seems silly" and "as silly as it sounds, it really bothered me". Addison's attempts to minimise his feelings of shame and his self-reproach likely only intensifies his shame (Morrison, 1998). It's as if Addison believes he should be 'bigger than that'. His admission that "… and, ja, I used to cry and stuff about it", is a touching reflection of how a young Addison wrestled with feelings of humiliation and hurt.

Towards the end of primary school Addison moved to a different geographical area and was home-schooled for several years. The implication is that Addison had minimal contact with his peer group and limited opportunities to develop his ability to relate to peers. Although he "really enjoyed" being home-schooled his results were not "good enough to get into university" so he began attending a "normal government school". However, his results were still not "quite good enough for varsity" and so he repeated still more subjects at "a small private school". The small environment afforded by a private school seemed to be a positive experience for Addison, enabling him to gain university entrance, "that was really great, and it just helped me prepare myself to be here [Wits]". However, Addison's childhood pattern of shameful inadequacy and fears of rejection seem to have played out intermittently during his first-year experience at Wits. The most pertinent example of this pattern is an extract taken from Addison's completed 'Shame experiences survey' where he describes approaching the Wits CCDU [Wits Counseling and Careers Development Unit] for support:

> [The] environment which is something that Wits could improve. Being in this environment could evoke a certain level of shame. Even the name CCDU sounds ghastly. I think they could do with renaming and rebranding themselves. I personally think they need a better marketing strategy and better PR but the first things that needs to change is their image. Image is a significant factor that can evoke or stop shame.

He adopted a polite, but scathing tone in the story. Although CCDU exists to provide student support, Addison positions it as an unsupportive, 'all bad', denigrated 'other'. In the process CCDU falls victim to a split representation. However, it was only through the interview and a psychosocial reading of the transcript that it became possible to posit suggestions as to why CCDU was experienced by Addison as shame provoking for students. The interview placed Addison's CCDU shame experience into context as follows:

> I…ja, I…I went there [INDISTINCT] beginning of the year, I was just struggle…struggling [INDISTINCT] academically, so I thought I'd go there for help and, so, I went…I ha…had one counselling session, then put me…like, they…they said,

> like, I should go to the adjustment group. So I went to that, like, two or three times but it really…that…I just don't find that place has a very nice sort of atmosphere.

Because he was struggling academically, Addison approached staff at CCDU for help. However, after only one session he was assigned to an adjustment group. His disappointment at not receiving further one-on-one sessions is evident in his words "then put me" and "they said, like, I should go to the adjustment group". He seems to cope with this rejection by rationalising that his "expectations" of CCDU were to receive "practical advice" and, by implication, not one-on-one therapy. However, a hidden desire for personal treatment comes through when later Addison paints a picture of an ideal CCDU which not only includes a modern space ("modern buildings with nice furniture and architecture", "a really nice space") but it is staffed with "psychologists or experts". This version of CCDU "might be very helpful". It is therefore suggested that not receiving one-on-one support from an 'expert' and being relegated to an adjustment group was experienced by Addison as dismissing of his struggles, exposing, and ultimately rejecting. Revealing a need for support is experienced as shameful because it is experienced as a sign of weakness and shameful dependency (Morrison, 1989).

However, the plot thickens as Addison reciprocates by dismissing the adjustment group and projects his feelings of weirdness or 'freakiness' onto CCDU. He describes the inputs of the adjustment group attendees as "clichéd" ("people just saying … things you've heard before"). He further moves to position the 'self' as somewhat superior to the group by portraying the space as helpful "for some people" but not for himself – he needs "to talk more extensively" and therefore "it wasn't really helpful" for him. Addison projects feelings of shame onto CCDU by positioning CCDU as hopelessly inadequate and irrelevant to many students. However, the extent of his vulnerability is revealed in descriptions of the signage at CCDU: "It shouldn't be, like, signs everywhere, this is counselling, and make it all like weird". Visible "signs" at CCDU symbolise the evaluative gaze. Addison had approached CCDU with the expectation of help and confidentiality, however, he is left feeling unhelped and exposed:

> … it wasn't really helpful… where you sit in, like, a circle and it's like a therapy type of thing. It just felt very weird … It feels very weird, like, you feel…you f…kind of feel weird going, like, why am I going there?

Repetition of the word "weird" is suggestive of some defensiveness and is regarded as indirect language for shame. Addison resorts to splitting to manage the shame of the CCDU dismissal .He splits off his vulnerability, projects his experiences of inadequacy, and assumes a position of critical superiority, commenting on the failings of the 'other'. Addison's story demonstrates how systems which are actually designed to support students can feel exposing and trigger shame. The risk to the student is rejection and further shame.

However, at other points in the interview, Addison is more able to acknowledge and own feelings of shameful inadequacy and rejection. For example, he said, "maybe there's a bit of fear of, like, not being

accepted or, um, being misunderstood". Furthermore, when asked by the researcher, "what shame is or what it means to him", Addison replied:

> I think shame is a feeling, um…it's a feeling that makes you wanna, like, almost cover yourself, like…like hide what's in your heart … It's something that you sort of don't want people to know. But, at the same time, it bothers you that you [sic] keeping it to yourself … you…you…you don't want people to know but you also, like, feel terri…terri…terrible, like, keeping that to yourself. Ja.

Addison has unwittingly touched on what is, from a psychoanalytic perspective, a core shame coping script: 'hiding'. The literature demonstrates that shame has an effective breeding ground when you "hide what's in your heart". Significantly, Addison depicts 'hiding' as a conflicted space because "it bothers you" and it is "terrible, keeping that to yourself". Addison's expression of wanting to "cover yourself" is symbolic of the need to protect the True Self. Recalling Addison's history of conflicted peer relationships it is understandable that he experiences shame as a psychological tearing because he wants to "show more" of himself but finds Wits a "difficult" space in which to do this:

> … if I was in another space, maybe I'd…I would find it easier to, um…to…to show all that I am and, here, it's…it's…it's more difficult to sh…to show all that I am here but my desire is to ….
>
> I think it's not really a culture here of, um, talking, like, sharing all that we are with each other. And I suppose it's also…comes to how, like, intimate you are with your friends, um. I guess, if…if you were someone who really, like…really…like, really, really close friends and you were one of those people who shares everything, I think that would different. I think it also depends on the dynamics that you have with your friends.

Addison's discourse of 'Wits is a big, impersonal space' is used to position Wits as not having a "culture" of sharing among students. However, you may spot the contradiction in the text because Addison was given ample opportunity to share with peers in the Wits' CCDU adjustment support group. However, feelings of shame rendered it impossible for him to leverage this opportunity. According to Morrison (2008), although shame experiences can be generated by institutional experiences, it is the individual's vulnerability and propensity to shame that will determine the intensity of shame experienced in response to the environment. This principle also applies to varying degrees of shame around institutional experiences of race on campus. For example, Addison positions being White on campus as erroneously associated with wealth:

> Interviewer: Do you think that there's [sic] people, um, who see you in negative ways and do you have any examples? Maybe…uh, specifically, you know, people, like, at Wits who might see you in negative ways?

> Addison: Not really. Ja. Sometimes…ja, sometimes there are racial problems, um, like, being White, sometimes people think that, because you [sic] White, you…you [sic] wealthy and you must, like, give them everything or…small things like that but nothing really big.

For Addison the discourse of 'you're white, you're privileged' is experienced as coercive he does not position himself as wealthy nor privileged on campus. Addison therefore experiences the ideas of White and privilege as a disjunct which is not felt to be self-relevant. Additionally, he uses the hard work discourse to decry any form of personal entitlement. This positioning of the 'self' serves to create a perceptual distance between race and poverty and in so doing any form of personal privilege becomes split off and denied. Addison's attempts to minimise his concerns around racial incidents on campus are possibly indicative of hiding and defending against shame. Later in his interview, Addison displays some ambivalence about the "underlying frustrations" from the legacy of apartheid, however, he again resorts to creating a perceptual distance between race and poverty:

> … underlying frustrations, stuff that's not necessarily a big problem, if…and…ja, from day to day but stuff that's still, like, buried…buried…buried inside people and stuff that's the…the legacy of apartheid …I think f…I think for…it's…for a lot of people, it is that ine…inequality that they see, um. It doesn't even have to be racial but, ja, black inequality that is…that's…there's…there's a few…there's a f…like, the minority ha…has a…has amassed so much wealth while there's so much poverty.

In a more general sense there is some truth to Addison's comment that "inequality doesn't even have to be racial". However, in the South African context, this is to split off and deny a history of legitimised racial inequality. Addison's portrait demonstrate how students move fluidly between the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions – he tangentially acknowledges the idea of "Black inequality" but then returns to a more paranoid schizoid position by splitting and referring to an unnamed "minority" who have amassed wealth. This is to defensively dance around what privilege means in a post-apartheid South Africa.

However, the shifting of positions is not only reserved for race; Addison also shifts positions around social awkwardness. Speaking from a more depressive position, Addison repeatedly returns to the ideas of socially awkwardness and difficulties interacting with peers. His shame is evident in self-reproach for not living up to a more ideal, extroverted 'self':

> I think why can't I be confident or, um, I'm…sometimes I feel like I'm a bit socially awkward, um, I'm not, like, quite as, um, ja, charismatic as other people. So, there's [sic] times where I feel inadequate or, um, like I could be doing more or, um, ja, like, being a more sort of successful person … why can't I be confident …

But as soon as the introverted 'self' is berated, shame is triggered and in real time Addison moves to defensively protect against the shame by contradicting himself, often in mid-sentence:

> Socially, ja, I do struggle but I'm also quite confide… like, secure in myself, um. I guess, ja, making friends and stuff is hard, um, in a big environment like this, um. A big environment is actually sort of comfor … it's actually kind of relaxed because there's no-one, like…you're not like…you know, there's no people, like, watching your every move, you're free to do what you want. So I think it's…you can kind of just do your own thing and, um, you never feel on the spot 'cause…because a more introverted person, you don't really like to, like, have too much attention. Ja.

In an unlikely move, Addison positions a "more introverted person", like himself, as suited to Wits and rationalises that this is because people are not "watching your every move, you're free". This seems to distance the 'self' from feelings of loss and shame around being more introverted. Seen in this light, Addison's applause of the relaxing and freeing environment of Wits is an escape from the reality of a "very big" institution that is impersonal ("not necessarily, like, a warm place") and his struggle to make friends and feel a sense of acceptance and belonging. The words "watching your every move" are, however, indicative of a level of self-consciousness which characterises Addison's experience at university. According to Morrison (1998) "While we may insist that others must be making malignant judgments about us, we can't know that for certain, and it remains our own eye looking inward that ultimately condemns us to these states of shame" (p. 24). One is left wondering 'who' is doing the "watching"? An answer to this question can be proffered, in part, by Addison's painful self-consciousness (watching the 'self') during the interview and his alternating between penetrating eye contact (watching the 'other') and staring right past the researcher and out of the window. The primary countertransference feeling experienced by the researcher was of self-consciousness. I recorded in my journal having experienced a bizarre sense of bodily awareness after scratching my head with a pen during the interview. The vignette below demonstrates how, I too had felt awkward at times during the interview and shared Addison's discomfort. Addison had already expressed his shame at oftentimes feeling socially inept and my 'babbling' seemed to be my attempt to help Addison feel more 'comfortable' with what had degenerated into clumsy probing:

> Interviewer: Um, and, if we can just move back to maybe some things that you don't like about yourself. You mentioned earlier that being an introvert can, uh, make you feel a bit like you [sic] not as…you…you can be a…feel a bit awkward or maybe not as charismatic as you think you should be. What is…what is that about for you or…?
>
> Addison: Uh. Can you clarify the question?

The researcher then proceeds to mumble about moving the microphone closer to the participant.

> Interviewer: Um, okay, so let me clarify my question. I…I'm just thinking around those aspects of yourself that maybe you feel less comfortable with. You know we all have some things which, um, we would maybe wanna change or we go through a phase where, now, suddenly, this aspect of ourselves isn't good enough, whereas, previously,

> it could've been or…you know, things shift. So, for you, now, in this stage, at Wits first year, is there anything that comes to mind? If there's not, that's also fine.

My genuine attempt to put Addison more at ease did seem to be containing in some way as Addison seemed comfortable to proceed. However, it should be noted that Addison did not initially voluntarily disclose the CCDU shame incident (the incident recorded in the survey). This incident was only revisited when prompted by the researcher. This can be regarded as a form of hiding. Further to this, when Addison courageously shared his troubles around relating, he visibly blushed, his face turning a deep pink colour. However, despite pauses and stalling with "ums", Addison bravely gave voice to his source of shame.

> I think I am very different to a lot of people. I'm, uh…I would…ja, I think I'm…I'm not, like, your typical person my age. I think I…I'm, just by nature, different. I don't know why; it's just the way I am.

> Uh, I think I would like to be better at communicating, um. I struggle to, like, relate with people and communicate where I feel or, um, ja, just…ja, I struggle to always, like, start conversations and, um, just kind of say what I want to say…because I think, um, ja, I do have stuff to say but sometimes, I…I don't…I just keep everything kind of to myself, ja, and don't share my opinions or –

Addison's sense of being "very different" resonates with his representation of CCDU as being "weird" and an "abnormal" space. It is likely this feeling of being "different" which leaves Addison feeling misunderstood by others and struggling to make friends. His expressed desire is for others to "understand that you're an individual". Addison switches between a more paranoid-schizoid position that bemoans 'others' who frustrate the 'self' because they do not understand "the way I function" and a more depressive position in which he acknowledges his struggle with keeping "everything kind of to myself". A further indication of this more depressive position is his positioning of the problem as "internal" constrictions which are "stopping myself". It is noteworthy that Addison's desire to be understood is not contextualised as pressure to conform to society, as was the case in several other interviews. It is therefore suggested that his struggle is more to do with being seen/recognised in the first place – let alone conforming. The more projective stance of bemoaning others, as indicated in the extract below, is likely a defence against the genuine hurt that Addison feels around remaining largely unseen:

> It's not, like, a…a huge thing but I guess it's a bit frustrating when, like, you…you know all that you are and people only see, like, a tiny bit of it but I guess it's a…something that we all have to deal with.

Addison's use of the word "tiny" is likely symbolic of feeling small and inferior. His desire to be seen and understood, together with his dismissive refusal of support from 'others' is indicative of his struggle to sustain a helpful mental representation of the 'self'. This is signified by the split representations of the 'confident' versus 'awkward' self and the 'big' versus more 'personable' Wits. The notion of a quietly

confident student who feels insecure, at times, yet manages to personably navigate his way through the Wits systems seems unattainable. The implication is that only confident, extroverted students are able to make friends and successfully negotiate their way in the big Wits system. Rather than freely receiving those opportunities that do present themselves to experience a more 'personable' Wits – like the CCDU adjustment group – feelings of shame drive Addison to shut down and become defensively dismissive.

8.1.4. Portrait 4 – Zanele

Zanele is a Black, female, postgraduate student in the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management at Wits. She is from an affluent middle-class family and positions herself as "privileged". Zanele stammers, somewhat uncharacteristically, when explaining her family situation "oh…oh…oh, my parents are divorced so…ja. Oh…oh…oh, my dad's remarried, so my dad's married …". Speaking of "half-siblings" she says, "I think that's what they're called, ja". This momentary lack of coherence when talking about her family helps us understand the recurrent theme in Zanele's portrait: the need to belong. During the course of the interview Zanele described herself as "very outspoken", "an open book", "not so serious", "very loud", "out there" and "loud and annoying". She believes that her weakness is being too opinionated and "reacting emotionally rather than processing first". Zanele feels "very lucky" having been brought up "in a very good home", has "amazing friends" and has been afforded many opportunities in life.

Zanele draws on a discourse of 'professional identity' and in so doing demonstrates the significance of a university student's burgeoning professional identity and how identification with a profession plays a role in the experience of shame. Throughout the interview Zanele draws upon hegemonic discourses of 'the quintessential lawyer' to portray a profession that permits one to speak with authority, "we're very good at like, spewing nonsense and making it come across, like, it's golden whatever", "Whatever you tell me, I can BS [bullshit] my way out of it, you know". Further to this, lawyers are allowed to tell others when they are talking nonsense, "… and I have authority to tell that you're talking nonsense [LAUGHS] because of … I'll give you facts and you'll realise that you're wrong, so just keep quiet". She positions law school as distinct from other degrees, "law school is completely different". However, Zanele seems to struggle to reconcile a lawyer-type authority and omniscience with feelings of being prideful or "being full of myself'". She confided that she has "developed this terrible habit of being dismissive towards others, I hate that about myself". For example, she sometimes listens to people and thinks how they are "talking nonsense". The result is that she feels like she has become "so obnoxious", "full of myself" and "like, what is wrong with me?" Zanele elaborates further about this conflicted internal state about 'others':

> I just, like, so ugh, like, you think you're better than people…ooh, I mean, I don't think I'm better than people but I think that, like, sometimes the way I process what other people say, like, I'll listen to people, I'm like, wow, why are you so dumb, and I'm like, uh-uh, that's not okay [LAUGHS].

To the extent that Zanele "hates" and is unable to reconcile the more competitive and judgemental parts of herself, I saw this as splitting. The ego is split through projection whereby she splits off parts of the 'self' that are feared as bad and subsequently identifies them as belonging to an outside object, the law fraternity. She positions this behaviour as hateful yet required by law school:

> I don't know, I … that's the thing, I think it's also part of law school. Like, you're kinda told that you're better than everyone and eventually, it gets to your head, like you, think you're better than everyone and you're not and that's part of law school I genuinely hate … they want you to think you're better than everyone, and you should be better than everyone, and I think that, like, sometimes, I see myself becoming that person who thinks that. I'm, like, oh, my God, what is wrong with you?

This idea of an imposing 'other' serves to position the external object as infiltrating the 'self' with the 'bad' which seems to feel threatening. The 'bad' is then kept 'out there' by being associated with the 'other' rather than arising from within the 'self'. This projecting of her own self-destructive thoughts and feelings and attributing them to law school likely mitigates the threat which Zanele's feelings of superiority and triumph invoke. Her fears of "sounding full of myself" are further evidence of difficulties integrating negative aspects of the 'self'. When I asked her "does it matter if you sound like you full of yourself?' she responded emphatically, "Yeah. I mean, that's…that's not okay. Wha…wha…why…wha…it's like patting yourself on the back. You did well".

Although Zanele positioned shame as foreign to the 'self' – "I don't think I have a lot of stuff that I'm hiding that makes me ashamed" – the messy process which led to securing her interview together with the researcher's countertransference feelings seem to tell a different story. The day before the interview I had sent a customary SMS reminder to Zanele, however, there was a no-show on the day. Upon SMSing to advise her that I appreciated her initial interest but respected her right to withdraw from the process she immediately apologized, "I'm sorry for standing you up". At Zanele's request the interview was rescheduled several days later, however, again Zanele did not turn up. I called her and she apologized profusely saying that she had once again forgotten the interview, however, she arrived thirty minutes later and the interview went ahead. This acting out is suggestive of some form of resistance which Zanele may have experienced when following through with the interview. This is further corroborated by Zanele's trivialization of the interview as demonstrated by the following two excerpts. Firstly, at the beginning of the interview, Zanele off-handedly commented about her no-show and lateness.

> Zanele: 'Like, I know now, like, my work ethic has improved, although I was terribly late for our interview for two days [LAUGHS] …but, like, generally, [LAUGHS], um, ja'.
>
> Interviewer: So how do you feel about yourself generally then? As a person, your self-esteem, how would you describe that?

It was only during the analysis that my own unconscious avoidance of broaching this difficult topic with Zanele became glaringly obvious as evidenced by my failure to stay present in the moment and reflect on Zanele's admission to being "terribly late". Instead, I had made an immediate move to ask Zanele a different question. It is as if I unconsciously joined Zanele's trivialisation by mimicking her use of the word "generally" in my question. Secondly, Zanele ended her interview with: "I'm so sorry about this, I mean, I feel like I didn't answer a lot of the shame questions". This positioning of herself as unable to shed light on shame served again to disavow any association with feelings of shame. However, I experienced the strongest countertransference feelings during the most severe rupture of the interview when asking Zanele about groups at Wits who possibly experience more shame than 'others'.

> I think so. I think…I think people who come from less…wa…but that's…but, then again, I…I don't know. Maybe it's the word shame that confuses me. L…like, shame. What is shame? Maybe if…can you tell me what you…your understanding of shame is? And then I'll tell you…maybe I'll answer your question better.

Zanele begins to answer my question by talking about "people who come from less … wa ..", however, her voice trails off and she changes course in mid-sentence. In a moment Zanele has successfully switched roles by asking *me* "What is shame?" I propose that Zanele wanted to use the word 'wealthy' in answer to my question, however, feeling an increasing sense of unconscious threat she cut herself short and attempted to gain more of a sense of control during the interview by putting me on the spot. In the moment, I felt that my research and the concept of shame did seem 'nonsensical'. In other words, my PhD is "BS [bullshit]". The feeling was so strong that I launched into a gregarious, albeit somewhat flustered attempt to defend myself and provide a credible explanation of 'shame' – this, despite knowing that my interviewee had demonstrated, minutes earlier, a conceptual understanding of shame. Zanele seemed to have split off the "small" part of herself ("what are you talking about you idiot?") into me and, I had taken the bait.

However, in stark contrast to my feeling 'attacked' by Zanele, I also felt her pull for acceptance and approval throughout the interview. She asked me directly four times "do you know what I mean?" and approximately six times sought validation by asking rhetorically "if that makes sense". The words "I mean" were used approximately fifty-five times during the interview to qualify her thoughts and opinions. I found myself pulled into this affirming role by saying "I understand what you're saying" and "It does make sense". Once or twice I even took this role up a notch, for example, when she said, "So I love res. Oh God, I love res". I spontaneously concurred with her, "I'm sure they love you too". She replied, "They do. I'm sorry but they do". I was providing the mirroring that Zanele was seeking.

Zanele's need to be loved and belong is evidenced throughout the data, for example she says: "I don't know why people like me, but I love it." When I asked Zanele about 'what shame is' she answered, "you don't belong because of certain things". This answer is suggestive of belonging as conditional, implying that rejection is a possibility. Zanele's core shame incident – which I have called 'I don't know why she hates me" – demonstrates feelings of humiliation and rejection. The scene was painted as follows: the

lecturer had arrived late, there was a lot of talking going on in the classroom, it was not clear to Zanele when the lecture commenced and, seemingly out of the blue, the lecturer singled Zanele out – publicly – for being on her phone. Note Zanele's initial reluctance to share her story in the following excerpts:

> Interviewer: And…and can you, um, remember feeling those feelings this year, at different points in different situations?
>
> Zanele: Um, not this year. Not that much this year. Like, besides the whole incident that happened in class that I spoke about.
>
> Interviewer: Yes, I'm interested in that incident with the lecturer.
>
> Zanele: Yeah. But, like, it wasn't…I mean, now that I think about it, I guess it wasn't that big of a deal, but I was just…I think I was more…I was embarrassed and I was annoyed because I just felt like, ag, stop it, but now I'm kinda over it and I just feel like maybe she was doing her job, I don't know, and I'm over it now.
>
> Interviewer: But, uh, tell me about the incident, like how it played out.
>
> Zanele: Well, it's kinda funny 'cause, now I think about it, maybe I was wrong, right. Um, so, um, I was in class and our lecturer ha…was late. So then, um, I was on my phone…I was on my phone, so I didn't even notice that she had walked in. I wasn't on my phone I was, like, holding my phone and whatnot. So I hadn't noticed that the lecturer walked in. And people were still making a noise, so, naturally, I was distracted with my own things, and she was like, um, okay, I…like, people were still talking and then she's like "why are you still…why are you on your phone" or whatever? And…but I wasn't aware that she was talking to me because, naturally, there's still noise all around and she was like why are you still on your pho…um, I'll start when that lady gets off her phone. But then I was like…I didn't even know that she was talking to me 'cause I'm there, like I'm on my phone and then I'm like, oh, hey, wait, what? [LAUGHS]. And then she was…I don't know, maybe she was having a bad day but, like, she was just literally just being mean.
>
> ….
>
> Interviewer: And what do you think was the tone of…
>
> Zanele: Um, I mean, she was kinda angry, but I don't know why, and that's wha…so it happened and then I just happened to fill out your survey. And I was really, like, embarrassed for the whole lecture, like, what did I ever do to you? Like, why are you shouting at me? Also, because I don't take well to being shouted at, especially because she's my lecturer and I don't even know her, and she was late for class, and people were

> still making a noise. Like, why are you picking on me? What is your problem? But it's fine now. I'm over it.
>
> ….
>
> Zanele: Yeah. Like, what did I ever do to you? You don't even know me. Yeah. All my lecturers love me. Oh, I hate her but everybody else loves me.

Zanele seemed anxious to rationalise and trivialise her feelings of shame which seemed to her to be insignificant and an over-reaction in hindsight, "I mean, now that I think about it, I guess it wasn't that big of a deal, but I was just …" and "I'm over it now". This is evidence of shame about experiencing shame. Zanele describes feeling "embarrassed" for the duration of the lecture, however, embarrassment is usually a more easily acknowledged feeling than shame and humiliation. Zanele portrays a 'self' who is a victim, as evidenced by imagery of being shouted at, picked on and the object of hatred, and the 'other' is a "mean" and "angry" perpetrator Significantly, this incident has ruptured the social bond between Zanele and her lecturer. Her feelings of shame seem to have been reinforced through imagery of a perpetrator and victim dynamic. The threat to Zanele is of not feeling the love of an admired lecturer which triggers feelings of shame about herself and leaves her feeling disregarded and 'unseen':

> So I'm pretty sure my lecturer doesn't even notice me 'cause I'm not exactly active in that class. So I don't know why she hates me but it's fine.

Not being noticed indicates a sensitivity to rejection. This admission of feeling unnoticed and "hated" is somewhat of a contradiction to Zanele's earlier expressed view that "I also just think that, like, in life, not everyone can like you, that's not possible, it's not how the world works. Like, not everyone is meant to like you, and the most important thing to take away from that is to want to not please everyone". Zanele continues to distance feelings of shame by positioning 'others', fellow students, as caught up in a need to "please everyone" and keep up with "pop culture and that kinda lifestyle". A sense of not belonging is reserved for 'other' students, the shame scapegoats: "Um, because it's so cliquey, um, people are kinda like forced to fit into a certain clique and, if they don't, then they feel like, oh, wow, do I belong?" This positioning further allows feelings of alienation, rejection and abandonment to be situated out there – in "other kids". Zanele uses discourses of "keeping up appearances" versus being your True Self to pinpoint the source of shame for many students: "They're ashamed of, if they show their true selves they just pretend to be a certain way because, if they are who they truly are …they are not likely to be accepted". This positioning is also a distancing technique to ward off shame. Zanele's account of students who are more likely to experience shame at Wits also captures imagery of social 'ranking systems' which trigger shame:

> I think people have the pressure of keeping up with appearances and that brings them shame because they can't keep up with appearances, and they keep up with appearances because they think everyone else is at a certain level that they feel that they need to reach or whatever … there's [a] culture that you think that you need to kinda align

> yourself to…in order to fit in, not a culture as in African or, like, Zulu, I just mean, like pop culture and that kinda lifestyle.

Zanele positions living in university residence as "common ground" for all students because it allows one to meet people from all different walks of life. Residence therefore levels an unequal playing field at university. Positioning of students as on "the same level" and "common ground" is, however, a contradiction to Zanele's discourse about "the wealthy kids on campus" in which she describes herself and her closest friends as "privileged kids". Zanele also seems to temporarily shelve issues of race and privilege in order to prioritise "common ground" at university. This is significant because Zanele has a lot to say about Black and White privilege, however, she seems to reserve this for the realm of the workplace. In other words, it is only in the context of the world of work that Zanele positions people as polarised according to race and privilege. The effect of this positioning is to situate race and class based in-and-out groups as 'out there', in the workplace. This use of distancing enables Zanele to preserve "common ground" at Wits and an accompanying sense of acceptance and belonging for all students at Wits. This is further corroborated by Zanele's positioning of herself as acceptable, belonging ("I generally fit in with a lot of people") and dearly loved by all on campus. This acceptance and belonging even extends to lecturers, "all my lecturers love me". This admission of the need for acceptance and belonging provide additional clues as to why Zanele's 'I don't know why she hates me' shame experience was so painful.

Not only does Zanele position shame as out there in 'other' students who are trying to 'keep up with the Joneses and Motsepes' but she also draws on a discourse of racism to position race as excluding and shaming but qualifies that this is only in the context of the workplace. Zanele's portrayal of her forthcoming separation from Wits (on graduation) and her entry into the world of work elucidates how shame – which involves a message of separation or the threat of separation – can lead to an invocation of race to make sense of conflicted feelings. In her interview, Zanele initially worked to discursively position any form of 'not belonging' in the workplace as attributable to racism. For example, Zanele told a touching story about a friend who was rejected in the workplace. Her friend, a Black girl, has a White colleague who she perceives as having more open communication channels with the White boss. For example, the White colleague SMS's the boss to inform her that she will be off sick for the day rather than following more formal protocols. In the extract below, Zanele further narrates another rejection experienced by her friend and how same race relationships can feel excluding to others in the workplace and trigger shame:

> Like, she also…so…so…so, the one day, she's, like, um…their b…s…like, their supervisor came to the office and was looking for the White girl and then she was, like, oh, and, like, hey, where is…I don't know what her name is? And she was like, oh, no, she's not here right now and she was like, oh, I wanted to tell her about my trip. Like, okay. So you can tell me about…okay, cool. Like, these are little things that kill you. Like, wow. So…but then, maybe, it's not a racial thing, it's just that's the way. I don't know. Maybe. I don't know

Zanele's words "these are little things that kill you" are duly thought provoking. Further evidence of Zanele's anxieties about fitting into the world of work are evident in her portrayal of her "biggest fear", that of being a "sell-out" when leaving Wits and entering the workplace:

> …and forgetting about my other Black people who are there and not realising their struggles and how they're treated differently from me, the Black who's made it.

The implication in the above extract is that to be a success and "make it" in the workplace poses the threat of an ever-evolving sense of difference and separation of the 'self' from the larger Black community and a sense of not belonging. Her success will then paradoxically incur losses that must be processed. Zanele's imagery of her Black professional identity therefore becomes convoluted with impending race-based rejection and guilty ideations of "the Black who's made it". Zanele's conflicted racial identity is also borne out by her emphatic allegiance to the #FeesMustFall movement despite , by her own admission, that she does not know much about it and her involvement is limited. Ironically, Zanele wished I could speak to her White friend who was well versed in and supportive of the movement. Zanele's sense of shame is therefore likely in the imagined reproach from fellow Black students of being a "sell-out" and dis-identifying with the "struggle". A fear of rejection by White colleagues further complicates the mix. What the data has demonstrated is that when functioning from a more paranoid schizoid mode, Zanele's shame may at times be attributed solely to race, to the exclusion of more nuanced versions of race and feelings of not belonging. However, Zanele is also capable of shifting positions and also functions from a more depressive position. For example, she later acknowledges the ambivalence inherent in relationships, irrespective of race. Below is a vignette where Zanele demonstrates this integration:

> Because sometimes it's not even that you…we call it privilege but, really, I think, if you take two peers, two people who are on the same level, and you put them on the white boss, right, um, and maybe you grew up privil…like, we are same privilege …same school…went to the same school and everything, um, or whatever, and maybe you just relate to our boss because you and our boss have both travelled to China and you like the same things and you have the same dogs or whatever. Even if I, as a Black person, relate well to that th…um, if…if I, as a Black person, relate to our boss more than the White kid, I'm likely to succeed better than the White kid –

In the above example, Zanele moved to level the 'privilege' playing field. Zanele is throwing the ideas of privilege, race, relationship and belonging in the air and juggling them simultaneously. She conversed in some detail, albeit conceptually, about the idea of privilege at university, which included discourses of Black versus White privilege. However, when asked directly about her own status of privilege, Zanele's hedging is evidence of conflicted feelings around this positioning:

> Interviewer:Do you consider yourself privileged?

> Zanele: A little bit, ja, definitely. I mean, to some extent, the opportunities that I've been afforded, a lot of people ca…haven't been afforded them…and…yeah, definitely. I think…I think, to say that I wasn't privileged would be an insult to God and, uh, to my parents as well because they've worked so hard to give me all the things that I have.

Comparative forms of speech like "a little bit", "to some extent" and "I think" demonstrate hedging and suggest that Zanele feels uncomfortable. I decided to pursue this line of questioning further to see if I could tease out the relationships between the positions of Black versus White versus privileged students:

> Interviewer: And…and how do you feel about being Black at Wits University and you're privileged and…do you think this is…this is common? Is this rare?
>
> Zanele: It's a bit of both. I think it's more common than I would've thought. But it's a different kind of privilege than White privilege. It's definitely way different than White privilege but it's a privilege. I mean I…I do…I think I'm privileged and…no, not I think, I am. I think I am. No, I definitely am. Yeah, to say otherwise would be completely false and not true.
>
> Interviewer: And what makes that…a Black privilege different from White privilege?
>
> Zanele: Um, firstly, because you…there's always that thing that, like…well, I mean, now I'm talking about…I'm gonna talk about it in, like, a working environment. You are always Black before you are anything else, and white kids don't have that barrier of being Black. They are White and, by default, they are better. That…that's just how it is, that's how it works in the real world where they are awarded a higher privilege by just being White.
>
> Interviewer: And…but who's awarding that privilege?
>
> Zanele: I mean, I think the way that, like, things have been, like, happening, um, the way that society was built and whatever, that privilege was a…like, there's just awarded to white kids forever and for…forever and the…like, it's…that's just the way the system works. I don't know how to explain it better. But, I mean, I know my friends are very conscious of their privilege and they're very much aware of it and we…ac…like, I know we are always asking ourselves: how do we break away that barrier of the privilege?

What began as a conversation about money and opportunity, moved into a discussion about race which demonstrates complex layers around the idea of students and privilege. Zanele positions White privilege as tied up with the reproach of the past whereas Black privilege is not. Zanele also addresses how White students employ a 'hard work' discourse to justify White privilege and are often "offended" by any intimation that they have not worked for what they have. She feels sad that nobody wants to acknowledge that hard work aside, "sometimes your privilege is what got you in the room" together with "the mere fact

that you're White". Zanele claims that Black people are not saying that White people do not work hard but rather that Black people want White people to acknowledge – rather than deny – their former privileged status. Zanele therefore integrates perceptions of 'privilege' and 'hard work'. Put another way, it is possible to work hard and still benefit from privilege.

Despite taking great pains to distinguish between Black and White privilege, Zanele showed a preference to position the effects of privilege as operating 'out there' in the working environment rather than in the here and now, in her university world. This likely served to preserve a split between her Black and privileged 'self' whilst a student at university. However, in the extract below Zanele integrates the two ideas:

> And it's not an ignorance that's [sic], like, makes you a bad person but, like you take so many things for granted. I realised I take so many things for granted, and I'm Black and I'm privileged and I take stuff for granted. More than anyone, I think, I should understand the struggle better.

By referencing the 'self' as being privileged in relation to Black counterparts Zanele brings together the ideas of 'Black' and 'privilege' which is suggestive of the Kleinian depressive position. It is arguable that the researcher's line of questioning prompted Zanele's integrative response, however, there is other evidence in the data of this more integrative stance. Zanele's comment "more than anyone, I think, I should understand the struggle better" reflects her identity as a Black person living in a post-apartheid era and how this impinges on race and belonging.

The core tension in Zanele's biography is of lovability and belonging as opposed to autonomy and authority. Imagery of being a lawyer who speaks with authority and who retains the right to dismiss and diminish others is symbolic of Zanele's own need to feel heard. This is suggestive of possible childhood perceptions of being unheard and fears of being unimportant. A psychodynamic possibility is that Zanele's parents' divorce (when she was a toddler) resulted in perceived rejection or dismissal by her father, an idealised parent. This may have been compounded by her father remarrying and having other children. However, Zanele's awareness of her need to identify with a position of superiority leaves her with feelings of ambivalence, as, in her estimation, these feelings are unacceptable. Shame therefore seems to function to inhibit Zanele's pride, by disinhibiting fantasies of being admired or desired by others and also serves to regulate excessive positive feelings about the' self'. Zanele's identification as a lawyer puts her in a double bind because although, law school enables her to express herself in a socially acceptable manner, she remains unsure of whether her autonomous and authoritative 'self' is truly acceptable.

8.1.5. Portrait 5 – Thuso

Thuso is a young Black man studying in the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management at the University of the Witwatersrand. He was raised by a single mother and remembers "moving around a lot, primarily due to my mom's work" and "trying to get away from my dad as well". Thuso confided that his

dad had a problem with "drug" and "alcohol addiction". He recalled that his father was abusive towards his mother and how this had a "severe emotional and psychological impact" on him whilst growing up. He attended a small private school which he positioned as not seen as prestigious by fellow students. Thuso initially commenced first year at a South African university situated in another province but the following year he transferred to Wits to be closer to home. He experienced his first year at university as particularly turbulent because of the "bubbling up" of unresolved feelings about his father which he had "suppressed", ongoing confusion around his "sexuality" and also feeling the impact of "being away from home". Throughout the interview Thuso portrayed strong ideations of a good 'self', using the word 'good' approximately twenty-five times to describe himself or how he hoped 'others' would see him:

> Um, I consider myself…I do consider myself a leader, I do consider myself a [sic] intellectual, I'm able to, um, engage in different types of intellectual spaces, I do attend a lot of seminars here at Wits …intellectual space. Um, I consider myself someone who's quite put together, neat, quite, um…you know, an upstanding citizen, that's who I'd wanna consider myself to …be, someone who's…good moral values, a good friend, a good brother, a good son, a good student. Ja. So I do consider myself someone who's diligent, who's conscientious, who's…I respect people, so I consider myself respectful, I'm courteous, um…ja.

When Thuso failed "three out of" his "seven subjects" during first year – and was advised to start his degree over upon joining Wits – it was representations of the ideal or good 'self' that seemed to be under threat. When asked how this experience had impacted him, Thuso's shame story began to unfold:

> I think it…it did impact me hec…um, it did impact me a lot, hectically, because I did tie my value to my performance academically and to my…my standing, you know, as someone who…I consider myself a leader, I consider myself someone who's always putting in the most and doing the best I can. So it was quite disheartening. I went through a lot of trauma with that as well 'cause I was like how can I fail? I'm not someone who…I don't associate myself and my character with failure.

Thuso was blindsided by failing. His poor academic performance represented a significant gap between the ideal and the real 'self'. The psychoanalytic shame literature shows how the more idealistic one's expectations are, like Thuso's, the greater the propensity to experience shame. Thuso had positioned himself as "a leader", "always putting in the most", and "always one of the top academic students in my school, wherever I went". Considering these towering ideals, it is not surprising that Thuso experienced failing as "trauma". Thuso does not "associate" himself or his "character with failure". For this reason, his first experience of failing academically signalled a loss of a cherished ideal which, together with his difficult family situation, likely led to feelings of disintegration. However, not only was Thuso's sense of the good 'self' potentially under threat on the academic front but he also positioned his university experience as competitive on many levels:

> So, um, here, at university, because we're the best of the best, it's kind of…I found, it was now a competition of intellect, a competition of wealth, a competition of, um, physical prowess, and it's…it's evolved here because you're in a different space, you're amongst the best.

Wits attracts the "best" and this results in "competition" on multiple levels, including "intellect", "wealth" and even "physical prowess". Thuso's talk about how "it's evolved here" and "you're amongst the best" depict how entering a big, competitive university environment requires repositioning of the 'self'. The competition has "evolved" or become intense at university than it was at school. It's as if school provided a more protected environment where being a top student allowed for the illusion of a 'self' who was unrivalled and immune to failure. Thuso acknowledged that upon entering university he felt shame for "not being wealthy enough", "not being well-spoken enough", "not having such a polished accent", "not having the dress code to fit in" and "not being masculine enough". Through deliberate repetition of the words "not" and "enough", Thuso has succinctly narrated the psychodynamics of shame: firstly, there is a 'watching' 'self' who sees the 'other' – the evaluative gaze – secondly, upward social comparison takes place and thirdly, there is the inevitability of finding oneself feeling inferior, unworthy and wanting.

Feelings of being unworthy, diminished and inferior are scattered throughout Thuso's portrait: being "looked down on", "slight degradations" and "it just makes you feel less than". The feeling of inferiority is also confirmed by the researcher's countertransference feeling of inferiority during the interview. The researcher's first impression of Thuso was of his flawless English accent, the kind that makes one's own accent sound flat and a bit common. Thuso portrayed a well-groomed 'self' of higher-than-average social standing. During the interview Thuso's intellectualisation of every conceivable topic also left me feeling underwhelmed about my own intellectual abilities. He seemed so competent intellectually that I was left grappling with feelings of inadequacy and unworthiness around the PhD. However, Thuso's inferiority did not manifest as an aggressive, superior arrogance but rather as a desire to "help" with the PhD.

Thuso's shame experience includes not only a watching 'self' but also a watching and judging 'other' which is also characteristic of shame:

> … shame that came from not being enough because I saw people who were perceived and society valued as enough.

The implication is that "society" – a diffuse 'other' – holds the power to value or devalue individuals. During his interview Thuso displayed a strong tendency to intellectualise about "society" using the word "society" approximately twenty-three times. He further went on to link the ideas of society and privilege, "So I think shame comes from the social construct of privilege …". In other words, Thuso portrays shame as social judgement based on one's level of privilege. Thuso's sense of ongoing competition at university; his feelings of not being "enough" and his contradictory feelings about his own privilege (privileged in some settings, not in others), suggest that he perceives that there are 'others' who are more valued than he is, towards whom he has feelings of envy. His example of a valued member of society is of a wealthy,

White, male student: “he benefits from male privilege, he benefits from social privilege, he benefits from [being] White, he benefits from [being] heterosexual, from being, you know, perceived…all these little privileges build up and, for people who are not that, you just feel shame and, because you know…certain things you cannot change about yourself …”

The rivalry that characterises Thuso’s shame dynamic is suggestive of the experience of an unstable sense of ‘self’ at university. An unstable ‘self’ is characterised by uncertainty of one’s own goodness or badness (Hinshelwood & Fortuna, 2018) and it is this uncertainty which leads to envy of the ‘good’ in the ‘other’. The literature documents how shame is often accompanied by feelings of envy and according to Klein (1975a), if the ‘other’ has what you want, it leads to feelings of dependency on the ‘other’ and if the ‘other’ is ‘good’ it leads to anxiety and questioning about the goodness of the ‘self’. Envy and separateness are inextricably intertwined. Put another way, recognising one’s separateness is what triggers envy. It is likely this conflict around separateness that has resulted in rivalry with ‘others’. However, as Thuso’s portrait demonstrates, this is a no-win situation because rivalry leads to the feeling of being diminished and dependent (Hinshelwood & Fortuna, 2018). Thuso’s difficulties in negotiating separateness and difference also manifest as ‘othering’ – putting students into categories – and a fear of difference. This is corroborated in a variety of extracts in which Thuso uses class and race talk to position students who belong and don’t belong at university.

Regarding class differences, Thuso splits the student community into two groups – privileged and underprivileged. Although Thuso situates himself within the middle-class, more privileged group, he also displays a strong tendency to minimize the distance between himself and the underprivileged group. He empathises deeply with students from “townships and villages and really poor schools” and suggests that these students likely feel “the most shame”. He contrasts the differences evident in the two schooling systems in South Africa – public versus private schooling – and describes how coming to university from a public school is like being “thrown in the deep end” and “really horrible”. Additionally, Thuso positions himself as less privileged and “left out” compared to his first-year counterparts because of being unable to afford the latest computer: “I just felt left out because I didn’t have an iPad or whatever”.

However, Thuso simultaneously positions himself as also fitting into the privileged student group. The effect of this positioning seemed to be to retain a more fluid status within both class groups. To achieve this straddling between the two groups, Thuso splits off parts of the self. This splitting was most evident in his switching between a “privileged” English and his “normal” accent depending on whose company he was in. He describes how his “posh” accent gains him “a certain level of respect” from wealthy – particularly White – students. His narrative positions those who speak with posh accents as more relatable, gaining more respect, being viewed as equals to and building more friendships with wealthier students. A posh accent has the additional benefit of signifying that one attended a prestigious private school (“they’re able to identify which school you went to and where you grew up, by your accent”). The implication is that university students fear being perceived as from a lower social standing. The use of a “privileged accent” signifies that one belongs to a group who has a higher social standing. Conversely, this intimates tacit

assumptions that the underprivileged are inferior. The underprivileged – who do not have private schooling backgrounds – are by implication less relatable and do not gain respect at university. In the vignette below, Thuso defensively positions a 'self' who leverages language to fit in with "different groups of people". His "accent privilege" becomes a connecting point which facilitates his shifting inclusion within the privileged and underprivileged groups at Wits:

> So I think, here, when people see…when you come on campus and you're in a lecture theatre and you just see how people, like, interact and mingle, different groups of people. So someone like me can definitely interact with a White person who…who went anywhere, because of my…my accent privilege, and the way I would be viewed as an equal to them whereas, if someone comes from a township school and they try to interact with a White person, just generally, it's not seen as…not not seen but it's just harder for them to navigate that social space.
>
> So…because it is quite weird because, if you use your accent with certain white people, when you meet them the first time, there's a certain level of respect and they see you in a certain way, therefore, they…they relate to your accent because they see, oh, you're from a good school, therefore, you're able to interact with me, I can relate to you in that way but, if you don't use your accent, oh, you…you're just…I don't think I can relate to you and I don't think we can build a friendship. So it is…it is about social dynamics, it's about social hierarchy and socioeconomics, not even social, socioeconomic hierarchy and dynamic.

Although Thuso desires to mingle with the socially desirable and command respect at university, he seems conflicted about the possibility of offending fellow students, especially the underprivileged. His choice of whether to use his privileged accent is therefore based on sensitivity to the class of the 'other' because an accent is a "signifier of privilege". 'Um, just generally, people who are not from middle-class or upper-class backgrounds, I won't use the accent because it's disrespectful, in a way'.

> I do use social interactions to kind of gauge how people see me …at certain…like, you know, sometimes, but, like, how do you see me and how do you perceive me? Um, because of my accent, some people have preconceived notions that I am, um, s…some certain snob…snob. I do…I don't know, I guess, because, um, the moment, as a Black individual with an accent, it's a signifier of privilege and growing up in a privileged environment.

In the above quotation Thus brings together the complex ideas of being a Black student and privileged. These two ideas were often portrayed as disparate or split representations in the data because privilege is an emotionally and politically charged idea in this university context. This leaves students, like Thuso, extremely cautious about their behaviour in front of less advantaged peers. The complexity around Thuso's accent choices is suggestive of a split identity. He has become caught up in a world on campus which is

often split into Black and poor versus White and privileged, yet he considers himself Black and privileged – this leaves him in a predicament at times. Thuso's fears of offending others and avoiding his "privileged" accent can be seen as an attempt to hide or deny his privilege at times, which is characteristic of shame. This defensive positioning is most likely to protect his belongingness.

Thuso's fear of the reproach directed at middle-class Black students is demonstrated in the following extract through a discourse of 'the reproach of the privileged':

> So it's quite interesting because…and someone…yesterday, a friend of mine was pointing out, oh, you associate with so many White people and…but you also have, um, so…so many views about White people. I'm like I don't find White people problematic, I just think, historically, the privilege they've benefitted from, that's the problem, is social constructs.

Thuso not only feels reproach for his "privileged accent" but also for his association with "White people". This idea of reproach is most clearly depicted in Thuso's own understanding of his troublesome role in the #FeesMustFall movement:

> So, if I come here with my…my accent and my privilege, I'm already seen as you're middle-class, why are you protesting with us? You…you have everything, why? Why are you pro…wha…not everybody has everything, you know. So it's literally for the most marginalised, that person who comes from a village, had to walk, every single day, to school, four hours, and that was their movement. You're just here to support them in their movement –
>
> It's doing it not for myself…I felt guilty as people were fighting for a cause for Black people and I'm Black and I'm a Black student. So, if people are on the line, putting their bodies on the line and their degrees on the line, I'm in my room sitting…or I'm at home sitting …watching this on TV, that's not…not right, I should be an active participant. If I wanna be considered a…a leader, an individual, if I wanna be considered someone who contributes to society, I must be seen, I must be heard, I must be there to push the movement, you know.

Thuso's vignettes show how he shifts between positioning himself as an outsider and an insider of the #FeesMustFall movement due to his middle-class, Black status. Thuso uses class to position himself on the periphery of the movement as evidenced in the text by his use of the singular pronoun "my" and in contrast to the third person "them" and "their" used to position a "marginalised' 'other'. However, in the second #FeesMustFall extract, Thuso uses race to shift the position of the 'self' to that of an insider of the movement. Significantly, this positioning is coloured by guilt as he talks about how he "should" and "must" support the movement in solidarity with fellow Black students. At the heart of the matter, Thuso seems to experience some disconnect between his African status and his current level of privilege and between his

African status and his desire for the privileged status of the super wealthy. Images of the super wealthy, White, heterosexual male portray an immunity to feelings of unworthiness and inferiority.Thuso's future aspirations of becoming super wealthy seem to form a core part of his ambivalence around race and class:

> So I do wanna attain wealth in that term so that I can…I'm able to do certain things like that. Um, travel is definitely important to me. I wanna be seen as a leader, someone who's a [sic] influencer, you know, in a positive way …, but it's…it's a lot of redefining who I thought I was.

Although this idealization of his membership within the wealthy group seems so appealing, Thuso cannot seem to shake feelings of guilt and reproach by the underprivileged student group who are predominantly Black:

> Black guilt, I think, is, um…I think, nowadays, Black guilt comes from someone who's grown up middle class or that kind of guilt of, okay, cool, in spaces like FeesMustFall, I ca…I can go there but I can't…you can't be seen as a leader because you're privileged, it's not your cause, you're just there to support, and, if you don't support, you're seen as, oh, ja, definitely, it's not for you, so you're definitely not gonna benefit, so we don't need you in this space anyways.

Thuso senses the "resentment" of the less privileged, even towards himself as a Black student, His use of the word "nowadays" in conjunction with the words "Black guilt" is evidence of a change in current representations of the ideas of 'Black' and 'privilege' and how difficult it is to reconcile these two notions based on historical inequalities in South Africa.

Thuso also picks up on the anger of the underprivileged student group towards more privileged students.

> I think there is a…a resentment. I…I do sense a lot of resentment towards people of privilege. So, even towards me, they're like, oh, you're privileged, you don't wanna…you don't…you shouldn't talk to me 'cause I…there's nothing we can relate to.

In the quotation above, Thuso's words "even towards me", imply that even he, as a Black person, is the recipient of the resentment of 'others', likely Black 'others'. Again, class differences are positioned as defining relatability among students. A student's class determines who he/she can relate to which has implications for belongingness or "us versus them". Thuso also describes the shame rage spirals in some parts of the student body:

> I think…I think the anger's driven by shame. Yes. So, if you're shameful, you're like why am I feeling like this? And then I shouldn't be feeling like this. Then it builds into a resentment and an anger and a frustration or, rather, frustration and then resentment to anger. So it's sh…I'm shameful, why do I feel like this? I'm frustrated, why am I

> frustrated? Because they have this, society views them as this, and it's a lot of us versus them.
>
> … there's a [sic] underbelly of resentment that's bubbling under and I think it…it's…it has reared itself in spaces like FeesMustFall …and, um, ja, I think that's…that's where the resentment is. So I think, definitely, the poorest among us …
>
> So I think it came out of a…a sense of just anger and a rejection of not being valued in society, not being seen in society, by our own government, by, you know, those in power, by…it was just…I think we were tired and we didn't know what else to do and we had been told, I think, just to, you know, go to school, study, learn - and then everything will be fine, but it's so hard, there's [sic] so many barriers before we actually get here, so people are like it's time to take down barriers. … So I think it's just a rejection of…it's a frustration of not knowing what to do.

Thuso recounts how it is not only the actions of individuals that lead to feelings of shameful betrayal but also groups and institutions. When asked what groups at Wits may potentially experience more shame than others Thuso positioned underprivileged students as experiencing more shame because these students despite "performing at their academic best" are "still shut out of certain institutions". The big question he posed is how are these students "supposed to move out of my social class and, and go into self-actualising?" Thuso therefore portrays the #FeesMustFall movement as stemming from the anger of underprivileged students and shifts the focus to rejection and betrayal by government.

The vignettes which unpack Thuso's struggle with accent, class, race, belonging and rejection can be encapsulated by the following rhetorical questions: Do I belong inside or outside the affluent student community? Do I belong inside or outside the Black student community? How can I belong to the Black student community as a person of privilege? Do I belong inside or outside the White student community? What would the 'right' type of African student look and sound like? His concerns about his sexuality and being perceived as "weak" also reflect conflicted feelings around being the 'right kind of African male' which then implies the question: Do I belong inside or outside the gay community? The danger evident in Thuso's portrait is that the real person gets lost in positional shifting. It's as though he must live "many separate lives at once" (Meltzer, 1981, p. 179).

Recall that it is Thuso's experience of failing for the first time that forms the backdrop of feeling torn about privilege, race and aspirations of future wealth. Thuso's portrait therefore demonstrates the principle of how any given student has multiple identities and that the desire to be recognized and held in high regard by fellow students has ramifications for healthy psychological functioning. Thuso's display of ongoing shifting seems to exacerbate identity confusion and fears of being unworthy and of not belonging. Although Thuso's shifting is characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid position, it is ultimately his experience of failing at university that compels him to confront loss which is reflective of the depressive position. Steiner (2011) contends that the experience of loss enables a process of 'sorting through' of that which belongs to the

'self' and that which belongs to the object. In other words, it is a taking back of those parts lost through projective identifications. On some level Thuso is aware of engaging in a sorting through process as he needs to "rebuild" and "redefine" himself. The words "who I am and who I thought I was", also speak to the disparities that he is currently processing.

> I feel like I'm rebuilding who I am and who I thought I was or who I thought I wanted to be ...Because I had all these ideals, being in high school, being a top achiever … being a leader at all different levels, you know, someone who people look up to ...I was always told, oh, you're such a respectable individual.
>
> Shame comes from experiences where you don't see yourself represented …you're not able to identify yourself as an individual, therefore, you feel invisible and, also, int…interactions with the people.

The above extracts show that Thuso is likely experiencing unretrieved projections as he struggles to forge an identity without clear external representation. An adolescent who loses touch with the qualities of his/her parents may have distorted internal representations of the parents (Waddell, 2002). Thuso, has experienced a distorted internal representation of his father as evidenced by his reference to previously "repressed" feelings and his more recent "bubbling up" of feelings towards his father. He remains faced with the task of reconciling a father who was abusive towards his mother, together with a longing for a fantasized reunion with his idealised but largely absent father. During his first year at university, amidst failure and feelings of confusion around his own masculinity, he began to face these contradictory versions he has of his father and it brought to the surface this split off emotional connection with his father. However, it is only through the retrieval of projections and metabolising shame that Thuso will be able to experience the richness and depth of his own personality. This working through may prove difficult because of the accumulation of traumatic experiences from Thuso's earliest years. He likely experiences a vulnerability to loss and feelings of inferiority. Thuso also faces feelings of unworthiness in relation to his idealised images of himself. Morrison (1998) purports that "unworthiness combines elements of failure, unlovability, inferiority, and defectiveness" (p. 47) and that unworthiness can stem from perceived rejection by a parent in early childhood which is internalised and becomes a part of one's core identity. He suggests that it is not unusual for such people to engage in a "lifelong quest for a sense of self-worth or acceptability through attempts to rid the self of shame" (p. 47). Thuso's need to "rebuild" and "redefine" the self may be suggestive of Morrison's "quest for a sense of self-worth".

8.1.6. Portrait 6 – Emma

Emma is a White, first-year student in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand. She was "raised with staunch Afrikaans parents", considers herself middle-class and works on a casual basis to help pay her "varsity fees" and "extra expenses". Emma experienced the transition

from high school to university as difficult and uses a discourse of 'Wits is big and impersonal' to justify occasionally feeling intimidated at Wits:

> So it was very difficult to transition from going from intimate learning situations to one where I'm just a number and I'm in a lecture hall, and it's terrifying to put your hand up and I'm not one that really shies away from stuff like that. If I wanna know something, I'm gonna ask, but I remember my first few weeks [INDISTINCT] here. So, in my first few weeks I was like, oh, my God, I can't do this, I can't. [LAUGHS]. It's just so big.

Emma does report that making friends from her class eased the transition to university and helped build her confidence. She positions herself as being in an exploratory phase of her life "to be completely honest, I have no life trajectory. I have no clue what I'm doing". Preferring to do a degree that offers her flexibility she decided to "just do a general BA and then change my courses as I go, if I need to". With a BA general degree "there's always another option". She reports getting 'bored' easily and hating certain subjects which she then "leaves" and "moves on from" – moving onto subjects which she enjoys. Emma has decided on her choice of majors but still hasn't "decided on what else I want to do". Despite not belonging to a specific professional fraternity at university, Emma feels that 'Wits is elite' and "there's something about it [university] that it just rises people above the norm". This identification serves to position the 'self' as rising above the norm because of going to university.

Emma describes how she has "a bit of an interesting family" which includes several stepdads. Although this would have brought many developmental challenges for the young Emma, she draws on a discourse of 'independence and self-sufficiency' to position a strong and capable sense of 'self' at university. For example, Emma maintains that even though her mother was constantly there for her she has always been "independent", "self-driven" and "I always just did it on my own". Growing up she experienced her mother as "quite strict" and a "disciplinarian" but her mother also "let me do my own thing". Emma reports that she has "never really had a problem with self-esteem" and currently manages the downs in life by picking herself up, telling herself to "just suck it up" and get through it. Emma's current self-talk is reflective of the self-sufficiency that characterized her childhood. The data suggests that Emma does not easily engage a supportive 'other' but rather mobilises this independent 'self' – she admits to not asking for help "even when I really need it".

Emma's talk about independence and self-sufficiency masks her conflict around more needy, dependent feelings which are often split off. For Emma, asking for help and showing signs of dependency seem to be highly shameful. This idea was corroborated in the data when Emma described her core shame experience as an incident which I have called 'the lunchbox faux pas', a situation where Emma did not have money to buy lunch on campus. Noticing or 'seeing' the situation, Emma's friend bought her lunch that day. However, Emma seemed to struggle with shameful feelings of dependency and neediness rather than freely receive the generosity of this gesture:

P6 Um, like, the one day, I hadn't managed to work enough shifts to make enough money to reach a certain point of the money that I needed and, um, I wasn't able to get lunch on campus and I had completely forgotten to pack one and, when, um…and that was one of the days where I'm here from eight 'til five. I've got lectures all day, and one of my friends, who's also very wealthy, …she bought me lunch without me asking and, for me, that was hard. Ja.

I What do you think she was thinking? And what were you thinking about that?

P6 I don't think she…she did it with –she's one of those people where she just gives out money, she doesn't really give thought about it. So, to her, she was just buying lunch 'cause we…we usually have an ongoing thing where we eat lunch together and we usually split half and half on whatever it is we get and, that day, she just bought lunch, like, she didn't even ask. [LAUGHS]. So, for me, it was, like, uh, why?

I Why?

P6 Ja, why?

I How…how did she know that day?

P6 Mm, ja. Um, I don't know. I felt very transparent –

I Mm.

P6 …like she knew everything …I hadn't told her. So, it was hard. It was hard to accept it.

Some of the characteristics of the shame experience evident in the above vignette are a 'self' that is focal in awareness together with a feeling of being 'seen' or, in this case, being 'seen through', exposed or "transparent". The implication of transparency is that Emma's protective ego boundary has slipped and she has found herself unable to hide her need of, or perhaps even her desire, for support. She later also describes how being on a tight budget means she cannot "go partying" with her wealthy friends "every weekend" and that she is "too prideful to ask for help. Um, I don't like it. I don't like asking for help at all". When asked by the interviewer to clarify what asking for help would mean to her, Emma responded, "It means that I can't do it on my own":

> So, um, ja. So, for me, when I ask for help on the times where I…I honestly just don't have a choice, that's when I'm ashamed 'cause I want…I want to be able to do it myself. As it…as I said earlier, I'm very independent …so I…for me, that is a source of shame, so I don't do it very often, even when I really need it. [LAUGHS].

Emma's feelings of transparency, which is indicative of shame, are further corroborated by her own 'watching' of 'other's. In this instance she is watching the "wealthy kids" at university:

> Emma: …you can always tell who the wealthy kids are, um –
>
> Interviewer: So how do you tell?
>
> Emma: The way they dress. You wouldn't think it because a lot of them look like hobos but…which is apparently the fashion now [LAUGHS], I don't understand [LAUGHS], but, um, just the way they dress and the way they act, and a lot of the wealthy kids are very sheltered, so they're very naïve in certain things. Um, so you…I don't know how but you can just spot them

Watching and spotting the 'wealthy kids on campus' seems to be used to monitor one's own social standing in relation to others at university. The effect of comparison is to position the 'self' as less privileged. Emma goes on to describe how her wealthy friends get to do a lot of things that she can't afford to do:

> Interviewer: So, tell me about your…how you understand shame and what shame feels like for you and why you think people feel shame?
>
> Emma: Um, I think shame ties very heavily into our need to fit in or our nee…our need to be normal and, you know, go with not necessarily the flow but to…to not stick out. So, um…um, so, like, for instance, a lot of my friends are wealthy, quite wealthy –
>
> Interviewer: Right.
>
> Emma: …'cause I went to a private school, and now, varsity, I see it's pretty much the same thing and, um, they all [COUGHS] go out for lunch and stuff and they party a lot and a lot of those things I can't do, obviously, because I can't afford it. I've got varsity fees and then I've still gotta pay extra expenses. So, for me it's like I always feel horrible when I say to them, no, I can't go out. And I don't wanna explain to them that, listen, you know, money's tight, I can't afford it, 'cause it…it's just something they don't understand, they've never experienced it. So, ja. Ja.

Not only does Emma seem to struggle to integrate an independent versus dependent 'self' in the university environment but she also makes frequent use of splitting to create order out of chaos when bringing the 'self' into relationship with 'others' at university. She does this primarily in three ways: firstly, she positions the 'self' as smart and potentially threatening to 'others'; secondly, she presents a 'self' who is physically separated or split off from others and, thirdly, she attempts to compartmentalize people at university into neat categories. These discourses and associated positionings will now be elaborated.

Firstly, Emma splits her own ego by putting the more vulnerable, needy parts of herself into 'others' who perceive her as 'intimidating':

> Ja, they definitely agreed that they f…I'm intimidating, apparently. Um, and, also, um, mm, toot my own horn, but I am quite smart, so, when it comes to subjects and stuff, I pick things up really quickly and I've been told that it puts people off, that, um, even before lectures are taught, I've read ahead, you know, so I know sort of what's going on, and it's intimidating and, apparently, people don't like that.

Emma's "tooting" of her own horn, admission to being "quite smart", "picking things up really quickly" and "reading ahead" forefront her need for independence and self-sufficiency. However, her use of the word "intimidating" is suggestive of projection – she projects her own dependence and insufficiency into others and sees these shameful feelings as existing outside of herself. Emma therefore appears to struggle to deal with her own aggression in realistic and objective ways. Emma also talks about 'the younger stage' to position the 'self' as at a more advanced level of maturity than her peers who are on average two years younger. However, despite this minimal age gap, this discourse seems to function to maintain a superior sense of the 'self' in relation to peers. "I don't understand, um, why they behave differently to me" and they're "younger than me, so they're not at that point of maturity … Like, I understand it but I don't understand". Emma's visible confusion around her peers' behaviour is evidence of a disconnect between her own vulnerable feelings and thought processes and those of her objects. The repeated suggestion of a 'self' who poses a threat to the 'other' – and the somewhat superior and triumphant tone of the 'self' – are more reflective of a paranoid schizoid position than a depressive position. Self-sufficiency is therefore likely a protection against shameful dependency and split off idealised parts of the 'self' are possibly a defence against destructive and persecutory phantasies of the self.

Secondly, evidence of splitting is found in Emma's rigid physical boundaries formed around the 'self' and embodied in a discourse of 'personal space':

> "Ja, I don't like people in my house, I don't like people in my bed, I don't like them in my space … ooh, space, massive thing for me. It's one thing I've found here at Wits, there's no concept of personal space. Like, people stand on top of you all the time [LAUGHS]. And I'm one of those people who I get instantly defensive, like, I want my space …"

Personal space likely functions as a distancing mechanism for Emma, creating a sense of safety and order. Emma's choice of the word "defensive" is suggestive of the need for a protective shielding of the 'self'. It is as if the 'self' requires safeguarding and protecting from 'others'. This perhaps illustrates why Emma experienced the "transparency" of her lunchbox faux pas as so acutely shameful whereas for another person the offer of lunch may have been welcomed without a second thought. Kilborne (1992) contends that "the more intense the feelings of shame, the more demanding the ideal of total self-sufficiency, and the more inevitable the failure, which fuels the shame cycle" (p. 237).

Thirdly, Emma manages negative, threatening feelings at university by splitting herself and 'others' into neat categories or groupings. These categories are either black or white, there is no space for nuance

or complexity. Emma achieves this by using a discourse of 'compartmentalizing'. For example, she makes a habit of "keeping my house life and varsity life completely separate". Splitting of her different lives also extends to her personality on campus:

> Um, I do find that I keep my personality quite under wraps. So I'm not as, um, extroverted as I usually would be if I was outside of campus, um, because, when I'm on campus, my brain is in school mode, like, I'm here to learn I'm not really here to have fun. So I do find that it, um…a lot of my friends go out and stuff together and, for me, I'm just like, mm, no, not with varsity friends, no. They're my intellectual friends. [LAUGHS]. So, ja, I k…I kinda keep my friends separate. I have my…my smart friends, my party friends, um, the family friends …and then they don't really interlink. I don't know if I do it on purpose or I just happen that way. [LAUGHS]. Ja.

Emma splits her own personality into a self who is kept "under wraps", an "extroverted" 'self', a "school mode" 'self' and a "fun" 'self'. In a similar vein, Emma divides friends into "intellectual", "smart", "party" or "family" friends and is adamant that these separate parts should not "interlink". The implication is that you can't have fun and be serious about your schoolwork or you can't be a smart person and party. This rigidity is in sharp contrast to Emma's remarkable flexibility around her subject and degree choice. Although 'compartmentalizing' can be a helpful way of coping with a complex social world it is perhaps the rigidity of Emma's representations that is noteworthy as this is more reflective of a paranoid schizoid position. It likely renders a more simple and manageable state of mind to cope at university. Despite Emma's emphatic treatise of 'compartmentalizing', she does however demonstrate movement between the paranoid schizoid and depressive positions as demonstrated through the following relationship with a friend: "when we first met, I was like, oh, my God, that guy's so annoying, I can't deal - but then, as I got to know him … he showed me, like, on campus, I could still have fun with him but still get my work done. So, he was that nice balance in the middle …". Emma begins the aforementioned relationship in her characteristic fashion of black and white thinking, however, as the friendship develops she is able to internalize some sort of a "nice balance" that feels helpful at university.

However, Emma is not the only student who compartmentalises to make sense of a complex student environment. The following vignette shows how Emma uses this discourse of 'compartmentalising' to understand racism in the classroom:

> Um, I've noticed that and, also…ooh, there was one Black girl in my linguistics class and we'd just learnt about, um, uh, you know, coloured people in the Cape Flats and their version of Afrikaans and how that's, like, the original version of Afrikaans and, um, we had just learnt that languages get named according to region, a lot of the time, and, so, my friend and I were like, oh, so that makes sense why it's called Afrikaans because of it originates from Africa, and the Black chick turned around and she's insistent, she's like Afrikaans people don't belong in Africa, and we're like really?

> [LAUGHS]. Was that so…so necessary? We were just making an observation. It's not like we were saying, okay, Afrikaans people own Africa. We were saying that's where the language developed, because it's true, that's where it did come from. It was Dutch people coming to Africa and mixing their language. So, for me, that is…ja, it still sticks in my head. I couldn't understand the…the bigotry, you know. I'd…uh, ja, uh.

Emma's antagonist compartmentalises by claiming that "Afrikaans people don't belong in Africa". If Afrikaans people do not belong in Africa, the implication is that they do not belong at Wits university. Emma calls this out as "bigotry". Additionally, Emma has been confronted with an inescapable categorisation of being White and therefore privileged. She seems to have difficulty compartmentalising the complexity of class and race on campus:

> Firstly, um, even though I have my own car, that's seen as a massive thing, you know, White supremist kind of thing. Um, a lot of the kids, they look down on this, on…I can always tell it's, like, the kids that are from my class kind of thing… Um, it's kinda like, um, you're White, you're on campus, so you must be a student, so, therefore, you must be, you know, part of the elitists kind of thing and I think people are very blinded by that, and especially now with all the protests and stuff. Instead of pushing race aside, it's making it more prominent. Um, ja, you…you…you can feel it. Ja.

Recall that Emma has taken great care to portray herself as middle-class and working hard to be able to afford all the extras that are required at university. However, in the extract above, the 'you're white, you're privileged' label is imposed on her on campus and some students "looked down on this" (owning a car). The implication is that some students are looking down on her privilege and this reversal of class positions seems to result in Emma feeling self-conscious which paradoxically triggers shame. I say 'paradoxically' because intuitively it is assumed that wealthier students have less shame. Further evidence that Emma's discourse of 'compartmentalising' is not always dependable in warding off shame is found in her portrayal of discussions about race during lectures. To Emma's dismay, race again becomes complexly intertwined with class and Emma finds herself starting to get "angry" in the classroom:

> As soon as they brought up, um…uh, like, the lecturer asked a question about, um, like, what are the issues in South Africa? And the first thing that popped was White supremacy. I was sitting there, I was like I don't see it 'cause it's not how I was raised and it's not the environment I grew up in.
>
> …sit there and listen to how the White people ruined their lives and…I couldn't. … And, like, firstly, I'm sitting there and I'm like, dude, this is, like, twenty-two years ago. It has nothing to do with you. It didn't happen to you, so it has no relevance to you. So, for me, I…I'd…'cause I'd sit there and I'd start to get angry 'cause I'm like they're so focussed on race. Meantime, um, they could be talking about the gender issues. I mean, we have major gender issues in South Africa. So, ja. I got…I…I sat through, I think,

> three lectures before I realised I couldn't. I couldn't sit there anymore and listen. So I self-taught that section to me.

The extracts above depict how an increased level of threat has resulted in Emma's withdrawal from lecture participation and a tendency to function from a more paranoid-schizoid position. This positioning is evidenced by her disavowal of the ramifications of apartheid in South African society, for example, "this is like, twenty-two years ago" and "it didn't happen to you". Her disavowal is corroborated by her suggestion to talk about "major gender issues in South Africa" rather than race. Emma's tendency to compartmentalise is also evident in how she has split the past and the present into two separate worlds. The past has, however, disappeared into a black hole. This positioning serves to ensure discontinuity between the old apartheid era and current reality. It also serves to distance any possibilities for ambivalence about the role of White people during the apartheid era. Emma also projects feelings of victimisation onto her 'White' lecturer who is portrayed as lacking sensitivity to the situation and proves unresponsive to a written e-mail appealing for support:

> … notice what your students are feeling, look at, um, how, when you bring up the White supremacy thing and how, um…the White elitists, notice how the White kids squirm because we can instantly feel the judgement coming from the Black kids. It's instant. And, as a White kid who sits in amongst Black kids, it's horrible. You sit there and you…you start to switch off, 'cause, for me, whenever race gets bring…gets brought up in a lecture, especially when they start talking about how White this, White that, I switch off. I'm just like it's not relevant, I don't need to know this …

The above extract shows how Emma's sense of threat in the classroom is intimately tied to feelings of shame as her persistent indifference about the welfare of the 'other' is indicative of bypassed shame. "Indifference can mark a state of bypassed shame: "It succeeds in warding off feelings of humiliation in the self and it can succeed in evoking them in others" (Lewis, 1971, p. 12). Some shame did however seem to be alleviated by the support of fellow Black students who reportedly also did "trickle out of the sociology lecture and they'd come and they'd join us, 'cause then we'd sit and we'd discuss it, and not just from a race point of view but from all sides". The implication is that supportive Black students were able to view fellow White students in a more holistic fashion rather than 'compartmentalise' or categorise them according to race.

However, that integration at university is an ongoing struggle for Emma is evident in the two extracts below which are taken from our conversation around the #FeesMustFall movement:

> So, um, I honestly think it's rubbish. [LAUGHS]. I am so against it. I mean, coming from a middle-class family, I do pay my own tuition, so I do understand that it's very expensive but, university, it's a privilege, it's not a right … but, university, uh, there's something about it that it just rises people above the norm. So, if…if they made the fees

completely gone, mm…looking at it from, like, a…I don't wanna sound racist [LAUGHS], um –

Okay. Uh, so, looking at it from a race point of view, as it is, white kids struggle to get into university … So, for me, if, um…if the fees had to fall, where would that leave the White people?

The data shows how Emma struggles with displacement from her position as a White, middle class South African which was formerly the centre of South African society. To be White and middle class was an assumed position in apartheid South Africa (Eagle, 2018). However, it is not only race and class which no longer fit into neat compartments, but issues of language as well. Below is a verbatim extract of an interaction between myself and Emma which has been included to demonstrate how sensitivities around race and ethnicity, and language in particular, can play out in extraordinary ways:

I I wanna come back to you said that you [sic], um, actually glad that you don't have an Afrikaans accent when you speak English.

P6 Ah, yes. [LAUGHS]. Um, personally, I think…I don't know what it is but Afrikaans, that…that accent, it, like…it has a stigma attached. [LAUGHS]. It's like, the more Afrikaans you sound, the dumber you sound.

I Interesting.

P6 So…and I…I noticed that when I moved from the East Rand, where I grew up Afrikaans, to the West Rand, where I was thrown into an English school, and I noticed kids would tease me because of the way I spoke. So, you know, adapt to survive. I picked up the…what they called the Sandton-cougal accent.

I You did indeed.

P6 So…ja. [LAUGHS]. My mom doesn't understand where I get it from. [LAUGHS]. Um, but, e…especially on campus, uh, I've noticed that a lot of people don't pay much mind to those that have the thick Afrikaans accent, um, that they don't listen to them. There's one girl I noticed in my psychology tutorial, we were busy learning about social disorders, and she…she actually mentioned something that was…I can't remember what it was but, in that moment, it was so relevant and I'm like, wow, I didn't even think of that, and our tutor completely skipped over her. So, when I brought it up again, my tutor was like, oh, ja, that's, like, great and I'm like but she just said that.

I Yes.

P6 [LAUGHS]. So, for me, d…I'm very glad I lost it. I feel bad for the others but, for me, it was a necessity, I had to.

I And do you think that's got a correlation in, um…in African languages?

P6 I do, actually. Um, now that I think about it, I don't pay much mind to people who…especially Coloured people. For me, when they talk, I switch off.

I Ja.

P6 Like, I'm instantly like, okay, it's obviously not that important. [LAUGHS]. Now that I think about it, that's really bad. [LAUGHS].

I What…what do you feel about that? What feeling?

P6 Sort of ashamed. [LAUGHS]. Like, I'm talking about all these people that ignore the Afrikaans people but I do the exact same thing for Black and Coloured people. I never actually thought about that. [LAUGHS]. Um, but, ja, like, um, when they talk, especially when they talk and they…they mix their English and their Zulu, for me, I…instantly, I'm like, okay, clearly you don't know English properly. [LAUGHS]. Oh, my God. [LAUGHS].

I Ja.

P6 Alright. I guess I learnt something today.

The extract reveals how I stepped out of my role as researcher and into a more interpretive role. Methodologically this is widely frowned upon in psychosocial research (Branney et al., 2009; Frosh & Emerson, 2005). I pursued this line of questioning firstly, because language had emerged as a clear theme within the data and, this particular case presented a compelling anomaly of the role of English for the Afrikaner and secondly, I found myself reacting to Emma's shifting racist stance throughout her interview. Emma's racial positioning is by no means of the 'thick-skinned' narcissistic type but is rather a more 'modern' kind of racism (Wright, 2003). Emma reports having friends from all races yet in her interview she consistently positioned the 'self' as indifferent to more disadvantaged Black students. What transpired in the interview was likely a countertransference experience of a guilty student whose interviewer may have wanted to scold her. The researcher followed the impulse to lightly scold rather than consider the interview context in which the impulse was experienced. This was likely a mix of my own shame and guilt about apartheid and Emma's feeling deserving of a scolding. However, the vignette demonstrates that Emma was able to receive the interpretation and that honest conversations about race, class and ethnicity can be helpful when non-threatening. However, it should be noted that this situation was likely non-threatening because Emma and I are the same race and it was a one-on-one interview rather than a classroom interaction with an audience.

The overriding theme in the interview data is Emma's portrayal of an unapproachable self who has "tunnel vision". Although Emma willingly acknowledges the somewhat negative portrayals of herself as seen through the eyes of her friends or 'others', the 'self' remains in a non-reflective state of being (Ogden,

1986/2018). Even when asked how 'others' on campus perceive her, Emma portrayed others' view of her ("quiet", "intimidating", "I have what's called a resting-bitch face", "I'm not very approachable") as reaffirming her independence and self-sufficiency. Emma acknowledges that her friends have kindly pointed out her lack of approachability on campus. Her one friend advised her "that a lot of people have tried to approach me and I've subconsciously just been like, oh, no, go away, I'm busy":

> Ja. So, um, unless I'm smiling, apparently, I'm not very approachable [LAUGHS] which I can understand, 'cause I don't notice these things 'cause I'm not really looking for it, it's not something that's bothered me, um, [LAUGHS] but he says that a lot of people, um, have tried to approach me and I've subconsciously just been like, oh, no, go away, I'm busy.

A contradiction evident in the data is how Emma describes herself as unapproachable and not looking to engage, yet the extract below, about the campus cleaning staff, tells another story:

> They flat out ignore you but then along comes, like, a Coloured or a Black person, and they're all friendly and I'm like, okay, that's nice [sarcasm].

What is striking in this extract is Emma's denial of her need to be seen and acknowledged. This is in contrast to her consistent portrayal of aggressive independence. Also evident is a lack of reflection about why she might be ignored by cleaning staff and the effect that her own unapproachable self-sufficiency may have on others – irrespective of race. Because of a lack of integration of the hateful self, hostile feelings tend to be represented at a distance, 'out there'. It is in this process of projection that discourses of 'compartmentalising' are usually invoked, for example race, language and privilege. Emma's admission that she is not looking to be approached is used to position the 'self' as not needing anyone. This unapproachability functions to distance her from 'others' and it is suggested, using a shame lens, that this can be regarded as a sophisticated form of hiding from others. The suggestion is therefore that Emma's experience of shame lies at the junction of negotiating relationships with others and her relationship to her own dependence and vulnerability to loss (Temperley, 2001).

8.1.7. Portrait 7 – Adele

Adele is a White, female postgraduate student in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand. She has a number of adult siblings and is the only sibling who no longer resides in the parental home. Adele's family of origin was very much at the forefront of her mind throughout the interview as she frequently positioned the 'self' in relation to her family and in particular her idealised mother. I have called this prevalent discourse 'my upbringing'. When asked why she thinks people feel shame, Adele's response was that it has "a lot to do with, mainly, upbringing and people around you". Like many survey and interview participants, Adele is no stranger to the experience of failing at university. She sketches a difficult first year both academically and with regards to her personal life, having ended an abusive relationship around that time. Adele had to "repeat a year" and began to appreciate the gravity of

her educational undertaking: “You know, health sciences is a difficult degree. Oh, my word. They don’t warn you [LAUGHS] about that”. However, Adele identified that she was struggling to concentrate and consulted a professional who assisted her with study techniques. She reported “a huge mark improvement after that”. Adele admits being “quite devastated” at failing and positions this through a discourse of ‘you fail, but peers move on’. She recalls that friends having “moved on” was the most difficult thing about failing. However, characteristic of the depressive position, she seems to have integrated the loss of this experience in two ways. Firstly, she has transformed this experience into an opportunity to help others.

> So…and I see that shame when anyone that does struggle or fail, I think why I get it, [LAUGHS] I wanna help them, ‘cause I know how crap it feels.

In the above extract Adele positions failing as to “be down there” which implies a low or inferior position which is shameful. The implicit discourse is therefore ‘if you fail, you are inferior’. This is indicative of shame. However, the second indication that Adele has been able to integrate this shame experience is that she was able to leverage her support structure and recalls receiving support from her friends who did not judge her. This discourse of ‘camaraderie’ is demonstrated in the extract below and shows how aligning herself with a fellow student who had experienced similar difficulties brought comfort and resulted in forging a long-term friendship:

> … And then, in fact, one friend, uh…well, one, she was…she was originally just, like, a class colleague and then she also repeated. So we actually ended up becoming friends and, so, out of it, I gained a friend and, still today, we’re good friends, so…

Although Adele no longer lives at home she positions herself as “still quite close” to her family of origin. The most significant portrayals of the ‘other’ during the interview were of Adele’s mother and her siblings. Her parents had divorced while she was in her late teens and although this was a difficult time for the family Adele describes the situation as “weird” because “they’re divorced but they’re still living in the same house”. Morrison (1981) describes how the word “weird” is one of many alternatives for talking indirectly about something that feels shameful. However, Adele only lingers briefly on this idea and quickly moves on to depict her mom as “an extremely strong person that I look at and I’m like, wow, you know, I should be like that, but … [LAUGHS]”. The implication is that Adele does not imagine herself to be the “strong person” her mother is. Adele goes on to describe how her mother financially supports her father, her adult siblings and some of her siblings’ partners, all of whom are currently living at home,“… she’s supporting them all and she’s just, like…ja, my mom’s impressive”. These complex living arrangements hint at the shameful dependency of family members, however, Adele’s mother largely remains the unambiguous protagonist in her story. The only exception being her description of her mother as “quite hard on us” and “how strict my mom was on us” during childhood.

Adele constructs a number of interesting positions of the ‘self’ with four themes recurring in the data: putting pressure on the ‘self’; being too hard on the ‘self’; a highly emotional ‘self’ and a physically

imploding ‘self’. The first theme, that of putting pressure on the ‘self’ is described in relationship to her idealised mother:

> …even though she doesn’t put that pressure on me, I think I put my own pressure on myself ‘cause I’m like, look at what she can do.

Adele’s comparison to her mother seems to lead to a ‘self’ who is found wanting and lacking. For example, “I should be like that, but …” and “I’m like, look at what she can do”. However, Adele also puts pressure on herself to emulate her supervisor who is supportive and is a highly published professional:

> Ja. But the nice thing is she’s always been understanding. It’s just that pr…I think that pressure that I put on myself to always…so, it’s always, like, the own pressure I put on myself.

In the shame experiences survey Adele reported “disappointing my supervisor with my output”, however, during the interview it became apparent that her supervisor was satisfied with her progress and that this “disappointment” seemed to be a judgement about the ‘self’. This links to the second theme around the representation of the ‘self’ as that of being “too hard” on the ‘self’:

> Um, I’m also, like, quite…apparently, too hard on myself. So I’m always criticising myself and always feel like things aren’t good enough.

It is significant that Adele used the word ‘hard’ approximately sixteen times during the interview. This word was used repeatedly in the context of being a “hard-working” person, of being “too hard” on herself, “how hard our parents had to work” and also her own “hard outlook in life”. A noteworthy exception to the context of the use of the word ‘hard’ was when Adele appealed to her parents to be “harder on them [her siblings]”. As such, Adele’s siblings are positioned as the antagonists in her story and are painted as “slackers”. Adele seems to experience some guilt at this admission about her siblings as indicated by her words, “I know it’s horrible …”. However, she consistently positions herself as at opposite ends of a divide compared to her siblings. For example, the extract below is a story in which Adele employs the ‘hard work’ discourse to juxtapose herself and a sibling:

> So…’cause I told them, like, if she fails again, you guys must make her pay for her own studies so she understands, you know. So…’cause I know my…when I failed, I was like, okay, rude awakening, focus on your studies, work harder, you know, start prioritising this, this, and this, and then I pushed and improved, but she just…uh, they give her too many opportunities, it’s like it’s too okay to fail. No, it’s not.

Adele employs the ‘hard work’ discourse and in so doing exhibits a split representation of the idea of “hard work”. There are those who work hard, like herself, her mother and her father and then there are those who are “slackers” like her siblings. This representation seems to function to position Adele as closely identified with her parents who are repeatedly portrayed as having made huge sacrifices but who are “stronger” because of it. Adele’s identification is particularly noticeable with respect to her mother, who

"pushed through" and overcame a "lot of financial strain". This identification with her parents is further corroborated when Adele constructs a 'self' who appreciates the value of her parents' sacrifice and "hard work". Adele also positioned the 'self' as exasperated by the #FeesMustFall movement because it seemed to denounce her own parents sacrifice: "That irritated me. I'm sorry, that…I know it's, like, horrible but, again, like, having known what my parents went through …". Further to this, Adele is also frustrated by her siblings who also seem unappreciative of the sacrifices their parents have made:

> …we all went through the same thing, so you'd just think that we'd value what our parents give us 'cause we know how hard our parents had to work to give us those opportunities, and then they…they don't value it.

The above extract demonstrates that Adele's split representation of the 'hard workers' versus "slackers" serves the unique function of creating an 'us' versus 'them' grouping within the family. Adele further engages a discourse of 'becoming stronger' to make sense of why she had to pay for her own university fees whereas her parents are financially supporting her adult siblings. Unable to access the pain and loss of the unfairness, she disidentifies with the "slackers" and rationalises that by emulating her parents and working hard, she has become "a stronger person" too:

> So, for me, it's just, like…I'm like, no, you work hard for something, it's not always great but you will…damn well will become, like, a stronger person for it, it will cut…'cause, when you go through something horrible, it does make you stronger. You, like, are able to do things that not…not everyone else can do 'cause you've been there, done that. You know, [INDISTINCT] so I've kinda got that hard outlook in life, which I got from [LAUGHS] my mom.

Adele's fixation with 'hard' and rationalisation of suffering is suggestive of a form of rigidity which is characteristic of a paranoid-schizoid position. This rigidity is further corroborated when Adele suggests that her peers describe her as "stubborn" and " then I think it's just, like, you know, that perception how I'm set in my ways and…ja, so…" and "people know. I'm very set in my ways. I get teased for it a lot …".

This rigidity is further evidenced in Adele's allegiance to the sacrifice made for her by her parents which proves impregnable even to the discourse of 'you're White, you're privileged':

> … I think, like, with race in our country, there's [sic] some people that m…are almost made to feel shame. And then, some people that are doing fine, they'll feel shame just because they're fine and, like, they had a nice upbringing but there, uh…there I feel like they're been made to feel ashamed because they're not going through what other people have.
>
> So I don't know. Like, some White people are made to feel ashamed but, like, I'm like I don't care, like, my parents worked hard, they were both a … both came from abused families, and [INDISTINCT] ashamed because of them tryna do the best for their kids.

> So it's…but then it…you'll feel some people that are…do feel ashamed. Like, my one friend, like, her…her life's been, like, very easy but she feels ashamed of being White and having those benefits but then that frustrates me. I'm like but then do something about it. You know, if you feel that shame, then help the Black people instead of just talking about how privileged White people are …

In both the extracts above, Adele distances herself from "some White people" who have "been made to feel ashamed" and "do feel ashamed" because of White privilege. She creates still more distance from privilege in the second extract by contrasting herself to a White friend who does feel this sense of shame. The implication is that she herself does not need to feel White shame because her parents have worked hard and came from abused families. Adele identifies herself with Black students who are struggling, however, she positions these struggles as "because of their upbringing'.

Another recurrent theme of the 'self' was that of a "very emotional" or labile 'self'. Adele provides several examples of this lability, however, the extract below was selected because it is not self-identifying but still demonstrates the theme. The story concerns a "guy who had a soup kitchen" and how his wife left him shortly after the birth of their baby:

> And it's like I know, like, some ladies get postnatal depression and then can't handle and they abandon but that, also, it…it broke me …in tears. So things like that, like, where I can't, like, fix …that, joh. I can't handle that. [LAUGHS].

What is noteworthy in the above extract is that the story contains imagery of abandonment and a powerless 'self' who is unable to "fix" the situation. Another example of this emotional lability is Adele's words, "if I had to drop dead, [LAUGHS] I'd be, like, okay, it would be better for everyone else". It should be clarified that these words were said in the context of an ongoing illness which is representative of the fourth theme in Adele's representation of the 'self', that of a physically imploding "self". Adele's illness has resulted in increased physical dependency on others and reduction in her workload. A significant contradiction in the data is that Adele admits, "I used to actually be, like, a really hard-worker …". The implication is that subsequent to her illness, Adele technically finds herself on the other side of the "hard work" divide. Talk of illness formed a significant part of Adele's interview, the details of which cannot be disclosed for reasons of confidentiality, however, throughout the interview Adele has taken great pains to portray herself as responsible and hard working in spite of illness. The question is 'why' this positioning?

The psychodynamic proposition is that Adele portrayed and seemed able to own her anger at the 'self' when constructed in the context of her illness, however, in all other respects the vulnerable parts of the 'self' must be relegated to hiding. Even Adele's emotional lability was contextualised in terms of either illness or the plight of vulnerable 'others'. It seems as if it is acceptable to be physically ill but unacceptable to be emotionally vulnerable and needy. In other words, it is proposed that Adele is unable to bring the weak side of herself into relationship for fear of being weak, unloved and abandoned. The recurrent dynamic therefore seemed to be of emotional regression but with a notable absence of feelings of anger.

Anger seems to be camouflaged by illness. It is suggested that Adele's anger has been turned inward against the 'self', "I hate talking about myself", and Adele is left "pushing" and "being hard on herself" to emulate her idealised mother and supervisor who are portrayed as strong and invulnerable. The idealised self is the "hard worker" who is self-sufficient and appreciates opportunities. The hard worker self is designed to hide the feared weak 'self' from being exposed and rejected. Unacceptable, vulnerable parts of the 'self' are also split off into the "slackers" who are "lazy", "unappreciative" and not willing to go "through something horrible" to "become stronger". This, self-directed anger together with a minimal awareness of emotional pain is characteristic of Lewis's (1971) bypassed shame. It is suggested that Adele experiences much shame around her illness and its accompanying physical limitations and emotional impacts, fearing being a disappointment and a burden to others. The parts of her that are identified with a harsh, capable mother seem to deride the parts that feel more vulnerable or lacking. It seems likely that due to her own parents abusive backgrounds, poverty, sibling rivalry and her parents "weird" relationship, Adele is unable to see that her environment did not provide enough emotional support. Her many references to "hard" is suggestive of formative relationships that were distant and/or critical. This likely translated into the self-blame and self-criticism which Adele now describes as "pressure" and "being hard on herself". The original anger towards her parents has been internalised as self-aggression and self-criticism and makes it difficult to take-in support from others. For example, despite the consistent understanding and support that she has received from her supervisor, Adele says, "…I don't feel like I'm worth of…of the understandingness [sic]". Her strong need to identify with her parents is a continued attempt to gain the acceptance and validation she longs for but is unable to give herself. Adele's fear of being weak, unlovable and abandoned is therefore defended against by idealisation of her mom and supervisor, rationalisation of a "hard work" ethic and splitting of the hard workers and slackers.

8.1.8. Portrait 8 – Mandla

Mandla is a Black, male, first-year student in the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management. At the time of the interview he was staying in university residence. When asked to tell me a bit more about himself Mandla began describing himself as "from a family, but my parents are divorced because …" – in mid-sentence Mandla hesitated and rather than disclose more information about his parents' divorce, he proffered his age. At the end of the interview, sensing the significance of Mandla's failure to mention his father I somewhat clumsily asked if his father is still alive. Mandla acknowledged, "ja, but he's not working anymore" because "he lost his job". When I asked if he thinks his father feels proud of what he is achieving at university he hesitantly responded "Ja. A bi… a bit… ja, a bit proud, ja, I'd say". My probing put Mandla in an awkward position as reflected by his hesitancy and stammering. This rupture in the interview will be addressed again later in this portrait.

One of the core discourses in Mandla's portrait is the 'social challenges of university'. Mandla references this discourse six times at different points during the interview. Relational issues at university seemed to be at the forefront of his mind. Mandla's proposed solution to these difficulties is summarised

in a discourse that I have called 'know thyself'. For example, when asked "tell me, um, what has been difficult for you, at university, so far?", Mandla replied that you've got to "know yourself' to "survive because, other than that, you'll just feel like you're not, um, living according to the standards or whatever". When prompted "So what do you feel the standards are?" he elaborated further that 'others' have:

> Got perceptions that you've gotta be, I don't know uh, confidence, and all that you know, but sometimes that's not what I value the most.

Mandla consistently painted a picture of his values as juxtaposed against the values of 'others'. His desires and standards versus the standards and perceptions of 'others'. It is important to note that the 'other' was usually referenced in a vague, diffuse way with a 'self' more focal in awareness. Mandla portrays a dilemma around having a sense of "self-realisation" whilst also feeling a sense of belonging or being able to fit in because, "if you feel like you don't fit in, you won't enjoy yourself". Another prevalent discourse was of 'independence and self-sufficiency'. From the start of our interaction, Mandla positioned himself as an embodiment of 'independence and self-sufficiency', refusing to concede to any form of emotional dependence on 'others'. He talked about himself as being "so independent" and "I don't need people to make me happy". He further added "I don't need anybody, like, to validate myself … because, I know this, I don't have to impress anyone, to validate myself. I just gotta be myself …". Perhaps the most explicit demonstration, in the data, of Mandla's juxtaposition of the 'self' against 'others' was evidenced when I asked, "How do you think other people around you see you?"

> Ah, they…they have a lot of [LAUGHS] opinions. [LAUGHS]. Ja. Someone else might see you, like… they have a lot of different opinions. Someone will say, no, you…you're a good person, you have good qualities or – …how they think things should be done, how they think you should respond, how they think you should…like, in everything, they'll try to make it…judge you based on what they believe in, even though they might be wrong, 'cause you…nobody else should be forced…should be tryna…we're not gonna be the same, as people, we are all different and stuff. So, ja. You just gotta be…you can either accept someone's opinion about you or reject it at the moment 'cause it's all about accepting in what's e…what's gonna grow you and stuff like that. Ja'.

An intrusive and possibly violating 'other' is evidenced through Mandla's rhetorical use of "they". Mandla seems to have disowned feelings of self-rejection, self-criticism and a lack of self-acceptance by projecting them into the 'other' who is highly opinionated ('they think things should be done', 'they think you should respond', 'they think you should', 'they'll try to make it' and 'what they believe in'). Mandla's discourse of 'self-sufficiency' ('I don't need anybody, like, to validate myself … because, I know this, I don't have to impress anyone, to validate myself. I just gotta be myself …') seemed to serve to buffer the real self from critical and rejecting others. This is suggestive of projection, an externalisation of internal danger situations. Mandla has effectively split off the needy parts of himself, his desire for acceptance and

validation from others, along with the angry, more critical parts of himself. The effect is to situate threat outside himself thus preserving his self-boundaries and shielding him from acknowledging vulnerability. This discourse of 'independence and self-sufficiency' is also followed through when talking about race:

> I think, for…for…for most African people, they feel like they are victims. Ja, they think, no, this was just a setup system to…to make them, I don't know, less privileged or whatever. But they always have their…that idea it's…they…it's given to them. It's not really the case now but …we…everybody's free now, everybody has a choice to do what is good for them, but they feel like they gotta be given…handed things to them, but that's not how it's gonna work [INDISTINCT]. If…if you…you feel like…it…it is a reality that the past might have…might have, um, worked against us, but that was in the past. If…if I feel like, no, I don't have what I…I was…I could've had if my parents were…were not [INDISTINCT] and stuff but, right now, you s…you have a choice to move forward. It's not like somebody's stopping you, like…ja.
>
> …maybe, let's say, we are saying some White people are doing this against their people, I don't think they…they just wake up in the morning and say, no, today I'm gonna oppress Black people or something. [LAUGHS]

In the vignettes above, Mandla positions 'other' African people who "feel like they are victims", however, he portrays this as a mindset based on the past because "it's not really the case now". He laughs at the irrational idea of "some White people" spontaneously waking up and deciding to "oppress Black people". This position seems paradoxical when compared to Mandla's former positioning of 'others' as opinionated, controlling and invasive. It is therefore suggested that there is again a projective element whereby Mandla's own fears of being controlled are denied and projected into others. However, there were moments where Mandla moved back and forth between a split representation of the 'self' as 'self-sufficient' and 'dependent'. For example, he moved to integrate feelings of dependency as follows:

> It's okay to have people, I'm not saying you don't need people, but they don't have to be the reason why I'm happy as a person.

While Mandla's discourse of 'self-sufficiency' serves to hide feelings of shame, it is his discourse of 'feeling disconnected' which speaks to his experience of shame. Mandla talks about 'feeling disconnected' when asked to elaborate about things he doesn't like about himself:

> Let's say I…I was…I was just feeling a bit down or maybe disconnected, then I c… I just say, no, let me go for a drink or something. Then I end up going over the line. Then, after that, it just shows that I was…I was not feeling okay, I'd be, like, so drunk or, like, walk around, do crazy stuff. [LAUGHS]. Then realise, the following morning, that, no, I was not even supposed to go out. So, I was just supposed to sleep or [LAUGHS].

> … sometimes I do get angry, … but then realise afterwards, that I was not even supposed to get angry about those things

Mandla talks about how feeling disconnected can lead to acting out. A dynamic which seems to be recurring is that of some cognitive awareness of shame connected events and/or feelings of anger but the feelings are not allowed to develop, "I was not even supposed to …". This is characteristic of Lewis's (1971) bypassed shame in which there is minimal awareness of emotional pain. This is possibly unacknowledged shame that can result in the inhibition of anger leaving Mandla feeling powerless to express anger towards others. He describes shame conceptually as "feeling that you lack something that'll make you the person that you are meant to be. Like, you don't feel sufficient enough …" and "there's always something that you don't have, as a person". When describing the impact of shame on 'others' he says "they try to cover it up with a lot of things. Ja. They adopt new habits, some they like to just experience new drugs". The discourse of 'feeling disconnected' is also captured when Mandla describes how some fellow students experiment with drugs to mask feelings of shame and inadequacy. Feeling disconnected is therefore associated with 'using drugs'. He confessed that he had "done it myself once" but qualified that he had only used "weed" not "pills" and that this was in the past because "it's a younger stage". Associating drug experimentation with "a younger stage" seems to serve to put distance between Mandla and feelings of shameful inadequacy and unworthiness.

In addition to the discourse of 'feeling disconnected', when Mandla was asked whether he felt that there were certain groups of people at Wits who experienced more shame than others he was emphatic that "Uh, not really" and qualified his answer with "there's not much shame. Mm. There's not much". This discourse of 'not much shame at Wits' seems to be in contradiction to his earlier disclosure of fellow students who "try to cover" up shame "with a lot of things" for example "they like to just experience new drugs". A Wits environment in which there is 'not much shame' possibly preserves Mandla's self-sufficient, invulnerable identity which includes a shame-free university experience. The experience of shame has effectively been split off from the university experience. This positioning of a shame-free Wits is also a contradiction to Mandla's own experience of humiliation by a bullying group 'other'. This paranoid-schizoid splitting of shame and Wits, therefore, seems to serve the purpose of preserving the 'good' within Mandla's university environment and any 'bad' in the Wits environment, such as the experiences of shame, can remain unacknowledged.

When asked about his experiences of shame at Wits, Mandla embodied the discourses of 'feeling disconnected' and 'not much shame at Wits' as he struggled to connect with myself as the researcher as well as his memories of his shame experience. This was evidenced by hedging "I'm tryna remember anything" and long pauses. I empathised with Mandla, endeavouring to put him at ease and seemed to create a safe enough space for him to venture some, albeit selective, memories about his shame experience:

> Interviewer: Can you tell me a bit about your experiences of shame at Wits? An example of maybe an incident or two, what happened, how you felt?

Mandla: It's, uh…okay, I'm tryna remember anything.

Interviewer: It is difficult –

Mandla: Uh, ja.

Interviewer: …because you've gotta think back.

Mandla: Ja, that I think, eh, [LAUGHS]… Uh, not really Wits. Maybe it…it…it was just a joke or something when people are tryna make f…like, jokes – …but they don't realise that m…sometime [sic] they make a joke about you, like, you don't really like. Like, when I…maybe my f…uh, there was once, a time when I was with my…my friends from res, and we were just talking, and they started, like, talking about me, making a joke out of me, like, at that moment, and I was like, okay, what the heck? We [sic] just talking and having fun, now they [sic] making fun of me. Like, it wasn't really cool for me at that point.

Interviewer: No.

Mandla: Ja, it wasn't cool. But then I…I…I forgot about it after…after it happened. Ja. [LAUGHS].

Interviewer: Did you…did you just say nothing and let the moment pass or –

Mandla: No, I told them I didn't like it.

Interviewer: You did?

Mandla: [LAUGHS]. Ja. I told them but, ja, they…they…they tried to, like, no, we was [sic] just joking. Ja. They tried …they tried saying that but… Ja.

Interviewer: And was it something personal about your personality or something you did? I'm just tryna think what was so funny for them, in the moment.

Mandla: Mm, I can't remember, like, really but I think it was something personal. Ja. Ja, I think it was.

Mandla's shame experience happened when he was hanging around with a group of friends from residence. He described having fun with his friends and then, seemingly randomly, they started "talking about me" and "making a joke out of me". His surprise at suddenly finding himself the object of ridicule is evidenced by his words "what the heck?" He was seemingly wounded by this unfair attack. The plot of the story positions Mandla as a victim who was vulnerable to humiliating others. This positioning is in stark contrast to Mandla's masterful discourse of 'independence and self-sufficiency'. However, Mandla remained resolute in his unwillingness or inability to recall further details of his shame experience. This 'forgetting' could possibly reflect Mandla's overall refusal both to admit emotional vulnerability and dependence and to overtly cast himself in the victim role. The shameful incident was also likely experienced

as a threat to his reputation among his friends resulting in feelings of public humiliation. This process of repression is possibly constructed around anxieties of abandonment because the context of Mandla's shame experience also involved a message of separation or at least the threat of separation from his friends. This type of shame context is intertwined with alienation. It is suggested that the missing feelings in Mandla's story are feelings of disconnection and rejection.

Secure bonds are usually characterized by closeness and separateness but it is suggested that Mandla has conflicted feelings around regulating social distance tension and levels of differentiation. This conflict around closeness and separateness is further corroborated by the researcher's countertransference experience of a loss of meaningful connection with Mandla during the interview. It was my loss of the experience of being an actual object – a compassionate researcher who was interested in hearing what he had to say and being given the opportunity to demonstrate compassion. I experienced Mandla as a respectful and well-groomed young man. He was consistently thoughtful about information proffered, often hesitating and/or stammering whilst answering questions. Throughout the interview Mandla repeatedly used a chin-stroking gesture (his thumb rested just underneath his chin and he lightly touched his fingers to his chin below his mouth). From a body language perspective this is regarded as an evaluation gesture. He also characteristically laughed after revealing sensitive information. Mandla's gestures, hesitancy and incongruent laughter were possibly related to his hesitancy around self-disclosure. He was not forthcoming with information, often providing cryptic answers which fuelled my own anxiety. In contrast to most other interviews, I asked a great deal more questions than I wanted to during this interview resulting in a more structured format. I felt pressured to probe for information but was worried about compromising the principle of free association that this study method relies on. When reviewing the overall interview structure I realized that Mandla had maintained some measure of control over the interview, using my questions to enforce his hard boundaries. At times my probing also led me to feel like a space invader. The most significant moment of rupture during the interview was when I questioned Mandla about his father. Although he respectfully answered my question about his father's status, I felt guilty for my line of questioning. I felt controlling and intrusive. However, I experienced increasing connection to Mandla through the data during the analysis process. By moving away from what Mandla had projected into me and back into a state of separateness I began to experience compassion rather than guilt at having been an intrusive interviewer. I felt a sense of respect for his unflinching resolve as well as his kindness as demonstrated in his willingness to participate in a difficult interview. I had a deeper understanding of what transpired between us and how probing about shame triggered an increased desire to protect self-boundaries.

8.1.9. Portrait 9 – Tau

Tau is a young, Black man who was studying in the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management at the time of the interview. He is from an affluent middle-class family and attended a prestigious high school in South Africa. He reports often being teased for being "a rich kid" but understands that he can

"comfortably" afford tuition at Wits whereas many other students can't. He attributes his smooth academic transition from high school to first year university to his level of privilege in society and the excellent schooling he received. However, despite this head start, Tau failed two subjects in second year. Tau employs a discourse of the 'blindsided self' as he did not foresee that he would fail, particularly the one subject because of his high year mark: "…I was shocked that it had to be that close" and that "even worse, I failed [another subject]". This gap between his academic expectations and the stark reality of failing were evident in his words, "And I guess it was difficult because it was the first time I'd failed anything …". Shame is characteristically experienced in the gap between the ideal and real regarding representations of the 'self':

> Um, like, I guess, my first disappointment was, um, how…how I performed at the end of the year for second year [be]cause, last year…or first year, I came out with a high and, like, very good marks and then, um, second year, uh, I failed by two percent and that really hurt.

Tau portrays a supportive parental 'other' who are highly invested in his education and he admits that on learning that he had failed two subjects "it was very hard for me to even tell my parents" and goes on to say that "they were visibly disappointed but they were also understanding, which helped, I guess". What seemed to contribute to Tau's shame of failing was his sister's strong academic performance: "where I didn't do bad but not as good as her, it's always been, like, a thing to keep in mind for me". Evidently, sibling rivalry against a sibling competitor is something that Tau has always borne in mind. Tau's situation is not unique in that having siblings who have gone before can serve as an inspiration but also result in added pressure, especially when siblings set the bar so high. However, Tau also depicts his sister as a supportive 'other' who encouraged him when he failed. Tau acknowledges that she too experienced some failure at a university level ("But she apparently, she did also fail a couple of subjects") which seemed to be comforting to him considering her otherwise excellent track record. It is as if his sister's experience of failing makes room for Tau to acknowledge his own shame of failure and it seems to assist him in a process of recovering his own internal good.

Tau seems to be rebuilding his inner world following the loss and disappointment of failing as evidenced by firstly, his acknowledgement that it "really hurt"; secondly, by owning that the disappointment experienced belonged more to himself than to his parents, "But, I guess, I was more so disappointed with myself"; and; thirdly, Tau draws on the discourse of 'camaraderie' to talk about how he was able to draw on the support of an extroverted friend who also failed the one subject: "we ended up just trying to work on it together and talk about the things that we found difficult in the last year, and we tried to help each other out". However, there is also evidence that Tau is, understandably, still grappling to work through this sense of loss because he also uses rationalisation as a defensive strategy, possibly to ward off feeling 'like a failure' and wanting to ease the shame gap between the ideal and real 'self'. His response to failure can therefore be regarded as ambivalent. He reasons that he failed by such a small margin, approximately 2%, and that this margin is usually "pushed up anyway". However, because he is "a very

forgetful person" he did not scan in at the commencement of every lecture attended. Students are required to attend a minimum of 75% of lectures and tutorials and scanning in on arrival serves as proof of attendance. Although Tau was certain that he had more than met these minimum attendance requirements, the department was unable to push him through because there was no evidence on the system that he had in fact attended most lectures and therefore put in a "good effort to try pass". At this point in the data the theme of guilt is introduced into Tau's experience of shame about failing. Tau's remorse, agonising over 'shoulds' and his justification are indicative of a representation of failing as some form of a transgression. This theme of guilt has been called 'acts of omission and commission' in this study.

> I felt like the margin was so small that – just a little bit more effort would have changed that, like just one test, if I just did better in, like, one test …in both subjects.
>
> I even look back on, like, if I'd just studied instead of that one off-day or if I just, you know, went through that instead of focussing on something that I pretty much understood …I started looking towards what I should've or…shouldn't have and should have done.

It was within the context of a guilty 'self' with agency that Tau positioned shame as a motivator. He described how feeling shame can function as "a driving force" because "you don't want to be feeling that". If you fail a subject "you know how you gonna feel and you know what you have to do to not feel that way". In this sense, Tau did not necessarily position shame as "a bad thing to feel per se" but rather that "it's just more so about how you treat it". Guilt is typically easier to experience and express than shame (Lewis, 1971). This more guilty 'self' does however serve to enable Tau to position the 'self' with a sense of personal agency. This resulted in thinking about how he could have improved the outcome of his results had he done things differently. When asked by the researcher how he understands shame, Tau unwittingly gives a textbook description of this complex mixture of guilt and shame:

> I guess, what I understand shame is, it's almost like a mixture of sort of disappointment and wishing you had done something else, wishing you did better. And I guess shame feels…to me, shame feels like…it's, like, a very negative feeling where you feel like you know you could've done better but, for whatever reason, you didn't choose to and…or it's a thing of you should have been this person but you were that person and that's what got you into this situation, which is a very difficult feeling to have 'cause it almost makes you…almost makes you, like, not really appreciate yourself too well in that situation. You feel like, ag, like, you either feel, wow, I'm so weak or, wow, I'm so stupid or I'm, um, you know… So I guess shame means it's more like a…it's a feeling where you can normally focus on your weakness …it's where you're most likely gonna focus on your weaknesses, and almost on yourself because…you know, take it out on yourself.

The first part of the vignette above describes the 'guilt' dimension of the failing experience which carries with it a message of "you could've" and "that's what got you into this situation". In contrast, the 'shame' experience is documented in the second part of the vignette and includes a negative evaluation of the whole self with ideation of "I'm so weak" and "I'm so stupid". The whole 'self' has now become the focus rather than just the act or transgression. Later in his narrative, Tau also uses the words "subjugate yourself" to describe how one can feel like shame has conquered or gained control over the whole 'self'. This alludes to a sense of helplessness and powerlessness that feelings of shame can ignite:

> When you feel shame, it's very easy to subjugate yourself to it, just be like, ugh, I'm just the worst person, like, I'm just one, two, three, I'm just weak, I'm just shallow, I'm just one, two, three, and you'll just stay there for a long time.

In addition to ambivalence about failing, Tau portrayed a healthy ambivalence about his self-esteem. This ambivalence is also characteristic of the depressive position:

> In certain situations, I'm very confident in myself and, in others, my confidence isn't as, like, clear. Like, right now, just talking to you, I'm comfortable, even though I'm talking about situations I'm not necessarily proud of, I can talk about it, but, like I don't know ...

In the quotation above Tau's acknowledgement that he felt "comfortable" talking to me despite the difficult topic, was indicative of the mutual rapport that we had established during the interview. Further to this, as the interview progressed I became more aware that as eager as I was to create a safe space for my participant, he too was synchronously creating a safe space for me. Through a thorough psychosocial reading of Tau's story, I realized that his relationship to shame is more nuanced than the shame evidenced through his ambivalence about failing. In fact, my countertransference experience of Tau as a helpful, reliable and 'good' interviewee provided an additional clue to Tau's other relationship to shame as indicated in the vignette below where Tau describes how he feels the 'most shame' when he 'disappoints or hurts others':

> Interviewer: … and, besides failing, is there anything else where you've experienced that…that horrible feeling?
>
> Tau: When I disappoint or hurt other people, that's when I feel the…probably the most shame because it's one thing to, you know, affect myself and upset myself but…but, when I do so to another person, it feels so much worse –…'cause it's one thing to rationalise how I feel, why I did something, but, to the other person, they won't necessarily know my intentions or necessarily understand why I was in the position I was in –…or I was feeling a certain way and what they did that would've triggered me to do something ..."

Tau went to great lengths to unpack this predicament of disappointing or inflicting hurt on others. His endeavours not to do so included the need to "try to be nice to people"; to "try to be a good person to them"; to "try help when I can" and to be "a positive impact on people". Tau also reported how it is difficult for him to be assertive even when the situation calls for it:

> And, I guess, also, in a sense, that, um, in other situations, I can't [INDISTINCT] right now, it…I'd find it very hard to be assertive in si…in situations 'cause of just the social implications my assertiveness has …everyone trusts you with that situ…with those types of situations. And, I guess, it's really…I really enjoy hearing that 'cause, I guess, it means who I…who…who I try show myself to be, um, seems to be, um, resonating with everyone else.

Tau spent some time employing a discourse of the difficulties of social interaction at university. Tau's inability to be assertive can also be interpreted as his fear of rejection for being his true 'self'. This suggested theme of rejection is further confirmed by Tau's expressed need to "be resonating with everyone else". This demonstrates that for the adolescent/young adult at university, the need to have friends and belong to a group has important implications for forging a unique identity. Tau builds on this discourse of 'social interaction' by moving to a discourse of 'introverts versus extroverts'. Below are some examples of how Tau portrays himself as "being a to-myself person" and "not really social".

> When you look back at meeting me, I want you to be able to say that it was at least a pleasant experience being around me. It doesn't have to be amazing but you can at least, at most be neutral.

> When my name's brought up, they may say, ja, sometimes he keeps to himself and sometimes he does that, which, I'm not the only person that does that but those are probably the only downfalls they can bring over me is that I keep to myself and …

> …sometimes I'm not really social but, when it comes to actions, it's always good things like, ja, I trust that guy, ja, he's a nice guy, he wouldn't try hurt you for hurting you sake …

In the above vignettes Tau defends his more introverted position and seeks to pre-empt possible judgement by peers because of his introverted "downfalls" (I keep to myself; I'm not really social). It is as if introversion has become split off from being a "nice guy". Although Tau paints a picture of himself as the quintessential introvert he describes one of his friends as an "extrovert of note who knew a lot of people, so I got to know a lot of people through him". Here again, the implication is that extroversion is associated with having lots of friends. A further inference is that the introvert can't make friends and is dependent on the extrovert or risks being alone without friends. Tau also employs a discourse of 'they don't know' – "And I guess, for me, it's very important to be able to, for other people to be able to at least get a glimpse of who I actually am …". What was not stated explicitly, was the inevitable rejection and judgement by

'others' who don't truly know you which results in painful feelings which require metabolising. This theme of rejection occurs repeatedly throughout Tau's portrait. Tau relates how being 'known' plays a crucial role in whether one is judged in a positive or negative light at university:

> Yes, the only people that see me…that could see me in a negative way are people that don't know me …

The vignettes above about 'they don't know me' indicate that 'others' are depicted as watching, recalling you in their minds eye, looking back at the experience of meeting you and judging you. Every effort must therefore be made to prevent the 'self' from being judged as disappointing or 'bad'. The contradiction in the data is that Tau's expressed concern for his objects, is coloured by the portrayal of an ideal 'self' and the preservation of the 'good self' before 'others'. Tau seems less able to separate out feelings of shame and guilt in relationships with others than demonstrated in his failing experience. Any small transgression on his part or negative appraisal by others seems to be able to trigger negative feelings related to the whole 'self' as being a 'bad' person who is disloyal, untrustworthy and so on. Tau's 'watching' imagery is therefore indicative of shame coloured by self-consciousness as he struggles to redirect a part of his attention away from the image of the self to engage more fully with others (Miller, 1995a). The result is an ongoing conflict between the engaging 'self' and the watching 'self'.

However, Tau's vignettes are not coloured by a 'self' who disparages the 'other'. Rather, the 'other' seems to be needed to sustain a mental representation of the 'good self' and so serve the function of warding off a 'bad self' and shameful feelings. These struggles with the 'good' and 'bad' 'self' are also represented in experiences of dependency as indicated in the following two extracts:

> … to hear them [friends] say, like, hey, bro, like, you, I try be more like you or, like, you're definitely, like, a good guy and anyone will be lucky to have you. Hearing sentiments like that, I feel like, you know…it makes me feel, uh more, like, confident in who I am, as a person, and what I do for other people makes me feel validated to be a good person.

> I find it hard to be assertive when I know that decision hurts someone or it will make someone feel a negative way. Like, if I'm in a bad situation I should leave but I know how much I mean to that person and I've tried all I could to try help them but it doesn't really…it doesn't…it doesn't seem to work out, it will be very hard for me to leave 'cause –…I know what it would do to that person to now have me around 'cause of the things I try do to help.

Tau's desire for validation and his struggle to be assertive, even when called for, are indicative of difficulties in maintaining a helpful mental representation of the 'self'. The 'self' must be vigilantly watched so that the 'bad' does not emerge to be harshly judged. According to Miller (1995a), this type of self-consciousness can be integral to the shame experience. The struggle is around how to present oneself

in social situations because of perceived ongoing surveillance by introjected objects who are felt to be harsh, or in Tau's case, easily injured (Temperley, 2001). This sense of threat by internal objects is characteristic of a paranoid-schizoid position. This would likely resolve if Tau works through his own disappointment in others, rather than unconsciously identify all the disappointment as belonging with him. This self-reproach can become self-torment and leads to constantly seeking to repair the injured internal object. Failure to do so results in an ongoing state of melancholia. The implications of this is that the ego likely remains impoverished by what has been split off in himself and lodged in those around him. As Tau becomes increasingly aware and accepting of his own mixed nature and of the tension that exists within himself between his loving/helpful and destructive/unhelpful impulses he will be better able to negotiate his relationships with others and recognise separateness, dependence and vulnerability to loss (Temperley, 2001). Further evidence of a sense of ongoing threat and self-reproach are found in Tau's understanding of how wealthy students, like himself, are sometimes derided on campus:

> Um, guys from wealthy backgrounds also get shamed from time to time. Like, um, a lot of the people that come to Wits in, like, fancy cars and stuff like that, you'll always hear the comments when the guy drives past, like, uh, why is the guy at Wits then? Their reaction to hearing where you from and everything, they're like okay. Okay.
>
> Like, why is he here if he's already driving such cars? And stuff like that. And, I guess, sometimes, it's funny at the time …but, others, um, you realise that, like, although maybe they're not being, like, meaning what they say but just the fact that that thought comes up as soon as you see someone driving in a nice car suddenly, you feel the urge to say…talk down on that, that's shame.

Tau's own story is a story of Black privilege, however, it enables us to unpack further 'how' and 'why' privileged Black student's experience shame on campus. Tau eloquently expressed the ambivalence of a privileged students' dilemma from a consistently depressive position. The question, "… why is the guy at Wits then?", demonstrates an implicit discourse or theme of unworthiness. However, this theme is largely buried under a hegemonic discourse of 'privilege is an insult'. Tau further described how underprivileged students have many additional responsibilities compared to their wealthier counterparts. The implication is that these students are more worthy of their place at Wits. Tau narrates how he is teased for being wealthy, his meaning making from this experience reflects a willingness to "understand" or empathise with where the 'other' is coming from:

> So I understand where most of it comes from but it's still does shame people that didn't really have to do much to get to Wits and they're more out of [INDISTINCT]. I guess I see it a lot, talking to people, okay, you're a rich kid, oh, I see, or, like, oh, you're…you're a north god because you come from the north. But I guess I don't mind it really 'cause I understand where it comes from and I guess the ones that know me use it, they don't really mean it that way it's more teasing than actually [INDISTINCT] I

> guess. I'm used to a lot of teasing … so I don't really mind it, but I see it and I notice it.

That Tau 'sees' and 'notices' this teasing is evident and that it can feel painful and shaming. In the vignette below he sheds light on one of the possible mechanisms of how class-based shame functions in more privileged students:

> You know. He may or may not think he's better than us. He may or may not think he's, like, not on the same, like, level, or he…he had it a lot easier to get to where I am, compared to me, which I guess I understand those feelings, 'cause I've heard a lot of stories of the things people had to go through just to make it to Wits and whereas I'm just here 'cause I'm here 'cause I'm able to pay for it comfortably when other people have to scrape to make it each year. And I guess, ja, I understand at least the…the they-have-it-easy thoughts.

The rational argument in the vignette above is around how much more, less privileged students sacrifice to study at Wits. By implication, less privileged students are more deserving. Psychodynamically, Tau's descriptions of the thoughts of less privileged 'others' evidences a hostile, ridiculing 'other' who has the power to reproach and ridicule the privileged 'self' – possibly think you believe you are "better than us"; that you perceive yourself to be "not on the same level" and "they-have-it-easy thoughts". This is possibly a vicarious experience of shame (Lewis, 1971). Tau's earlier rhetorical question of "why is the guy at Wits then" seems to be reiterated in these ridiculing representations in which one's worthiness and belongingness at Wits are challenged. Less privileged 'others' can therefore function as the judge or 'shamer'. It is suggested that guilt underlies feelings of shame because rather than refute these ridiculing voices, Tau acquiesces, for example, "I'm here 'cause I'm able to pay for it comfortably", "they did have a harder time" and, Tau also denounces the usual employment of the 'hard work' discourse:

> I understand those [have-it-easy thoughts] 'cause, yes, they did have a harder time to get here than me, although people have to say that, um, well, we both had to get good marks to get here and we both got the marks and we got here end of story.
>
> It's not necessarily that, because what you had to go through to get those marks are completely different … it's very difficult in those situations … and you have to make a lot of sacrifices

Rather than use the 'hard work' discourse to justify his belonging at Wits, Tau holds an ambivalent view of this ambivalent position called privilege and acknowledges that some students do sacrifice more than others to achieve success at university. Tau demonstrates an empathy that is characteristic of the depressive position and a desire to seek reparation. However, that Black privilege has profound implications for belonging at Wits is evidenced by Tau's portrayals of an excluded 'self', based on both

privilege and race that manifests on a micro and a macro level. Tau portrays government as not necessarily upholding the value of education:

> And especially when you look at, um, Parliament when the issue of, like, clever Blacks and everything comes through, it doesn't look like they hold education in very high regard, and they call educated people clever Blacks and discard them as such they almost talk down on people with education and then, on top of that, there isn't really an education plan for universities. It just feels like there is an overall, like, disregard of just the need to be educated … But I guess, with Zuma, it seems like not only is he separating people as Blacks and Whites but he's separating them as clever Blacks and the Blacks [INDISTINCT] Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana.

Tau introduces a new discourse into the data of "clever versus stupid Blacks" and his identification with "clever Blacks". The implication is that Tau does not identify with the racist notion of 'stupid Blacks'. Tau paints a picture of how politics in post-apartheid South Africa produces a split, not only been Black and White people but also between "clever Blacks" and 'other' Blacks. This extract is enlightening as it highlights the important role of education in facilitating the class shift in South African society. It also highlights how "clever Blacks" or the Black middle class potentially feel "discarded" and "talked down on" as if they are devalued and don't belong in South African society.

However, Klein's (1997) principle of movement between the depressive and paranoid schizoid positions is well demonstrated in the following extract where Tau reduces a complex situation such as #FeesMustFall into 'Black' and 'White' which seems to represent a more paranoid schizoid position:

> Um, I guess, 'cause of our past, certain races are more well-off than others, so they don't understand struggle as much as others would. So, with that, you had the, uh, counter FeesMustFall movement, which I understood, to an extent. Some of them were just on the damages that it's caused [INDISTINCT], like, when people burnt f…libraries down and stuff like that I also don't agree with that, but to go against a whole [INDISTINCT] almost, um –he whole…the whole movement, that whole um, really upsets most of the FeesMustFall people and I guess majority of them were…were…were White people and, obviously, with our history beforehand, it's a…it's a very…still open wound –

The above extract demonstrates Tau's use of near and distant positioning to situate himself in relation to race, wealth and the #FeesMustFall movement. Tau firstly positions wealth as entirely race-based in South Africa. This is somewhat of a contradiction to his former positioning. However, this positioning serves to narrow the perceptual distance between the 'self' and the "struggle" of Black South Africans. Tau's real dilemma is evidenced when he talks about how those who oppose the whole movement "really upsets most of the FeesMustFall people". By using the words "most of the FeesMustFall people" the implication is that his identification with the #FeesMustFall movement is, in part, from an outsider

perspective. Tau's difficulty seems to lie in the importance of positioning himself, as a privileged Black person, as more understanding of the "struggle" than White people. This is suggestive of how Black middle-class students can feel sandwiched in between White students who have a history of privilege on the one hand and poor Black students on the other. However, Tau again shifts to a more depressive position and moves beyond a racialised split view of the movement and acknowledges that "all" races need education:

> … there was also, White people on the other side of the fence that were chanting FeesMustFall as well, which is really a boost 'cause, when people are also saying, ja, even the White people are here to support us, it feels like a more unified, like, movement as well to say, hey, we all need education, it's not just the poor Blacks, it's not just the Indians, it's not just the Coloureds, we all need education to be able to further ourselves … we all need education …

8.1.10. Portrait 10 – Natalie

Natalie is a White, middle-class female who was far advanced in her training as a medical doctor at the time of the interview. She is widely regarded by her peers as an academically strong student, however, she vividly recalls how distressing it was to have failed her first year at university. This experience of failing was prior to commencing medicine. Drawing on a discourse of 'Wits is a big university', Natalie positions a 'self' who struggled to cope during that first year. She recalls that year as a "very difficult" time mainly due to being one of hundreds of students in a class and "you didn't really get any attention, no-one knew if you were passing or failing, no-one cared. So I found that really difficult. Um, so I actually did fail that first year". A discourse of the 'blindsided self' was used to talk about how failing came as a surprise to Natalie because she'd always excelled at school. The gap between the expected or desired result and the reality of failing left Natalie with a 'self' more focal in awareness and struggling with feelings of shame that threatened to colour her view of the entire 'self' rather than just the event:

> I felt…I felt very ashamed because I had done well at school and then I just felt like I've just failed, you know, and it wasn't just a [sic] academic failure, I just felt like a general failure, that I'd failed as a person, you know. Um, so that's something that I do struggle with still and I feel, like, really anxious about exams because I don't want that to happen again and that's something I am working on. I realise it's not…failing an…an exam isn't…doesn't mean you're a failure, you know, but that was very difficult for me, especially having done so well at school and I got a scholarship to come here and then I failed. So it was just…that was very difficult for me.

The extract above shows that elements of Natalie's functioning are characteristic of the depressive position as she differentiates between 'being a failure' and 'failing based on an external standard'. Subsequent to failing, Natalie decided to pursue a different degree, registering in another faculty. Although she again experienced being "sort of drowned out by the crowd" she felt more suited to her line of studies

and was able to establish some kind of relationship with lecturers from second year onwards and went on to complete an undergraduate degree and honours. Natalie's experience whilst undertaking this BSc degree, on Wits main campus, was portrayed as a positive experience largely due to supportive 'others' comprising "relationships with senior staff", "input from them", and "enthusiastic" lecturers:

> when you move up, so to second and third year, you get more, um, interaction with the staff, they start learning who you are, and that…that's quite important for me 'cause I just feel like, um, it's nice to be able to have some kind of relationship with the senior staff and have some kind of input from them…

The implication is that Natalie felt included and like an 'insider' during this period. However, this is in direct contrast to Natalie's experience in medical school in which she likely feels like an 'outsider', isolated and alienated because of a lack of communication and relationship:

> So they will say this is how you break bad news. That's it. You get taught how to do it but no-one ever sits with you when you [sic] doing it you know. 'Cause I think someone needs to say, like, you did that well or you…there were things you could improve. So I think, like, I often walk away feeling like did I even do that the right way? And I don't know. [LAUGHS].

Natalie uses imagery of a desired nurturing lecturer who "sits with you" and encourages you – "you did well" or, "you could improve". This supportive, nurturing 'other' is however, absent. The implication is that Natalie is left to fulfil this role for herself. However, when Natalie talked about her experience of medical school on the Wits Parktown campus, there was a notable shift in her tone and mood which suggested significant distress. Natalie talked about how 'medical school is different' and this discourse forms the contextual backdrop to Natalie's portrait. Natalie portrays the two experiences at university, her BSc degree and medical school, as "totally different" worlds. She goes as far as to cast the physical environments as disparate, describing the medical faculty as:

> it's just…it's a horrible environment …it's really not nice, I didn't enjoy it at all … I love Wits, I think it's wonderful but just medical school's just horrible, actually.

Natalie portrays a Wits she 'loves', but medical school is not part of that Wits. As the interview progresses, this discourse of 'medical school is different' is employed to firmly establish a split representation of Wits faculties. This discourse serves to create a distinction between 'then' and 'now', Natalie's former experience filled with 'good' supportive objects and the 'now' that is filled with 'bad' objects. She narrates her current experience of shame at Wits as more chronic in nature describing her experience of shame on a typical day as a medical student in the hospital setting as follows:

> …so, if you know something in the hospital, let's say you're on a ward round and there's a patient and they [medical consultants in government hospitals] ask you a question about the patient, and you know the answer and you give the answer, they keep asking

> you things until you don't know. They'll never say, okay, you know, um, congratulations, that's so great that you knew that. Um, they'll just keep going and keep going, keep going until they've proved to you that they know more than you and then they say you need to go and…go read, you don't…you know, you don't know what you [sic] talking about. So they don't allow you to have a moment of celebration for something that you do know.

In contrast to the former supportive 'good' objects' in Natalie's BSc degree, the feeling is now of an 'other' who has deliberate intent to prove her inadequacy and humiliate her. This discourse has been called 'the wilful shamer' in this study. This perceived intent to wilfully shame is evident in Natalie's repetition of the words "they'll just keep going" which alludes to a feeling of standing trial and being interrogated. The perceived severity and persistence of the accusing 'other' is evidenced by "until they've proved to you …". This interrogation scene positions the 'self' in a no-win situation. By using a discourse of 'the wilful shamer', the 'self' shifts into the position of a victim who has no means of escaping but must endure punishment. A sense of shameful powerlessness is also evident in the words "they don't allow you to have a moment of celebration for something that you do know". For Natalie, shame seems to function as a signal of threat against the loss of self-boundaries and the ability to retain a separate 'self'. The imagery of the 'other' is of one who rejects and won't "allow" the separateness and authority of the 'self'. This mechanism further fuels Natalie's fear of persecution by making the 'self' the focus of experience which is characteristic of shame. The themes of 'standing trial' and not being 'allowed' to be separate are also carried through in Natalie's talk about racism on campus in which she introduces the discourse of 'you're White, you're privileged', as shown in the following two extracts:

> I…I feel, sometimes, like, the students of other colour might see me in a negative way bef…they haven't really gotten to know me but I think they put me in a box, you know, that I'm White, I must be privileged and ra…racist

> Race is constantly brought up in lectures and by certain societies in such a way that makes White people feel guilty or like they are supposed to feel guilty. These incidences aren't personal to me but I think some of the students of colour can be quite rude and abrasive in their approach because they don't care if they offend their "oppressors" as they put it. I just don't participate in the discussions.

Natalie's discourse of 'you're White, you're privileged' is also encapsulated by her words "being cast as an oppressor" and her analogy of being "put in a box". Both contain imagery of 'the wilful shamer'. The extract above is an example of perceived revenge where Black students feel justified in making White students pay for the transgressions of the past as indicated by the use of the word "oppressors". Natalie's experience seems to be that revenge is not so evident in the content of responses, so much as in the tone. In the above extracts, Natalie has also introduced a discourse of 'they don't know me'. This discourse positions the 'self' as in danger of unfair criticism and judgement based on categorisation. This discourse

of ‘they don’t know me’ also positions the self as excluded. However, not only can race feel excluding for students on campus, but poverty can too. Natalie, in the succinct summary below, expresses concerns about the impact of poverty on the day-to-day activities of poorer students on campus and demonstrates how poverty feels excluding:

> ’cause there are a few students who have come from very rural backgrounds who don’t necessarily…they don’t have any, um, money…like, extra money and things like that … Like, you have to get textbooks, you have to, you know, pay your fees upfront, a lot of them, unti…well, you’ve got until a certain date but I think, after that date, your student card stops working, you can’t go to the library and things like that, and I think, for them, I think that’s really difficult because they aren’t able to, like, access a lot of the facilities that other people can and they can’t necessarily participate in a lot of the activities that other students can.

Natalie recalls going to the Union Buildings during the #FeesMustFall movement and that it was an “amazing feeling ‘cause I felt like we were all united, like, all races, class of people, we were all united to try and get, like, a no-fee increase”. She then reports how the following year she “felt quite guilty” about being “quite privileged” because some students:

> … can’t pay even their deposit and they get …kicked out in third year and they haven’t…you know, they’ve just got, let’s say, ten thousand rand outstanding and they just never graduate because of that. That just made me feel really guilty and…so then I thought I…I wanted to get involved ...

Natalie also introduces a discourse of ‘not knowing’ the answers. ‘Not knowing’ seems to encompass being unable to answer questions asked as well as a more general sense of lacking knowledge and experience. Both Natalie’s experience of failing first year and her sense of ‘not knowing’ the answers in medical school demonstrate the gap between the ideal and the real ‘self’ in terms of meeting performance standards at university. However, whereas failing a year seemed to represent a more definitive confrontation with reality, the discourse of ‘not knowing’ introduces what is felt to be a more ongoing, nuanced gap in Natalie’s day-to-day experience of shame as a student. ‘Not knowing’ is also talked about as a public experience. The gap between the ideal and the ‘not knowing self’ therefore leads to humiliation when the gap or lack is exposed. The result is firstly, feelings of being small or inferior and secondly, needy. Evidence for these two shame feeling states – feeling small/inferior and needy – arising because of exposed gaps will now be presented.

Firstly, the idea of smallness and inferiority is borne out through Natalie’s discourse of ‘ranking systems’ and ideation of the unwavering hierarchy in medicine which is depicted as assigning superiority to some but not to others:

> Ja. And there's a lot of hierarchy in…in medicine as well, so you…they constantly want you to know your place. So…ja, so, if you know something that they feel is…I don't know, um, you shouldn't, as a student, they'll push you down until you know your place … there's [sic] the specialists and they haven't super-specialised yet, so just like, um, a physician, let's say, or a surgeon who hasn't su…super-specialised, and then it's the registrars who are specialising, and then it's the interns, and then it's the students.

In the vignette below Natalie provides a personal experience of how 'ranking systems' function on a day-to-day basis for medical students:

> …we were on call once and we were all…there was a stude…so it was me, another student, and the intern, and a registrar, and a consultant. So, um, because of the hierarchy, I got a out of my seat, 'cause there was only one se…one chair for the interns and the students, I said, no, why don't you sit here? And then the registrar made a comment, um, why are you giving up your chair for her? So I said 'cause she's an intern and I'm a student. And she said…and he said, um, well, I didn't know there was anything less than an intern but now I know. So it's that kind of thing. It's very entrenched –

The contradiction evident in the above extract is that Natalie seems not to recognise that she too endorsed the hierarchy by vacating her seat despite the registrar challenging her on the necessity of her action. Natalie accepts the registrar's sarcastic retort as evidence of the entrenchment of the hierarchy rather than as also possibly challenging the status quo. Natalie seems to struggle to bring together the idea of a 'self' who also plays a role in fortifying the hierarchy and so she disconnects this as part of her own experience, projecting it into the registrar. Psychosocially it is proposed that the discourse of 'ranking systems' seems to function as a way of locating threatening feelings of superiority outside the 'self'. This idea is further corroborated by Natalie's belief that her opinions don't matter "until I'm a specialist":

> So, ja, and your opinion, I feel, in my opinion, it doesn't matter unless, you know…like…like, until I'm a specialist kind of thing.

It is therefore likely that through a discourse of 'ranking systems' Natalie will keep feelings of superiority 'out there'. She is likely unconsciously afraid of her own intelligence for fear of how she will manage feelings of triumph and superiority. Natalie attempts to possess the 'good' whilst locating the 'bad' outside of herself into her external objects. Good is equated with the 'self' and bad is equated with 'not me'. This proposition also seems plausible based on Natalie's report of a parental 'other' who would blame her and make her "feel like a lot of things were my fault". She was constantly worried about "being hit" or "verbally abused" and would "constantly look back on things that I had done and feel shameful for what I had done and then also shameful for how my parents responded to those things". She further reported that her parents had her when they were young, "didn't have a lot of money" and were "both quite abusive

towards me", "I don't think they wanted to be parents". This ongoing experience of feeling small and powerless would have also resulted in shame regarding her own legitimate sense of need.

This brings us to the second constellation of shame feeling states fuelled by a 'not knowing' discourse, that of neediness and inadequacy which actively plays into issues of dependency and separateness. Natalie has already expressed the importance of relationship with academic staff. It was supportive relationships to which she attributes the success and enjoyment of her first degree. In sharp contrast, the university lecturers and consultants in medical school are portrayed as powerful, authoritarian, provoking hatred and mistrust. She openly expresses her longing for words of encouragement such as "congratulations" or "that's so great". The portrayal of a 'wilful shamer' is clearly depicted in an interaction Natalie had with a professor at medical school whom she had approached about the possibility of providing more emotional support to medical students:

> … I thought I was gonna meet with someone else, and then he was quite, um, antagonistic towards me, 'cause I…'cause I…I think he feels like maybe that he's doing a good job and I was saying that I feel like we need debriefing or we need something, but he didn't really seem to…he wasn't happy with me. Ja. And, like, it's also not easy because he's a professor. And then I had him in…on…you know, he was at…he's at Bara, I might even be in his ward next year. So it's very difficult because everything's just so hier…you know, there's that hierarchy and I challenged him and he…he…ja, so we just don't ha…even in the corridors now at Bara, I feel so uncomfortable walking past him because I know that I challenged him and he wasn't happy. So it's a very difficult…it's hard 'cause I feel like, if you want to go and get help, which I help…like, get help for the class, you kind of get, um…feel quite alienated then …

In the extract above Natalie positions the experience of asking for help as "alienating". Although the professor is higher in the 'ranking system', she also portrays him as a superior 'other' and as potentially threatening of punishment. "It's not easy because he's a professor" is evidence of a sense of anxiety and threat that the interaction seemed to trigger. "I feel so uncomfortable walking past him" and "I might even be in his ward next year" alludes to imminent and future retaliation by the professor. Natalie likely experiences her expression of need as a threat to the 'self'. This generated anxiety. The fear is both of a loss of a supportive 'other' and a loss of the 'self'. By positioning a powerful 'other', the 'self' is located as small, lacking authority and a victim. By splitting off medical school lecturers and consultants as the bad object in such interactions, she also splits off part of her own ego. Different parts of her experience therefore have had to be disconnected from one another. Natalie seems to have split off the part of herself capable of feeling authoritative and has projected this into a future when she will be qualified and, by implication, hold the superior position. The extract below further demonstrates the extent to which the 'self' feels ridiculed and victimised for daring to approach a staff member, despite having a valid request:

Natalie - So I just feel like, um…ja, I just feel like he doesn't really wanna be around me and he doesn't want to interact with me and, um, he doesn't really think much of me. That's how I [LAUGHS] feel … Um, so, ja, that's pro…that's how I feel he…well, he probably doesn't…maybe he doesn't even remember [LAUGHS] but, you know, like, I just…he…ja. It's possible he doesn't even remember that it was me, you know, but, like, I'm just reading that from him whenever I interact with him. I remember it.

Interviewer - And, if you bump into him [again], what would you –

Natalie - I say hello to him if I see him. I just say hello. I greet him by name and everything. But, uh, ja, I don't know, I just feel uncomfortable around him 'cause I feel like what if he is holding that against me you know? Um, so, ja. So it's not…it's not easy to have a voice 'cause I just feel like now…well, I'll see next year, if I'm in his ward, if he even discriminates against me, I don't know. But, ja, there's just a feel…'cause I have a lot of fear around that.

Interviewer: Ja. So, sometimes, it feels, if you have a voice, you use it at the risk of being discriminated against?

Natalie: Ja, exactly. There's a lot of…there's a high cost to things and, even in the hospitals, if a doctor's being rude to the patient, which happens a lot, you know, I always feel like I wanna say something, you know, and, uh, like, ugh, I just feel like, if I do, then, you know, they just…they won't sign my logbook or they won't, um, you know, give me a good ward mark and then I'll fail the block and things like that. So it just feels like a lot of…a cost, there's a high cost to a lot of things or sticking up for what you believe in comes at such a high cost that you just land up retreating and just, you know, hiding away in your own little bubble.

Natalie's imagery of "it's not easy to have a voice", builds on the previous stories which depict a small, inferior 'self' with no authority. Finding your own "voice" at university is portrayed as difficult and risky. Natalie goes on to describe her professor as not wanting to be around her nor interact with her and that "he doesn't really think much of me". This is likely projective and indicative that Natalie is functioning from a more paranoid-schizoid position. The incident has led Natalie to "have a lot of fear" of being "discriminated" against. Having honest conversations with staff is therefore depicted as incurring "a high cost" because it may result in acts of sabotage such as refusal to sign a student's "logbook", being awarded poor marks for a ward round or even failing a block. The 'other' is depicted as an all-powerful perpetrator. This persecutory anxiety is indicative of conflicted feelings around shameful dependency and neediness. Natalie portrays a split representation of her lecturers in medical school and seems to have difficulty in reconciling the ideas of medical school lecturers who are supportive. Although Natalie does suggest that her professor may not even remember the incident and that it is Natalie, herself, who may be "reading that from him", for the most part, the incompatible idea of an authoritative 'self' manifests as the incompatible

idea of a supportive lecturer/consultant. The danger and punitive elements are thus split off and perceived as coming from outside herself. Natalie also invokes the 'not knowing' discourse to position the 'self' as inferior to patients in the hospital setting:

> Um, and then I think a lot of shame, for me, comes from, also…like, when I…I feel shame is around the patients because, a lot of the time, I feel like I don't really know how to deal with some of the situations and the things that they…they [sic] dealing with, um, because, fir…I may not have gone through something like that before. They may be, like, an eighty-year-old woman and I feel like they have a lot more life experience than me, and it's a bit…I feel like I don't really know what to say to them and whether my opinion is even valid because they [sic] just so much older and have so much more life experience and are from different backgrounds to me. Um, so I feel just inadequate, actually. I think a lot of shame comes from that …

In the above extract Natalie splits off that part of the 'self' that has undergone extensive medical training and gained medical expertise as evident by her return to the 'not knowing' discourse. This discourse therefore represents a return to the more resonant position of the "inadequate" self. Further to this she experiences the entire medical system as "broken" leaving the 'self' "stuck in the middle":

> Ja. We [medical students] just stuck in the middle and, um…ja, I'm tryna think of what other…I don't know. I just…I think there's [sic] just a lot of difficulties with dealing with a patient and trying to meet their expectations with in such a broken system, I think.

In the preceding extracts above, which described the shame state of neediness, inadequacy and voicelessness, the data was used to demonstrate Natalie's rigid portrayal of firstly, medical school staff and consultants as superior and threatening. This was achieved by invoking discourses of the 'wilful shamer' and 'ranking systems'. Secondly, patients are also put into a superior position owing to "more life experience" – the 'not knowing' discourse was invoked for this purpose. Thirdly, it is suggested that Natalie's portrayal of a "broken" medical system represents her experience of rupture and separation which are likely based, in part, in these shame states. This is reflective of a paranoid-schizoid position and a lack of resiliency in which the splits generated by discourses of 'ranking systems' and 'not knowing' have to be rigidly maintained. For example, the idea of higher-ranking lecturers who do care but are working within time and money constraints or the possibility of pockets of expertise and care in a "broken system" seem to be incompatible. Natalie's use of the word "stuck" seems apt. She seems stuck in a dynamic that highlights her own feelings of inadequacy, in which others are constructed as watching, critical, superior and all-knowing.

The psychosocial shame proposition for this portrait is that the pursuit of a career in medicine may possibly form part of some omnipotent fantasy, which it is hoped will resolve painful feelings of ambivalence around inadequacy. It's as if to reach the highest levels of specialisation in medicine will bring

with it an invulnerability and untouchability by bad objects. However, in reality, medical school becomes a highly ambivalent experience for students like Natalie, because the good object is not felt to inspire nor does it return the 'infant's' love (Roth, 2001). This is repeatedly corroborated in the data by Natalie's depiction of medical school staff who are not able or willing to give "attention", "care", "input" and "motivate", as Natalie had experienced in her previous degree. Thus, the experience of medical school reinforces pre-existing dynamics of the self as inferior. Her fantasy of having an "opinion that matters" as a specialist one day, inadvertently serves to reinforce the status quo. When in this paranoid schizoid position, Natalie is either the inferior 'bad object' or the 'good object', which "never has to be recognized as separate from the self, the good object *is* the good self, from whom all good experiences come" (Roth, 2001, p. 44). Put another way, according to Klein, it is not possible to omnipotently achieve the ideal but rather, it can be aspired to. Therefore in order to differentiate between the omnipotent ideal and an aspired to ideal, Natalie will need to face the shame of inadequacy and mourn the loss of the good object together with a sense of omnipotence that made possession of it possible (Steiner, 2011, 2013) thereby achieving a more separate and adequate sense of 'self'.

8.2. Synopses of portraits and chapter summary

Below are short synopses of all ten participants to provide a panoramic view for the reader.

Nofoto portrays a 'self' who is gaining independence, particularly in relation to her family of origin. This discourse of 'independence' enables Nofoto to position a 'self' who can cope at university. Nofoto also introduces a discourse of 'Wits is big and impersonal'. This seems to help Nofoto make sense of and manage the conflicts inherit in functioning more independently within a complex university environment. Furthermore, Nofoto has also internalised good objects who serve as models of healthy coping. Nofoto briefly invokes the 'hard work' discourse to mitigate fleeting feelings of being undeserving of belonging to a "best ranked" university, like Wits. A discourse of 'Wits is elite" carries with it the implication that 'therefore I am elite'. This reinforces a split of the student group into those who are not deserving and therefore don't belong and those, like the self, who are deserving and do belong to Wits. The 'hard work' discourse is used to position the 'self' as fitting into the former group. Nofoto draws heavily on the 'society is the baddie' discourse, which is flavoured by both 'pressure to succeed' and 'pressure to conform'. This discourse serves to project onto various 'others' the felt pressure of the demands of university and the dreaded shame of possibly failing. Nofoto is at times able to reconcile this split of 'society as all bad' and the 'self as all good'. However, the need to ward off feelings of impending shame when interacting with lecturers and/or fellow students in a public classroom seem to be more pressing for Nofoto. This results in a split of the classroom into "intimidating" lecturers/fellow students and a 'self' grappling to be authentic. The discourse of 'you're intimidating' implies that there is a sense of an external threat to the 'self'. This tended to result in projection and the 'solution' to the threat is presented as a discourse of the need to be 'true' to oneself. However, at times these defences prove inadequate and Nofoto is left to grapple with the shame gap between her own versions of the ideal and real 'self' at university. This gap was also portrayed

through a discourse of ‘I can’t believe I failed’ when Nofoto found out that she had failed a test. It is therefore proposed that when gaps or discrepancies are not acknowledged, ‘society’ and ‘intimidating’ lecturers becomes the primary persecutors or the inflictors of the burden of shame and simultaneously, through a discourse of ‘introverts versus extroverts, ‘introverts’ become the proverbial shame scapegoat. However, that Nofoto is able to negotiate ambiguity and relieve feelings of shame is suggestive of her developmental history of supportive others and successfully working through loss. This leaves a ‘self’ who is experienced as capable, even in the presence of pressure to perform and failure.

Charles’ portrait demonstrates shame that is, for the most part, bypassed. This means that there is limited cognitive awareness of multiple shame triggers and of resultant emotional pain. At the centre of Charles’ narrative is Wits, the idealised ‘other’. A psychoanalytic understanding of the ‘Wits is elite’ discourse is that it represents an inhibiting idealization. A psychosocial proposition is that because Charles lost both parents as a teenager, he lost two important sources of identification and his proneness to shame and denial may therefore be connected to oedipal feelings such as the desire to be loved and admired by his father and mother. Because Charles can no longer be esteemed through the eyes of the parent, he has turned his gaze towards Wits as an idealised ‘other’. He is likely experiencing intolerable levels of pain and has escaped into a perfect fantasy relationship with Wits. Wits and a university education are being used to mitigate the loss of his parents. However, a university education is also being used to mitigate penury which has caused Charles suffering. This idealization is therefore likely from a failure of the superego and ego ideal to form because of earlier losses and extreme poverty. By continuing his idealization of Wits, Charles’ own ego cannot serve as the ideal in a healthy process of identification that would enable first idealised objects to be owned by his own ego. As a result, his own ego sacrifices healthy narcissistic drive for the interest of the object, which exists independently. However, because the ego ideal is externalized the idealised object becomes alienating. This contributes to Charles’ fear of being misunderstood and judged for making “excuses” at university. It also exacerbates an infantile experience of helplessness which can be explained by Freud’s (1921) description of how relationships are imbued with power and that there can be a form of “paralysis derived from the relation between someone with superior power and someone who is without power and helpless" (p. 79). Charles experiences this ongoing sense of subjective powerlessness and weakness as anxiety which functions to distort and deny reality. His frequent use of the processes of splitting and projection are indicative of the conflict between his aspirations and his sense of dependence stemming from abandonment and poverty. Charles’ idealisation serves to maintain a split between the idealised object (Wits) and a small, impoverished self in comparison. Charles’ portrait demonstrates how a discourse of poverty positions the ‘self’ as weak, alone and shamefully dependent, the knowledge of which Charles tries to deny through a discourse of ‘hard work’ and ‘responsibility’. There is the one part of Charles that feels his history has hurt him – hurt his sense of a capable and supported self – which others do not understand. However, he denies this part of himself – does not face that he is hurt and may be too hurt to cope at university. The trouble is that he is in a double bind – to get the help and support he needs, he needs to admit that he is not coping, but not coping is divorced from his sense of self – it cannot be integrated, rather it is split off into sickness, anxiety and defended against with idealised dreams.

Having to admit he is not coping would be so shameful and alien to the sense of himself constructed as capable and a 'Wits student'. The fear is that admitting he is not coping would cause a complete collapse, so he keeps on defending. Charles is stuck in a pattern of shifting, using denial and unwarranted optimism.

Addison - what emerges from the narrative is a 'self' who feels inadequate and socially awkward and is unable to draw on the support of, even well meaning, 'others'. Addison invokes discourses of 'Wits is big and impersonal' and 'introverts versus extroverts' in an unlikely mix to position a socially awkward 'self' as better off in an impersonal environment. That this is a defensive move is corroborated numerous times in the data. Addison's impassioned discourses of 'I am an original' and 'they don't know me' are used to mask his hurt and longing to be 'seen' and accepted by others. A discourse of 'as silly as it sounds' reveals how Addison experiences 'shame about shame' which results in a reluctance to disclose or share with others. Addison therefore bears a double burden of shame as is also evidenced by his self-reproach. A discourse of 'hiding' was also used by Addison to position shame as needing to reside in a secret and undisclosed yet conflicted emotional space. For example, Addison would have preferred to 'hide' his CCDU shame experience from me, however, with some encouragement he shared his story. Addison's CCDU shame experience draws on a discourse of 'student support'. However, this story has a twist as it paints a picture of how 'student support' can go wrong. Functioning from the paranoid-schizoid position, Addison uses splitting to manage intense feelings of shame, exposure and rejection triggered by his contact with staff and fellow students at CCDU. 'Bad' emotions are split off into CCDU and the support group attendees allowing Addison to assume a position of critical superiority. Addison's personal history has important implications for understanding his experience of shame at university and how individual vulnerability can impact a propensity to institutional shame experiences. It is suggested that Addison's childhood exposure to teasing and rejection from peers have resulted in ongoing social awkwardness and heightened sensitivity to institutionally generated shame experiences. Moreover, moving geographical locations and home schooling seem to have impinged on Addison's ability to develop healthy coping skills and supportive relationships with peers. From a psychodynamic perspective it is likely that Addison is unsure of how to present himself in social situations because of a perception of 'watching' by introjected objects who are experienced as reproachful (Temperley, 2001). His experience of childhood teasing likely plays a significant role in this experience. This sense of threat by internal objects is characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid position. This would likely resolve if Addison could metabolise the reproach which is experienced as self-attack.

Zanele has enjoyed a successful academic track record and portrays a 'self' whose identity is strengthened by a strong affinity with her professional identity. However, Zanele's identification with the attributes of her profession seemed to be leveraged in a struggle to reconcile shameful competitive and judgemental aspects of the 'self'. Zanele's professional identification indicated some conflict around a more autonomous and authoritative versus acceptable 'self' who must be lovable in order to belong. Zanele positioned a 'self' who is well socialised and popular at university – "all my lecturers love me … everybody else loves me". In contrast, Zanele portrayed fellow students as subject to societal pressures resulting in

their struggle to be their true selves and belong at university. The effect was to position the 'self' as having overcome the need to fit-in and belong at university. In this way more needy, dependant parts of the 'self' were split off into 'other' students. However, Zanele's tenuous feelings of belonging were evident in her 'I don't know why she hates me' shame experience where she felt deliberately picked on by a lecturer. The incident seemed to have disturbed Zanele's equilibrium of belonging and acceptance at Wits. Zanele experienced the rejection personally and was left feeling unnoticed and hated by her lecturer – "So I don't know why she hates me but it's fine". That the very desire to be recognised with loving and approving eyes can feel shameful and scary was confirmed by Zanele's desire to minimise the experience. Although Zanele positions living in university residence as "common ground" or the great equaliser among students – where everyone belongs – her status as a "privileged kid" seemed to result in a conflicted identity of being privileged and Black which threatened her feelings of acceptance and belonging at Wits because of a tenuous ability to identify with Black poverty and possibilities of being a "sell-out". Zanele drew on racialised categorisation and splitting of Black privilege and White privilege to make sense of the threat of not belonging, particularly as projected into her future workplace. However, Zanele integrated that although race can feel excluding success was ultimately about one's ability to foster relationships with others.

Thuso's portrait portrays a 'self' who is "rebuilding" his identity after a traumatic mismatch between expectations and reality at university which had triggered a "bubbling up" of suppressed feelings around his father. Thuso had high ideals to be a "top achiever" and a "leader" at university and experienced shame when these ideals did not materialise and he failed numerous subjects at his former university. These feelings were exacerbated as the experience transported Thuso back to difficult feelings surrounding his abusive father. Thuso had since changed universities which seems to have afforded him some space from the institution which had inflicted his original wound. This distance and working through of his shame experience had enabled Thuso to integrate his relationships with both his former and current universities and retain a healthy sense of ambivalence towards both institutions. What appeared to exacerbate Thuso's experience of shame at university was his ongoing experience of 'others' as competitors and an inescapable evaluative gaze which was often demeaning. Whilst his personal ambition can be considered a societally endorsed channelling of masculine aggression (Bozkurt, Tartanoglu & Dawes, 2015), without sufficient awareness these distorted internal representations can result "in a kind of defensive imitation of, and identification with, competitive, superior and clever people" (Waddell, 2002, p. 160). Thuso's skills at imitation were demonstrated through his fluid shifting of positions that enabled him to fit into Black and White student groups as well as students from different classes. This was particularly evident through Thuso's use of a "privileged" English accent to help him command respect and be socially desirable versus withholding his "privileged" accent so as not to offend less privileged 'others'. This switching of accents shows that Thuso was sensitive to the shaming reproach of the 'other' as well as the needs of the 'other'. The trouble with splitting and imitating was that it ultimately led to splitting off parts of the 'self' and ensuing feelings of inferiority and never being enough – of which Thuso had some awareness. From a biographical perspective Thuso is in the process of reconciling contradictory versions of his father, his own masculinity, his racial identity and so on. Although Thuso is achieving some integration, his tendency to

intellectualise and use "society" as a target of shame indicates an ongoing need to protect and distance the vulnerable parts of the 'self' from shame at university.

Emma – what is evident from the narratives is a 'self' who guards against shame through portrayals of aggressive self-sufficiency. Dependency needs seem to be particularly shameful for Emma as depicted in her 'lunchbox faux pas' in which she was found wanting financially and left feeling transparent and 'watched'. Emma leverages the discourses of 'Wits is big and impersonal' and 'Wits is elite' to position the 'self' as justifiably intimidated by the demand of university but coping well and rising above the norm. Emma's pervasive discourse of 'independence and self-sufficiency' is used to mask conflict around more needy, dependent feelings which are often split off and projected onto others. 'Others' are depicted as threatened by the 'self' and are rigidly 'compartmentalised' through black and white thinking, in an attempt to maintain psychological order and stability. Emma uses a discourse of 'the younger stage' to position the 'self' as superior in relation to peers. A discourse of 'personal space' is also used to create meaning and seems to function as a distancing mechanism towards others. Emma's withdrawal from lecture participation due to conflicted discussions of race and privilege demonstrate a tendency to function from a more paranoid-schizoid position and is indicative of the occasional failure of her rigid 'compartmentalisation' strategy to ward off feelings of shame. Her seeming indifference and dismissal of 'others' is likely indicative of bypassed shame. Emma employs a discourse of watching the 'wealthy kids on campus' to monitor her social standing in relation to fellow students. This downward comparison is alternated with upward comparison which is talked about through an imposition of the discourse 'you're white, you're privileged'. The 'self' is then positioned as a victim and the 'other' as 'shamer'. It is proposed that Emma lacks integration of the various contradictory self-states involved in negotiations of independence and dependence on others resulting in splitting to ward off feelings of shameful dependency.

Adele portrays a world in which she feels pressured to live up to the standards of idealised 'others' like her mother and supervisor who she portrays as self-sacrificing, hard workers whilst on the other hand she denigrates siblings and peers who are entitled 'slackers'. The 'self' is portrayed as emotionally labile, struggling to cope due to ongoing physical illness and feeling pressure to live up to these idealised 'others'. Adele is also teased at university for being stubborn and rigid. Adele's 'Who's disappointing who?' shame experience demonstrates the relentless onslaught of her harsh inner critic and that she has some ability to discern that this pressure comes from within. By drawing heavily on discourses of 'my upbringing' and 'hard work' she is able to position a coping 'self', amidst the emotional turmoil, and rationalises difficult feelings by employing the 'becoming stronger' discourse. Although Adele did report shame in failing first year because 'you fail but peers move on', she employed a discourse of 'camaraderie in failing' to position a 'self' who managed to cope and process this painful experience. However, failing was not at the forefront of Adele's mind in comparison to her current illness and conflicted family of origin. Adele repeatedly employed the discourse of 'hard work' to firstly, position the 'self' as aligned with her idealised objects and secondly, to distance herself from her 'slacker' siblings. Adele simultaneously idealises 'my upbringing' and positions her parents as poor and underprivileged. Amongst others, this positioning enables

her to distance herself from the discourse of 'you're white, you're privileged'. Although Adele idealises 'my upbringing', her portrayal of her "weird" family situation feels shameful and the split representation of 'hard workers' and 'slackers' seems to indicate that she is unable to access shame related to her upbringing and family situation. She is therefore left to pursue an ideal embodied in her mother and the rest become shame scapegoats. This is characteristic of bypassed shame (Lewis, 1971). Adele's personal history shows that she is unable to metabolise the losses incurred during childhood. The implication is that Adele remains stuck in shameful feelings of unworthiness and dependency that have left her unable to support herself and take in support from 'others' including within the university environment.

Mandla's experience of shame is largely unacknowledged as evidenced through a discourse of 'feeling disconnected' and his unwillingness and/or inability to recall the details of his 'What the heck!' shame experience with fellow students. Mandla began his interview with a discourse about 'social engagement' which provided the first clue about his struggles with relatedness and potential feelings of alienation. He used this discourse of 'social engagement' to position others as invasive, controlling and demanding of conformity at the expense of what the 'self' values. To manage this invasive onslaught, Mandla draws heavily on a discourse of 'independence and self-sufficiency'. The effect is to position the self as impervious to the opinions and judgement of others. It also enables the critical, harsh, rejecting parts of the self to be projected into controlling and opinionated others. At times, the more needy, dependent parts of the self were effectively split off into others, however, for the most part Mandla embodied the discourse of 'feeling disconnected'. A discourse of 'not much shame at Wits' served to preserve the 'good' within Mandla's university environment and 'bad', shameful experiences at Wits could then remain split off and unacknowledged. A discourse of 'the younger stage' was also used to create distance between the 'self' and feelings of shame. However, that this defensive splitting is not impregnable to shame is evidenced by Mandla's, 'What the heck!', shame experience, in which a group of fellow students at Wits ridiculed him. This event was so painful and the signal threat of shame so powerful that Mandla seemed to find it impossible to fully recount the details of the experience during the interview. Mandla's portrait is filled with intrusive 'others' who must be guarded against and the researcher was no exception. This seems to leave Mandla with the exhausting task of ongoing self-support and self-validation in a complex university environment. The importance of considering personal histories in the experience of shame at university is evidenced by the biographic psych3odynamic possibility that the teenage Mandla was at a sensitive age when his parents got divorced leading to a disruption to key attachments. Mandla may therefore experience any form of need of others as shameful. Shame likely brings into focal awareness the dynamic that the 'other' rejects and does not value the true 'self'. However, Mandla defends against this experience through a focus on his identity as separate, making the 'self' the consistent focus of his experience. The mechanism is to turn his gaze away from the 'other' and focus on himself (his own gaze). Mandla's ongoing tension between guarded recognition of the 'other' and asserting the 'self' fuels and, is in turn fuelled by the discourse of 'independence and self-sufficiency', the hallmark of which is shameful alienation.

Tau – what emerges from the story is a 'self' who needs to "be resonating with everyone else" for fear of hurting 'others'. This discourse of 'hurting others' is also evidenced through 'watching' imagery, employed to monitor perceived transgressions by the 'self' toward 'others' and, more implicitly, negative appraisals of the 'self' by 'others'. Real or imagined transgressions towards 'others' trigger negative feelings with the whole-self judged as 'bad'. This split representation of a 'good' versus 'bad' self leaves Tau vulnerable and needing 'others' to help sustain a representation of the 'good self' or, risk feeling 'bad' and shameful. Tau's 'my bad' shame story demonstrated how he experienced failing as both shameful and guilt inducing. The discourse of the 'blindsided self' instituted failing as a form of transgression, however, it served to position the 'self' as agentic. Tau was able to metabolise the shame of failing by drawing on supportive 'others' as evidenced by discourses of 'camaraderie in failing' and 'parental support'. Whilst the 'other', pertaining to academics, is perceived by Tau as supportive, there was also a prevalent, judging 'other' that emerged in the narrative, primarily in social and socio-political contexts. This 'other' could be unknowingly transgressed against and was largely characterized by harsh, easily injured, introjected objects who seemed to undertake ongoing surveillance of the 'self'. This more hostile 'other' tended to predominate in discourses of difficulties around 'social engagement' at university, 'introverts versus extroverts', 'they don't know me', 'privilege is an insult' and 'clever Blacks'. Although these discourses may seem disparate, the underlying affective response was of fear of judgement and painful rejection, leading to questions around worthiness and belonging. Tau paradoxically upended the hegemonic 'hard work' discourse and supported the discourse of 'privilege is an insult'. However, these discourses served to reinforce the splitting of the 'good' and 'bad' self and fuel the threat of being shamed by the easily injured 'other'. This portrait provides a useful example of how splitting reinforces and is in turn reinforced by chosen discourses. The complexities of societal positionings of 'Black' and 'privilege' seemed to trigger shame and guilt for Tau as evidenced by poignant imagery of threat and the reproach of the 'other'. However, Tau's psychodynamic history has shown a recurring theme of self-reproach projected onto the 'other', therefore the reproach of the underprivileged 'other' is likely, in part, a projection of unbearable self-reproach. This is suggestive of ongoing melancholia rather than the working through of loss.

Natalie portrays a beleaguered 'self' who is at the mercy of wilful shamers in medical school. The discourse of the 'wilful shamer' enables Natalie to make sense of an intricate web of chronic feelings of shameful inadequacy and smallness that are triggered daily at medical school. Natalie invokes the 'Wits is big and impersonal' and 'I can't believe I failed' discourses to situate failing first year as more of a once-off experience from which she recovered and so preserved the ideal self. Natalie's subsequent outstanding academic track record and good internalised objects from her earlier years at Wits seemed to reinforce this view. However, the shame gap between the ideal and real seemed to emerge in a far more subtle but chronic form when entering medical school as espoused through discourses of 'not knowing' and 'medical school is different'. Natalie's use of these discourses show how chronic shame has split Natalie's university worlds into two. The first world, the Wits of her former degree, is characterised by 'good', supportive 'others' who facilitate success and belief in the 'self'. The second world, medical school, is all 'bad' and characterised by 'wilful shamers' whose critical judgement results in feelings of shameful inadequacy. Natalie longs for

the former world but feels "stuck" in the latter. The discourse of 'wilful shamers' serves to position the 'self' as a victim of a shaming system. The emotional theme is of 'standing trial' and being exposed as inadequate before others. This theme of being unfairly judged and not being given a chance is carried through in Natalie's discourse about race where the accusation is if 'you're White, you're privileged' and feeling that 'they don't know me'. In other words, whether lecturers/consultants or students of other races, the imagery is of being "cast" or "put" into a shameful role by the 'other'. For Natalie, the shaming experience is exacerbated as depicted by discourses of 'ranking systems' which cast the 'other' as superior. This is a discourse which locates threatening feelings of superiority and/or inferiority outside the 'self'. Unacknowledged shame gaps seem to result in 'others' being cast in the role of 'wilful shamers' who inflict a burden of shame and the 'self' is the proverbial shame scapegoat within a defunct system. It is important to note that Natalie's personal history was shrouded in parental verbal abuse and blaming. These early insecure attachments seemed to have resulted in increased sensitivity to shame. This explains, in part, Natalie's experience of others as perpetrators and a floundering sense of shameful inadequacy despite evidence to the contrary.

In summary, what was common to these narratives was recurring discursively positioned shame triggers for the 'self' and 'others' that were used to make sense of shame experiences at university – failing, being ridiculed, race and class-based identities and so on. However, it was evident that each individual's biographical history seemed to play an important part in how shame unfolded and was managed regardless of the shame trigger type. The quality of participants' relationships with historical parental others seemed to set the stage for relationships with both authority figures and peers in the current university environment. The portraits confirmed that student identities and belonging are complex rather than unitary (Carolissen & Kiguwa, 2018). However, healthy ambivalence seemed difficult to achieve in a stressful university environment and as a result shame triggers often resulted in defensive splitting. Students who had internalised loving, supportive objects seemed better able to acknowledge uncertainty related to the 'self' while navigating difficulties at university, holding onto both strengths and weaknesses, whereas some students seemed to have developed various rigid 'selves' to manage uncertainty. Some students were also better able to talk about their shame experiences more directly. These students appeared to be more connected to themselves and were able to access enough 'good' in themselves to grapple with the 'bad' so that the bad need not be avoided. Perceptions of the 'other' were also strikingly related to emotional legacies. Participants who were able to integrate past experiences or at least reflect on them in some way during the interview seemed to metabolise shame more effectively. Those with more critical internalised objects appeared to expect criticism and judgement from 'others' (and were critical and judgemental of themselves); while those with neglectful/abandoning/absent parents exhibited the use of more defences like avoidance and idealisation. Idealisation of Wits and the 'self' at university seemed to be a common shame coping mechanism in this particular institutional domain. However, in some instances, these kinds of defences appeared to prevent more realistic engagement with the 'self' (real self not living up to constructed ideal self) and 'others' (real others not living up to idealised other), ironically keeping them more disconnected, and seemingly perpetuating experiences of rejection, humiliation and exclusion at university.

SECTION III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 9 – A PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENT SHAME: Discussion of the three data sets

9.1. Introduction

This chapter brings together the 'what', 'how' and 'why' findings – from the three study parts – of student shame experiences. The quantitative study strand, Part 1, was helpful in answering the 'what' questions about student shame prevalence, intensity and impact as well as indicating prevalent and intense shame triggers. The open-ended exploratory and psychosocial qualitative strands (Parts 2 and 3) added layers of depth in understanding the psychosocial dynamics – the 'how' and 'why' – of student shame experiences. At the heart of this study were stories about the emotional toll that the learning environment – the educational institutional domain – has on emotional wellbeing and student engagement. The study illustrates how students navigated university life with hearts and minds full of expectation but as a range of unforeseen struggles and institutional sanction inevitably unfolded, students were confronted with painful feelings of shame. Throughout this discussion the mismatches between desires and real circumstances at university have been highlighted as potential 'shame gaps'. The term 'gap' signifies a conflicted transitional area of experience arising from disparities around students' expectations for achievement, recognition and attachment at university. The study further illustrates how having incompatible ideas of the 'self' exposed was both an intrapsychic experience arising from internalised imaginations and a social one, constructed through institutionally relevant discourses. The shame gap has implications for the organisation of the 'self' and relationships within the institutional domain because it symbolises the onset of discontinuity, disconnectedness and the experience of loss. This chapter includes a comparison of the study findings to the existing literature reviewed in Section II. I describe how these findings disrupt more traditional student experience literature and contribute to a psychosocial understanding of student shame. Throughout the discussion, this study will be referred to as the Shame Experiences Study so as to distinguish it from other studies discussed.

9.2. The frequency, intensity and impact of shame in the student sample

The Shame Experiences Study found similar levels of shame prevalence in the Wits student sample compared to a study conducted by Rizvi (2010) at Boston University in the United States of America. The mean total shame score for all Boston University participants was 1.76 with a standard deviation of 0.66 (Females 1.87, SD 0.63; Males 1.51, SD 0.66). The Shame Experiences Study results were within a similar range with a mean total shame score of 1.78 (SD 0.68), showing a comparatively slightly elevated mean score for females (1.93; SD 0.68) whereas the mean score for males was fairly consistent in comparison at 1.52 (SD 0.63).

With regards to trait shame in the Wits sample, The Global Shame scores indicated that there were differences among students in the reported frequency, intensity and impact of feelings of shame. Just over a third of students (35%) reported that they seldom experience shame, 38% reported experiencing shame occasionally, 20% often and 8% always. With regards to the intensity of shame, 37% of students reported none to slight intensity, 38% moderate, 22% considerable and 3% extreme. In terms of impact on quality of life, 52% regarded shame as having no or a slight effect, 25% reported a moderate effect, 19% a considerable effect and 3.4% an extreme effect. These results point to important individual differences; whereas many students experienced fleeting, micro-bursts of shame, others reported shame that was more chronic in nature and possibly associated with ongoing mental health difficulties (Orth et al., 2006; Scheel et al., 2014). Next it seems important to confirm who the affected students are so as to be able to identify at risk individuals and groups within the broader student population. An avenue of exploration in this study was therefore to establish whether demographics or categorical units tell different stories about shame prevalence and intensity.

9.2.1. Who has got more shame? Do demographics tell different stories?

The answer to this question is, yes, The Shame Inventory indicated that there were differences in the experience of student shame based on demographics or meso-level social categorisation. In particular, this study corroborates the literature that there are significant gender differences in student shame scores, with the female group consistently scoring higher than the male group. It is fair to say that every hypothesis that was tested using The Shame Inventory generated a gender discrepant result. Concerning the Global Shame score (trait shame), the female group had higher shame prevalence, intensity and impact. The higher shame intensity score supports the view that there may be increased shame intensity in women due to greater negative evaluations of the 'self' (Sanftner et al., 2011). This is suggestive of the drawback of quantitative shame measures – like The Shame Inventory – that are unable to account for the organisation of the 'self' in the shame experience. Similarly, the female group also scored higher on the Situational Shame score (state shame), however, this score proved difficult to interpret meaningfully because The Shame Inventory makes use of a large number of disparate shame cues. However, the two clusters that were derived from the Situational Shame Scale items and used for further analyses – 'Interpersonal exposure' and 'Feelings of inadequacy' – suggested that the Situational Shame Scale may inadvertently tap into behaviours that impact the self-organising features of female identities to a greater extent than male identities. For example, the higher scores for females in the 'Interpersonal exposure' cluster confirms literature that suggests that women experience more shame due to increased investment in relatedness, greater receptivity to connection and concern over letting others down (Brown, 2006; Ferguson & Dempsey, 2000; Gross & Hansen, 2000; Lewis, 1971; Miller-Prieve, 2016). In a similar vein, the higher female scores for the 'Feelings of inadequacy' shame cue cluster confirms the view that males were more likely to feel more confident about their capability and intelligence than their female counterparts (Burke et al., 2016). Notwithstanding, it is suggested that these gender findings be cautiously interpreted in light of Ferguson and Dempsey's (2000) warning that disparate gender findings often depend on the type of instrument used. Furthermore, The

Shame Inventory has not been used in a South African population before therefore normative data and psychometric properties have not yet been established for the instrument and, gender did not feature as a theme, in any respect, in Parts 2 and 3 of this study. It was therefore not possible to explore the 'how' and 'why' of student shame experiences whilst holding gender in mind. Gender discrepancies in student shame is therefore recommended as an important area for future study particularly because of the differential implications for students' mental health. Men tend to be more shame avoidant and unlikely to seek help (Elison et al., 2006; Shepard & Rabinowitz, 2013), whereas women tend to withdraw and Attack-Self (Elison et al., 2006). Concerningly, avoidant shame responses have been linked to substance abuse and Attack-Self responses to increased suicide risk (Elison et al., 2006).

The second demographic variable that yielded a statistically significant shame result was differences between the 'heterosexual' and 'other sexual orientation' groups – albeit with a weak effect size. The 'other sexual orientation' group had both higher trait and state shame scores. This result was anticipated, firstly, because the literature is clear that sexual minority groups are subject to negative attitudes and social stigma, including in the South African university context (Lesch et al., 2017; Mwaba, 2009). Secondly, research confirms that shame is a common emotional response to societal stigma (Henry, 2020). Once again, because sexual orientation did not emerge as a dominant theme in Study Parts 2 and 3, it was decided to forgo this topic in the discussion. This is, however, a significant topic for future research because of the identity and mental health implications of shame for sexual minority groups at university. Research shows how shame has been linked to the rejection of one's own non-heterosexual identity (Chow & Cheng, 2010; Hequembourg & Dearing, 2013) and internalised homophobia (Meyer, 2003).

While the social categories 'Year of Study' and 'Age' did not yield statistically significant shame scores, Study Part 3 revealed that most students tended to construct first year students and younger students – albeit often only by a small margin – as more susceptible to shame than older students. This construction was at times used in a reflexive way by participants, such as thinking back on one's earlier shame experiences at university but, at other times, it was used as a form of scapegoating to distance the 'self' from shame. Despite the possible use of scapegoating, there is some empirical support that students over twenty years of age do tend to have more confidence about their intellectual ability and the implication is that these students experience less shame around issues of capability (Burke et al., 2016). Although 'Faculty' also did not yield statistically significant results in terms of Global or Situational Shame scores, Parts 2 and 3 of the study showed that there were nuances in students' shame experiences based on faculty – specifically pertaining to societal perceptions of different degrees and professions. This will be interpreted in the section 'Role confusion', using an Eriksonian (1963) lens and Mann's (2001) insights on the hazards of professional journeying. It was previously reported that the absence of a significant finding around the meso-level variables of 'Race' and 'Language' was puzzling. The Shame Inventory results around race and shame seemed to be paradoxical because firstly, shame was not colour blind because there was no significant difference in trait or state shame scores – including prevalence, intensity or impact – based on race. However, secondly, further probing using the shame cue 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' revealed that

one's racial identity can indeed be experienced as a situational shame trigger. The limitation of a quantitative measure, like The Shame Inventory, was that it was not possible to probe the role of the 'self' in relation to the 'other' to understand the shame dynamics at play in this variable. This is problematic because there is the possibility of multiple pairings of the 'self' and the 'other' in any given shame situation (Stadter, 2011). The shame instrument therefore leaves us at a loss to understand how students constructed shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' and 'why' – what are students' main concerns around this shame trigger? Statistical analyses did, however, reveal that there were differences between the Black and White student groups with the White student group experiencing significantly more shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' than their Black counterparts. This is a unique finding largely because research about race in the South African higher education context tends to prioritise the experience of being Black and secondly, issues of both blackness and whiteness in the literature tend to favour critical approaches that often leave underlying emotional dynamics unexplained. However, Parts 2 and 3 of this study confirmed this result and illustrate a 'threatened student' position constructed around White students' loss of formerly held places in South African society and ensuing concerns and shame (See section 9.3.4).

Along similar lines, the 'Language' variable did not yield statistically significant results, however, when exploring further, the 'English home language' group (0.94 mean shame score) reported experiencing more shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' than students whose only home language was an African language (0.56 mean shame score). This seemed counterintuitive in light of literature that documents the difficulties that students who are not proficient in English experience at South African universities in terms of both academics and feelings of belonging (Brown, 2016; Case et al., 2018; Swartz et al., 2017, 2018) and internationally (Yoon & Lee, 2010; Zhang & Moradi, 2013). However, the literature argues that in the South African context language is often used as a proxy device to talk about race (Case et al., 2018; Singh & Bhana, 2015; Soudien, 2008). The implication of this finding is that the English language has become a proxy for whiteness and privilege, resulting in conflicted feelings. Additionally, bear in mind that a number of Black students also reported using 'English only as home language'. There was some evidence in the qualitative data for Black students who experienced shame about being subject to a marshalling Black gaze (Canham & Williams, 2016) (See section 9.3.4).

9.2.2. Shame and belonging, financial worry and regard for Wits

The Shame Experiences Study probed three additional variables: the association between shame and financial worry, feelings of belonging at Wits and regard for the institution. The results support Schlossberg's (1989) thesis of the ongoing tension between feelings of 'marginality' and 'mattering' at university and elucidated specific shame stimulus situations that provoked feelings of marginality. Based on existing literature, it was expected to find an association between student shame and 'Worry about financial situation' (Firfirey & Carolissen, 2010; Loveday, 2015; Reay et al., 2005). The Shame Experiences Study indicates that students who reported more worry about finances tended to report more shame. 90% of students reported that they have had the experience of 'Not being able to afford something'

while at university and, approximately a third of these students experienced 'high shame' as a result. This confirmed the SASSE results where one third of students reported worrying daily about paying university tuition and living expenses and that this caused high levels of worry and stress (USAf, 2018). The Shame Experiences Study is, however, unique in that it links the experience of worry about finances to shame. Additionally, a notable finding was that the exploratory use of Q25 'Not being able to afford something' tapped into the phenomenon of how shame about lack collided with race in this South African university sample. The group mean shame score for the Black group (1.77) for shame about 'Not being able to afford something' (Q25) was higher than the White group (1.33). The implication is that not only were poorer students experiencing the brunt of shame at university but, poor students in the sample were more likely to be Black. Furthermore greater shame about 'Not being able to afford something' was associated with less regard for Wits and less feelings of academic belonging. These findings can be understood using Turner's (2010) theory of the stratification of emotions. Because of the historically rooted stratification system operating in South African society, students who are poor and Black not only have fewer material resources but also an emotional legacy of shame (Turner, 2010) which tends to result in avoidance and withdrawal from the institution. This finding supports Callender and Jackson's (2005) argument that student debt and financial hardship impact participation in higher education.

The Shame Experiences Study also adds to knowledge concerning the distinction between academic versus social belonging. You may recall that during the pilot study students themselves differentiated between academic and social belonging and that this distinction was included in the final survey questions. This distinction has, however, long been made in the education literature (Tinto, 1997). Results from The Shame Inventory showed that students who experienced more shame (trait and state shame) had less feelings of belonging at Wits – both academic and social belonging. Recall the derived clusters of shame cues from the Situational Scale of The Shame Inventory where the 'Feelings of inadequacy' cluster included situations related to academic performance (such as 'Being slow to learn something' and 'Not knowing the answer to questions') whereas the 'Interpersonal exposure' cluster was related to social items such as being criticised, laughed at, talked badly about and so on. The significant finding was that the shame about 'Feelings of inadequacy' cluster was associated with less feelings of 'academic belonging' at Wits, whereas the shame about 'Interpersonal exposure' cluster was associated with less feelings of 'social belonging'. In all likelihood, 'Interpersonal exposure' shame scenarios could have related to shame experiences in the classroom – because these were prevalent in the data. Nevertheless, the implication is that when a shame trigger included interpersonal exposure it tended to result in less feelings of 'social belonging' at Wits. Findings that related to belongingness will be discussed in Theme two using an Eriksonian (1963, 1968) lens of adolescent belonging.

The association between shame about 'Feelings of inadequacy' and lack of academic belonging cannot be overemphasized in a study about student shame. The results showed that higher shame scores for 'Feelings of inadequacy' were associated with less feelings of 'academic belonging' – this finding was irrespective of race, faculty, financial disadvantage and age. The implication is that all students are

vulnerable to shame about inadequacy. This supports a central finding by Burke et al. (2016), that conflicted notions of capability are intimately tied to constructions of belonging at university. They argue that in order for students to belong it is important that they feel "recognized" by others as having the capability to belong" (p. 19). Burke (2012) further contends that belonging is confounded because the aspirational value attached to a university education predisposes students who do not perform well to feelings of inadequacy. This principle will be further elaborated in section 9.3.4 using qualitative data.

9.2.3. 'Trouble' talking about shame

The elusiveness of shame and its ability to operate outside a level of conscious awareness was evident in several ways in Parts 2 and 3 of this study (Brown, 2006; Izard, 2010; Lewis, 1971). Students tended to use alternative words to talk about their feelings, rarely using the word 'shame' (Scheff, 2015). For this reason, understanding shame variants proved to be invaluable to this study (Lewis's, 1971; Morrison, 1998; Retzinger, 1995; Scheff, 2003; Steiner, 2011). Additionally, avoidance was particularly evident in stories in Study Part 2 where students were unable/unwilling to report any feelings. These stories presented a 'self' who was absent and/or devoid of emotions. Difficulties 'talking' about shame whilst taking the survey were also analysed by examining students' responses to the survey question about how difficult it was to take the survey and why. Some of these responses reflected students' 'emotional trouble' that was experienced whilst answering the survey. In addition to difficulties articulating the shame situation, there were several reports of a 'reliving' of the shameful experience – as if the shame and associated pain were re-triggered and haunting memories came flooding back into consciousness. In some cases, this may have been suggestive of the disorganising nature of shame and the connection between shame and PTSD (Herman, 2012; Leary & Tangney, 2012). It was also evidence of how shame fulfils a regulatory function by perceiving danger when an incompatible view of oneself is brought to the fore (Freud & Breuer, 1895/2004; Lansky & Morrison, 2014). Whilst there was also evidence of some defensiveness in the in-depth interviews – Study Part 3 – the presence of the researcher may have been containing, allowing some participants to experience a form of comfort in talking about their shame experiences. It is important to reiterate that these significant observations from the qualitative data are neither discernible nor measurable when using a quantitative shame measure. Using Study Parts 2 and 3 as a cross-check it also seems likely that some survey participants may have underreported shame (Fowler, 2014). This attests to the value of using mixed methods because the systematic distortion of answers to questions in the quantitative element was partly accounted for in the qualitative analysis which revealed defensive omission and distortion. Dhuffar and Griffiths (2014) also reported that several participants may have dissociated from shame during their study resulting in underreporting of shame. Literature has found a greater propensity for shame avoidance in men (Elison et al., 2006), which may be suggestive of more underreporting of shame in the male sample compared to the female group in the Shame Experiences Study.

9.2.4. Shame about what? Is there evidence for common shame triggers?

Another question that begs answering is how a study that adhered to calls to include multiple shame cues/triggers fared in a university context? (Clore & Ortony, 2013; Rizvi, 2010; Tracy & Robins, 2006). Although The Situational Scale of The Shame Inventory was designed to cater for diverse shame triggers and, in so doing, overcome the inherent weakness of scenario-type scales (which are more detailed but limited and not broadly applicable), it seems that it may have moved to the other extreme where too little scenario detail left some participants experiencing both 'conceptual' and 'contextual trouble' with the scale. The Shame Inventory's approximately 50 shame cues/situations were described by several participants as too general and unclear. This suggests that some participants were unsure about the context of the shame cues likely because the scale was not developed specifically for students within an educational institutional domain. Dhuffar and Griffiths (2014) came to a similar conclusion in their use of The Shame Inventory: that it did not seem able to capture the construct of shame in specific contexts. To be fair, the diversity of shame triggers in The Shame Inventory was useful for exploratory purposes. It helped highlight shame triggers that have low prevalence in the student population but result in 'high shame', for example, 'Being physically or sexually abused' and having 'Had sex with someone when I didn't want to'. The paradox of The Shame Inventory is that the multiplicity of shame triggers seemed to be achieved at the expense of the nuance contained in more detailed scenario-based scales. Analytically, this also meant a struggle to find some sort of meaning from a large but disparate array of shame cues. Whilst The Shame Experiences Survey successfully indicated that class, race, 'Interpersonal exposure' and 'Feelings of inadequacy' were all shame stimuli that significantly impacted feelings of belonging and regard for Wits, it was the qualitative data, Study Parts 2 and 3, that provided the nuances of student shame triggers.

Seven shame stimulus situations were identified as common in the Wits university sample in Study Part 2. These seven triggers were: shame about failing; shame in comparison; shame about being ridiculed; shame about being rejected; shame about acts of omission and commission; shame about class, and shame about race. Study Part 3 proved invaluable in unpacking the finer details of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses used by students to construct what can be regarded as frequently occurring shame triggers within this specific institutional domain. The evidence strongly suggests that specific types of institutional sanctioning – by the institution itself and the peer group – were salient and formed the basis of some form of common experience. It bears clarifying that although the seven identified stimulus situations did appear to represent some form of universal or common shame triggers for students themselves, it was constructions of different positionings of the 'self' and the 'other' – both conscious and unconscious – that indicated vastly different experiences and responses to shame triggers. The variety of experiences and responses to the same trigger was evidence that external reality is not a straightforward representation of internal reality (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Shame is deeply personal and mediated through unique internal object relational worlds. Whilst The Shame Inventory successfully captured a host of different shame events, it is not designed to capture the organisation of the 'self'. This is possibly one of the reasons why some students reported that The Shame Inventory felt ambiguous. It is therefore argued

that the missing element in studies that focus solely on shame situations is encapsulated in Lewis' (1971) thesis that different circumstances *and* differences in the organisation of the 'self' in relation to 'others', collectively, form part of the shame stimulus situation. While extreme constructionist approaches consider emotions as solely a function of the sociocultural context, often choosing to remain agnostic towards the intrapersonal dimension (Turner, 2009), this research supports Lewis's (1971) view that shame inherently concerns self-focus and self-evaluation. In fact, this research argues that shame is an intersubjective experience. The intersubjective elements of the shame experience were borne out in the qualitative data where the majority of shame stimulus situations were characterised by constructions of the evaluative gaze of the 'self' and/or 'other' – both real and imagined. The results from the qualitative study elements proved to be better suited to elicit and foreground the 'self' and thereby add to our knowledge of student shame.

9.3. Students' discursive constructions of their shame experiences: Investment in particular discursive positions over others

Four key psychosocial losses relevant to students' discursively constructed shame experiences will be discussed. These are: the loss of the 'ideal' self within the institutional domain; the loss of the familiar childhood milieu; the loss of a safe transitional space in the classroom; and the loss of an inclusive 'ideal' society at university. These losses will be broadly situated within the student experience literature in higher education, as well as build on existing knowledge by demonstrating how student shame is a psychosocial experience which disrupts the intermediate area of experience at university. Each discursively constructed loss has also been characterised by a corresponding subjective student position, namely: a precarious 'model student' position, an isolated and competitive student position, a victimised student position and multiple threatened student positions. These positions illustrate students' shame defences – both conscious and unconscious – and how the negative self-focus present in the shame experience signifies a loss to the 'self' and simultaneously signals threat to bonds within the institutional domain. The underlying processes that facilitated or impeded appropriate expression of shame and the gravity of "self-object ruptures" and/or "intersubjective disjunctions" triggered by shame are woven throughout this discussion (Morrison, 1994, p. 69). It will also be illustrated how students' coping scripts appeared to be informed by complex combinations of their biographies (including defensive structures), emotional legacies arising within the societal stratification system, the discourses chosen, the current sociopolitical context and the ethos of the educational institution (Wits, Faculties, Departments and classrooms). Because shame coping is central to understanding intersubjective shame dynamics, patterns identified in the data will be reiterated in the section called 'Shame defences and the relational fallout'. Finally, it will be demonstrated that stratification systems in society and the associated shame legacies may hinder natural mourning processes leaving some students facing greater levels of threat, more stuck in shameful negative student identities than others and with a 'self' that feels more impoverished.

9.3.1. The loss of the ideal 'self' within the institutional domain: The precarious 'model student' position

Here, the focus is on the complex relationship between the student and the institution in the experience of shame at university. The data is used to illustrate how discordance between wishful self-images – the precarious model student position – and reality, resulted in students' feeling that the whole 'self' was failing, unworthy and inferior (Jacobson, 1964) and recognisable as such in the university context. Because this study is foremost about the *experience* of shame, this loss will be discussed using a mix of Bionian (1962) insights about the ability to think about experience and the Winnicottian (1951; 2005) notion of an 'intermediate area of experiencing'. These principles will be applied to how students both avoid and think about the shame of incompatible ideas of the 'self' at university. Winnicott's (2005) intermediate area of experiencing is meant to be a "resting-place" where students can effectively work out inner and outer reality (p. 3). However, this space can only be leveraged when students think *with* the emotion of shame and thereby make sense out of experience (Bion, 1962; Hollway, 2011a). The trouble evident in the data was that the shame of discordance between idealised views of the 'self' and external reality at university often resulted in self-wounding and public disgrace. As a result, the realities of shameful experiences at university were often "thrown out of the mind" and avoided, disowned or projected rather than used to create meaning and foster growth.

9.3.1.1. "Wits and me": Idealisation and disillusionment

Of the five student positions that are illustrated in Chapter Nine, the 'model student' is the only position that is framed in positive terms. The other four positionings are framed in the negative: the isolated/competitive, the victimised, and multiple threatened student positions (which includes the disadvantaged position). While a positive identity may look strange in a study of student shame, a central finding in the data was that the 'model student' position comprised the foundation of student identifications with Wits that inherently represented a defensive, idealised position. To avoid shame students needed to identify with success, intelligence, strength, attractiveness and so on (Kernberg, 1985). Students' wishes were to be strong, capable, superior, good, worthy, loving and to avoid feeling inferior, unworthy and insecure (Gilbert, 2000). The principle of identification therefore provides a logical starting point to introduce one of the most complex relationships found in the Shame Experiences Study, the relationship between the student and Wits university. Wits – the institution – played a central role in students' grandiose schemes of themselves and their university journeys. The first indication of a love-affair with Wits – the idealizing mirror transference (Kohut, 1984) – was a feeling of being hand-picked, out of thousands of applicants, to attend Wits. This proud association seemed to begin from the moment one's application was accepted by Wits. Charles was "honoured" when Wits "welcomed" his application. Emma felt university "just rises people above the norm" and Thuso described university-goers as "the best of the best". Nofoto recounted how she is held in high esteem back home in her community because she goes to Wits. Several students drew comparisons among universities in South Africa and Wits was often positioned as more

prestigious than its competitors. Recall how Nofoto felt that she was envied by her former school friends who, she suspects, accused her of thinking too highly of herself – because she goes to Wits. However, Nofoto was comforted that her acceptance at Wits was confirmation that she had worked hard and was worthy of her place at Wits. There were numerous instances in the data of study participants who had worked hard and flourished at high school, held positions of leadership and achieved multiple distinctions and so expected continuity of this successful student identity at university. The idealizing mirror therefore seemed to work two ways for students at Wits (Kohut, 1984). First, you are hand-picked by Wits because *you* are a top individual. And, because Wits is an elite institution – with an impressive world ranking – being accepted and belonging to Wits confirms that you are a deserving and worthy student. Traditional forms of universities have long been regarded as centres of elite education, accessed by a 'select group' in society (Hornsby & Osman, 2014). The word 'select' (Collins, 2020) means that one is chosen, superior, and the best of one's kind. These constructions demonstrate how historical systems within society influence students' personal meaning making and perpetuate discourses of elitism despite other competing discourses such as education as social justice. Although neoliberal ideologies may be fuelling current unhelpful discourses of elitism in higher education, one cannot negate the positive historically based associations around the prestige of university that are also at play.

The data therefore shows that from the start of a student's relationship with Wits, the ideal 'self' and the ideal 'other' often seemed to have become mixed up (Kernberg, 1985). In this way the "idol" – Wits university – comes to represent the ideals that students desire for themselves (Erikson, 1968). Lewis (1971) called this the "admired imago" (p. 23). Both Cross and Johnson (2008) and Ndofirepi (2015) found that students felt that being accepted at Wits was synonymous with personal achievement – based on one's excellent academic track record at high school. Cross and Johnson (2008) also found that students held idealised images about their own identities in relation to Wits university. Similarly, Ochse's (2005) study, conducted at the University of South Africa, found that acceptance at university was felt by students – of all races – to be an elite experience and fostered feelings of superiority. Ochse (2005) postulated that students' powerful associations with elitism were due to long-held socio-historical associations between universities and elite students. The Shame Experiences Study supports these findings because Wits university was often idealised – by students of all races – as if belonging to the institution conferred a sense of worthiness and capability on the student. This confirms Steiner's (2011) proposition that shame defences – hiding places – can take the form of phantasies about groups of people who are felt to confer safety or power through membership.

From a shame perspective, the starting point of the 'model student' position was therefore attempts to draw the 'other' – Wits and peers – into a position of admiration about one's capability and worth, with the aim of countering humiliation (Steiner, 2011). In order to achieve this, students constructed elaborate standards and ideals that confirmed that the 'self' was worthy of admiration by the 'self' and 'others' at university. A typical checklist of student standards therefore looked something like this in the data: Be a top academic achiever. Check. Be sure to sound eloquent. Check. Never make a mistake in class. Check.

Make lots of friends and fit-in socially. Check. Be socially admired. Check. Graduate within the minimum number of years. Check. Move on to fulfil your professional dreams. Check. And the list goes on. However, the precarity of the aforementioned ideals was demonstrated through portrayals of being 'blindsided' at university. Being blindsided included both explicit/formal failing – failing a test, an exam, a module or the year – as well as falling short of implicit/informal standards – not knowing, being rejected, not being seen as socially desirable and so on. The shame of falling short of ideals is supported by results from The Shame Inventory: "Didn't live up to a really important standard of mine" ranked second in importance out of 50 items and 67.5% of students reported high shame at the likelihood of this event occurring. Call to mind Tau's 'my bad' shame story and how embarrassing it was for him to fail second year, especially considering his success in first year. Tau's shock and processing of shame and loss were tangible in a portrait littered with constructions of bargaining – "should haves", "what ifs" and "if onlys". It would seem that in the education literature, the closest equivalent to being blindsided is the term mismatched expectations, captured in the "Freshman Myth" which is used to describe the first-year experience (Pather & Dorasamy, 2018; USAf, 2018). However, the Shame Experiences Study showed that mismatched expectations occurred at all levels of study. This was not an experience reserved for first years only. Recall the Engineering student who failed third year and the small but significant number of students who reported the humiliation of not being able to graduate with their peers? Also, not being accepted into the postgraduate programme of one's choice left several students grappling with feelings of confusion, inadequacy and rejection. These stories caution us not to relegate mismatched expectations to the first-year experience. It also brings us to the question: Why does the term 'mismatched expectations' seem to lack explanatory power about the painful feelings of shame evident in stories of being blindsided at university? One possibility is that market-driven student experience research – fuelled by high drop-out crises at universities – has subtly shifted the focus off the student and onto the role of the institution and socio-political factors in higher education. This is not to say that this type of research is unhelpful. As Jones (2018) rightly points out, socio-economic factors and families play a significant part in shaping student expectations in the first place. However, while the SASSE and BUSSE reports allude to students' "disillusionment" and the "disconnect between reality and expectation" (USAf, 2018), the shame data indicates that being blindsided was a complex mix of altered views about the ideals of the 'self' in relation to the 'self', 'others' (including Wits, the institution) and one's experience within the university world (Gilbert, 2000). The contribution that the Shame Experiences Study therefore makes to increasing our understanding of mismatched expectations is by applying a psychosocial theory that acknowledges the discordance that arises when idealised images of the 'self' and 'others' are called into question when one is confronted with reality – often through sanctioning by the institution and/or peers.

9.3.1.2. Incompatible ideas of the 'self'

The element of surprise in blindsided stories concerning discordant views of the 'self' supports the signal function of shame. (Lansky, 1995; Morrison, 1998). Because the 'self' was exposed to incompatible ideas about the 'self', the ensuing shame resulted in compromised feelings towards the 'self'. To understand

the significance of compromised feelings towards the 'self' we must revisit the idea of ego-ideal conflict. Recall that although Freud and psychoanalytic theories of the conscience have left an awkward gap in our understanding of the ego-ideal – and hence our understanding of shame – Lansky (2005) argues that irrespective of its origins, shame always "indicates conflict with the set of standards, ideals, and role expectations that we refer to as the ego-ideal" (p. 878). In other words, shock and surprise – of the 'self' and/or 'others' – indicated that the shame experience had brought incompatible ideas of the 'self' to the fore (Freud & Breuer, 1895/2004). The Shame Experiences Study showed that this shame was two-fold in nature: first, it was self-wounding and second, it led to disgrace in the eyes of 'others' (Lynd, 1958/2014). Incompatible ideas of the 'self' were painful because it seemed difficult for students' to accept the reality of human imperfection (Winnicott, 1988). Hollway (2010) puts it this way, "To face external reality is always a strain because it does not conform to our wishes; it is outside our omnipotent control and illusion of omnipotence is hard" (p. 222). For a number of students, maintaining omnipotent control had seemed more manageable in the safety of schools and homes, compared to a bigger, more demanding university environment. Furthermore, the data showed that students who had more demanding ideals and therefore more incompatible views of the 'self', seemed to be more vulnerable to shame and injury at university (Kilborne; 1992; Wurmser, 1987). Put another way, higher ideals about the 'self' at university exacerbated shame. This was corroborated in the data by stories of students who did not do well in a test or an essay and yet seemed to experience shame that was as intense, if not more so, than peers who had failed an entire year. This is a significant finding because the real-world sanctioning of failing a year at university results in far greater consequences than not achieving a desired distinction. Importantly, the ego ideal is never regressive of itself – it can and should be leveraged at university to facilitate creative striving. The Shame Experiences Study showed that student ideals seemed to range on a continuum from omnipotent to more aspirational ideals (Klein, 1997). This is perhaps best demonstrated through Thuso's more omnipotent versus Nofoto's aspirational striving at university. Although Nofoto was striving towards high ideals and she was not spared from discordant views of herself when failing, her experience of shame seemed to be tempered by aspirational striving (Klein, 1997). The caution evident in the data is that the more the idealised object – Wits – was used to bolster an omnipotent ideal, the more difficult it seemed for students to accept and mourn the loss of disparities (Steiner, 2013). Incompatible ideas of the 'self' – can also be understood through Freud's (1917) argument that 'expectancy' results in the reality of loss being experienced as a loss to the ego itself. This idea of losses to the ego itself seems to resonate particularly well with Lewis's (1971) central premise that shame is an experience that impinges on the whole self. This principle was supported by many instances in the data where, rather than the shame remaining circumscribed to a particular time and event, students tended to struggle with whole self identities: 'I am a failure', 'I felt like a loser', 'I am incapable', 'So stupid', 'I am undesirable', 'They look at me strange' and so on. The Shame Experiences Study therefore also supports Ferguson and Dempsey's (2000) argument that the genesis of shame is unwanted identities. The question of identities seems especially relevant to Wits students who are, for the most part, in the adolescent/young adult life phases which encompasses identity exploration. This will be discussed extensively in section 9.3.2.

Thuso's sky-high ideals in his "I consider myself a leader and an intellectual" story is prototypical of demanding ideals, both academic and social, that lead to questions around unwanted identities. How shameful it felt for him to fail first year at university, however, Thuso was also left grappling with injuries that seemed to be based on his own internal criteria for personal success (Morrison, 1994, 2007). Consequently, when Thuso's academic capability was called into question – through the sanction of failing – it had a knock-on effect that seemed to call many other parts of himself into question too, including his role as a leader, an intellectual, his masculinity and even his racial and class identities. Thuso managed the shame by withdrawing from his first university and re-enrolling the following year at Wits. His first university, once the admired imago, seemed to have become contaminated by his shameful experience, resulting in the urge to leave and start over somewhere else, closer to home. In this sense, a university can be likened to a transitional object that is paradoxically "both found and created" by the student and is used to navigate an "intermediate area" of experience. According to Winnicott (2005), if all goes well, the transitional object loses its importance through a process of gradual disillusionment thereby facilitating healthy differentiation between inner psychic reality (including one's own ideals) and the external world (Winnicott, 2005). However, in Thuso's case, the shame of failing disrupted this intermediate area of experiencing. The original "pride and triumphant feeling" stirred up by the "internalized admired imago" were replaced with shame instead (Lewis, 1971, p. 23). Thuso's physical withdrawal from his first university does seem to have facilitated some differentiation between inner and outer reality and his new transitional object – Wits university – which feels safer, likely because it was not felt to inflict the original wound. A safer intermediate area of experience seemed to have afforded Thuso the opportunity to "redefine" himself. His ability to think with and about the original shame wound also seem to have tempered Thuso's idealization of the 'self' and Wits as he talks about his experience of Wits with some ambivalence.

However, a central finding in the Shame Experiences Study was that conflicted feelings about the 'self' rendered students vulnerable to feelings of shame not only from within but also from without (Hinshelwood & Fortuna, 2018). This is the second part of the signal function of shame: exposure of the 'self' before 'others' – whether real or imagined (Lansky & Morrison, 2014). Having incompatible ideas of the 'self' exposed was both a personal – driven by "imaginative internalization" (Hollway, 2011a, p. 56) – and a social experience constructed through social discourses of what it means to fail and fall short of standards. This is the Kleinian concept of the movement of objects between the inner and outer worlds or what Hollway (2010) calls "two-way traffic". Take a moment to remember the wounding of the Engineering student who failed the year and suffered the humiliation of losing his bursary: "I cried at first but after a while I just felt dead inside and stopped feeling". To hold something inside of you that is "dead" confirms the principle that objects have the power to shame from within and without because they both live and die inside and outside the 'self' in our phantasies (Segal, 1992). That the intrapsychic and social are hopelessly intertwined was demonstrated in the Shame Experiences Study through imaginations of being exposed before 'others' when failing. This was corroborated in the data by stories of being haunted by the fear of failing or messing up at university. Nofoto 'imagined' the shame of failing and/or dropping out from

Wits and, worst of all, having to return home and tell everybody that *you* didn't make it. These haunting images described in the data were at times also based on shameful past experiences. Recall the original "shame still haunts" story where the student who had once failed at his previous college was living in fear of a repeat experience at Wits. This finding supports Ndofirepi's (2015) study where for some students the prestige of being a "Witsie" was tainted by feelings of ongoing pressure and striving to prove oneself worthy of being at Wits and thereby confirming that "there is something special about you" (p. 131). Stories that haunt demonstrated how much students dreaded the shame of their imperfections and failings being exposed. The anticipated anxiety of falling short of ideal views of the 'self' before 'others' was debilitating enough to prompt several students to withdraw from academic activities rather than expose themselves to the possibility of being sanctioned for poor performance and experience shame. You may recall the 'I dropped out because I felt incapable' and the 'I felt as though I would fail so I opted out' stories?

However, the anticipation of shame was not entirely irrational. The data illustrates how many sources of shame were related to increased levels of exposure because of being on a university campus in the presence of a watching peer group. For example, getting it wrong in class or failing often resulted in increased exposure before peers – this is Winnicott's (2005) outer reality of experience. Exemplars from the data were students who felt publicly humiliated in the classroom for not knowing the answer to a question and students who failed a year or were academically excluded. These examples illustrate how sanction by peers and academic sanction by the institution interweave in complex ways in the educational domain, exacerbating shame. Because the classroom represents a significant transitional space within its own right, this topic will be elaborated in section 9.3.3. With regards to failing, those students who failed a year or had to repeat a module not only had to navigate discordant views of the 'self' resulting from the original injury of failing but also had to contend with ongoing losses on campus. Natalie observed how at-risk students "get put in another group" to repeat modules or the academic year. The implication was that failing altered a students' peer context and inadvertently resulted in social exclusion and feelings of abandonment. Shame was also exacerbated for students who were left behind when peers had already graduated and moved on with their careers. Students who failed were therefore confronted with having to make new friends whilst dealing with unwanted student identities: being failures, incapable, losers and so on. The implication of this social side of shame about failing at university was that the shame lingered because the intermediate area of experiencing – within and without - was disrupted for a longer period. Recall how Charles' feelings of isolation at Wits inherently stemmed from feeling (mis)aligned from his original cohort through failing several years prior. Recall how I realized that Charles' interview was a treatise in which he meticulously presented his case before me, justifying why he had failed and was academically excluded. The fear seemed to be that I would join his peers in accusing him of making "excuses" for failing. Seen in this light, my time with Charles represented a short but significant intermediate area of experience where Charles could be afforded some form of non-judgemental acceptance. Based on Charles' denial and disavowal of his dire circumstances, one could argue that he was using projection to protect himself from exposure before the 'self' (Lansky, 1995). The social implication of being sanctioned within the educational institutional domain is that every time Charles went to campus,

he experienced unwanted exposure in front of his current and former peers. This meant that he was stuck re-experiencing undesirable shame states at university and the unacknowledged trauma of a threat to the integrity of the 'self' (Lansky, 1995; Morrison, 1998; Nussbaum, 2015). It is no wonder that Charles continued his idealization of Wits despite that it provided no resting place. However, Charles was not alone in avoiding his situation.

9.3.1.3. Defending against injury and public disgrace: Closing down the intermediate area of experience

A central finding in the Shame Experiences Study was that avoidance was a common strategy used when failing – the aim was to throw incompatible ideas of the 'self' at university out of the mind. This confirmed the regulatory function of shame: signalling the danger of the threat of incompatible views of the 'self' (Lansky & Morrison, 2014). However, the prolific use of an avoidant coping strategy was concerning because without thinking about shame, students seemed unable to make meaning out of their shame experiences at university. Emotion is what makes meaning making possible (Hollway, 2011a). The use of avoidance in shame stories therefore confirmed the proposition that the 'model student' position – despite seeming to represent a 'positive' student identity – was, in fact, the quintessential defence against shame at university. Put another way, the *standards* of the ego ideal were ultimately a defence against inferiority and shame states (Lansky & Morrison, 2014). Avoidance was evident in the data through narratives that reflected inordinate difficulties talking about the experience of shame such as forgetting, avoiding, minimizing as well as narrating stories in a detached way. The detachment of these lost subjects seemed to symbolise alienation from the 'self' and the 'other' in the shame experience. The subjective 'self' was withdrawn indicating that students were struggling to accept the message of shame, losses or unmet desires (Elison et al., 2006; Frosh, 1991). Avoidance was prevalent in the shame about failing category which was also indicative of the emotional intensity around failing. Hollway (2011a) argues that the more emotionally loaded an experience is, the more difficult it is to process the shame. However, these students often seemed stuck because finding reality is contingent on acknowledgement of the wounding and loss (Hollway, 2011a). Furthermore the data showed that the defensive loss of the subject in no way diminished the pain of suffering a burden of shame (Morrison, 2008) and also, avoiding the situation did not alter reality (Hollway, 2011a). In cases where students felt particularly humiliated, identification with Wits – the idealised object – appeared to leave the student even more conflicted and with a sense of nowhere to hide. Phantasies about belonging to a group and/or institution that conferred safety or power through membership (Steiner, 2011) seemed to have vanished. In some instances, when shame was repressed, Wits became the target of the student's shame and the institution was delegitimised (Turner, 2010). Because the shame experience resulted in the student's membership at Wits being called into question, Wits no longer felt like a safe space. This finding confirmed the thesis of Dutton et al. (1994) that a lack of perceived similarity between an organizational identity and an individual's self-concept results in feelings of discontinuity and disidentification. At times, avoidance was employed despite dire academic circumstances because idealisation of Wits was a complex response to a background of deprivation and parental loss. For

example, Charles' unwavering idealisation of Wits, despite being academically excluded (twice), was likely fuelled by penury and his deep longing for a good, more powerful 'other' to prepare him for success in the world.

Although an avoidant shame coping strategy illustrates an inability to process shame, Hollway (2011) argues that ironically a combination of thinking and avoiding is necessary to process emotional experience because this type of thinking changes the thinker. Recall how Nofoto did not speak to anyone when she found out that she had failed a test. She slept as much as possible and after approximately three days was able to talk to her friends about her experience. Which begets the question: What happened during those three days? It is likely that psychological reality slowly emerged for Nofoto through the combined processes of thinking and avoiding thinking about her shame experience (Hollway, 2011). Students, like Nofoto, in the Shame Experiences Study were able to process the shame, tolerate the ambivalence of reality and their ego became stronger in the process (Waddell, 2002). Recall the student who felt humiliated when competing to be in the house committee at the university residence? He also "slept over it" and took some time to process the "extreme shame" he had experienced. He was able to consider that the other students had moved on and that winning isn't everything. Helpful thinking therefore includes the ability to process positive and negative feelings (Hollway, 2010). The skill required is an unconscious intersubjective dynamic - the ability to think whilst containing one's own emotional states (Hollway, 2011a). We also know that the ability to process loss is related to biographical history. Prior to university, Nofoto had acquired the ability to mourn the loss of several loved ones and developed some ability to bear psychic reality (Waddell, 2002). In contrast, Thuso's biography instructs us that the trauma of failing at university can lead to a re-experiencing of childhood trauma. In Thuso's case, failing aroused difficult feelings around his relationship with his father and his own masculinity. Additionally, in instances of severe developmental injury, like Charles, the ability to think about shame was compromised. Charles, was no longer able to be admired through the eyes of his parents and had therefore turned his gaze towards Wits as the idealised 'other' to fulfil these longings. Charles' avoidant coping strategy closed down the experience and with it his ability to think about what he had contributed to the failure and what the context had contributed. According to Hollway (2011a) "the key characteristic of raw experience is that we do not know where thinking about it might lead and so there is an accompanying fear that can result in closing down the experience and, in consequence, not being able to think about what is happening" (p. 54).

However, not all students closed down the experience of shame through avoidance. A unique finding that emerged in the data was where some students developed a sense of camaraderie with peers who had also failed or found themselves in a similar situation. These newfound relationships seemed to help students open up a space of experience and in so doing metabolise the shame. Significantly these spaces were experienced as a refuge because, by design, they shielded students from feelings of public disgrace. Tau used this strategy successfully when he failed second year. Recall how Natalie described peers who participated together in medical tutorials as a collective sense of "refuge" against hostile, ridiculing consultants. The concept of a refuge seemed to be a particularly important shame coping strategy in the

university environment where exposure at university tended to preclude hiding. The opposite of camaraderie was, however, when students felt like the odd-one-out. These were emotionally loaded shame experiences where students were the only one among their peer group who had failed, got something wrong, did not know or did not graduate. These students were left feeling hopelessly inadequate and tended to withdraw and disengage from 'others' to manage the shame.

But not all shame experiences involved such severe discrepancies of the 'self' confounded by developmental injuries. Which begets the question: When students experience shame at university, is there a particular mechanism that they use to differentiate between inner psychic reality and their external world? The Shame Experiences Study showed that a central mechanism that students used to test inner versus outer reality in shame experiences at university was comparison. In fact, when students experienced incongruencies of the 'self' at university, the reflexive response was often to compare themselves to their peers. According to Retzinger (2014), comparison is the mechanism that exposes that ideals about the 'self' have not been met. Comparison was therefore used as a function of judgement to determine whether an experience was good or bad, inside or outside the 'self' (Hinshelwood & Fortuna, 2018). The function of judgement was evident through prevalent constructions in the data of the evaluative gaze. Students were always watching and observing. According to Morrison (2008) "The eyes of others, present or in memory, are always there alongside our own, looking, observing" (p. 75). However, because comparison represented students' attempts to resolve the shame of incompatible ideas of the 'self', it usually led to feelings of being objectified. Feeling objectified is to be felt to be seen by 'others' in specific ways, usually derogatory. Upward social comparison therefore left students' feeling stuck with the bad on the inside resulting in feelings of inadequacy and inferiority to peers (Compton, 2005; Kaufman, 1989; Morrison, 1989). The data therefore supports Steiner's (2011) argument that admiration is drawn in through the eyes but if this process goes wrong it leads to humiliation. In the shame experience, rather than the student being the recipient of admiration – the very purpose of the idealizing transference – the student felt exposed and feared negative sanction.

9.3.1.4. Creating a space for agency: Accepting the limits of reality?

A unique feature of constructions of the 'blindsided self' was the differential use of the 'hard work' discourse. 'Hard work' either served to reinforce or mitigate shame arising from the mismatch between the ideal and the real 'self' when failing or falling short of standards – explicit or implicit – and the difference lay in the organisation of the 'self'. In shame stories where the whole 'self' was invoked, constructions of 'hard work' seemed to deepen students' sense of despair and powerlessness following failing. For example, the 'I dropped out because I felt incapable' story in which the student's unexpected failure led to a global sense of inadequacy. This supports the argument that failing – and especially repeated failing – can lead to a sense of the 'self' – the whole self – feeling inferior or incapable (Bibring, 1953). Unfortunately, there were tragic stories of repeated failing in the data in which students' 'hard work' was not paying off and dire sanction was experienced. Educational thinkers have argued that by subscribing to a myopic view of

the ‘hard work’ argument, students can set themselves up for failure when confronted with inevitable difficulties at university (Case et al., 2018; Gillborn, 2014). They argue, in part, that this is because notions of ‘hard work’ can lead to a naïve lack of anticipation of struggles at university. The Shame Experiences Study confirms this finding. Students did tend to be susceptible to illusions of invincibility at university and this often led to a crisis of the ‘self’. However, on the other hand, the ‘hard work’ discourse through imagery of a more agentic ‘self’ and rationalisation – ‘trying harder’, ‘the need to be strong’ and, ‘you’ve got to make your parents proud’ – mitigated shame in certain cases. Portrayals of a more agentic ‘self’ when failing were often indicative of shame mixed with some guilt around failing to meet performance standards. Using cognitive appraisal language, by invoking an external attribution the student was able to keep the sense of ‘self’ more intact, often leading to greater ability to metabolise shame and effect change. The goal of reconciling incompatible ideas of the ‘self’ is to reach a place of acceptance where inner and external reality contribute to a more helpful intermediate area of experiencing (Winnicott, 2005). In Study Part 2, it was demonstrated through the category called ‘acts of omission and commission’ that some shame stories were nuanced with a good dose of guilt in addition to shame. The implications of students who experienced more guilt versus shame was that these students were able to process the guilt more productively whereas shame often impeded the acceptance of loss (Steiner, 1985). Students who experienced guilt usually demonstrated a working through of loss and acceptance of reality whereas those who experienced shame seemed stuck with difficult feelings to process. Significantly, when guilt was mixed with shame, even in race and class-based stories, it manifested in reparative desires towards the ‘self’ and the restoration of ‘others’ who may have been hurt (Segal, 1952). In the data this more reparative stance was reflective of the depressive position and creating space for agency.

The loss of the ‘ideal’ self or ‘model student’ position within the institutional domain provides a foundation for understanding how discordant wishful self-images are internalised imaginations that are finely interwoven with the social institution and its resources. It sets the scene for understanding the gravity of public disgrace experienced at university when self-wounding occurs thereby disrupting the intermediate area of experiencing. In order to continue to build a psychosocial picture of student shame, the following section will discuss shame experiences using a developmental lens because the meso-level categories of adolescence and young adulthood were central to students’ meaning making of shame experiences at university.

9.3.2. The loss of the familiar childhood milieu and entry into a competitive world: The isolated and competitive student positions

“It is the individual relationships,
one by one,
that eventually lead to socialization”
(Winnicott, 2012a, p. 126)

The Shame Experiences Study shows how stories about student shame unfolded in an active relational, developmental context. In this section the focus is on how shame was experienced in two main adolescent/young adult peer contexts on campus: friendships and romantic relationships. Approximately 91.2% of survey participants were under the age of thirty which suggests that the majority of students who participated in the study were, broadly speaking, in the process of transitioning from childhood to adulthood. The evidence from the research strongly suggests that life stage is an important meso-categorical influence that shaped the experience of shame at university in specific ways. The influence of this developmental stage on shame experiences will therefore be considered using a mix of Eriksonian (1963, 1968) and Winnicottian (1965, 2012) principles to help us understand how the adolescent and young adult life phases necessarily involve attempts to integrate different identity elements and therefore feelings of relational safety and belonging are tenuous at best. Fundamental to an Eriksonian psychosocial theory of adolescence is that it concerns the *experience* of relationships, the meaning of relational experience for the developing 'self' and the significance of relational processes for identity (Kerpelman & Pittman, 2018). Students' relationships to peers are therefore tied, in one way or another, to identity formation (Galliher & Kerpelman, 2012) which is concerning because the Shame Experiences Study illustrates that peer relationships are on the decline in terms of both quality and quantity at university. This loss illustrates how a lack of relationships at university is central to an understanding of student shame.

9.3.2.1. The ambivalence of launching out and socialisation at university

The prestige around launching out and going to university during adolescence (Winnicott, 2012a) sounds far more glamorous than how it was portrayed in students' stories of shame. First there was a sense of ambivalence around the ongoing role of the 'parental other' when students failed or found themselves struggling. These students seemed caught between the need to draw support from parents on the one hand but desiring to please and fearing the power to disappoint. Several students reported anticipated shame at the prospect of failing and letting parents down. Recall how difficult it was for Tau, a well-adjusted student, to tell his parents that he had failed second year. However, many students, like Tau, found relief and comfort in the support shown by parents when they experienced difficulties at university. The ambivalence around the parental other was therefore a complicated mix of parents being perceived as both supportive and demanding. For those students who felt inordinately pressing demands from a 'parental other' it may be attributed, in part, to projective tendencies around an 'ideal self' as well as the aspirational value of a university education. There was a sense of urgency for the next generation to succeed at university and help the whole family transcend the class divide. However, because stratification systems in society can 'lock' individuals into certain classes both materially and emotionally (Turner, 2010), for some students there was a reverential dread of how choices in adolescence – and success or failure in pursuing those choices – would have an impact on their desired futures (Erikson, 1968). This was illustrated in the Shame Experiences Study where poorer students were felt to have limited options in society and that a university

education was the only way out – to shift social class. This idea was corroborated through Charles' paradoxical lack of support for the #FeesMustFall movement. One would have expected the poorest of poor students to feel supported by the movement. Charles did not. He portrayed his studies, and the future it guarantees, as the only thing he could "rely on" to help him create a better life and protesting students were felt to be jeopardizing this important chance by distracting students, like himself, from studying in their rooms: "they believed that they are doing [protesting] for the future generation, they were not really".

Although Erikson (1963) argued that during adolescence the role of parents typically decreases and adolescents spend more time exploring with peers, the Shame Experiences Study showed that some students still relied heavily on parental figures for emotional support at university – even when family live far from the university – due to a lack of peer relationships. The story that comes to mind is the student who opted out from doing a presentation because of anticipatory shame. She stayed indoors and cried for a whole week, only feeling better when she was able to go back to her "hometown" and presumably process the experience in a supportive environment. A number of students admitted that when they experienced shameful interpersonal difficulties with peers on campus they waited until they got home and could talk through the issues with their parents. The implication is that parents are still playing a significant role in the lives of some students and peer relationships are not being leveraged for the purposes of adult socialisation. This finding is also concerning because research shows that students who do not have friends at university feel more lonely and insecure (Maunder et al., 2010). Although students who attend university are engaging in processes that lead to some forms of adult independence – like career development – exploring through peer relationships seemed problematic to study participants because of a lack of relational safety. This relational safety seemed to be around students unwillingness and/or lack of skills to express emotions constructively – particularly negative emotions, like shame – in front of peers. The fear seemed to be that emotional honesty may increase negative exposure and sanction, leading to more shame. This principle was embodied through the 'face talk' in the data – keeping a "straight" face, putting on a "brave" face and "since he doesn't know my face". I have argued that 'face talk' is suggestive of compliance at university but it is equally about limiting negative exposure and sanction by peers by presenting a False Self. A False Self is therefore used to cope with feelings of shame and gain some kind of acceptance from peers. This finding supports Erikson's (1963) proposition that for the adolescent 'how you look' in the eyes of others can be more important than how you really feel.

For some students, like Charles, historical trauma arguably impacts the ability to successfully launch out and socialize at university. It can be argued that in the same way that Erikson (1968) regarded soldiers from the Second World War as suffering from an identity crisis – a loss of personal and historical continuity and an impaired ego identity (Côté, 2018) – so too, students stuck in penury and/or lacking parental support systems may be suffering from trauma. This is trauma that results in ego impairment and a loss of the sense of 'self' as having a past and a future. Although Charles had moved into a new social context, his previous identifications were misaligned with his new university context. Charles' portrait indicates that he had not had previous opportunities to establish a more integrated adult identity resulting in identity confusion and

a crisis at university (Erikson, 1968). Charles seemed to be experiencing identity confusion which included "a loss of centre and a dispersion" (Erikson, 1968, p. 212). His denial and disavowal can also be attributed to difficulties that arose at university because of transitioning to adulthood – including difficulties with intimacy, time distortions, a "diffusion of industry" and a "negative identity" (Erikson, 1968, as cited in Côté, 2018). Charles' seeming inability to face reality and his need to hold onto idealised versions of the 'self' and 'other' – repeating the same shameful traumas over and over, as opposed to being able to use his experience at university as a transitional or becoming space, where he can learn from his mistakes – seem to represent a severe case of identity confusion with no moratorium possible (Erikson, 1968, p. 246, as cited in Côté, 2018, p. 253). Côté (2018) argues that much of the stress of contemporary students would have been regarded by Erikson (1963) as normal developmental difficulties associated with identity confusion. However, he further qualifies that normal developmental difficulties at university seem to have been compounded by "problematic person-context fits" where students enter university environments emotionally and/or academically underprepared (Côté, 2018, p. 252). The Shame Experiences Study demonstrates that perhaps the experience of shame for poor students requires us to re-examine Erikson's (1968) notion of university as providing a psychosocial "moratorium" during which different elements of identity are integrated allowing a secure sense of identity to emerge. It would seem that penury and trauma do not afford some students sufficient space to explore options because the very essence of a "moratorium" is disproportionately skewed to favour more advantaged students.

The current contentious university environment also undoubtedly plays a role in a felt lack of safety on campus, however, from a psychosocial perspective there are other contributing factors too, like attachment legacies. This is because identity and attachment work in tandem influencing a young person's ability to adapt to adulthood (Kerpelman & Pittman, 2018, p. 309). Attachment theory shows that conflicted experience with caregivers can lead to questions about "one's worthiness for love and care" (Kerpelman & Pittman, 2018, p. 308). The implication of Erikson's (1963) principle of basic trust versus mistrust for the 'self', is that students carry internal working models of 'others' who are either responsive/supportive or threatening (Kerpelman & Pittman, 2018). Kerpelman and Pittman (2018) suggest that anxiety corresponds to unhelpful models of the 'self' whereas 'avoidance' corresponds to negative models of the 'other'. Both were evident in the data and often in combination. Adele's portrait epitomizes how identification with parents can influence identity and relationships with lecturers at university in complex ways. Adele's lack of emotional stability and support whilst growing up seem to have resulted in a disavowal of the original anger towards her parents becoming internalized as self-criticism and physical illness. She retained a strong identification with her parents, seeking their ongoing validation and acceptance which seemed to leave her feeling unworthy of support. The implication was that she felt unworthy of support from a supportive supervisor at university. Additionally, Adele lost the capacity to explore peer relationships and either assumed a parental position and/or polarised students into "slackers" and "hard workers" thereby replicating a familiar sibling dynamic from her home of origin. Adele was left reeling in a world of physical and emotional pain because she could not bring the vulnerable parts of herself into relationship with peers for fear of being seen as weak and being abandoned.

The dilemma for students was that relational exploration at university, so crucial to shaping emerging adult identity, was either helped or confounded by relational working models. Students like Nofoto who had developed basic trust in her own worthiness for love and care demonstrated the presence of positive working models. Nofoto used 'independence' to discursively position a 'self' who was loosening the ties from her family of origin. Because of her loving internalised objects she had a sense of 'self' grounded in basic trust and was able to draw from a wellspring of supportive peer relationships to help her cope at university. In contrast, students who had a negative model of the 'self', like Addison, had questions around their sense of worthiness and adopted an avoidant shame coping strategy. Recall how Mandla also employed a discourse of 'independence' at university but for different reasons to Nofoto. In contrast, Mandla's 'independence' was flavoured with defensive self-sufficiency that reflected a lack of basic trust in his own worthiness and of support from peers at university. Mandla's 'What the heck!' shame story showed a repetition of this pattern where he felt betrayed and shamed by his friend's derogatory comments about him, resulting in his withdrawal and positioning of a 'self' who was invulnerable to the opinions and judgements of 'others'. The continuity of Mandla's attachment model at university left Mandla walled-off from peers which is equivalent to a shame state (Retzinger, 2014). Similarly, Emma's attachment history demonstrated ambivalence around independence. The 'lunchbox faux pas' concerned how shameful needy and dependent feelings should be hidden from peers at university. The Shame Experiences Study therefore illustrated how shame triggered defensive working models during peer exploration at university leading to feelings of isolation from peers, which appeared to disrupt healthy shifts along the dependence-independence continuum. This lack of relational safety often resulted in projection and splitting when shame was triggered. The sense of disconnection and isolation felt by students was encapsulated by Emma's analogy of the need to compartmentalise herself and fellow students at university. This strategy clearly helped her to maintain psychological safety, particularly within a diverse student body. Compartmentalisation in the data demonstrated how students were struggling to integrate different identity elements at university (Erikson, 1968) resulting in splitting within the student body.

9.3.2.2. The turbulent peer context: Friendship and romantic relationships

University can feel lonely and rejecting

So, as a student, you have launched out, reached beyond the familiar family environment to go to university. Now what? Schlossberg (1989) suggested that one of the primary concerns of students who enter university is "Will I make friends?" There were numerous stories in the data – not just from the first-year experience – of students who experienced shame about not having friends at university. These were students who were alone on campus or had no friends to sit with in class. Students who experienced the shame of being alone represented a recurring phenomenon in the study: an 'isolated student' position. Furthermore, the results from the belonging variable of the Shame Experiences Study – that more shame was associated with less belonging – corroborates Erikson's (1968) proposition that feelings of belonging are tenuous at best during the adolescent/young adult life stages. Similarly, Gorard et al. (2006) found that

the struggle to make friends left students feeling socially isolated. However, the 'isolated student' position is somewhat of a paradox because according to Winnicott (2012a) an adolescent "is essentially an "isolate" (p. 125). Winnicott (2012a) was, however, referring to a transitory phase where adolescents launch out from what is formerly known in order to successfully undergo new socialization processes in different environments. In the same way that an infant learns to appreciate the existence of objects that are not part of the 'self', so too "the adolescent repeats the struggle" (p. 126). In this view, launching out at university is a process of trying out, personal discovery, and exploration – particularly through relationships. However, the 'isolated student' position confirms that personal relationships are lacking at university and many students were struggling to find a separate sense of 'self'. The Shame Experiences Study supports Baron and Corbin's (2012) contention that the consequences of the massification of university – large classes, limited lecturer interaction and a diverse student body − mean that opportunities for relationship at university are less available to students than ever before. Isolation at university is problematic because according to Winnicott (2012a) socialisation happens primarily through "individual relationships, one-by-one" (p. 126). The lack of relationships at university not only impacted student socialization processes but in turn impacted the sense of 'self'. The 'isolated student' position represented a negative student identity. Schachter and Galliher (2018) argue that an oversight in identity research has been an inability to differentiate between positive authentic identities versus pseudo-identities rooted in belongingness to sociocultural groups. The Shame Experiences Study indicated that there was a very real sense of isolation and negative forms of identity when students felt unrecognized by peers at university – 'I don't matter'. This question of mattering was indicated through portrayals of being alone and a felt inability to command the interest or notice of peers. To make matters worse, isolated students tended to perceive other students as surrounded by loving and supportive friends. The shamefulness of being friendless was therefore constructed through the evaluative gaze of others which included feeling unrecognised and/or negatively exposed. The isolated student typically felt negatively exposed for being 'seen' alone, followed by subsequent feelings of insignificance and rejection. Similarly, Cheng's (2004) study found that not having friends on campus resulted in a lack of feelings of personal worth. Constructions around a lack of friends on campus therefore confirm that peer relationships play a vital role in 'mattering' at university (Astin, 1993; Johnson et al., 2007). There were two interesting splits that emerged in the data that indicated students' need to distance the 'self' from the shame around difficulties in socializing with peers: introverts versus extroverts and the polarisation of education and relationships.

Fairly prevalent in the interview data was the idea that introverts experience more shame on campus than extroverts. Introverted students were constructed as having deficits and a distinct disadvantage to their more outgoing, eloquent peers. Introverts were painted by some as being unable to engage and socialize as well as struggling to engage with tutors and lecturers. Three out of the five male interview participants spoke, albeit in different ways, about the unique difficulties that arise for the introvert when socialising at university. Addison was no stranger to introversion and seemed less able to integrate a split representation of introversion/extroversion within the 'self'. He berated himself for being "socially awkward" and for not being more "charismatic". He often felt misunderstood and under-rated because, as an introvert, he felt

unable to capture the interest of his peers. Recall that Addison was sensitive to peer rejection, likely arising from childhood teasing. He knew what it felt like to be misunderstood and feel powerless to present an acceptable image of himself and be accepted by peers. Addison's conflicted stance on introversion was more characteristic of the paranoid schizoid position and shame. However, the Shame Experiences Study showed that introversion was not necessarily equivalent to shame at university. For example, Mandla sketched a more integrated picture of an introverted 'self' who had learnt to validate himself (because your parents are not around), alongside the need to be accepted socially. Mandla was exploring the ambivalence around his need of others whilst not allowing others to define him. He was attempting to integrate his own desires with the desires of 'others' and society at large. He realised that this is a tricky balance that must be mastered. This is characteristic of the depressive position. Recall also how Tau positioned himself as an introvert by sketching the "downfalls" of his more introverted self – "I keep to myself" and "I'm not really social – however, he managed to leverage his friendship with an extroverted student who introduced him to others and in so doing he was included in a wider friendship circle at university than he imagined possible. Which begets the question: Why do some students use 'introverts' as shame scapegoats in a study of student shame? To answer this question we return to the principle that the 'isolated student' position is characterized by both a lack of recognition and negative exposure and introverted students were portrayed as the least likely to be able to command the notice and respect of their peers. Therefore, it is proposed that some students used a split representation of introverts and extroverts to distance the 'self' from more introverted parts of themselves which they feared would not command notice or respect at university. This proposition was corroborated in Nofoto's portrait where she acknowledged feeling "shy" in front of her peers but split off introverts as possibly "damaged". This indicates that the shame of not appearing to be skilfully sociable and popular with peers runs deep at university.

The other revealing split evident as a defensive strategy against the shame of not mattering, was the polarisation of education and relationships. The story that many students told themselves – perhaps to soothe themselves from the shame – was that an isolated student position was a choice, even a prerequisite to succeed at academics. This defensive portrayal of being alone and rejected cast those who had an enviable social life as likely to be distracted from their academic work. In this view there was no room for a university experience where academics and healthy socialisation together formed part of a complete university experience. The disavowal seemed to be that if one is immersed in work then one does not have to face one's vulnerability to shame and rejection by peers. This split representation of education and relationships seemed to draw on current discourses in education of how relationships at university are like business transactions, leaving no room for developmental exploration (Scott, 2014). These recursive shame loops demonstrate how neoliberal discourses that seem to function only at the macro level literally permeate the micro and meso levels of society and are leveraged by students – consciously and unconsciously – to perpetuate ways of non-relational 'being' at university. Put another way, the current business climate at universities reinforced students felt sense of shame and isolation. A related avoidant strategy, used to defensively ward off the shame of rejection by peers, was simply to be unapproachable in the first place. The idea seemed to be "I'll reject you before you have a chance to reject me – the shame is on you". For

example, Emma's lack of "approachability" on campus had more to do with defending the 'self' around shameful vulnerability and fear of rejection from her peers than academic pursuits. However, when Emma was confronted by a friend about her unapproachability in class, she showed tremendous insight and was able to imagine how continuing down her current path would leave her friendless at university. We must, however, also consider how Emma's 'unapproachable' persona likely had a negative knock-on effect on her peers where the projection of 'not mattering' could result in peers feeling devalued by Emma. Following this line of argument, it is suggested that students' unmetabolised shame has a ripple effect across the peer group compounding the breakdown in peer relationships.

In the Shame Experiences Study, peer relationships included the idea of anticipated reciprocity through intimate relationships. Intimate relationships seemed to render students on campus particularly vulnerable, likely because to seek a romantic partner is to desire to share an understanding of the 'self' (Pittman et al., 2011) and the hope that the 'self' will be warmly received. Some of the most painful stories of shame were stories of students who expressed a romantic interest in a fellow student: but were rejected. These stories portrayed the rejected party as feeling ashamed of reaching out in the first place, leaving the student with more questions than answers about their self-worth. Intimacy and identity processes are inextricably intertwined during early adulthood (Pittman et al., 2011). Erikson (1963) put it this way: "adolescent love is an attempt to arrive at a definition of one's identity by projecting one's diffused ego image on another and by seeing it thus reflected and gradually clarified" (p. 262). The proposition from the Shame Experiences Study is that when the projection of the ego image was rejected by someone who was regarded as a potential partner, shame ensued. Failed romantic relationships at university were both an expression of need and dependency (a longing for the closeness and intimacy that is lost when leaving home) and an expression of aggression/competition – prowess and being seen to be desired – and rejections in this regard were so very shaming because they were a repudiation of these needs/strivings. The data from Tau's interview corroborated this finding by providing a contrast to the shame of being rejected when pursuing a romantic relationship. During his interview Tau expressed feelings of pride because he had pursued and conquered his romantic interest. He felt that his relationship with a desirable partner at university made him the envy of some of his peers. The Shame Experiences Study showed that rivalry was often a feature of students' shame experience, which confirms Steiner's (2011) argument that the Oedipus complex concerns rivalry that extends beyond the father and son relationship.

The downside of "the competitive edge": Sibling rivalry and inferiority

Therefore, in addition to the 'isolated student' position, we must consider the 'competitive student' position, too. Sibling rivalry, in the form of competition with peers, seemed to rub salt into already wounded peer relationships. Erikson (1963) argued that throughout every stage of development, individuals learn what matters in their unique cultural context and, students in the Wits context seemed to understand that universities prize competitive students. The data showed that neoliberal ideologies of competitive universities have fuelled a sense of competition amongst students. On the one hand students constructed

the massification of university as a social duty of paramount importance because more students are then given the opportunity to go to university and rewrite the wrongs of the past. But what seemed to be disavowed was that students must then compete with peers for acceptance at university. Public and privately schooled peers must compete as well as engage in highly competitive selection processes for limited positions in postgraduate programmes. Competition involves a contest, rivalry and vying for position which, in turn, fuels conflict, struggle, winning or losing and survival of the fittest. These qualities are embodied in the Wits slogan: "Wits gives you the edge". 'Edge' is defined as "a quality or factor which gives superiority over close rivals" (Oxford Lexico, 2020). The Wits slogan therefore plays into simultaneous constructions of elitism by association with Wits, and the need to compete. Erikson (1968) gives a nod to the role of competitive processes in identity formation by stating that the adolescent must have "subordinated his childhood identifications to a new kind of identification, achieved in absorbing sociability and in competitive apprenticeship with and among his age mates" (p. 155). In one sense, Erikson (1968) represents a voice of reason, arguing that competitive processes are a given in adolescent identity formation. However, this study indicates that inordinately competitive environments increase the likelihood of shame triggered within peer relationships – thereby exacerbating the adolescent struggle to explore intimacy and identity through healthy relationships.

According to Erikson (1968), when adolescents confront difficulties in establishing their identity, they will often manage the struggle in one of three ways, firstly, by an over-identification with peers, secondly, by engaging 'others' as adversaries and thirdly, by assigning 'others' as idols who represent ideals of what we desire for ourselves. In the data, many students' shame coping scripts corresponded to Erikson's (1968) second proposition, engaging 'others' as adversaries or seeking 'others' as targets. Although Erikson (1968) intimated that this process is part of normative adolescent development, the data shows that the current competitive context seemed to amplify a hierarchical world for students. Not only was this ranking academic but also social: "the social and academic hierarchy projected at Wits". The peer group or "social hierarchy" at university is what made this educational institutional domain seem unique compared to other domains and particularly ripe for shame. Not only does the institution itself have the power to sanction based on academic standards but the peer group seemed to have the power to sanction based on an inseparable mix of academic and social standards. Students felt that no aspect of student life was left untouched by competition and ranking: intellect, wealth, physical prowess, sociability, clothing, lifestyle and so on. Living up to a "pop culture" lifestyle was also a burden that students felt they had to bear. Remember Burke's (2012) warning about performance standards at university rendering students vulnerable to feelings of inadequacy? Indeed, the Shame Experiences Study shows that we must take this idea of shame about performativity and extend it across the entire social dimension of student life. It is the pervasive nature of performativity that seemed to seep into students' lives colouring the whole self with feelings of unworthiness. In the social hierarchy, Wits students seem to have worked out their own – spoken and unspoken – signs and symbols to signify social rank and in-and-out groups All of this shame about social ranking was constructed primarily through a judging, evaluative gaze which corroborates Steiner's (2011) argument about the central role of gaze in the shame experience. Just beneath the shaky substrate

of ‘watching’ and ‘looking’ were constructions of the fear of being judged by other students and found lacking. This finding supports Burke et al.’s (2016) argument that students’ fear of judgement is suggestive of a fragile sense of ‘self’ that increases vulnerability. The Shame Experiences Study showed how competitive hierarchies were shame triggering because upward comparison often left students questioning a fragile sense of ‘self’. If the ‘self’ was felt to be threatened by any one of a number of discrepancies, it resulted in feelings of inferiority to peers, triggered through comparative processes. ‘Keeping up’ was always about comparison to peers. At this point, the pivotal role of class disparities at university also came into play because to live the high life – and have all the symbols of wealth at university – costs money which many students did not have. However, because of the fluidity of comparison in the data – moving quickly between upward and downward comparison, depending on who you are with – students at all levels of the socio-economic strata tended to experience shame about class at university because at some point every student felt that they had less than the student next to them. For example, middle-class students who had less resources than super wealthy peers reported shame about not being able to live up to the lifestyle of the wealthy. The implication was that at some point the majority of students felt excluded because ‘they’ (wealthier others) went out to lunch and ‘they’ partied and ‘you’ were left out. However, the implications of comparison were more dire for poorer students who lacked the resources to dress fashionably leaving some poorer students feeling undesirable or even worse, ugly and unlovable.

But money was not the only currency driving competition amongst students. One of the key areas of tangible shame emanating from competition was around ‘knowledge’. Students’ conflicted relationship to knowledge is significant because the ‘transmission of knowledge’ is the key resource provided by the educational institutional domain in society. Although the very reason that students attend university is to gain knowledge, the shame of ‘not knowing’ was highly prevalent in the data. Knowledge was characterized by competition and the fear of negative sanction by peers as illustrated in stories about ‘not knowing’ that were always in the presence of lecturers and peers. The Shame Experiences Study therefore confirms Lansky and Morrison’s (2014) proposition that shame is prevalent in learning environments. Additionally, it demonstrates that one of the reasons that learning environments fuel shame is because of students’ relationship to ‘knowledge’ and how knowledge is used to grow or defend the ‘self’. The premise of identity development is having a sense of freedom to explore (Erikson, 1968), however, a lack of freedom means that exploration will be curtailed. Concerningly, the presence of strong competition at university and the fear of humiliation in front of peers, meant that students tended to foreclose exploration in an attempt to try and hold onto a superior position to others – sibling rivalry – and in so doing ward off dreaded feelings of inadequacy and incompetency (Coles, 2015). The result was often feelings of humiliation which led to the defensive desire to omnipotently achieve the ‘ideal’ as was manifest in defensive projection and splitting to attempt to regain equilibrium.

Waddell (2018) argues that when learning represents a compulsion to know – rather than a desire to explore – it undermines development. Rather than a thirst for understanding ‘knowledge’ then becomes a thing to be acquired “to be possessed, usually for ambitious, rivalrous, competitive and self-serving

purposes" (Waddell, 2018, p. 100). We must take into account students' wish to be the special child (Coles, 2015) at university – the clever child, the good child – what is illustrated in the data as the 'model' and 'knowledgeable' student positions. This compulsion to 'know' and be the 'clever child' was a pervasive construction in the Shame Experiences Study and brings to mind Mann's (2001) notion of performativity that characterises most learning in universities today. Waddell (2018) writes how this less functional type of learning happens because fear and frustration result in impulses to eliminate feared rivals by destroying, controlling or taking possession. Although both healthy and dysfunctional types of learning rely on projective processes, a more compulsive form of learning leads to personal feelings of being a fraud and causes a crisis over one's feared lack – at times even in the midst of success. The examples in the data that come to mind are the struggles of medical students to transcend pervasive feelings of inadequacy and unworthiness in tutorials – always striving but never arriving – despite the prestige associated with their chosen role in society. This also explains why straight-A participants defended against the shame of inadequacy when not achieving top marks. The data therefore supports the view that competition has replaced participation at university (Swartz et al., 2017) and it further shows that a key weapon that students employ in this competition is 'knowledge' (Waddell, 2018). However, knowledge that undermines development seemed to be a double-edged sword, provoking shame that negatively impacted identity in two ways: firstly, when intellectualizing the mind became the location of a False Self rather than authentic experience (Winnicott, 1965), and secondly, disengagement from peer relationships because of the failure to develop one's own thoughts and feelings (Ivey, 1989).

Returning to the idea that learning relies on projective processes (Waddell, 2018), this was illustrated in the data through a clear theme of students overwhelming need to distance themselves from the shame of 'not knowing' and purge the 'self' from feeling like the lesser child at university: inadequate and incompetent. Unfortunately, this was achieved by constructing stories of peers as ridiculing perpetrators – at times joining hostile lecturers – who inflicted shame on the 'self', an unsuspecting victim. These stories highlighted how defending against the shame of 'not knowing' usually involved seeking a target. Constructions of a perpetrator seemed to allow someone 'out there' to be vilified. And the unspoken rule seemed to be that one need never, justifiably, engage a perpetrator. This meant that rather than confront sibling rivalry and the powerful feelings of shame that it triggered when the 'self' was seen to be inadequate, the student disidentified with peers and withdrew him/herself from the competition. Put another way, the feelings of inadequacy stirred by rivalry resulted in students disengaging from peer relationships to distance themselves from the shame of inadequacy. There were many distancing mechanisms in the data ranging from being the odd-one-out, to ridiculing peers, to class and race-based categorization. The latter was when a sense of competition – both social and academic – occasionally manifested along racial or class lines, and aggravated images of polarisation of particular groups, leaving them feeling devalued and 'not wanted' or questioning their belonging at Wits.

9.3.2.3. Role confusion: Inferior degrees and roles in society

A central feature of Erikson's (1968) theory is achieving role clarity through a suitable career. According to Pittman et al. (2011) the question asked about one's identity during the adolescent phase is, "What will I be when I enter the adult world of work" (p. 38). This is a more sophisticated version of the child-like: "What do I want to be when I group up?" For some students the questions around chosen roles in society were more easily answered than for others. The former group were typically students who were pursuing medical, engineering, accounting or law degrees – vocational specific training – and, who demonstrated a commitment to their chosen profession. Recall how strongly Zanele identified with the law profession? Her identity was strengthened through an affinity with a profession that she had dreamed of belonging to, even as a teenager. Although most students felt that belonging to Wits increases one's social standing in society, a small number of students who had some uncertainty around their future career roles seemed to grapple with feelings of inferiority within the university community because of their degree and/or career choices. The majority of these stories involved students who were enrolled for Bachelor of Arts (BA) degrees. These students felt looked down upon by peers (presumably students engaged in more vocational specific degrees). The ensuing feelings of inferiority left the students feeling the need to justify their worth to their 'accusers'.

There are two key possibilities around how and why this particular upward comparison was a painful source of shame at university. Firstly, according to Erikson (1968) establishing a sound identity includes a "decisive occupational choice" (p. 166). The central idea seems to rest on the word "decisive". Research shows that when students do not enter more "decisive" or specific vocational training, finding role clarity is often a more difficult passage. For example, Case et al. (2018) found that although BA graduates appeared to have similar work prospects and experienced similar difficulties in finding their first job compared to their BSc counterparts, the BSc graduates found jobs more closely related to their degree majors. Case et al. (2018) therefore argue that role uncertainty arises for BA graduates because BA majors, like Philosophy or Sociology, have less of a relation to a particular profession or workplace. This means that the general nature of certain degrees results in some students taking longer to settle on a career identity than others. The second idea is based on Erikson's (1968) proposition that when a young person is unable to settle on an occupational identity it "disturbs" the person (p. 132). From an Eriksonian (1963) perspective one can therefore argue that students who were studying general degrees were in a more exploratory phase regarding future roles whereas those who were doing career specific degrees had already achieved some level of role commitment. Put another way, the latter group had made some identity decision because the Eriksonian (1963) premise is that career decisions and commitments help to define identity (Pittman et al., 2011). This means that undertaking a more general degree at university may feel threatening, rather than helpful, to emerging identity commitments. Schlossberg et al. (1989) also argued that when students transition from former to new roles and, particularly when there is a perceived discrepancy between these roles, there will be greater feelings of disequilibrium and marginality in the university environment. It is

also possible, that the larger themes of competition and inadequacy played a role in the 'ranking' or 'grading' of degree choices in students' minds.

However, even students who were undertaking what would be considered more 'prestigious' degrees did not seem to escape the turbulence and shame caused by role clarity in adolescence. Rather than asking if there is shame around role clarity during adolescence, the question is more about what kind of shame. Research shows that downward comparison is a common mechanism for managing affect and self-esteem (Gerber et al., 2018). The application of this principle to the data is that some students who were undertaking more specific vocational training may have constructed 'others' as doing less prestigious degrees possibly as useful recipients of projections of inadequacy or 'less than' feelings. The projections stemmed from shameful inadequacy because although, for example, medical students had a strong commitment to their chosen profession they often experienced shame because of negative evaluations in tutorials and this was felt as threatening to their professional identity (Pittman et al., 2011). Failure to affirm their threatened professional identity often resulted in students commitment to redoubling their efforts to do better next time. The threat to identity therefore resulted in ongoing identity exploration to find a more acceptable sense of 'self' in spite of career clarity (Pittman et al., 2011).

The Shame Experiences Study therefore confirms that choosing and pursuing a degree at university is central to choosing one's roles in society and forces the adolescent/young adult to undertake some form of identity exploration and confront self-defining information (Pittman et al., 2011). For those students who were struggling with more aggravated forms of identity issues, degree/career choice tended to result in the shame of being "misaligned" (Côté, 2018, p. 252) from the larger university peer group. The implication is that the shame provoked through doubts about roles led to decreased capacity for healthy peer relationships and increased feelings of isolation on campus (Miller, 1993). Interestingly, for some students the opportunity to explore different prospective roles was experienced as positive rather than threatening to their identity. Recall how Emma, who was enrolled in a BA degree, enjoyed having the freedom to explore different subjects and repeatedly changed her majors according to her interests. She was effectively using her degree as an opportunity to explore areas of interest and strength whilst at university.

9.3.2.4. Discourses of 'society' and 'not being known' protect the True Self from shame

So far, it has been established that the ambivalence of launching out – socialization, the turbulence of friendships and romantic relationships, sibling rivalry in knowledge acquisition and role confusion – all presented shame gaps that seemed to characterize the loss of the familiar childhood milieu when going to university. This unsettling period for students seemed to be well represented in the data by both an 'isolated' and a 'competitive' student position. The Shame Experiences Study demonstrates that the struggle of Winnicott's (2012) "isolate" was often characterised by the shame of rejection and competition that inhibited socialization at university, including the development of intimate relationships. Feeling rejected by peers or being turned down romantically provoked shame that some students did not attempt to deny – the pain was palpable and characteristically led to emotional withdrawal on campus. Emotional withdrawal

seemed to be an appropriate defence because physical withdrawal was often not possible in the university context. Students had to see their rejector repeatedly because they were often in the same class or friendship circle on campus and so on. Recall the student who was "turned down by someone I really care about and having to see them every day"; despite the other party being portrayed as "kind, respectful and understanding", the student reported falling into a "pretty bad depression that lasted for about two years". This is a picture of the adolescent who is situated within the 'isolated student' position. Often students sensed the pity of well-meaning, empathetic peers, however, rather than bringing comfort it seemed to amplify the shame. This was likely because of the increased exposure that a university campus brings. Knowing that their rejection had been witnessed by peers and fearing more shame at disclosing their vulnerability, led to isolation and processing of difficult feelings alone. Withdrawal from one's surroundings is a typical response when one lacks confidence that your needs for recognition and support will be met (Winnicott, 1965). In contrast, a more developmentally integrated individual would likely not become isolated but would re-engage towards renewed interdependence with their environment (Winnicott, 1965). The Shame Experiences Study showed that relationships in the university context are socially complex making it more difficult to re-engage following shameful rejection. There is a great deal at stake for the burgeoning adult identities of students. Peer relationships are inherently about reaching out to share the 'self' (Pittman et al., 2011) and when this gesture was declined/refused/unattainable, the opportunity to be recognised and understood was felt to be denied or withheld by the 'other'. Remember how primal the expectations of being seen and cherished are? (Fonagy et al., 2002). When the opportunity to have the 'self' reflected back by 'others' in loving ways was denied (Erikson, 1963), hopes of being warmly received were shattered. The 'isolated student' position therefore demonstrated that shame had done its job: it had effectively signalled a threat of danger to a sense of integrity of the 'self' and the social bond (Lansky & Morrison, 2014). Rather than going through a short period of adolescent transition as an "isolate", some of these students felt stuck in shame and isolated on campus.

It is important to note that rejection proved to be a far more important thread in the adolescent university experience than may have seemed at first glance in the data. In the early stages of data analysis the researcher categorised shame stories into themes purely from a discursive perspective by using a form of semantic content coding. During this preliminary analysis there were 94 stories of shame about failing to meet explicit/implicit performance standards, 53 stories of humiliation in the classroom, 67 stories of shameful devaluation based on categorical identification (race, gender, mental illness, disability, SES), 23 stories of shame resulting from overt comparison to peers and 35 stories of personal rejection/betrayal on campus. Configured in this way, only 13% of students' stories about shame at university seemed to be about rejection. However, intuitively this number seemed to be too low in light of the vast literature about the adolescent phase. An additional content analysis was conducted which included imagery of rejection/separation/abandonment/isolation in shame stories – conscious and unconscious – irrespective of the central discourse employed. Using this strategy, the percentage moved up: approximately 40% of all shame experiences included some element of rejection/separation/abandonment/isolation. Rejection was second only to feelings of shame about inadequacy/incompetency at 64% and, the remaining 35% was

allocated to imagery of feelings of ridicule/humiliation. It is likely that students were reluctant to talk explicitly about experiences of rejection because it is so shaming. What does this analytic difference indicate? The suggestion is that students who narrated stories of overt rejection had accepted the shame message which is characteristic of Withdrawal and Attack-Self coping scripts (Elison et al., 2006). In contrast, student stories that contained imagery of rejection/separation/abandonment/isolation that was not the central plot of the story tended to use Avoidance and Attack-Other coping strategies which is indicative of less acceptance of the shame message (Elison et al., 2006). Put another way, there was a tendency to disavow feelings of rejection and not belonging at university.

A further interesting finding was how the 'isolated student' position was nuanced based on one's relative standing to the larger peer group at Wits. It was in this larger group dynamic that the 'isolated' and 'competitive' student positions seemed to be interwoven in students' sense-making of their shame experiences. The group dynamic was evident in the data through portrayals of an ever-threatening, but diffuse 'other', that set unattainable standards at university – academic and social – and reserved the right to judge, sanction and inflict shame on students. Surprisingly this 'other' was not Wits, nor was it peers on campus nor in the classroom: the 'other' was called 'society'. 'Society' was portrayed as the perpetrator who pressurised students to live up to seemingly impossible standards. Recall Mandla's portrait which was scattered with seeds of ambivalence about the demands and perceptions of others to 'be' or 'behave' in socially circumscribed ways at university. The question that arises is why students would so readily employ 'society' as the perpetrator who inflicts the shame of isolation and competition? The answer lies in the developmental progression of shame and the need to defend against it. Around the time that "objective self-awareness" appears – usually during infancy – we experience difference, comparison and competition (Morrison, 2007). With the onset of these distinctions between the 'self' and 'others' "shame becomes an affect imposed by an external other – for example, 'society' – even as it remains an internal, subjective experience" (Morrison, 2007, p. 168). This idea of shame being imposed on one from an external source was corroborated in the data through examples of what Lewis (1971) called the vicarious experience of shame. Recall the student who failed an exam and admitted "I would be scared that in *their mind they* were judging me". Imagery of 'others' judging the 'self' was common in the data. Steiner (2011) argues that developmentally the visual dimension enables a child to integrate the 'good' and 'bad' mother as the child sees the physical actions or movements of the mother, however, perceptual integration later gives way to emotional integration of the 'good' and 'bad' mother as well as of loving and hateful feelings. To integrate emotionally therefore becomes the knowledge that the one who loves and hates are the very same 'self'. However, when students split under threat, they often experienced imagery of 'bad' peers who were "judging" together with a simultaneous experience of a 'bad' self who felt "worthless and very low". What would have been more reflective of students' external reality was whole objects who can be supportive yet also demeaning at times. However, the vicarious experience of shame included many instances in the data where the distinction between inner and outer sources of shame was unclear, indicating permeable boundaries of the 'self' – which led to more shame (Lewis, 1971). During the adolescent stage, 'society' is the scary unknown that has come to replace the familiar of childhood (Erikson, 1963, 1968) and, in the

adolescent turmoil of re-engaging with others (Winnicott, 2012) one can anticipate that there will be confusion and a working through of inner and outer experience. The proposition is therefore that 'society' helped to distance the 'self' from feelings of shame at Wits and served to keep closer others 'good'. This confirms Turner's (2010) thesis that negative emotions tend to migrate towards meso and macrostructures in society because they are considered safer targets and it does not disrupt the ability to secure positive sanctioning which occurs primarily on the micro-level. In many instances the more diffuse 'other', namely 'society' who shames was indicative of avoidance and/or disavowal of shame and its source (Lewis, 1971).

Study part 3 was particularly informative in helping us to understand *why* 'society' was employed by students as a perpetrator to distance the 'self' from shame. Remember Erikson's (1968) three ways that adolescents confront difficulties when establishing their identity? Engaging 'others' as adversaries or targets has been touched on and was easily accessible in the data because of the prevalence of discourses of competition among peers. However, Erikson's (1968) first strategy – over-identification with peers – seemed to be less clear in the data. While this is likely a result of changing and increasingly complex student group divisions along race and class lines (which will be elaborated later in this chapter), the ambivalence around the shame of feeling different or that one does not fit in at Wits, was often defended against in the data. But what did being 'different' look like, for students, in this study of shame? We know from the shame literature that "the mere experience of feeling different from others in some important way is enough to cause us to feel freakish and unacceptable" (Morrison, 1989. p. 27). Interestingly, Morrison was not specifically referring to adolescence, however, this principle seemed particularly relevant to the adolescent experience at university. The implication is that shameful feelings – whether inadequacy, incompetency, unlovability, unworthiness, rejection and so on – resulted in the adolescent feeling unacceptable at university. In other words, irrespective of the source of shame, personal injury followed a shame trigger and part of that injury was about feeling 'different' and that one does not belong. If belonging to a group facilitates a sense of being 'okay', then when the idealised friends, group or institution don't make you feel 'okay' – like the shame experiences documented in this study – shame comes into view again (Morrison, 1989). Effectively shame therefore fuelled ambivalence around the vulnerable, developing adult identity. A significant strategy that students employed – at least in the in-depth interviews –to defend against shame or the fear of sanction was to put forward a pseudo self or a False Self at university to protect the True Self from the demands of 'society' at university. This finding seems to be a pertinent example of Schachter and Galliher's (2018) proposition of pseudo-identities that have their roots in the desire to belong to sociocultural groups.

Winnicott's antidote for moving through personal injury, rather than resort to a False Self, was the safety net provided by a thoughtful and attentive (m)other who provides a model as to how to use relationships for comfort. However, the student predicament was that isolation and competition had eroded the very relationships that were meant to provide comfort and support at university and help students process troubling thoughts. The data illustrates that the False Self was often a withdrawal strategy – characterised by pseudo-independence. Winnicott (1958) argued that the ability to be alone is a positive

capacity which relies on an internalised comforting other, compared to the fear of being alone which is a defensive state of withdrawal used when there is an expectation of persecution. Scenes of persecution were highly prevalent in the Shame Experiences Study, suggesting a great deal of defensive withdrawal into isolation, which was then experienced as further persecution. The False Self was advanced as necessary on campus because of a loss of relational safety. Peers do not provide a safe presence for one another that constitutes a safety net to be able to resolve shame and conflicted feelings whilst at university.

Another cruel twist of the adolescent dilemma is that the search for identity involves a delicate balance between a unique identity – something akin to the True Self – whilst still fitting-in with the group. But the key to achieving this balance is that the 'self' needs to be well defined, including how you want 'others' to perceive you (Erikson, 1963, 1968). An important way of characterizing a 'well defined' sense of 'self' in a study of shame is to consider acceptance of the flawed self. Erikson (1968) argued that the antidote to being concerned about how you appear in the eyes of others is to be concerned with what *you* feel *you* are. The Shame Experiences Study therefore illustrates that peers were not the only ones watching the shame experience. Students were watching themselves too. Attempts to manage the ambivalence of forging a unique sense of identity, whilst still fitting into the group, often resulted in harsh self-judgement – as inadequate, unworthy or unlovable (Manganyi, 1981). However, a fundamental premise of intersubjectivity is that acceptance is being known by an accepting 'other', not just the 'self'. Morrison (2008) puts it this way: "The antidote to the experience of shame is the quest (or struggle) for acceptance-of the flawed self, by self or other" (p. 65). Remember Winnicott's (2012) capacity to be alone occurs within the presence of a trusted, supportive 'other'? The fundamental role of the 'other' provides the overarching contrast between Nofoto and for example, Mandla's portraits. In the midst of failure, Nofoto was processing both self-acceptance and acceptance by trusted 'others'. However, Mandla was attempting to process self-acceptance in the absence of trusted 'others'. That this was a flawed strategy was evident in Mandla's walled-off state and ongoing fears of keeping controlling 'others' at a distance: "socially, you've gotta know yourself for you to, like, survive". Survival speaks of holding onto the 'self' rather than a sense of flourishing in the presence of others. Additionally, "Being known" – particularly in close relationships - is a prerequisite for the development of one's identity (Kerpelman & Pittman, 2018). This is Ghent's (1990) argument, that defences against shame are essentially a deception – whether in the form of rationalizing, denial, avoiding, splitting – because the deep desire is to "come clean" and admit the longing to be recognized and to know the other in return (p. 109). The danger of functioning from the False Self was therefore that it resulted in splitting of the 'other' and difficulties in forming meaningful relationships (Winnicott, 1965).

Before moving on we must address Erikson's (1968) third strategy used by adolescents to manage difficulties in establishing their identity: assigning 'others' as idols who represent ideals of what we desire for ourselves. In the Shame Experiences Study the institution, Wits, was often the assigned idol as has been discussed previously (See section 9.3.1 – "Wits and me"). Crucially, the demands of 'performativity' at university were rarely constructed as stemming from Wits, the institution, but rather from constructions of the opaque, faceless entity called 'society'. In this way, an idealised Wits was perfectly preserved,

representing everything that aspiring graduates wished to become and, as such, it represented cherished ideals. Recall Mandla's insistence that "there is no shame at Wits". This, despite his own personal experience of shame amongst his peers at Wits – as narrated in his 'what the heck' shame story. It seems likely that despite sanction and shame, many students will continuously return to this 'comforting' space of idealisation of Wits because as Morrison argues, every time shame comes into view again the search for the idealised object will be reignited – to blunt feelings of shame and rejection (Morrison, 1989).

9.3.3. The loss of a safe 'transitional space' in the classroom: A 'victimised' student position

Here the focus shifts to shame in the classroom and understanding how shame arises in that liminal space between process and outcome in learning and how it interlocks with the conflicted adolescent space where students are working out internal and external experiences in the making of their identities. This section will build further on Winnicott's (2005) thesis of a safe transitional space. We will consider the student's movement from illusion to disillusionment in the classroom whilst acquiring knowledge and implications for growth. An important aspect of a safe transitional space is for the mother figure to mirror the infant so that he/she can learn to integrate their emotions and achieve a stable sense of self. Winnicott (2005) argued that the task of creating a safe transitional space, is an ongoing task for parents and, interestingly, also for educators. In the university environment this would typically mean that lecturers need to create classrooms with sufficient safety in which students can *be* and *become*. However, from the student perspective taken in this study, the commodifying of higher education and declining relationships have translated into an absence of a safe transitional space in the classroom. Rather than sanctuaries, classrooms were at times experienced as sites of shame.

9.3.3.1. The price of commodified education: Being (mis)recognised in the classroom

Students arriving at university had high expectations of entering a warm environment where they would feel like they belong, have personal relationships with lecturers and make lots of friends. For students, that all-important letter of acceptance from Wits felt like an invitation to join a relational world – a "holding environment" – in which to grow and learn. However, these hopes were soon dashed as reflected in stories of disillusionment where students felt like "nobody knows me", "nobody cares" and Wits feels "big" and "impersonal". You may recall how Addison struggled to integrate his sense of disenchantment with Wits. On the one hand, Addison felt a sense of pride in belonging to Wits, an institution that offers "impressive", "quality" education. But he also sensed no "warmth" and experienced ongoing feelings of loneliness and awkwardness and, more problematically, this left him feeling small and insignificant on campus. This finding supports the view that an absence of meaningful relationships in education results in deficits in belonging which ultimately negatively impact perceptions of the institution (Slaten et al., 2014). For many students a felt absence of relationships on campus included a lack of engagement with lecturers. Natalie and Nofoto both expressed a longing for relationship with lecturers who were felt to be absent, particularly at the undergraduate level. Recall Natalie's "two different worlds" shame story where she

contrasted her experiences in two different faculties. In the years when she had good relationships with lecturers, her experience was emotionally coloured as positive compared to ongoing feelings of shame in her current faculty where there was a notable absence of relationships. Natalie's expressed desire for personal feedback – despite being a soon to be qualified medical doctor – is indicative of the significance of the mirror transference in education. Because the wishful longing for a nurturing 'other' was unfulfilled, the student was left to fulfil this role for him/herself. Nofoto also expressed this loss of a mirroring 'good enough' university mother figure as a terrifying reality that you are on your own and that there is nobody there to "rescue you" at university – you have to figure it out for yourself.

Students' desire for relationships and attachment at university seemed particularly significant to this study of shame because attachment creates an "expectation of being seen" and, when this expectation went unmet, the student felt objectified and shame ensued (Fonagy et al., 2002). But, in the university context, it gets worse. Although *not* being seen at university was a significant shame trigger, the study showed that students found it exquisitely painful to *be seen* by lecturers and peers *but*, in a *negative* light. These were stories where students felt (mis)recognised by lecturers and peers in the classroom. This study therefore supports Schlossberg's (1989) thesis that 'mattering' in education is not only about commanding notice or being seen but moreover *how* you are seen by others. (Mis)recognition was constructed through stories of students who experienced deep humiliation in front of lecturers and peers in classroom interactions.

9.3.3.2. No room for 'trial and error': Classrooms as sites of humiliation when acquiring 'knowledge'

The prototypical story of humiliation in the classroom concerned 'not knowing' the answer or getting an answer to a question wrong – publicly – when asked by a lecturer in class. Interestingly, there were always three role players or positions in these stories: the student, the lecturer and the peer group. The position that remained fairly constant in these stories was that of the 'victimised student', where the defenceless student felt pounced upon like unsuspecting prey. The question that begs is why 'not knowing' or 'getting it wrong' in the classroom was experienced by students as particularly humiliating? Returning to a Winnicottian understanding of transitional space, Winnicott (2005) believed that creative discovery and development flow from trial and error that take place within a safe environment. In the university classroom, the back-and-forth of questions and answers can be likened to trial and error that forms an important part of student engagement. However, because of big class sizes at university, students are often required to engage with lecturers in front of large audiences. Even the more extroverted students in this study – who were not shy to speak up, like Emma – experienced big classes as threatening spaces. And unfortunately for students, bigger classes meant more worry about being judged by peers. The Shame Inventory corroborated this finding of a feared threat of being judged and ensuing shame: 'Didn't know the answer to a question I felt I should know' and being 'Criticised in front of others' were ranked highest in prevalence among 50 possible shame triggers. D'Amour (2020) argues that "the messy spaces of meaningful learning" can only be attained in a "trusted holding environment" where students are "free from

worry and premature judgement" (p. 207). Bearing in mind that the Shame Experiences Study showed that students did not feel a sense of a trusted holding environment at university, this is likely why the data indicated increased fears of premature judgement and shame at being (mis)recognised by lecturers/peers as stupid and/or incompetent. This research supports the view that because of the demands on students and lecturers in the classroom, students can no longer "freely press their boundaries in the conceptual work of learning" (D'Amour, 2020, p. 208). In this study, 'trial and error' was a luxury which students felt they could ill afford in the classroom.

However, the study also tapped into a noteworthy finding: that shame in the classroom was not always about the bigness of the class. Yes, the sheer number of students in a classroom did significantly contribute to a sense of public disgrace but there were also classroom stories – like tutorials or practicals for medical students – that involved a smaller number of peers and yet, the experience of humiliation seemed to be no less extreme. Steiner (2011) would argue – from a shame perspective – that the trouble in the classroom had its origins in constructions of the evaluative gaze. This was borne out in the Shame Experiences Study where irrespective of the number of students involved in the classroom scene, all those who were present – even sympathisers – were cast as observers or witnesses at a crime scene. Constructions of the evaluative gaze confirmed that the collateral damage around 'not knowing' or 'getting it wrong' in the classroom was felt to be damage done to one's reputation in the 'eyes' of observing peers and lecturers. Turner (2010) argues that negative sanctioning within an institution arouses negative emotions and is experienced as a loss of social value. Lecturers were therefore cast as perpetrators who unashamedly ridiculed the unsuspecting student and fellow students – the crowd of witnesses – were constructed as co-conspirators: laughing, mocking, rolling their eyes and sighing with impatience and so on.

Every student has a history of superego functioning: "praise or blame, and reward or punishment, are functions of the observing object and come to be incorporated in the classical formulation of the superego" (Steiner, 1985). This means that when the superego is activated – for example, in the classroom, through gaze – its power to humiliate is ubiquitous. This intimates that students who were unable to answer a question correctly in the classroom tended to experience both an external and internal source of threat. Put another way, the critical role of the superego was mobilized when failing to meet an implicit performance standard when in public view. Following this line of reasoning, the 'watching', 'looking', 'observing' 'others' were most likely, in part, ascribed a superego-like role of critical observer. However, there were also a number of classroom stories where feelings of humiliation seemed to be moderated by the presence of a rescuer; either in the form of a supportive lecturer and/or a splinter group of students/friends. These supportive others were experienced as non-judgemental and empathetic observers. This discrepant pattern in the data suggests that there were varying levels of emotional investment in the 'victimised student' position which can likely be attributed to differences in superego functioning based on attachment history. Natalie's story of 'wilful shamers' aptly illustrates this phenomenon. Natalie painted a picture of a defenceless 'self', standing trial in front of hostile, accusing 'others'. Tutorials became scenes from a courtroom where persistent interrogation left the defendant standing in shameful powerlessness. Natalie's

portrait gives us some clues that the threat of her critical superego – which likely had its origins in critical and abusive parenting – materialized in powerful feelings of shame and victimization. This was a recurring theme scattered throughout Natalie's portrait and came to the fore in a story where she challenged an antagonistic lecturer because of a felt lack of support for students. Although Natalie's complaint was likely justified, she became riddled with persecutory fear that her lecturer neither liked nor wanted to be around her. However, the inside/outside dilemma of superego functioning manifested in the data when Natalie intuitively acknowledged that she may have played a role by "reading that from him". In other words, upon reflection during the interview, Natalie had some awareness of how her internal and external critical superego had merged.

You may also recall Zanele who, despite being the epitome of confidence and verbal prowess, experienced the administering of discipline in the classroom as shaming and felt that she was the object of her lecturer's hatred. In Zanele's 'I don't know why she hates me' shame story, Zanele also displayed some awareness of how she may have overreacted to the criticism. However, Zanele's portrait informs a reader of her sensitivity to rejection and, it is therefore likely that this incident of public humiliation felt especially rejecting. The result was Zanele's withdrawal from all further participation in that particular class. Rather than apportion blame to lecturers or students when a classroom interaction goes wrong, the purpose of this study is to sensitise both parties to an understanding that object relations play a significant part in how and why students respond differently to shameful interactions in the classroom. The Shame Experiences Study therefore corroborates Tangney and Dearing's (2002) proposition of the paradoxical role of lecturers. It demonstrates that lecturer-student interaction that takes place outside of the context of relationship can unwittingly trigger and/or intensify shame. The danger for the lecturer is that students' responses to shame can lead to lecturer enactment rather than an understanding of the observing role (critical superego) that they have been put into. The lecturer-student interaction can be likened to the case of the patient and analyst; when shame is triggered in the patient the analyst may unwittingly enact further shameful interactions. The more helpful response is for the analyst to tolerate and mourn the temporary loss of relationship and the associated feelings – originating from being placed in the role of critical observer – to process these feelings and find ways to reconnect. However, the therapeutic relationship is a circumscribed dyad, so where does this leave the lecturer who is not a trained analyst and who must manage conflicted scenes, sometimes in front of hundreds of students? This study cannot provide definitive answers as to how to contain shame in the classroom, however, it is worth exploring possibilities of how lecturers can reduce enactments of the judging, critical superego when triggered in a classroom context. However, students not only looked to lecturers for mirroring (accepting-confirming) and the idealizing transference (merger with a source of idealised strength and calmness) (Kohut, 1971) but also to their fellow students. And, sadly, helpful mirroring was often absent. If peers were not co-conspirators inflicting further humiliation, they were portrayed as 'silent bystanders': equally disempowered victims. The 'silent bystanders' are likely testament to a loss of camaraderie amongst peers due to the culture of increased competition among university students described earlier. The conclusion that we can come to is that in humiliating classroom interactions it was difficult, if not impossible, for students to save face in front of their peers.

9.3.3.3. How discourses of victimisation defend against shame: Denial, mimicry and faking

Now, you may ask, why would students employ a 'victimised' position to defend against shame? What could be more shameful than being a victim? Before I answer that question, an important proviso is to acknowledge that the place of 'victimhood' in the university journey is a sensitive subject. Research on the journeys of South African university students – those who succeeded and those who did not – reported stories of agency and not victimhood (Case et al., 2018). However, a central assumption of the Shame Experiences Study is the principle of multiple identities and that students used discourses to continuously shift their positioning, based on their emotional investments. Therefore, although this section elaborates a 'victimised student', it is considered a 'position' that was employed for a specific purpose within the classroom environment and in no way reflects any given student's ongoing identity. However, as we know from the shame literature, when an individual feels unable to save face, the inevitable outcome is to draw from a variety of shame coping scripts – to avoid attending to the situation. The 'victimised student' position was one such coping script. D'Amour (2020) argues that the fate of students who must function in classrooms that do not serve as holding environments includes engagement in "dissociative enactments, denial [that] deflects criticisms and fortifies defences" (p. 209). In the Shame Experiences Study, students who felt 'victimised' reverted to Winnicott's (2005) False Self which was evident in denial, rationalization, mimicry and faking. The intrigue of denial in a study of shame is that it can only be found when looking for what is missing in the data. So, what was repudiated in stories of humiliation and victimisation in the classroom? The answer is feelings of inadequacy, incompetency and a sense of falling short of being a 'model/knowledgeable' student – being admired by peers and having social value. The proposition is therefore that in the same way that it was difficult to acknowledge the disillusionment of a 'cold-hearted' Wits, so too was conceding to one's own less than ideal performance in the classroom. Some students resorted to rationalisation about how they 'should have' known or performed better. Rationalising can be interpreted either as constructions of agency or students' difficulties in holding a state of paradox around 'not knowing' (Winnicott, 1965). It was likely a combination of both, however, elaborate constructions of victimization and the prevalence of projection and splitting – reflecting attempts to distance the 'self' from humiliation – indicate that the paradox of 'not knowing' in the classroom requires some consideration.

'Not knowing' represented the quintessential dilemma of learning: the push and pull of emotional boundaries (Mahler, 1967). Meyer and Land (2005) call it the liminal space between process and outcome in learning. The dilemma that students faced in the classroom was the pull of integrating new knowledge and skills, together with the uncertainty and fatigue of limit. The ambivalence of the push and pull was characterized by a search for some continuity or the safety of old objects – the mirroring of lecturers and peers. Many students were unable to integrate the uncertainty that acquiring new knowledge entails and perceived failing or poor performance in the classroom as a reflection of their self-worth rather than a source of information about how to learn and grow skills (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Additionally, Mahler's (1967) thesis of the crisis of dependency helps us to understand why when integrating new knowledge the unmet search for mirroring in the classroom was experienced by students as particularly devastating. Not

only were students grappling with the uncertainty of new knowledge but feared dependency was stirred up that seemed to compound the rapid deterioration of relationships in the classroom. Remember Winnicott's (2005) premise that the infant must be allowed to experience disillusionment gradually? However, students who got it wrong in the classroom seemed to be confronted with immediate disillusionment. Being caught off guard and not having an opportunity to have one's emotions reflected back resulted in the development of a personal crisis. Because the classroom was felt to be unsafe, the student was unable to integrate feelings of shame and allow a more stable sense of self to emerge. This shameful disillusionment is suggestive of two things, the pivotal role that peers play in the classroom because it is a primary source of formal face-to-face interaction within the institution and the enormous task that lecturers at universities confront in trying to facilitate a balance between the stimulation of learning whilst affording the right amount of protection to students. The Shame Experiences Study showed that when this delicate balance was not achieved in the classroom the risk was students who disavowed feelings of inadequacy, dependency and inferiority. The mechanism of this disavowal was putting 'others' (lecturers and peers) – in the position of a type of critical superego through defensive projection and splitting. Projecting the 'bad' onto wilful shamers provided some freedom to hate the bad 'out there' (Klein, 1946). The victimised 'self' thereby attempted to omnipotently hold onto the 'ideal' and in so doing regain emotional equilibrium (Steiner, 2013). While Tinto's (1993) seminal work has argued for the importance of students' relationships with lecturers inside the classroom, this study illustrates how the presence of peers in the classroom also plays a pivotal role in the student-lecturer relationship and learning.

The tragedy of shame in the classroom was students who seemed to be moving through the university system without gaining an understanding of their own emotions and identity because of a lack of trial and error in a safe space. Remember the "Once I am part of the working world" story where a postgraduate student who had already accomplished so much at university was still clouded by shame, loneliness and a lack of intimate relationships? His hope was that things would be different in the working world. This is the ultimate betrayal of performative ideologies at university and what Cousin (2006) calls 'faking it' or 'mimicry'. In the Shame Experiences Study this was illustrated by putting on a brave face in front of peers and acquiescing to the wishes of lecturers. But developmentally it was a hollow victory. Fearing shame, students were no longer able and/or willing to freely bring of themselves. It is what Winnicott (1965) called a false subsystem that responds to educational demands through compliant conformance to protect the sacred core.

The loss of a safe transitional space in the classroom therefore illustrates how students have a conflicted relationship with 'knowledge'. Knowledge acquisition publicly signifies adequacy, competency and social value. Conversely, a lack of knowledge publicly signifies inadequacy, incompetency and a lack of social value: shame. The implication from the Shame Experiences Study is that the institution has inadvertently not only bestowed a material resource (knowledge) but also an emotional resource (shame).

9.3.4. The loss of an inclusive 'ideal' society at university: Shame legacies and multiple threatened student positions

Thus far this psychosocial study has demonstrated that the inner and outer worlds are inseparable or, presented in sociological terms that the micro, meso and macro-levels of social organisation are embedded and reciprocally influence the experience of shame in students. Whereas the 'loss of the ideal self' favoured internal imaginations and 'the loss of the familiar childhood milieu and a safe transitional space in the classroom' forefronted meso-categories and structures, this section highlights how students use race and class meso-categories to understand shame experiences. This section builds on all the previous sections because although social categories and ideologies are often painted as intangibles 'out there', the psychosocial approach adopted for this study illustrates how race and class formed an important part of the 'in here' of student shame experiences. Frosh (2019) argues it this way, "We make sense of, and manage, ourselves in a world in which social structures and events are felt, and have dynamic force, in the most intimate way" (p. 105). In this loss, the macro-level dilemma was discursively constructed as the conflicting ideologies of education as social justice versus meritocracy characterised by three broad historically contingent meso-level student categories on campus: poor previously disadvantaged Black students, White historically privileged students and middle-class Black students. It will be illustrated how these social categories were, at times, experienced as personally shaming when used by students to determine bases for adequacy/inadequacy and worthiness of inclusion/exclusion at Wits. To some extent these three groupings reflected common patterns in students' race-related shame experiences which bears testimony to the stratification of society and shame legacies (Turner, 2010), however, the data also indicated the relational dangers of using broad homogenising categories because it leaves no room for nuance. Additionally, in keeping with the previous losses discussed, this section interprets the findings using a combination of Eriksonian (1963, 1968) and Winnicottian (2012) principles but this time as applied to the role of the inherently ideological adolescent mind in race and class-based shame in the intermediate area of experience at university. The shameful impact of race and class-based (mis)recognition and (mis)attunement in a university attachment context will be discussed. Additionally the complex role of those who are witnesses (D'Amour, 2020) to structural poverty and ensuing conflicted race and class-based identities will be discussed. The Shame Experiences Study demonstrates that students' failure to recognize one another, embrace difference and mourn losses has resulted in dissociation and divisive amplification of broad-based categorical differences within the student body. This section begins by situating poverty in an intersubjective context thereby demonstrating how class and race are finely interwoven in a South African student context.

9.3.4.1. Situating shame about class in an intersubjective context

The shame of lack: (Mis)attuned recognition in a social context on campus

"There is a universal and immutable link between poverty and shame" (Walker, 2014, p. 1). But how did poverty impact shame in a predominantly adolescent/young adult sample in a university context? Recall that the Shame Experiences Study showed that 90% of all students who completed the Situational Shame Scale reported that they had felt shame due to financial impingement – 'Not being able to afford something' – at university. For a third of these students this experience translated into 'high shame'. But how do we interpret this high prevalence of shame about financial impingement on campus? The answer to this question was found in the qualitative data which indicated that students who told stories about lack seemed to represent a wide socio-economic spectrum, not only penury. There were several stories, like that of Charles, where penury was evident and students could not pay their university fees and/or were unable to afford basic living expenses like food, clothing and learning resources. But, there was also another group of students who reported being able to make ends meet despite struggling to pay university fees. To varying degrees this group seemed to represent the middle-class who felt that they were unable to keep up with the lifestyle of wealthier peers on campus. For example, remember how Addison – who firmly situated himself within the middle class – experienced shame about spending his meagre university allowance on a cup of coffee because he regarded it as a luxury rather than a necessity? Similarly, although Emma's core university shame experience was being unable to afford lunch on a given day, she also represented the middle class. Students' experiences of shame about differing levels of lack were therefore suggestive of how poverty measures have shifted in recent decades from absolute to relative and from uni-to-multidimensional measures (Walker, 2014). However, although measures of poverty are important, Walker (2014) argues that it is useful to situate poverty within an interactional context because the experience of poverty is psychosocial in nature. Rather than focus on measures of poverty, the aim of this discussion will therefore be to take an interactional context one step further and situate shame about poverty within an intersubjective context.

Using an intersubjective lens, a significant finding in the Shame Experiences Study was the gravity of being 'seen' by peers on campus as poor or disadvantaged. Several stories captured the painful visibility that is characteristic of the poor (Lebeau, 2019). Recall the student who had a "torn bag" and "torn shoes" and felt that "everyone looks at me strange". That there was a need to defend against the shame of poverty was demonstrated by Charles' portrait. Charles – who represented the poorest of the disadvantaged in this study – was the only interview participant who did not construct poor students as more susceptible to shame at university. In contrast, Charles constructed first-year students as experiencing the most shame. While there is research to support Charles' view that first-year students have less confidence (Burke et al., 2016) – and are therefore likely to experience more shame – his portrait is suggestive of a need to distance himself from the shame of penury and in so doing deny the ramifications of his 'disadvantaged student' position. What seemed to make the shame of being poor on campus that much worse for poor students were concerns

around being disregarded and disrespected by peers. This was borne out in the data through constructions of a devaluing gaze. The devaluing gaze was felt to be inescapable, leaving students feeling highly visible or transparent on campus. Increased exposure seemed to stir imagery of the negative judgement of 'others' which is indicative of deeply felt humiliation (Morrison, 2008; Steiner, 1985). It is also indicative of the vicarious experience of shame (Lewis, 1971). This idea is also borne out from a social psychology perspective where it was found that people who score highly on measures of negative self-beliefs also score highly on scales of the negative beliefs that others have towards the 'self' (Lewis, 1987). For example the view that "I see myself as unworthy" usually corresponds to a view that "others see me as unworthy". However, the vicarious experience of shame about poverty in the data can also be understood in a collective sense. Because both resources and emotions – like shame – are stratified in society (Turner, 2010), poorer students have a legacy of shame which seemed to colour their experience within the educational institutional domain. A pertinent example of the visibility and disregard felt by the poor is the 'my feet hurt' story where the student felt devalued because she was not driving a car on campus. To add insult to injury, the student started to mull over how disadvantaged students face this type of burdensome condition on campus whereas advantaged students are "not even questioned, ever" because they are in their cars. The Wits systems were split into two: systems favouring the privileged and systems that further prejudice the poor. The implication of the splitting seen in the data is that poverty is stigmatizing (Walker, 2014). Being poor added to the student's difficulties on campus because she had to walk a literal extra mile to get to another entrance gate. Lebeau (2019) contends that the poor feel governed by many burdensome conditions. According to Turner (2010) those who have less resources will struggle to acquire additional resources from other institutional domains. In the Shame Experiences Study poorer students faced more difficulties at university and were considered by their middle-class counterparts to sacrifice more to be at university.

Walker (2014) contends that "Everybody knows poverty when they see it" (p. 4). Whilst the Shame Experiences Study unreservedly supports Walker's (2014) proposition, it also demonstrates that 'everybody knows the wealthier students when they see them'. While poorer students were left feeling exposed and devalued on campus, there was a "watching" and "spotting" of the "wealthy kids on campus" too. Wealthier students had high visibility on campus. You can spot the wealthy students by "the way they dress and the way they act" and who drives what type of car on campus. This finding confirmed the pivotal role of social comparison in the experience of class-based shame. Put another way, class self-perceptions were always relative (Flaherty, 2008) to a friend or group of fellow students. Interestingly, many students displayed heightened sensitivity to class awareness on campus. However, a unique finding in the interview data was that students tended to move fluidly between a position of financial advantage to disadvantage and back again when talking about their own class. Irrespective of a student's class positioning, upward social comparison was usually shame triggering because of perceptions of being inferior to other students. It is therefore suggested that class comparison likely accounts for the high prevalence of shame about financial impingement in the Survey. For example, recall how middle-class Emma's 'lunchbox faux pas' centred around comparison to her wealthier friend, triggering shameful feelings of inadequacy and dependency. Interestingly, Emma used imagery of feeling "very transparent" because her friend had

‘recognised’ her predicament and bought her lunch: it was “like she knew everything”. The implication is that class-based (mis)recognition or being seen in undesirable ways by peers on campus was inevitably experienced as shameful at all levels of the socio-economic spectrum.

Constructions of the evaluative gaze also inform us about the ‘why’ of students’ class-based shame comparisons. Class-based shame – as a self-conscious emotion – was used by students to gauge feedback on their social acceptability and also their sense of worth (Tracy & Robins, 2004). According to D’Amour (2020), “attuned recognising and recognisable other serves as a critical witness and arbiter of what to notice in the world” (p. 89). From a developmental perspective a “critical witness” usually implies the role of the mother, however, you may recall from section 9.3.2 that ‘society’ also teaches students “how to adjudicate” their adolescent world. Students therefore employed the evaluative gaze to adjudicate others based on class. The noteworthy finding, however, was that the purpose of adjudicating fellow students was ultimately to gauge one’s own perceived level of social acceptability in relation to peers and the university community at large. The three commodities that were commonly used by students as benchmarks to adjudicate levels of acceptability were: stylish clothing, participation in leisure activities (going out with friends) and owning/driving a car. However, the data showed that poorer students were often unable to afford these commodities. Consequently, poorer students tended to perceive feedback from peers about their social acceptability as negative. This is likely why the experience of class-based shame seemed to be more painful and conflicted for poorer students. Recall Benjamin’s (1988) thesis of the critical role of recognition by ‘others’ in the development of the ‘self’? Poorer students often felt (mis)recognized by peers and being defined by devaluing self-relevant information therefore seemed to make their student identities that much more conflicted and more difficult to negotiate. According to Burke (2012), students who are not able to perform personhood in circumscribed ways are vulnerable to shaming and feelings of inadequacy. There were, however, exceptions to this principle. Remember the ‘clothing doesn’t define me story’? In this story the student felt “pressure” to “dress well and have an air of wealth and style” but could not afford to wear trendy clothing. However, the student in this particular story was able to metabolise the shame, her boundaries became less diffuse and she subsequently experienced less imagery of being “deliberately watched” by peers. In contrast, those students who were unable to process shame were left feeling as though they had been taken captive by ‘others’ on campus and used devaluing information from ‘others’ to define the ‘self’. Stolorow (2013) puts it this way, “In shame we are tyrannized and held hostage by the eyes of others; we belong, not to ourselves, but to them” (para. 1). In other words, poorer students tended to experience greater levels of (mis)attuned recognition which also led to a felt loss of agency of the ‘self’. Because these students felt devalued, powerless and, at times, depressed and hopeless, a frequent coping strategy was withdrawal from peers – physical and/or emotional – to limit the unwelcome gaze of peers and attempt to regain emotional equilibrium.

Structural poverty: (Mis)attuned recognition - the disadvantaged student position

Another noteworthy finding was how poorer students felt particularly powerless when shame was felt to be "externally imposed … through social institutions" (Walker, 2014, p. 2). And, in this context, educational institutions. According to Walker (2014), "Shame is taken to be externally imposed by society, via individuals and through social institutions, but internalized and experienced as a powerful negative emotion that results in social withdrawal and a sense of powerlessness" (p 2). Walker's (2014) caution of the shame inducing power of social institutions is a reminder that multiple levels of influence is key to understanding the student experience. However, the university context was nuanced with both social and academic relevance for students. Recall the distinction made by students concerning academic versus social belonging? This distinction also emerged as pivotal to an understanding of class-based shame. The foregoing discussion has largely centred on class-based shame experienced within a more 'social' context on campus, however, what proved to be far more injurious to students was when poverty impinged on the academic context and personal academic performance. These were stories where shame was felt to be externally imposed by social institutions, putting some students at a distinct academic disadvantage to their peers. The two key sources of shame imposed externally by social institutions were: (mis)attunement arising from public schooling and a lack of proficiency in the English language. These two sources of shame effectively moved an understanding of student shame from more individualized to structural notions of poverty (Flaherty, 2008). However, a proviso to understanding the shame of structural poverty in this study, is that race and class are complexly intertwined in the South African higher education context (Bhana, 2014; Singh & Bhana, 2015; Soudien, 2010).

In the open-ended qualitative data (Study Part 2) the student body was repeatedly split into two broad racialised categories: White historically privileged and Black historically disadvantaged students. These two categories – which combine race and class-based shame – illustrate how student subjectivity in South Africa is still influenced by what D'Amour (2020) would argue is trauma "visited forward, from generation to generation" (p. 189). In the context of this study the trauma arises from social injustices. One of the key ongoing manifestations of social injustice was felt to be the public schooling system. Public schooling was positioned as synonymous with feelings of inferiority and not fitting-in at university. And, the shame of having attended a public school was portrayed as shame that follows you. Additionally, better resourced private schools were constructed as conferring an unfair advantage on already privileged students. But who were these privileged students who attended private schools? The interview data showed that both White and middle-class Black students attended private schools. This finding opened up a window onto a third category in the shame data, the Black middle-class. The relative absence of a Black middle-class category in Study Part 2 was partly due to methodological limitations but is also likely a reflection of the often-unacknowledged split between the Black middle-class and poorer Black students in the student body – to be discussed shortly. This class discrepancy within the Black student group supports Torres and Massey's (2012) findings from their study conducted in the United States. The results showed that – in a large Black student body – students from more racially integrated versus urban, Black cultures found it surprising and

difficult to acknowledge how uncomfortable it was for them to interact with one another due to class-based differences. In the Shame Experiences Study, the game changer of class-based differences was constructed as the socialisation that private schooling afforded middle-class students – both White and Black – compared to their public-schooled counterparts, in part because of increased student-teacher interaction. More affluent schools allow students to relate to and ultimately assume the values of the middle-class (Hunter, 2010; Singh & Bhana; 2015). This means that middle-class students who attend private schools understand how to operate according to the values of the middle-class.

Closely intertwined with inferior public schooling and, still focusing on structural poverty, was the experience of shame due to a lack of English language proficiency at university. The humiliation and loss of face resulting from a lack of English proficiency – in the academic context – provided some of the most painful manifestations of shame in the data. Recall the "held hostage" and similar stories where students found themselves unable to converse eloquently in English and felt humiliated in front of their peers. For some, the shameful memory still lingered years later. These findings corroborate the acculturation education literature and in particular, the study by DeHoyos and Ramirez (2006) at a university near the US-Mexico border which found that Latino/Chicano students expressed embarrassment, fear and frustration at being unable to express themselves in English. Their results also suggest that embarrassment had a greater negative impact on relationships between peers, compared to lecturer-student interaction. This was also true for the Shame Experiences Study where some students experienced lecturers as more supportive than ridiculing peers. This was likely due, in part, to the increased competition and lack of relationships with peers as discussed previously. However, the uniquely South African flavour of the Shame Experiences Study was evident in how the 'held hostage' student defended against shame by splitting the classroom into those proficient in English (historically White people) and those not proficient (historically, non-English speaking, Black people) – this splitting left no space for variation. This proposition is corroborated by the absence of any mention of the Black middle-class who, in the interview data, positioned themselves as highly proficient in English. Nuance is therefore important. D'Amour (2020) argues that there are "degrees of fit between the, historically emerged, present self and what that learning situation "asks" and "expects" that self to do, know, be, or become". (p. 166).

Another prominent feature of shame around English proficiency was feelings of voicelessness. 'Voicelessness' often resulted in students withdrawing and/or hiding in class to minimize exposure in front of peers. This confirms Barroso's (2015) finding where students who experienced language barriers chose to avoid participation in class – even at the expense of losing marks. From an intersubjective perspective, one could argue that a missing component in student's shame experiences of voicelessness was the essential response of being recognised by 'others' in helpful ways (Benjamin, 1988). In contrast, these students felt (mis)recognized and ridiculed. It is possible that the powerlessness and voicelessness stemming from a lack of English proficiency have come to symbolise the intergenerational trauma of missing cultural scripts at universities (Antikainen et al., 1994). The finding that 'voiceless' disadvantaged Black students experienced shame because of missing cultural scripts was corroborated in the survey, Study Part 1, where

the association between shame and disadvantage was greater for the Black student group. These findings illustrate the relational impact that shame legacies can have within the educational institutional domain. The implication is that poorer Black students who already bear the burden of shame in society at large, continue to bear a greater burden of shame at university. In the Shame Experiences Study, language and schooling were used to position a race-based disadvantaged student position. However, language and schooling are widely regarded in the education literature as proxy devices, used to talk about race (Case et al., 2018; Singh & Bhana, 2015; Soudien, 2008). Assuming that language and schooling were used as proxy devices in this study, the question that arises is: Was there a disavowed discourse about race and disadvantage in the data? The answer is yes, and it had to do with the thorny subject of adequacy and belonging and the shame of double wounding stemming from structural poverty.

9.3.4.2. The identity crisis of a generation

Adequacy and belonging: The double wounding of the disadvantaged

First, it must be qualified that the Shame Experiences Study showed that all students – irrespective of class and/or race – were vulnerable to feelings of shame around inadequacy at university. This proposition was authenticated by the high prevalence of stories about failing and falling short of standards at university – both explicit and implicit. To some extent, this finding was expected because of the inevitability that students will encounter discrepancies between illusion and objective reality on their academic journeys. D'Amour (2020) states: "In the matter of education, one of the most significant intersubjective lessons on intrapsychic being will involve a capacity to tolerate and play in a Winnicottian transitional space with the illusions *made* in mind and the disillusionments *given* from without" (p. 88). Furthermore, stories of being "haunted" confirmed students ongoing fears – both conscious and unconscious – of the shame of failing to meet 'institutional' standards and being sanctioned. The implication is that failing *was* imagined by university students as shameful and, that concerns were usually around the 'self' as inadequate and unworthy to be at Wits. However, although the primacy of feelings of inadequacy in the data is indisputable, the experience itself was often nuanced and in some of these instances discourses around race and adequacy were disavowed.

Noteworthy examples in the data were when several students employed racial categories to try and make meaning out of their situation and the shame experience was nuanced with ideations of intergenerational racial trauma around adequacy. This manifested as a fear of being judged or (mis)recognized as inadequate and incompetent at university because of being Black. You may recall my conversation with Nofoto – when talking about the racial difference between us during the interview – and how she alluded to the possibility that "maybe *someone* may call me an idiot because I'm Black". I felt saddened and ashamed that this example, of all possibilities, had come to mind. Furthermore, shameful inadequacy seemed to be amplified for students who were Black and stuck in structural poverty. The story titled 'you as a White researcher' also comes to mind. Although the student acknowledged that he had

failed and had not been able to graduate with his peer group, he tended to distance himself from feelings of inadequacy by projecting and splitting – using broad, homogenizing categories. His shame was rooted in an original wound of structural poverty and the negative identities assigned to him stemming from apartheid. What made things worse for this student, was that he also had to contend with a 'failing' identity at university. When you feel that you can't conform to an ideal you have conflicted feelings of rage and vulnerability at the heart of which is a deep sense of shame (Morrison, 1998, p. 29). This speaks to a longing for a positive sense of self. This is likely why he experienced myself, a White researcher, as particularly injurious. However, issues around adequacy, competency and race are far reaching and are not reserved for educational environments. White people have historically constructed Black people as "short on intelligence" (Fanon, 1952, as cited in Davids, 1996, p. 216). In their recent study about professionals in Johannesburg, Canham and Williams' (2016) found that constructions arise from the negative judgement about capability flowing from the hegemonic White gaze. However, in the *Ready or Not* study, findings regarding capability were mixed (Swartz et al., 2017). Several participants reported fears of intellectual inferiority whereas others found that their university experience had enabled them to reject stereotypes and abandon feelings of inferiority – particularly race-based stereotypes in the South African context. Also in a South African student context, Kessi and Cornell (2015) conducted a study at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and found that the increased enrolment of Black students at historically White universities was marked "by a resurgence of racialising discourses that represent Black students as lacking in competencies, lowering academic standards and undeserving of their places at university" (p. 1). Concerningly, the researchers found that these discourses had a detrimental effect on students' self-esteem, academic performance and sense of belonging.

A nuance in the Shame Experiences Survey was that shame about 'feelings of inadequacy' was always associated with a lack of 'belonging at Wits' – irrespective of race. In addition to this, there were more shades of grey that emerged and must be considered around student adequacy, belonging and shame. For example, in an interesting twist in the data it was found that a number of students in the Black middle-class group did not suffer from the intergenerational trauma of a loss of academic regard. Furthermore these students tended to feel more comfortable positioned in historically White universities compared to their poorer counterparts. The most striking example was Tau who identified with "clever Blacks", rather than historically racialised constructions of Blacks as "short on intelligence". This was despite Tau's experience of failing second year and seemed to indicate that his shame was transitory. Tau metabolised the shame and experienced failing as a normative part of his academic journey – even his sibling, a top student, had experienced some failure during her journey. Tau painted a more nuanced picture of race and class compared to the two-category split – poor Black and privileged White – identified in the exploratory qualitative data (Study part 2). He described how politics in a post-apartheid South Africa has also produced a split between "clever Blacks" and "other Blacks". Moreover, Tau positioned "clever Blacks" – the Black middle-class – as being "discarded" and "talked down on" by "other Blacks" who do not value education. Tau's feelings seemed to resonate more with White study participants. While some middle-class Black students may identify, at times, more strongly with Whiteness, it is suggestive of unconscious defensive

disidentification with aspects of Blackness that may be perceived as shaming. The implication is that while Black middle-class students were not necessarily grappling with questions of adequacy and competency at university, they were struggling with (mis)attuned recognition. Thuso's portrait confirmed this proposition. Shame had signalled a threat to social bonds within his larger Black student group. For those Black students who felt that the gap between who they are and the group they wanted to join was too incommensurate, it triggered shame because they perceived their own lack to inhibit fluid movement and belonging within different groups at Wits. The implication is that it felt increasingly difficult for students to experience belonging in an ever-evolving South African society. However, D'Amour (2020) cautions us to remember that normative judgements arising from social categories represents only one dimension of how subjectivity is navigated. She further argues that people often preferentially use social categories, at the expense of understanding ignorant assumptions, psychic splits, differing inborn tendencies and intergenerational trauma arising from social injustices. However, the Shame Experiences Study demonstrated that when students leveraged social categories in this South African context, they were painfully cognizant that intergenerational trauma arising from social injustices had been built on racial categories.

The central role of attuned recognition therefore seems highly significant to the experience of race and class-based shame at university because, irrespective of whether Black students felt adequate or inadequate, it was the experience of being (mis)recognized by 'others' who are deemed important, that seemed to trigger shame and questions of belonging. Because there are many different ways of belonging to particular academic and social groups in the university context, there also seemed to be more possibilities for (mis)recognition in this context. The study participants were then characterised by multiple 'threatened' student positions because students at both ends of the capability spectrum, and everything in between, expressed their reservations about belonging at Wits – irrespective of race or class. The Shame Experiences Study therefore supports the proposition that capability is intimately tied to belonging at university, is identity forming and produced within a specific social context (Burke et al., 2016). Although 'capable' students also grappled with questions of belonging at Wits, the Shame Experiences Study showed that in the same way that there are "degrees of fit" (D'Amour, 2020) at university, there are also degrees of injury – rooted in South Africa's apartheid history. Although shame is always about injury to the sense of 'self' – whether in the form of "insult, rejection, rebuff, disapproval, unrequited love, betrayal, unresponsiveness, disrespect, criticism" (Retzinger, 2014, p. 298) – students who suffered original wounding, from structural poverty, seemed to experience double injury when confronted with disillusioning realities at university. In other words, students grappling with negative class-and race-assigned and assumed positions at university found it appreciably more difficult to process the shame of additional negative student identities, like failing.

Ideological (dis)unity: The paradox of social justice and meritocracy

Whereas disadvantaged students felt stuck in shameful psychosocial identities that resonated structurally and emotionally with apartheid, more advantaged peers were left grappling with societal

disillusionment and their own unique brands of shame. This finding can be interpreted using Erikson's (1959, 1964, 1975) thesis of the development of psychosocial identities within a given generation. Erikson argued that psychosocial identities include the integration of personal and group roles and that each new generation needs the positive identities of its emergent adults to be confirmed. However, recall that the data has shown that structural poverty was often not commensurate with the confirmation of positive identities at university. Additionally, the interview data showed that more advantaged students – both Black and White – also experienced shame around conflicted psychosocial identities because of the ideological dilemma presented by education as social justice versus meritocracy. This ideological dilemma seemed particularly problematic in this context because Erikson (1959, 1964, 1975) contended that the positive confirmation of psychosocial identities necessarily includes a striving for ideological unity – that is informed by the past and a hoped-for future – and if the process of confirmation of identities fails in many individuals, within a given generation, it is indicative of a historical crisis. The data confirmed that students experienced a failure of the higher education sector to confirm positive identities of its youth and that this was experienced by students as tantamount to a historical crisis – leaving many students stuck in shameful identities. Ideological (dis)unity manifested repeatedly in the data as brewing in the hearts of Wits students – "bubbling under", an "underbelly of resentment" and "underlying frustrations … buried…buried…buried inside people". The #FeesMustFall movement was felt to embody the crisis. Higher education had failed to be the promised vehicle for the articulation of the past and future thereby achieving social mobility for the disadvantaged (Carolissen & Kiguwa, 2018). Students portrayed #FeesMustFall as a desperate attempt to communicate the disillusionment of a generation about the failure of higher education to bring about transformation in South African society. Retzinger (2014) contends that different forms of angry protest – overt or covert – are often attempts to restore threatened relationships.

A discursively constructed Black disadvantaged student position proved to be informative to this study because it illustrated how both disadvantaged and advantaged students engaged in structural attributions of poverty. These constructions were indicative of conflicted ideologies – historical inequalities – of the past carried forward into the future. This finding was in contrast to those of many westernised countries where poverty has often been associated "with social censure and although some criticism is aimed at the structural causes of poverty most is directed at the perceived characteristics of people in poverty themselves" (Flaherty, 2008). The most significant feature of structural attributions of poverty in the data was that it allowed more privileged students to talk about their poorer counterparts without diminishing their value, adequacy or worthiness of belonging to Wits. However, the contradiction scattered throughout the data was that more advantaged students always attributed their own success and/or failure to the meritocratic principles of 'hard work', trying harder and 'taking responsibility' for their own 'hoped-for future'. What was denied? That "the competitive individualism of capitalist societies does not lend itself to "genuinely inclusive and equitable principles" (Hardy & Woodcock, 2015, as cited in D'Amour, 2020, p. 182). This finding supports Mann's (2001, 2008) warning that neoliberalism in education causes students to be pulled in different directions.

The concerning paradox in the data was that several disadvantaged students blindly subscribed to meritocratic principles and did not consider structural poverty when making sense out of their difficulties and shame experiences at university. On the one hand, this finding was not surprising but confirmed what D'Amour (2020) calls a prevailing twenty-first century attitude where students believe that they can achieve anything that they set their mind to and whatever they desire. But more problematically, this finding was indicative of distancing from poverty and the neoliberal denial of human need and vulnerability (Lebeau, 2019). This distancing was often achieved through a discourse – overt and covert – of 'responsibility'. Recall how Charles defensively positioned himself as taking responsibility for his studies: "the only thing that keeps me going is that I can take responsibility of some of the things"? Charles repeatedly used the word 'responsibility' to construct a 'self' who was capable of continuing at university despite pending academic exclusion – for the second time – and mounting debt. This finding was indicative of the depths of Charles' denial and is supported by Flaherty's (2008) research on poverty where "people in the study denied 'poverty' by utilising different formulations of responsibility. They did not want to see themselves or be identified as the 'irresponsible welfare dependant'" (p. 156). The implication, as applied to this study, was that no student – including Charles – wanted to feel that they were at university solely because they were part of a social justice project. Another study that seems appropriate to this finding was conducted at UCT and found that students believed that they had been accepted at university based solely on racial policies – rather than merit (Moodley, 2013, as cited in Bazana & Mogotsi, 2017). These students struggled with feelings of unworthiness. Although O'Shea et al. (2018) argue that it is unfair that deficit discourses in education leave individual students 'responsible' to attain the necessary skills for success at university, the Shame Experiences Study – confirmed by literature on shame and poverty – suggests that it is critical that support should not be felt to impinge on the agency of the individual or, risk exacerbating shame and ensuing negative student identities. However, the shame of poverty was not reserved only for poor previously disadvantaged students at Wits thus confirming Walker's (2014) argument that "the shame of poverty extends beyond the people experiencing it" (p. 1). The data showed how the shame of the past and of privilege permeated the student body becoming a contagion of racialised class-based shame.

The contagion of racialised class-based shame on campus

D'Amour (2020) argues that students suffering from original wounding feel isolated because fellow students and lecturers are often "blind" to their injuries and the effects thereof (p. 188). However, the Shame Experiences Study showed that although more privileged students lacked an intimate understanding of the shame of penury, they were by no means blind to the injuries of structural poverty. The interview data provided copious evidence of how more privileged students were 'witnesses' to the struggles of their disadvantaged peers: public schooling in townships, English proficiency issues, lack of family support at the university level, and being unable to afford basic necessities at university, let alone tuition fees. More privileged students therefore talked about finding ways to support the plight of poorer students demonstrating, in part, a capacity for empathic altruism (Winnicott, 1965). This pattern of altruism in the data showed many students' growing willingness to assume positions of responsibility within society and

also confirmed emergent work in the education literature on 'active citizenship'. In the education literature, 'active citizenship' concerns students' willingness to engage with one another and their institutions to challenge social beliefs and practices (McMahon & Portelli, 2012; Zepke et al., 2010). Winnicott (1988) believed that "in maturity, environment is something to which the individual contributes and for which the individual man or woman takes responsibility" (p. 152). In the Shame Experiences Study, student citizenship implied an understanding that relationships carry rights and obligations to fellow students (Carolissen & Kiguwa, 2018). Whilst Kahu (2013) argues that citizenship is a distal social consequence of effective student engagement, in this South African context, the rise of student citizenship seemed to concern a moral response to the shame of the ongoing ramifications of apartheid and its impact on poorer students. Student citizenship therefore represented a discursive position of poverty as stemming from the denial of human rights (Flaherty, 2008; Walker, 2014).

Although empathy for disadvantaged students and the rise of student citizenship was encouraging, paradoxically the data showed that poorer students continued to feel (mis)recognized and devalued when 'witnessed' as poor on campus. Remember that a central premise of the experience of shame is the sense of unwanted *negative* exposure? Class-based shame on campus proved to be no exception to this principle. Shame involved a sense of critical observation and negative evaluation by a perceived more powerful 'other' – in this instance, more privileged students (Lewis, 1971, 1987) – that seemed to stir up self-consciousness, inferiority, dependency and, in some cases, anger. Poorer students felt transparent in front of their peers which often triggered imagery of being devalued by fellow students – whether they were supportive in reality or not – leading to withdrawal, both physically and emotionally. Hinshelwood and Fortuna (2018) claim that an unstable sense of self is characterised by an uncertainty of one's own goodness or badness which often results in a good external object being experienced as a threat to the 'self'. In other words, the presence of goodness in the 'other' can also be shaming. This principle is corroborated by Emma's response to the generosity of her friend who bought her lunch – rather than accept the gesture, it felt shaming. The contradiction evident in the data was therefore that despite constructions of student citizenship and a willingness to help the less fortunate, disadvantaged students continued to experience poverty as an impingement on their social and academic status at university. This paradox can be interpreted using Benjamin's (1988) thesis that the experience of authorship of one's own acts is crucial to the development of the 'self' and that the role of the recogniser needs to be that of a respectful witness who is not felt to impinge on the independence of the developing individual.

The proposition is therefore that the ongoing shame of disadvantaged students seemed to arise because of the paradoxical role of 'witnesses' who, although well-meaning, were felt to impinge. The data seemed to indicate that more privileged students often felt that their privilege was an inescapable impingement on their poorer counterparts. Thuso portrayed this ideological (mis)attunement when reflecting on the role of more privileged students in the #FeesMustFall movement. On the one hand he positioned his moral duty to "contribute to society" and to "be there to push the movement". But, shortly thereafter, Thuso switched positions, positioning himself as an unwelcome outsider to the movement because of his privilege: "I

can't…you can't be seen as a leader because you're privileged, it's not your cause". A number of interviews corroborated this finding which was even more pronounced for White students. The implication of these ideological contradictions that led to (mis)recognition and (mis)attunement was dissociation within the student body. This was evident in the data through a doer–done-to dynamic of dissociation (D'Amour, 2020) and what Erikson (1968) called a "a split of self-images" which he regarded as tantamount to identity confusion (p. 212). Put another way, what manifested in the data was psychic splitting and a student world that lacked perspective, difference and was fragmented (Hoggett, 1992). The following section will discuss the fragmented categories, or splits used by students in the data – poor previously disadvantaged Black students, White historically privileged students and middle-class Black students – and how each category experienced a unique sense of threat to their sense of belonging at Wits resulting in nuanced shame experiences.

9.3.4.3. Defending against multiple threatened student positions: Shame moves and countermoves

To understand the gravity of shame, and subsequent splitting, in stories about race and class, recall Steiner's (2011) proposition that when negative emotions become attached to injustice, destructive feelings become intensified. The Shame Experiences Study showed that because race and class in the South African context are interlaced with historical injustices, shame was passed back and forth among racialised-class student groups in a series of shame moves and countermoves. And, with no resolution in sight.

Doer-done-to dynamics: When the shamed become shamers

A less prevalent pattern in the data, albeit highly informative, was that of poorer students who projected their shame onto wealthier peers evidenced through a reproachful gaze. The shamed and shamer seemed to reverse roles in a doer–done-to dynamic (D'Amour, 2020). Tau – a wealthy student on campus – described this dynamic as when a student who has less may "feel the urge to say, talk down on that, that's shame". The implication of Tau's portrayal of reproach is that some poor students attempted to take back power by projecting shame and anger onto wealthier students on campus. Lansky (2005) argues that the shame of powerlessness, contempt and helplessness can lead to actions that afford an experience of power (Lansky, 2005). The "talk down on that" story demonstrated how the privilege of fellow students could feel like an injury to the 'self'. In an attempt to preserve a threatened sense of 'self', the wealthy 'other' then becomes the object of ridicule. This projection is indicative that fear is not being contained enough and so needs to be externalized (Hoggett, 1992). Additionally, because the shame is largely ignored it has left disadvantaged students feeling separated, hurt and with difficulties identifying with the 'other' (Retzinger, 1991). The 'other' is then felt to be the source of the hurt from what is perceived as an attack. According to Hoggett (1992), the mechanism is "I fear" which becomes "I am frightened of" and so the danger within becomes the danger without (p. 346). Observing the doer–done-to dynamic in the data was also a way of identifying the contagion of shame because privileged students, like Tau, demonstrated awareness of the reproach and it led to them questioning whether they were deserving or worthy of studying

at Wits. In contrast, Tau and every other interview participant positioned poorer students as unequivocally deserving of being at Wits. This moral argument – around the deserving poor – seemed to leave the more privileged student body reeling with a sense of threat around 'who is worthy of studying at Wits?' Whereas poor students often felt unworthy because of failing to meet the academic and social standards of their middle-class counterparts, more privileged students – both Black and White – were keenly aware that they made fewer sacrifices compared to their underprivileged peers, to both access and succeed at university. Recall Tau's rhetorical question about what was felt to be his own tenuous position in the eyes of disadvantaged students because of being a wealthier student: "why is the guy at Wits then". Less privileged 'others' were therefore used to function as a judge or 'shamer'. Nofoto provided a provocative vignette of a different form of reproach against privileged 'others' on campus. She portrayed how students may invoke the "privilege" of 'others' to hide their own sense of inadequacy. For example, she described a friend who was too ashamed to ask for help when struggling with her academics and made "excuses" for the success of 'others' by attributing their success to privilege. Put another way, the expulsion of fear and shame necessarily includes the creation of threat (Hoggett, 1992). Rosenfeld (1987) described how, in a therapeutic context, some patients "feel humiliated and defeated by the revelation that it is the external object which, in reality, contains the valuable qualities that they had attributed to their own creative powers" (p. 105).

However, that the reproach of the wealthy by poorer students was also likely, in part, a vicarious experience of shame and guilt, was evident in Tau's rationalizing that poorer students may believe you are "better than us" and that you perceive yourself to be "not on the same level". According to Davids (2006) the current climate, characterised by increasing demands for equality, has disturbed the balance of superiority/inferiority leading to threatening responses. In this study threatened responses have been characterized as investment in threatened student positions. Tau's talk about "levels" confirms Davids (2006) argument that superiority and inferiority are "… finely tuned to the social meanings of difference in the external world" (p. 73). Although Tau functions from a privileged level in society, he did not disavow his class-based privilege nor did he ignore the plight of the poor. Tau acknowledged that he could comfortably afford to be at university, he empathized with the struggles of his poorer counterparts and, significantly, he denounced the employment of the 'hard work' discourse to justify being worthy of studying at Wits. However, despite Tau's awareness of the shame and guilt of his privilege, these uncomfortable feelings likely remain unresolved because of a lack of co-recognition from poorer, Black counterparts who are felt to be reproachful. According to D'Amour (2020) dissociation can only be resolved through "co-recognition between actors, bearing witness to each other in a taken-as-shared system, then trust and control serve each other" (p. 168).

Denial and distancing: The shame of White privilege

White students also experienced the reproach and shame of privilege, however, Black privilege and White privilege were by no means equivalent in the data. Recall Thuso's Freudian slip of the tongue when

talking about “anti-White sentiment” on campus which he immediately corrected to “anti-privileged sentiment”. This finding supports Taylor’s (2004) argument that calls for decolonization have included attacks on White privilege or whiteness. Whiteness is synonymous with privilege in the South African student context (Dolby, 2000). The nuance of this threatened White student position was constructed through discourses of a reproachful gaze and inescapable categorisation as White and privileged. Emma portrayed how when her lecturer talked “about the White supremacy thing … notice how the White kids squirm because we can instantly feel the judgement coming from the Black kids”. According to Suchet (2007) whiteness results in being an involuntary beneficiary and the Shame Experiences Study demonstrated that this was a shame trigger for White students on campus. Recall Walker’s (2005a, 2005b) pivotal study conducted in the mid-2000s which found that White students, within a historically White university, tended to erase race and Black students tended to ignore racial inequalities. The Shame Experiences Study showed that everything has changed. Students – of all races – did not deny the realities of ongoing racial tension on campus. In fact, #FeesMustFall signalled an escalation of racial tension on university campuses (Eagle, 2018; Lange, 2017). One White student constructed race as “the biggest thing” on campus. Furthermore, there was a discursive split in the road whereby Black middle-class students drew on discourses of both empathy and solidarity for the poor whereas White students drew on discourses of empathy for the poor while facing exclusion from the Black student group. Recall The Shame Experiences Survey finding that the White student group had a significantly higher mean shame score about ‘Being a certain race/ethnicity’ (1.06) compared to the Black group (0.65)? Additionally, the White student group questioned their belonging at Wits: in the quantitative data higher shame scores about ‘Being a certain race/ethnicity’ were associated with less feelings of both academic and social belonging and less regard for Wits. The interview data corroborated these findings through a reproachful gaze on whiteness and privilege. White students constructed themselves as being tried, found guilty and sentenced to silence because of the ramifications of historical injustice. White students reported physically walking away when confronted by the anger and reproach of Black students, often choosing to disengage in classroom discussions about race because of perceived levels of threat. The shame and despair of White privilege therefore demonstrated that much shame is found in the rupture of the ‘interpersonal bridge’ (Kaufman, 1989, p. 22).

The interview data showed that two main defensive responses were employed by White students to ward off the shame of accusation and reproach. The first pattern of defensive response was to distance the ‘self’ from privilege by positioning one’s economic circumstances as tantamount to the struggling middle-class. The effect was to split the ideas of White and privilege and thereby distance the ‘self’ from the difficult feelings which it evoked. This positioning was in contrast to Black middle-class counterparts who were more willing to own their position of privilege. Emma’s portrait provided a wonderful example of how many students seamlessly switched positions on the university class continuum based on the specific interactional context. Emma switched from being unable to afford partying with her wealthier friends to being “looked down on” by poorer students because she owned a car. The discourses and positional shifting employed by several White students, subtly reinforced an emphasis on poverty as a personal experience. This served the function of identifying with poverty (Flaherty, 2008) and (dis)identifying with structural

poverty. Poverty was therefore constructed as close – in the here and now – thereby distancing the effects of apartheid. Emma's positional shifting was particularly significant because she positioned apartheid as having taken place in a bygone era with no current ramifications. The implication was that while racial tension on campus was no longer denied, some students were unwilling to acknowledge the hurt and injury caused by apartheid and tended to remain in a more paranoid-schizoid position in which shame and guilt about apartheid were denied. However, not all White students dissociated from the Black student experience. A number of White students engaged with both guilt and shame, as evidenced by discourses of reparation, reflective of the Kleinian depressive position. This reparative stance was also reflected in the aforementioned 'student citizenship'.

The second pattern of defensive response used to resist the categorization of White privilege was the use of the 'hard work' argument. Middle-class students – particularly White middle-class students – used 'hard work' to justify what was felt to be a tenuous position at university in light of moral responses to apartheid. This employment of 'hard work' was therefore different to that of poorer students who had used 'hard work' to position a responsible, agentic student 'self'. Wealthier Black middle-class interview participants seemed to be caught in the middle of the ideological dilemma and tended to refute the 'hard work' argument as inappropriate because it represented a form of White denial of historical structural inequality. The 'hard work' argument was therefore employed by students in different ways to defend against shame because the legacy of shame (Turner, 2010) was different for different race and class categories. In this sense, the Shame Experiences Study showed that discourses of 'hard work' and meritocracy were not used to obscure inequality and privilege in higher education (Clarence, 2018). Rather, 'hard work' was used defensively to mitigate race and class-based shame at university.

Moving in and out of social identities: The Black middle-class

The Shame Experiences Study supports Singh and Bhana's (2015) research which showed that some students' racial positioning is continuous with historically held constructions in South Africa and others are not. Singh and Bhana (2015) argue that, generally speaking, being Black and poor in South Africa is a racial positioning with continuity, however, there is a new category of Black students who align with shifting class positions in a post-apartheid South Africa – the Black middle-class. This latter category was absent in Part 2 of this study but particularly pronounced in the in-depth interviews, Study Part 3. However, positionings of the 'self' as Black *and* privileged seemed to result in conflicted racialised identities and triggered shame. The Black middle-class seemed to be caught in the middle of conflicted class and race-based positionings at university with a need to conform to two groups – the poorer Black and the White privileged student groups. The need to conform seemed to be an attempt to alleviate feelings of anxiety and shame caused by the split and not belonging. "Fromm argues that the need to belong is essential to the very essence of being and self-consciousness, without it we could simply not live at all, it's basic and in some sense not social. Belonging is a form of defence from others (which requires others), from nature and ultimately from ourselves" (Clarke, 2003, p. 87). One of the more overt ways that shame manifested around

conflicted Black middle-class student belonging in the data was through the use of fluent English. Hunter's (2010) argument that English is used as a medium to leverage middle-class values and establish cross-racial friendships was supported in the Shame Experiences Study. For example, Thuso's construction of a 'high accent' was used to position himself within the values of the middle-class – and because of his future aspirations of becoming wealthy – and enabled him to engage in effective cross-racial mixing. Thuso felt that his association with wealthy White students, brought with it a sense of prestige and a longed-for identification with wealth. Fromm's (1942/2001) concept of automaton conformity is useful to understand why Thuso adopted different personas which conformed to cultural patterns because it enabled him to become "exactly as all others are and as they expect him to be" (p. 161). This finding in the Shame Experiences Study was more nuanced than Barroso's (2015) finding around social identities at Rhodes University in which Black students portrayed interactions with White students as being out of necessity and resulting in uneasiness. However, it was also evident that Thuso did experience some guilt and shame around his association with White students, which emerged in constructions of a disapproving evaluative gaze of Black students. Similarly, Tau's constructions of middle-class Black students as "sell-outs", "north gods" and "rich kids" confirmed Singh and Bhana's (2015) research about the hybrid identities – the "coconut" and "oreo" – of Black students who identify with aspects of a White identity, such as language.

This finding also confirmed Canham and William's (2016) study where Black professionals who were perceived as abandoning notions of Blackness were subject to a marshalling Black gaze. The Shame Experiences Study highlighted how class resulted in nuanced experiences of shame about race. Whereas some middle-class Black students felt subject to a marshalling Black gaze, other Black students from less privileged backgrounds constructed shame about the hegemonic White gaze. Singh and Bhana (2015) propose that because more Black students are accessing English medium schools there is an increasing investment in the use of the English language and that this is likely the reason why students view 'coconuts' with contempt. Put another way, language proficiency signals the growing class divide and poverty arouses shame which signals the relational threat which manifested through language. Another explanation for the shame of the sandwiched Black middle-class is found in Torres and Massey's (2012) study, where students from more segregated backgrounds relied on same-race peers as a source of comfort from a hostile, White-dominated 'other'. Additionally, they found that Black students from more integrated backgrounds – the South African equivalent of middle-class, private schooling – were better able to establish relationships with same and cross-race peers. In their study both the more affluent students and those from more segregated backgrounds admitted being surprised at how the lifestyles of Black students from different classes felt alien. However, in the Shame Experiences Study, although Black middle-class students acknowledged a marshalling Black gaze (Canham & Williams, 2016), their allegiance to fellow Black students tended to result in a disavowal of difference and fear of betrayal. Black middle-class students retained a measure of belongingness to the poor Black student group through constructions of social solidarity whilst simultaneously moving in and out of their other identities of belonging. At the heart of the matter was the complex issue of group belongingness.

The irony was that in the same way that disadvantaged students who were not fluent in English experienced shame at university, so too did Black middle-class students because of imminent reproach of betrayal associated with speaking English fluently. However, an anomaly in the data was that a lack of English proficiency was not limited to previously disadvantaged students. You will recall how Emma, an Afrikaans student, used a 'high accent' when speaking English rather than reverting to a shameful Afrikaner-English accent. Emma positioned an Afrikaans-English accent as sounding "stupid" whereas good English embodied intelligence and enhanced one's ability to gain respect at university. This finding is in contrast to Brown's (2016) study at a historically Afrikaans speaking university where Afrikaans students tended to position the Afrikaans language as normative. Emma and Thuso's portraits therefore highlighted that, from a shame perspective, language is often used by students to position a 'self' who has good social and academic standing at university and that the choice of language used to achieve this depends on the type and nature of the institutional domain (Turner, 2010).

Failure of the 'environment mother': The reproach against government

Several students regarded the ultimate betrayal of disadvantaged students as stemming from the government. Put another way, Winnicott's "environment mother" had failed to provide unobtrusive support (D'Amour, 2020, p. 207). Recall Nofoto's iconic words, "you can't really say I have a right to have a house but then you can't give me the keys to that house. So that means I don't have a right at all". Nofoto's analogy was directed at government's perceived failure to deliver on its promises to young people in South Africa. Tau accused the government of not taking education and educated Blacks seriously. Similarly, Thuso constructed #FeesMustFall as a response to "rejection" and "not being valued in society … by our own government". Thuso felt that students themselves had "tried and we didn't know what else to do". Even Charles felt that some of the blame for the contentions in higher education should be placed at the door of government. This finding of the reproach against government supports Turner's (2010) argument that meso and macro-level structures are often felt to be safer targets on which to project negative emotions. Erikson (1975) warned that when an adult community is in a state of "collective strife and epidemic tension" (p. 21), rites of passage – such as the university journey – are likely to be marked by inadequate structures to guide adolescents transitioning to adulthood thereby exacerbating identity crises. Erikson (1975) argued that in some "people, classes, and periods, the crisis will be clearly marked off as a critical period intensified by collective strife and epidemic tension" (p. 21). Students in this study felt that they were part of such a critical period in history. You may be wondering why the government bore the brunt of splitting and badness whereas Wits, also a macro-level structure, remained relatively unscathed in the Shame Experiences Study? In answering this question the reciprocal influences on the shame experience are illustrated because we return to the first loss discussed in this chapter and the premise that the loss of the 'ideal' self in the shame experience never occurs in a vacuum. Students are engaged in an intersubjective relationship with Wits which is the idealised object that has the power to confer desired resources which society values (Turner, 2010). The answer to this question will unfold in the next section

which reconfirms the proposition that idealisation of Wits fulfilled an important defensive function against shame at university

9.4. Shame defences and the relational fallout: Conscious and unconscious coping scripts

Arguably the most consequential finding in the Shame Experiences Study was the profound impact of students' shame coping strategies on their relationship with themselves, peers, lecturers, parents, Wits, various Wits entities, and the government, to name a few. The data supports the view that individuals often use multiple shame coping scripts simultaneously or successively (Elison et al., 2006) to defend against shame. Furthermore, the evidence from this study strongly suggests that this was likely because shame defences represented student's responses to multiple levels of social reality that cohered in the shame experience. A number of shame defences were prevalent and stood out as patterns in the data, largely because of the relational consequences for students. These patterns will be briefly discussed in this section because they allow for some interpretation of (dis)engagement, (un)belonging and alienation at university. The first pattern is resilience and how, although more rare in the data set, a central feature is the ability to reach out to others for support. The next pattern reasserts how biography – a history of good versus bad object relating – seemed to serve as a baseline for the prevalence and magnitude of splitting to defend against shame. Emotional legacies will then be discussed with a focus on tenuous idealisation of the institution. Next, the implications of self-reproach as a coping strategy will be discussed. Patterns of avoidance and withdrawal and the implications for student (dis)engagement will also be illustrated as representing adolescent/young adult difficulties in maintaining a healthy tension between asserting the 'self' and recognising the 'other'. Lastly, reproach deadlocks on campus will be discussed and the role of emotional legacies in shame, threat and a failure to mourn.

9.4.1. Resilience: Reaching out and drawing support

The results from the Shame Experiences Study were not all doom and gloom. There were stories of resilience which confirmed that some students metabolised shame by mourning the lost object or ideal. An important aspect of healthy metabolising of shame was illustrated by several students' ability to draw on support from others, including family, peers and lecturers. Natalie's portrait confirms that some students draw support from interaction with university staff. You will recall that Natalie found first year really difficult because lecturers did not know her personally, however, from second year onwards Natalie enjoyed "interaction with the staff" and flourished. In terms of peer relationships, although the data indicated that competition was rife at university, the glimmer of hope was constructions of 'camaraderie' where students adopted a more collaborative approach. Even the construction of the 'silent bystanders' in the data is significant because it signified 'siblings' who were felt as an empathetic presence although they often did not outwardly demonstrate their solidarity for the 'victimised' student because of feared sanctioning. The positioning of a 'self' with an in-group through camaraderie illustrated that alignment

with fellow students who had also failed, struggled and got it wrong, served as a protective factor against shame. According to Shame Resilience Theory (SRT), connection with others and 'speaking out' are important elements in overcoming shame induced states (Brown, 2006). It seems that supportive friends served a protective function against feelings of shame at university, likely because it afforded the student a space to think about their experience and less need to distance the 'self' from the shame. Drawing on healthy peer support often meant the difference between failing as a circumscribed event versus experiencing a 'self' 'who is a failure' or, getting it wrong versus 'Something is wrong with me'. However, it was evident in the data that neoliberal ideologies have infiltrated student culture where oftentimes students responded to the competitive environment by 'joining' with peers and collectively becoming competitive and belittling affected students. This was the 'bullying group' that often left the 'victimised' student feeling incapable of competing and rather identifying with feelings of worthlessness.

9.4.2. Biography and the tendency towards splitting

A significant pattern in the data was that shame often left students feeling disconnected and alienated from *themselves* (Lewis, 1971; Scheff, 1990). This disconnection seemed symptomatic of the struggle to hold onto a 'good' sense of 'self' when the institution and/or peers felt persecuting when expectations were not met. Because of this sense of threat, many students did not attend to the source of shame, nor were they able to evaluate how to address the situation because it felt as though the good object had suddenly been removed and the ensuing shame left them questioning their own goodness as they were flooded with a sense of badness and objectification. Study Part 3, in particular, came into its own by demonstrating how students' memories – conscious and unconscious – of lifelong emotional attachments left their mark in the here-and-now of managing the experience of shame at university. The study illustrates how shame seemed to activate internalised objects which transported students back to their history of object relating. The term shame 'trigger' therefore feels particularly significant to a psychosocial study of shame because 'trigger' is defined in the dictionary as an event or situation that can transport one back to the past (Cambridge University Press, 2020).

When a crisis of the 'self' involved a history of good, loving internalised objects shame seemed to be metabolised more easily. Nofoto's portrait provided an example of internalised good objects who served as models of healthy coping. Rather than becoming alienated at university when experiencing a shame trigger, Nofoto was able to draw from a wealth of supportive 'others' – both internal and external. In contrast, hostile internalised objects appeared to block students' abilities to process shame. When students experienced the shame situation as a loss to the ego and they struggled to maintain a sense of goodness by drawing on good internalised objects they resorted to distorting reality through avoidance, denial, splitting, projection and so on. For example, Addison's internal objects included reproachful 'others' stemming, in part, from rejecting peers in childhood. Addison was therefore vulnerable to peers triggering feelings of badness which then left him feeling alienated at Wits. Importantly, he was unable to draw support from peers but resorted to splitting off his bad emotions. This data supports Turner's (2010) argument that

negative stores of emotional energy may limit an individual's potential for securing access to resources in institutional domains. In this sense, Addison's emotional legacy played a significant role in how he engaged with peers within the institution.

The influence of emotional history was most evident in stories where shame was split off in the form of an all-bad 'other' – out there. By evading ambivalence and depressive anxiety and projecting threat onto a now 'bad' object, the 'self' often moved into the role of victim and a host of 'others' – peers/lecturers/Wits/society/government and so on – were cast as perpetrators. The trouble with functioning from this more paranoid schizoid position was that it resulted in students only seeing one side of the equation in the shame experience and the response of others to the 'self' was often catastrophised. While it is true that real experiences that were bad and shaming did happen, it is equally true that this was also a reflection of an internal state of varying levels of persecution, neediness and 'badness' that required good objects to provide support and stability in the inner world. Although it was not possible to definitively tease out the inner and outer worlds nor historical and current worlds of experience in this study, the data did illustrate how students used the movement of objects, through splitting and projection, to maintain inner stability – by taking good into the ego and pushing the shame out onto 'bad' others (including meso and macrostructures in society). Although splitting was prolific in the data it should be remembered that in this study splitting was not regarded as a sign of pathology. Bion (1962), like Klein, believed that there are times when polarisation is necessary for safety and even one's own achievement. Klein (1997) also contended that people will revert to the use of a more paranoid mode of functioning during times of stress. The Shame Experiences Study therefore illustrates that because of the stress of university life – given the constant demands of meeting performance standards and the fear of sanction – the environment was ripe for polarisation. The ongoing sense of looming threat of sanction mixed up with feared persecution was perhaps what also made students prone to idealisation because the idealised object was needed to protect the 'self' from persecutory objects who have the power to sanction and shame.

9.4.3. Emotional legacies and tenuous idealisation

Turner (2010) identified repression as the master defence mechanism that keeps negative emotions outside of consciousness in societal emotion stratification systems. However, in the data, idealisation emerged as a significant defence within the education institutional domain. It seems likely that because the aspirational value of education has become a concerning form of idealism and the two general conditions of emotional arousal identified by (Turner, 2010) are particularly salient within the educational domain, idealisation is necessary to protect the 'self' from the object which is felt to hold the power of negative sanction and persecution. Although positive student identities were achieved through varying levels of identification with Wits, the varied responses to Wits in the shame experience seemed to indicate that the degree of idealisation was bound up in individual psychodynamics in relation to Wits and that this defence often proved to be tenuous. On the one hand, a number of interview participants who had experienced disillusionment in their university journeys had managed to achieve a more separate sense of a good 'self'

and continue to hold Wits, the institution, in high regard. But, concerningly, several participants in Study Part 2 seemed to have internalised their shame experience as evidencing a 'not good enough self' in relation to Wits. This seemed to be particularly painful when Wits had been idealised as an elite 'other' whose approval was sought, but which became a rejecting, unsupportive, judging 'other'. In these cases, shame seemed to confirm an inadequate 'self' and was held externally as sanctioning or actively preventing one's ability to acquire resources from the institutional domain and associated resources from other domains (Turner, 2010). This was likely the scenario depicted clearly in the quantitative data where more shame and more 'worry about finances' were associated with less regard for Wits as an institution. Interestingly, the in-depth interviews revealed more idealisation of Wits, exposing the other side of, or perhaps the underlying reason, for this defensive split. The shame experience or sanctioning was therefore an obstacle to being 'good enough', denoting a loss of personal value in the social system. So, while in some instances defensive positioning of Wits as 'bad' or 'withholding' was evident, even more problematic perhaps was the continued idealisation of Wits by some who had material legacies of penury and emotional legacies of shame, as a form of defensive splitting to keep overwhelming experiences of the object apart in phantasy. In these instances, feelings of elitism by association to Wits proved to be fragile indeed. For example, Charles' defensive idealisation of Wits can only be understood by considering his biography and emotional legacy in the stratification system. His orphaned status is suggestive that the origins of his idealisation are due to early feelings of rejection in the absence of idealisable parents during childhood (Morrison, 1998). His bypassed shame likely resulted from pre-existing phantasies (conscious and unconscious) of being deprived and fears of disappointing previously idealised 'others' (his mother). Idealisation of 'others' therefore served to protect his objects from his disappointment in them and his feelings of anger towards them (Hinshelwood & Fortuna, 2018). However, this shame coping strategy left Charles holding all the inadequacy and shame. For Charles, this pattern seemed to be repeated in his relationship with Wits. Belongingness to Wits was therefore used to submerge feelings of shame and experience a sense of value which left Charles in a difficult predicament when he was faced with his inability to meet institutional standards, mounting debt and increasing psychological difficulties. Charles' vulnerability informs us that idealisation of Wits can be particularly complex for previously disadvantaged students wishing to escape poverty and achieve a sense of value through education.

Failure to receive positive sanction from the idealised institution left Charles with ongoing feelings that his relationship with Wits was under threat. Additionally, Charles felt alienated from peers which testifies to the embedded nature and reciprocal influence of different levels of social organisation (Turner, 2010). His shameful financial dependence collided with his experience of failing which also manifested as a vicarious experience of his peers as hostile and judging. Bear in mind that Charles' early experiences of rejection, poverty and subsequent failing and academic exclusion all likely contributed to feeling haunted by hostile/ridiculing internalised 'others'. Charles felt that his peers did not understand the way he "experienced life". This confirms Lebeau's (2019) argument that the poor have a deep sense that the conditions they are living in are unknown and unimagined by others who have not shared the same experience. The "mafia" in Charles' psyche were often so overwhelming that Charles even felt judged by

peers because he did not do exceptionally well in matric. He felt misunderstood because he felt that his peers did not know the reasons why he struggled to obtain better matric results despite being capable of doing so. He also felt judged and misunderstood because of his academic exclusion. To make matters worse, he felt that his bleak academic reputation was following him around at university in what he called "a pattern of judging that, no, no, no, bad, bad, bad". He felt hopeless and that his story began to "sound like an excuse", even to himself. It would seem that when Charles felt angry at his peers who judged his wounded self unfairly, it would bring the wounded 'self' and shame into focal awareness. He was aware that his status as a Wits student was constantly under threat because he was "studying on condition". This situation only served to put pressure on Charles to pass exceptionally well, to shake off his reputation, prove himself and keep his place at Wits. Because these feelings of shame were unbearable for Charles, he regularly resorted to flights into fantasy – the power of idealisation – where he received all he needed from a powerful 'other' (Wits): Wits "grooms an individual to be an exceptional being". On the one hand Charles' individual vulnerability determined the amount and degree of shame in response to his environment (Morrison, 2008). But, the Wits university systems and peer dynamics also inadvertently contributed to his shame and unwillingness to admit that he was not coping – he believed that "it is more difficult for me to raise my concerns, my issues" and that he had to work harder to "convince people" of his worth. Charles' portrait therefore demonstrates how shame is stratified in society (Turner, 2010): not only was he positioned at the lower end of the material stratification system but his position was inextricably bound to an emotional legacy of shame and in the institutional domain he was "left foundering in unfit choices that bespeak abandonment's reiteration" (D'Amour, 2020, p. 189).

9.4.4. Turning against the 'self': Shame and self-reproach

According to Hinshelwood and Fortuna (2018), Klein contended that "self-condemnation and self-hatred" arise from ambivalence towards something inside the self (p. 65). This study supports this view as illustrated through a clear pattern in the data when students failed to meet 'expectations' and shame was turned inwards toward the 'self', manifesting as various forms of self-loathing or Nathanson's (1992) Attack-Self. Self-reproach was often used in combination with other shame defences like projection and splitting. This shame defence illustrated how the ego ideal fulfilled a mafia type role (Hinshelwood & Fortuna, 2018) and set itself up against other parts of the ego resulting in objectification and harsh judgement of the 'self'. For example, students who felt like "losers", "unworthy" and "incompetent". Lewis (1971) and Nathanson (1992) called this type of self-attack 'self-directed hostility'. The data also indicated that in instances of self-reproach there was often an absence of supportive, benevolent objects who were held in mind to offer encouragement. Therefore, as feelings of badness accumulated, the ego experienced greater hostility from within, resulting in compromised feelings about the 'self'. These students were consequently vulnerable to shame from within and without – from the external environment. Additionally, confusion between the inner and outer worlds often impeded these students' ability to identify the source of the shame and mourn the lost object, resulting in splitting. These were stories where students moved from feeling like the 'best' to the 'worst', from a 'success' to a 'failure' or from coping to feeling suicidal.

Recall the student who split off academics and relationships at university? This story demonstrated how self-reproach can heighten feelings of alienation at university. When viewing self-reproach as a stand-alone shame response pattern it may not appear to be noteworthy particularly in light of the relational drama that played out when shame sought a target. However, in its more extreme forms, self-reproach manifest as depression, anxiety and even attempted suicide. Because self-reproach signified a conscious awareness of shame and an acceptance of the shame message (Elison, 2006), it is suggested that students who engaged in intense self-reproach were likely experiencing shame that was more chronic in nature.

9.4.5. (Dis)engaging from others: Avoidance and withdrawal

If student engagement is critical to success, then avoidance and withdrawal shame coping scripts served as a flashing red light in the data. Avoidance and withdrawal were common strategies used by students who found themselves unable to evaluate and address the shame situation (Nathanson, 1992). In the Shame Experiences Study avoidance signified disengagement from the 'self' and/or peers whereas withdrawal often indicated physically walking away from peers. Avoidance strategies were particularly prevalent in stories about failing at university. Recall stories that seemed to have an 'absent' 'self', which depicted students' attempts to disconnect from shame and a depleted sense of 'self'. The 'absent' self in stories of failing confirm Mann's (2001) argument that when education is reduced to achievement or the possession of something, the subject is often lost. However, rather than preclude or diminish the suffering of the burden of shame (Morrison, 2008), avoidance served only to reduce the student's capacity for meaning making. Because avoidance involves the denial of shame, this strategy blocked students' ability to reflect on what they had contributed to the failure and what other influencing factors within the context had contributed. Narratives that reflected inordinate difficulties in talking about the experience of shame – forgetting, avoiding and minimizing – therefore seemed to indicate less conscious awareness and more paranoid-schizoid responses to shame, including more idealisation of the 'self' and 'others'.

Both withdrawal and avoidance in the data were often characterised by hiding. This confirms Steiner's (2011) proposition that shame states of mind are "represented spatially as hiding places" to which individuals withdraw to protect themselves from pain and anxiety (p. 3). According to Fenichel (1946/2005):

> "I feel ashamed" means "I do not want to be seen". Therefore persons who feel ashamed of themselves hide themselves or at least avert their faces. However, they also close their eyes and refuse to look. This is a kind of magical gesture, arising from the magical belief that anyone who does not look cannot be looked at" (p. 124).

Recall the 'face talk' in the data and specifically the student who felt a bit safer because the lecturer "doesn't know my face". The student clearly experienced relief and safety in feeling hidden from the lecturer's view. Several students used 'face talk' to put forward more acceptable versions of the 'self' to protect and hide the inner core. Students who used withdrawal (which included presentation of a False Self)

and avoidance strategies hoped to find shelter from the evaluative gaze of 'others'. Significantly, physical withdrawal seemed to be particularly prevalent in race-and class-based shame encounters in the classroom and on campus. Students of all races constructed various levels of racial threat to justify physical withdrawal from racial encounters. Remember how Emma and some of her peers physically withdrew from lectures to limit exposure to race-based shame triggered during class discussions? When shame experiences were characterised by avoidance and withdrawal it seemed to have two implications for shame management. Firstly, the ego seemed vulnerable to self-reproach and secondly, the ego ideal became locked in phantasies of self-sufficiency. Self-reproach has been discussed in the foregoing section, however, discourses of self-sufficiency were also fairly prevalent in the data and warrant some discussion because of their relevance to the adolescent life stage. Emma's aversion to feelings of dependency and Mandla's resolution to validate himself are two examples of self-sufficiency in the data. Rather than a healthy form of growing adolescent independence there was, at times in the data, a form of pseudo self-sufficiency that was characterised by rigid boundaries and becoming over guarded. These students tended to resort to splitting or what Emma called 'compartmentalising' to maintain psychological order and stability in a complex university environment. However, Retzinger (2014) contends that being cut off emotionally or extreme dependency both indicate difficulties in functioning separately and can render one subject to shame states: both are also regarded as states of alienation. Whereas differentiation characterises flexible bonding systems, alienation corresponds to rigid bonding systems. However, the paradox of differentiation is that it requires the ability to perceive an object as an external phenomenon or an object in its own right rather than as a projective object (Winnicott, 1969). Benjamin (1995) described differentiation as "a constant tension between recognising the other and asserting oneself" (p. 37). The prevalence of avoidance and withdrawal patterns in the data, however, signified students' inability to do either, leaving the 'self' experiencing shame in deep isolation rather than experiencing age-appropriate socialisation. The prevalence of different forms of hiding also confirm that objects were often not clearly visible to students (Steiner, 2011). Hiding and separation can also be understood through Steiner's (2013) distinction between 'seeing' and 'being seen'. Not being seen implies that students could not 'see' others and the situation properly, resulting in splitting in order to alter or deny aspects of the self by projecting these onto others. The result was that students were unable to confront unhelpful elements within the 'self' such as frustration, anger, remorse and envy.

Although a 'hiding place' conjures up images of safety, when used as a defence against shame it came at a cost to students: it made it difficult for students to socialise and negotiate for themselves at university. Students who had personal histories (emotional legacies) that influenced their ability to engage with others as separate 'others' in the university setting seemed to be particularly vulnerable to avoidance and withdrawal. Charles had limited experience of being able to rely on others and struggled to use his relationships associated with Wits in ways that allowed for meaningful support and guidance. Charles' portrait resembles the 'culturally displaced' student group formulated by Cross et al. (2009) which described students who lack resources to negotiate for themselves at university and end up withdrawing and feeling alienated. However, Charles' portrait indicates that it is more complex than culture alone because there are always multiple influences present that cohere on the micro, meso and macro-levels and

can result in students feeling unable to negotiate for themselves. For example, Addison was not culturally displaced, however, his biography indicated his potential vulnerability to peer shaming and difficulties socialising which negatively impacted his ability to receive support from CCDU. He feared the negative exposure of engaging in group therapy on campus and abruptly withdrew from the CCDU support group and resorted to splitting. Addison split off his 'bad' emotions into CCDU and his support group peers. The shame coping strategy displayed by Addison resembled 'the Survivors' group described by Cross et al. (2009) which included students with fewer knowledge gaps and better able to find needed resources, but who also tended to hide when feeling vulnerable. Steiner (2011) purports that in the clinical context when individuals try to emerge from 'hiding' they often feel exposed and observed, resulting in renewed attempts to hide the 'self' from the gaze of 'others'. This finding is helpful to understand patterns of student engagement followed by abrupt disengagement even in the midst of adequate support. Put another way, students who emerge from a shame-based state of withdrawal and attempt to re-engage, like Addison and Charles, may retreat again when feeling vulnerable.

9.4.6. Reproach deadlocks and contested belonging on campus: Shame, threat and a failure to mourn

This section is an attempt to provide a holistic interpretation of the race and class-based shame moves and countermoves discussed previously and to illustrate the reciprocal nature of micro, meso and macro influences on student shame resulting in contested belonging at university. Race-based stories provided the most convincing evidence in the university sample for the stratification of shame in society (Turner, 2010). The significant shame defence in these stories was the reproach of the 'other' which was characterised by divisive splitting into Black and White student groups: 'us' versus 'them'. On the one hand, White students felt the reproach of Black students because of being benefactors of privilege stemming from the apartheid legacy. In the same way that categorisation as 'Black' had felt inescapable during apartheid, some White students felt an inescapable categorization of 'the White privilege'. On the other hand, disadvantaged Black students felt reproach because of increased difficulties in meeting performance expectations – explicit and implicit, academic and social – and negative sanctioning within the institution. Remember also the privileged Black middle-class who were sandwiched in between these two groups? However, despite experiencing guilt and shame because of their more privileged status, Black middle-class students constructed historical allegiance to their disadvantaged Black peers.

In order to understand reproach deadlocks psychosocially I will use four moves to unpack the shame experienced by disadvantaged Black students within the institution to illustrate how their experience of shame is intensified because it lies at the confluence of multiple negative social identities. First, the disadvantaged student is positioned lower down within the social stratification system (meso-level category = class) and therefore brings a history of negative societal sanction for being poor. In the data poor students felt exposed, rejected, (mis)recognised and (mis)attuned to their peers. The shame of poverty resulted in poorer students withdrawing thereby inhibiting socialisation and increasing difficulties in leveraging

important relationships within the institution. Second, in the sample, poor students were more likely to be Black due to the material ramifications of the stratification of race in South African society (meso-level category = race). Recall that historical injustice amplifies difference and intensifies shame based on the stratification of race. Third, the standards of the university (macro-level category = the institution) are used to evaluate the performance of the student and students also use these standards to evaluate their performance in relation to peers (micro/meso-level interaction). The purpose of these comparative processes is to gauge social acceptability and value. This can be traumatic for students who associate institutional standards with historical race-based humiliation. Fourth, holding all the aforementioned ideas in mind, when a disadvantaged student is subject to negative sanction within the institution for failing to meet expectations – explicit/implicit and academic/social – the student must still contend with the shame of discordant views of the 'self' (micro-level). One could argue about which level of social reality should lead in this discussion because failing to meet expectations and being sanctioned was surely the shame trigger? Although this was the shame stimulus, this summary illustrates how the micro versus macro argument has played out repeatedly in the data. This is the cause-and-effect dilemma. This is the meeting point between ideological arguments in education and the intimate experience of the student. And, despite its bewildering complexity, this study contends for the reciprocal influence of micro, meso and macro influences in the shame experience. The data therefore illustrates that when it comes to the experience of shame at university, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This study illustrates that the legacy of the stratification of race in South African society – material and emotional – continues to live on through class-based shame resulting in disadvantaged students bearing a greater burden of shame at university.

Although all students discursively constructed the stratification of material resources in society through notions of structural poverty, it was the stratification of shame in the student body which was often unacknowledged but which triggered particularly uncomfortable feelings of threat that manifested in nuanced threatened student positions and reproach deadlocks. A significant finding was that better resourced students – irrespective of race – experienced guilt and shame about their more privileged status and vicariously experienced the shame and the threat of poorer students' tenuous position at university. However, because the shame was largely unacknowledged it transmuted into reproach and sought a target: race. The Shame Experiences Study supports Turner's (2010) proposition that the target of shame is more likely to be at the meso-categorical level or macrostructures in society because they are felt to be safer objects than face-to-face encounters which are an important source of positive sanctioning. You may argue that reproach deadlocks did take place in the form of face-to-face encounters, and they did. However, an important proviso was that the chosen target for the projection of the shame within these encounters was the racial category held by the student. Face-to-face reproach deadlocks were characterized by feelings of hatred, anger, and in some cases revenge toward the White student group. Although hatred may seem like a strong word it is useful when using a relational perspective because it signifies object seeking connotations (Eagle, 2018). Racial categories were used by all races as a more distal target which served to distance the 'self' from shame aroused in the institutional domain. Because the conscious and unconscious sense of threat of ongoing evaluation is conducive to feelings of persecution, racialised

'others' tended to be used as "a peg onto which fears or desires" could "be hung" (Frosh, 2002, as cited in Pattman, 2007, p. 481). The disconcerting tendency to use racial identifications as a peg on which to hang our shame is why Frosh (2002) argues that the notion of a non-racist "Rainbow Nation" is a fantasy.

Concerningly, the Shame Experiences Study also illustrates how race was used to realise group identities on campus and achieve a sense of belonging to mitigate threat. The proposition is that threat likely amplified segregated group belonging because the literature argues that group identity can be achieved more readily if you are attacked as a group (Winnicott, 2012) – whether along racial, class, gender, faculty lines and the list of meso-categories goes on. However, the problem with racialised group identities on campus was that these were reactive because meaning was derived from a shared sense of persecution (Winnicott, 2012) within the educational institutional domain. According to Winnicott (2012), the inherent flaw with this type of grouping is that the dynamics do not arise from within. Difficulties working through issues with an outside 'other' therefore resulted in a drama of internal objects characterised by splitting and projection (Ogden, 1986/2018) which ranged from attacks at one end of the scale to communication that engendered empathy and understanding (Clarke, 2003). In the Shame Experiences Study, race-based reproach – both real and imagined – was usually experienced as an attack coming from a racialised 'other' in the external environment and the 'self' felt like "the target of the other's hostility" (Lewis, 1971; Retzinger, 2014, p. 297). Splitting therefore served to keep students stuck in racialised reproach deadlocks unable to interpret the situation. Old binary relationships of "doer and done to" were replicated by reinforcing a sense of being a "victim" where "being the one who is actively hurtful feels involuntary, a position of helplessness" (Benjamin, 2004, p. 11).

Relational impasses cannot be resolved without recognising our own participation (Benjamin, 2004). This psychosocial study illustrates that students' own participation in reproach deadlocks was hopelessly confounded because of the mix up of the inner and outer worlds. This study illustrates that shame blocks the ability to see objects clearly and thereby differentiate between the inner and the outer world. A number of students in this study learned through painful shame experiences that in reality aspirations are necessarily coloured by disillusionment and loss. Failing is an inevitable part of success. Getting it wrong in class is unavoidable when acquiring knowledge. Sounding silly in front of others is unfortunate but happens. Being rejected at some point when forging friendships and romantic relationships is a given. Feeling socially excluded is inevitable. Setbacks are inevitable. You may recognise that this student checklist is a more realistic version of the idealistic one presented in Section 9.3.1 and illustrates how disillusionment necessarily tempers students' idealisation. Winnicott (2012) contends that if there is no understanding about loss there is confusion and an inability to engage in the mourning process. Concerningly, the alternative to mourning is melancholia where the student's ego itself was felt to be poorer (Eng & Han, 2000). Mourning allows for the loss of a host of objects (Freud, 1917) which seems important in this context where students must mourn not only their failure to meet expectations but that the world is 'poor' (Eng & Han, 2000). As a middle-class Black student Nofoto has been able to mourn the loss of an envisioned ideal society as captured by her touching words when talking about the plight of disadvantaged students who do not

experience social uplift through university: “that thing really hurt me … it really hurts …”. However, this study has demonstrated that students who are lower down in the stratification system have more invested in the aspirational value of education and are therefore subject to greater disillusionment, loss and shame. The proposition of this study is therefore that legacies of shame are often unacknowledged but continue to block natural mourning processes (Volkan, 2004) that would allow disadvantaged students to metabolise shame and process current injuries.

Overall, processing shame at university was difficult for students because it required accepting disillusionment and losses concerning the self, conflicted relationships with peers, that acquiring knowledge requires struggle and that society is far from ideal. This requires some level of consciousness of ambivalent feelings towards the ‘self’, the university, the peer group, future roles in society and the lost ideal. Klein called this process the working through of objects into an integration of good and bad – the dilemma that characterises the depressive position (Temperley, 2001). Although it sounds counter-intuitive, the depressive position was that sweet spot where some students learned to manage their anxiety and shame at university in the midst of disillusionment by mourning and rebuilding the inner world (Klein, 1952).

CHAPTER 10 – CONCLUSION: Metacommentary and final reflections

10.1. Introduction

The aim of this mixed methods study was to understand the experience of shame in students at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) from a psychosocial perspective. This study offered a unique space where students could tell their stories and, in some instances, break their silence around the experience of shame at university. The research questions sought to understand the prevalence and gravity of student shame, common shame triggers and *how* and *why* particular student positions were discursively constructed over others in the shame experience and what these meant for student subjectivities. The key objective was to explore how shame shapes the student experience through the interactions between micro-level shame dynamics (including unconscious intersubjectivity) and meso and macro-level structures and their respective ideologies. In this thesis I drew on Hollway and Jefferson's (2000) psychosocial principles – which leverage object relations theory – to establish the primacy of intersubjective processes, alongside discourses as systems of meaning, and external events. The psychosocial attention to narratives was of value for informing an understanding of how socially circumscribed discourses allowed students to discursively position themselves to create meaning from their shame experiences. The principle of a non-unitary defended subject was especially useful to my analysis as it allowed me to think through the ways in which students' shame coping strategies – both conscious and unconscious – impacted student subjectivities and how internal object relational worlds informed shame coping. Additionally, Turner's (2010) theory of the stratification of emotions was fruitful for grasping how meso and macrostructures are felt intimately, including in the form of shame legacies that are stratified in the student body.

This study has disrupted more traditional student experience research by using a psychosocial approach to trace *how* and *why* shame dynamics operate reciprocally at the micro, meso and macro-levels within the educational domain. In this concluding chapter I will attempt to provide a summary of findings, a metacommentary about the central claims made based on the findings and the positioning and contributions of this study to the student experience literature and understandings of shame. This critique includes limitations of the study and further research that potentially arises from it.

10.2. Summary of key quantitative findings and the psychosocial themes

10.2.1. Key findings from the quantitative survey

- Approximately two-thirds of students surveyed have experienced shame whether occasional or more persistent in nature. The remaining one-third seldom experienced shame.

- 37% of students reported very little or mild intensity shame whereas 38% reported moderate intensity, 22% considerable and 3% extremely intense shame.
- 25% of students reported a moderate impact of shame on their quality of life, 19% a considerable, and 3.4% an extreme effect.
- More shame was associated with less feelings of belonging at university – academic and social.
- More shame was associated with less regard for the academic institution.
- More worry about financial situation was associated with more shame.
- More Black students reported shame about financial worries than their White counterparts.
- Higher levels of shame around financial worry was associated with less regard for the academic institution and less feelings of academic belonging.
- English-language only speakers reported experiencing more shame than students whose only home language was an African language – irrespective of race.
- Higher levels of shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' was associated with less regard for the academic institution and less academic and social belonging.
- White students reported experiencing more shame about 'Being a certain race/ethnicity' compared to their Black counterparts.
- More shame related to 'Interpersonal exposure' was associated with less feelings of 'social' belonging.
- More shame related to 'Feelings of inadequacy' was associated with less feelings of 'academic belonging'.
- Females were more likely than males to experience shame related to 'Interpersonal exposure' and 'Feelings of inadequacy' and therefore experience less social and academic belonging respectively.

10.2.2. Key psychosocial themes from the qualitative analyses

Students' complex intersubjective relationships to the institution and knowledge is central to understanding student shame:

- The loss of the 'ideal' self never occurs in a vacuum. Student shame experiences necessarily include a relationship to the educational institution.
- The institution is idealised because of its vested power to 'transmit knowledge' (Turner, 2010), a highly valued resource in society which is believed to grant access to all other societal domains, their associated resources and social value. University is therefore an emotionally loaded experience.
- Although universities are social structures, they are felt in intimate ways by students because of their power to sanction based on whether institutional standards are met. External negative sanction by the institution is experienced as a loss to the 'self' as signified by negative self-focus and negative self-evaluation in the shame experience – "I am a failure", "I felt like a loser", "So stupid",

"I am undesirable", "They look at *me* strange". Negative whole-self evaluation is the genesis of negative student identities.

- Students have a conflicted relationship with 'knowledge'. Knowledge acquisition publicly signifies adequacy, competency and social value. Conversely, a lack of knowledge publicly signifies inadequacy, incompetency and a lack of social value: shame. The implication is that institutions not only bestow material resources (knowledge) but also emotional resources (shame).
- Discourses of being blindsided illustrate incompatible ideas of the 'self' and discrepancies around performance which arise when the 'self' is not verified within the institutional domain. Having incompatible ideas of the 'self' exposed is both a personal experience, driven by internalised imaginations – and social, constructed through discourses relevant to the standards of the institutional domain.
- Students' own gaze (seeing) and that of others (being seen), whether in the present moment or in memory, is central to the shame experience.
- All students – irrespective of class, race, language, faculty and year of study – are vulnerable to feelings of shameful inadequacy at university. Stories of being haunted confirm students' ongoing fears – both conscious and unconscious – of threat of negative sanction for failing to meet expectations.
- The evaluation systems of universities are inadvertently emotionally reinforcing because when the 'self' is not verified, negative emotions like shame and anger are reinforced.
- Common shame triggers were identifiable likely because specific forms of sanctioning are salient within the educational institutional domain. The seven common shame triggers are: failing, comparison to peers, being ridiculed, being rejected, acts of omission and commission, class and race.
- Idealisation is a fundamental defence against shame in a university context. Going to Wits is prestigious and by association the student feels elite – part of a 'select' group. When the idealised object sanctions it is felt to inflict a personal wound and the idealising mirror no longer reflects a picture of knowledge, success, intelligence, strength and attractiveness. Shame comes into view.
- It is difficult to delegitimise the institution whose resources give you social value.
- Historical systems within society perpetuate discourses of the prestige of going to university despite competing discourses of education as social justice.

The peer group represent a double sanctioning power within the institutional domain:

- The idealising mirror is also held up to peers. Students use comparison of performance (explicit and implicit standards) to gauge perceived levels of academic and social acceptability. The evaluative gaze is used to monitor levels of recognition/(mis)recognition, attunement/(mis)attunement and belonging/(un)belonging at university.
- Massification, large classes and diverse student bodies leave students feeling (un)seen, lonely, struggling to make friends and fit-in, rejected and vulnerable to shame. Lack of relationships on the micro-level translate into less opportunities for positive sanctioning among peers at university.

- Shame is used to monitor the state of relationships – separateness and togetherness.
- Shame triggers defensive working models during peer interaction and disrupts healthy shifts along the dependence-independence continuum. Inordinate dependency and cutting peers off both signified shame and alienated states.
- Academic sanctioning by the university inadvertently translates into public shaming because students who fail must repeat a subject/year in a highly visible environment. The loss of a cohort is experienced as rejection, abandonment and public disgrace.
- Neoliberal ideologies – marketisation and commodification – have infiltrated student relationships resulting in competition and inferiority overshadowing participation and co-operation.

Lack of relationships and negative peer sanctioning engender the loss of a safe transitional space:

- Adolescence/young adulthood are characterised by unique shame triggers as students must navigate the loss of the familiar childhood milieu and forge new relationships and roles in a highly competitive university society.
- Students look to both lecturers and peers for acceptance and as a source of strength in the classroom.
- Ridicule by peers when 'not knowing' or 'getting it wrong' turns classrooms into sites of humiliation.
- Classrooms are conflicted transitional spaces when there is no room for trial and error for fear of being (mis)recognised by peers as (in)adequate and lacking knowledge.
- Students who feel inadequate and inferior may revert to a False Self characterised by mimicry and faking and/or the 'bad' is defensively projected onto wilful shamers leaving the 'self' feeling victimised and objectified. Discourses of victimisation protect the True Self from the shame of 'not knowing'.
- When peers are silent bystanders, they neither join the bullying group nor support the individual for fear of being sanctioned themselves.
- A sense of camaraderie from supportive peers feels like a refuge at university and can help students metabolise their shame.
- Not all faculties and degree choices are equal because some professions are felt to impart more social value than others. Less social value equals more shame.
- Encouraging student engagement in the classroom can backfire if the student is publicly exposed as lacking knowledge, triggering inadequacy and shame.
- Because lecturers exercise authority invested in them by the institution, their very presence may unconsciously trigger fear of sanction and amplify insult and injury when interactions go wrong.
- Lecturer-student interaction/discipline which takes place publicly, outside the context of relationship, is felt to call the student's adequacy or goodness into question and exacerbates shame.

Biography weaves its way through every shame experience:

- Shame is deeply personal and mediated through unique internal object relational worlds.

- Students' perceptions of shame events were coloured by intrapsychic defensive structures developed in response to their backgrounds where some representations of the 'self' were more uncertain and rigid than others. When the 'self' felt uncertain and threatened because of the shame trigger, students tried to navigate a university context that was perceived in particular ways, depending on their backgrounds, using familiar discourses to create meaning.
- The ability to process shame is related to biography. When a crisis of the 'self' involves good, loving internalised objects shame is metabolised more easily. Conversely, hostile internalised objects block an ability to process shame.

Defending against shame: Withdrawal and/or target seeking.

- Students have trouble talking about shame. Shame is both prevalent and elusive because it also operates outside conscious awareness.
- The decline of healthy face-to-face interaction (friendships and romantic relationships) symbolises less opportunity for students to receive support on campus to contain their emotional states and metabolise shame.
- Avoidance and withdrawal (emotional and/or physical) are common student shame coping strategies leading to (dis)engagement and ultimately alienation.
- To avoid shame injuries at university, students shut down the intermediate area of experience.
- When the shame message is acknowledged and received it can lead to self-reproach that is overwhelming, making it difficult to receive support – even from benevolent others.
- The need to distance the 'self' from shame results in splitting/polarization of the 'self' and the student body: good-bad, introverts-extroverts, adequate-inadequate, clever-stupid, beautiful-ugly, Black-White, perpetrator-victim, rich-poor, knowledgeable-ignorant, relationships versus education (education is constructed as devoid of relationships).
- Students cope with relational threat at university by shifting between positive authentic identities (the True Self) and pseudo-identities (the False Self) on campus to facilitate belongingness to different social groups and protect the core self.
- Unacknowledged shame and threat at university transmutes into anger and is pushed outward towards 'safer' racialised categories in the meso and macrostructures, characterised by reproach deadlocks on campus.

The stratification of shame in the institution and society:

- Student subjectivity in the South African context is still heavily influenced by the historical legacy of apartheid. Disadvantaged Black students who suffer original wounding from structural poverty rooted in apartheid are likely to experience double injury and shame when confronted with disillusioning realities at university. When difference is attached to historical injustice and race-based humiliation its destructiveness is magnified.
- Structural poverty is not commensurate with the confirmation of positive student identities. Poorer Black students often bear the burden of shame at university and feel (mis)recognized and (de)valued by peers and are defined by devaluing self-relevant information.

- Structural poverty is experienced as shame externally imposed by social institutions putting the student in a disadvantaged position.
- Penury and trauma do not afford poorer students sufficient space and resources for a moratorium and effective socialisation at university.
- The 'hard work' dilemma: disadvantaged students subscribe to meritocratic principles – as do their more advantaged counterparts – through discourses of hard work and responsibility. Concerningly, poorer students fail to consider the implications of structural poverty on their performance thereby exacerbating negative student identities.
- When the shame of poverty is unacknowledged, disadvantaged students are left feeling separated, hurt and with difficulties identifying with the institution and their peers. The 'other' is often felt to be the source of the hurt from what is perceived as an attack.
- Shame legacies limit a student's potential to secure access to resources at university: students who have less are able to receive less. Students who have shame legacies are particularly vulnerable to avoidance and withdrawal coping strategies which often leads to alienation from the institution. These students struggle to use their relationships associated with Wits in ways that allow for meaningful support and guidance – even from well-meaning 'others'.

The shame of poverty leaves no student untouched:

- Conflicted ideologies around education as social justice versus meritocracy are experienced personally by students as discordant feelings of unworthiness of studying at Wits resulting in multiple race- and class-based threatened student positions.
- The rise of student citizenship is, in part, a moral response of the middle-class to the shame of the ongoing ramifications of apartheid in higher education and its impact on disadvantaged students.
- Language and schooling are used as proxy devices for disavowed discourses about race, adequacy and contested belonging at university.
- White students leverage the 'hard work' discourse to mitigate a threatened student position.
- The government and higher education sector has failed to support and achieve social mobility for disadvantaged students who are left grappling with shameful student identities at university: this is the felt historical crisis of a generation that manifest in the #FeesMustFall student movement.

10.3. Metacommentary

10.3.1. A conflicted transitional space: Micro, meso and macro influences employed in the construction of students' shame experiences

The global call in education research to embrace the student as an emotional being, in an institution, that is embedded within a sociohistorical system (Case, 2008; Jones, 2018; Kahu, 2013; Schutz & Pekrun, 2007; Solomonides & Reid, 2009) has highlighted the need for psychosocial research like this study about student shame. While recent student experience research on the South African front can be commended for

exploring contextually specific ways that students make meaning out of their university experiences (Case et al., 2018; Swartz et al., 2017; Swartz et al., 2018; USAf, 2018), a focus on the emotional dimension remains lacking. However, by concluding that emotions are a significant factor to be reckoned with in student's university journeys, these studies have highlighted the necessity of emotion-focused research agendas.

The data emerging from this study suggests that the student's intersubjective relationship to the institution is pivotal to constructions of shame at university despite institutions often being cast as playing a more peripheral or service-related role in the student experience. The institutional domain provided participants with a reference point to make sense out of their shame experiences. Shame was both prevalent and intense in the quantitative student sample and the qualitative data suggests that this was likely grounded in the aspirational value which students attach to 'knowledge' – the critical resource which the institution has the power to confer. Furthermore, the university and knowledge were emotionally loaded because education was positioned as giving one access to resources from all other institutional domains in society, thereby facilitating social lift. The data opens up new possibilities for thinking about shame in educational institutions by illustrating how the institution not only supplies material resources like knowledge – but emotional ones as well (Turner, 2010) – like shame. The study illustrates that the most significant way that the institution – albeit a social structure – was felt personally and aroused shame was through its power to sanction based on whether expectations were met or not. When a student was sanctioned academically it triggered shame. The shame signalled threat to personal feelings of adequacy and worthiness, the loss of social value and the relationship with the institution felt tenuous. Thus, having incompatible ideas of the 'self' exposed at university was at once a personal experience – driven by imaginative internalisation – and social, constructed through discourses pertaining to the standards of the institutional domain (the university and the peer group). All students, at times, experienced losses in relation to their expectations for achievement, success, recognition and attachment at university. Losses were experienced as a loss to the ego itself and therefore signalled the genesis of shameful student identities when shame was unmetabolised.

Despite wide consensus in the literature that shame is a social emotion that is experienced in the presence of 'others', empirical research often fails to address *how* multiple levels of social organisation – which constitute the social nature of shame – interact. The aforementioned claim was about how shame arises from both the sanctioning power of the institution (without) and imaginative internalisation (within) of one's own performance within the institution – and that the two are inseparable. Another central finding in the Shame Experiences Study was how students' relationship to the institution and knowledge was convoluted by the peer group as illustrated through constructions of humiliation, comparison, ridicule, victimisation, rejection and reproach deadlocks. This study illustrates how the peer group is a complicated mix of micro and meso-level interaction that represents a double sanctioning power within this institutional domain. While the institution sanctions for failure to meet academic standards, peers were portrayed as having the power to sanction for the failure to meet explicit or implicit expectations related to academic or social standards and ways of being. The peer group represented a particularly complex academic/social

juncture with inordinate ability to shame as illustrated through constructions of the evaluative gaze – students' own gaze (seeing) and that of peers (being seen). This study therefore builds on existing education knowledge that seeks to understand the academic/social distinction and its ability to plague student life (Tinto, 1997) by illustrating how shame is amplified at the confluence of two levels of social organisation of the peer group within the institutional domain. First, peers are part of academic cohorts and must participate in formal teaching and learning within classrooms, tutorials, at internship sites and other formal events. This forms part of the mesostructure of the institution where students are organised to pursue goals and institutional standards are used to evaluate both the 'self' and 'others' thereby increasing emotional arousal. However, evaluation has become more conflicted, fuelled by neoliberal ideologies of commodification, competition, individualism and meritocracy. Second, peers form part of a vast adolescent/young adult cohort whose concerns at university are around relational experience – friendships and romantic relationships. This form of socialisation is significant for identity formation. Education is therefore not only about process and outcome in learning but also processes related to being recognised and becoming someone of value. However, these two levels of development are embedded therefore the neoliberal ideologies within the more formal peer structures have infiltrated the less formal socialisation structures. Students are locked into competitive and isolated positions that are characterised by a decline in relationships and limited micro-level face-to-face interaction resulting in a conflicted intermediate area of experience. Because the university is experienced as an academically and socially unsafe space, emotional support is often obtained from structures outside the university rather than forging new relationships beyond the childhood milieu. This finding means that a static focus on the institution and individual students in student experience research agendas will lack explanatory power around the complexity of student engagement and academic/social belonging.

Whilst current thinking in emotion research leans more towards the persuasion that there are no universal or common shame triggers (Clore & Ortony, 2013; Tracy & Robins, 2006), the data suggests that common shame triggers or precipitating events may well be identifiable within particular institutional domains because of the salience of the institution in the shame experience. The seven common shame triggers that emerged in this study were: failing, comparison to peers, being ridiculed, being rejected, acts of omission and commission, class and race-based categorisation. These seven shame triggers represented prevalent forms of academic and social sanctioning that occurred within this educational context. It seems possible that researching shame within other institutional domains, unrelated to education, may render alternative shame triggers common because different institutions provide different resources, engage in unique forms of sanction and may not necessarily involve a powerful peer group. Furthermore, it is argued that one educational institution may differ from another. For instance, notable findings in this South African student sample were how race and class-based shame were nuanced in complex ways that were slightly different from global counterparts because of the material and emotional legacies of apartheid. Narratives from this urban/advantaged university (Swartz et al., 2017) also had a strong middle-class flavour. This unique sociohistorical context provided participants with the vehicle to construct nuanced race and class-based shame triggers. By researching shame within a single institution (Kahu, 2013) this study provides a

platform for informing student engagement within this particular institution. The possibility of identifying common shame triggers based on institutional domain type also suggests that although The Shame Inventory (Rizvi, 2010) is leading the way as a contextual shame measure, there remains a need to develop shame measures that are contextually sensitive within specific institutional domains. The findings from this study can serve as a foundation for the development of a shame measure in the South African higher education context.

10.3.2. Repressed shame and the reciprocal influence of the inner and outer worlds

Because psychoanalysis has contributed significantly to an in-depth understanding of shame defences, it makes the scarcity of psychoanalytic research in an education context particularly regrettable. The task of this research was also to consider students' unconscious shame coping scripts and this study is therefore the product of both discursively constructed shame experiences as well as a springboard for the production of psychosocial knowledge on how intersubjective processes – both individual and collective – shape students' experiences of shame at university. This study illustrates that shame signals threat to intersubjective relationships within the institutional domain that when unacknowledged is defended against. Therefore one cannot fully account for shame without using a theory that considers underlying dynamics. One of the most significant findings from this study was the prevalence of idealisation as a key defence against shame in the educational institutional domain. The societal aspirations around going to university are unprecedented and education is constructed as the "key" that gives students access to all other institutional domains and their resources. The study illustrates how the merger of an ideal self with an idealised object, the university, protects the 'self' from feared persecution and threat in an environment where there is ongoing evaluation. When disparities between students' expectations and losses were too great – exposed through negative sanction by the institution – the shame was overwhelming and was repressed often leading to, among others, delegitimising the institution. Idealisation is a novel defence with respect to Turner's (2010) theory of the stratification of emotions. This finding suggests that some defences may be more relevant and prevalent based on the type of institutional domain and the nature and social value of its resources. Another important finding from this study – only made possible by using a psychosocial lens that embraces unconscious dynamics – was that mismatched expectations are more complex than a first-year myth because external reality is not a direct portrayal of internal reality. While the international and South African education literature acknowledge that mismatched expectations involve "disillusionment" and a "disconnect between reality and expectation" (USAf, 2018), this study adds to this body of knowledge by illustrating how mismatched expectations trigger shame because expectations/ideals are a complex mix of internalised imaginations that involve others, including meso and macrostructures in society.

Despite the global appeal for more holistic student experience research, the significant role of biography and emotional legacies in society have not been acknowledged by academic and education communities such that they remain invisible, peripheral, or distanced concepts in understanding the student

experience. However, the Shame Experiences Study hopes to stimulate this avenue of enquiry through its scientific accounts and theoretical propositions that instantiate the possibilities of how biography and shame legacies play a pivotal role in negative student identities and contested student belonging. Concerning biography (Hollway & Jefferson, 2005) – a more individual intersubjective level – this study illustrates that although students experience external threat through sanction from the external environment, there are also unseen internal sources of persecution arising from the critical superego that join forces with the external threat and intensify shame. Students who carried negative internal working models of others as unresponsive, unsupportive or even threatening experienced peers, lecturers, the institution, government and so on as unresponsive, unsupportive and threatening and therefore tended to struggle to metabolise shame. Conversely, the data showed that students who had loving internalised objects and secure attachment histories tended to be able to draw on support from both their internalised objects and from the environment which enabled them to metabolise shame more productively.

With regards to emotional legacies (Turner, 2010) carried on collective, societal intersubjective levels – this study adds to and complexifies research that demonstrates the impact of race and class in the South African student context (Bhana, 2014; Singh & Bhana, 2015; Soudien, 2008; Swartz et al., 2018) by illustrating how the student identities of disadvantaged students are built on a legacy of race-based shame exacerbated by the shame of ongoing poverty. These students therefore bear a double burden of shame at university when confronted with disillusioning realities and sanction at university. Furthermore this study supports the view of the shame of White privilege and illustrates how this leads to physical withdrawal on campus whereas the Black middle-class student group, who are sandwiched between the two groups, experience the shame of (mis)recognition and (mis)attunement by Black peers because of their privilege. The study therefore illustrates how the ramifications of historical injustice rooted emotionally in race-based humiliation amplified difference on campus resulting in racial categories becoming the target of projection of unacknowledged shame. Unacknowledged shame transmuted into anger which manifested as reproach deadlocks and contested belonging in the form of multiple threatened student positions. Furthering existing literature (Clarence, 2018), this study suggests how discursive constructions of meritocracy and 'hard work' are used by students to obscure inequality to defensively mitigate race and class-based shame and threatened student positions at university. This research also provides empirical support for the view that an ill-considered application of meritocratic principles to disadvantaged students is concerning because the students themselves then fail to consider the role of external factors on their performance (Burke, 2012, 2016; O'Shea et al., 2018; Reed et al., 2007; Swartz et al., 2017) which fuels shame when failing to meet expectations. This research thus supports the argument that constructions of capability and belonging in higher education are context dependent and concern being recognised as capable by others (Burke et al., 2016). The psychoanalytic orientation of the Shame Experiences Study was particularly useful in highlighting the central role of gaze in the shame experience and how being (mis)recognised as inadequate or lacking social value triggers shame. These findings challenge extreme forms of social constructivism that claim agnosticism towards the intrapersonal dimension and disregard for the influence of personal histories of relating on current experience.

This study illustrates that shame in a student context is a complex phenomenon and it seems fitting to conclude my thoughts around the contributions of this study with a question, 'Is it possible to alleviate student shame within the institutional domain? Although this study cannot claim to answer this question it has hopefully paved the way for thinking about the reciprocal influences of shame in the student context and that it requires disrupting the cycle of shame in the entire system to effect change. As a start to this conversation the next section briefly outlines possibilities for how the findings of this study might inform university approaches in order to better support students through the 'university experience' and to mitigate the effects of shame.

10.4. Recommendations for higher education

If universities are committed to developing graduates who are critical thinkers and curious about new knowledge and advancing the public good by providing environments that equip students to be global citizens then shame dynamics that obstruct thinking, distort relationships and reinforce structural inequalities need to be disrupted. Based on the findings from this study, the researcher recommends:

- It is important that the university places greater emphasis on peers building supportive relationships with each other at university – through face-to-face interaction – thereby facilitating socialisation and opportunities for positive sanction. Turner (2010) argues that the smallest unit that makes up biography is face-to-face encounters and that this is where opportunities for more positive sanction reside. Therefore one avenue to disrupt the shame cycle is to increase positive sanctioning at the face-to-face level and help students build positive student identities. The central contention of this study of student shame is that shame and all its associated defences confirm the deep longing of students to be recognised (be seen) and to recognise the other (seeing) (Ghent, 1990; Steiner, 2011). This will require a concerted effort to encourage peer relationships which this study has confirmed are on the decline and characterised by (mis)recognition, (mis)attunement and a False Self. Being known by thoughtful and attentive others will provide students with a safety net of relational comfort to move through personal injury when experiencing inevitable disillusionment at university. Being known in close relationships will facilitate the formation of authentic, positive student identities.
- Raising awareness across the university about the relational dynamics of shame in the university context and the impact on student engagement and belonging. This should include:
    - Normalising losses in relation to students' ongoing expectations around achievement, success, recognition and attachment in a university context.
    - Sensitising all parties as to how academic sanctioning translates into social sanctioning in a university context.
    - An understanding of the complex ways in which racial tension on campus is rooted in shame legacies and is amplified due to the aspirational value of education and the sense of threat due to ongoing evaluation that takes place in educational institutions.

- University lecturers should be sensitised as to how their own legitimate exercise of institutional authority may unconsciously trigger the threat of sanction and shame and that the crowd of witnesses – the ridiculing peer group – represents a double sanctioning power in the classroom amplifying insult and injury and blocking the ability to acquire new knowledge.
- Lecturers should be supported by the institution to create contexts for supportive relationships between lecturers and students and students themselves as well as oopportunities for trial and error in teaching and learning. Opportunities to learn within a safe, non-judgemental space will allow for exploration and gradual disillusionment thereby encouraging students to develop a healthier relationship to knowledge and assume more realistic expectations about their performance.
- Faculties, schools, departments and lecturers should proactively challenge stereotypes about the social value of different degree choices and careers.
- Universities, lecturers and students should exercise humility in how they interact with disadvantaged students and appreciate the role of shame legacies. The reality is that positive sanction on the micro-level will be confined within the limits of the meso and macrostructures. Because the institution retains the power to sanction based on institutional standards it will inadvertently be emotionally reinforcing often resulting in disadvantaged students bearing a double burden of shame at university. It is critical that all forms of support for disadvantaged students be based on the principles of equity and inclusion but which are not felt to impinge on the agency and sense of adequacy of the individual (or the risk is to exacerbate shame and ensuing negative student identities). Although disadvantaged students require additional resources and support to guide their transition into adulthood (academically and by means of socialisation), the role of the recogniser needs to be that of a respectful witness who is not felt to impinge on the independence, ability and worthiness of the developing individual.

10.5. Study critique: Limitations

Exploring the personal-social reciprocal nature of shame has been the greatest strength and concern of this study. This study aimed to step into the student experience research gap arising from a dearth of more sophisticated research frameworks that fail to account for multiple reciprocal influences. However, only through the process did I come to intimately understand and empathise with education researchers as to why this contentious gap exists. Most education researchers would agree that students should be studied as emotional beings who are embedded within multiple social structures (Camras & Shuster, 2013; Stets & Turner, 2008), however, the difficulty lies in how to define the scope of such a project. Kahu (2013) developed what can be regarded as one of the most comprehensive conceptual frameworks suitable for student engagement research, however, she acknowledges that it is impossible for any research project to include all elements. However, in my experience, the dilemma faced when studying reciprocal elements is that by curbing study elements the explanatory power is decreased and there is always the potential risk of incorrect interpretations based on limited evidence. Alternatively, a researcher can follow the approach

adopted for this study where all elements remain open to investigation, however, the problem then shifts to analysing layer upon layer of data and trying to form a coherent whole from the parts. It did help to limit the investigation to a single institution because it provided some contextual consistency.

The remaining critique of study limitations will first address the quantitative study element, followed by the qualitative elements. A potential shortcoming of the quantitative element was the use of convenience sampling and a shame scale that was novel in the South African context – both of which affect the generalisability of the quantitative results. However, the notion of generalisability was not necessarily desirable for this study considering that it focussed on one institution. Because every institution has unique dynamics one can regard the results as transferable and rather providing insight into individual experiences. Although The Shame Inventory has not been standardised nor validated for a South African population it has been argued that the use of a novel shame scale was justified because of its use to explore the prevalence of multiple shame triggers using descriptive statistics. Paradoxically, my critique of The Shame Inventory was an insufficient emphasis on broader social shame cues like race and class. This would have been particularly helpful in a South African context. However, the qualitative data – Study Parts 2 and 3 – provided sufficient explanatory power around race and class-based shame which attested to the value of using mixed methods. Although quantitative shame research usually requires participants to distinguish shame from related constructs (Rizvi, 2010), a central premise of this study was that shame has many cognates and variants which indicate nuance in the shame experience. Some survey participants did, however, experience the definition and shame cues in the scale as diffuse and confusing, which indicates that it is difficult to define and explore complex emotions quantitatively. It can also be argued that the use of a quantitative self-report measure may have failed to capture the elusiveness of shame because shame may have operated outside some students' levels of conscious awareness (Yelsma et al., 2002) and therefore have been difficult to access for verbal report (Izard, 2010). For example, sensitivities may have resulted in participants' reluctance to be upfront in certain responses, leading to social desirability bias (Rizvi, 2010). I would also argue that although survey participation seemed to be experienced as beneficial to many students, it also left several students grappling with the trauma of re-experiencing shame. Although students were given access and encouraged to seek psychological help should the need arise, because the survey participants' disclosure was outside the context of relationship it was possibly a less helpful experience for these students compared to those who participated in the in-depth interviews. The interviews allowed the researcher to create a safe space for participants and to personally 'recognise' and empathise with students. Finally, even though low response rates were expected for the survey based on existing surveying statistics (Kaplowitz, Hadlock & Levine, 2004), it was still disappointing. As a researcher I was keenly aware of my dependence on the willingness of students to participate (Couper, 2000) despite every effort being made to ensure that the survey was easily accessible via a variety of technologies.

Another possible shortcoming of the study pertains to the interviews. Using one interview per participant is somewhat rare in psychosocial research because multiple interviews allow a researcher to probe further into issues uncovered in the first interview (Frosh & Emerson, 2005; Hollway & Jefferson,

2005). However, the psychosocial qualitative part of this study was only one of three large datasets which together provided copious amounts of data. Add to this, the desire to avoid putting any additional pressure on participants who were moving into the examination period and it was decided to conduct only one in-depth interview per participant. This strategy also served to limit levels of personal disclosure which was important from an ethical perspective as previously discussed. This did, however, put more onus on the researcher to facilitate an analysis of the interview data in which the personal was not lost nor subordinated to the more social/discursive. Additionally, the fact that nine out of ten interview participants were middle-class – and I too am middle-class – may have resulted in the dominance of a middle-class perspective. This may, however, also reflect Wits' urban/advantaged classification (Swartz et al., 2017). The implication was that the portrait of the one non middle-class student was valuable to this study to gain insight into poverty and shame. However, the exploratory, qualitative data set corroborated many of the propositions made using this particular portrait.

Drawing on an object relations perspective allowed for an in-depth understanding of shame coping scripts and ensuing identities, however, it can also be regarded as a study limitation because it represents a worldview firmly rooted in European origins. Perhaps this theoretical framework did not allow sufficient room for more of an African worldview of shame to emerge. The caution is that the scientific discoveries from this study should be treated as inseparable from the chosen ontology and epistemology. Along similar lines, whilst this study viewed student engagement as both the experience and construction of being a student (Bryson et al., 2009), the practical ramification of this was difficulty balancing a top down versus bottom-up approach to the data. A top-down approach may have propagated an expert stance (Saville Young, 2009).

10.6. Recommendations for further research

The quantitative element of this study yielded statistically significant results for gender and sexual orientation on the Global, Situational and Total Shame scores. Exploration of how and why gendered and sexual orientation social identities play a role in shame in the student context is therefore recommended. Gendered and sexual orientation discourses in South Africa do not necessarily have the same nuances as global counterparts. The Shame Experiences Study has demonstrated that South African specific discourses and shame legacies continue to shape race and class-based shame experiences and student identities. Further research should therefore use these understandings as a foundation to investigate reciprocal influences on gendered shame experiences in the student context.

This study did not pursue mental health as an object of enquiry but it emerged in the data likely due to the strong links that have been found between high levels of shame and psychopathology (Allan et al., 1994; Cochran & Rabinowitz, 2000; Greenberg & Iwakabe, 2011; Gutierrez & Hagedorn, 2013; Kaufman, 1989; Kim et al., 2011; Leary & Tangney, 2012; Herman, 2012; Orth et al., 2006; Morrison, 1984, 2011; Scheel et al., 2014; Shepard and Rabinowitz, 2013). In light of ongoing concerns around students' mental

health (Bantjes et al., 2019; Côté, 2018) and the increase in student suicides (September, 2018), it is suggested that the relationship between shame and mental health warrants further investigation. This study has indicated that approximately 8% of students experienced shame that was more chronic in nature and that 3% of students experienced intense shame that had an extreme impact on quality of life. These are psychologically at-risk students. This study can be used as a point of departure for understanding how at-risk students are less likely to seek help because shame and the stratification of shame in society leads to avoidance, withdrawal and complicates help-seeking behaviour.

There was a lack of healthy shame coping evident in the data. While it can be argued that this was due, at least in part, to the nature of the investigation in which shame was made visible as the object of enquiry (Bowman & Hook, 2010), it may be worthwhile to explore the experiences of students who have metabolised shame in the university context to complement the existing body of knowledge on resilience in students. There is a growing body of research on shame specific resilience (Brown, 2006; Gilbert & Procter, 2006) which can be applied to the student context.

Because this research focussed on a single institution it may be worthwhile exploring lecturers' awareness of shame in this specific context. This study has illustrated how shame disrupted the lecturer-student relationship because students associated lecturers with the sanctioning power of the institution which consciously and unconsciously amplified insult and injury when interactions went awry. The lecturer perspective would potentially add an additional layer of understanding about how shame operates in the institutional domain and ideologies that may be fuelling it. The study itself could also serve to increase lecturers' awareness and sensitivity to student shame dynamics within the institution.

It may be fruitful to explore the role of shame in knowledge acquisition using Bion's (1962) theory of thinking because this study has illustrated students' conflicted relationship to knowledge which has become weaponised as a key resource within the institutional domain. The Shame Experiences Study has provided several foundational points that can be used for further inductive enquiry by illustrating how competitive knowledge acquisition and performativity undermined development, robbing students of authentic experience and exacerbating disengagement through a disconnect with their own thoughts and feelings. These matters are at the heart of the educational development community and Bionian theory could possibly provide fresh insights into how shame impacts thinking in a university context.

10.7. Final words

By using a psychosocial approach (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000) that considers how the reciprocal influences of shame at the micro, meso and macro-levels of social organisation (Turner, 2010) – including unconscious intersubjectivity – both constrain and produce shame, this study offers new possibilities for understanding shame in the student context. By tracing discursively constructed student positions and defensive shame moves and countermoves the thesis has called attention to shame as an important resource that signals threat to internalised imaginations of the self and relationships with others within the

institutional domain. In doing so, this study provides a compelling argument for considering the role of shame in student (mis)recognition, (mis)attunement, (dis)engagement and possibly negative student identities themselves.

References

Agyeman, G. S. (2008). White researcher-Black subjects: Exploring the challenges of researching the marginalised and 'invisible'. *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods, 6*(1), 77-84.

Ainley, P. (2008). The varieties of student experience – an open research question and some ways to answer it. *Studies in Higher Education, 33*(5), 615-624. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070802373222

Ajrouch, K. J. (2015). Toward a vigorous incorporation of culture in the study of human development. *Research in Human Development, 12*(3-4), 202-208. https://doi.org/10.1080/15427609.2015.1068046

Allan, S., Gilbert, P., & Goss, K. (1994). An exploration of shame measures – II: Psychopathology. *Personality and Individual Differences, 17*(5), 719–722. https://doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(94)90150-3

Antikainen, A., Houtsonen, J., Huotelin, H., & Kauppila, J. (1994). In search of the meaning of education. The case of educational generations in Finland. In E. Heikkinen, J. Kuusinen & I. Ruopilla (Eds.), *Preparation for Aging,* (pp. 63-72). Plenum Press.

Araujo, N., Carlin, D., Clarke, B., Morieson, L., Lukas, K., & Wilson, R. (2014). Belonging in the first year: A creative discipline cohort case study.*The International Journal of First Year in Higher Education, 5(*2), 21-31. https://doi.org/10.5204/intjfyhe.v5i2.240

Astin, A. W. (1993). *What matters in college?* Wiley.

Attewell, P., Lavin, P., Domina, T., & Levey, T. (2007). *Passing the torch: Does higher education for the disadvantaged pay off across the generations*? Russell Sage Foundation.

Auerbach, J. S. (1995). Review of Shame and the self [Review of the book *Shame and the self,* by F. J. Broucek]. *Psychoanalytic Psychology, 12*(1), 159–163. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0085193

Averill, J. R. (1980). A constructivist view of emotion. In R. Plutchik & H. Kellerman (Eds.), *Emotion: Theory research, and experience* (pp. 305-339). Academic Press.

Balint, E. (1993). *Before I was I.* Free Association Books.

Ball, S. J. (2016). Neoliberal education? Confronting the slouching beast. *Policy Futures in Education, 14*(8), 1046-1059. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210316664259

Banmen, J. (1988). Guilt and shame: Theories and therapeutic possibilities. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 11*(1), 79–91. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00715584

Bantjes, J., Lochner, C., Saal, W., Roos, Taljaard, L., Page, D., Auerbach, R. P., Mortier, P., Bruffaerts, R., Kessler, R. C., & Stein, D. J. (2019). Prevalence and sociodemographic correlates of common mental disorders among first-year university students in post-apartheid South Africa: Implications for a public mental health approach to student wellness. *BMC Public Health, 19*(922). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7218-y

Baron, P., & Corbin, L. (2012). Student engagement: Rhetoric and reality. *Higher Education Research & Development, 31*(6), 759-772. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2012.655711

Barrett, L. F. (2006). Are emotions natural kinds? *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 1*(1), 28-58. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6916.2006.00003.x

Barroso, A. K. (2015). *A critical Fanonian understanding of Black student identities at Rhodes University, South Africa*. [Master's thesis. Rhodes University]. SEALS. http://vital.seals.ac.za:8080/vital/access/manager/PdfViewer/vital:3391/SOURCEPDF?viewPdfInternal=1

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin, 117*(3), 497–529. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.117.3.497

Bazana, S., & Mogotsi, O. P. (2017). Social identities and racial integration in historically White universities: A literature review of the experiences of Black students. *Transformation in Higher Education, 2*. https://doi.org/10.4102/the.v2i0.25

Becher, T. (1989). *Academic tribes and territories: Intellectual inquiry and the culture of disciplines*. Society for Research into Higher Education/Open University Press.

Benetti-McQuoid, J., & Bursik, K. (2005). Individual differences in experiences of and responses to guilt and shame: Examining the lenses of gender and gender role. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research, 53*(1-2), 133–142. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-005-4287-4

Benjamin, J. (1988). *The bonds of love: Psychoanalysis, feminism, and the problem of domination.* Pantheon.

Benjamin, J. (1998). *Shadow of the other: Intersubjectivity and gender in psychoanalysis*. Routledge.

Benjamin, J. (1995). *Like subjects, love objects: Essays on recognition and sexual difference.* Yale University Press.

Benjamin, J. (2004). Beyond doer and done to: An intersubjective view of thirdness. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 73*(1), 5-46. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2167-4086.2004.tb00151.x

Bernstein, B. (1975). *Class, codes, and control, Vol. 3: Towards a theory of educational transmissions (Primary socialization, language and education)*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Bernstein, B. (2000). *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity: Theory, research and critique (Rev. ed).* Rowman & Littlefield.

Bhana, D. (2014). Race matters and the emergence of class: Views from selected South African university students. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 28*(2), 355-367.

Bharuthram, S. (2018). Attending to the affective: Exploring first year students' emotional experiences at university. South African Journal of Higher Education, 32(2), 27-42. https://doi.org/10.20853/32-2-2113

Bibring, E. (1953). The mechanism of depression. In P. Greenacre (Ed.), *Affective disorders* (pp. 13-48). International University Press.

Bilevicius, E., Neufeld, D., Single, A., Foot, M., Ellery, M., Keough, M., & Johnson, E. A. (2019). Vulnerable narcissism and addiction: The mediating role of shame. *Addictive Behaviors, 92*, 115- 121.

Bilham, T. (2013). *For the love of learning: Innovations from outstanding university teachers*. Macmillan Education.

Bion, W. R. (1962). The Psycho-analytic study of thinking. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 43*, 306-310. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2167-4086.2013.00030.x

Bion, W. R. (1967/2018). *Second thoughts: Selected papers on psychoanalysis.* Routledge.

Bloom, D. E., Canning, D., Chan, K., & Luca, D. L. (2014). Higher education and economic growth in Africa. *International Journal of African Higher Education, 1*(1), 23-57. https://doi.org/10.6017/ijahe.v1i1.5643

Blum, A. (2008). Shame and guilt, misconceptions and controversies: A critical review of the literature. *Traumatology, 14*(3), 91–102. https://doi.org/10.1177/1534765608321070

Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss, Vol 1: Attachment.* Basic Books.

Bowman, B., & Hook, D. (2010). Paedophile as apartheid event: Genealogical lessons for working with the apartheid archive. *Psychology in Society, 40*, 64-82.

Branney, P., Gough, B., & Madill, A. (2009). The other side of social psychology? A review of the utility of Lacanian psychoanalysis with a focus on the theory of the four discourses. *Annual Review of Critical Psychology, 7*, 187-204.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. Sage.

Brint, S., Cantwell, A. M., & Hanneman, R. A. (2008). The two cultures of undergraduate academic engagement. *Research in Higher Education, 49*(5), 383-402. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-008-9090-y

Britzman, D. P. (2015). *A psychoanalyst in the classroom: On the human condition in education.* State University of New York.

Bronstein, C. (2001). Bion's theory of containment. In C. Bronstein (Ed.), *Kleinian theory: A contemporary perspective* (pp. 165-180). Wiley.

Brophy, M., & Kruger, G. (2013). Sex differences in the attribution of shame and guilt. *Journal of Psychology in Africa, 23*(2), 251-258. https://doi.org/10.1080/14330237.2013.10820621

Broucek, F. J. (1982). Shame and its relationship to early narcissistic developments. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 63*(3), 369-378.

Broucek, F. J. (1991). *Shame and the self.* Guilford Press

Brown, B. (2006). Shame resilience theory: A grounded theory study on women and shame. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services , 87*(1), 43-52. https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.3483

Brown, L. N. (2016). *Narratives of belonging amongst students at a historically White university*. [Masters thesis. Stellenbosch University]. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/188221619.pdf

Bryson, C. (2013). Creating space for student autonomy and engagement through partnership and letting go. In T. Bilham (Ed.), *For the love of learning: Innovations from outstanding university teachers*. (pp. 180-184). Palgrave Macmillan.

Bryson, C., Hardy, C., & Hand, L. (2009, 22 - 24 May). *An in-depth investigation of students' engagement throughout their first year in university* [Paper presentation]. UK National Transition Conference. London.

Burke Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher, 33*(14), 14-26. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033007014

Burke Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(2), 112-133. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689806298224

Burke, P. J. (2012). *The right to higher education: Beyond widening participation*. Routlegde.

Burke P. J. (2016). Access to and widening participation in higher education. In J. Shin & P. Teixeira (Eds.) *Encyclopedia of International Higher Education Systems and Institutions*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9553-1_47-1

Burke, P. J., Bennett, A., Burgess, C., Gray, K., & Southgate, E. (2016). *Capability, belonging and equity in higher education: Developing inclusive approaches*. University of Newcastle.

Burke, P. J., Stevenson, J., & Whelan, P. (2015).'Teaching excellence' and pedagogic stratification in higher education. *International Studies in Widening Participation, 2*(2), 29–43. http://shura.shu.ac.uk/11087/

Butler, J. (1997). *Excitable Speech: A politics of the performative*. Routledge.

Callender, C., & Jackson, J. (2005). Does the fear of debt deter students from higher education? *Journal of Social Policy, 34*(4), 509-540. https://doi.org/10.1017/S004727940500913X

Callender, C., Ramsden, P., & Griggs, J. (2014). *Review of the 'National Student Survey' (Summary Report)*. Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/*/http:/www.hefce.ac.uk/#d.en.87657

Cambridge University Press. (2020). Trigger. In *Cambridge Dictionary*. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/trigger

Campbell, D. T., & Fiske, D. W. (1959). Convergent and discriminant validation by the multitrait-multimethod matrix. *Psychological Bulletin, 56*(2), 81-105. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0046016

Camras, L. A., & Shuster, M. M. (2013). Current emotion research in developmental psychology. *Emotion Review, 5*(3), 321–329. https://doi.org10.1177/1754073913477516

Canham, H., & Williams, R. (2016). Being black, middle class and the object of two gazes. *Ethnicities, 17*(1), 23-46. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796816664752

Carolissen, R., & Kiguwa, P. (2018). Narrative explorations of the micro-politics of students' citizenship, belonging and alienation at South African universities. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 32*(3), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.20853/32-3-2542

Carter, P. L. (2006). Straddling boundaries: Identity, culture and school. *Sociology of Education, 27*(4), 304-328. https://doi.org/10.1177/003804070607900402

Cartwright, D. (2004). The psychoanalytic research interview: Preliminary suggestions. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 52*(1), 209-242. https://doi.org/10.1177/00030651040520010501

Case, J. M., & Gunstone, R. (2006). Metacognitive development: A view beyond cognition. *Research in Science Education, 36*(1), 51-67. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11165-004-3953-9

Case, J. M. (2008). Alienation and engagement: Development of an alternative theoretical framework for understanding student learning. *Higher Education, 55*(3), 321-332.

Case, J. M., Marshall, D., McKenna, S., Mogashana, D. (2018). *Going to university. The influence of higher education on the lives of young South Africans*. African Minds.

Chase, E., & Walker, R. (2013). The co-construction of shame in the context of poverty: Beyond a threat to the social bond. *Sociology, 47*(4), 739-754. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038512453796

Cheng, D. X. (2004). Students' sense of campus community: What it means, and what to do about it. *NASPA Journal, 41*(2), 216-234. https://doi.org/10.2202/1949-6605.1331

Chow, P.-K., & Cheng, S.-T. (2010). Shame, internalized heterosexism, lesbian identity, and coming out to others: A comparative study of lesbians in mainland China and Hong Kong. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 57*(1), 92-104. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017930

Claesson, K., & Sohlberg, S. (2002). Internalized shame and early interactions characterized by indifference, abandonment and rejection: Replicated findings. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy, 9(*4), 277-284.

Clarence, S. 2018. Understanding student experiences through the lens of academic staff development practice and research. In P. Ashwin & J. Case (Eds.), *Higher education pathways: South African undergraduate education and the public good* (pp. 204-215). African Minds.

Clarke, S. (1999). Splitting difference: Psychoanalysis, hatred and exclusion. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 29*(1), 21–35. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5914.00089

Clarke, S. (2003). *Social theory, psychoanalysis and racism*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Cloete, N. (2016). For sustainable funding and fees, the undergraduate system in South Africa must be restructured. *South African Journal of Science 112*(3/4), 5-9. https://doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2016/a0146

Clore, G. L., & Ortony, A. (2013). Psychological construction in the OCC model of emotion. *Emotion Review*, *5*(4), 335-343. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073913489751

Coates, H. (2010). Development of the Australasian survey of student engagement (AUSSE). *Higher Education, 60*(1), 1-17. 10.1007/s10734-009-9281-2

Cochran, S. V., & Rabinowitz, F. E. (2000). *Practical resources for the mental health professional. Men and depression: Clinical and empirical perspectives.* Academic Press.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Academic Press.

Coles, P. (2015). Sibling rivalry at work: From family to groups. *Psychodynamic Practice, 21*(3), 254-263. https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14753634.2015.1037600

Collins. (2020). Select. In *Collins English Dictionary*. https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/select

Compton, W. C. (2005). *Introduction to positive psychology*. Thomson Wadsworth.

Côté, J. E. (2018). The enduring usefulness of Erikson's concept of the identity crisis in the 21st century: An analysis of student mental health concerns. *Identity, 18*(4), 251-263. https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2018.1524328

Couper, M. P. (2000). Web surveys: A review of issues and approaches. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 64*(4), 464-494. https://doi.org/10.1086/318641

Cousin, G. (2006). Threshold concepts, troublesome knowledge and emotional capital: An exploration into learning about others. In J. H. F. Meyer, & R. Land (Eds.), *Overcoming barriers to student understanding: Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge* (pp. 134-147). Routledge.

Cranmer, S. (2006). Enhancing graduate employability: Best intentions and mixed outcomes. *Studies in Higher Education, 31*(2), 169-184. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070600572041

Creswell, J. W. (2008). The "movement" of mixed methods research and the role of educators. *South African Journal of Education, 28*(3), 321-333. https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v28n3a176

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.

Creswell, J. W. & Plano Clark, V. L. (2006). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage.

Creswell, J. W. & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Cross, M., & Johnson, B. (2008). Establishing a space of dialogue and possibilities: Student experience and meaning at the University of the Witwatersrand. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 22*(2), 302-321. https://doi.org.10.4314/sajhe.v22i2.25787

Cross, M., Shalem, Y., Backhouse, J., & Adams, F. (2009). How undergraduate students 'negotiate' academic performance within a diverse university environment. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 23*(21-42). https://doi.org/10.4314/sajhe.v23i1.44800

Crozier, W. R. (2014). Differentiating shame from embarrassment. *Emotion Review, 6*(3), 269-276. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073914523800

Cureton, D., & Gravestock, P. (2019). 'We belong': Differential sense of belonging and its meaning for different ethnicity groups in higher education. *Compass: Journal of Learning and Teaching, 12*(1).

Daehnert, C. (1998). The False Self as a means of disidentification: A psychoanalytic case study. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 34*(2), 251-257. https://doi.org/10.1080/00107530.1998.10746361

Dahl, A., Campos, J. J., & Witherington, D. C. (2011). Emotional action and communication in early moral development. *Emotion Review, 3*(2), 147-157. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073910387948

Dall'Alba, G., & Barnacle, R. (2007). An ontological turn for higher education. *Studies in Higher Education, 32*(6), 679-691. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070701685130

D'Amour, L. (2020). *Relational psychoanalysis at the heart of teaching and learning: How and why it matters* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://www.routledge.com/Relational-Psychoanalysis-at-the-Heart-of-Teaching-and-Learning-How-and/DAmour/p/book/9781138097582

Davids, M. F. (1996). Frantz Fanon: The struggle for inner freedom. *Free Associations, 6(*38), 205-234.

Davids, M. F. (2002a) 'Fathers in the internal world: From boy to man to father'. In J. Trowell & A. Etchegoyen (Eds.), *The importance of fathers: A psychoanalytic re-evaluation* (pp. 67-92). Brunner-Routledge.

Davids, M. F. (2002b). September 11th 2001: Some thoughts on racism and religious prejudice as an obstacle. *British Journal of Psychotherapy, 18*(3), 361-366. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0118.2002.tb00037.x

Davids, M. F. (2006). Internal racism, anxiety and the world outside: Islamophobia Post-9/11. *Organisational and Social Dynamics, 6(*1), 63-85.

Davids, M. F. (2011). *Internal racism: A psychoanalytic approach to race and difference*. Red Globe Press.

DeHoyos, L. R., & Ramirez, N. (2006). The relationship between shame and acculturation among Latino/Chicano students. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work, 15(*1), 147-166. https://doi.org/10.1300/J051v15n01_07

Dearing, R. L., & Tangney, J. P. (2011). *Shame in the therapy hour.* American Psychological Association.

DeYoung, P. A. (2015). *Understanding and treating chronic shame: A relational/neurobiological approach.* Routledge.

Dhuffar-Pottiwal, M., & Griffiths, M. D. (2014). Understanding the role of shame and its consequences in female hypersexual behaviours: A pilot study. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions, 3*(4), 231-237.

Dickerson, S. S., Gruenewald, T. L., & Kemeny, M. E. (2004). When the social self is threatened: Shame, physiology, and health. *Journal of Personality, 72*(6), 1191-1216. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2004.00295.x

Dickerson, S. S., & Kemeny, M. E. (2004). Acute stressors and cortisol responses: A theoretical integration and synthesis of laboratory research. *Psychological Bulletin, 130*(3), 355–391. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.130.3.355

Dolby, N. (2000). The shifting ground of race: The role of taste in youth's production of identities. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 3*(1), 7-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/713693014

Dolby, N. (2001). White fright: The politics of white youth identity in South Africa. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 22*(1), 5-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425690020030756

Dolby, N. (2002). Making White: Constructing race in a South African high school. *Curriculum Inquiry, 32*(1), 7-29. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3202188

Donnelly, M. (2018). Inequalities in higher education: Applying the sociology of Basil Bernstein. *Sociology, 52*(2), 316-332. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038516656326

Douglas, M. (1966). *Purity and danger*. Routledge.

Duckworth, V., Thomas, L., & Bland, D. (2016). Joining the dots between teacher education and widening participation in higher education. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 21*(3), 260-277. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13596748.2016.1195167

Dutton, J. E., Dukerich, J. M., & Harquail, C. V. (1994). Organizational images and member identification. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 39*(2), 239-263. https://doi.org/10.2307/2393235

Duval, S., & Wicklund, R. A. (1972). *A theory of objective self awareness.* Academic Press.

Dweck, C. S., & Leggett, E. L. (1988). A social-cognitive approach to motivation and personality. *Psychological Review, 95*(2), 256–273. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.95.2.256

Eagle, G. (2018). Engaging with the hatred of the other: Personal reflections discussion of "States of exile and marginalization". *Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 28*(3), 279-284. https://doi.org/10.1080/10481885.2018.1459385

Efthim, P. W., Kenny, M. E., & Mahalik, J. R. (2001). Gender role stress in relation to shame, guilt, and externalization. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 79*(4), 430–438. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2001.tb01990.x

Elison, J., Lennon, R., & Pulos, S. (2006). Investigating the Compass of Shame: The development of the Compass of Shame Scale. *Social Behavior and Personality, 34*(3), 221-238. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2006.34.3.221

Ellis, L. A., McCabe, K. L., Rahilly, K. A., Nicholas, M. A., Davenport, T. A., Burns, J. M., & Hickie, I. B. (2014). Encouraging young men's participation in mental health research and treatment: Perspectives in our technological age. *Clinical Investigation, 4*(10), 881-888.

Else-Quest, N. M., Higgins, A., Allison, C., & Morton, L. C. (2012). Gender differences in self-conscious emotional experience: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 138*(5), 947–981. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027930

Emde, R. N., & Fonagy, P. (1997). An emerging culture for psychoanalytic research? *International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 78*, 643-652.

Emerson, P., & Frosh, S. (2004). *Critical narrative analysis in psychology: A guide to practice*. Palgrave.

Eng, D. L., & Han, S. (2000). A dialogue on racial melancholia. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 10*(4), 667-700. https://doi.org/10.1080/10481881009348576

Erikson, E.H. (1959). *Identity and the life cycle: Selected papers*. International Universities Press.

Erikson, E. H. (1963). *Childhood and society*. Norton.

Erikson, E. H. (1964). *Insight and responsibility: Lectures on the ethical implications of psychoanalytic insight*. Norton.

Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. Norton.

Erikson, E. H. (1975). *Life history and the historical moment*. Norton.

Erikson, E. H. (1980). *Identity and the life cycle*. International University Press.

Ettorre, E. (2013). Chapter 9. Drug user researchers as autoethnographers: "Doing reflexivity" with women drug users. *Subtance Use & Misuse, 48*(13), 1377-1385. https://doi.org/10.3109/10826084.2013.814999

Fanon, F. (1952). *Black skin, white masks*. Pluto Press.

Fenichel, O. (1946/2005). *The psychoanalytic theory of neurosis.* Routledge.

Ferguson, T. J., & Dempsey, H. L. (2000). Engendering gender differences in shame and guilt: Stereotypes, socialization, and situational pressures. In A. Fischer (Ed.), *Gender and emotion: Social psychological perspectives* (pp. 254-276). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CB09780511628191.013

Ferguson, T. J., & Eyre, H. L. (2000). Engendering gender differences in shame and guilt: Stereotypes, socialization, and situational pressures. In A. H. Fischer (Ed.), *Studies in emotion and social interaction. Second series. Gender and emotion: Social psychological perspectives* (pp. 254-276). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511628191.013

Ferguson, T. J., Eyre, H. L., & Ashbaker, M. (2000). Unwanted identities: A key variable in shame–anger links and gender differences in shame. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research, 42*(3-4), 133–157. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007061505251

Fetters, M. D., & Molina-Azorin, J. F. (2017). The Journal of Mixed Methods Research starts a new decade: Perspectives of past editors on the current state of the field and future directions. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 11*(4). https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689817729476.

Finchilescu, G., Tredoux, C., Mynhardt, J., Pillay, J., & Muianga, L. (2007). Accounting for lack of interracial mixing amongst South African university students. *South African Journal of Psychology, 37(*4), 720-737. https://doi.org/10.1177/008124630703700404

Fink, A. (2016). *How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide* (6th ed.). Sage.

Firfirey, N., & Carolissen, R. (2010). 'I keep myself clean... at least when you see me, you don't know I am poor': Student experiences of poverty in South African higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, *24*(6), 987-1002.

Flaherty, J. (2008). *'I mean we're not the richest but we're not poor': Discourses of 'Poverty' and 'Social Exclusion'*. [Doctoral thesis, Loughborough University]. https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/

Fonagy, P. (2018). *Attachment theory and psychoanalysis*. Routledge.

Fonagy, P., Gergely, G., Jurist, E. L., & Target, M. (2002). *Affect regulation, mentalization, and the development of the self.* Other Press.

Fonagy, P., Gergely, G., & Target, M. (2008). Psychoanalytic constructs and attachment theory and research. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 783–810). The Guilford Press.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language by Michel Foucault*. (A. M. Sheridan Smith, Trans.). Pantheon. (Original work published 1969).

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972-1977 by Michel Foucault*. (C. Gordon, Ed., C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham & K Soper, Trans.). Pantheon.

Fowler, F. J. (2014). *Survey research methods* (5th ed.). Sage.

Freud, S. (1901/1914). *The psychopathology of everyday life.* (A. A. Brill, Trans.). Macmillan. (Original work published 1901). https://www.stmarys-ca.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/files/Psychopathology.pdf

Freud, S. (1914). On Narcissism: An introduction. In J. Strachey (Ed. & Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud Vol. XIV* (pp. 73–102). Hogarth.

Freud, S. (1917). Mourning and melancholia. In J. Strachey (Ed. & Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud Vol XIV* (pp. 243-258). Hogarth. https://www.sas.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Freud_MourningAndMelancholia.pdf

Freud, S. (1921). Group psychology and the analysis of the ego. In E. Jones (Ed.) & J. Stachey (Trans.), *The International Psycho-Analytical Library, No. 6*. Hogarth.

Freud, S. (1938). Splitting of the ego in the process of defence. In J. Strachey (Ed. & Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud Vol. XXIII* (pp. 271–278). Hogarth.

Freud, S., & Breuer, J. (1895/2004). *Studies in Hysteria*. (N. Luckhurst, Trans. & R. Bowlby, Ed.). Penguin Classics. (Original work published 1895).

Fromm, E. (1977). *To have or to be?* Jonathan Cape.

Fromm, E. (1942/2001). *The fear of freedom.* Routledge.

Frosh, S. (1991). *Identity crisis: Modernity, psychoanalysis, and the self.* Palgrave Macmillan.

Frosh, S. (2002). *After words: The personal in gender, culture, and psychotherapy*. Palgrave.

Frosh, S. (2019). Psychosocial studies with psychoanalysis. *Journal of Psychosocial Studies, 12*(1-2), 101-114. https://doi.org/10.1332/147867319X15608718110952

Frosh, S., & Baraitser, L. (2003). Thinking, recognition and otherness. *The Psychoanalytic Review, 90*, 771-789. http://doi.org/10.1521/prev.90.6.771.28786

Frosh, S., & Baraitser, L. (2008). Psychoanalysis and psychosocial studies. *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society, 13*(4), 346–365. https://doi.org/10.1057/pcs.2008.8

Frosh, S., & Emmerson, P. D. (2005). Interpretation and over-interpretation: Disputing the meaning of texts. *Qualitative Research, 5*(3), 307-324. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794105054457

Frosh, S., Phoenix, A., & Pattman, R. (2000). "But it's racism I really hate": Young masculinities, racism, and psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Psychology, 17*(2), 225-242. https://doi.org/10.1037/0736-9735.17.2.225

Frosh, S., Phoenix, A., & Pattman, R. (2003). Taking a stand: Using psychoanalysis to explore the positioning of subjects in discourse. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 42*, 39-53.

Frosh, S., & Saville Young, L. (2008). Psychoanalytic approaches to qualitative psychology. In C. Willig & W. Stainton-Rogers (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Reserch in Psychology* (pp. 109-126). Sage.

Gadd, D., & Corr, M. L. (2017). Beyond typologies: Foregrounding meaning and motive in domestic violence perpetration. *Deviant Behaviour, 38*(7), 781-791. https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2016.1197685

Galliher, R. V., & Kerpelman, J. K. (2012). The intersection of identity development and peer relationship processes in adolescence and young adulthood: Contributions of the special issue [Editorial]. *Journal of Adolescence, 35*(6), 1409-1415. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2012.09.007

Gentile, J. (2007). Wrestling with matter: Origins of intersubjectivity. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 76*(2) 547-582. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2167-4086.2007.tb00267.x

Gerber, J. P., Wheeler, L., & Suls, J. (2018). A social comparison theory meta-analysis 60+ years on. *Psychological Bulletin, 144*(2), 177-197. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000127

Gergen, M. M., & Gergen, K. J. (2000). Qualitative inquiry: Tensions and transformations. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1025-1046). Sage.

Geyer, F. (2001). Alienation, sociology of. In N. J. Smelser & P. B. Baltes (Eds.), *International encyclopaedia of the social and behavioral sciences* (Vol. 1, pp. 388-392). Elsevier.

Ghent, E. (1990). Masochism, submission, surrender. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 26*(1), 108-136. https://doi.org/10.1080/00107530.1990.10746643

Gilbert, P. (1989). *Human nature and suffering.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gilbert, P. (1997). The evolution of social attractiveness and its role in shame, humiliation, guilt and therapy. *British Journal of Medical Psychology, 70*(2), 113-147. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8341.1997.tb01893.x

Gilbert, P. (2000). The relationship of shame, social anxiety and depression: The role of the evaluation of social rank. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, *7*(3), 174-189. https://doi.org/10.1002/1099-0879(200007)7:3<174::AID-CPP236>3.0.CO;2-U

Gilbert, P. (2003). Evolution, social roles, and the differences in shame and guilt. *Social Research: An International Quarterly, 70*(4), 1205-1230.

Gilbert, P., & Procter, S. (2006). Compassionate mind training for people with high shame and self-criticism: Overview and pilot study of a group therapy approach. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy, 13*(6), 353-379. https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.507

Gillborn, D. (2014). Racism as policy: A critical race analysis of education reforms in the United States and England. *The Educational Forum, 28*(1), 26-41. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2014.850982

Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual: Essays on face-to-face interaction*. Aldine.

Goldberg, D. T. (2016, August 12). *Coming to you soon: Uber U*. Inside Higher Ed. https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/08/12/dangers-uberization-higher-education-essay

Goodenow, C., & Grady, K. E. (1993). The relationship of school belonging and friends' values to academic motivation among urban adolescent students. *Journal of Experimental Education, 62*(1), 60-71. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.1993.9943831

Gorard, S., Smith, E., May, H., Thomas, L., Adnett, N., & Slack, N. (2006). *Review of widening participation research: Addressing the barriers to participation in higher education*. University of York.

Gottschalk, L. A., Winget, C. N., & Gleser, G. C. (1969). *Manual of instructions for using the Gottschalk-Gleser-Content Analysis Scales: Anxiety, hostility, and social alienation-personal disorganisation*. University of California Press.

Gough, B. (2004). Psychoanalysis as a resource for understanding emotional ruptures in the text: The case of defensive masculinities. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 43*(2), 245-267. https://doi.org/10.1348/1044666041501651

Greenberg, J. R., & Mitchell, S. A. (1983). *Object relations in psychoanalytic theory*. Harvard University Press.

Greenberg, L. S., & Iwakabe, S. (2011). Emotion-focused therapy and shame. In R. L. Dearing & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), *Shame in the therapy hour* (pp. 69-90). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/12326-003

Gross, C. A., & Hansen, N. E. (2000). Clarifying the experience of shame: The role of attachment style, gender, and investment in relatedness. *Personality and Individual Differences, 28*(5), 897-907. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(99)00148-8

Guba, E. G. (1990). *The paradigm dialog*. Sage.

Gutierrez, D., & Hagedorn, W. B. (2013). The toxicity of shame applications for Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling, 35*(1), 43-59. https://doi.org/10.17744/mehc.35.1.5n16p4x782601253

Halse, C. (2018). *Interrogating belonging for young people in schools.* Palgrave.

Hardy, I., & Woodcock, S. (2015) Inclusive education policies: Discourses of difference, diversity and deficit. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 19*(2), 141-164, 10.1080/13603116.2014.908965

Harris, C. A., & Khanna, N. (2010). Black is, Black ain't: Biracials, middle-class Blacks, and the social construction of blackness. *Sociological Spectrum, 30*(6), 639-670. https://doi.org/10.1080/02732173.2010.510057

Harris, M. (1981). The individual in the group: On learning to work with the psychoanalytic method. In J. S. Grotstein (Ed.), *Do I Dare Disturb the Universe? A Memorial to W. R. Bion* (pp. 647-660). Karnac.

Hemsley-Brown, J., Melewar, T.C., & Nguyen, B. (2016). Exploring brand identity, meaning, image, and reputation (BIMIR) in higher education. *Journal of Business Research, 69*(8), 3019-3022. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.01.016

Henning, E., van Rensburg, W., & Smit, B. (2004). *Finding your way in qualitative research.* Van Schaik.

Henry, H. M. (2020). Internalized sexual stigma as an internal minority stress: The Egyptian gay experience. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health, 24*(2), 174-189. https://doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2019.1706681

Hequembourg, A. L., & Dearing, R. L. (2013). Exploring shame, guilt, and risky substance use among sexual minority men and women. *Journal of Homosexuality, 60*(4), 615-638. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.760365

Herman, J. L. (2012). Shattered shame states and their repair. In J. Yellin & K. White (Eds.), *Shattered states: Disorganised attachment and its repair* (1st ed., pp. 157-170). Karnac.

Hinshelwood, R. D. (1991). Pscyhodynamic formulation in assessment for psychotherapy. *British Journal of Psychotherapy, 8*(2), 166-174. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0118.1991.tb01173.x

Hinshelwood, R. D. (2003). *Clinical Klein*. *From theory to practice.* Basic Books.

Hinshelwood, R. D., & Fortuna, T. (2018). *Melanie Klein the basics.* Routledge.

Hockings, C., Cooke, S., & Bowl, M. (2007). 'Academic engagement' within a widening participation context—a 3D analysis. *Teaching in Higher Education, 12*(5-6), 721-733. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510701596323

Hoggett, P. (1992). A place for experience: A psychoanalytic perspective on boundary, identity, and culture. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 10*(3), 345-346. https://doi.org/10.1068/d100345

Hollway, W. (2006). Paradox in the pursuit of a critical theorization of the development of self in family relationships. *Theory & Psychology*, *16*(4), 465-482. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354306066201

Hollway, W. (2010). Relationality: The intersubjective foundations of identity. In M. Wetherell, & C. T. Mohanty (Eds.), *Sage Handbook of Identities* (pp. 216-232). Sage.

Hollway, W. (2011a). In between external and internal worlds: Imagination in transitional space. *Methodological Innovations, 6*(3), 50-60. https://doi.org/10.4256/mio.2011.006

Hollway, W. (2011b). Psycho-social writing from data. *Journal of Psychosocial Studies*, *4*(2), 92-101.

Hollway, W. (2011c). Through discursive psychology to a psycho-social approach. In N. Bozatzis & T. Dragonas (Eds.), *The discursive turn in social psychology* (pp. 139-158). WorldShare/Taos Institute.

Hollway, W. (2013). Locating unconscious, "societal-collective" processes in psycho-social research. *Organisational and Social Dynamics, 13*(1), 22-40.

Hollway, W. (2015). *Knowing mothers. Researching maternal identity change*. Palgrave.

Hollway, W., & Jefferson, T. (2000). *Doing qualitative research differently. Free association, narrative and the interview method* (1st ed.). Sage.

Hollway, W., & Jefferson, T. (2005). Panic and perjury: A psychosocial exploration of agency. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 44*(2), 147-163. https://doi.org/10.1348/014466604X18983

Hollway, W., & Jefferson, T. (2013). *Doing qualitative research differently. A psychosocial approach* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Holmes, J. (2013). A comparison of clinical psychoanalysis and research interviews. *Human Relations, 10(*2), 160-173. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726712465315

Hook, D., W. (2008). Articulating psychoanalysis and psychosocial studies: Limitations and possibilities. *Psychoanalysis Culture & Society, 13*(4), 397-405. https://doi.org/10.1057/pcs.2008.23

Hooks, B. (1996). *Killing rage: Ending racism.* Holt.

Hornsby, D. J., & Osman, R. (2014). Massification in higher education: Large classes and student learning. *Higher Education, 67*(6), 711-719. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-014-9733-1

Hunter, M. (2010). Racial desegregation and schooling in South Africa: Contested geographies of class formation. *Environment and planning A, 42(*11), 2640-2657. https://doi.org/10.1068/a439

Ivey, G. (1989). *A case study of narcissistic pathology: An object relations perspective*. [Masters thesis. Rhodes University]. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/145047971.pdf

Izard, C. E. (2010). The many meanings/aspects of emotion: Definitions, functions, activation, and regulation. *Emotion Review, (2)*4, 363-370. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073910374661

Jacobson, E. (1964). *The self and the object world*. International Universities Press.

Johnson, D. R., Soldner, M., Brown Leonard, J., Alvarez, P., Kurotsuchi Inkelas, K., Rowan-Kenyon, H., & Longerbeam, S. (2007). Examining sense of belonging among first year undergraduates from different racial/ethnic groups. *Journal of College Student Development, 48*(5), 525-542.

Jones, R. (2018). The student experience of undergraduate students: Towards a conceptual framework. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 42*(8), 1040-1054. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2017.1349882

Kahu, E. R. (2013). Framing student engagement in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education, 38*(15), 758-773. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2011.598505

Kaplowitz, M. D., Hadlock, T. D., & Levine, R. (2004). A comparison of web and mail survey response rates. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 68*(1), 94-101. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfh006

Kaufman, G. (1989). *The psychology of shame: Theory and treatment of shame-based syndromes*. Springer.

Keller, K. H., Mollen, D., & Rosen, L. H. (2015). Spiritual maturity as a moderator of the relationship between Christian fundamentalism and shame. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 43*(1), 34-46. https://doi.org/10.1177/009164711504300104

Kernberg, O. F. (1970). Factors in the psychoanalytic treatment of narcissistic personalities. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 18*, 51-85. https://doi.org/10.1177/000306517001800103

Kernberg, O. F. (1985). *Borderline conditions and pathological narcissism.* Rowman & Littlefield.

Kerpelman, J. L., & Pittman, J. F. (2018). Erikson and the relational context of identity: Strengthening connections with attachment theory. *Identity, 18*(4), 306-314. https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2018.1523726

Kessi, S., & Cornell, J. (2015). Coming to UCT: Black students, transformation and discourses of race. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa, (3)*2.

Kezar, A., & Kinzie, J. L. (2006). Examining the ways institutions create student engagement: The role of mission. *Journal of College Student Development, 47*(2), 149-172

Kilborne, B. (1992). Fields of shame: Anthropologists abroad. *Ethos, 20*(2), 230-253. https://doi.org/10.1525//eth.1992.20.2.02a00050

Kilborne, B. (2005). Shame conflicts and tragedy in the scarlet letter. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 53(2), 465-83. https://doi.org/10.1177/00030651050530021601

Kim, S., Thibodeau, R., & Jorgensen, R. S. (2011). Shame, guilt, and depressive symptoms: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin, 137*(1), 68–96. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021466

Klein, D. C. (1991). The humiliation dynamic: An overview. *Journal of Primary Prevention, 12,* 93-121. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02015214

Klein, M. (1946). Notes on some schizoid mechanisms. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 27*, 99-110.

Klein, M. (1952). The origins of transference. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 33*, 433-438.

Klein, M. (1975a). Envy and gratitude. *In envy and gratitude and other works 1946-1963. The writings of Melanie Klein, Vol. III* (pp. 176-235). Hogarth. (Original work published 1957).

Klein, M. (1975b). *Love, guilt and reparation and other works 1921-1945, The writings of Melanie Klein, Vol I*. Karnac.

Klein, M. (1975c). Our adult world and its roots in infancy. *Envy and gratitude and other works 1946-1963* M. Masud & R Khan Eds. Hogarth, pp. 247-263. (Original work published 1959).

Klein, M. (1997). *Envy and gratitude and other works 1946–1963, Vol III*. Vintage.

Klemencic, M., & Chirikov. I. (2015). How do we know how students experience higher education? On the use of student surveys. In A. Curaj, L. Matei, R. Pricopie, J. Salmi & P. Scott (Eds.), *The*

European higher education area: Between critical reflections and future policies (pp. 361-379). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-20877-0_24

Kohut, H. (1971). *The analysis of the self.* University of Chicago Press.

Kohut, H. (1977). *The restoration of the self*. University Of Chicago Press.

Kohut, H. (1984). *How does analysis cure?* University of Chicago Press.

Krause,K.-L. (2012). Student engagement: A messy policy challenge in higher education. In I. Solomonides, A. Reid & P. Petocz (Eds.), *Engaging with learning in higher education* (pp. 457-474). Libri Publishing.

Kreber, C. (2006). Editor's notes. *New Directions for Teaching & Learning, 107,* 73-84.

Kring, A. M. (2010). The future of emotion research in the study of psychopathology. *Emotion Review, 2*(3), 225-228. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073910361986

Kübler-Ross, E. (1969). *On death and dying*. Macmillan.

Kuh, G. D. (2009). The national survey of student engagement: Conceptual and empirical foundations. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 141,* 5-20.

Kuh, G. D., Cruce, T. M., Shoup, R., Kinzie, J., & Gonyea, R. M. (2008). Unmasking the effects of student engagement on first-year college grades and persistence. *The Journal of Higher Education, 79*(5), 540-563. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2008.11772116

Lane, R. C., & Meisels, M. (2013). *A history of the division of psychoanalysis of the American Psychological Association*. Routledge.

Lange, M. (2017). *#Hashtag: An analysis of the #FeesMustFall movement at South African universities*. Johannesburg. Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation. https://www.csvr.org.za/pdf/An-analysis-of-the-FeesMustFall-Movement-at-South-African-universities.pdf

Lansky, M. R. (1987). Shame and domestic violence. In D. L. Nathanson (Ed.), *The many faces of shame* (pp. 335-362). The Guilford Press.

Lansky, M. R. (1995). Shame and the scope of psychoanalytic understanding. *American Behavioral Scientist, 38*(3), 1076-1090. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764295038008004

Lansky, M. R. (2005). Hidden shame. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 53*(3), 865-890. https://doi.org/10.1177/00030651050530031101

Lansky, M. R., & Morrison, A. P. (Eds.). (2014). *The widening scope of shame*. Psychology Press.

Leary, M. R. (2007). Motivational and emotional aspects of the self. *Annual Review of Psychology, 58*, 317-344. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.58.110405.085658

Leary, M. R., & Tangney, J. P. (2012). The self as an organizing construct in the behavioral and social sciences. In M. R. Leary & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of self and identity* (pp. 1–18). The Guilford Press.

Leathwood, C. (2008). *International stratification and higher education policy*. Draft paper for the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE), Higher Education Policy Network, 30 June.

Lebeau, V. (2019). 'Feeling poor: Donald Winnicott and Daniel Blake'. *New Formations: A Journal of Culture, Theory, Politics, 96,* 160-175. http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/83692/

Lee, D. A., Scragg, P., & Turner, S. (2001). The role of shame and guilt in traumatic events: A clinical model of shame-based and guilt-based PTSD. *British Journal of Medical Psychology, 74*(4), 451-66. https://doi.org/10.1348/000711201161109

Le Grange, L. (2011). (Re)thinking (trans)formation in South African (higher) education. *Perspectives in Education, 29*(2), 1-9.

Lesch, E., Brits, S., & Naidoo, N. T. (2017). 'Walking on eggshells to not offend people': Experiences of same-sex student couples at a South African university. *The South African Journal of Higher Education, 31*(4), 127-149. http://dx.doi.org/10.20853/31-4-893

Letseka, M., & Maile, S. (2008). *High university drop-out rates: A threat to South Africa's future*. HSRC Policy Brief. Human Sciences Research Council. http://www.hsrc.ac.za/uploads/pageContent/3330/2008marDropout%20rates.pdf

Levine, A. R. (2005). The social face of shame and humiliation. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 53*(2), 525-534. https://doi.org/10.1177/00030651050530021901

Lewis, H. B. (1971). *Shame and guilt in neurosis*. International Universities Press.

Lewis, H. B. (Ed.). (1987). *The role of shame in symptom formation*. Erlbaum.

Lewis, M. (2003). The role of the self in shame. *Social Research, 70*(4), 1181-1204. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40971966

Lewis, M., & Ramsay, D. (2002). Cortisol response to embarrassment and shame. *Child Development, 73*(4), 1034-45. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00455

Oxford Lexico. (2020). Edge. In *Lexico.com.* https://www.lexico.com/definition/edge

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Sage.

Liotti, G. (2004). Trauma, dissociation, and disorganized attachment: Three strands of a single braid. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 41*(4), 472-486. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-3204.41.4.472

Loewald, H. W. (1980). *Papers on psychoanalysis*. Yale University Press.

Long, T., & Johnson, M. (2000). Rigour, reliability and validity in qualitative research. *Clinical Effectiveness in Nursing, 4*(1), 30-37. https://doi.org/10.1054/cein.2000.0106

Longhofer, J. L. (2013). Shame in the clinical process with LGBTQ clients. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 41*(3), 297-301. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-013-0455-0

Lopez, F. G., & Gormley, B. (2002). Stability and change in adult attachment style over the first-year college transition: Relations to self-confidence, coping, and distress patterns. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 49*(3), 355-364. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.49.3.355

Lorenzer, A. (2016). Language, life praxis and scenic understanding in psychoanalytic therapy. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 97*(5), 1399-1414. https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-8315.12601

Loveday, V. (2015). Embodying deficiency through 'affective practice': Shame, relationality, and the lived experience of social class and gender in higher education. *Sociology*, *50*(6), 1140–1155. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038515589301

Lynd, H. M. (1958/2014). *On shame and the search for identity*. Routledge.

Lyons-Ruth, K. (2003). Dissociation and the parent-infant dialogue: A longitudinal perspective from attachment research. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 51*(3), 883-911. https://doi.org/10.1177/00030651030510031501

Maassen P., & Cloete N. (2006). Global reform trends in higher education. In N. Cloete, P. Maassen, R Fehnel, T. Moja, T. Gibbon & H. Perold (Eds.), *Transformation in higher education. Global pressures and local realities* (pp. 7-33). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-4006-7_2

Mahler, M. S. (1967). On human symbiosis and the vicissitudes of individuation. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 15*(4), 740-763. https://doi.org/10.1177/000306516701500401

Manganyi, N. C. (1981). *Looking through the keyhole: Dissenting essays on the Black experience*. Raven.

Mann, S. J. (2001). Alternative perspectives on the student experience: Alienation and engagement. *Studies in Higher Education, 26*(1), 7-19. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070020030689

Mann, S. J. (2008). *Study, power and the university*. McGraw-Hill Education.

Marmarosh, C. L., & Mann, S. (2014). Patients' selfobject needs in psychodynamic psychodynamic psychotherapy: How they relate to client attachment, symptoms, and the therapy alliance. *Psychoanalytic Psychology, 31*(3), 297-313. https://doi.org.10.1037/a0036866

Masika, R. & Jones, J. (2016). Building student belonging and engagement: Insights into higher education students' experiences of participating and learning together. *Teaching in Higher Education, 21*(2), 138-150. https://doi.org/10.1037/A0036866

Maunder, R. E., Gingham, J., & Rogers, J. (2010) Transition in Higher Education: Exploring the experiences of first and second year psychology undergraduate students. *The Psychology of Education Review 34*(1), 50-54.

McDermott, E., Roen, K., & Scourfield, J. (2008). Avoiding shame: Young LGBT people, homophobia and self-destructive behaviours. *Culture, Health & Sexuality, 10*(8), 815–829. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691050802380974

McMahon, B. J., & Portelli, J. P. (Eds.). (2012). *Student engagement in urban schools: Beyond neoliberal discourses*. Information Age Publishing.

McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2006). *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry* (6th ed.). Pearson.

Meeuwisse, M., Severiens, S. E., & Born, M. (2010). Learning environment, interaction, sense of belonging and study success in ethnically diverse student groups. *Research in Higher Education, 51*(1), 528-545. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070902906780

Mehra, N. (1973). Alienation: Meaning, origins and forms. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 19*(2), 129–143.

Meltzer, D. (1981). The Kleinian expansion of Freud's metapsychology. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 62*, 177-185.

Mercer, J., & Saunders, D. (2004). Accommodating change: The process of growth and development amongst a mature student population. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 9*(2), 283-300. https://doi.org/10.1080/13596740400200171

Mereish, E. H., & Poteat, V. P. (2015). A relational model of sexual minority mental and physical health: The negative effects of shame on relationships, loneliness, and health. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 62*(3), 425–437. https://doi.org/10.1037

Merriam, S. B. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. Jossey-Bass.

Mertens, E. M. (2015). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology* (4th ed.). Sage.

Mesquita, B., & Boiger, M. (2014). Emotions in context: A sociodynamic model of emotions. *Emotion Review, 6*(4), 298-302. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073914534480

Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin, 129*(5), 674-697. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674

Meyer, J. H., & Land, R. (2005). Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge (2): Epistemological considerations and a conceptual framework for teaching and learning. *Higher Education, 49*(3), 373-388. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10734-004-6779-5

Miller, P. H. (1993). *Theories of developmental psychology* (3rd ed.). W H Freeman.

Miller, R. S. (1995a). Embarrassment and social behavior. In J. P. Tangney & K. W. Fischer (Eds.), *Self-conscious emotions: The psychology of shame, guilt, embarrassment, and pride* (pp. 322–339). Guilford Press.

Miller, R. S. (1995b). On the nature of embarrassability: Shyness, social evaluation, and social skill. *Journal of Personality, 63*(2), 315-339, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.1995.tb00812.x

Miller-Prieve, V. (2016). *Women, shame and mental health: A systematic review of approaches in psychotherapy*. [Masters thesis. St. Catherine University]. https://sophia.stkate.edu/msw_papers/630/

Mishler, E. (1990). Validation in inquiry-guided research: The role of exemplars in narrative studies. *Harvard Educational Review, 60(*4), 415-443. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.60.4.n4405243p6635752

Moleiro, C., & Pinto, N. (2015). Sexual orientation and gender identity: Review of concepts, controversies and their relation to psychopathology classification systems. *Frontiers in Psychology, 6.* https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01511

Moodley, J. (2013). *She broke my identity into invisible pieces: Transformation and Black students in higher education*. Unpublished manuscript. University of Cape Town. http://www.careers.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/117/Joy.Moodley.pdf

Morgan, D. L. (2007). Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained: Methodological implications of combining qualitative and quantitative methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(1), 48-76. https://doi.org/10.1177/2345678906292462

Morrison, A. P. (1983). Shame, ideal self and narcissism. *Journal of Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 19*(2), 295-318. https://doi.org/10.1080/00107530.1983.10746610

Morrison, A. P. (1984). Working with shame in psychoanalytic treatment. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 32*(3), 479-505. https://doi.org/10.1177/000306518403200303

Morrison, A. P. (Ed.). (1986). *Essential papers on narcissism.* New York University Press.

Morrison, A. P. (1987). The eye turned inward: Shame and the self. In D. L. Nathanson (Ed.), *The many faces of shame* (pp. 271-291). The Guilford Press.

Morrison, A. P. (1989). *Shame: The underside of narcissism.* Analytic Press.

Morrison, A. P. (1994). The breadth and boundaries of a self-psychological immersion in shame a one-and-a-half-person perspective. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 4*(1), 455-479. https://doi.org/10.1080/10481889409539003

Morrison, A. P. (1998). *The culture of shame*. Random House.

Morrison, A. P. (2007). Shame: A major instigator of secrets. In P. Buirski & A. Kottler (Eds.), *New developments in self psychology practice* (pp. 167-179). Jason Aronson.

Morrison, A. P. (2008). The analyst's shame. *Contemporary psychoanalysis, 44*(1), 65-82. https://doi.org/10.1080/00107530.2008.10745951

Morrison, A. P. (2011). The psychodynamics of shame. In R. L. Dearing & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), *Shame in the therapy hour* (pp. 23-43). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/12326-001

Morrison, A. P. (2014). *Shame: The underside of narcissism*. Routledge.

Morse, J. M. (1991). Approaches to qualitative-quantitative methodological triangulation. *Nursing Research, 40*(2), 120-123. https://doi.org/10.1097/00006199-199103000-00014

Motala, S. (2017). Introduction - Part III Achieving 'free education' for the poor – a realisable goal in 2018? *Journal of Education, 68*. https://journals.ukzn.ac.za/index.php/joe/issue/view/22

Mwaba, K. (2009). Attitudes and beliefs about homosexuality and same-sex marriage among a sample of South African students. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal, 37(*6), 801-804. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2009.37.6.801

Nathanson, D. L. (Ed.). (1987). *The many faces of shame*. The Guilford Press.

Nathanson, D. L. (1992). *Shame and pride: Affect, sex, and the birth of self*. Norton.

Nathanson, D. L. (Ed.). (1996). *Knowing feeling: Affect, script and psychotherapy.* Norton.

Ndofirepi, E. S. (2015). *Rethinking social spaces in higher education: Exploring undergraduate student experience in a selected South African university*. [Doctoral thesis, University of the Witwatersrand]. http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/18217

Newman, I., & Benz, C. R. (1998). *Qualitative-quantitative research methodology: Exploring the interactive continuum*. Southern Illinois University.

Nussbaum, M. C. (2003). *Upheavals of thought: The intelligence of emotions*. Cambridge University Press.

Ochse, C. (2005). Race differences in academic expectations and perceptions of ability in relation to actual achievement. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 19*(2), 334-344. https://doi.org/10.4314/sajhe.v19i2.25655

Ogden, T. H. (1986/2018). *Object relations and the psychoanalytic dialogue.* Routledge.

Orth, U., Berking, M., & Burkhardt, S. (2006). Self-conscious emotions and depression: Rumination explains why shame but not guilt is maladaptive. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32*(12), 1608-1619. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167206292958

O'Shaughnessy, E. (1981). A commemorative essay on W. R. Bion's theory of thinking. *Journal of Child Psychotherapy, 7*(2), 181-192. https://doi.org/10.1080/00754178108255031

O'Shea, S., Stone, C., Delahunty, J., & May, J. (2018). Discourses of betterment and opportunity: Exploring the privileging of university attendance for first-in-family learners. *Studies in Higher Education, 43(*6), 1020-1033. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1212325

Pace, C. R. (1982, May 25). *Achievement and the quality of student effort* [Meeting presentation]. The 1982 Meeting of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, Washington, DC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED227101.pdf

Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. T. (2005). *How college affects students: A third decade of research. Vol 2.* Jossey-Bas.

Pascarella, E., Seifert, T., & Blaich, C. (2010). How effective are the NSSE benchmarks in predicting important educational outcomes? *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 42*(1), 16-22. https://doi.org/10.1080/00091380903449060

Pather, S., & Dorasamy, N. (2018). The mismatch between first-year students' expectations and experience alongside university access and success: A South African university case study. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa, 6*(1), 49-64. https://doi.org/10.24085/jsaa.v6i1.3065

Pattman, R. (2007). Student identities, and researching these, in a newly 'racially' merged university in South Africa. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 10*(4), 473-492. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320701658480

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Perry, W. G. (1999). *Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years: A scheme.* Jossey-Bass.

Pew Research (2013). *The global divide on homosexuality: Greater acceptance in more secular and affluent countries*. Pew Research Global Attitudes Project. http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/06/04/the-global-divide-on-homosexuality

Pines, M. (1995). The universality of shame: A psychoanalytic approach. *British Journal of Psychotherapy, 11*(3), 346-357. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0118.1995.tb00739.x

Pittman, J. F., Keiley, M. K., Kerpelman, J. L., & Vaughn, B. E. (2011). Attachment, identity, and intimacy: Parallels between Bowlby's and Erikson's paradigms. *Journal of Family Theory & Review, 3*(1), 32-46. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1756-2589.2010.00079.x

Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and social psychology: Beyond attitudes and behaviour*. Sage.

Radloff, A. (2011). *Student engagement in New Zealand's universities*. Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), Melbourne.

Ratner, C. (2007). A macro cultural-psychological theory of emotions. In P. A. Schutz & R. Pekrun (Eds.), *Emotion in Education* (pp. 89-104). Elsevier Academic Press.

Ray, L., Smith, D., & Wastell, L. (2004). Shame, rage and racist violence. *British Journal of Criminology, 44*(3), 350-368. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azh022

Read, B., Archer, L., & Leathwood, C. (2003). Challenging cultures? Student conceptions of 'belonging' and 'isolation' at a post-1992 university. *Studies in Higher Education, 28(*3), 261-277. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070309290

Reay, D., David, M. E., & Ball, S. J. (2005). *Degrees of choice: Class, race, gender and higher education*. Trentham Books.

Reed, R., Gates, P. & Last, K. (2007). *Young participation in higher education in the parliamentary constituencies of Birmingham Hodge Hill, Bristol South, Nottingham North and Sheffield Brightside.* (Technical Report). HEFCE, UK. https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/output/1034038/young-participation-in-higher-education-in-the-parliamentary-constituencies-of-birmingham-hodge-hill-bristol-south-nottingham-north-and-sheffield-brightside

Reid, A., Dahlgren, L., Petocz, P., & Dahlgren, M. (2008). Identity and engagement for professional formation. *Studies in Higher Education, 33*(6), 729-742. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070802457108

Renn, K. A. (2004). *Mixed race students in college: The ecology of race, identity, and community on campus*. Suny Press.

Retzinger, S. M. (1991). *Violent Emotions: Shame and rage in marital quarrels* (1st ed.). Sage.

Retzinger, S. M. (1995). Identifying shame and anger in discourse. *The American Behavioral Scientist, 38*(8), 1104-1113. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764295038008006

Retzinger, S. M. (2014). Shame-rage in marital quarrels. In M. R. Lansky & A. P. Morrison (Eds.), *The widening scope of shame* (pp. 297-310). Psychology Press.

Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative Analysis. Qualitative research methods series (Vol. 30)*. Sage.

Rizvi, S.L. (2010). Development and preliminary validation of a new measure to assess shame: The Shame Inventory. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment, 32*(3), 438-447. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10862-009-9172-y

Robins, R. W., Noftle, E. E., & Tracy, J. L. (2007). Assessing self-conscious emotions: A review of self-report and nonverbal measures. In J. L. Tracy, R. W. Robins, & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), *The self-conscious emotions: Theory and research* (pp. 443-467). Guilford Press.

Rohleder, N., Chen, E., Wolf, J. M., & Miller, G. E. (2008). The psychobiology of trait shame in young women: Extending the social self preservation theory. *Health Psychology, 27*(5), 523–532. https://doi.org/10.1037/0278-6133.27.5.523

Roland Martin, J. (2007). *Educational metamorphoses: Philosophical reflections on identity and culture* (2nd ed.). Rowman and Littlefield.

Roland Martin, J. (2013). *Education reconfigured: Culture, encounter, and change*. Routledge.

Rosenberg, M., & McCullough, B. C. (1981). Mattering: Inferred significance and mental health among adolescents. *Research in Community & Mental Health, 2,* 163–182.

Rosenfeld, H. (1987). *Impasse and interpretation.* Travistock.

Roth, P. (2001). The paranoid-schizoid position. In C. Bronstein (Ed.). *Kleinian Theory: A contemporary perspective* (pp. 32-46). Whurr.

Roth, L., Kaffenberger, T., Herwig, U., & Brühl, A. B. (2014). Brain activation associated with pride and shame. *Neuropsychology, 69*(2), 95-106. https://doi.org/10.1159/000358090

Russell, J. A. (2003). Core affect and the psychological construction of emotion. *Psychological Review, 110*(1), 145-172. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.110.1.145

Rustin, M. (1991). *The good society and the inner world: Psychoanalysis, politics and culture*. Verso.

Ruswa, A. S. (2019). *Multi-dimensional student poverty at a South African university: A capabilities approach* [Policy brief]. University of the Free State (UFS), SARCHI Research Chair. https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/librariesprovider34/default-document-library/anesu-policy-brief.pdf?sfvrsn=5c868921_0

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2002). Overview of self-determination theory: An organismic-dialectical perspective. In E. L. Deci & R. M. Ryan (Eds.), *Handbook of self-determination research* (pp. 3–33). University of Rochester Press.

Salkind, N. J. (Ed.). (2010). *Encyclopedia of research design*. Sage.

Sanftner McGraw, J., & Tantillo, M. (2011). Body image and eating disorders: A compelling source of shame for women. In R. L. Dearing & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), *Shame in the therapy hour* (pp. 277-303). American Psychological Association.

Saville Young, L. (2009). Not knowing: Towards an ethics for employing psychoanalysis in psychosocial research. *Psycho-analytic Psychotherapy in South Africa, 17*(2), 1-26.

Saville Young, L., & Frosh, S. (2009). Discourse and psychoanalysis: Translating concepts into 'fragmenting' methodology. *Psychology in Society, 38*, 1-16.

Saville Young, L., & Jearey-Graham, N. (2015). "They're gonna come and corrupt our children": A psychosocial reading of South African xenophobia. *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society, 20*, 395-413. https://doi.org/10.1057/pcs.2015.47

Sayer, A. (2005). Class, moral worth and recognition. *Sociology, 39*(5), 947-963. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038505058376

Scarantino, A. (2012). How to define emotions scientifically. *Emotion Review, 4*(4), 358-368. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073912445810

Schachter, E. P., & Galliher, R. V. (2018). Fifty years since "Identity: Youth and crisis": A renewed look at Erikson's writings on identity. *Identity, 18*(4), 247-250. https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2018.1529267

Scharff, J. S., & Scharff, D. E. (1992). *International object relations library series. Scharff notes: A primer of object relations therapy*. Jason Aronson.

Scheel, C. N., Bender, C., Tuschen-Caffier, B., Brodführer, A., Matthies, S., Hermann, C., Geisse, E. K., Svaldi, J., Brakemeier, E. L., Philipsen, A., & Jacob, G. A. (2014). Do patients with different mental disorders show specific aspects of shame? *Psychiatry Research, 220*(1-2), 490-495. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2014.07.062

Scheff, T. J. (1990). *Microsociology: Discourse, emotion and social structure*. University of Chicago Press.

Scheff, T. J. (2000). Shame and the social bond: A sociological theory. *Sociological Theory, 18*(1),

84-99. https://doi.org/10.1111/0735-2751.00089

Scheff, T. J. (2003). Shame in self and society. *Symbolic Interaction, 26*(2), 239-262. https://doi.org/10.1525/si.2003.26.2.239

Scheff, T. J. (2015). Toward defining basic emotions. *Qualitative Inquiry, 21*(2), 111-121. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414550462

Scheff, T. J., & Mateo, S. (2016). The s-word is taboo: Shame is invisible in modern societies. *Journal of General Practice, 4*(1). https://doi.org/10.4172/2329-9126.1000217

Scheff, T. J., & Retzinger, S. (2000). Shame as the master emotion of everyday life. *Journal of Mundane Behaviour, 1*(3), 303-324.

Scheff, T. J., & Retzinger, S. M. (2001). *Emotions and violence: Shame and rage in destructive conflicts*. iUniverse.

Schlossberg, N. K. (1989). Marginality and mattering: Key issues in building community. *New Directions for Student Services, 48*, 5-15. https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.37119894803

Schlossberg, N. K., Lynch, A. Q., & Chickering, A. W. (1989). *Improving higher education environments for adults: Responsive programs and services from entry to departure*. Jossey-Bass.

Schore, A. N. (2003). *Affect regulation and the repair of the self*. Norton.

Schore, A. N. (2015). *Affect regulation and the origin of the self: The neurobiology of emotional development*. Routledge.

Schutz, P.A., & Pekrun, R. (Eds.). (2007). *Emotion in education*. Elsevier.

Scott, I., Yeld, N., & Hendry, J. (2007). *A case for improving teaching and learning in South African higher education*. Higher Education Monitor No. 6. Council on Higher Education (CHE).

Scott, P. (2014, February 4). 'Student experience' is the new buzzword, but what does it mean? *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/feb/04/university-education-not-just-about-student-experience

Seekings, J. (2008). The continuing salience of race: Discrimination and diversity in South Africa. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 26*(1), 1-25. https://doi.org/10.1080/02589000701782612

Seeman, M. (1975). Alienation studies. *Annual Review of Sociology, 1(*1), 91-123. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.01.080175.000515

Segal, H. (1952). A psycho-analytical approach to aesthetics. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 33,* 196-207

Segal, J. (1992). *Melanie Klein* (1st ed.). Sage.

Segal, J. (2004). *Melanie Klein* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Segal, H. (2006). Reflections on truth, tradition, and the psychoanalytic tradition of truth. *American Imago, 63*(3), 283-292. https://doi.org/10.1353/aim.2006.0035

September, J. (2008, October 29). *Campus suicide*. University of the Witwatersrand. https://www.wits.ac.za/news/latest-news/in-their-own-words/2018/2018-10/campus-suicide.html

Shadbolt, C. (2009). Sexuality and shame. *Transactional Analysis Journal, 39*(2), 163-172. https://doi.org/10.1177/036215370903900210

Shannon-Baker, P. (2016). Making paradigms meaningful in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 10*(4), 319-334. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689815575861

Shepard, D. S., & Rabinowitz, F. E. (2013). The power of shame in men who are depressed: Implications for counsellors. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 91*(4). https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2013.00117.x

Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher, 15*(2), 4-14. https://doi.org/10.2307/1175860

Silverman, D. (2000). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook.* Sage.

Simons, H., & Usher, R. (2012). *Situated ethics in educational research*. Routledge.

Singh, T., & Bhana, D. (2015). Shifting race and class in student construction of identities at a South African university. *African Identities, 13*(3), 199-210. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2015.1074537

Slaten, C. D., Elison, Z. M., & Lee, J. (2014). Belonging on campus: A qualitative inquiry of Asian international students. *The Counseling Psychologist, (44)*, 383-410. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000016633506

Slaten, C. D., Ferguson, J. K., Allen, K. A., Brodrick, D. V., & Waters, L. (2016). School belonging: A review of the history, current trends, and future directions. *The Educational and Developmental Psychologist, 33*(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1017/edp.2016.6

Smith, E. R., & Mackie, D. M. (2000). *Social psychology* (2nd ed.). Psychology Press.

Smith, R. H., Webster, J. M., Parrott, W. G., & Eyre, H. L. (2002). The role of public exposure in moral and nonmoral shame and guilt. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 83*(1), 138-159. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.83.1.138

Solomonides, I. (2013). A relational and multidimensional model of student engagement. In E. Dunne & D. Owen (Eds.), *The student engagement handbook: Practice in higher education* (1st ed., pp. 43-58). Emerald.

Solomonides, I., & Martin, P. (2008). All this talk of engagement is making me itch. In C. Bryson & L. Hand (Eds.), *Aspects of student engagement - SEDA special 22* (pp. 13-19). Staff and Educational Development Association.

Solomonides, I., & Reid, A. (2009, July 6-9). *Understanding the relationship between student identity and engagement with studies* [Conference presentation]. 32nd HERDSA Annual Conference, Darwin, Australia. https://www.herdsa.org.au/publications/conference-proceedings/research-and-development-higher-education-student-experience-60

Sondergaard, D. M. (2002). Poststructural approaches to empirical analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 15*(2), 187-204. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390110111910

Soudien, C. (2008). The intersection of race and class in the South African university: Student. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 22(*3), 662-678. https://doi.org/10.4314/sajhe.v22i3.25809

Soudien, C. (2010). Grasping the nettle? South African higher education and its transformative imperatives. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 24*(5), 881-896.

Spillius, E. B., Milton, J., Garvey, P., Couve, C., & Steiner, D. (Eds.). (2011). *The new dictionary of Kleinian thought*. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Stadter, M. (2011). The inner world of shaming and ashamed: An object relations perspective and therapeutic approach. In R. L. Dearing & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), *Shame in the therapy hour* (pp. 45-68). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/12326-002

Straker, G. (2004). Race for cover: Castrated whiteness, perverse consequences. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 14*(4), 405-422. https://doi.org/10.1080/10481881409348795

Straker, G. (2013). Unsettling Whiteness. In G. Stevens, N. Duncan & D Hook (Eds.), *Race, memory and the apartheid archive* (pp. 91-108). Palgrave Macmillan.

Steiner, J. (1985). Turning a blind eye: The cover up for Oedipus. *International Review of Psychoanalysis, 12,* 161-171.

Steiner, J. (1990). Pathological organizations as obstacles to mourning: The role of unbearable guilt. The *International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 71*, 87-94.

Steiner, J. (1993/2004). *Psychic retreats: Pathological organizations in psychotic, neurotic and borderline patients*. Taylor & Francis.

Steiner, J. (2006). Seeing and being seen: Narcissistic pride and narcissistic humiliation. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 87*(4), 939-951. https://doi.org/10.1516/AL5W-9RVJ-WKG2-B0CK

Steiner, J. (2011). *Seeing and being seen: Emerging from a psychic retreat*. Routledge.

Steiner, J. (2013). The ideal and the real in Klein and Milton: Some observations on reading Paradise Lost. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 82*(4), 897-923. http://doi.org/10.1002/j.2167-4086.2013.00064.x.

Stern, D. N. (2000). *The interpersonal world of the infant: A view from psychoanalysis & developmental psychology*. Basic Books. (Original work published 1985)

Stets, J. E. (2010). Future directions in the sociology of emotions. *Emotion Review, 2*(3), 265-268. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073910361975

Stets, J. E., & Turner, J. H. (2008). The sociology of emotions. In M. Lewis, J. M. Haviland-Jones & L. F. Barrett (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (pp. 32-46). The Guilford Press.

Stolorow, R. D. (2013, October 5). *The Shame Family*. Psychology Today. https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/blog/feeling-relating-existing/201310/the-shame-family?amp

Stolorow, R. D., & Atwood, G. E. (1992). *Contexts of being: The intersubjective foundations of psychological life*. Routledge.

Strydom, J. & Mentz, M. (2010). *South African Survey of Student Engagement (SASSE): Focusing the student experience on success through student engagement*. Council on Higher Education, Pretoria. https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/librariesprovider42/sasse-documents/publications-documents/focusing-the-student-experience-on-success-through-student-engagement-92-eng.pdf?sfvrsn=8a60c921_0

SETMU (Student Equity and Talent Management Unit). (n.d.). *12 Years of the Targeting Talent Programme*. https://www.wits.ac.za/setmu/

Suchet, M. (2004). A relational encounter with race. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 14*(4), 423-438. https://doi.org/10.1080/10481881409348796

Suchet, M. (2007). Unraveling Whiteness. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues, 17(*6), 867-886. https://doi.org/10.1080/10481880701703730

Swartz, S., Mahali, A., Arogundade, E., Khalema, E., Rule, C., Cooper, A. Molefi, S., & Naidoo, P. (2017). *Ready or Not! Race, Education and Emancipation: A five-year longitudinal, qualitative study of agency and impasses to success amongst higher education students in a sample of South African universities*. (Client report submitted to the Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity). University of KwaZulu-Natal/Department of Higher Education and Training. http://repository.hsrc.ac.za/handle/20.500.11910/11305

Swartz, S., Mahali, A., Moletsane, R., Arogundade, E., Khalema, E., Cooper, A., & Groenewald, C. (2018). *Studying while Black. Race, education and emancipation in South African universities*. HSRC Press.

Szajnberg, N. M. (1995). Review of Shame and the self [Review of the book *Shame and the self,* by F. J. Broucek]. *Psychoanalytic Psychology, 12*(1), 165-169. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0085194

Szymanski, D. M., Kashubeck-West, S., & Meyer, J. (2008). Internalized heterosexism: A historical and theoretical overview. *The Counseling Psychologist, 36*(4), 510-524. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000007309488

Tangney, J. P. (1995). Shame and guilt in interpersonal relationships. In J. P. Tangney & K. W. Fischer (Eds.), *Self-conscious emotions: The psychology of shame, guilt, embarrassment, and pride* (pp. 114-139). Guilford Press.

Tangney, J. P., & Dearing, R. L. (2002). *Emotions and social behavior. Shame and guilt.* Guilford Press. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412950664.n388

Tangney, J. P., Dearing, R. L., Wagner, P. E., & Gramzow, R. H. (2000). *The Test of SelfConscious Affect3 (TOSCA3)*. George Mason University

Tangney, J. P., Miller, R. S., Flicker, L., & Barlow, D. H. (1996). Are shame, guilt, and embarrassment distinct emotions? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70*(6), 1256-1269. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.70.6.1256

Tangney, J. P., Stuewig, J., & Mashek, D. (2007). Moral emotions and moral behavior. *Annual Review of Psychology, 58*(1), 345-72. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.56.091103.070145

Taylor, P. C. (2004). Silence and sympathy: Dewey's whiteness. *In G. Yancy (Ed.) What White looks like: African-American philosohers on the whiteness question* (pp. 227-241). Routledge.

Temperley, J. (2001). The depressive position. In C. Bronstein (Ed.), *Kleinian theory: A contemporary perspective* (pp. 47-62). Whurr Publishers.

Temple, P., Callender, C., Grove, L., & Kersh, N. (2016). Managing the student experience in English higher education: Differing responses to market pressures. *London Review of Education, 14*(1), 33-45. https://doi.org/10.18546/LRE.14.1.05

Theron, L. C. (2016). Enabling resilience: Shifting the intergenerational career expectations of South Africans challenged by structural disadvantage. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 30*(3), 37-53. http://dx.doi.org/10.20853/30-3-657

Thomas, L. (2002). Student retention in higher education: The role of institutional habitus. *Journal of Education Policy, 17*(4), 423-442. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930210140257

Thomas, L. (2012). *Building student engagement and belonging in higher education at a time of change:* Final report from the What Works? Student retention and success programme. United Kingdom, The Higher Education Academy. https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/what_works_final_report_0.pdf

Thomson, R. (2007). The qualitative longitudinal case history: Practical, methodological and ethical reflections. *Social Policy and Society, 6(*4), 571-582. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746407003909

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (1997). Classrooms as communities: Exploring the educational character of student persistence. *The Journal of Higher Education, 68*(6), 599-623. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2959965

Tomkins, S. S. (1962). *Affect, imagery, consciousness: Vol. 1. The positive affects*. Springer

Torres, K., & Massey, D. S. (2012). Fitting in: Segregation, social class, and the experiences of black students at selective colleges and universities. *Race and Social Problems, 4*(3-4), 171-192. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-012-9077-3

Tracy, J. L., & Robins, R. W. (2004). Putting the self into self-conscious emotions: A theoretical model. *Psychological Inquiry, 15*(2), 103-125. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1502_01

Tracy, J. L., & Robins, R.W. (2006). Appraisal antecedents of shame and guilt: Support for a theoretical model. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *32*(10), 1339-1351. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167206290212

Tronick, E., Als, H., Adamson, L., Wise, S., & Brazelton, B. (1978). The infant's response to entrapment between contradictory messages in face-to-face interaction. *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry, 17*(1), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0002-7138(09)62273-1

Trumbull, D. (2003). Shame: An acute stress response to interpersonal traumatization. *Psychiatry Interpersonal & Biological Processes, 66*(1), 53-64. https://doi.org/10.1521/psyc.66.1.53.20288

Turner, J. H. (2009). The sociology of emotions: Basic theoretical arguments. *Emotion Review*, *1*(4), 340-354. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073909338305

Turner, J. H. (2010). The stratification of emotions: Some preliminary generalizations. *Sociological Inquiry*, *80*(2), 168-199. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.2010.00326.x

Universities South Africa (USAf) (2018). *Understanding Students* (March, October & November reports). https://www.usaf.ac.za/what-were-learning-about/

University of the Witwatersrand. (2017). *2017 Annual Report of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg*. https://www.wits.ac.za/media/wits-university/footer/about-wits/governance/documents/2017%20Annual%20Report.pdf

Volkan, V. (1977). *The need to have enemies and allies: From clinical practice to international relationships*. Jason Aronson.

Volkan, V. (1998). *Bloodlines: From ethnic pride to ethnic terrorism*. Westview.

Volkan, D. (2001). Transgenerational transmissions and chosen traumas: An aspect of large-group identity. *Group Analysis, 34*(1), 79-97. https://doi.org/10.1177/05333160122077730

Volkan, V. (2004). *Blind trust: Large groups and their leaders in times of crisis and terror* (1st ed.). Pitchstone Publishing.

Waddell, M. (2002). *Inside lives: Psychoanalysis and the growth of personality*. Karnac.

Waddell, M. (2018). *On adolescence: Inside stories*. Routledge.

Walker, M. (2005a). Race is nowhere and race is everywhere: Narratives from Black and White South African university students in post-apartheid South Africa. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 26*(1), 41-54. https://doi.org/10.1080/0142569042000292707

Walker, M. (2005b). Rainbow nation or new racism? Theorizing race and identity formation in South African higher education. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(2), 129-146. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320500110501

Walker, M. (2006). *Higher education pedagogies: A capabilities approach*. McGraw-Hill.

Walker, R. (2014). *The shame of poverty*. Oxford.

Walkerdine, V. (2008). Contextualizing debates about psychosocial studies. *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society, 13*(4), 341-345. https://doi.org/10.1057/pcs.2008.31

Wawrzynski, M. R., Heck, A. M., & Remley, C. T. (2012). Student engagement in South African higher education. *Journal of College Student Development, 53*(1), 106-123. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2012.0007

Wefald, A. J., & Downey, R. (2009). Construct dimensionality of engagement and its relation with satisfaction. *The Journal of Psychology Interdisciplinary and Applied, 143*(1), 91-111. https://doi.org/10.3200/JRLP.143.1.91-112

Weiss, H. (2015). Introduction: The role of shame in psychoanalytic theory and practice. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 96*(6), 1585-1588. https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-8315.12418

Wengraf, T. (2001). *Qualitative research interviewing*. Sage.

Wetherell, M. (2003). Paranoia, ambivalence, and discursive practices: Concepts of position and positioning in psychoanalysis and discursive psychology. In R. Harre & F. Moghaddam (Eds.), *The self and others: Positioning individuals and groups in personal, political and cultural contexts* (pp. 99-120). Praeger Publishers/Greenwood.

Wetherell, M. (2005). Unconscious conflict or everyday accountability. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 44*(2), 169-173. https://doi.org/10.1348/014466605X39619

Wetherell, M. (2008). Subjectivity or psycho-discursive practices? Investigating complex intersectional identities. *Subjectivity, 22*(1), 73-81. https://doi.org/10.1057/sub.2008.7

Williams, W. J. (2013). *Consuming higher education: Why learning can't be bought*. Bloomsbury.

Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology* (3rd ed.). Open University Press.

Winnicott, D.W. (1951). Transitional objects and transitional phenomena. In L. Caldwell & A. Joyce, *Reading Winnicott* (pp. 99-103). Routledge, (2011).

Winnicott, D. W. (1958). The capacity to be alone. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 39,* 416-420.

Winnicott, D. W. (1965). *The maturational processes and the facilitating environment: Studies in the theory of emotional development*. (M. Masud & R. Khan, Eds.). Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis.

Winnicott , D. W. (1967). Mirror-role of mother and family in child development. In P. Lomas (Ed.), *Predicament of the Family: A Psycho-Analytical Symposium* (pp. 26-33). Hogarth Press.

Winnicott, D. W. (1969). The use of an object. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 50*(4), 711-716.

Winnicott, D. W. (1974). Fear of breakdown. *International Review of Psycho-Analysis, 1*(1-2), 103-107.

Winnicott, D. W. (1988). *Human Nature.* Routledge.

Winnicott, D. W. (2005). *Playing and reality*. Routledge. (Original work published 1971).

Winnicott, D. W. (2012). *Deprivation and delinquency*. (C. Winnicott, R. Shepherd & M. Davis, Eds.). Routledge. (Original work published 1984).

Winnicott, D. W. (2012a). Struggling through the doldrums. In C. Winnicott, R. Shepherd & M. Davis (Eds.), *Deprivation and delinquency* (pp. 124-133). Routledge. (Original work published 1984).

Womersley, G., Maw, A., & Swartz, S. (2011).The construction of shame in feminist reflexive practice and its manifestations in a research relationship. *Qualitative Inquiry, 17*(9), 876-886. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800411423205

Woodward, K. (2000). *Questioning identity: Gender, class, ethnicity.* Routledge.

Wright, J. (2003). 'Things are changing for me ... The anger is still there but not the hatred'. Some reflections from work with a racist. *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, 17*(3), 241–252.

Wurmser, L. (1981). *The mask of shame*. John Hopkins University Press.

Wurmser, L. (1987). Shame: The veiled companion of narcissism. In D. L Nathanson (Ed.), *The many faces of shame* (pp. 64-92). The Guilford Press.

Yelsma, P., Brown, N., & Elison, J. (2002). Shame-focused coping styles and their associations with self-esteem. *Psychological Reports, 90*(3), 1179-1189. https://doi.org/10.1177/003329410209000320.2

Yoon, S. Y., & Lee, C. H. (2010). The perspectives and effectiveness of blended learning in L2 writing of Korean university students. *Multimedia-Assisted Language Learning, 13*(2), 177-204.

Zemack-Rugar, Y., Bettman, J. R., & Fitzsimons, G. J. (2007). The effects of nonconsciously priming emotion concepts on behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 93*(6), 927-939. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.93.6.927

Zembylas, M. (2007). Theory and methodology in researching emotions in education. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education, 30(*1), 57-72. https://doi.org/10.1080/17437270701207785

Zembylas, M. (2008). The politics of shame in intercultural education. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, *3*(3), 263-280. https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197908095135

Zepke, N. (2015). Student engagement research: Thinking beyond the mainstream. *Higher Education Research and Development, 34*(6), 1311-1323. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2015.1024635

Zepke, N., Leach, L., & Butler, P. (2010). *Student engagement: What is it and what influences it?* Teaching and Learning Research Initiative, Wellington, New Zeland. http://www.tlri.org.nz/sites/default/files/projects/9261-Introduction.pdf

Zhang, S., & Moradi, B. (2013). Asian American acculturation and enculturation: Construct clarification and measurement consolidation. *The Counseling Psychologist, 41*(5), 750-790. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000012456882

Appendix A: Ethical clearance certificate

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Neel

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H17/06/42**
PROJECT TITLE	Understanding the experience of shame in students within a South African University setting - a mixed methods psychosocial approach
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Mrs S Neel
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Human and Community Development/
DATE CONSIDERED	30 June 2017
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved
EXPIRY DATE	24 July 2020
DATE 25 July 2017	**CHAIRPERSON** (Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Dr K Bain

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

Signature

26 / 07 / 2017
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix B: The Shame Experience Survey (including participant information sheet)

E-mail subject: Survey on student experiences of shame

Dear student

My name is Sheryl Neel. I am studying a PhD degree in Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am doing research on the experience of shame in students within a South African university setting. I want to find out about your experiences of shame in different situations at university and how you have understood and integrated these experiences. This research is being done so that the experience of shame and its impact in learning environments can be better understood.

I am inviting you to take part in an on-line survey. Participation is voluntary and you will not receive any benefits or money for participating in the study. All students who are 18 years of age and older and who are currently registered for the 2017 academic year at the University of the Witwatersrand are invited to participate in this survey. There will be no negative consequences for not participating in this survey. The survey will take approximately 10 to 30 minutes to complete and includes the Shame Inventory Scale. The scale is a set of questions about what types of situations may/may not trigger shame. The survey will ask you to think about situations in which you have experienced shame, and thus asks you to recall events that may have been somewhat distressing. Numbers for free counselling services are provided, if necessary.

There are no right or wrong answers. In addition, you may choose to skip any questions you do not wish to answer. The answers you do fill in will not be transmitted until you press the submit button at the end. Your responses will be totally anonymous as I will not preserve any link between your identity and your responses. It is possible that direct quotes from your survey will be used in the report, however, no identifying information will be included and they will be used with quotes from other surveys. A copy of my report will be marked by examiners and a copy will be kept in the library at the University of the Witwatersrand. On request, an electronic copy of the report will be sent to you.

If you agree to participate, I invite you to access the survey now at http://www.[redacted]

If you have any questions about the survey or experience technical difficulties please contact me at [redacted] and I will be happy to assist.

Completing and pressing 'submit' at the end of the survey will be taken to mean your consent to participate in the research.

Kind regards

Sheryl Neel

Ms. Sheryl Neel
(PhD Psychology Student)
[redacted]
Email: saneel@telkomsa.net

Dr. Katherine Bain
(Research Supervisor)
011 717 4558
Email: Katherine.Bain@wits.ac.za

Welcome to My Survey

Hello

This survey includes demographic questions and the Shame Inventory Scale.
Remember there are no right or wrong answers.
By participating in this survey, you are indicating that you understand that your responses are anonymous and will not be identified with you in any way. You are at least 18 years old.
You may skip any question that you find intrusive or offensive.

Completing and selecting '*Done*' at the end of the survey will be taken to mean your consent to participate in the research.

Thank you. I really appreciate your participation.

Regards
Sheryl Neel

Please answer the following demographic questions

What year of study are you in?

- ◯ Year 1
- ◯ Year 2
- ◯ Year 3
- ◯ Year 4
- ◯ 4th Year Honours
- ◯ Honours
- ◯ Masters
- ◯ Doctoral

In which faculty are you currently registered?

- ◯ Commerce, Law and Management
- ◯ Engineering and the Built Environment
- ◯ Health Sciences
- ◯ Humanities
- ◯ Science

What is your gender?

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male
- ◯ Transgender
- ◯ Other
- ◯ Prefer not to say

What do you consider yourself to be:

- ◯ Heterosexual
- ◯ Homosexual
- ◯ Bisexual
- ◯ Asexual
- ◯ Other
- ◯ Prefer not to say

How old are you?

- ◯ 18-21
- ◯ 22-29
- ◯ 30-40
- ◯ 41-52
- ◯ 53 and older

Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)

- ○ Asian
- ○ Black
- ○ Coloured
- ○ Indian
- ○ White
- ○ Multiple ethnicity / Other (please specify)

What language do you mainly speak at home?

- ☐ Afrikaans
- ☐ English
- ☐ Ndebele
- ☐ Northern Sotho
- ☐ Sotho
- ☐ Swazi
- ☐ Tsonga
- ☐ Tswana
- ☐ Venda
- ☐ Xhosa
- ☐ Zulu

Other (please specify)

With whom do you live during the university year?

- ○ University residence
- ○ I live alone off-campus
- ○ With one or more other students
- ○ My parents
- ○ Other (please specify)
- ○ Other relatives
- ○ Friends who are not Wits students
- ○ My spouse/partner

Please answer the following questions about your university expenses

Is there enough money at your home of origin (where you grew up) every month to cover food, transport, basic utilities (electricity and water, if available)?

- ◯ All the time
- ◯ Most of the time
- ◯ Half of the time
- ◯ Hardly ever
- ◯ Never

If you live away from this home, do you have enough money each month to cover food, transport, basic utilities?

- ◯ All the time
- ◯ Most of the time
- ◯ Half of the time
- ◯ Hardly ever
- ◯ Never

How do you meet your university expenses (tuition and living)? Select the response that best approximates the amount of support from: *Parents*

- ◯ No support
- ◯ Very little
- ◯ Less than half
- ◯ About half
- ◯ More than half
- ◯ All or nearly all

How do you meet your university expenses (tuition and living)? Select the response that best approximates the amount of support from: *Self (job, savings etc).*

- ◯ No support
- ◯ Very little
- ◯ Less than half
- ◯ About half
- ◯ More than half
- ◯ All or nearly all

How do you meet your university expenses (tuition and living)? Select the response that best approximates the amount of support from: *Other relatives*

- ◯ No support
- ◯ Very little
- ◯ About half
- ◯ More than half
- ◯ All or nearly all

How do you meet your university expenses (tuition and living)? Select the response that best approximates the amount of support from: *Scholarships/grants/bursaries*

- ◯ No support
- ◯ Very little
- ◯ Less than half
- ◯ About half
- ◯ More than half
- ◯ All or nearly all

How do you meet your university expenses (tuition and living)? Select the response that best approximates the amount of support from: *Loans*

- ◯ No support
- ◯ Very little
- ◯ Less than half
- ◯ About half
- ◯ More than half
- ◯ All or nearly all

Do you currently have any of the following forms of debt related to university expenses? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Credit card debt
- ☐ Student loans
- ☐ Personal loans
- ☐ Wits payment plan
- ☐ No debt
- ☐ Other (please specify)

In the last six months, how often have you worried about your financial situation?

- ◯ All the time
- ◯ Most of the time
- ◯ About half the time
- ◯ Once in a while
- ◯ Never

Please answer the following questions about your feelings towards Wits

I regard Wits as a good university to study at

- ◯ Strongly disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neither agree nor disagree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly agree

Academically, I feel a sense of belonging to Wits

- ◯ Strongly disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neither agree nor disagree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly agree

Socially, I feel a sense of belonging to Wits

- ◯ Strongly disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neither agree nor disagree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly agree

Nearly there - please complete The Shame Inventory Scale

You are about to complete *THE SHAME INVENTORY SCALE*
Shame is different from just generally being upset or distressed.
Shame relates to how you feel about yourself.
Some people experience shame on a regular basis; others hardly experience shame at all.
The questions below are about overall shame feelings that you may experience.

How often do you typically experience shame?

- ◯ Never
- ◯ Seldom
- ◯ Occasionally
- ◯ Often
- ◯ Always

Please indicate the *intensity or severity* of shame that you typically experience

- ◯ None
- ◯ Slight
- ◯ Moderate
- ◯ Considerable
- ◯ Extreme

To what extent does shame negatively affect the quality of your life?

- ◯ No effect
- ◯ Slight effect
- ◯ Moderate effect
- ◯ Considerable effect
- ◯ Extreme effect

Below is a list of situations and behaviours that may or may not be related to the experience of shame for you. Please select the option which indicates the intensity of your shame about that event or indicate if the statement does not apply to you.

A time when I ...

Was laughed at in front of others

- ◯ Does not apply to me
- ◯ No shame
- ◯ Slight shame
- ◯ Moderate shame
- ◯ Considerable shame
- ◯ Extreme shame

Was criticised in front of others

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Cried in front of others

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Made a scene in public

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Lost something important

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Had sex with someone when I didn't want to

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Forced/coerced someone to have sex with me

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Had an affair/was unfaithful/was sexually promiscuous

- ◯ Does not apply to me
- ◯ No shame
- ◯ Slight shame
- ◯ Moderate shame
- ◯ Considerable shame
- ◯ Extreme shame

Was sexually harassed

- ◯ Does not apply to me
- ◯ No shame
- ◯ Slight shame
- ◯ Moderate shame
- ◯ Considerable shame
- ◯ Extreme shame

Made a suicide attempt/threat or harmed myself on purpose

- ◯ Does not apply to me
- ◯ No shame
- ◯ Slight shame
- ◯ Moderate shame
- ◯ Considerable shame
- ◯ Extreme shame

Didn't know the answer to a question I felt I should know

- ◯ Does not apply to me
- ◯ No shame
- ◯ Slight shame
- ◯ Moderate shame
- ◯ Considerable shame
- ◯ Extreme shame

Was caught saying negative things about others

- ◯ Does not apply to me
- ◯ No shame
- ◯ Slight shame
- ◯ Moderate shame
- ◯ Considerable shame
- ◯ Extreme shame

Overate or ate unhealthy/high fat food

- ◯ Does not apply to me
- ◯ No shame
- ◯ Slight shame
- ◯ Moderate shame
- ◯ Considerable shame
- ◯ Extreme shame

Missed an important appointment

- ◯ Does not apply to me
- ◯ No shame
- ◯ Slight shame
- ◯ Moderate shame
- ◯ Considerable shame
- ◯ Extreme shame

Was praised for something I didn't do

- ◯ Does not apply to me
- ◯ No shame
- ◯ Slight shame
- ◯ Moderate shame
- ◯ Considerable shame
- ◯ Extreme shame

Didn't live up to a really important standard of mine

- ◯ Does not apply to me
- ◯ No shame
- ◯ Slight shame
- ◯ Moderate shame
- ◯ Considerable shame
- ◯ Extreme shame

Didn't live up to others' standards

- ◯ Does not apply to me
- ◯ No shame
- ◯ Slight shame
- ◯ Moderate shame
- ◯ Considerable shame
- ◯ Extreme shame

Told a lie

- ◯ Does not apply to me
- ◯ No shame
- ◯ Slight shame
- ◯ Moderate shame
- ◯ Considerable shame
- ◯ Extreme shame

Broke a promise

- ◯ Does not apply to me
- ◯ No shame
- ◯ Slight shame
- ◯ Moderate shame
- ◯ Considerable shame
- ◯ Extreme shame

Committed a crime

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Knew someone talked badly about me behind my back

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Received a compliment

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Found out someone I cared for didn't feel the same way

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Was turned down for a date/request to spend time with someone

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Could not afford something

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Was slow to learn something

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Hurt someone emotionally

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Hurt someone physically

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Hurt an animal

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Was physically or sexually abused

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Saw a picture of myself/saw myself in a mirror

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Was afraid to do something

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Failed at work

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Lost a friendship

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Had fantasies of violence or death

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Had sexual/kinky fantasies

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Betrayed a friend

- Does not apply to me
- No shame
- Slight shame
- Moderate shame
- Considerable shame
- Extreme shame

Was betrayed by someone I care about

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Hated a family member

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Had an abortion

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Had a private aspect of myself exposed

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Not being in an intimate relationship

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Not having children

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Being gay/lesbian/bisexual

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Feeling unattractive/ugly

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Having a mental disorder

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Being a certain race/ethnicity

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Not having a good career

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Being adopted

- ○ Does not apply to me
- ○ No shame
- ○ Slight shame
- ○ Moderate shame
- ○ Considerable shame
- ○ Extreme shame

Some last questions - Please explain an incident at Wits in which you felt shame

What was the specific incident? An incident is any experience you've had at Wits, social or academic, in which you felt shame.

If others were involved, what characteristics/behaviours did he/she/they display?

How did you manage the feelings and thoughts going through your mind at the time?

If you would be willing to be contacted by the researcher to participate in a face to face interview about your specific shame experiences in the Wits university context, please provide your contact number. Please note that provision of your number does not guarantee that you will be contacted. Also please note that your number will not be used to access your identity or be linked to any of your responses on the survey.
Contact number:

Were any of the survey questions difficult to answer?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ If yes, please specify why (optional)

It is not expected that this survey will harm you in any way. However, it has asked you to think about distressing emotions, and it is likely that this will have brought up some difficult memories. If you find that these feelings do not subside and you think that you might benefit from counselling, you can access one of the following free counselling services.

Wits Counselling and Careers Development Unit (CCDU)- 011 717 9140/32
Wits Emthonjeni Community Psychology Clinic- 011 717 4513
Lifeline - 011 715 2000
SADAG (South African Depression and Anxiety Group) - 011 234 4837

Please scroll down and select '*Done*' to submit the survey. Thank you for participating!

ONLY If you are a first year Psychology student please include your student number if you wish to receive credit. This will not be linked to your data.

Appendix C: Overview of shame scales reviewed

Trait or dispositional measures	
Scale details	Strengths and limitations of scale
Personal Feelings Questionnaire (PFQ2) (Harder & Lewis, 1987; Harder & Zalma, 1990)	
Adjective/statement measure used to assess affective tendencies in clinical settings Scale characteristics: shame (10 items); guilt (6 items) Response format: 5 point scale	Limitations: Respondents are asked to distinguish between shame and guilt in abstract contexts which has proved difficult even for well-educated adults (Tangney, 1996). Lewis (1971) identified that individuals tend to fuse shame and guilt and label guilt more readily. Strengths: Good internal reliability and factor structure
TOSCA 3 (Test of Self-Conscious Affect) (Tangney et al., 2000)	
Scenario based measure Scale characteristics: measures different affect tendencies – shame proneness, guilt proneness, externalisation, (blaming), detachment and alpha (pride in one's personality characteristics) and beta (pride in one's behaviour) pride. Explores the likelihood of shameful and guilt responses based on 10 negative scenarios and five positive ones. Each scenario is followed by a response which represents a phenomenological description of shame or guilt. Response format: 5-point scale	Strengths - Good reliability; used frequently. Limitations - Scenario-based measures have lower internal consistency than adjective checklist measures due to situation variance of the scenarios presented. It is difficult to produce scenarios that are broadly applicable and likely encountered by most respondents (Tangney et al., 1996); Dependent on particular phenomenological descriptions of shame and guilt (Gilbert, 2000).
The Internalized Shame Scale (ISS) Cook (1987/1994/2001)	
Statement based Scale characteristics: internalized shame; negative self-esteem Composed of 24 internalised shame items and 6 items from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Response format: 5 point scale.	Strengths Useful in clinical populations to measure trait shame. Limitations: concerns around discriminant validity between internalized shame and low self-esteem (Tangney, 1996).
The Experience of Shame Scale (ESS) (Andrews, Qian, & Valentine, 2002)	
Statement based Scale characteristics: Uses self-report measures to assess shame reactions with 11 semantic differential items for three components: characterological shame (4 aspects); behavioural shame (3 aspects) and bodily aspects of shame. Response format: 4 point scale	Strengths High internal consistency (Matos, Pinto-Gouveia, Gilbert, Duarte, & Figueiredo, 2015) Useful for clinical prediction of depression. Limitations: rarely used
Guilt and Shame Proneness Scale (GASP) (Cohen, 2011)	
Scenario based	Strengths

Trait or dispositional measures	
Scale details	Strengths and limitations of scale
Scale characteristics: Measures individual differences in the propensity to experience guilt and shame across a range of personal transgressions. The GASP contains 2 guilt subscales that assess negative behaviour-evaluations and repair action tendencies following private transgressions and 2 shame subscales that assess negative self-evaluations (NSEs) and withdrawal action tendencies following publically exposed transgressions. The GASP measures guilt and shame proneness and not feeling states.	The GASP aims to be used as a tool to detect individuals who are susceptible to corruption. Scenario based scales usually include multiple response options including behaviours, thoughts and feelings.
Compass of Shame Scale (COSS) (Elison, Lennon, & Pulos, 2006)	
Scenario based Scale characteristics: Withdrawal (12 items α = .89); Attack Other (12 items α = .85); Attack Self (12 items; α = .91); Avoidance (12 items; α= .74). Used to assess use of Nathanson's four shame coping styles Response format: 5 point scale	Rarely used but is newer
Other As Shamer (OAS) (Goss & Allen, 1994)	
Statement based Scale characteristics: total scale (18 items), inferiority (seven items), emptiness (four items), how others behave when they see me make mistakes (six items) [one item included in total scale is not an item on any of the subscales] Modified from subset of ISS. Measures others perceptions. Response format: 5 point scale	Strengths: Good internal consistency; Cronbach Alpha of 0.92; Version 2 available which is shorter and more economical (Matos et al., 2015) Limitations: Rarely used
Shame, guilt and hostility inward subscales of the DES IV (Izard et al., 1993)	
Statement based Scale characteristics: shame (three items: feel embarrassed when anybody sees you make a mistake; feel like people laugh at you; feel like people always look at you when anything goes wrong; α = .60); guilt (three items: feel regret, sorry about something you did; feel like you did something wrong; feel like you ought to be blamed for something; α = .72); hostility–inward (three items: feel you can't stand yourself; feel mad at yourself; feel sick about yourself; α = .75); Response format: 5 point scale	Limitations: Shame scale closer to current conceptions of embarrassment
Dimensions of Conscience Questionnaire (DCQ) (Johnson et al., 1987)	
Situation based	Occasionally used

Trait or dispositional measures	
Scale details	Strengths and limitations of scale
Based on public/private distinction. To distinguish between shame and guilt inducing situations. Scale characteristics: shame (13 items); guilt (15 items) Response format: 7 point scale	

State (in the moment feelings) based measures:	
Scale details	Strengths and limitations
The State Shame and Guilt Scale (SSGS) (Marschall, Sanftner, & Tangney, 1994)	
Statement based Development: rational method, based on Lewis's (1971) theory to assess phenomenological aspects of shame and guilt. Scale characteristics: shame (five items; $\alpha = .89$); guilt (five items; $\alpha = .82$); pride (five items; $\alpha = .87$) Response format: 5 point scale	Limitations: Rarely used
The Experiential Shame Scale (ESS) (Turner, 1998)	
Statement based – state measure. Scale characteristics: Three categories: physical phenomena (three items), emotional phenomena (four items), and social phenomena (four items). Each category addresses experiential, cognitive and behavioural components. Response format: 9 point scale	
Shame and Embarrassment Scales of the Differential Emotions Scale (DESII) (Mosher & White, 1981) Revision of Izard et al., 1974	
Adjective-based - trait or state measure Scale characteristics: shame, shyness and embarrassment scales; Response format: 5 point scale	Limitations: Rarely used; older scale
The Adapted Shame and Guilt Scale (ASGS) (Hoblitzelle, 1987/1990)	
Designed as trait measure but can also be used as state measure Adjective based; Scale characteristics: shame (10 items); guilt (12 items); filler items; Response format: 7 point scale	Limitations: the adjective checklists require advanced verbal skills not suitable for all respondents (Tangney, 1996); Rarely used (Robins et al., 2007)

Appendix D: Executive summary of pilot study

Pilot study conducted on 10 and 11 August 2017 by Sheryl Neel

Demographic details of pilot study participants:

RESPONDENTS	DEMOGRAPHIC AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS	DEVICE USED	DURATION (in minutes)
Respondent 1 = R1	Black; male; Masters level; Humanities (Journalism)	Computer	40
Respondent 2 = R2	Black; female; 4th year honours; Commerce, Law and Management	Smartphone	15
Respondent 3 = R3	White; female; 2nd year; Science (Biology)	Smartphone	20
Respondent 4 = R4	Indian; female; 3rd year; Science (Environment)	Smartphone	33
Respondent 5 = R5	Black; male; 2nd year; Commerce, Law and Management (Commerce)	Tablet	17
Respondent 6 = R6	Black; male; 3rd year; Science	Smartphone	20

The pilot study demonstrated that participants seemed to have a limited understanding of what shame 'is' or put another way 'shame about what?'. In the words of one respondent prior to taking the survey 'shame is not a problem at Wits'. However, although this abstract concept of shame did not seem to resonate with participants at the beginning of the survey, in all cases, the completion of the Shame Inventory moved respondents from a place of 'not knowing' or 'not understanding' to a place of being able to identify with shame related experiences in their own lives. The Shame Inventory proved to be an integral part of the survey triggering a deeper understanding of shame and was experienced by participants as more meaningful than the rest of the survey. Several pilot participants reported that the survey triggered the ability to think in a different way about themselves and the role of shame and found the survey somewhat therapeutic. The pilot study confirmed the importance of 'emotion' research and the potential utility of this study for increasing students' language of emotions. However, I've identified the following three critical risk factors for survey response rates and how this has necessitated revisiting the length and therefore the aims of the survey.

Three critical risk factors for survey response rates:

1. Non-response due to the slow Wits WiFi network - all participants reported unusually slow response times on the Wits network over the past weeks/months due to ongoing network upgrades. Students often resort to using their own data even when on campus because of the slow network. When attempting to access the survey hyperlink via Wits WiFi, students were unable to open the survey, it took too long. However, when accessing the survey via other data options the survey

opened immediately. Although the survey was designed to minimize data usage, the speed of the Wits WiFi connection is concerning and will have a negative effect on response rates.

2. Dropout due to survey length – survey dropout is a potential at any point in the survey. Participants may dropout if they come across a question that they don't understand and feel they can't answer or if the survey becomes too lengthy. Statistically 26-30 questions usually take the average respondent 9-10 minutes (average of 19 seconds per question). The Shame Inventory alone contains 43 questions. Most respondents considered the survey too long and two respondents said they would only consider completing it if they had free time available. Lengthy surveys also lead to satisficing or speeding through the survey which can affect reliability. Satisficing was evident in the speed with which respondents completed the Shame Inventory which was positioned at the end of the survey. Dr Steinberg (proposal reader) commented on the length of the proposed survey and suggested that as a survey respondent, she would not have completed the survey. I believe the pilot confirmed her hunch.

3. Relying on the goodwill of students – participants are required to move through many demographic, social and experiential questions before arriving at the Shame Inventory which appeared to be the more meaningful part of the survey for students. Three of the pilot respondents reported that there was no sense of satisfaction in completing the survey whereas three reported experiencing satisfaction and therapeutic benefit, particularly after completing the Shame Inventory.

Reconsideration of survey length and concomitant aims. The long length of the survey has in many ways been dictated by two core goals around which the Wits Shame survey hinges namely:

1. The use of the Shame Inventory as a statistically reliable and valid measure of shame in a sample of the population (state and trait measures).

2. The use of demographic, social and experiential questions to try and establish connections (and in some instances correlations) between shame and the Wits university experience.

I realised that it is the integration of the two goals in one survey which impacts the nature and length of the survey. The two parts of the survey compete for question space. However, due to risk factors listed above without some form of compromise I risk an unusually high non-response rate. If the assumption is that the Shame Inventory cannot be tampered with for reasons of reliability and validity then the only alternative is to revisit the remaining survey questions (demographic, social and experiential) and associated aims. Every question has been revisited considering its meaning for the participant, ease of understanding and navigation as well as its contribution to the aims of the survey. A detailed breakdown of each question was compiled below and contains the following information:

- A snapshot of the question as it appeared in SurveyMonkey.
- Respondent's comments/observations about the question and ease of navigation.

- Researcher thoughts and observations.
- Recommendations for possible question changes.

Conclusion

The non-negotiable aims (and therefore questions included) of the survey are as follows:

- The Shame Inventory (to ascertain levels of shame (state and trait) in this population)
- Demographic questions (will enable correlations between levels of shame and gender, year of study, and other core demographic factors), however, certain demographic questions have been recommended for deletion.
- Income/funding questions (will enable correlations between levels of shame and poverty).

Negotiable aims and therefore questions:

- Social questions - questions around perceptions of Wits and Wits staff be condensed from seven questions to two.
- Open ended questions around an incident/shame experience at Wits - this section has a high dropout potential because of the level of time and effort. Respondents tended to find the scaffolding repetitive. It is suggested that this section be repositioned at the end of the survey after the Shame Inventory and be condensed using less scaffolding.
- Studies conducted by Leith and Baumeister (1998) and Tangney (1995) showed that experiences of shame can result in a decreased ability to take another's perspective.

For the full version of the report please contact the researcher.

Appendix E: Interview participant information sheet

Participant Information Sheet

School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559
Email: 576434@students.wits.ac.za

Good day

My name is Sheryl Neel. I am studying a PhD degree in Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am doing research on the experience of shame in students within a South African university setting. This research is being done so that the experience of shame and its impact in learning environments can be better understood.

Thank you for completing the on-line shame survey and for expressing your willingness to be contacted by myself for a face-to-face interview regarding your specific shame experiences in the Wits university context.

This letter serves as a formal invitation to you to participate in a one-on-one interview with myself, as researcher. Should you decide to be interviewed, the interview will take approximately 1 hour at a time convenient for you and will be conducted in complete privacy in a room in the Emthonjeni building at Wits. During the interview, I will ask you questions about your understanding of shame and specific situations at university in which you may have experienced shame. These experiences may be difficult to talk about, but the researcher will endeavour to treat your experiences with respect. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to, there are no right or wrong answers and you may stop the interview at any time with no negative consequences. Participation is voluntary and you will not receive any benefits nor money for participating in the study.

This study involves the audio recording of your interview with the researcher. It is necessary for me to audio record the interview to remember as much detail as possible and to meet the requirements of the methodology chosen for the study. Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. Personal information will not be included in any part of the research. Your interview will not be heard by anyone else other than myself. I will personally write up your interview (transcript) and all your identifying information will be removed. The audio recordings and transcripts will be kept in a password-protected file on my computer which only I will have access to. The printed-out anonymized transcripts will only be seen by my research supervisor and me and will be kept safely in a locked cupboard. My supervisor will not know any of your personal identifying information and will only read the interview to help me write my report. It is possible that direct quotes from your interview may be used in the report, however, no

identifying information will be included and they will be used with quotes from other interviews. After the report has been examined and publication of the findings has occurred the interview recording will be deleted. Your anonymized transcript will be archived on a password protected computer for possible further research use by myself and my supervisor, with your permission. General feedback will be given in the form of a letter to you. A copy of my report will be marked by examiners and a copy will be kept in the library at the University of the Witwatersrand and published online. An electronic copy of the report will also be made available to you should you request it. My contact details and those of my supervisor are provided below. Please feel free to contact either myself or my supervisor if you would like any further information, have any further questions, or would like to report any negative affects the study has had on you.

If you do choose to participate in this interview please can you fill out the consent form attached and return it to me.

Kind regards

Ms. Sheryl Neel
(PhD Psychology Student)
083 423 5699
Email: 576434@students.wits.ac.za

Dr. Katherine Bain
(Research Supervisor)
011 717 4558
Email: Katherine.Bain@wits.ac.za

If you would like to report any problems or complaints that you have with regard to any part of the research process you can contact the University of the Witwatersrand's Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical) Lucille Mooragan**,** on 011 717 1408 or at lucille.mooragan@wits.ac.za

Counselling services

We do not expect that the interview will harm you in any way but if you feel that you are having difficulties after having participated you may access one of the following free therapy services.

Wits Counselling and Careers Development Unit (CCDU)	011 717 9140/32
Wits Emthonjeni Community Psychology Clinic	011 717 4513
Lifeline	011 715 2000
SADAG (South African Depression and Anxiety Group)	011 234 4837

Appendix F: Interview informed consent

Interview Consent Form

I _____ consent to an audio-recorded interview with Sheryl Neel for Sheryl's study on the experience of shame in students within a South African university setting. The research study has been explained to me and I understand the purpose and nature of the study. I understand that:

- Participation in the interview is voluntary.
- I have the choice to not answer any questions I do not want to answer.
- I may stop the interview at any time.
- Direct quotes will be used in the report, however, no personal information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.
- After the report is finished a copy will be kept in the library at the University of the Witwatersrand and will be available online.
- An electronic copy of the report will be made available to me on request.
- The interview audio-recording as well the anonymised transcript will be kept in password-protected files.
- After completion of the study, the audio-recordings will be deleted and the anonymised transcripts will be archived for possible future research use by researchers involved in this study, with my permission.
- There are no direct benefits for me in participating in this study.
- There are no anticipated risks for me participating in this study.

By signing this consent form I understand that I am allowing the researcher to audio-record this interview as part of the research.

(please tick) Yes____ No____

I give my informed consent for my anonymised transcript to be archived for possible future research use

(please tick) Yes____ No____

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix G: Interview schedule

1. Personal history:
   - Please tell me a little bit about yourself, where you are from and how you grew up?
2. Identifying information about the student experience and possibilities for shame at university:
   - What are you studying and why? How has being at university been for you?; Can you tell me about what has been especially hard for you? How have you managed these challenges?
3. Positioning of the 'self':
   - Please tell me a little bit about your self-esteem and how you feel about yourself as a person – things you like and things you don't like about yourself?
   - Where do you think you got these ideas about what is acceptable and what isn't?
4. Positioning of the 'other":
   - How do you think other people see you? Which people see you that way? How do you understand this?
   - Are there any people, in particular, who you feel see you in negative ways? Can you give me an example? How do you make sense of this?
5. Awareness of shame and shame vocabulary:
   - Please tell me about how you understand shame? What does it feel like for you? Why do you think people feel shame?
6. Shame stimulus/triggers within a university context (and the role of the 'self' and the 'other'):
   - Please tell me a bit about your experiences of shame at Wits. Prompt for examples: What happened? Who was there? How did you make sense of the incident? What was going on in your mind at the time? What do you think was going on in their minds about you?
7. Shame coping scripts (conscious and unconscious):
   - How have you managed/resolved the incident?
   - Do you think who you are (as a result of your history and upbringing) is acceptable at university? Tell me more. Can you give me an example?
   - Are there times you feel that you need to hide aspects of who you are at university? Tell me more. Can you give me an example?
   - Do you think particular groups at Wits experience more shame than others? Tell me more. Can you give me an example? How do you understand this? What do you think would help to alleviate this?
8. The current university context: What is your understanding of the #FeesMustFall campaign?