A PSYCHOSOCIAL READING OF NOVICE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS' TALK ABOUT WHITENESS

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Abstract

This research presents a case study report of interview encounters with two novice white South African clinical psychologists. A psychosocial research methodology is employed to examine the discursive strategies that participants engage in when speaking about whiteness in the context of their professional identity and practice, as well as to examine the ways in which these discursive strategies support or constrain 'mentalizing' in relation to raced experience.

One case study highlights an individualistic discourse of 'racial innocence', which constructs the speaker as being free of racial enculturation and consciousness, eliding a broader social context. I argue that this discourse closes down mentalizing in relation to more difficult, intractable aspects of raced experience in clinical work, relating to differences in positionality as well as issues of inequality. I also propose that this discourse may be understood in terms of a 'pretend' mode of thought, where aspects of the wider social context and of race in particular are experienced as being unrelated to intimate personal experience.

The other case study highlights a discourse of 'uneasy whiteness' that involves awareness of white positionality, and that is grounded in a constructionist sensibility. This positions the speaker as being inevitably implicated in white privilege and racism in ways that she may be ignorant of. I argue that the discourse facilitates a particular type of mentalizing that is sensitive to the interpellation of intimate personal experience with a wider social context that encompasses a range of discourses and practices. It closes down mentalizing, however, in so far as it allows a reified construction of whiteness. I find the concept of psychic equivalence, which equates external (concrete, factual) reality and internal (subjective, symbolic) reality, useful in terms of understanding this reification.

Overall the research highlights the tension between constructionist and individualistic modes of thinking within clinical psychology research and practice in the South African context. At the level of methodology, it presents an example of how these modes may be integrated within research. At the level of content, it explores differences between constructionist and individualistic talk in relation to race and psychological practice.

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Acknowledgements

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.   Introduction

This research is concerned with the significance of raced experience, and whiteness in particular, as one facet of the emerging identities of clinical psychologists in South Africa. Two case studies are presented to examine the way in which novice clinical psychologists speak about their whiteness in the context of a research interview, and the way in which this relates to processes of 'mentalizing'. Here mentalizing is conceptualised as "(t)he mental process by which an individual implicitly and explicitly interprets the actions of himself and others as meaningful on the basis of intentional mental states such as personal desires, needs, feelings, beliefs and reasons" (Bateman and Fonagy, 2004, p.21). This involves a capacity to form representations of mental states both in self and others (Fonagy & Target, 1998). However it is not a purely cognitive concept, as generating an accurate representation of psychological experience involves clarity of feeling as well as thought (Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist & Target, 2004).

The theoretical and methodological framework for the study is psychosocial, and is broadly informed by social constructionism and psychoanalytic thinking (Frosh & Saville Young, 2008/2010; Saville Young, 2011). It relates, on the one hand, to a growing constructionist interest in the ways in which individual subjects engage with discourses available to them (Nuttal, 2006), and on the other, to a growing psychoanalytic interest in the intra- as well as inter-personal significance of cultural and political processes, including race and class (Altman, 1995; Cushman, 1995; Knight, 2013; Kruger, 2006; Layton, Caro Hollander, & Gutwill, 2006; Suchet, 2004). However, the psychosocial approach is distinctive in its concern with adopting a 'binocular' vision that balances social constructionist and psychoanalytic perspectives: it specifically tries to avoid giving explanatory preference to either social or psychological processes, challenging the dichotomy of these terms (Frosh & Saville Young, 2008; Frosh & Saville Young, 2010; Saville Young, 2011).

The study assumes a psychosocial view of race as a social construct (rather than biological essence) that is discursively produced, but that is used by individuals in personal, invested and less-than-fully-conscious ways. Within this view, individuals have access to a limited repertoire of discourses within which to identify themselves, for instance, as white. Although they make active use of these discourses, this is often not a matter of conscious choice. Discourses are embedded in matrices of power and knowledge that limit what can be thought, spoken and enacted in specific contexts, but they are also used by individuals in

unconscious ways. At the outset, then, to account for oneself as white is not straightforward. For reasons that will be explored in the course of this chapter, accounting for oneself as a white clinical psychologist in the current South African context may be a particularly challenging task. How this is accomplished within the context of a research interview, and what this facilitates or constrains in terms of mentalizing, is the focus of this study.

For the remainder of this chapter, I give a more detailed context and rationale for the focus on whiteness in South African psychology as well as the psychosocial approach. Finally I briefly outline the structure of the dissertation.

2.   Whiteness in South African Psychology

In the South African context, as elsewhere, the demarcation of race intersects in important ways with demarcations of class, language, culture and ethnicity. Notwithstanding these complex intersections, race has remained a particularly salient marker of difference, and one with important implications - both symbolic and practical - for individuals. Furthermore, there is some evidence to suggest that white South Africans remain particularly invested in a raced identity and that white subjectivities continue to play an important role in the society (Seekings, 2007).

In South Africa as in many contexts, psychology is a traditionally white-dominated profession. This relates both to the proportion of practitioners that are white relative to the general population (Pillay, Ahmed & Bawa, 2013), and to the content of the training that has developed out of, and by and large still reflects, historically white cultural norms and life experiences. In the post-apartheid South African context transformation agendas have therefore pertained both to the selection and training of a more representative body of practitioners, and to revisions of the training and practice of psychology (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004; Kagee, 2006; Kagee, 2014; Pillay, Ahmed, & Bawa, 2013; Pretorius, 2012).

Equity and transformation goals apply to professions across the board in the post-apartheid context. However psychological practice is somewhat distinct in the degree to which it relies on interpersonal understanding and felt relatedness, which in many cases stems from speaking the same language and sharing similar sets of socio-economic, cultural and raced experience. For this reason diversification has been a particularly urgent goal, and one that relates both to fair opportunity and to the quality of service delivery. Race, along with language, gender and class, is taken into account in the highly competitive selection processes for programmes such as clinical and counselling psychology (Pillay et al., 2013).

It is also recognised that many established aspects of psychological practice that have evolved primarily in first world western contexts may be ill-suited to the economic and socio-cultural realities of a South African context. Psychologists in South Africa acknowledge an urgent need for more relevant understandings and interventions geared to the marginalised majority rather than the privileged elite that can afford private psychological services (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004; Pillay et al., 2013). There have been efforts to distinguish a distinctly African psychology rooted in indigenous belief systems and values (Holdstock, 2000; Lazarus, 2006). Other scholars have argued that the focus on amelioration and on one-to-one therapeutic intervention that characterises traditional psychological practice is inefficient in contexts of resource-scarcity and poorly matched to less individualistic cultures. They have proposed a shift toward larger scale capacity-building and prevention work and to practices that evolve within local contexts (Pillay et al., 2013; Saraceno et al., 2007). Community psychology has been incorporated into psychology programmes in acknowledgment of the importance of larger scale work that is rooted in local contexts (Pillay et al., 2013). Also within a community psychology orientation, the notion of the expert psychologist with special knowledge has been contested, within an awareness of the ways in which claims to expertise may be safeguarded for reasons of personal gain as much as concern for what is best for people (Seedat, 1998). In many ways clinical psychology has been positioned furthest away from the ideals of transformation and of community psychology in particular. A reason for this is its close alignment with the medical model, which arguably emphasises decontextualised objectivity above engagement with socio-political realities, and in which hierarchies of expertise are particularly entrenched (Albee, 1998; Pillay & Ahmed, 2004; Pretorius, 2012).

Importantly however, much of the work outlined above is nascent or aspired to rather than currently practiced. Some aspects of training programmes may highlight the importance of transforming the practice of psychology in this context, while large aspects of what is taught and done may remain more suited to first world western contexts. Furthermore, while training programmes may emphasise critical non-mainstream approaches, mainstream practices may be entrenched in internship and employment contexts. Critical non-mainstream practice may hold moral weight in academic contexts, but this does not necessarily translate into practice. In addition, while few would deny the importance of greater contextual relevance, there is limited consensus about what this ought to involve. Revisions to psychology may be strongly advocated but are not necessarily practiced or even widely agreed upon (Kagee, 2014; Pillay & Ahmed, 2004; Pillay et al., 2013; Swartz, 2006).

Race is of clear significance in terms of equity goals and efforts to increase the representativeness of professional psychologists. However the wider transformation goals outlined above relate more to the ways in which psychology is practiced than the race of psychologists per se, and how a racial identity might position one in terms of these agendas is less clear. Being a person of colour may in many cases involve greater familiarity with widespread living conditions as well as the languages and belief systems of the marginalised majority of South Africans. The experience of being a person of colour (although not unitary) cannot be known directly by someone who is white. At the risk of exaggerating the similarities between experiences of South Africans of colour, it may be argued that psychologists of colour are more likely to have the type of knowledge of language and context that is important for developing effective larger scale interventions, but also for working effectively in one-on-one and other smaller settings. There are reasons why candidates of colour may be more sought-after and indeed better equipped to enter the profession and make a meaningful contribution to addressing the challenges currently faced in this context (Pillay & Kramers, 2003; Pillay & Siyothula, 2008). However, in thinking about the position of whiteness in South African psychology, it is also important to consider that the symbolic meaning of whiteness may extend beyond whiteness as a marker of individual positionality/identity. In some cases, for instance, aspects of psychology that remain exclusive and ill-suited to context may become coded to whiteness, whereas transformation may be imagined as 'black' or 'of colour'.

To conclude then, whiteness in real but also more symbolic ways continues to dominate the profession of psychology in South Africa. However, there is an awareness of this and recognition of the need for change, even if this does not yet translate into significant shifts in practice. In this regard, whiteness may be understood as both a dominant and contested or uncertain position.

Psychologists in training and in their first years of practice are likely to be confronted with the issues outlined above, and may grapple with how these issues relate to their own racial identities and their potential role within psychology in South Africa.

In particular, prior to the commencement of training, the significance of race may be activated in relation to issues of selection. The selection process is notoriously competitive and applicants may have a range of thoughts and feelings about how their racial status might impact their selection (Traub & Swartz, 2013). During training itself, teaching content and class discussions may highlight the significance of race for psychological practice in South Africa (even if only obliquely in terms of its intersections with culture, language and class).

Trainees may reflect on their own racial positioning in terms of the need for more contextually relevant practices. Practical work in the first years of training (the 'M1' or coursework year as well as the 'M2' or internship year) as well as the first year of practice (Community Service) generally takes place in clinic or public health settings. In these contexts trainees/practitioners are likely to work with a large percentage of clients who are not white, which may stimulate further thoughts and feelings in relation to their own racial identity and its significance for their professional practice.

In addition to the factors outlined above, psychological training is likely to stimulate some form of engagement with personal identity. Firstly, the training is often aimed at enhancing self-awareness or reflexivity, which is widely regarded as an important psychological competency. Secondly, it may introduce new concepts with which to think about the self and personal relationships. Thirdly, it involves the construction of a particular professional identity, which may also be understood as an induction into a new social role (which, to complicate matters, may be contested, in so far as there are debates about the role of psychological practice in this context). All of these processes may bring personal identity into focus in a way that may be provocative and destabilising. In a study on the experiences of clinical psychology trainees at the University of Cape Town, Amanda Kottler and Sally Swartz (2004) suggest that this training is more focused on transforming identity than it is on developing skill. Not all programmes will adopt the same position yet it is widely recognised that psychology training involves some engagement with personal identity. Of relevance to this research, race – also in its intersection with other processes - may be experienced as a more or less significant aspect of this identity.

There is a growing body of research examining the experiences of black practitioners entering a traditionally white psychological field (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004; Christian, Mokutu, & Rankoe, 2002; Mayekiso, Strydom, Jithoo, & Katz, 2004; Suffla & Seedat, 2004). Craig Traub and Leslie Swartz (2013) have investigated the experiences of white trainees, looking specifically at attitudes to equity policies for selection to clinical psychology programmes. They highlight white trainees' reluctance to speak about race, which they link both to racial shame and to fears of being labelled as racist (with possible implications for future employment). They find that trainees were inclined to regard their whiteness as a disadvantage in terms of selection, contributing to "bonds and acceptance of racist talk" amongst white applicants. (p.854). They also find that trainees recognised the importance of diversity within psychology training but that they took issue with a primarily race-based

quota system implemented at Master's level, advocating approaches that would encourage greater language and socio-economic diversity at earlier stages of training.

This research extends on the former research to explore the ways in which race, and specifically whiteness, may be construed as one aspect of identity during a period in which individuals are consolidating emergent identities as clinical psychologists and orientating themselves to practice in the South African context.

3.   Psychosocial Research

The psychosocial focus of this research involves a dual interest in broad discursive processes and smaller-scale – individual and interpersonal - psychological processing. In terms of the psychological dimension, it focuses on individual subjectivity and the perspective of white psychologists. A potential criticism is that this once again places whiteness in a central position within South African psychology. It may better serve transformation agendas to either attend to the experience of raced others who remain more marginal within the profession, or to attend critically at how whiteness operates (rather than trying to understand the subjectivity of whiteness). However, this research takes the view, also put forward in Traub and Swartz's (2013) paper, that there is also transformative potential in better understanding the views of a dominant group.

Moreover, within its discursive orientation the research also has a bearing on broader social/cultural processes and in particular the ways in which psychological practice is conceptualised and structured in the South African context. In this regard, it extends beyond individual subjectivity and engages more critically with the ways in which psychological practice as well as race are spoken about and with what effects.

The psychological dimension is theoretically centred on the concept of mentalizing. Although mentalizing is presented within a psychoanalytic framework within this research, it may be argued that its implications extend beyond psychoanalytic practice. Conceptualised as a meta-cognitive capacity that involves awareness of minds, mentalizing may be regarded as a generic psychological skill that comes into play within all clinical and therapeutic practice. In particular, it is implicated both in self-awareness and in the capacity to track and think about the subjective experience of others. For this reason, Antony Bateman and Peter Fonagy (2012) argue that mentalizing has relevance beyond specific mentalization-based modalities:

> We suggest that regardless of whether a formal mentalizing approach is adopted
> in treatment, there is a need for any practitioner to see the world from the

patient's perspective, and that whenever that focus on the patient's internal mental process is dominant, there is intrinsic value in this powerful commitment to the patient's subjectivity. (pg. xvii)

The focus of this research is specifically with the ways in which psychologists mentalize in relation to issues of race; that is, in relation to their own raced experiences as well as those of their clients, and the contextual factors that facilitate or constrain this. Part of the relevance here concerns issues of cross-racial practice and the training of white psychologists who are likely to work effectively within the broader South African context - and not only within predominantly white enclaves of private practice. However, since the significance of race is not limited to white psychologist/black client interactions, it also pertains more broadly to the practice and training of psychologists that are able to think and feel clearly about race.

Finally, in terms of the psychosocial orientation, there is a secondary interest running through the research that is theoretical and methodological; in particular engaging with the challenge of combining a social constructionist paradigm (that looks at shared narratives and accounts of the world), with one that is more conventionally psychological in its focus on subjectivity and the experience of individual speakers.

4.   Outline of the Dissertation

The research is presented as follows: Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature, focusing on issues of race and whiteness within both the social constructionist and psychoanalytic paradigms that are engaged in this study. Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical underpinnings of the research approach. Chapter 4 describes the methodological procedures that were applied. Chapter 5 presents the two case studies, discussing key discursive features of the speakers' talk about whiteness within the context of the research interviews. Chapter 6 goes on to analyse the relationship between these discursive features and processes of mentalizing within the context of the research interviews. Importantly, the findings and discussion of findings is merged in Chapters 5 and 6, in that I discuss my analysis of the data alongside engagement with the appropriate literature. Finally, Chapter 7 draws together key findings of the research, reflecting on limitations and implications.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

1. Introduction

This chapter engages with work about race and whiteness – with an emphasis on the South African context - within social constructionist and psychoanalytic paradigms. This distinction between social constructionist and psychoanalytic views is somewhat crude, and many of the scholars included engage with both domains. However I find it useful to separate approaches that are relatively more focused on description (of languages, cultural practices, and the interests that these serve) and approaches relatively more focused on explanation (reasons 'why,' at the level of individual psychology), since the psychosocial approach tries to give equal weight to both.

2. Constructionist Approaches to Race and Whiteness

2.1. Race

The constructionist paradigm rejects the notion of race as a natural category, and rather views it as an arbitrary marker of difference that is given meaning within particular historical contexts. Importantly, this is also the view of the present research and my use of racial terms (including 'white', 'black' and 'coloured') is consistent with this constructionist approach. In other words, it is based on the meaning that is ascribed to these terms within the present South African context, rather than any notion of essential racial categories that transcend context (for example in the sense of having a biological basis).

Constructionist thought typically denies any universal or innate basis for racism and views it as a local and historical occurrence that arises as a result of political processes (such as acquisition and conquest), to which people thereafter adapt psychologically (Cushman, 2000). Overall constructionist scholarship pays attention to the historical, material, social and economic processes involved with racism as well as the particular ways in which race and racism operate in specific settings, through ways of speaking as well as the practical arrangements of life.

Kevin Durrheim, Xoliswa Mtose and Lyndsay Brown (2011) elaborate a constructionist approach to race that is particular to the South African context. They take the constructionist view that race is an invented category with no inherent significance, but argue that it has nonetheless taken on an "experiential reality" (p.31) in terms of how people experience themselves and others, as well as the material arrangements of the society. They develop the concept of 'race trouble' to think about the ways in which race is sustained in the

post-apartheid South African context. This concept, they argue, better captures the complexity and multiplicity of raced experiences than prominent theories of race and racism.

Firstly, the concept of 'race trouble' focuses attention on specific contexts and the intricate ways in which race is produced within ways of talking (discourse), activities in time and space (practices, spatial arrangements), as well as personal, private experience (subjectivity). Durrheim et al. (2011) argue that this is an alternative to, on the one hand, psychological theories that describe race as an arbitrary distinction given meaning by individual beliefs and attitudes, and on the other, sociological theories that describe race in terms of social relations of inequality - neither of which they argue are adequate for understanding race as both a social and subjective phenomenon.

Secondly, thinking in terms of 'race trouble' conceptualises race as a process in which all members of society participate, regardless of whether they may be described as being 'racist' or not. In fact, Durrheim et al. (2011) find that the concept of 'racism' has limited utility in terms of understanding the complex ways in which race is produced within subjective experience, and risks reifying as a stable subjective state that which is a dynamic contextual process.

Durrheim et al. (2011) summarise a range of studies investigating the language, practices and subjective experiences in which race is produced. This work does not assume any essential psychological or social phenomenon that gives rise to or explains race, but rather maintains a grounded, fine-grained focus on the context-specific processes.

2.2. Whiteness

Initially scholarship on race focused on the construction and experience of oppressed races. Over the last three decades however scholarship has expanded to include work on whiteness as a distinct raced experience. This challenges the assumption that white experience is unremarkable and so unworthy of study, which, scholars have argued, sustains a view of whiteness as a norm or natural state from which other types of experience deviate (Winddance Twine & Gallagher, 2008).

The emerging interdisciplinary field of whiteness studies has investigated the construction of whiteness as an identity, practice, language and/or ideological stance in various contexts. It has roots in the work of W.E.B. Du Bois (1935) who examined the meaning and value attached to whiteness as well as the ways in which whiteness is often invisible to white people themselves. A 1993 publication by sociologist Ruth Frankenberg, 'White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness', was influential in

drawing attention to the ways in which white advantage may be reinforced in subtle, habitual and unwitting ways by white people who are ideologically opposed to racism. Since then a body of scholarship has amassed, spanning a range of disciplines and contexts, which considers the practices and ideologies that sustain whiteness as a form of identity and power. Often under the lens is the role of whiteness in framing racial categories, boundaries and hierarchies, as well as the covert power relations embedded within these constructions of race. An effort is made to expose the practices and ideologies that bolster white privilege, often by positing whiteness as an implicit norm (Green, Sonn, & Matsebula, 2007). White privilege is distinguished from overt white racism or supremacy. While the latter is located in explicitly racist views and actions, the former is often articulated in less-than-conscious ways and may be compatible with anti-racism and varying degrees of awareness of privilege. Shannon Sullivan (2006) defines it as "a constellation of psychical and somatic habits formed through transaction with a racist world" (p.63) which are often unconscious but which have the effect of maintaining white domination.

As the field has developed there has been increased interest in the manner in which whiteness operates at structural and institutional (as opposed to subjective) levels; as well as ways in which it intersects with other forms of inequity (pertaining for instance to global processes of migration, resurgences of cultural nationalism, increasing disparities in the distribution of wealth, and post 9/11 geopolitics) (Winddance Twine & Gallagher, 2008). More recently, scholarship has also focused on complex local articulations of whiteness, often in post-imperial, post-apartheid and post-Civil Rights contexts where the symbolic and political status of whiteness is increasingly contested. Here, the spotlight falls on ways in which whiteness is reinvented in new contexts, often to retain or reconstitute a position of privilege. Some scholars demonstrate how the boundaries of whiteness fluctuate in the course of struggles for this form of social power; and how whiteness is taken up and guarded in a range of ways (Green et al., 2007; Winddance Twine & Gallagher, 2008). Other scholars are interested in the contradictions that play out within specific positions of whiteness as "at the same time a taken-for-granted entitlement, a desired social status, a perceived source of victimization and a tenuous situational identity" (Winddance Twine & Gallagher, 2008, p.7).

2.3. Whiteness Studies in South Africa
2.3.1. South African Whiteness

Durrheim et al.'s (2011) survey investigates the ways in which race commonly 'troubles' whites in South Africa. Prominent types of white 'race trouble' include

ambivalence about inherited privilege; stigma of white racism; ambivalence about transformation; and racial discrimination. With regard to ambivalence about inherited privilege, white South Africans experience guilt and shame about privilege, whilst also not wanting to lose privilege. "The challenge for white people and other advantaged groups in a racist world is to live with dignity and humanity while maintaining the benefits of privilege maintained at the expense of exploited others" (p.44). This may be heightened in the South African context, where "the legitimacy of white privilege is perpetually questioned and threatened" (p.44). In terms of the stigma of white racism, Durrheim et al. (2011) find that white South Africans guard against being viewed as racist, often denying racism or distancing themselves from past racism. At the same time, they tend to experience a socially and/or morally unacceptable longing for aspects of the (apartheid) past. They are inclined to characterise their experience in the post-apartheid context in terms of marginalisation, insecurity, loss of privilege, and uncertainty about belonging. As a result, they tend to withdraw from public life and to retreat into 'comfort zones' (exclusive living, shopping, working and holidaying areas) that are cordoned off from the broader society. Finally, with respect to racial discrimination, Durrheim et al. (2011) find that white South Africans are likely to experience discrimination on the basis of race, or what they perceive to be such discrimination.

In addition, Durrheim et al. (2011) identify forms of 'race trouble' that affect South Africans across the board. These include working to justify inequality; the risk of race talk; and uncertainty about the presence/absence of race. In terms of justifying inequality, it falls upon both black and white members of the middle and upper classes to maintain a morally-acceptable sense of self whilst witnessing (and more or less directly participating in) the oppression of the still largely black working class and almost exclusively black underclass. Bringing race into talk is risky for South Africans across the board, raising for white South Africans the possibility of being labelled as racist and for black South Africans the possibility of being accused of being oversensitive to race or of 'playing the race card'.

Finally, Durrheim et al. (2011) maintain that a defining feature of race in the present South African context is its simultaneous presence and absence. Race is present in enduring routines of engagement, distribution of resources and spatial arrangements stemming from apartheid policies. In this sense race, and specifically white privilege and supremacy, remains consistently available as a "frame of interpretation" (p.56). On the other hand, race is also absent in the sense that race talk is avoided (for reasons highlighted above). For this reason, part of what makes race 'troubling' is specifically uncertainty about whether it is pertinent

within a specific situation, i.e. whether a particular experience or phenomenon is 'raced' or not.

Other work that has been done in the South African context has also shown that whites find it difficult to speak about race and avoid doing so (Nair, 2008; Traub & Swartz, 2013). It has highlighted the tensions between shame, guilt and self-hate on the one hand and superiority on the other that arises in white South African experience (Ancis & Szymanski, 2001; Sonn & Green, 2006). It has been found that white South Africans are inclined to underestimate their relative privilege and the historical significance of race in producing this privilege (Stevens, 2007; Steyn & Foster, 2008). At the same time, there has been some evidence to suggest that white South Africans are more invested in raced identities than their black compatriots and also more inclined to hold onto biological conceptions of race (where race is associated with physical appearance or descent rather than culture) (Seekings, 2008).

Melissa Steyn's (2001) research into discourses of whiteness in the post-apartheid era identifies five broad narratives. The first, 'Still Colonial After All These Years', makes use of a colonial/apartheid master narrative of white supremacy. It conceptualise whites as still having power and setting the agenda for change.

The second narrative, 'This Shouldn't Happen To A White', is also predicated on assumptions about white superiority – although less explicitly so than the first. It proposes a simple reversal of power and oppression in the post-apartheid context; that is, claiming that whites are now oppressed in the same way that blacks were formerly oppressed.

The third narrative, 'Don't Think White, It's All Right', centres on the notion of multiculturalism, and conceptualises whites as "becoming one strand within the future "rainbow" society; a strand that should be maintained with greater or lesser integrity" (p.84). One version of this narrative, 'Whites Are Doing It for Themselves', emphasises the importance of white identity and of keeping this as intact as possible. A gentler version, 'We Can Work It Out', places more emphasis on the notion of equality within difference – that is, that whites are a distinct group no more or less worthy than any other group. In contrast with the previous narratives there is some acceptance of change, even though challenges are highlighted.

The fourth, 'A Whiter Shade of White', is "a narrative of a whiteness that purports to have eluded enmeshment with 'race' and the concomitant white privilege" (p.102). Steyn outlines a number of strategies employed within this narrative in order to deny personal racialisation, establish racial innocence, and generally position the subject as being outside cultural influences. These include:

- Appeals to an overarching South African or African identity that focuses attention away from positions of advantage and disadvantage within these contexts.

- Appeals to 'non-applicability' – that is, factors precluding any implication in racism. This may include citing a non-South African background, being English-speaking rather than Afrikaans (which is associated with racism); evidence of never having been racist and/or of 'colour blindness' (not noticing race or believing in its existence).

- Overlapping with the previous point is the appeal to a politically correct ethnicity, which is essentially a matter of not being Afrikaans. Here, "Whiteness, racism, Apartheid and Afrikanerdom are all conflated" (p.107). Steyn argues that this - like the previous strategy - obscures the privilege that is shared with those whites who are deemed racist, thereby "screening out attention to personal involvement in structures of whiteness" (p.101).

- Appeals to a transcendent self, which involve the notion that "one 'really' consists of an individual 'essence,' the 'true self' that transcends the (fortunate or unfortunate) accident of one's 'outer' appearance or social position…" (p.109). This is also associated with the notion of common humanity, which presumes that "as individuals, we are 'all fundamentally the same inside'" (p.110). Both concepts draw attention away from the significance of race and issues of power and privilege.

- Appeals to external forces, which involve emphasising one's position within a system over which one has no control in order to deny personal accountability and agency.

The final narrative, 'Under African Skies (or White, but Not Quite)', acknowledges the speaker's personal implication in social processes of racialisation. It rejects master narratives of whiteness and aspires to create new subjectivities, although there is variation in the extent to which the speaker feels competent to do so. Steyn distinguishes three variations of this narrative:

The first version, which Steyn terms 'I Just Don't Know What to Do, Being White', involves commitment to social transformation and integration. However, the speaker feels ill-equipped to participate in this. There may be an uncomfortable awareness of personal enculturation that arises in interracial contact, which limits easy interaction and brings up feelings of isolation and ineptitude. In addition, these speakers tend to be highly aware of the ways in which they have benefitted from their racial privilege. While they accept intellectually that social change may require that they lose certain privileges, this may still be emotionally difficult. Steyn explains: "There is an awareness of a balance between loss and gain, an acquiescence that restructuring is going to pinch somewhere, and that there is no

reason why that somewhere shouldn't be you." (p.117) Overall, therefore, this narrative is characterised by a sense of "ambivalence and duality" (p.116) that Steyn describes in terms of feeling "morally convinced, but personally unaccomplished" (p.119).

The second version of this narrative, 'I don't Wanna Be White No More', is characterised by identification with an identity that is not white.

The third version, 'Hybridization, That's the Name of the Game', speaks to processes of developing new, hybrid identities. These narrators feel that they are engaged with transformation and social integration and experience a sense of personal benefit. There is an awareness of racial enculturation but not a sense of being completely defined by - or trapped within – an inherited racial identity. Value is placed on honest engagement with the past and with racial histories, as well as on being open to learn from raced 'others', also about whiteness. In general, social change is viewed with enthusiasm as holding positive opportunities for personal growth and enrichment.

More recently, Steyn and Don Foster (2008) have analysed popular newspaper columns to highlight forms of 'White talk' that perpetuate notions of white superiority whilst emphasising a commitment to non-racialism and equality. They consider the complex discursive strategies, replete with contradictions, ambiguities and elisions, which resist transformation and reinforce white privilege whilst denying the crude type of white racism that is now widely shunned. Furthermore, they show how allegiance with a progressive global white identity aids positive self-representation and defends against moral blameworthiness. In Steyn and Foster's (2008) words, "White Talk can help to secure the position of privilege for those who have not given up their faith in White superiority, but do not want their commitment to democracy, or their opposition to apartheid in the past, to be called into question" (p. 34). The effect of this talk, one might argue, is to recuperate the status of a morally tarnished and politically less powerful whiteness.

Durrheim et al. (2011) also survey common features of white racial discourse in post-apartheid South Africa. These ways of talking, they argue, guard against accusations of racism or opposition to transformation, but at the same time may also serve to preserve privilege:

- Racial difference is explained in terms of culture or ethnicity rather than biology.
- Talk about race is embedded in the language of liberalism, which emphasises freedom and equality. What may be understood as criticism of black persons or practices is framed as an objection to the violation of an important value.

- Racism is located in the past rather than the present. This involves denying the continuing salience of racism and inequality as well as the need for redress.

- Racial expression is adapted to context and varies widely depending on the risk of censorship. In different contexts, people may express different views pertaining to race.

2.3.2. Privilege-Aware, Anti-Racist Whiteness in South Africa

Other scholarship has honed in specifically on the position of privilege-aware, anti-racist white South Africans.

In 2010 philosopher Samantha Vice published an article 'How do I live in this strange place?' that catalysed interdisciplinary debate about the position of whiteness in the South African context. Importantly, Vice herself is not a constructionist thinker. However, her work is included here as an example of how whiteness has been construed within a particular intellectual context in South Africa.

Vice argues that the only ethical position for white South Africans is one of penitent silence within spheres of public debate. She believes that whites have the potential to do more harm than good by inadvertently dominating or inhibiting others. Here is a synergy with the argument that has been made within liberation movements (including black consciousness [Biko, 1978] and feminism [Tong, 2013]) that premature collaboration with members of the oppressing group can undermine self-liberation.

More central to Vice's argument however is the belief that to be white involves a form of moral injury to which the appropriate response is humble retreat and self-reflection. One reason for this moral injury, Vice argues, is that white South Africans continue to benefit from unearned privilege accrued by exploitative means. But she also refers to ingrained often unconscious habits of privilege that are unethical. She refers to Lisa Tessman's (2005) understanding of 'the ordinary vices of domination' that are everyday forms of (in Vice's terms) "indifference or callousness, cowardice or dishonesty, failure(s) of imagination and empathy, or just plain laziness" (p. 327) that allow privileged persons to accept their own exceptionalism as well as others' privations. Importantly, to be white is to be morally tarnished regardless of whether one may be anti-racist, privilege aware, and ideologically opposed to white domination.

A number of respondents take issue with aspects of Vice's argument that they consider to be, paradoxically, 'whitely'. Again, these are not specifically constructionist thinkers, but their responses to Vice's argument may be interpreted as highlighting the

construction of whiteness within a liberal-minded anti-racist paradigm (which Vice seems to exemplify in this article), as well as the effects of such a construction.

David Benatar (2012) argues that Vice's reasoning should apply to any group that has been unfairly advantaged. Benatar thinks that the fact that Vice makes the argument for whiteness and not, for instance, for masculinity, points to a form of white exceptionalism. Derek Hook (2011) finds an element of paternalism in Vice's position of humble retreat, reminiscent of the more advanced teacher stepping aside to provide a learner with an opportunity to develop their own mind.

Others take issue with Vice's view that whites ought to withdraw from public life. In Alison Bailey's (2011) view, Vice's argument is rooted in an understanding of the ways in which the lives of white South Africans affect those of other South Africans. But she argues that Vice fails to develop this relational strand of her argument. In concluding that white South Africans ought to disconnect themselves from public life, Bailey thinks that Vice loses sight of the premise of connectedness that is the foundation of her argument. Furthermore Bailey thinks that by denying a sense of mutual involvement Vice also denies mutual vulnerability - a capacity not only to affect but also to be affected. This failure to recognise one's own vulnerability whilst emphasising the vulnerability of the other, she suggests, is eminently 'whitely':

> Invulnerability is a convenient myth for the master subject. It allows us to ignore those common traits of our humanity that either fail to match the fanciful images we have of ourselves, or that make us feel uncomfortable and exposed. We forget that we are fragile beings: our bodies bleed, our hearts break, our minds fade, and our lives can be move[d] from joy to unimaginable sadness in less than a moment. Vulnerability is universal. When we are wilfully ignorant of our human vulnerability we mistakenly believe that people who are the most vulnerable and oppressed are somehow responsible for their misfortunes and that we are somehow immune to similar circumstances. (Bailey, 2011, p. 481)

So, to think it possible that one might extricate oneself by choosing silence or withdrawal (as a response to moral culpability) is to deny the extent to which one is already tangled up with others' lives.

Sally Matthews (2012) formulates a similar response. She acknowledges that white participation in anti-racist struggles is neither straightforward nor necessarily helpful, but she

also argues that the only way in which whites will unlearn ingrained racialised ways of being is through sustained contact with blacks, and indeed, through being challenged by blacks. In her understanding too, withdrawal is not a productive response.

These responses reinforce the notion of whiteness as an intrinsic stance that one may have little to no awareness of in oneself; that may be unintentionally revealed to others and that may work against more consciously held values. The Vice debate as a whole may be viewed as an example of how liberal whites may police a problematic whiteness in themselves and others; how whiteness becomes a quality hidden to the self but potentially visible to others in a way that could lead to public shame. Ideological progressiveness or commitment against racism is not sufficient to protect against this form of shame.

Again, it must be noted that the above scholars are rooted in a range of paradigms and these arguments are not necessarily constructionist. However the intention here was to reflect on this debate from a constructionist perspective, as highlighting discourses associated with whiteness (and in particular progressive privilege-aware whiteness) in the South African context.

2.4. Summary

The focus of the work on whiteness outlined above draws attention to the complexity of whiteness as a social psychological experience in the South African context. There is widespread recognition of white privilege in academic literature but also in the wider culture, but this may resonate more or less with individual experience. Where individuals recognise their own privilege, it may be experienced uncomfortably as a source of guilt and/or it may be experienced as a tenuous and uncertain position. It may involve fear of attack, reprisal or loss. Individuals may engage in a range of strategies to deal with the discomfort of guilt and/or uncertainty, working to deny, obscure, legitimise, retain, reinvent or apologise for privilege.

Overall, this section has surveyed thought about race and whiteness in a manner that reflects a constructionist emphasis on describing rather than explaining forms of practice, talk and subjectivity. The following section surveys ways in which psychoanalytic theory has been used in order to explain some of the more unconscious affective dynamics that may underpin these processes.

3. Psychoanalytic Approaches to Race and Whiteness

Psychoanalytic theory has been widely applied to analyse psychic processes involved with the construction of race, and with processes of racism. Psychoanalytic theory varies widely, as does the ways in which it has been applied to race. Some psychoanalytic thinkers, in characteristically reflexive fashion, have reflected on the racist assumptions inherent within psychoanalysis itself. Altman (2000), for example, has argued that psychoanalysis is predicated on the same rational/irrational binary that underlies the history of racism as it has developed in the context of Western imperialism. A range of thinkers have highlighted the manner in which psychoanalysis has kept silent about race as well as other forms of social, material and economic injustice (Altman, 1995, 2000; Bracher, 1997; Cushman, 1995, 2000; Dimen, 2000; Frosh, 1989; Kruger, 2006; Leary, 2000). In the American context Altman (1995) and Cushman (1995) have been proponents of a more politically engaged psychoanalytic practice that troubles the historical schism between intra- and inter-personal domains and the outside world of material and political processes. It falls outside the scope of this review to attend in any detail to this work, apart from acknowledging this critical approach as an important facet of psychoanalytic engagement with race.

For the purposes of this review, attention is given to Kleinian, Lacanian and relational or intersubjective approaches to the formation of racial subjects as well as processes of racism. Although these theories are not a primary theoretical framework for the current research, the scholarship surveyed forms an important background for this study and includes work that is referenced in later discussions.

Drawing on Kleinian theory racism has been understood as a function of unconscious processes of repression, splitting and projection (Altman, 2004). In this view, problematic or intolerable aspects of the self are split off from consciousness, repressed and projected onto what has been established within a particular context as a distinct racial group. In this manner race becomes a socially accepted receptacle for negative projections. Here Neil Altman (2004) contextualises his own Kleinian understanding of racism:

> [In Kleinian perspectives] people are seen as struggling with destructiveness, whether innate or a product of experience. Unable to contain a sense of guilt and "badness," people are prone to disavow and project these qualities onto and into others. Racism results from choosing the other—the target of projection and projective identification—on the basis of the physical characteristics that are associated with race. (Altman, 2004, p. 440)

Altman distinguishes the Kleinian view from a Lacanian view (adopted by Gillian Straker [2004]), in which lack rather than destructiveness is the primary concept. In this view human beings are confronted with lack and respond to this by aspiring to "ideal images of wholeness and perfection" (Altman, 2004, p. 441). Whiteness is understood to function as such an image, promising completeness, control and limitless possibility.

> Whiteness is linked to ideals such as power and freedom—the power and freedom to make of yourself whatever you want, to accomplish whatever you want to accomplish in America, the new world where the constraints of class and religion and tyrannical rulers don't apply. Whiteness is counterposed to blackness, that is, the state of unfreedom, constraint, slavery (Morrison, 1993). (Altman, 2004, p. 441)

Scholars such as Altman (2004) and Straker (2004) have applied psychoanalytic theory to the position of liberal-minded progressive whites who consider themselves anti-racist, living in contexts in which whiteness remains powerful but in ways that are increasingly contested. While Straker sees this as a position of unwanted privilege, Altman sees it as an experience of guilt that comes from recognising one's own privilege as well as one's reluctance to surrender this privilege:

> Part of the guilt that attaches to holding a privileged position in a racist society may derive from a sense that we want and feel that we need our privileges and comforts and would not give them up so easily if it came right down to it. (Altman, 2004, p. 442)

While their specific interpretations differ, Altman and Straker both adopt suspicion about affect that is premised on a distinctively psychoanalytic understanding of the defensive function that emotions can play to obscure other less acceptable emotions.

Straker (2004) understands white liberal self-hatred as a type of melancholia – what Altman (2004) in his commentary describes as an "unresolvable mourning for lost ideals of Whiteness" (p. 442). Here she conceptualises whiteness as a lost object which, in terms of the Freudian understanding of melancholia, comes to be hated in the course of being mourned. In

a similar vein, Ross Truscott (2011) analyses Afrikaner self-parody as form of melancholic mourning.

Straker (2004) also considers the type of 'pseudoreparation' that whites may engage in when unable to tolerate the thought of having done harm; i.e a reality of personal destructiveness. Pseudoreparation may take the form of compulsive and condescending caretaking where the interests of an oppressed group are "patronizingly and paternalistically promoted, these interests having been predetermined for the group" (p. 415). Often this strategy sustains fantasies of white influence and virtue. Declarations of exaggerated white guilt that oversimplify the complex range of motivations for white people's actions are also understood as a form of pseudoreparation that paradoxically defends against feeling guilt and shame (Straker, 2004).

In later work she reflects on the sense in which white people's shame and guilt on behalf of their entire race may be a way of avoiding the more individual shame and guilt associated with the personal ways in which they participate in racism and oppression. However, she also questions whether there may be a "certain perverse status that attaches to being the shamed other who can acknowledge fault" (Straker, 2011, p.14).

In a contemporary rereading of Biko's work, Derek Hook (2013) highlights the secondary gain of various forms of white anti-racism. Specifically, he highlights the potential of ostentatious displays of white anti-racism that serve narcissistic purposes of self-promotion; charitable anti-racism as a means of consolidating white agency and "entrench(ing) the "subservient position of those whom good needs to be done to" (p.96); and white admissions of racism as a strategy for transcending whiteness or evading the inherent guilt of whiteness. Here, reflexivity may serve as symbolic refuge from what it means to be white.

Importantly, these gestures are compatible with existing structures of benefit and often do little to challenge social relations of power that sustain white privilege.

Hook (2013) also reflects on critiques of whiteness studies that highlight similarly self-serving and defensive dynamics. In particular, he refers to arguments against the identity paradigm of whiteness studies, which focuses attention on white experience rather than offering a critique of whiteness. The risk of this approach is that it 're-centres' whiteness: it draws attention to, consolidates and redeems white subjectivity rather than criticizing it and the power relations in which it is embedded. Furthermore, this type of work can serve a symbolic function for individual scholars – it can be read as one of the anti-racist gestures noted above, which seeks to aggrandize and/or absolve the author of guilt. Hook

acknowledges that his own work may be read in this way, and argues that there is no way in order to escape or transcend this dynamic inherent in white scholarship on whiteness. All that is possible is to maintain awareness of the failings of white anti-racism.

Returning again to Vice's (2010) argument, it is possible to see how a psychoanalytic critique could highlight the symbolic gain of her position. Indeed a number of psychoanalytic respondents have argued this. Ross Truscott (2013) suggests that Vice's anxiety about a morally tarnished whiteness may rely upon and reinforce notions of white purity - i.e. whiteness as fantasy of goodness and perfection. Hook (2011) considers the manner in which white guilt may alleviate psychic discomfort and fulfil personal ego needs, as well as the ways in which 'silence' - as recommended by Vice - may constitute an act of aggression, grandiosity and power over the other.

It is worthwhile noting however that Straker (2011) has also challenged this fairly suspicious and negative approach to liberal whiteness and forms of white guilt and shame. Here she reflects on what she terms the 'unsettled whiteness' that she encounters in white narratives about apartheid. Again engaging the notion of racial melancholia, she argues that 'unsettled whiteness' involves unresolvable mourning for the loss of white power as well as ideals of whiteness. Affectively this state is characterised by confusion, alienation and sadness; a sense of betrayal by what was viewed as good and despair about a way forward. She acknowledges that it is possible to approach this melancholic stance suspiciously, and to deconstruct it to reveal covert forms of racism or resistance to transformation. However she also finds that there is something important within this stance. It represents a step forward from either a position of white supremacy, "based on a delusion of phallic fullness and the complete denial of any vulnerability and limitation" (2011; p.17), or a position of white self-hatred, which can easily become an unproductive dead end. She reflects that the process of 'unsettling' whiteness may be important. To mourn what has been lost (even if this never existed), and to allow the experience of confusion, alienation and sadness, might be more transformative than defensive efforts to avoid, deny, or 'make good' loss.

Psychoanalytic treatments of race have focused on its presence within clinical or analytic contexts, where it is often understood as an unconscious process that is difficult to think about and therefore likely to surface as an enactment. Scholars both in South Africa and abroad have reflected on the potentially damaging impact of unmetabolized racial prejudice and guilt within the white therapist-black client dyad, and the importance of working with this in the transference/countertransference relationship (Altman, 1995; Knight, 2013; Saville-Young, 2011; Straker, 2004; Suchet, 2004; Swartz, 2007). Most of this work can be

located within a paradigm of relational psychoanalysis, which places particular emphasis on the relationship between therapist and client, and the 'intersubjective' field of experience that is established between - and by both - therapist and client (as opposed to interpreting the subjectivity of the client separately) (Lyons-Ruth, 1999). Key here is "the conceptualisation of the other as always implicated in subjectivity" (Saville Young & Frosh, In press, p.3).

Reflecting on her own work as a psychoanalyst, Melanie Suchet (2004) thinks about the ways in which her racial past is tied up with the most repressed aspects of her own subjectivity; what she refers to as areas of narcissistic vulnerability. She reflects on the processes by which white racial identity in particular is split off from the rest of identity formation. To be aware of the internalised aggressor, she argues, is to be confronted with "fundamentally incompatible interpersonal experiences" (p. 433). It is extremely difficult to hold, at the same time, a sense of oneself as attentive to and respectful of the other, and as oppressive. Therefore the racial past of someone such as herself, grown up in a racist society, becomes a 'melancholic structure' that is rich with unmetabolizable experience. Suchet is interested in the ways in which race surfaces between herself as white therapist and her black patient as a strong affective charge that is associated with mutual shame; as well as the ways in which they collaboratively repress this shameful experience.

Writing about an interview encounter, Lisa Saville Young (2011) thinks psychoanalytically about the way in which the threatening presence of race is disavowed between two people. Race becomes threatening, she suggests, where the fear of being marginalised or of finding oneself marginalising is marked; or where the desire not to be racist is acute and the fear of exposing latent racism or of being labelled as racist is strong. She traces specific interactions in which race is denied and returns in the form of racial enactments: less-than-conscious repetitions of longstanding relational patterns.

In particular, she uses Judith Butler's (2009) concept of 'recognition' to think through her own raced responses to research participants and in particular the impulse to withdraw. For Butler, Saville Young explains, recognisability is a potential of every human being, but one that can only be actualized by other people. To 'recognise' another is to register that they have a precarious life that renders them dependent. Here dependence is a shared condition: the precariousness of our lives renders us all dependent, and this is the basis of our sociality. To recognise another as fully human is therefore bound up with recognising ourselves as vulnerable and dependent.

Saville Young analyses a moment in which, in the course of an interview, a respondent indirectly appeals to her for financial assistance. In this moment, she suggests, she

is "faced with an obviously precarious life that demands dependency" (2011, p. 52). She goes on to argue that when she fails to engage with this appeal but rather withdraws from it, it amounts to a failure of recognition. Indeed, as Butler points out, there is a more obvious precarity and dependence to the lives of people who are poor. However this does not alter an abiding condition of mutual precarity and dependence. Here, withdrawal amounts to a denial of mutual dependence. Moreover, Saville Young finds that there is a raced dimension to this denial that both she and the respondent work, discursively, to produce. She reflects: "It seems that here, race works to disavow, causing a flight into 'Whiteness,' where poverty is acceptable for Blacks but not for Whites" (2011, p.52). She concludes that the more ethical response would have been to respond, rather than to withdraw. To respond, here, involves appreciating the ways in which "one is implicated in making others' lives unliveable and in increasingly accepting them as unrecognizable and therefore, to follow Butler's thinking, as a less grievable, less worthy life" (2011, p.52). It involves mindfulness of the ways in which one is already 'entangled'.

Sally Swartz (2007) reflects on the challenges of intersubjective psychoanalytic therapy where difference (race, gender, class) comes into play. Like Suchet (2004), she is interested in the ways that social processes of oppression and inequality arise in intersubjective ways within therapy spaces, often within shared unconscious and affective states. Working with such states is potentially transformative, provided they can be thought about and put into words. However, this requires a level of openness to disavowed psychic material that may be very challenging. Part of Swartz' understanding here is that the experience of the 'other' is by definition an experience of that which is unconscious – not owned or integrated and profoundly uncomfortable to face.

> The other I encounter – with whom there is no resonance of alikeness, no easy moment of meeting – is divided from me by everything I have banished from consciousness. She is half of myself, a product of a process in which the dissociative fog has been populated by everything I cannot face about myself. (Swartz, 2007, p.180)

Swartz gives examples of how this otherness arises for her, within the shame of 'not knowing' and having to ask, as well as the sense of not being able to resonate with her client. She goes on to reflect about some of the ways in which she approaches this challenging

intersubjective work, which demands willingness to experience and think about aspects of experience that may feel intolerable.

Swartz clearly acknowledges her positionality. She accepts that whiteness involves culpability, both in the sense of having benefitted unfairly and in the sense of a habituated blindness to the suffering and privation of persons of colour. However she also finds it important to attend to the specific personal ways in which the 'otherness' or difference arises within her experience with a client. There is a risk of essentialising whiteness as well as 'otherness', which must be guarded against.

According to Swartz, working with difference requires sensitivity to power, and in particular to language as an instrument of power. Language must be yielded carefully, searching collaboratively for ways to 'name' so as to avoid forms of injury and oppression. There must be awareness that speaking and hearing in contexts of difference is complicated, and not a straightforward or transparent activity.

Indeed, she finds it important to acknowledge the weight of racialised (and gendered, classed) histories and relations of power, and to proceed with caution. Yet she finds it equally important that this weightiness and caution does not inhibit the capacity for the type of open engagement that the work requires. Swartz invokes the idea of 'sitting lightly', which may be understood as a quality of awareness, curiosity and playfulness in relation to whatever arises. The concept of play comes from Winnicott's (1971) thought, where it is conceptualised as a crucial aspect of therapeutic activity. Swartz explains that "'(p)lay in this sense entails engagement with fantasy, suspension of the mundane concreteness of the material world" (p.186). Play allows for exploration, experimentation with possibilities, and a sense of real, alive self in contact with another.

In addition to 'lightness' Swartz refers to being 'robust', which brings to mind a capacity to approach that which feels delicate or dangerous and to engage in play in a way that is not bogged down by excessive caution or reverence. Both lightness and robustness may be understood as qualities that counter the potentially inhibiting effects of shame and that allow for a continued lively interest and involvement with that which might feel heavy and hard to bear, wherein lies the possibility of transformation.

Gillian Eagle, H. Haynes and Carol Long (2007) reflect on the challenges of working within contexts of difference from the perspective of training and supervision of clinical psychologists. In particular they consider the challenge faced by trainee psychologists working in community contexts, where they encounter clients whose life experiences are notably different from their own in ways that are marked by extreme forms of trauma and

deprivation. Racial difference is not a specific focus here but is understood as one aspect of difference that may be salient.

In their experience of training and supervision they have found that trainees often experience this encounter with difference in a highly visceral way. In Kleinian terms, 'primitive' anxieties may be evoked, which leave trainees vulnerable to defences such as denial, splitting and projection. Specifically, they refer to persecution or annihilation anxieties, which may involve a recognition of relative privilege and fear of envious attack; narcissistic anxieties, which may involve fear of failure or of being shamed; and contamination anxieties, which may involve fears of an overwhelming sense of the 'bad' that depletes or damages the 'good' internal object. With regard to fears of narcissistic injury, it is noted that anxieties about working effectively within this unfamiliar and challenging context may overlap with anxieties related to being a novice therapist, amplifying the risk of being exposed as incompetent.

Eagle et al. (2007) consider the importance of supervision processes that assist trainees with processing their often inchoate, anxiety-filled experiences in ways that make it more possible to think about, engage with and learn from them. They make use of Bion's (1984) notion of 'reverie' to describe ways in which supervisors might listen to trainees' unformed and overwhelming experiences and reflect them back in ways that make them more tolerable and available for thought; i.e. "helping trainees to convert the anxieties and rawness they encounter into something more assimilated and transformative" (Eagle et al., 2007, p.134).

They discuss the ways in which uncontained anxiety may limit trainees' effectiveness, specifically in community contexts, through closing down thinking and heightening either defensive under-identification or non-reflective over-identification with clients. They also argue that uncontained anxiety negatively impacts trainees' ability to learn from their experience, as well as their willingness to engage outside of their comfort zones both during training and later in practice. Where anxiety is successfully contained, on the other hand, trainees may experience the work as meaningful and affirming of relatedness, and may be motivated in future to continue work in less traditional psychological settings.

4. Attachment Theory, Mentalizing and Applications to Race

Contemporary attachment theorists who locate themselves under the broader umbrella of psychoanalytic thought have also developed understandings of race as an aspect of

psychological experience. As this is the primary interpretive frame for the current study, I spend some time introducing theoretical aspects prior to reviewing applications to race.

4.1. Attachment Theory

Attachment theory developed out of the empirical research of John Bowlby. A psychoanalyst himself, Bowlby took issue with the psychoanalytic emphasis at the time on unconscious fantasy driving development. Rather he attended to the impact of real-life experiences with caretakers. Although his work was initially rejected by the psychoanalytic community, the notion of attachment has subsequently gained wide credence and has made its way back into psychoanalytic paradigms. Drawing on relational psychoanalysis and intersubjectivity, Fonagy and colleagues have developed attachment theory and the related concept of mentalizing within novel articulations of psychoanalytic theory (Fonagy et al., 2004).

Bowlby theorised attachment as an instinctive repertoire of behaviour and experience designed to maintain proximity between infants and their caretakers. When development proceeds well, infants form preferential attachment bonds with attachment figures. At times of separation or increased risk, they are primed to seek out proximity to these attachment figures who provide a sense of 'felt security'. Bowlby's research was extended in a range of follow-up studies, with notable contributions by Mary Ainsworth, Mary Main and Fonagy (Wallin, 2007). Additions to the theory included:

- Attachment as a basis for exploration:

Ainsworth finds that when attachment is successful, the attachment figure serves as a 'secure base' for the infant and growing child - a steady foundation from which s/he can venture into the world to explore. In addition, as Bowlby understood, this figure is also a 'safe haven' to which the infant/child can subsequently return to receive nurturing, reassurance and comfort (Hopkins, 1999).

- Variations within attachment:

Ainsworth et al. (1978) identify distinct patterns of attachment evident from infancy. Secure attachment is evident when infants are reassured by proximity to the caretaker and equally free to pursue both proximity and exploration. In insecure attachment proximity is less reassuring. Strategies observed in such cases include inhibition of proximity-seeking (as in avoidant attachment) or inhibition of exploration (as in ambivalent attachment). In cases

where proximity to the attachment figure has been frightening, infants lack coherent strategies for attachment (as in disorganised attachment) (Wallin, 2007).

- Attachment as a lifelong process:

There has been increased recognition of the significance of attachment beyond development to psychological and social life in general. Throughout the lifespan, security of attachment remains important and influences the capacity to regulate emotions as well as engage with novel situations. The attachment styles of infancy and childhood have been found to have correlates in adulthood, and often (although not always) adult attachment patterns in significant relationships repeat early attachment experiences with primary attachment figures. In broad terms, early attachment influences later expectations of others and of the likelihood of perceiving responses as, and/or evoking responses that are, either empathic or disengaged; soothing or arousing; benign or hostile (Fonagy et al., 2004).

- Attachment beyond specific attachment relationships/as ubiquitous to social relationships:

The concept of attachment has been taken up within a range of fields and attachment processes have been detailed in contexts other than the primary intimate relationships highlighted within psychological studies. Attachment dynamics have been identified in less personal or emotionally intimate relationships, for instance in professional contexts (Smith, Murphy & Coats, 1999). Attachment to and within social groups has also been theorised (Dalal, 2006; Fonagy & Higgit, 2007; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001).

- Attachment as a context for social cognition:

Main (1991) begins to look at the correlations between attachment style and ways of thinking and speaking about significant attachment figures and relationships. Fonagy et al.'s (2004) work goes further to examine the relationship between attachment and more general features of social cognition, in particular what may be termed 'theory of mind', 'metacognition', or the ability to make sense of mental states. Their concept of 'mentalizing' or 'reflective functioning' is next outlined.

4.2. Mentalizing

Mentalizing, as conceptualised in Fonagy et al.'s (2004) psychoanalytically-grounded work, is a capacity to conceive of one's own as well as others' mental states, including thoughts, feelings, wishes, beliefs and intentions, within an awareness that "having a mind mediates our experience of the world" (Wallin, 2007, p.44). Importantly, mentalizing unfolds

at emotional as well as conceptual levels, and is more accurately conceptualised as an intersubjective concept that pertains to affective relational processes than a cognitive rational concept.

Fonagy et al. (2004) operationalise mentalizing as 'reflective functioning', evident within interview talk that demonstrates the following:

- Implicit knowledge of the nature of mental states in general, including that mental states are opaque and can never be fully known, that they may defend against pain, that they may be concealed, and that they affect interpretations of events.

- Attempts to understand behaviour in terms of mental states, with an awareness that outward behaviour is not necessarily consistent with felt experience.

- Implicit awareness of mental states within the interview context, for example recognition that the interviewer does not have direct access to what is in the speaker's mind and may not share the speaker's mental state with regard to topics of conversation. (Fonagy, Steele, Steele & Target, 1997).

Mentalizing enables individuals to take a reflective stance in relation to their own experience, particularly experience that is emotionally charged. This in turn assists with modulation of affect and increases flexibility with regard to mental states.

Fonagy et al. (2004) argue that mentalizing develops in the context of attachment relationships, where processes of attachment and mentalizing unfold in mutually supportive ways. The caretaker's capacity for mentalizing allows him/her to read the child's attachment signals and respond appropriately, which assists secure attachment. A secure attachment relationship in turn provides the necessary interpersonal conditions to begin to explore one's own mind as well as the mind of another. Specifically, it offers felt security, emotion regulation, a quality of playfulness, contingent communication, and access to another mind that is benign - all of which supports the development of mentalizing. Furthermore, the caretaker scaffolds mentalizing for the child: as he/she mentalizes for the child, the child acquires this ability him/herself. Throughout the course of development, the child discovers his/her own mind as it is reflected to him/her by the caretaker. In order to know him/herself as a being with a mind, he/she has to have been recognised as such by a mentalizing other (Fonagy & Target, 2006, 2008).

Fonagy and Mary Target (2006, 2008) conceptualise individualise variation in capacities to mentalize, but also emphasise that individuals' capacities fluctuate depending on circumstances. In particular, they find that mentalizing diminishes in the face of strong

emotional arousal and specifically in situations that stimulate anxiety, anger, or a sense of shame. These states of mind involve reduced capacity to recognise and explore what is in the mind of the self as well as the other.

One way in which Fonagy et al. (2004) conceptualise mentalizing, is as an implicit understanding of the relationship between internal and external worlds that comprises both a sense of how they relate to one another and how they are different from one another. David Wallin (2007) explains that mentalizing and non-mentalizing modes of thought as "modes of psychological experience that reflect our sense of the relationship between the internal world and external reality" (p.46).

Fonagy et al. (2004) outline specific non-mentalizing states. In a mode of 'psychic equivalence' individuals are inclined to equate what is in the mind with external reality; i.e. what is felt or thought is taken as fact. In developmental terms, this is the mode in which children experience their fears as concrete realities.

> Initially, the child's experience of the mind is as if it were a recording device, with exact correspondence between internal state and external reality. We have used the term "psychic equivalence" to denote this mode of functioning in order to emphasize that for the young child mental events are equivalent, in terms of power, causality, and implications, to events in the physical world. Equating internal and external is inevitably a two-way process. Not only will the small child feel compelled to equate appearance with reality (how it seems is how it is), but also thoughts and feelings – distorted by phantasy – will be projected onto external reality in a manner unmodulated by awareness that the experience of the external world might have been distorted in this way. (Fonagy et al., 2004, p.389 – 390)

Within this mode of experience, there is limited symbolic capacity. It is difficult to stand back from experience and imagine other possibilities or ways of thinking and feeling about a situation.

> The experience of unconscious as well as conscious feelings and ideas as equivalent to physical reality inhibits individuals' capacity to suspend the

immediacy of their experience and create the psychological space to "play with reality. (Fonagy et al., 2004, p.388)

On the other hand, in a mode of 'pretend', individuals sever what is in the mind from external reality; i.e. what is felt or thought need have no relationship with objective fact. Developmentally, this is the mode in which children play, engaging with sometimes difficult aspects of experience in ways that are reassuringly 'not-real'. "In 'pretend mode,' the child experiences feelings and ideas as totally representational, or symbolic: as having no implication for the world outside" (Fonagy et al., 2004, p.390).

By contrast, within a mentalizing mode, "Inner and outer reality can ... be seen as linked, yet they are accepted as differing in important ways and no longer have to be either equated or dissociated from each other" " (Fonagy et al., 2004, p.71) Wallin (2007) explains, "(i)n the *mentalizing (or reflective) mode*, we are able to recognize that the internal world is separate from, but also related to, external reality. Here we can reflect on the ways in which our thoughts, feelings, and fantasies both affect, and are affected by, what actually happens to us" (p.47).

4.3. Attachment and Mentalizing in the Study of Racism

Concepts of attachment and mentalizing have been applied within social psychology to aid understanding of processes such as racism and prejudice. What follows is a discussion of attachment-based understandings of prejudice that inform the present analysis. Although racism and prejudice are not specifically a focus of this research, there is overlap between these concepts and the types of raced experiences and identifications that are pertinent here.

Farhad Dalal (2006) makes use of the concept of attachment, particularly as developed in Fonagy's work, in order to understand racism. As noted above, Fonagy and his colleagues theorise that the child's sense of self develops in relation to the image of the child in the parent's mind. Dalal adds that this image is also informed by social discourses, such that the most personal self is social. He writes that "the so-called social categories of identity (in general) are integral to a deep sense of self, the experience of the *true me*" (p. 148). From here he goes on to argue that we form attachments not just to individuals but also to social categories. "...*it follows that, in attaching to others, we are also, of necessity, attaching to categories*, however subliminal our sense of those might be" (p.148). Racism, Dalal argues, is predicated on this subjective investment in social constructs of race.

Stuart Twemlow and Frank Sacco (2007) apply mentalizing to the concept of prejudice, which I include in this discussion insofar as it overlaps with, or describes one aspect of, racism. They understand prejudice as a failure of mentalizing involving inaccurate assessments of both self and other and compromised reality testing. It hinges on the experience of threat, and is associated with social contexts with prominent power relations between sub-groups (as opposed to a sense of collective identity).

Fonagy and Anna Higgitt (2007) develop an attachment-based understanding of prejudice. They distinguish between normal prejudice and malignant prejudice. Malignant prejudice is viewed as a consequence of pathological (disorganised) attachment, where attachment is associated with terror. It functions in terms of processes of projective identification whereby intolerable aspects of experience are evoked in others so that they can be seen as belonging to the other, and not the self.

Normal prejudice is conceptualised as a natural response to diminished security of attachment, which involves reduced mentalizing. More specifically, prejudice is understood as a *"secure base phenomenon"* (Fonagy & Higgitt, 2007, p.73); that is, a way of seeking out proximity to an 'other' that is safe and familiar in order to alleviate anxiety when attachment is threatened. In this way it may be understood as creating "an identificatory affiliation in the face of difference" (p.71). The sense of familiarity and belonging in relation to a perceived in-group is heightened in relation to a perceived out-group whose differences are exaggerated. This establishes symbolic proximity to an object that is safe. Importantly, the return to familiarity and safety involves diminished exploration – specifically of mind and subjectivity (that is, mentalizing). There is less reflection on the mind and subjectivity of the other (who is understood in generalised, simplified terms), as well as the self (with less awareness of personal perspective and bias).

In particular, Fonagy and Higgitt (2007) find that prejudicial ways of thinking are often instances of psychic equivalence. In this state, assumptions are more fixed and less likely to be revised in the face of contradictory evidence. While this sense of certainty provides a measure of safety, it also makes mental experience more threatening, since "every threatening thought now has the full weight of physical reality behind it" (p.74). There is less freedom to 'play' with thought - to entertain possibilities and investigate alternatives. This reinforces an anti-mentalizing stance and encourages further safety-seeking, also within prejudice itself. In this way, prejudice functions to further maintain a negative cycle.

Within this theory of normal prejudice, attachment insecurity is understood as a context-dependent rather than stable state. All people, regardless of their dominant

attachment style, may experience temporary threats to attachment. Insecure internal working models of attachment may be activated when there is separation anxiety or threatened loss of attachment security, an attachment object or familiar social environment. Fonagy and Higgitt (2007) therefore postulate that both prejudice and resistance to prejudice form a normal part of social cognition. "We feel and mostly work to overcome our prejudices all the time" (p.72). In situations of heightened mistrust, more work is required to resist prejudicial attitudes. Unlike malignant prejudice, normal prejudice should wax and wane in relation to felt security, diminishing as security increases. Furthermore, it is not orientated to the response of the victim and should decrease when confronted more vividly with the subjectivity of a specific person toward whom prejudice is held.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has provided theoretical background for both of the conceptual approaches to race and whiteness that are engaged in the present study. First it outlines basic features of a constructionist treatment of race, honing in on specific studies examining the construction of whiteness in the South African context. What is evident in this research, I suggest, is the complexity of racial talk in the South African context and talk about whiteness in particular. Accounting for whiteness as an aspect of identity involves particular challenges, in particular pertaining to the subject's position in relation to a chequered racial past, and to the complex status of whiteness in the contemporary South African context as still privileged but less securely so. The literature highlights the range of strategies that speakers employ in the post-apartheid context to navigate these challenges.

The second part of the chapter focuses on psychoanalytic approaches to race and whiteness in particular, which may be understood as offering explanations for particular constructions of race and whiteness at the level of individual psychology and unconscious, affective as well as relational processes. Attention is also given to psychoanalytic understandings of the ways in which race, and social identities more broadly, may surface within unconscious, affective relational experience, specifically in the context of psychotherapy.

Finally the chapter gives some theoretical background for the concept of mentalizing, particularly as this has been developed within a psychoanalytic framework and in relation to the topic of race. The research outlined here highlights ways in which raced thinking may constrain mentalizing, where mentalizing is understood to involve a capacity to 'hold mind in mind'.

Together with the context provided in the introductory chapter, which highlighted the potential significance of race and whiteness for psychological training and practice in the South African context, this chapter prepares the ground for an investigation of the construction of whiteness in clinical practice in this setting, as well as implications that this might have for mentalizing.

Chapter 3: Psychosocial Theoretical Framework

1. Introduction

This chapter engages with psychosocial research, outlining its theoretical underpinnings.

Psychosocial research endeavours to conceptualise research subjects in ways that engage seriously with both social and psychological understandings of subjectivity. Specifically, it combines social constructionist methodologies, which highlight the construction of subjectivity within social discourses, with more theoretically-inflected psychoanalytic interpretations, which attend to the emotional and relational investments that subjects might have in discourses and that may motivate their use of discourse in particular settings (Frosh & Saville Young, 2008, 2011). This interest in combining discursive and psychoanalytic approaches stems from a critique of discursive approaches for focusing on social context to such an extent that the subject or individual is lost (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). The aim of psychosocial research is to balance discursive and psychoanalytic perspectives so that neither is given explanatory preference. However, there is some debate about the extent to which psychosocial researchers have achieved this balance, with criticism for instance of an excessive focus in certain cases on the individual (which may be pathologising) (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008; Wetherell, 2005).

The present study draws on two lines of work within psychosocial studies. Primarily it draws on psychosocial methodologies developed by Stephen Frosh and Lisa Saville Young (Frosh & Saville Young, 2008, 2010, 2011, In press; Saville Young, 2011; Saville Young & Jeary-Graham, 2015; Saville Young & Berry, 2016), but aspects of Wendy Hollway and Tony Jefferson's (2013) work are also influential. Hollway and Jefferson draw on Kleinian theory, Frosh and Saville Young on Lacanian theory, and more recently Saville Young has turned to theory related to attachment and mentalizing. The present study shares the latter theoretical orientation, and focuses in particular on the concept of mentalizing.

2. Constructionist Influences in Psychosocial Research

Constructionist research attends to the ways in which apparently 'natural' or 'objectively true' aspects of social life are - at least in part - socially constructed. Under the broader constructionist umbrella, discursive methodologies emphasise the role of language in constructing social realities. To this end, discursive research is interested in what language produces (its effects), rather than what it represents (its meaning or veracity as a reflection of reality).

There are a wide range of constructionist and discursive methodologies. This chapter reviews methodologies that inform the psychosocial framework adopted in the present study.

2.1. Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis involves systematic, fine-grained readings of specific instances of talk for the ways in which they construct aspects of identity or of the world. The strand of discourse analysis that is of interest here is particularly concerned with the ways in which broad patterns of collective sense-making are engaged in talk - reproducing but also potentially destabilising familiar constructions of reality (Edley & Wetherell, 1999). In this approach, the term 'discourse' refers to culturally familiar sets of meanings that define the nature of subjects and of the world. Potter et al. define discourse as "discernible clusters of terms, descriptions, common-places and figures of speech often clustered around metaphors or vivid images (Potter et al. 1990: 212)" (cited in Durrheim et al., 2011, p.95). Nigel Edley and Margaret Wetherell (1999) refer to a "stock of shared understandings" that constitute common sense (p.183), as well as "a set of ready-made resources (provided by society) with which to think and talk about the world" (p.182). Associated terms that are used in the research include 'interpretive repertoires' and 'cultural narratives'. Reference is also made to the notion of 'subject positions', which are made available through particular discourses (Edley & Wetherell, 1999, p.182).

Discourse theory highlights the ways in which discourses produce social life (in its material, spatial and embodied forms) as well as subjectivity (including mental states and identities), whilst at the same time being reinforced within these processes of sociality and subjectivity. (Importantly however, discourse theorists are not concerned with intrapsychic processes, but rather the ways in which language about mental states constructs individuals as psychological beings with certain affects). What is evoked is the continual circulation of discourses through the arrangements of everyday life, which encompass both that which is shared and that which is personal; both concrete, consensual realities and experiences that are privately felt (Durrheim et al., 2011).

Discourse in this view is both facilitating and constraining: it makes available particular versions of the world, of self and others that suggest what can and cannot be done, thought and felt. Durrheim et al. (2011) point out that "discourses contain traces of former usage which have sedimented into their meaning, providing traces of former ways of thinking" (p.97). They may get activated in a way that resonates beyond the speaker's intentions, or the explicit significance of talk. While discourse can be seen to 'use' speakers

to reproduce itself, it is also used by speakers for their own ends: "people are both the products and the producers of discourse; the masters and the slaves of language" (Edley & Wetherell, 1999, p. 182). To speak is an act of 'recitation' - the repetition of existing meanings rather than a novel production of authentic personal meaning. However, as Durrheim, et al. (2011) point out, "Recitation is always the recruiting of a routine way of thinking to a new agenda, the deployment of cultural resources in a new context" (p.103). In other words, speaking is never a straightforward reproduction of discourse. It is always an active, tricky task in which speakers have recourse to limited discursive resources in order to accomplish a range of tasks, some of which may not be congruent with one another. Different contexts make different discursive demands. However, specific contexts may also present competing discursive challenges that produce tensions in speech. Different - at times discordant - discursive resources may be required to give an account of the world, to justify one's actions, to maintain an acceptable sense of self, to elicit understanding, and to avoid potential criticism. Speakers often work hard to anticipate and manage potential criticism of their speech, engaging in what Durrheim et al. (2011) refer to as "accountability work" (p.106). In the context of a socially and politically sensitive topic such as race, rhetorical efforts to manage possible criticism or social censorship produce particular discursive tensions.

In order to manage complex discursive tasks, speakers adopt particular relationships with the discursive resources at their disposal. They might embrace or resist certain cultural narratives, or oscillate between. Being highly familiar, discourses may be conjured in subtle, oblique ways that avoid any explicit alignment with potentially objectionable positions.

Edley and Wetherell (1999) suggest that discourses are structured around 'ideological dilemmas'. That is, they take the form of competing ideals or arguments for certain positions. As a result, speech is often organised around claims and counter-claims, defences and rebuttals. This is another sense in which speaking is never merely the recitation of discourse, it is a far more active, contested process. Discourse analysis, in this regard, investigates the ways in which "lives, thoughts and experiences are organized around a particular set of `ideological dilemmas'" (Edley & Wetherell, 1999, p.183), as well as the ways in which speakers manage these dilemmas in ways that sometimes involve challenging or transforming discursive 'truths'.

Discursive research attends in a grounded way - looking closely at specific uses of language - to the ways in which speakers make use of limited discursive resources in order to accomplish specific rhetorical tasks. There is no interest in matching language to a

supposedly more real external reality to establish whether it is a true or false reflection of this reality. There is also no interest in matching language to a supposedly independent, interior psychic realm, to establish whether it reflects the 'true' intentions or beliefs of the speaker. The focus remains strictly with language itself and what it accomplishes (both in a particular setting and in the world at large).

2.2. Narrative research

Narrative research (in the form in which it has been incorporated into the psychosocial approaches referred to here) also attends to language, with a constructionist interest in the ways in which language produces social realities. Specifically however, the focus is with the ways in which speakers 'narrate' or 'story' aspects of the world, themselves and others. Whereas the discursive work reviewed above focuses to a large extent on content (the particular discourses that are engaged or resisted within specific instances of talk), the narrative approach places emphasis on narrative form alongside content. Saville Young and Frosh (In press) make the argument that there is an intrinsic 'fit' between narrative approaches and psychoanalytic enquiry, which may be harnessed within psychosocial methodologies. In particular what they propose is shared is an assumption that meaning is not transparent and that the form of speech often reveals significance beyond what is explicitly said.

Narrative analysis may attend to the following aspects of talk:

(1) The structure of the narrative: Structural elements may include the specific events that are selected for inclusion, the ways in which these are ordered and connected, as well as the overall pace and rhythm of narration.

(2) Noteworthy uses of language: These are distinctive, evocative uses of language noted within a more poetic sensibility.

Psychoanalytic interpretation is similarly attuned to the ways in which subjects relay events and their specific choices of words as indicative of affective and unconscious experience.

(3) Interactional aspects of language: This includes the dialogical process and the manner in which meaning is co-constructed by interviewer and interviewee. It also includes the interaction that the talk constructs between the interviewer and interviewee, attending to the social action that this accomplishes. (The concern with interactional aspects of language is also shared with discourse analysis, various forms of which are interested in what talk accomplishes between people. Furthermore, there is some overlap here with the

psychoanalytic interest in the relational roles that are constructed within talk, typically described in terms of 'transference' and 'countertransference').

(4) Loss of coherence: This includes moments in which narrative order breaks down. Such moments are also of importance within a psychoanalytic paradigm - indicative of heightened affect and unconscious significance (Saville Young & Frosh, In press).

2.3. Psychosocial Applications

Discourse analysis and narrative research pay close attention to specific instances of language use, highlighting ways in which these reproduce but also trouble dominant social discourses. There is a conceptual and methodological commitment to stay with the level of language and not to draw inferences about material or subjective realities 'beyond' language and its effects.

Psychosocial researchers want to retain this discursive/narrative interest in what subjects 'do' with language, whilst also engaging with some of the affective and relational reasons for this 'doing'. What is assumed here is that speakers have access to a limited set of discursive resources that constrain what they are able to do, think and say, but there are also psychological factors at play within specific contexts of talk that influence the availability of particular discursive resources, as well as the ways in which they might be put to use. The following section surveys approaches used within psychosocial research to engage this psychological dimension, often in a way that conceptualises psychological processes as fundamentally social.

3.   Psychoanalytic Influences in Psychosocial Research

While discursive and narrative analyses provide sophisticated ways of thinking about the ways in which speakers use language (including the broader societal discourses that they draw on and to what effects), what they provide in terms of thinking about the subjective reasons for particular uses of language is more limited. Psychoanalytic theory is brought on board within psychosocial research as a well-developed, evocative language in which to think about the affective investments that speakers have in ways of talking, as well as the intersubjective processes that influence the availability of discourses within particular contexts. In this way, psychoanalysis offers a "'thickening' or enrichment of interpretive understanding" (Frosh & Saville Young, 2011, p.50) that is more individualised and emotion-inflected than what might emerge from a purely discursive/narrative reading.

A central tenet of psychoanalytic theory that is brought on board within psychosocial approaches is the notion of the 'unconscious'. This is a broader understanding of the unconscious than that of classical Freudian theory, which focuses on repressed psychic content (often aggressive or sexual in nature) that can be made conscious through interpretation. Rather, it encompasses:

(1) The relational view of the unconscious as aspects of experience that are implicit or procedural, encoded as ways of feeling and behaving but not explicitly remembered or known (Lemma, 2003).

(2) The Lacanian view of the unconscious as the broader structure of language itself in which subjects are produced and that limits what can be known and spoken (Saville Young, 2011);

(3) The mentalizing-based view of the unconscious as that which is not accessible under certain relational and emotional conditions (Fonagy et al., 2004); in addition to

(4) The more classical view of the unconscious as that which is dynamically repressed: kept out of awareness in order to defend against anxiety or pain (Frosh, 2012; Knox, 2007).

In general, the unconscious encompasses aspects of functioning or experience that are hidden but make themselves known indirectly. Within the Lacanian view in particular, it is not the property of an individual mind but rather that of language as a social phenomenon (Frosh, 2012; Knox, 2007).

Within psychoanalytic approaches, affect is closely monitored as flagging unconscious activity. Loss of coherence is often regarded as being indicative of heightened affect and therefore of unconscious activity; that is, experience that cannot be thought or spoken about. Affect is understood to be disruptive, producing "moments that are marginal, isolated and contradictory" (Frosh & Saville Young, 2010, p.2) and that warrant interpretive attention (Saville Young & Frosh, In press).

Importantly, psychoanalytic frameworks suggest ways of thinking not only 'about' affective and relational experience, but also 'by means of' these experiences. One of the hallmarks of psychoanalytic practice is that the practitioner makes use of their emotional experiences within the relationship with the client (i.e. their 'countertransference') as data for interpretation. That is, it is predicated on a notion of "knowing (though never fully) through emotional structures with which we experience ourselves and others (Davies, 2011)" (Saville Young & Frosh, In press, p.3). There is contention around the application of an aspect of clinical practice within a research setting, where the duration and circumstances of the

relationship differ and where there is not an opportunity to explore interpretive hypotheses with the subject of analysis. Frosh and Saville Young (2008), for example, argue:

> It is unusual, except in some ethnographic work, for researchers to spend enough time with research participants for the kind of deeply emotional relationship found it psychoanalysis to develop, and this places strong constraints on the extent to which, for example, transference material can be fostered and examined as part of the research. (p.114)

Nonethelesss, psychosocial researchers make some use of affective and relational data, albeit in tentative and circumscribed ways, in order to enrich their reading of interview texts.

The psychosocial research that informs the current research adopts an integrative psychoanalytic approach, drawing on aspects of Kleinian object relations, relational/intersubjective theory, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and attachment and mentalizing theory (which is the primary interpretive frame used here). I next briefly survey Kleinian and Lacanian approaches, after which I focus on applications of attachment and mentalizing within psychosocial research.

Hollway and Jefferson's (2013) psychosocial work is primarily Kleinian in its orientation. Here, key concepts of Kleinian theory (including anxiety, conflict, defences, and internalised self/object relations) are used to interpret narrative accounts elicited within research interviews, also drawing on biographical information about interviewees as well as the researcher's affective and relational experience in the context of the interview. Ultimately what is produced is a coherent analysis of particular research subjects, which in some measure explains their talk and engagement with cultural narratives in the context of a research interview. The present research acknowledges processes of transference, in the sense that previous experiences of relationships may be transferred to new encounters, but these concepts are not central to the analysis as the aim is not to interpret the psyche of the research subject.

In contrast with the case studies of Hollway and Jefferson that frame *subjects* as the focus of analysis, Saville Young and Frosh attend specifically to *research encounters*. This reflects a more relational or intersubjective focus on the dynamics between interviewer and interviewee that bring about certain ways of speaking. The interview is taken as a co-constructed event that reflects as much on the psyche of the interviewer as that of the

interviewee, but in particular reflects on their engagement with one another within a particular socio-cultural context. Within Saville Young and Frosh's (2010) approach the psychoanalytic gaze may also be turned toward social processes at large, using concepts such as repression in order to make sense of prevalent discursive practices. In general, Saville Young and Frosh use psychoanalytic thought in a manner that shifts emphasis away from individual subjectivity and towards social context - both the larger context and the specific context of the research interview. This intersubjective as well as broader social focus aligns well with a social constructionist paradigm.

Saville Young and Frosh make use of Lacanian psychoanalysis in a number of studies (Frosh & Saville Young, 2008, 2010, 2011; Saville Young, 2011). Lacan's theory places particular emphasis on language, and "the ways in which language 'uses' us, limiting what we can and cannot say" (Saville Young & Frosh, In press, p.2). This notion of language constraining speakers is also an important aspect of discourse theory, and so it sits well within a psychosocial paradigm.

In Lacanian terms, there is a sense in which language is fundamentally alien to psychic life - it is inherited or received from outside and incapable of ever truly matching or expressing subjective experience. Yet we continue to yearn for full expression within language and to maintain a fantasy that this is possible. This sets up a continual striving that has no endpoint: there is a continual reaching for meaning but meaning is always deferred.

As a result, Lacanian analysis is more interested in the ways in which language fails than in what it reveals. The assumption here is that there is no position outside of language from which to interpret that which language itself does not adequately contain - i.e. to access what a speaker 'really means' (Frosh & Saville Young, 2011). More so than other psychoanalytic approaches, the Lacanian approach is orientated to disruptions and breaks in the smooth surface of telling. In addition, it may attend to that which is absent or excluded within a particular account - the meanings disavowed or 'repressed' within certain ways of making sense.

It is beyond the scope of this research to engage with the complexity of Lacanian theory, nor is the aim to engage a specifically Lacanian reading of texts. However, I do draw on the both Lacanian and Relational/Intersubjective sensibility that informs Saville Young and Frosh's research, which is sceptical of the notion of a 'knowing' researcher that is able to get to the 'truth' of a particular account. Frosh and Saville Young (2011) propose the concept of a psychoanalytic 'reading' rather than interpretation or analysis of texts. Reading is an involved, productive process that opens up interpretive possibilities, whilst acknowledging

that this does not exclude other possibilities. Similarly, they cite Ogden's example of listening to poetry as a useful analogy for psychoanalytic engagement: "the task of the analyst is no longer to unearth the truth of what lies behind the patient's or the poem's words; it is simply to find a way to listen and respond that brings 'feelings and ideas to life in words that will advance the analytic process' (1999: 66)" (Frosh & Saville Young, 2011, p.52).

Saville Young and Frosh (2011) argue that the Lacanian sensibility in particular harnesses the more critical potential of psychoanalytic thought, which questions certainty and turns a reflexive, deconstructive gaze upon itself as a source of 'truth'. This, in their view, is an ethical position that avoids reductive or pathologising accounts of research subjects.

In more recent psychosocial studies Saville Young and co-authors have adopted theory relating to attachment and mentalizing (Saville Young & Jearey-Graham, 2015; Saville Young & Berry, 2016). As previously stated, this is also the primary interpretive framework for this study.

In a psychosocial study relating to xenophobia, Saville Young and Jearey-Graham (2015) examine the ways in which a broader socio-historical context as well as the specific interpersonal context of the research interview facilitate or restrict mentalizing, with consequences for how both interviewer and interviewee engage with xenophobic discourse.

Similarly, in a more recent study relating to mothers with children with disability, Saville Young and Berry (2016) highlight the ways in which moments of non-mentalizing in an interview exchange 'belong' to a socio-historical context and a particular interpersonal encounter, rather than to the psyche of the research subject. In both studies, the researchers adopt concepts of attachment and mentalizing in a way that recognises the 'psychological' as already socially-inflected. Here, the psychoanalytic frame of interpretation is one that is critical of individualising discourses that places moral blame on individuals. Rather than identifying investments in discourse within the research subject, the research "seeks to understand investments as always already belonging in, around, between and outside" (Saville Young & Berry, 2016, p.7) individual subjects.

4.   Conclusion

This chapter has surveyed theoretical foundations of psychosocial research, focusing on constructionist elements, psychoanalytic elements, as well as the ways in which these are brought together within the psychosocial approaches that inform the present research.

1. Introduction

The present study falls under the broad umbrella of case study research, which focuses on specific instances and the factors at play within these instances, allowing for in-depth exploration of questions of 'how' and 'why' (Yin, 1994). More specifically, it adopts a psychosocial methodology to examine interview encounters with two novice white clinical psychologists, in which experiences of whiteness and of becoming and being a clinical psychologist in South Africa are a focus of discussion. Psychosocial research is defined by a dual interest in the discursive work that happens within a text, and the subjective, affective processes involved with this discursive work. In this study, the subjective, affective dimension is investigated specifically in relation to the concept of mentalizing, as developed in the work of Fonagy and colleagues (Fonagy et al., 2004; Fonagy & Target, 1998, 2006).

2. Research Aims

In adopting a psychosocial perspective, this research is interested both in the use of language and in the subjective, affective processes involved with the use of language, which may be understood in terms of unconscious dynamics (or within the language of mentalizing – aspects of experience that cannot be thought about, or ways in which experience cannot be thought about). Here, that which is unconscious – or of that which cannot be thought – relates both to the interview context and to the broader socio-cultural context. Importantly however, while the psychosocial approaches outlined in this chapter tend to focus on subjective, affective reasons 'behind' certain kinds of talk, this study is more concerned with the subjective, affective correlates of particular ways of talking.

In particular, the research examines interview encounters with novice white clinical psychologists, looking at how whiteness is spoken about in the context of psychological practice in South Africa. In addition, it reflects on ways in which this talk relates to processes of mentalizing in relation to raced experience.

3. Methodological Procedures

3.1. Sampling

3.1.1. Research sample

Research participants were purposefully sampled to include white South African clinical psychologists either in internship or community service years of practice. Internship forms part of professional training, while community service is the first year of practice

following training. These are novice years of practice in which negotiating issues of professional identity and competence are likely to form a prominent part of people's experience. In addition, this is a period in which whiteness (also via commonly associated designations of class, culture and language) may be highlighted as a significant aspect of identity. Intern and community service psychologists work in the public sector, which is generally a more racially representative context than private practice (where many psychologists work later in their careers) and one in which whiteness might stand out. In addition, whiteness may have surfaced within aspects of selection and training in ways that would remain vivid and might constitute a background for more recent experiences. Overall, intern and community service psychologists are likely to have had recent experiences relating to race that might interface with their sense of themselves within their new professional role as psychologists. These experiences could be drawn on in interviews as 'live' examples.

Since this would be an in-depth qualitative study focused on making sense of particular cases rather than drawing generalisable conclusions, the sample size is small – two participants.

3.1.2. Recruitment

University departments (other than my own university, Rhodes) were approached to circulate a request for research participants amongst currently registered interns. (The recruitment letter is attached as Appendix A). Regrettably there were no responses, which was understood as a possible reflection of the difficulty and risk involved with speaking about race in the current South African context. (This hypothesis was later supported by the research findings, as discussed in following chapters). The same request for participation was thereafter circulated via social networks of fellow training psychologists, which led to two positive responses. At the time of conducting interviews both participants were completing or had recently completed their internship and/or community service placements at government institutions. The names 'Emma' and 'Maxine' are pseudonyms, and biographic details as well as details regarding their training institutions and placements are omitted in order to protect anonymity.

3.2. Procedures for Generating Data for Analysis
3.2.1. Research Data

Within the psychosocial methodology adopted here, the level of analysis is the transcript of the research interview alongside the interviewer's reflexive notes, made shortly

after the interview and again during analysis, in response to the text and thinking back on the experience of the interview (Frosh & Saville Young, 2011). The reflexive notes were written in a free association style, and included immediate as well as later recollections of my thoughts and feelings during the interviews. These include the ways in which I remembered making sense of talk within the interview context, my own emotional responses as well as my impressions of the participants' emotional experience; and then also thoughts or associations that arose in me in the course of the interviews, inasmuch as they seemed obliquely related or unrelated to our talk. The reflexive notes also documented some of my later thoughts and feelings about the interviews.

3.2.2. Interviewing

Two research participants were interviewed, drawing primarily on the 'free association narrative interview' that forms part of Hollway and Jefferson's (2013) psychosocial methodology, and to a lesser extent on the 'biographical narrative interview' that forms part of Frosh and Saville Young's (2008) methodology. Initial interviews were approximately 90 minutes in length, with a shorter follow-up interview with one participant.

Broadly speaking, this interview style was selected with a view to stimulating the active, invested and relational processes of meaning making that are a focus within the chosen psychosocial methodology.

Hollway and Jefferson's (2013) 'free association narrative interview' focuses on eliciting narrative material rather than generalised reports or explanations. The aim here is to generate specific, concrete and detailed descriptions that are close to real-life experience. Hollway and Jefferson argue that a narrative approach can be particularly useful where the topic is potentially sensitive, painful, and anxiety-provoking, as is the case with whiteness and race. Narrative accounts may circumvent a cautious, defensive response style and engage a wider range of discourses and experiences than might be directly reported (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

Another focus of the narrative approach is to elicit the meaning frame of the speaker and to avoid, as much as possible, imposing the researcher's significance. Narration involves active construction of meaning: "in telling a story, the narrator takes responsibility for 'making the relevance of the telling clear' (quoted in Chase, 1995:2)" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p.29). The aim here is twofold: to remain as open as possible to what the interviewee brings, and to highlight the construction of meaning within the interview process (because what is of interest is the ways in which speakers make sense of – narrate/explain/account for

– their experiences within a particular relational setting, rather than the experiences or the speakers themselves).

The 'free association narrative interview' is also informed by principles of psychoanalytic free association, which is interested in "the kind of narrative that is not structured according to conscious logic, but according to unconscious logic; that is, the associations follow pathways defined by emotional motivations, rather than rational intentions" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013, p.34). In this respect, this style of interviewing is less concerned with obtaining a coherent account than with inviting the interviewee to speak as freely as possible, following their own train of thought, with the understanding that breaks in coherence are likely to be emotionally significant. Here, contradictions, elisions and discontinuities are not taken as problematic elements that need to be cleared up but rather as crucial aspects of meaning (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

Although Hollway and Jefferson's approach was the primary influence for interviewing, consideration was also given to elaborating affect and deepening reflection as in the 'biographical narrative interview' described by Frosh and Saville Young (2008).

Specifically, the following steps were taken:

• An interview schedule was developed based on research themes (see Appendix C). Planned questions were kept to a minimum and simple enough to allow for flexible, non-directive interviewing. Follow-up questions adhered to topics and phrasing introduced by interviewees.

• As far as possible questions were open-ended, and interviewees were encouraged to pursue their initial responses and the unfolding train of thought - even when potentially veering off topic.

• Where possible questions were aimed at eliciting narratives: accounts of specific experiences rather than generalised reports. Follow-up questions sought clarification or probed affective dimensions of these experiences. Both research participants were spontaneously reflective, and there was limited need to encourage this beyond general prompts to continue speaking.

3.2.3. Interview schedule

The interview schedule followed the three-part theoretical structure of the research topic, which comprises (1) Being/doing whiteness in South Africa; (2) Being a clinical

psychologist/doing clinical psychology in South Africa; and (3) the process of becoming a clinical psychologist or starting to do clinical psychology in South Africa.

Specific questions included in the interview schedule were:

(1) Can you tell me about your background and what brought you to this work?

(2) Tell me about your experience of training to be a clinical psychologist and your first years of work?

(3) What were some experiences that you had around race or being white during this time (i.e. training and first years of work)?

3.2.4. Follow up interview

The initial plan was to conduct only one interview with each participant. After the first interview, which was conducted with Maxine, I felt that there would be value in conducting a follow-up interview, as the interview had been dense and it seemed that there was more to explore. The possibility of a follow-up interview was discussed at that point, and the participant was later approached to arrange this. The plan was then to conduct two interviews with Emma as well, and the possibility of a second interview was also presented to her at the end of the first interview – explaining that this would be dependent on whether I thought it necessary as well as the her willingness and availability. In the end there were practical circumstances that presented a challenge to having a follow-up interview with Emma, and since I also felt that there had been a sense of closure at the end of the first interview and that it was less important than it had been with Maxine to speak further, no follow-up interview was conducted. In Chapter 6 I reflect more critically on this aspect of the process, as possibly revealing less conscious dynamics of my interview with Emma.

Hollway and Jefferson (2013) include a second interview in order to 'test out' their emergent hypotheses about participants' underlying psychic processes, as well as to give participants an opportunity to reflect on what had been discussed in the first interview. In this research, where there is less interest in making interpretations about the participants' psychic processes outside of the interview itself, the rationale for a second interview with Maxine was to give the participant and researcher an opportunity to comment and reflect together on the first interviews.

In this case, I listened to the first interview and reviewed my reflective notes prior to conducting the second interview, taking note of key themes as well as my felt experience of the interview. During the second interview I invited the research participant to reflect on her experience or any content that stood out after the first interview. In addition, I shared some of

my own responses during and after the interview. The main purpose was to elicit the meaning that the participant had made of the first interview, including intersubjective elements, so that this could be included as a further layer of meaning-making. In addition I hoped to provide the participant with an opportunity to comment on the meanings that she had begun to make. Overall, the intention was to draw attention to and provide an opportunity for joint reflection on our mutual engagement in the interview process.

3.2.5. Reflexive notes

Within the psychosocial methodology adopted here field notes are an important adjunct to interview texts, casting light on the researcher's investments in the material and the relational dimensions of the interview talk. Following Frosh & Saville Young's (2008) approach, I made detailed notes directly after each interview, which included observations of non-verbal, affective and relational aspects, and my thoughts and feelings about each interview.

3.2.6. Transcription

Interviews were transcribed by the researcher soon after they were conducted. The transcription notation was adapted from that developed by Gail Jefferson (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984) (see Appendix D), indicating conversational and expressive aspects of talk, including tone of voice, non-verbal expressions, interruptions, pauses, and overlapping speech.

3.3. Procedures for Analysis

Analysis focuses on what happens at a textual level within the interview, as well as subjective, affective aspects that may not appear within the words of the transcript but that are captured in the researcher's reflections. The rationale here is twofold. Firstly, the research avoids any claims to analysing the psyches of the participants, apart from commenting on what might be happening within the interview exchanges. Secondly, the aim is to highlight the researcher's active involvement in sense-making.

As mentioned previously, Hollway and Jefferson's (2013) analysis makes sense of a case as a whole. The aim is to distil a 'gestalt': an overarching meaning of the interview encounter that captures something of the psyche of the research subject. The social and psychological are viewed as interpolated but nonetheless there is a sense in which the analysis makes final reference to an interior realm of experience.

Saville Young and Frosh's (Frosh & Saville Young, 2008/2010/2011/In press; Saville Young, 2011; Saville Young & Jearey-Graham, 2015; Saville Young & Berry, 2016) approach differs in that it presents multiple readings of the interview text, with a view to engaging dialogue between these readings rather than a final interpretation (that makes recourse to either social or inner experience). The emphasis falls on identifying what is unconscious – both in the inner and external worlds, whilst also highlighting how these are two sides of the same coin. Analytical procedures used within the present study were largely informed by Saville Young and Frosh's work. Key aspects adopted from their approach include:

(1)   Analysis involves multiples 'readings' of the text as the whole, beginning with reading, coding and sorting codes into themes, then identifying the discursive positions occupied and resisted within the text, and finally moving towards more interpretative readings that look at significances that may be more hidden/covert, also bringing on board psychoanalytic theory (in this case centred on the concept of mentalizing). Initially, these readings are done independently with no attempt to integrate them. Later, they are examined alongside one another and decisions are made about how they may be understood and presented together: whether this be as an integrated argument or as perspectives that remain distinct.

(2)   The focus of psychoanalytic interpretation is not the psyche of the interviewee but rather the interview exchange, which is viewed as a social process in itself but also an offshoot of larger social processes. That which is unconscious, invested, affectively-motivated and subjective is the property of both social and individual experience.

(3)   Saville Young and Frosh tend to focus the psychoanalytic level of interpretation on a specific extract, rather than looking at the whole text. Initially I planned to follow this approach and attempted to do so. However, I repeatedly found that I was drawing on multiple extracts in relation to one another or on my sense of the whole text in order to make sense at this level. After some time of trying to restrict myself to a more focused analysis of shorter sections and finding this unproductive, I made the decision to revise my approach and instead consider the text as a whole, drawing on various extracts as examples or in order to build an argument.

3.3.1. Steps for analysis

The following analytic procedures were engaged for each interview text. At each step, notes were made in the margins of the text (samples are included as Appendix E):

(1) Interview texts were read through several times and key themes identified, as a way to enhance familiarity with the text as whole.

(2) The first focused analytic reading aimed to identify key discursive positions engaged within the text. The following questions were posed of the interview text:

(a) What discourses/repertoires/cultural narratives do the speakers draw on in relation to whiteness, and to what effects?

(b) What subject positions are made available by the interview talk on whiteness, and to what effects?

(c) What ideological dilemmas are negotiated within the interview talk? How do the speakers position themselves in relation to particular discourses (for instance in alignment, critically, or ambivalently)?

(3) I examined the interview texts for specific uses of language in order to identify meanings emerging less directly, through the form rather than content of talk. Questions asked of the text included:

(a) How is the account/narrative structured, with what effects?

(b) Note any distinctive or evocative uses of language. What are their effects?

(c) What relationship does the talk establish between interviewer and interviewee, with what effects?

(d) How do the interviewer and interviewee collaborate to produce certain narratives, with what effects?

(e) Note any 'failures' in narrative coherence, for example breaks, absences, elisions, inconsistencies or dead-ends. What are their effects?

(4) I reviewed the text in light of my reflexive notes, where possible reconstructing my own thoughts, feelings and understandings at the time of the interview. In addition, I documented thoughts and feelings arising during analysis. The aim here was to reflect on my own investments in the research as well as her contribution to making sense of the interview talk. Specific questions asked of the text included:

(a) What was subjectively present for me then, at this point in the interview? What are the effects of this?

(b) What is subjectively present for me now, at this point in the interview? What are the effects of this?

(5) Initial analytical findings were discussed with the research supervisor, who had also familiarised herself with the interview transcripts. Based on this discussion, the analysis was reviewed.

(6) Drawing on all of the readings done up until this point, I engaged psychoanalytic theory in order to reflect on the subjective, affective processes involved with the interview talk. In particular I considered how processes of mentalizing may have influenced – but primarily been influenced by – the discursive paradigm of each interview. Of interest here was the ways in which particular discourses may facilitate and constrain thought about self and others. Within this analysis, the 'unconscious' – that which cannot be thought or spoken – was conceptualised as both a social and individual process.

(7) I made decisions about how to present the analytical findings in a way that would retain a sense of multiple lenses whilst holding a sense of the whole.

3.4. Criteria for Evaluation

The trustworthiness of the research was conceptualised in terms of a well-documented and consistent series of research procedures. Interview recordings, transcripts as well as field notes were open to supplementary examination by the supervisor and examiners (although access to recorded interviews would be balanced against the risk of compromising anonymity).

The quality of analysis would depend on the extent to which the research conclusions followed from the interview and reflective material. The onus was on me as the researcher to construct a persuasive line of argument that bridges the gap between material and interpretations. Moreover, although short extracts were finally presented for detailed analysis, it was incumbent on me to consider the material overall and to take into account aspects of the material that do not 'fit' the constructs of analysis. I was obliged to maintain a level of responsiveness to the material that involves a willingness to relinquish constructs or interpretations that seem promising at first, but on closer reflection do not provide a convincing 'thickening' of the material.

Finally, I strove for sincerity by means of reflexivity about my subjective involvement with the research material, as well as transparency about the research process and challenges (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002; Seale, 1999; Tracy, 2013). Importantly, the research adopts a psychoanalytic view of subjective experience as a legitimate form of knowledge, and not merely a source of bias that clouds objectivity (Frosh & Saville Young, 2008). In reflecting on my subjective involvement therefore, I was less concerned with correcting for bias than with elaborating an understanding of the material and making the process of interpretation clear.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Given the sensitivity of issues concerning race in the South African context, the anonymity of participants was an ethical concern, and care was taken that participants would not be identifiable in the thesis, nor in notes and transcripts made available for supervision and examination purposes.

Ethical considerations also informed the choice of theoretical paradigm and style of analysis. By emphasising intersubjectivity, social construction, reflexivity as well as uncertainty, I hoped to avoid an individualising and potentially pathologising gaze that might locate forms of whiteness within research subjects. In general, I had ethical concerns about interpreting research subjects outside of a context that provided an opportunity for response, and presenting these interpretations as 'knowledge'. Given the focus on whiteness and the potential that this might be construed in moral terms, it was deemed particularly important to avoid a style of interpretation that might locate whiteness in research participants in a final authoritative way.

An ethical protocol was submitted for review by the Rhodes Ethics Committee and the letter granting ethical approval is included as Appendix F.

Chapter 5: Case Presentations and Outline of Key Discursive Features

1.   Introduction

This chapter presents the two case studies and outlines key discursive features of interview talk in each case. The cases are presented separately. Each begins with an overview of the interviews and the dominant discourses that they engage, followed by a more detailed discussion of these discourses with examples from interview extracts. In discussing the second case study I occasionally draw comparisons with the first, where I find this illuminating.

Since I reflect on my own involvement in the interviews as well as subsequent analysis, it is important to state explicitly that I, like both participants, am a white South African and that at the time of conducting the interviews I was also a clinical psychologist in training, about to commence or in the first months of my internship (M2 year). Where relevant I comment on the significance of this shared positionality.

2.   Emma: Racial Innocence

At the time of the interview Emma was in the process of completing, or had recently completed, her internship and/or community service placement at a government institution. (Details are omitted to protect anonymity.)

The interview follows the structure outlined by the interview schedule. Initially I invite Emma to narrate her journey to becoming a psychologist. She gives an account of early influences contributing to her interest in this field as well as the challenges leading up to selection for training. Then, the interview hones in on her experience of training and novice psychological work, attending specifically to matters of race and whiteness.

The tone of the interview can be described as buoyant and optimistic. My field notes document my impression of Emma as soft-spoken, gentle, and self-effacing. Overall, the interview talk is clear and focused, with few digressions and little equivocation. There is minimal talk about the significance of race and whiteness outside the demarcated domain of psychological training and practice. Furthermore, Emma draws on a circumscribed set of discourses to speak about race and whiteness, as a result of which there is limited wrestling with discursive tensions. Her talk is fluent, and my responses and questions similarly smooth and succinct.

In the sections that follow I suggest that Emma's talk relies on a number of inter-related discourses, all of which contribute to an overarching discourse of racial innocence. The discourse of racial innocence, I suggest, includes a construal of race in terms of cultural

difference rather than class/socio-economic status; a focus on notions of individualism and common humanity (which I suggest may be broadly associated with a liberal humanist paradigm); a focus on crude racism rather than more subtle, unconscious forms of racism; and adherence to the notion of colour blindness. I argue that this discursive mode shares important features of the narrative that Steyn (2001) terms 'A Whiter Shade of White', which is outlined in Chapter 2. Steyn defines this narrative in terms of a tendency to deny "personal ramifications of South African socialisation" (p.100), including the speaker's own racialisation and enculturation within a racialised society. While I draw a number of parallels between what I refer to as a discourse of racial innocence and this narrative that Steyn identifies, I do not wish to equate them. Two considerations apply.

Firstly, Steyn identifies the narrative within a particular historical context, less than a decade after the end of apartheid. Participants in Steyn's research would have been raised and oftentimes lived as adults within an apartheid context. Their denial of any implication in whiteness therefore seems more extreme than that of a speaker who was too young to ever have been conscious of apartheid. Emma belongs to a generation that grew up after the end of apartheid, in a society that has in certain ways been deracialised. Nonetheless, insofar as South African society remains racialised in important - albeit less politically formalised - ways, I find that the comparison with Steyn's narrative still has relevance.

Secondly, Emma's talk differs in important ways from the talk that Steyn includes under the umbrella of this narrative. In general, the participants that Steyn cites seem emphatic and unequivocal in their views, whereas Emma's talk is also characterised by questioning and reflection. Most notably, the certainty that characterises the 'Whiter Shade of White' narrations is counterbalanced in Emma's talk by a discourse of therapeutic 'not knowing' within which there is always some element of experience that cannot be fully known.

2.1. Race as Cultural Difference

Firstly, as is common within contemporary South African white talk, Emma construes race in terms of culture or ethnicity rather than biology (Durrheim et al., 2011). She focuses in particular on race as a proxy for cultural and language groupings. More often she refers to herself as being Afrikaans (rather than white), emphasising a cultural and linguistic rather than racial identity. However, it must also be noted that Afrikaans culture is commonly a raced construct in the South African context, in the sense that it distinguishes white Afrikaans-speaking persons from mixed race Afrikaans speaking persons who are identified

as 'coloured'. Although Emma's conscious or explicit identification is with culture and language, it may be argued that these are also racial constructs but that the significance of race is de-emphasised within Emma's talk.

Secondly, Emma's talk focuses on the cultural and linguistic rather than socio-economic significance of race in the South African context. In this regard, race is construed primarily in terms of notions of difference rather than class or socio-economic status (which implies inequality and power differentials). Racial difference is framed positively, in terms of diversity rather than strife or competition.

> **Emma:** (...) ek dink Suid-Afrika - um daar's so baie verskillende kulture so baie verskillende tale ... dis so land van sulke groot diversiteit ... dit maak dit ook opwindend um *{I think South Africa – um there are so many different cultures so many different languages .... it's such a country of such great diversity .... That also makes it exciting[1]}* (mm), (mm) there's never a dull moment (Emma laughs).

Here there are traces of a discourse of multiculturalism that posits distinct cultures with relatively clear boundaries that (at least in principle) are equal and co-exist harmoniously.

As Steyn (2001) points out in her discussion of the 'Whiter Shade than White' narrative, the effect of this emphasis on the intersection of race with culture – rather than class – is to erase issues of privilege and power and the ways in which these sustain past dynamics of oppression. So too, the manner in which Emma's talk focuses attention on issues of difference (linguistic and cultural) within interracial practice may be seen as deflecting attention away from issues of inequality. In this manner, the privilege of whiteness as it pertains to her psychological practice is obscured.

2.2. Liberal Humanism: Individualism and Common Humanity

Engaging what may be viewed as a discourse of individualism, Emma emphasises the significance of clients' unique personal experiences and cautions against making assumptions based on any form of group identity. She explains that within her psychological practice, her

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[1] An English translation is provided in italicized text for all Afrikaans speech. However I have retained the original Afrikaans in order to preserve tone and nuance.

concern lies with her client's individual experience of race and she tries not to make assumptions about what this might be.

> **Emma:** (…) I think you have to when you when I do therapy I'm I listen to that person's experience of their own background no matter which ra – from which race they are (okay) ja so I think I treat every person individually for – ja where they come from specifically where they come from and (ja) hear their story um, (mm) ja but I (…) I don't actually see people so differently I I rather hear a person's own account of their experience of their background of their race, ja. (…)

Emma positions herself in the above extract as someone who is curious about her clients' experiences of culture and race constructing this as aiding the development of a therapeutic alliance. By asking questions, she explains, she demonstrates her willingness and interest to learn from the client, and to work towards understanding their individual experience.

> **Emma:** (…) it's not necessarily about, race for me (mm) but it's more about differences in culture (mm-hmm) um, (mm-hmm), but for me it's not that I can't work with a person from a different culture than me it's just that I have to be more open to learn about that person's experience of their culture and to ask more questions if I don't understand or to (mm) um (mm), om amper ja meer te wil leer om meer te verstaan (mm) (…) *{to almost want to learn more, understand more}*

> **Emma:** I have to ask about the process and what happened because I don't know so much about that specific (mm) ritual and the culture (mm) ja, but through that experience (mm) through asking them you um wys jy ook dat jy belangstel en meer wil leer (mm) um so ja (mm, mm), so dit – hulle's nie gewoonlik - ja hulle - ek dink die pasient ervaar dit positief as jy uitvra oor die kultuur (okay) omdat jy wil belangstel, um ek sien dit nie noodwendig as 'n impediment of 'n hindernis nie ek sien dit meer (ja) – jy kan dit ook gebruik (ja) um en dit kan ook 'n positiewe invloed hê op die terapie (ja) omdat jy nie net

aanneem nie of nie net maak of jy weet nie (ja) jy vra meer (ja) *{you also show that you're interested and want to learn more (mm) um so yes (mm, mm), so it – they're not usually – yes they – I think the patient experiences it positively when you ask about the culture (okay) because you want to be interested, um I don't necessarily see it as an impediment or an obstacle I see it more (yes) – you can also use it (yes) um and it can also have a positive influence on the therapy (yes) because you don't just assume or pretend that you know (yes) you ask more (yes)}*

The extracts above can be understood in relation to a discourse of common humanity, which assumes that it is possible for individuals to know and understand one another even when their social experience is significantly different. In this way of talking, social difference presents challenges to communication, but these are not insurmountable. Where language is a barrier, interpretation/translation may assist. Cultural differences may be discussed, explained and understood. Certainly, Emma acknowledges that there are situations in which language and cultural difference may pose fundamental difficulties for psychological work, but there is also an overall sense of confidence in the possibility of connection across social boundaries.

Steyn (2001) notes that the 'Whiter Shade of White' narrative draws on individualistic discourses of liberal humanism, which centres on concepts of individualism and universal humanity that transcend context. Certainly, Emma's talk differs from the narratives that Steyn describes in that there is some awareness of the significance of social context. She refers, for example, to the significance of poverty for mental health in the South African context:

Emma: (...) in Suid-Afrika veral in die gemeenskappe waar ons werk um armoede het 'n groot invloed op op mense en op um die tipe, ja sielkundige moeilikhede wat hulle ook ervaar soos angs en depressie *{In South Africa particularly in the communities where we work um poverty has a big influence on people and on um the type of, yes psychological difficulties that they also experience such as anxiety and depression (...)}*

Nevertheless it is possible to identify traces of the 'Whiter Shade of White' stance within Emma's emphasis on individual as well as common human features. The effect is not the total disavowal of social context and historicity that Steyn observes, but rather a subtle

emphasis on the individual and particular that draws attention away from larger social processes and group identities.

On the one hand this discourse may be understood as a particular narrative of whiteness that serves a function within the current South African context. Within Steyn's (2001) analysis, it mediates against a sense of personal accountability in respect to a history of racial oppression and ongoing racial inequality. However it is also important to note that individualistic thought as well as the broader framework of liberal humanism may be viewed as characteristically psychological. As scholars such as Cushman (1995) have argued, the discipline emerged by carving out as its subject matter a special domain of private experience, encompassing the intrapsychic and interpersonal. While specialisations such as social and community psychology do not focus on the individual, clinical psychology has remained particularly individualistic in its orientation. Certainly, there is a significant impetus within clinical psychology to better integrate a sense of context and of the social. In the South African context, the public health model that is outlined in the National Mental Health Policy Framework and Strategic Plan (2013) represents a less individualistic approach. Nonetheless the pull towards the individual and personal remains strong. In its alignment with psychiatry, for example, clinical psychology tends to maintain a focus on individual pathology. This is different from a social learning model that regards distress and so-called dysfunction as normal adaptations to particular circumstances. While the social learning model might encourage a more contextual focus on the factors shaping human experience in particular times and places, the medical model highlights individual processes of health and illness (Albee, 1998).

When Emma speaks about her psychological practice there are traces of this discourse of pathology and amelioration. She refers to the value of therapy for children who have had difficult experiences, helping them to process this so that they do not later develop pathology.

> **Emma:** (...) ek voel sielkundige hulp ook 'n groot verandering kan bring ja, aan gesinne um vir individue en gesinne en veral kinders um, want ek ja ek glo as 'n mens 'n kind vroegtydig kan help sal dit vir hom dalk hopelik later in sy lewe help om nie patologie te ontwikkel of ja as jy vir hom vroeg genoeg kan help (mm) as hy deur 'n moeilike ervaring gaan hopelik verhoed dit hom om later in sy lewe patologie te ontwikkel (mm, mm) ja (...) *{I feel psychological help can also bring a big change yes, for families um for individuals and families and particularly children um, because I yes I believe if one can assist*

a child early on it will hopefully help him later in his life not to develop
pathology or yes if you can help him early enough (mm) if he's been through a
difficult experience it will hopefully prevent him from developing pathology
later in his life (mm, mm) yes (...)}

In her discussion of client work, she refers primarily to cases such as this; where a specific traumatic stressor has given rise to psychological problems. In the following extract, for example, she speaks about her work with clients with substance use disorders:

Emma: (...) die mense gebruik die substances as 'n coping mechanism gewoonlik omdat dit vir hulle moeilik is om te praat oor baie moeilike goed wat met hulle gebeur het en partykeer (...) as jy 'n individuele terapie met hulle doen is dit soos die eerste keer wat hulle ooit vir enigiemand vertel dat hulle dalk seksueel gemolesteer is of seksueel mishandel is of enige ander moeilike ding (mm) en, um, (...) ek het amper bevoorreg gevoel dat hulle my genoeg vertrou (mm) om dit te deel sodat hulle dit kan verwerk sodat gehelp kan word op 'n manier en (mm) dat hulle hopelik nie weer terug hoef te gaan na substances toe soos toe hulle - as 'n coping mechanism nie (...) *{(...) the people use substances as a coping mechanism usually because it is difficult for them to speak about very difficult things that happened to them and sometimes (...) if you do individual therapy with them it's like the first time that they ever tell someone that they've maybe been sexually molested or sexually abused or any other difficult thing (mm) and, um, (...) I felt almost privileged that they trust me enough (mm) to share it with me so that they can process it so that they can be helped in a way and (mm) that they hopefully won't have to go back to substances like when they – as a coping mechanism (...)}*

To reiterate, Emma does demonstrate sensitivity to context and awareness of the significance of social circumstances. Yet in terms of these notions of trauma and pathology, the particular experience of the individual tends to come into focus. What may slip out of view are the forms of chronic and widespread distress that relate to broader social processes involving power and privilege. Speaking in terms of trauma and pathology does not preclude an awareness of the social domain but may tip the balance somewhat towards an individualistic perspective.

Emma's talk reflects the prominence of discourses of liberal humanism and individualism in the broader culture, but also the extent to which such discourses permeate psychological thought and practice. Here, psychological discourse seems to overlap with and reinforce a particular discourse of whiteness. Whereas discourses associated with approaches such as narrative psychology (Mcleod, 2006) and community psychology (Levine, Perkins & Perkins, 2005) challenge the status quo of clinical psychology and mediate against individualism, the more mainstream discourse engaged in Emma's talk supports an individualistic orientation. Overall, the implication of this type of talk is that the significance of broader social processes - including those that pertain to the notion of race - may recede.

2.3. Blatant Racism versus Colour Blindness

Emma's talk construes two forms of racial consciousness: on the one hand there is the possibility of blatant racism, which involves racial prejudice and discrimination, and on the other, the possibility of colour blindness, which involves having no awareness of race.

In Emma's talk, 'race trouble' centres on the type of overt racism that Durrheim et al. (2011) term "old-fashioned" or "blatant" racism (p.71), which involves negative views of other racial groups and positive views of one's own racial group that are fairly consciously held. She associates this racism with apartheid, noting that older generations who lived during this time are more likely to be racist; and also with Afrikanerdom, noting that Afrikaans-speaking South Africans seem more likely to be racist than English-speaking ones.

> **Emma:** Ja, I think, I don't know but I think sometimes English white people are more open-minded (laughing tone) I don't know whether it's only my perception (mm), um (mm), ja or the people that I have contact with (mm) um, I think they are more more open-minded in that regard, but I don't know whether it's only my perception (mm) ja.

Again there are echoes of a discourse of racial innocence. As noted in Chapter 2, Steyn (2001) finds that narrators adopting this discourse are inclined to equate racism, apartheid and Afrikanerdom. The effect of such talk, she argues, is to conceal that which the speaker has in common with overtly racist, apartheid-era Afrikaans-speaking whites; which includes privilege. Durrheim et al. (2011) also highlight the tendency of white speakers to locate racism in the past, which has the effect of obscuring the continuing salience of racist attitudes and practices.

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In one sense Emma identifies strongly with being 'Afrikaans', referring to this as 'her culture'. She recounts a sense of shame when confronted with Afrikaner racism in the course of her training (via the experience of a black classmate). However, she is also able to distance herself from white Afrikaner racism in a discursively straightforward manner. She explains that although her grandparents hold racist attitudes stemming from their apartheid upbringing, her parents do not share these and as a result she was raised not be racist. In other words, the narrative is that her parents made a clean break from their racist past in such a way that none of it was transmitted to the next generation. In this regard, Emma stands apart from her history as evidenced in the extract below:

Emma: I was raised um, we were raised to accept all kinds of people that (mm) um, although we look different from the outside we're all people with the same feelings with the same needs (mm)

Emma: Um, I think my my grandparents are quite, ja both grandparents from my father and my mother's side um, are quite Afrikaans um, and I think for them it's more difficult to accept all races in a way because they grew up in the Apartheid era or they (mm) worked during that time (mm), um, so sometimes when they do make, specific remarks (laughing tone) I will just say that I don't agree or that that's not necessarily the truth or, um (mm), I will I will ja I will say when I don't agree (ja), um, but they do make remarks sometimes about ja, about other races and ja (ja) ja (ja), ja so I think um, but my parents are quite open-minded in that regard so I think um, the way that I was raised um helped me to stand up against ja (ja), and if my parents also didn't agree with what my grandparents are saying they would also say that – no what you're saying is not necessarily (ja) the truth, perhaps it's your experience of it but (ja) it's not always true for for all people (ja), ja, ja.

Again, Emma's use of a discourse of racial innocence is more restrained than the speakers that Steyn bases her analysis upon, as she acknowledges that racism persists in present day South African society. In so far as she admits to a sense of shame when confronted with Afrikaner racism, she does acknowledge a certain implication within this. However, I would argue that the relative emphasis placed within her account on a crude form of apartheid-era racism draws attention away from the possibility of inadvertent forms of

racism or of unavoidable participation in aspects of South African life that reflect continuity with the apartheid past. Once again, the issue of inequality and of being embedded within unequal social relations by virtue of race, is de-emphasised.

Furthermore it is noteworthy that Emma makes symmetrical references to black and white racism, again - one may argue - promoting a view of raced experiences as primarily different rather than unequal. For example, in reflecting on issues of racism within her therapy practice she considers both the possibility of racism directed at her as a white person, and her directing racism at clients of colour.

> **Emma:** (…) but in my experience I didn't experience any, racism as such from (mm) the clients' perspective (mm-hmm) um and I hope that it didn't play out from my perspective (laughing tone) (…)

This comment is removed from a historical context in which black and white prejudice was not equally experienced. Rather, racism is constructed as functioning equivalently for white and black South Africans and so again attention is deflected away from inequality.

The counterpoint for blatant racism and the more moral alternative is racial blindness. Emma draws on this notion to describe her experience in relation to clients of colour, where she feels she sees them as individuals rather than members of a racial group. Colour blindness is construed in terms of a moral commitment to approaching all persons with a similar degree of compassion and care, based on their shared humanity.

> **Emma:** I actually told somebody the other day I don't – almost see different colours anymore (laughing tone) if I work with people I don't (mm) ja, it's almost as if I – ja register that this is a black person or a coloured person or white person (mm) and then there are diff – because they come from different backgrounds perhaps you take that into account but it's not that, ja I actually (mm) see the person differently (mm) when they are a different race (mm) it's not that I, (…) dis nie asof jy dit meer so erg besef nie dit (ja) is, ja, of jy jy die persoon anders hanteer of ja ek dink dis as 'n kind is ek grootgemaak jy hanteer alle mense dieselfde dis nie asof jy (mm) hulle anders hanteer of hulle op 'n ander vlak sien (mm) as hulle van 'n ander kleur is nie (mm) um (mm, mm), ja. *{it's not like you realise it so strongly anymore (yes), yes, or that you treat the person differently or, yes, I think as a child I was raised to treat all people in*

the same way, it's not like you (mm) treat them differently or see them on another level (mm) if they're a different colour (mm) um (mm, mm), yes.}

Again there is a parallel with a discourse of racial innocence, which, Steyn (2001) finds, often involves notions of colour blindness. Narrators of this account assert that they are "free of racial consciousness" (p.110). Again, the social domain, with its prominent racialisation, is cordoned off from the individual mind. Steyn also notes that this involves a denial of whiteness – it "disclaims any implication in whiteness" (p.101). Whiteness is an external designation but does not penetrate the inner self. Similarly, it may be argued that Emma's talk around colour blindness also involves a disavowal of whiteness. Firstly, if race is not a significant aspect of others' identities it follows that it should not be a significant aspect of her own identity. Secondly, by focusing on how raced others are perceived, attention is deflected away from the issue of the self as a raced subject.

It is noteworthy that Emma speaks with confidence about her own thoughts regarding race, including the sense of colour blindness discussed here. In doing so she positions herself as someone whose contents of her own mind are fairly accessible. In psychological terms, it is possible that she is positioning herself as aligned with a theoretical stance that is less focused on the notion of the unconscious as a domain of experience that can never be fully known and that we actively resist knowing. Again, a particular way of speaking about race and a certain psychological sensibility seem to overlap and support one another. Here, there may be an interaction between the quality of certainty that seems to characterise a discourse of racial innocence, in which the narrator knows with confidence that her consciousness is not raced, and a psychological language that construes mental processes as relatively open.

3.   Maxine: Uneasy Whiteness

At the time of the interview Maxine was in the process of completing, or had recently completed, her internship and/or community service placement at a government institution. (Details are omitted to protect anonymity.)

The first interview follows the interview schedule format, focusing initially on factors influencing Maxine's choice of career and the Masters training. Maxine begins to reflect on issues of race and whiteness without prompting. Later talk focuses on her experience of race and whiteness within her psychological practice as well as other contexts. The second interview reflects back on Maxine's experience of the first interview as well as key points that had been raised in that discussion.

The overall sense of Maxine's talk in both interviews is animated, analytic and probing. My field notes document my impression of a tenacious searching after clarity and understanding, often involving a feeling of difficulty and struggle. There is an active wrestling with arguments and terminology, and regular reformulations and qualifications. Apart from a few moments of hesitation where talk falters, Maxine speaks fluently, following an associative structure. Often there are digressions as she weighs up different perspectives and experiences. Topics extend beyond psychological training and practice, and she reflects on experiences of race in a variety of spheres of her life.

My notes also highlight my own sense of anxiety and self-consciousness in the course of both interviews. My responses are often hesitant and awkwardly formulated, and I find it difficult to think clearly. I feel concerned about Maxine's experience of the interview - that she may feel taxed and scrutinised.

In the first interview I maintain a fairly neutral interviewing role, offering only brief responses to prompt further talk. In the second interview I at times participate more actively in the conversation, responding at greater length and including some self-disclosure.

In comparison with Emma's talk, which I argued is rooted in a liberal humanist paradigm, Maxine's talk tends towards a more constructionist sensibility. Where liberal humanism focuses on that which is common and constant within human nature, constructionism views the human subject as a "product of social and linguistic forces" (Barry, 2009, p.63) that are specific to time and place. The upshot of this is that emphasis often falls on issues of social difference; that is, how experience differs across social contexts (as opposed to universal human experience), as well as how experience within particular contexts is shared (as opposed to unique individual experiences).

Within this constructionist orientation, Maxine must attend carefully to her positionality as a white South African and the ways in which this relates her to other white South Africans, whilst setting her apart from South Africans of colour. Often she is obliged to acknowledge involvement with aspects of whiteness that she finds reprehensible. The concept of 'white privilege' is important within her talk, highlighting the unfair advantage and associated guilt that she shares with other whites - regardless of how progressive or aware she may be in her views on race. Maxine's use of the concept of 'white privilege' corresponds with its use within whiteness studies, as outlined in Chapter 2. The concept includes an understanding of subtle habits of privilege - attitudes of entitlement, superiority, prejudice as well as insensitivity to the situation of less privileged others. Importantly, this way of being is often hidden to the self but may be evident to others. Furthermore, it is compatible with

ideological opposition to racism. In this regard there is some overlap with the concept of everyday racism, which Durrheim et al. (2011) point out may be distinguished from old-fashioned or blatant racism, involving habitual aspects of life in contexts of racial inequality. Notions of white privilege and everyday racism posit deeply ingrained often unconscious ways of being that relate to commonplace perceptions and practices within a racialised society.

Like Emma, Maxine conceives of race as a proxy for cultural and language identities; rather than an inherently meaningful or biological category. However, the concept of privilege highlights the socio-economic significance of whiteness – that is, its intersection with class. In addition, she refers to forms of white cultural dominance. She notes that the majority of spaces in which she moves privilege white cultural norms and that it is rarely required of her to adapt to settings where whiteness is not the norm. She also refers to prevalent patterns of bias towards persons of colour, which do not affect her as a result of being white.

> **Maxine**: (…) I'm thinking about these kind of implicit subtle things which don't
> affect me, uh (mm) just by virtue of having been born white um (right) (…)

Both economically and culturally, then, whiteness is conceptualised in terms of notions of power and inequality, and not merely difference.

As I will show in more detail below, Maxine's talk communicates a sense of frustration about being set apart from raced others and in particular the ways in which this may limit her practice as psychologist in the South African context and exclude her from certain settings of work. In this regard, as well as in relation to the notion of white privilege, Maxine's talk emphasises negative connotations of whiteness. At the same time, discursive tension arises where she highlights more positive aspects of identity that work against the predominantly critical narrative of whiteness.

All of the factors outlined above – the sensitivity to issues of social difference that limits a sense of universal relatedness, the preoccupation with privilege and inequality, and the tension between a critical account of whiteness and more positive versions of identity, contribute to a narrative of whiteness that is marked by discomfort and ambivalence. In the discussion that follows I will refer to this as a discourse of 'uneasy whiteness', which I suggest shares many features of the narrative that Steyn (2001) terms 'I Just Don't Know What to Do, Being White'. As discussed in Chapter 2, this narrative is defined by a critical

appraisal of whiteness and a desire to unsettle this identity, but a sense of not being competent to do so.

The discussion that follows focuses on the ideological dilemma that runs through Maxine's account of whiteness between, on the one hand, a critical narrative that construes whiteness in terms of deficiency and highlights ways in which this impedes her psychological practice, and, on the other, narratives that bolster her identity as psychologist.

3.1. White Deficiency

Maxine's critical account of whiteness, and its significance for her practice as a psychologist, focuses on two broad areas. The first concerns the issue of relating across racial boundaries, which arises in her talk about engagement with clients and about her position more broadly within a South African public health context. The second concerns what may be regarded as the moral flaws of whiteness, which arises in her talk about whiteness in general and bleeds into her descriptions of her psychological practice.

3.1.1. Barriers to Interracial Relatedness and Integration
3.1.1.1. Impaired Understanding of Clients

Like Emma, Maxine discusses the significance of race for her psychological practice in terms of associated cultural and language differences. However, she is less optimistic than Emma about overcoming these differences within the context of psychological practice; that is, of achieving understanding and relatedness across cultural and language boundaries. Furthermore, the additional emphasis that she places on socio-economic factors heightens the significance of racial difference and brings into the equation issues of inequality that further trouble interracial relations.

In the following examples Maxine's talk constructs a sense of the limited capacity of the white psychologist to understand and therefore respond effectively to the needs of clients of colour. Firstly, I present an extract from the first interview in which Maxine recounts comments made by a senior colleague during her induction at one placement. In Maxine's version of her colleague's talk, the novice psychologists are warned against forgetting their difference, lest they are lulled into a false sense of understanding their clients' experience.

> **Maxine:** (…) I remember very clearly the induction, (…) this always stood out
> for me **(a senior colleague)** she said something about the um cultural - I can't
> remember the term she used but just the vast differences between the local

communities of (...) who used (...) and the group of **(intern/community service)** psychologists and that we're vastly different and that we need to be hyperaware throughout the year of how that's inter-subjectively affecting the interaction and what that means and how we can never really know the experience of the people we're serving and we mustn't think we do which I think is - I remember at the time being a bit taken aback and being a bit affronted it's almost - I wouldn't say it's aggressive but it's almost saying, um, I kind of heard it as um you're missing something that would that if you had would make you even better at this but none of you have it so you can't get it which I think is it's her manner to be quite aggressive and quite affronting but I think it was something that was very true and it was very - I'm glad in a way that she said it because I was very aware of it throughout the year (mm-hmm) and um, I did have one, or two, white patients but otherwise - um, I guess race is one construct of a person (mm) but socioeconomically racially I was very different from all of my patients (...)

Maxine's version of the senior colleague's counsel conveys the sense of a fundamental barrier between psychologists from a privileged background and their clients in the public health context. The comments do not directly reference race, but racial connotations are activated in Maxine's retelling. This happens in a number of ways. Firstly, race and whiteness are overarching themes of the interview talk, which sets up a raced reading. Secondly, Maxine refers towards the end of the extract to the minority of clients who are demographically similar to her as being white, which implies that the 'difference' at stake in these comments is at least partly racial. And thirdly, in the second interview she refers back to the same comments in explicitly racial terms: specifically, she refers back to the instance when the senior colleague communicated "You whiteys need to know…"

Maxine recalls hearing these remarks as a comment about her fundamental deficiency as a privileged white person, working in the public health context: "it's almost saying, um, I kind of heard it as um you're missing something that would that if you had would make you even better at this but none of you have it so you can't get it…" Within the narration she recalls an initial sense of protest, recalling that she found the comments affronting. But she quickly shifts towards a stance of humble acceptance of what she refers to as this 'truth'. The position affirmed here is a far cry from the type of 'common humanity' emphasised in Emma's account.

At a later point in the first interview Maxine refers to a type of 'implicit understanding' or 'alliance' that white psychologists have difficulty achieving with patients of colour, as a result of language and cultural differences.

> **Maxine:** (…) if you scroll through the listings online of psychologists all the mugshots are white smiling South Africans who speak English and maybe Afrikaans but not African languages and so they offer a certain service and it's quite - you know of course you can work with anybody but I think it's um, ja there's a limitation to, um, limitation to… How I complete this sentence is probably quite critical to your research, um, there's a limitation to the… um, the work you can do as a white psychologist as opposed to I think speaking to someone in their native tongue (mm), having a shared um culture… Um (mm) can offer a lot of implicit understanding ([emphatic] mm). Implicit, um, what's the word, implicit alliance between yourself and the client (…)

Here, language and cultural difference stands in the way of both understanding and of the basic sense of relatedness on which therapeutic work depends. Maxine conjures an image of the surplus of white South African psychologists who offer the same limited service. Her description of them all as smiling versions of one another - equally incompetent in terms of the needs of this context – invites a subtle sense of ridicule. There is a tone of despondency as she recognises that she falls within the same camp, regardless of whether she wants to or not, as evidenced in the extract below.

> **Maxine:** (…) I have to go into private practice (ja), I don't have a choice. I have to compete with the other hundreds of private psychologists and differentiate myself (…)

It is also noteworthy that this talk positions Maxine as a passive recipient of an inevitable future, which can be seen as working to absolve her from responsibility for the decision to enter private practice.

At points Maxine relays specific instances where she felt that she did not adequately grasp her clients' experience, which she relates to differences in cultural and socio-economic experience. In one case she recounts an extended process with a family in which a child had been diagnosed with a developmental disorder. She explains how she had heard their account

of their home circumstances but that it didn't fully register with her. It was only when she heard a social worker describe these circumstances in a multidisciplinary team context that she felt they became vivid in her mind. This shifted her understanding and experience of the case. Where she had been taking a fairly directive approach and feeling a sense of impatience with the family for not being more willing to engage with change, she found herself adopting a more supportive approach that allowed a greater sense of resonance and connection and that she ultimately deemed more beneficial. The extract below describes this shift:

> **Maxine:** (…) it was less about the therapeutic goals specifically we want to reduce this problem behaviour by frequency and severity or we want to um, um, understand this person's needs and structure their life in a way that their needs get met but more just connecting with the humanness with the person's existential struggles which is something that has always appealed to me (mm-hmm), the humanistic connection with people that you just know of their day to day and them being heard by another person who also has a day to day with its own struggles that they, um, feel contained and heard and therefore face their challenges with a little bit of space and a little bit of (mmm) support even if it's very subtle (mmm). So um, so I think that's how it shifted with them, is that became a much more meaningful relationship (…)

Importantly however, the narrative presents Maxine as relying on a process of translation, with the social worker functioning as an intermediary that assists her to hold her clients in mind. The privileged white psychologist is constructed as being closed off to the experience of disadvantaged clients of colour and incapable of overcoming this on her own.

The above examples give a sense of how Maxine finds that her whiteness (in its intersection with language, cultural and class) limits her capacity to work effectively with the wide cross-section of the population typically represented in public health contexts. As noted earlier, Emma's account is not wholly naïve to difference, as she acknowledges the significance of language and cultural differences within her practice. Maxine, on the other hand, is not wholly cynical about the possibility of bridging difference, as the above example demonstrates. However, while Emma emphasises commonality and connection in cross-racial work, Maxine emphasises difference and the failure of communication.

One factor that may play a role is that Maxine is English-speaking. Unlike Emma, who shares Afrikaans as a first language with a proportion of coloured clients, Maxine generally

cannot converse with clients of colour in their home language. For her the linguistic significance of race may therefore be more pronounced, in a way that exacerbates a sense of difference.

However, Maxine's focus may also be understood as reflecting a broadly constructionist discursive orientation that emphasises positionality and difference and limits the possibilities for clear, straightforward communication across social groupings. Specifically, constructionist thought (here also conceptualised as it overlaps with related movements such as post-structuralism and deconstruction) tends to assume that language is ideological – it reflects belief systems that serve particular interests. For this reason post-colonial scholarship that is rooted in a broadly constructionist/post-structural/deconstructive frame has examined the ways in which culturally, politically and economically more dominant colonial languages have overshadowed other ways of speaking, silencing marginal subjects (Barry, 2009; Swartz, 2005). As a white subject speaking within this mode, one would have to be careful about making any claims to truly understanding or being able to represent the experience of someone more marginal, as this might be viewed as erroneous as well as an expropriation of someone else's voice.

The constructionist view of language as ideological and wrapped up with power contrasts with the liberal humanist assumption that language functions as a neutral reflection of things that exist in reality. Within this liberal humanist view, the meaning of language is clear and constant: it is available for understanding (even though this might involve some form of translation/interpretation) across different time periods and locations (Barry, 2009). It therefore follows that Emma, insofar as she is rooted in this paradigm, is relatively optimistic about the possibilities of translation and cultural explanation.

Of course, neither Maxine nor Emma need a fully elaborated theoretical understanding of these paradigms in order to speak as they do. The argument here is that these theoretical paradigms may be implicitly active within their talk, in relation to the unspoken values and assumptions of the types of language that they use.

3.1.1.2. Failure to Integrate into Public Health

Maxine's descriptions of her general experience in the public health context evokes a sense of being unable to relate and integrate. At times this is framed in terms of an internal sense of not belonging, and at other times in terms of a sense of being barred entry from outside. The tension that arises in terms of wanting to feel part of and to participate in more integrated South African contexts, but feeling personally unable or externally obstructed from

doing so, is consistent with the narrative that Steyn (2001) terms 'I Just Don't Know What to Do, Being White'.

Maxine expresses a desire to work in public health, with a broad spectrum of the population, rather than in the elitist - primarily white - context of private practice. However, she also describes a sense of feeling separate and out of place in the public health context - both in relation to staff and clients.

> **Maxine: (working in government health)** has been a very, um, (…) I suppose, isolating I guess culturally isolating experience.

> **Maxine:** (…) there's something very alien actually about being in that space being in this space (…)

> **Maxine:** So this year I've really felt as a white English-speaking female there's a very particular difference between me and um, the patient population but also the the kind of personnel (…) so even though we speak English in (…), um, on a more kind of, in the kind of in-between spaces there's a lot of they might kind of banter and chit chat and it's mostly in Afrikaans and it's it's not, uh, ja, I don't feel part of it really (mm) (…)

In the following extract she recounts her experience attending a staff dinner at her place of work, together with another white psychologist.

> **Maxine:** (…) there was like a prayer in Afrikaans and then a prayer in Xhosa like this long Christian thing and (…) and I are both atheists and (…) the food was just not our food (…) she's vegetarian and there was no vegetarian option and (…) like a two litre of Jive and um, um, like soft drinks that we don't drink and it's like you know there's cultural differences in the soft drinks that people drink (ja) and, um, we were like this is not for, this is not culturally, this is not us culturally (…)

She recounts how they slipped out before their food arrived. The sense of discomfort is marked, with uncertainty about whether the onus had been on them to adapt and integrate or on the institution to better include them. Maxine goes on to reflect on how rarely she

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occupies spaces that are not predominantly white and where she might be expected to adapt to different cultural norms or practices. There is a sense of shame in her admission of feeling comfortable in familiar white spaces, and alienated - as well as sometimes threatened - in settings that are not white. It challenges her sense of self as a transformed, progressive white South African that is willing to venture beyond the enclaves of white privilege.

Maxine's sense of being excluded from the outside is most overtly pinned to the issue of racial employment quotas. She recalls finding it difficult to see racial employment targets on display in a work space, which brought home how hard it might be for her to find work in the public sector. However, expressing personal concern about the implication of equity policies is not consistent with her alignment with transformation discourse and she has to manage this discursively:

> **Maxine:** (…) what I've heard is that there may be a few posts that are available (…) in government but there are, um, colours there are quotas based on colour (okay), and and certainly now that I think of it, at (…) **(when)** we saw patients at the OPD (…) in that nurses' station there were a lot of things on the wall and there was a map of the catchment area and phone numbers of the other hospitals and yada yada yada and I remember this massive piece of paper, and it was a table, and it had, eh physiotherapist nurse OT doctor psychologist intern psychologist all the kind of roles (okay) cleaner security and then it had male female coloured Indian black white targets and it had it there, plain you know, plain as whatever the expression is, how many white psychiatrists there were and there were too many and then it was like 14 and the target (sjoe) eight and the deficit and the percentage of target reached and it was it was you know. It was this big (wow), it was out in the open that this is the the genuine kind of circumstances and um (…)

At this point in the narrative Maxine stands down from the sense of personal dismay and indignation about racial quotas that may exclude her, so as to reaffirm her unambiguous support for transformation.

> **Maxine: (continuing directly from above)** Uh I've just become aware I hope I don't come across as this kind of right wing, I don't for a minute think that this system should be different (mm), but it just is what it is and I accept it

because I understand that, you know, the legacy of apartheid is such that, eh, which terms to use here but I suppose post-colonial South Africa has colonial hangovers and post-apartheid South Africa has apartheid hangovers it's not the right term but it's a hangover in the sense that things happened and there's a consequence that lingers and it's taking a while to find kind of equitable you know employment practices and equitable power eh allocation and (mm) financial redistribution and everything and it's part of being white, coloured, black anything in South Africa is that you fit in with the systems.

Steyn (2001) finds it characteristic of the narrative that she terms 'I Just Don't Know What to Do, Being White' that speakers conceptualise a 'political/personal split': While there is intellectual understanding of processes of transformation, there may be an emotional sense of loss and marginalisation. As Steyn explains: "…those who tell this narrative see their fortunes as integrally related to larger processes that have to work out in ways that may actually be quite indifferent to their individual desires." (p.117-118) Elsewhere in the literature there are similar descriptions of the position of privilege-aware whites who may condemn their inherited advantage while simultaneously being reluctant to surrender it. In terms of the literature surveyed for the purposes of this study, Altman's (2004) work comes to mind.

To summarise, Maxine's account of her experience in public health is marked by difficulty and exclusion. On the one hand she refers to her experience of working in the public sector in terms of a sense of alienation and ineptitude, felt in relationships with both colleagues and clients. In addition, there is a sense of being unwelcome, which she relates to racial quotas. However, the alternative that she proposes to working in public health is private practice, which she describes as an elite, primarily white context where psychological intervention is neither urgent nor meaningful.

> **Maxine:** (…) I **(will have to)** to some degree join the ranks of private practice okay I don't have to I could work for an NGO or be unemployed or whatever but, um, ja that's kind of interesting to me how that used to feel so verboten (mm), like that's something that, that's the worst kind of white psychologist is someone who just sees wealthy clients (mm) in **(she mentions a wealthy area)** you know, you should you should roll your sleeves up and be on the frontline

and, work with the orphans, you know work with the Aids orphans and the destitute (…)

Unlike in the earlier extract, Maxine does construct her position here as involving choice. However this is closed down quickly by means of the alignment of working for an NGO and being unemployed, as well as the phrase "or whatever". The fact that private practice and government employment come out as the only viable possibilities is noteworthy and presumably reflects something about how clinical psychology is practiced and imagined (in mutually reinforcing ways) in the current South African context. As a result, it is difficult for Maxine to envision an acceptable role for herself in psychology in South Africa.

3.1.2. Vices of Whiteness

Next I will highlight ways in which whiteness is construed as a morally or socially tarnished subject position within the interviews with Maxine, in ways that directly impacts psychological practice but also more generally runs counter to values of psychological practice.

3.1.2.1. Privilege as Moral/Social Flaw

Maxine refers to moments of acute awareness of her socio-economic advantage in relation to clients of colour.

> **Maxine:** (…) So um, so clients know that I suppose have a laptop and they might see car keys or they might see me in my car and um (mm) they don't have laptops or cars um, they can't afford to get here every day I can afford to get here (…)

Maxine refers to the sense of guilt that arises when she considers such differences in circumstances. The sense here is that there is something inherently dishonourable about having more than others, and that wealth is socially/morally problematic. It is also noteworthy however that Maxine refers specifically to her *white* privilege, which suggests that discourses of whiteness are active in this experience of guilt. This guilt relates not to advantage in general but specifically the advantage of whiteness, accrued through a history of exploitation.

In instances where Maxine describes the differences between her own circumstances and those of clients with whom she has worked, 'white guilt' seems to become personalised and relevant to the particular relationship at hand. In the following extract she talks about the thoughts that run through her mind when a client speaks about her experience on the train.

> **Maxine**: (…) I'm thinking I don't know what it's like to (…) travel with a child on a train and be responsible for them let alone when they have ADHD and autism and they're so unboundaried that they can just go up to someone and grab a packet of chips out of their hand and then lie down on the floor or travel on the train with my child who is vulnerable and disabled and it's late at night or it's early in the morning and there's risks and inherent dangers that they're going to hurt someone or get hurt (ja), um, so those things are not said but they're definitely in my mind.
>
> **Brink**: And what is your experience when that comes up in your mind? What is the, ja… what does that…
>
> **Maxine:** Uh, ja-a-a, I think, ja I guess this is a bit, there's a white privilege um guilt.

The fact that she, Maxine, is protected from the experience that her client recounts is a source of guilt. Here her talk constructs a sense of personal failure in relation to the particular client in her care, as opposed to a general sense of racial guilt. In this way, her racial identity and the associated moral guilt are intimately wrapped up with her psychological practice and identity.

3.1.2.2. Indifference to Suffering

Scholarship on white privilege highlights personal attributes associated with this position: deeply ingrained ways of being that stem from being privileged and also sustain privilege. One such feature is that of indifference and apathy in relation to the privations and suffering of people of colour (Forman, 2004; Forman & Lewis, 2006; Vice, 2010). This construction of whiteness is prominent in Maxine's talk. In contrast with accounts of the daily struggles of her clients of colour, she conjures images of carefree white people such as herself enjoying frivolous pursuits. In the following extract, for example, she highlights how different her own experience of holiday train travel is from the daily train commute of some of her clients.

Maxine: (…) I know when I'm imagining him on the train it's only based on my, you know four or five times on the train (mm) (…) you know let's go from **(she mentions a place)** to **(she mentions another place)** by train it's this very white novelty train trip not you know this is the only way to travel with the amount of money I have and because of where I live, um, ja (mm).

She elaborates on the frivolity of white train travel, juxtaposing it with the grim reality of train travel for her client. An implication that arises within this telling is that white people, herself included, are able to happily enjoy their good fortune, whilst living in close proximity to others who face enormous adversity.

At another point she ridicules the insensitivity and complacency of white people who jump on the bandwagon of a 'Zuma Must Fall' march[2]:

Maxine: (…) it was very, it was all over my Facebook um newsfeed that people are like going to this march and encouraging each other to make posters and go to this march and then, uh I suppose black friends of mine who are I'd consider generally more vocal and engaging about South African issues uh generally, were saying, this Zuma Must Fall march is such a white thing that now that Zuma's affecting the Rand Dollar exchange rate or making life hard for the whiteys now the whiteys are getting upset about it and (mm) you know 're gonna get a takeaway cappuccino (Brink chuckles) and stand in the Company Gardens and take lots of Instagram photos (Brink chuckles) but it's not really but what about you know when Marikana happened or (mm) uh you know the Education Department's in crisis or the Health Department's in crisis when it's not really affecting the whiteys who can afford private education and health care where, why aren't they marching then? So quite a lot of - It was just interesting to see the ja the white friends who thought they were being left by saying let's go the Gardens and march and the, true left uh kind of voices on my Facebook feed who were saying this is preposterous (right), anyone anyone who goes to that should be embarrassed if they are only supporting that (…)

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[2] Marches took place in several metropoles in South Africa on the 16th of December 2015, demanding that President Jacob Zuma be recalled.

In a sense Maxine distinguishes herself from other white people in this narrative. But she recounts this in the context of talking about her own anxiety that – like the supporters of the 'Zuma Must Fall' march - she might consider herself progressive and aware, but come across as being narrow-minded. There is therefore also a sense in which she includes herself in this camp, or at least feels that she stands at the edge of this camp – at any point ready to topple over into it.

At various points in the interview Maxine refers sheepishly to some of her expensive tastes in relation to her colleagues of colour in the public health setting. She talks about bringing special coffee to work, and disliking the food served at a large staff event. On the one hand this talk evokes a sense of her discomfort and alienation in these spaces, as I have already discussed. On the other hand, however, there is a distinct tone of self-mockery, as she characterises herself as somewhat pompous and shallow.

The qualities of whiteness highlighted here - self-indulgence, superficiality, thoughtlessness - are at odds with some of the key values of psychological practice, which include sensitivity, awareness, and attention to others' needs. This rendering of her whiteness is at odds with the subject position associated with her professional identity. Constructing her whiteness in this manner also reinforces the narrative (discussed above) in which she does not properly register the difficulty of her clients' circumstances. In that instance too there was the suggestion of a limited capacity for empathy with her clients' hardship, which was coupled with a sense of whiteness.

3.1.2.3. Arrogance and Domination

Other habits of whiteness that are associated with its colonial history and cultural dominance are assumed superiority and a tendency to take charge. In the following extract Maxine codes her desire to contribute to South African society through her psychological practice to this form of white arrogance and domination.

> **Maxine:** (…) I think there's also something for me about being, I don't know
> if this has to do with race but being South African where there is so much um,
> um, so much shit, so much (mm) wrong with the country or so much broken or
> dysfunctional (mm) and I don't know if it's a, I feel it very much as something
> that I'm very pulled towards is being involved in that, and I'm always, I guess
> more so this year, held more cognisance about is that a, the wanting to be
> involved is that like a white um, feeling of, I'm white therefore I know what's

best or I have the means or power to um, uh kind of help the system towards my image of South Africa (mm) as opposed to, I mean what's I think the kind of Rhodes Must Fall Fees Must Fall movement has made me more aware of the assumptions I might have about the role that I must play or could play and it being bigger than it might actually be just cause I'm white I might assume you that uh (mm) as opposed to more kind of pan-African um I don't know if that's the right term there but a sense of, um, 'Africa will be fine without you whitey'. (Mm) Like 'don't worry we don't need your, sympathy because it's not, it's not like your tears are magical and can fix us, we're fine' (…)

Here, Maxine questions the extent to which her involvement with psychology in South Africa relates to unexamined white conceit, and plays into the problematic 'rescuing' discourse that whites are inclined to adopt in relation to 'Africa'. This casts a shadow on her psychological practice, again linking it with negative aspects of whiteness.

3.1.3. Conclusion: White Deficiency

In a similar way to speakers who engage what Steyn (2001) terms the 'I Just Don't Know What to Do, Being White' narrative, Maxine's narrative constructs whiteness as something that impacts her personhood, and positions her as limited in her identity and practice as a psychologist working in South Africa. In particular, she constructs the moral and/or social deficits of apathy, indifference, assumed superiority, as well as the subject position of unearned privilege in ways that point to race troubles. In addition, she constructs her cultural, linguistic and socio-economic difference as significant for her capacity to work well with clients of colour. Overall, these considerations position her as limited in her role as a psychologist working in the South African context.

There is a sense in which Maxine's talk on these points enacts a depreciation of whiteness, which may be understood as a rhetorical effort to distance herself from any form of white supremacy as well as a display of humble penitence (for the sins of her race). If we accept that there is always an element of identity work and impression management involved with talk (Durrheim et al., 2011), then Maxine's talk performs a progressive, anti-racist, privilege-aware white identity that may be distinguished from the now widely spurned whiteness of apartheid. However, as I have already eluded to and will now develop further, Maxine at times struggles to maintain this talk alongside a sense of herself as a good and competent psychologist.

3.2. Countering Deficiency: Bolstered Whiteness

3.2.1. White Excellence

In the following extract (drawn from the second interview), Maxine reflects on her experience of working in the public sector. I propose that it is possible to identify traces of a discourse of white excellence within this talk, which offers a more positive language in which to construct a sense of herself as a psychologist.

Maxine: Um I think the predominant feeling was that there wasn't uh, that the work that ended up getting done there wasn't of a, particularly high calibre or, the system just kind of colluded with a way of working ja that was very uh disinterested and lethargic and um, abusive, (okay) and um deprived um patients I think of, of higher levels of care? (okay) and I think, so I think where race comes into it? um, (…) thinking about myself? Maybe my expectations of, um, I don't know where these expectations would come from but kind of expectations of service providers working really hard or (mm) kind of trying to excel or (mm) it just felt like at all the hospitals I suppose I can only really comment on two but my experience also of working at **(she names her training institution)** I suppose is that there was always a lot of pressure on really excelling doing your best and proving your evidence-based practices and then at **(she names her internship/community service site)** those things didn't really exist, and it wasn't, it was kind of spoken about but we should improve, um we could and should get some training and we should get specialists in but it never really happened um, and I think maybe it's a South African shift? um in terms of maybe different levels of um, uh what's the word? Kind of work ethic I suppose? I remember, I'm just going to jump back in time some years but when I moved I moved back to South Africa from living in **(she names a first world western country)** just about a year before doing my Masters and I remember being struck I went straight into a job and I remember being struck by how different the work ethic was um, comparing **(the first world country)** to South Africa where I remember one day in **(the first world country)** we had a problem with (…) and it was like literally ten to five or half past five on a Friday and um, we called a company **(who resolved it over the weekend)** whereas in South Africa by kind of Friday at maybe 11 o'clock or 10 o'clock if the printer was out of paper that was it, like, everyone can go home (mm) um

(Brink laughs) it's is just such a different, um, energy level around work and around um, so maybe my expectations of there being a possibility for more or it even – ja - there being a potential for uh, kind of, greater work ethic or harder work or more productive output is, I can maybe relate it to my race and privilege because I've had the opportunity perhaps of working in uh, **(the first world country)** and in **(she names another first world country)** and I suppose experiencing a kind of first world um, work energy or work ethic. So maybe my frustrations with the system wouldn't exist if um perhaps if I hadn't have been exposed to that? (right, right) I might just be grasping at straws I don't know. (…)

Maxine is careful here not to explicitly couple whiteness with the idea of a 'work ethic', and blackness with the lack thereof. The only explicit link that is made with race is that her whiteness has given her an opportunity to work in contexts outside of South Africa where there is a greater work ethic. Yet the first implication – associating whiteness with hard work – is available as a possible framework for interpretation. One reason for this is that Maxine contrasts the work ethic of her training institution, which she herself previously depicted as predominantly white, with a government institution that is not predominantly white. But in addition to this it may be argued that this type of talk can easily activate what Donovan Robus and Catriona Macleod (2006) have called a discourse of white excellence/black failure, that couples whiteness with notions of civilisation, advancement and innovation, and elevated moral and intellectual standards, and blackness with notions of incompetence.

This perhaps also accounts for the care that Maxine takes to work against any possible racial reading; that is, she tries to resist or erase this potential discursive layer. First, she identifies the terms of comparison as being the training context versus the government institution. The terms then shift: the comparison is between South Africa and specific first world countries. When I allude to a possible raced reading, she denies that this was her intended meaning and again reformulates, suggesting a comparison between different cities within South Africa.

Brink: (Intake of breath) Ja-a-a, I mean it – (Brink sighs). Ja I suppose I suppose? What's going through my mind and… it might be very different to what's going through your mind? um, is that it's, it's hard to talk about, it's hard to think about and to experience and to talk about differences between, the first

world context and a South African context without, without at some level experiencing it as racial even though - For me. (mm) Even though I know there are no inherent sort of biological links in any way between something like work ethic and race um… Ja it can be something that that that feels real and is experienced in some way but it's really hard talking about it because it feels racist it's hard thinking about it that's how it feels for me (mm) I don't know if I don't know if that's part of what you're grappling with? Or if it's something different.

Maxine: I mean I, ja, when you say it now I'm kind of aware that there's a racial um stereotype about, um, ja I suppose about laziness or you know those kind of terms um, but that wasn't - I hadn't thought of that, or that wasn't at the forefront of my mind um, but I suppose in in in different using different words that's what I was saying, um, but again I don't know if it's - it felt less about race to me but more about **(she names a city in South Africa)**, um (okay) even compared to **(she names a different city in South Africa)** (okay, okay, okay) that there's a different pace of uh working here (okay, okay), ja, that's kind of that's kind of across racial divides (yes), it's just maybe that my frustration might've been based on the fact that because I'm white I've had the privilege to have been embedded in other work systems in other places (ah, 'kay, got you) because I've had access to travel (okay), I've been part of a **(she names a first world country)** firm and you know worked in **(she names another first world country)** uh where ja of course there were people cutting corners but it didn't feel like the culture of the business was um to kind of coast through and hope the boss doesn't realise um whereas here it feels like the boss sometimes feels like, ag it's three on a Friday like let's go have a beer um (ja), I know that happened once in **(the first world country)** and it really stood out that we had a big Friday lunch which involved having two drinks instead of one and then it was a little bit harder to work in the afternoon but we still worked you know it wasn't like (okay) let's call it a day (Brink laughs) (ja), so just a different work ethic and race being uh just the kind of gateway to having knowledge of a different way or a different culture (ja).

The shifts that Maxine makes in order to account for her impression of a poor work ethic in the government context may be interpreted, in part, as an effort to evade troublesome

racial connotations as these arise. This is not to suggest that she is consciously covering her tracks - that is, hiding the fact that she is 'actually' thinking about race. Rather this type of continual re-adjustment is the nature of discursive work, particularly where discourses are ideologically contested. As I suggested in the discussion of discourse theory in Chapter 2, it is the nature of discourse to activate a web of significance, often in ways that resonate beyond the intended use of speakers. When unintended meanings are activated, speakers have to work to manage these connotations. In this instance, it can be argued that Maxine has to manage the problematic resonances of this talk, which in other aspects also serve her.

Specifically, a discourse of first world white excellence allows her to align herself with a positive model of professional practice. Even though she may have certain shortcomings as a white person working as a psychologist in South Africa, her association with a culture of professional dedication and striving is a strength. It highlights what she has to offer rather than what she lacks. At one point in the first interview Maxine discusses her impression that she is unlikely to find work in public health as a white psychologist. Although at times her talk positions her as having understood and accepted the reasons for this, at other times she positions herself as struggling to come to terms with this emotionally, she takes up the subject position of having been in some way 'cheated' or unfairly excluded. It is possible that part of the function of the discourse that is engaged here is that it subjugates this 'cheated' or unfairly excluded subject position and rather turns the tables on those in the public sector who are constructed as likely to find themselves in an unmotivated environment. In addition it is possible that this discourse allows Maxine to align herself with a progressive international white identity that is less morally tainted than a South African white identity.

3.2.2. Individualism

While Maxine's talk often focuses on social positionality, she also draws on a more conventional psychological discourse of individual personhood. Accounting for her choice of profession, for example, she first of all considers her personal history and the family dynamics that may have inclined her toward psychological practice.

Within the overall context of her talk this individualistic discourse mediates against a sense of problematic whiteness. While her reflections on social dynamics often highlights aspects of herself that are at odds with her cherished values, the individualistic lens seems to provide a more familiar sense of selfhood that is consistent with ideals and beliefs.

Here she describes the qualities emerging in relation to early family dynamics that may have contributed to an interest in psychological practice:

> **Maxine:** (…) a certain (.) level I guess of empathy (mm) and um… just awareness of other people's kind of needs and internal worlds developed in me and has always been something I've been naturally… interested in and thinking about what's people's experiences of things… and always… ja always being, being aware of that (…)

> **Maxine:** (…) [Ja] I guess I'm trying to think I think it's always been part of my character or part of my (mm) person to not want to draw attention to myself to not want to celebrate my, (mm) self or my achievements (mm) because it might make other people feel less (mmm), so I think for myself the way I've always understood is that (…) **(followed by an explanation in terms of early family dynamics)**

The qualities described above - empathy, interest in others' experience, a tendency to be self-effacing - differ markedly from the qualities highlighted as features of whiteness in Maxine's talk - indifference, blinkeredness and frivolity; and are much more consistent with notions of what a psychologist ought to be.

The conflict between social and individualistic viewpoints is apparent in Maxine's talk about the racial demographics of her training programme. She comments on the dominant whiteness of her own cohort of trainees as well as their teachers. She finds this puzzling and wonders about the social dynamics involved with this. In the end however she refers to the reason that was given by the staff at the time to account for the selection of only white candidates.

> **Maxine:** (…) I think we asked the the (…) main staff members (…) who trained us you know how come (…)? And they said, there just weren't suitable candidates of colour, they weren't, you know, they didn't want to, um, accept anybody who wasn't I guess worthy just based on a surname or a skin colour (…)

This explanation concludes her reflection. Here, an individualistic discourse centred on the notion of personal merit holds final sway. The essential nature of the individual self is what finally matters, rather than superficial qualities such as skin colour or a last name. In the context of the rest of the discussion, which often highlights the significance and

unavoidability of social positioning, it is possible that this individualistic discourse works to construct Maxine's whiteness as ultimately unimportant because the discourse upholds individual qualities; individual qualities trump whatever strengths and limitations stem from social factors. In addition, the individualistic discourse can be viewed as constructing her as being in a position of control: she can take credit for her own individual qualities even if indirectly through her family environment.

4.   Conclusion

This chapter presents the two case studies and examines key discursive strategies engaged in each. I find that the participants engage notably different discursive repertoires in order to speak about race in general and their whiteness in particular in the context of their training and practice as clinical psychologists. Emma, I suggest, relies primarily on a discourse of liberal humanism that centres on notions of individualism and universalism. This enables her to underplay her own racial enculturation and participation in the construction of race in this context, thereby claiming a certain 'racial innocence'. Maxine by contrast engages in what might be described as a social constructionist discourse, drawing attention to the significance of social difference and of her own racialisation within her psychological practice. This talk enables Maxine to position herself as a progressive, anti-racist and privilege-aware white subject. In this way both speakers' are engaged with a type of 'identity work' that involves distancing themselves from a position of white supremacy and racism. However their discursive strategies have different implications for the way in which they position themselves within South African clinical psychology. Emma's discursive orientation allows her to imagine herself making a positive, productive contribution to the field. Interracial practice may involve certain challenges but these are not insoluble. Maxine's discursive orientation makes it more difficult for her to speak optimistically and confidently about her role within the field. Firstly, it emphasises the significance of social difference and conceptualises a greater gulf between subjects of different races (where race is understood to intersect with class, language and culture). Secondly, it emphasises specific limitations or flaws of whiteness that may impact psychological practice. A further effect of this talk is that it limits the agency that Maxine positions herself as having in terms of determining her role as a clinical psychologist in the South African context. Whereas in Emma's talk whiteness places few limits on the role that she can play as a psychologist in this context, in Maxine's talk whiteness is highly determining.

Finally, the chapter attempts to highlight anomalous instances and ways in which both Emma and Maxine's talk do not fit neatly into a single narrative of whiteness. Although Emma's talk involves less discursive struggle than Maxine's, it does deviate from the 'script' that is provided by the particular narrative of whiteness that she primarily relies on. Maxine's talk on the other hand involves prominent struggle, as the primarily critical narrative of whiteness that she engages comes into conflict with talk that frames her identity and practice more positively.

Chapter 6: Analysis of Discursive Activity in Terms of Mentalizing

1. Introduction

This chapter analyses the discursive positions evident in Emma and Maxine's talk in relation to concepts of mentalizing. The purpose is to think about how these discursive positions facilitate and constrain engagement with mental states, allowing or preventing the speaker from holding self and other in mind; specifically in relation to issues of race in the context of psychological practice.

Importantly, the objective here is not to make any pronouncement on Emma or Maxine as individuals, or on how they may typically or primarily be inclined to mentalize. Rather what is of interest here is how the discursive positions that they draw on in these particular instances of talk may be understood to facilitate and constrain thought about minds. The constructionist understanding is that discourses offer a limited set of linguistic possibilities that curtail what can be perceived and known, functioning as a way of shoring up the dominant discourse and subjugating more marginalized discourses. Importantly, this defensive function is built into the language itself and no assumptions are made about individual defensive processes at play (that is, intra-psychically).

This chapter goes beyond a purely discursive understanding in that it engages with what might be happening at the level of individual minds in relation to certain discursive activities. However the constructionist sensibility is retained in that it is also understood that these individual psychological processes are always contextual and therefore not indicative of permanent psychological structures 'in' Emma and Maxine.

2. Emma's Talk: Implications for Mentalizing

I have argued that Emma draws predominantly on what may be termed a discourse of racial innocence in speaking about race and whiteness. I suggested that this discourse centres on liberal humanist notions of individualism as well as universal humanity, and that it allows Emma to think about her own mind and her psychological practice as relatively unaffected by race.

In this section I consider how this discourse of racial innocence, and the liberal humanist paradigm in which it is based, may constrain mentalizing in the context of raced experience. More specifically I consider what possibilities it opens up or closes down for Emma as she reflects on her whiteness in relation to her identity and practice as a psychologist.

As discussed in Chapter 2, one way in which Fonagy et al. (2004) conceptualise mentalizing is as an implicit understanding of the relationship between internal and external worlds. The mentalizing or reflective mode is understood as a state of mind in which the internal world is experienced as being separate from but nonetheless related to external reality. Mental experience is recognised as influencing and being influenced by external reality, but there is also an understanding that it is not the same as external reality. Non-mentalizing modes of thought involve either a reduced capacity to distinguish mental experience from external events ('psychic equivalence'), or a reduced connection between mental experience and reality ('pretend').

The discourse of racial innocence that Emma draws on enables her to cordon off the social realm - and in particular the significance of race - from her mind. There is a clear boundary between her own mind and the 'racial struggles' that are prominent in the broader context.

> **Emma:** Ja, ja, but I know that at the moment especially race is quite a, um, a topic in South Africa as a whole (mm) - I think quite a lot of racial struggles so it's not that I'm denying the fact that there are racial issues happening (mm) in South Africa but I think for me, um, I don't I don't have a problem with (laughing tone) with ja (mm) specific races (...)

In the same way that 'racial struggle' is easily put outside her own internal world, it is also put outside the relational sphere of her psychological work. Emma does consider the possibility that difficult racial dynamics might arise in her practice and there is not the sense, therefore, that this is radically denied. However, reflecting back on therapy processes, she is able to dismiss the significance of race quite straightforwardly by saying that she was not aware of any racism on the part of her clients and hopes they felt similarly toward her. Again, she refers only to the possibility of blatant racism and not to other ways in which race might be constellated relationally.

> **Emma:** (...) I work with people from all races, um, but in my experience I didn't experience any, racism as such from (mm) the clients' perspective (mm-hmm) um and I hope that it didn't play out from my perspective (laughing tone) (...)

There is not the sense in Emma's talk, as there is in Maxine's, that the complexities of raced experience in other spaces (i.e. outside of the therapy room) might 'haunt' her interaction with clients. Rather there is a sense in which the private psychological sphere of her own mind and her relationships with her clients is unsullied by wider social processes of racialisation, inequality and oppression. Reflecting on the narrative that she terms 'A Whiter Shade of White', which I compared in Chapter 5 with Emma's discourse of racial innocence, Steyn (2001) suggests that this type of talk involves "splitting off the racial aspects of the narrator's experience and social positionality" (p.113).

One way in which to understand this mode of talk in relation to mentalizing, is in terms of the types of mental experience that it frames as being significant. Specifically, the discourse of racial innocence defines the psychological relevance of whiteness and race in terms of overt racism. At a discursive level, the significance of privilege is out of view. So it follows that thoughts and feelings that pertain to privilege are not thought nor felt, or thought and felt in such a way that is not available for reflection. They are not, in other words, fully mentalized.

Another possibility (which has already been highlighted) is to understand the discourse of racial innocence in terms of a 'pretend' mode of thought, in which there is a decoupling of the individual mind and the wider context in which social processes such as race operate. That is, there is imagined to be a solid boundary between the ways in which race functions socially (both historically and at present), and the speaker's own mind. Race is located wholly in the external world and has no presence in the realm of the 'inner self' or in the private, intimate sphere of personal relationships. As a result, Emma's reflections on the significance of race for her identity and practice as psychologist in the South African context are limited: for the most part, race – and whiteness in particular – is simply not present within these experiences and so there is little to reflect upon.

Yet another way to think about mentalizing in relation to this discourse relates to the positioning of the subject as certain. Reflective functioning (an operationalisation of mentalizing) involves recognizing that minds are opaque and cannot be fully known. Talk that demonstrates a sense of curiosity about mental processes therefore marks mentalizing, whereas talk that assumes certain knowledge about mental processes is associated with a less mentalizing stance. In line with this, it may be argued that Emma's employment of the racial innocence discourse enables a taking up of a subject positioning of sureness about her own raced experience, and to a lesser extent also her clients' and classmates' experience, a

position that, from a psychological perspective, reflects curtailed mentalizing around raced experience.

As I will argue in more detail when attending to Maxine's talk, a constructionist discourse tends to position the subject as produced by social processes that may not be clearly evident to the subject herself (or that may be so familiar and taken-for-granted that they are not recognised as being significant). This subject position is therefore not inconsistent with a sense of uncertainty and curiosity about aspects of subjective experience that seem straightforward or self-evident. In comparison, the discourse of racial innocence that Emma draws upon positions her as fairly certain about what is in her own mind in relation to race, as well as others' reporting on their thoughts and feelings regarding race. On a few occasions she speaks more tentatively; but on the whole her narrative positions her as someone who has no doubt that she is not racist and as someone who does not adopt a racialised gaze with clients.

> **Emma:** (…) ja ek dink *{yes I think}* people come from different backgrounds um, ja but I think you have to when you when I do therapy I'm I listen to that person's experience of their own background no matter which ra – from which race they are (okay) ja so I think I treat every person individually for – ja where they come from specifically where they come from and (ja) hear their story um, (mm) ja but I I didn't (mm) it's not that I, ja I I ja I thought a little bit about the topic before I came here and then I actually didn't know what I'm gonna say because I don't actually see people so differently I I rather hear a person's own account of their experience of their background of their race, ja. (…)

Furthermore, the discourse of racial innocence that she adopts enables her to position herself as able to accept at face value others' reports – or lack of reporting – about raced experience. Because there was no report to the contrary, she is fairly confident that race has not been a significant issue within her work with clients and that it was not a significant issue within her class of trainees.

> **Emma:** (…) in my experience I didn't experience any, racism as such from (mm) the clients' perspective (mm-hmm) um and I hope that it didn't play out from my perspective (laughing tone) (…)

Emma: (...) in the class we we all – for me it was – I don't know how the others experienced it but it was quite invisible we didn't (ja), ja, there wasn't even much discussion about - I knew that in the community psychology module um we talked about community but race wasn't an issue in a way, um, we talked more about different communities different people's backgrounds (mm) but we, didn't really have discussion about race as such (mm), I think we would've talked about it if it was an issue because (mm) we were quite a um close class we shared a lot and we could be quite honest in class (mm), um, but it wasn't an issue (...)

This subject positioning as someone with a significant level of certainty limits the need for further exploration that might probe beyond what is immediately felt or reported to be true. It is noteworthy that Emma's reflections on her own and others' raced experiences are far more circumscribed than Maxine's. In reflecting above on how race played out in her relationships with clients, she considers whether or not racism was present: the answer to this is either yes or no and there is no more to say on the matter.

This seems to be consistent with Steyn's (2001) observation that speakers who rely primarily on the narrative that she terms 'A Whiter Shade of White' typically have little to say about what might be going on in the minds of raced others with respect to racial experience. She writes that "(t)his narrative is mum about what the respondents perceive to be going on in the minds of the 'other'" (p.113). There is an a priori assumption about the lack of significance of race that seems to restrict subsequent thought or reflection on the matter.

In line with this, it may be argued that Emma' lack of doubts about her own raced experience, and to a lesser extent also her clients' and classmates' experience, reflects curtailed mentalizing around raced experience.

Importantly, my decision not to pursue a follow-up interview with Emma may be understood as a form of collusion with the way in which her talk closes down mentalizing in relation to race and whiteness. In accepting without further reflection that there is no more to say on the matter and that Emma's thoughts and feelings are indeed self-evident and straightforward, I close down further thought about what may have been happening within her mind and between our minds. Not having a follow-up interview may be seen as an enactment of this shutting down of reflection, preventing both Emma and myself from

probing our thoughts and feelings about the first interview - and the issues that it raised - further.

The argument that I have made up to this point is that the discursive paradigm itself seems to constrain the speaker's capacity to reflect on thoughts and feelings related to particular types of experience. I have not engaged with the more individual or personal factors that may also impact mentalizing, or influence the speaker's investment in this particular discourse – with the constraints that it places on mentalizing. For reasons outlined in Chapters 1 and 3, the methodological framework of the study excludes making interpretations about the research subject as an individual, outside of the interview context. In the case of Maxine, I found that I was able to reflect on my own emotional and relational experience within the interviews and also to make certain inferences about her experience, in a way that allows me to comment on some of the more personal reasons for investment in particular discourses within this interview. However in Emma's case, I found this much more difficult and felt that there simply had not been enough happening between us, or enough emerging within either the interview or the reflective notes to warrant any interpretations at this level. Of course, this response may be revealing and warrant interpretation in itself. Again, it points to a possible shutting down of both emotional experience and reflection that makes experience unthinkable.

Retrospectively I think that it was important to have had a follow-up interview with Emma, in particular to explore her thoughts and feelings about speaking about race and whiteness. One possibility, which I suggest applies to my contact with Maxine, is that the interview itself is experienced as scrutinising and potentially exposing. This ties in with the risks associated with speaking about race in the current South African context and the potential of being found to be racist. It may have been interesting to explore the ways in which a discourse of racial innocence could defend Emma against perceived risks of talking about race. Furthermore, mentalizing is understood to be impacted by a sense of threat: it tends to be inhibited in the context of emotional arousal (Fonagy et al., 2004); and as Fonagy and Higgit (2007) argue, a sense of insecurity may motivate secure base behaviour where exploration of minds is inhibited. Therefore it seems important to have explored any fears that Emma may have had about taking part in the interview, which may also have reinforced engagement with a discourse that limits mentalizing in certain ways. That this did not happen is a limitation of the research.

Finally, it must also be considered that the discourse of racial innocence may in certain ways also support the speaker's ability to hold herself and others in mind. Emma's confident

assertions about the limited significance that her whiteness has for her sense of herself as a psychologist and her practice may on the one hand be approached with suspicion, as indicative of some form of naivety or denial. On the other hand, it may also be accepted at face value - as a valid experience. As will become evident when considering Maxine's talk, Maxine's discursive framework – which places value on acknowledging the significance of positionality and in particular also racial positionality - may make it more difficult for her to dismiss the significance of race in certain situations where it is appropriate to do so. Emma's discursive position, on the other hand, allows her to do so. So too, it may allow her in certain instances to register or reflect on the significance of individuality or of a sense of human connection, in a way that may be more difficult to do within the framework that Maxine engages. In this way, the discourse of racial innocence may be seen to both constrain and facilitate mentalizing in certain aspects.

3.   Maxine's talk: Implications for Mentalizing

I have argued that Maxine draws predominantly on what I have termed a discourse of uneasy whiteness.

One aspect of this is an awareness of inevitable racial enculturation (that is, that being white has significant implications for her personhood) as well as participation in racism (that is, in the history of whiteness and how it functions within contemporary society; a position that may be summed up in terms of the understanding that "…sustaining 'normal' white life perpetuates the disadvantages of others" [Steyn, 2001, p.113]). This, I suggested, involves a set of assumptions that may be broadly characterised as constructionist; that is, emphasising the social construction of experience within a particular time and place rather than the individual or universal features that transcend context. In this regard it tends to emphasise social difference (as opposed to features that are either uniquely individual or universally human). It is talk that positions social and historical processes as being significant for the type of experience that has conventionally been designated 'psychological'; that is, personal, private or internal.

Importantly, uneasy whiteness is characterised by a positioning of the subject as uncomfortable about racial enculturation and participation in race. The subject is positioned as having an awareness of taking part in aspects of whiteness that one would prefer not to be associated with, but being helpless or powerless to change this. In the previous chapter I observed the discursive struggle evident in Maxine's talk as she oscillates between critical appraisals of whiteness and talk that reasserts a more positive sense of identity. Because she

constructs herself (in a constructionist vein) as being largely unaware of her own racial enculturation, there is a continual vigilant monitoring of her own talk for signs of problematic whiteness. It is risky to be anything other than explicitly critical of whiteness as this may reveal underlying white supremacy or racism. All of the above contributes to a prominent sense of uncertainty and struggle within Maxine's account of herself.

In this section I reflect on ways in which these discursive features might facilitate and constrain mentalizing in relation to raced experience. That is, how do they assist and/or deter Maxine (and myself) to hold ourselves and others in mind in the context of talk about race/whiteness?

3.1. Mentalizing the Social

It is noteworthy that while Emma primarily gives an account of clinical spaces, Maxine's narrative traverses various contexts at work (including clinical spaces but also entrance gates, corridors, and waiting rooms) as well as non-work contexts (local, international, virtual). It seems to be consistent with Emma's individualistic stance that she looks for the significance of race within her psychological practice in what is manifest in the clinical space - directly present in what she experiences and what her clients communicate. Maxine, on the other hand, who employs a more constructionist discourse in relation to whiteness as a broader social and cultural phenomenon and positions herself as participating in this, reflects on a wide range of contexts in order to make sense of whiteness for her practice. The accumulated effect within Maxine's narrative is a sense of porous boundaries between her professional identity and experience, and her identity and experience in terms of a wider social sphere. The meaning that whiteness has in certain spaces - for instance as an automatic form of privilege, a protected and insular position, or a challenged status - is transferred to her psychological practice, remaining active as a way of understanding this practice. What whiteness might mean in other spaces of her life, but also in the culture in general and as a historical phenomenon, has implications for who she is and what she does as a psychologist. While she positions herself as valuing and experiencing a sense of herself as empathic, attuned to others' needs and generally self-effacing, the political and social significance of whiteness also positions her as self-interested, complacent and dominant. Similarly, while she takes up the position of valuing and aspiring towards interpersonal relationships that are supportive, responsive and non-coercive, broader social forms of negligence and oppression are held up in her talk as about instances of contact with clients.

Mentalizing, Fonagy et al. (2004) argue, involves an implicit awareness of the nature of minds. Within a constructionist frame, that which is conventionally ascribed to the individual mind is understood to be social. Subjects are always located within ways of speaking and doing that are contextually specific. In this sense they rely on linguistic as well as behavioural repertoires that are not their own, and that reflect a range of competing positions. Maxine's narrative – a collage of reflections on her own thoughts and feelings; interactions with clients; her behaviour in a range of contexts; as well as the activities of a range of social others – may be understood as a way of relating to the inner world that encompasses more of the outer – 'social' world – than is the case within an individualistic paradigm. Her discursive struggle may also be understood as a way of 'holding in mind' the multiplicity of social voices that make up her (personal) inner world as well as the (interpersonal) relational space between her and her clients.

I have noted that one feature of mentalizing is a sense of the opacity of minds and therefore a measure of uncertainty about thoughts and feelings. In the type of mentalizing that I suggest that Maxine displays, where there is a prominent sense of a larger social landscape within the personal domain of thought and feeling, uncertainty may be particularly marked. In the following extract, Maxine demonstrates an awareness that her own talk reflects a multiplicity of social voices (as opposed to a single voice of something like a 'true self'). This makes it possible for her to position herself as both anti-racist, and as participating in forms of racism that are part of the society. From a psychoanalytic perspective, her own thoughts, feelings and talk come to represent elements that are 'foreign' – they do not feel like a comfortable part of the self or clearly known.

The extract below is taken from the second interview, where I question her about the sense of concern that she had had about her talk in the first interview:

> **Brink:** And (mm) and was your sense that was it more of the sense – … was it more the sense of um that that something that you said might have been that might might be kind of misconstrued? as being racist? or more of a sense that maybe you did actually say something racist and there is actually some sense in which you are racist and that that might be exposed.
>
> **Maxine:** Mm the latter. That without realising it that I believe things or s- said things which are racist in and of themselves (okay) um, ja (okay). And that despite my best efforts to not be racist that I still hold and report racist opinions

and views and, um (okay) that almost without without realising (yes) ja, (yes, okay, okay).

This talk may be contrasted with a comment that she makes earlier in the same interview, where she expresses a concern about being misconstrued as racist.

Maxine: (…) I think it's easy to be misconstrued or one's (mm) or one's true character or uh, uh ja I guess character to be uh painted in improper light or misunderstood or (mm, mm) (…)

Here there is a sense of certainty about her 'true' thoughts and feelings, which others may fail to grasp. Of course misunderstandings can and do arise, but it is also noteworthy that this second statement conveys a sense of a singular, known mind. The first extract may be interpreted in terms of discursive struggle: there is tension between the non-racist language that Maxine aspires to (within her 'best efforts') and the racist language that she recognises she may nonetheless at times draw on. By comparison, the second extract roots the mind in a unitary discourse. Adding a psychological reading, it is possible to view the uncertainty and discursive struggle evident in the first extract as markers of mentalizing; where mentalizing is understood to encompass an implicit sense of one's own location within a complex and contradictory set of social discourses, which means that what one experiences as being one's 'own' thoughts and feelings are also bound to be complex and contradictory.

As a final observation, the understanding of mentalizing that I am putting forward here is congruent with the type of engagement with intersubjective experience advanced by relational psychoanalysts such as Altman (1995) and Suchet (2004), who are interested in the presence of social and political processes within psychological experience. Such work is informed by a concern with experience that is unconscious and that presents itself in a 'not yet fully thought about' way within emotional responses, phantasies and enactments within the context of a therapeutic relationship. There is an interest in the unconscious experience that arises both for the therapist and client, also within an understanding that these experiences are jointly created (Lyons-Ruth, 1999). Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 2, these scholars are concerned with the types of unconscious experience that relate to the domain conventionally relegated by psychology to 'the social'; including race.

The notion of 'mentalizing the social'; that is, holding in one's mind the parts of 'mind' that seem to be located more in the social world than in the individual space of internal

experience, fits well with this more socially and politically aware intersubjective work. The idea that social experience may have a larger presence within one's intimate personal experience than immediately seems to be the case fits with the notion of an unconscious; that is, that large aspects of experience are not clearly known or knowable. In addition, it fits with the premise of a more politically and socially minded psychoanalytic practice that unconscious experience includes aspects of so-called 'social' experience (extending beyond, for example, experiences with significant family members). In addition, the idea that it is possible to think and feel more clearly about – that is, to mentalize – these dimensions of experience fits with the theory of intersubjective work, which is that it is possible to think about and put into words the more unconscious aspects of experience that reveal themselves within the context of a relationship.

Maxine refers to the influence of intersubjective theory on her practice and it is possible to see how this may also inform her way of speaking about whiteness, and the type of mentalizing that this seems to support.

3.2. Reifying Whiteness and Psychic Equivalence

I have argued that Maxine's narrative constructs her whiteness as a facet of her inner world, as well as her practice as psychologist. Furthermore, I suggested that this may read through a psychoanalytic lens as a type of mentalizing, which involves holding features of the society in mind as part of psychological experience. As a result there is often a sense of curiosity and uncertainty about how whiteness plays out within her identity and her practice as a psychologist.

However, I will also argue that there are points in the interview where it seems to become more difficult to hold onto a mentalizing stance in relation to raced experience. Specifically, the complexity and instability of whiteness as an aspect of inner and intersubjective experience is lost during the course of the interview, and it begins to be characterised in fixed terms. In addition, the complexity of a range of experiences within novice psychological practice are coded to the singular significance of whiteness. This I will argue may be understood as a form of psychic equivalence, in that it involves a tendency to objectify the symbolic and/or psychological significance of race.

3.2.1. Fixing Whiteness

I have argued that Maxine constructs her whiteness (within her practice as psychologist) in terms of ineptitude (specifically in terms of relating with clients of colour and grasping

their life experience), as well as moral or social deficiency (characterised by negative attributes of whiteness such as frivolity, ignorance and arrogance). In my reading of the narrative as a whole, I find that this construction of whiteness remains active even when race is not clearly under consideration. Whiteness is coded to deficiency and ineptitude, so that all experiences of deficiency and ineptitude start to tie in with whiteness.

Maxine describes a context of work that is particularly challenging, as the majority of presentations are chronic and severe. Psychological intervention rarely leads to recovery, and at best assists with somewhat improved coping. In her own words, there is most often "very little that can change, very little that can shift and (there is) a lot of frustration about that".

In addition to this, as is common within a South African public health context, clients are often coping with poverty, overcrowding and with living in communities that have high rates of violence and crime. Psychologists working in such a context are likely to be confronted with great distress that may only be addressed in limited ways through psychological intervention. It is likely that even experienced practitioners would find this work challenging, particularly if they determine their role in a fairly traditional way. For novice practitioners the challenge may be greater, as the difficulties of working in this context may intersect with and amplify the particular difficulties of early practice. Eagle et al. (2007) note that it is common for novice psychologists working for the first time in community settings to feel incompetent and afraid of failure, which often evokes or heightens narcissistic anxieties.

Within the 'gestalt' of Maxine's narrative, I argue that the frustration of working in a context of deprivation, with high levels of distress and particularly challenging presentations attaches to the construction of white ineptitude and deficiency. This is not easily demonstrated with any particular example and rather I find it to be an effect of the narrative as a whole. Through the series of reflections that she offers, only occasionally explicitly linked with race, the accumulating sense of difficulty and failure nonetheless seems to hook onto the significance of whiteness. Of course, here my own involvement in making sense of Maxine's talk is particularly pronounced and the reading that I offer here is likely to reflect my own raced interpretation of Maxine's talk (which could relate both to the focus on whiteness that the research itself brings, and to my own relationship with whiteness).

Related to this coupling of whiteness with a range of areas of difficulty, I argue that the narrative evokes a sense of a core of whiteness that is 'bad'. This sense of an essential 'bad' whiteness is perhaps most vividly communicated within Maxine's concerns (reported in the second interview) about her talk during the first interview.

Brink: (...) So ja I'm I suppose I'm, I'm wondering firstly if, it's been a while since we've spoken then about a month I'm wondering, if you how far away that interview feels and if you've had any thoughts, in the meantime anything that's come up after our conversation?

Maxine: I think my main feeling since then um, can't remember some of the content but I remember a bit of a sense of guilt afterwards almost a feeling I hope the, I hope the, that the, it doesn't come across as racist or white privilege or um, you know which is going to I mean I know it's all going to be anonymous um I had like a sudden rush of anxiety that it's going to go against my character or...

Brink: Sjoe.

Maxine: Ja, then I read I reread the documents which you sent then I see there's something there's an opportunity to kind of review (yes) um to see just to check you know anonymity and everything (yes) so that reassured me (...) I think I'd like to I guess I want to look at myself as someone who's part of a kind of modern South African society where I'm aware of um issues of race and equality and um, I wondered if there were aspects of what I was saying that were maybe somehow racist or reinforcing stereotypes (...)

Maxine is presumably aware that she would not have made any overtly racist or prejudicial comments during the first interview. Yet she describes intense concern about what she may have said. There does not seem to be a sense that whatever she may have said, which may or may not have involved a degree of prejudice or ignorance, would form part of a complex picture. It would, for example, stand alongside her clear disavowal of racism and her willingness to grapple with ways in which she may be biased or unaware – given her position in the society. Rather the fear seems to be that anything that she may have said that betrayed the slightest form of prejudice or ignorance would reveal something wholly reprehensible. Specifically, it might reveal a buried kernel of 'bad' whiteness that she may have attempted - but not been able to - eradicate or conceal. In this way of thinking, the type of mentalizing that I described in the previous section – where there is a sense of being (unavoidably) steeped in language that is not one's own and that carries the traces of earlier usage – is lost. Rather, mind is imagined as a single, stable entity that may be directly revealed within talk.

In examining my responses to Maxine's talk, as documented in field notes shortly after the interviews but also in reflexive notes during the phase of analysis, I find that I participate

in a fixing of 'bad' whiteness. I reflect on my sense of trying to calibrate the relative degrees of my and Maxine's whiteness, where whiteness is construed in terms of privilege and associated qualities such as arrogance and insularity. I observe, for example, my preoccupation with our relative privilege. I have the impression that Maxine comes from a more affluent background than I do, and I note the combination of envy and self-righteousness that I experience when she refers to this economic privilege. The sense is that I covet this wealth but also feel bolstered by the fact that I am relatively less well-off, as though this lessens my privilege and therefore my 'bad' whiteness. In addition, I compare our relative comfort in spaces that are not predominantly white. I scrutinise Maxine's talk for indications of subtle racial superiority or ignorance and wonder at the same time how my own talk would stand up to such scrutiny. The matter of selection for training also becomes a point of comparison. Maxine trained at an institution where I had also applied, but not been accepted. Thoughts and feeling related to the selection process are activated for me during the interview, as I find that I compare our relative worthiness for selection and feel a sense of falling short. Perhaps because Maxine emphasises the whiteness of her training institution at the time of her training, there is a sense in which I associate her selection to this programme with a type of whiteness that I lack. Here it is as though I code whiteness to a notion of being 'chosen', or allowed into an inner circle of privilege and power.

These responses indicate the extent to which my construction of whiteness within the course of the interviews corresponds with Maxine's, as described in Chapter 5. Specifically, the notion of privilege is central and there is an association between privileged whiteness and subtle forms of racism and supremacy that may not be visible to the self. Furthermore, my responses may also be interpreted in terms of a reification of whiteness. In order to relate in this way to Maxine's talk there is a sense in which I treat whiteness not as a complex social process in which we both participate – but as an attribute that inheres in individuals. Whiteness is measurable – I imagine that Maxine and I each possess it to a greater or lesser extent, and in a way that defines us. In a similar way that I suggested that a range of experiences seem to 'stick' to the notion of whiteness within Maxine's talk, my responses also seem to couple various experiences to a sense of whiteness. Financial security, for example, is conflated with whiteness, as is being accepted to a particular psychology training programme. Again, whiteness becomes a stable position on which to pin a range of events and emotional experiences.

In the same way that I may be viewed as locating whiteness within Maxine in my responses to her talk, Maxine and I may at times be viewed as collaborating to locate

whiteness in others. In the extract quoted in Chapter 5 (3.1.2.2.), where Maxine refers to the lack of awareness of whites who think themselves progressive by attending a 'Zuma Must Fall' march, I chuckle as she ridicules their behaviour (drinking cappuccinos whilst engaging in protest).

Within these instances, whiteness functions divisively. Distinctions are drawn between degrees of whiteness, and subjects are set apart in terms of their relative whiteness. This dynamic is at odds with the more explicit way in which our talk construes whiteness as a shared identity – associated with comfort and mutual understanding. Maxine and I, for example, refer to our shared whiteness as a source of relatedness. In the second interview, when I question Maxine about her experience of my whiteness, she responds by describing a sense of tacit understanding.

> **Brink:** I'm I'm curious whether – it's a it's a hard question and probably in a sense impossible to answer but what are your thoughts on how how this might have felt different to you if if I weren't white? This, so these interviews and…
>
> **Maxine:** I think they would have felt radically different I think um, ja I think a few times I've I've seen a kind of um almost like a nod and like 'ja, (right) (Brink laughs) (okay) I know what's that's like) like a 'ah yes I've been there' (okay, ja [laughing tone]) so I think there's been a – what's the word, ja um, I don't know what the right words would be I think maybe that's your job as as the research (Maxine laughs) um, uh to put the words to it but from my side I think it's just maybe made it, um I guess easier to think about - to describe certain situations where I think I can see that there's understanding or there's a kind of buy-in from you of (mm) 'ja, I know I know what that's like' (mm, mm) and maybe that means it's easier for me to go there or to, not to have to speak to something which might not be uh felt by someone of colour (right) or, and I guess maybe it makes me less um apologetic about certain things? (…)

I affirm this sense of understanding and relatedness between us:

> **Brink:** (…) and so I think when you speak about the nod I, I think I felt quite strongly that I that I wanted to, wanted to communicate a sense of understanding or a sense of um (intake of breath) it seemed to me that you did feel apologetic

at times and um, ja and I suppose I had a strong sense of sort of wanting to communicate that um, I could relate to your experience (...)

The field notes testify to my sense of identification with aspects of Maxine's experience. However, as highlighted above, there were also experiences of dissonance, and these are not spoken about.

While Maxine acknowledges anxiety about being misunderstood or critically appraised, she denies any concern about how I might interpret or portray her talk. Rather her concern is with the possible interpretations of outside readers. One interpretation is that the language that we use to refer to our contact with one another excludes the possibility of dissonance between us.

In reflecting on her relationships with colleagues and clients, as well as her experience in various public spaces, Maxine describes contact between whites in terms of comfort, familiarity, and a sense of 'implicit understanding'. This she contrasts with the difficulty and strangeness of relating with people of colour, or of being in spaces that are not predominantly white. Again, there is an explicit construal of whiteness as a shared, unitary experience.

What is excluded within our explicit construction of whiteness is how it is also permeated with difference. Within my (unspoken) responses to Maxine's talk, as well as our shared mockery of other whites who reveal lack of social awareness, whiteness does not emerge as a stable phenomenon. Rather, what whiteness signifies, and where or in whom it is located, continually shifts. There are degrees of whiteness, and ways of ridding oneself of some of one's whiteness. Furthermore, within these unspoken aspects of our interaction whiteness is not an uncomplicated form of connection but often a site of contest and rivalry. I mark out the ways in which Maxine is white and I am not. We do so together in relation to others. Yet this is never entirely successful and the awareness of remaining white remains. Hence the sense of despair when Maxine describes online listings of undifferentiated white psychologists, reflecting that she has no choice but to join their ranks. At the same time, while whiteness is in one sense an unwanted identity it is also yearned for – as I yearn for the privilege that I imagine Maxine has in greater measure, and as Maxine yearns for the competence and efficiency that she at certain points associates with what may be viewed as first world whiteness. Whiteness is an unstable, divided experience: at the same time 'self' and (disavowed as well as longed for) 'other'.

It is interesting to contrast Maxine's account of whiteness as a source of implicit understanding with Emma's comments about working with demographically similar clients.

Emma: (…) in mens se eie kultuur um (mm) neem mens partykeer goeters aan want jy dink jy verstaan (mm) maar dan vra jy nie 'n spesifieke vraag nie (mm) en dalk is daai persoon se ervaring van nie dieselfde ding wat jy ervaar het heeltemal iets anders (mm) maar jy vra nie want jy aanvaar dit net en – onbewustelik (mm) dis nie altyd bewustelik nie so ja ek dink as jy met 'n ander kultuur werk hoef dit nie noodwending 'n hindernes te wees nie maar dit kan ook (mm) iets wees wat jy kan gebruik in terapie (mm) al dit is net om die verhouding te bou of om (ja) trust te bou of ja (ja) ja. *{(...) in one's own culture um (mm) you sometimes assume things that you think you understand (mm) but then you don't ask a specific question (mm) and maybe that person's experience of the same thing that you experienced is completely different (mm) but you don't ask because you just accept it and – unconsciously (mm) it's not always conscious so yes I think if you work with another culture it doesn't necessarily have to be an obstacle but it can also (mm) be something that you can use in therapy (mm) even if it is only to build the relationship or to (yes) build trust or yes (yes) yes.}*

Where Maxine highlights the difficulties of cross-cultural/-racial practice, Emma argues that her practice is enhanced by cultural/racial difference in that she is forced to ask questions and check her understandings in relation to the client's perspective and experience. When working with white clients, she finds, there is a greater risk of assuming understanding. Here Emma's individualistic focus mediates against essentialising social difference, which may be a risk within the type of discursive paradigm that Maxine engages.

Of course the notion of singular whiteness, which is a basis for connection and understanding, depends on a notion of racial difference. In Maxine's talk, the portrayal of comfortable, familiar interactions between white subjects stands in contrast with a portrayal of relationships across racial boundaries in terms of difference and strangeness. I have highlighted her accounts of not being able to understand or relate to clients and colleagues of colour, and of feeling alienated in spaces that are not predominantly white. This discussion has focused on troubling the notion of singular, comfortable whiteness, by looking at how our interaction within the context of the interviews undermines this narrative. However, it may also have been possible to challenge the converse construction of racial difference. Swartz' (2007) discussion of the experience of difference within therapeutic work points to the complexity of this phenomenon and the risk of fixing it. She questions what may be involved

with the therapist's experience of fundamental otherness in relation to a client of a different race, class or gender. In her analysis, the experience of not being able to relate to the client often conceals a more complex encounter with aspects of the self that are not fully integrated. For this reason, she writes, "…we have an unparalleled opportunity to understand better what lives inside us unconsciously, by looking closely at what happens in encounters with what we as individuals experience as otherness" (p.181). She encourages curiosity about the specific ways in which the sense of difference presents itself in therapeutic work, pointing out that "(f)or every person, the contents, the anxieties [arising in an encounter with otherness] will be different. There is no generic way of looking at race in analysis – or gender, or sexuality – it will be as unique as our own subjectivity and projected fear (p.181). The aim is to shift away from a sense of difference or otherness as a monolithic entity, and rather to approach it as a multifaceted and dynamic experience. So, there is an acknowledgment of difference and of how compelling difference can feel interpersonally, but it is not treated as endpoint. There is an understanding that it masks a more complex experience; and that it is possible to engage with it in a way that allows it to become less rather than more final.

What I have argued in this section is that there are ways in which my and Maxine's talk in these interviews – particularly at a surface level - tends towards a reification of whiteness. The significance of whiteness is fixed around notions of social and moral deficiency, and whiteness becomes the linchpin for a range of experiences that evoke these connotations. Furthermore, the notion of a singular whiteness obscures the complexity of experiences of racial sameness as well as difference – a complexity which is evident when our interaction with one another is examined more closely.

3.2.2. 'Psychic Equivalence'

It is possible to understand the simplified construction of whiteness that I discuss above as a failure of mentalizing. In particular I want to suggest that it may be understood in terms of the concept of 'psychic equivalence'.

In psychic equivalence, Fonagy et al. (2004) argue, there is an impaired sense of the nature of mental experience and the ways in which this differs from physical reality (even though it continually impacts on and is impacted upon by physical reality). Thoughts and feelings are engaged with as though they were facts, or concrete entities, operating with the full force of physical reality. There is a reduced sense of the symbolic, of representation, and of the *meaning* of experience (that is, that thought and feeling is always intentional – *about* something rather a thing in itself). There is also an increased sense of certainty and finality

about experience, as though inner experience is as clearly manifest and fully knowable as objects in the natural world.

In general Maxine's talk is highly mentalizing. She continually reflects on the thoughts and feelings that might motivate her own and others' behaviour; also in a way that is tentative and questions, rather than claiming complete knowledge. However, the fixed construction of whiteness that emerges within our talk may be understood as being less mentalized. Within a mode of psychic equivalence, whiteness becomes a singular phenomenon 'within' subjects, rather than a complex and dynamic subjective process. In other words, it is treated as a fixed set of traits that add up to a type of moral and social deficiency. Similarly, it becomes a singular phenomenon 'between' subjects, rather than a complex and dynamic intersubjective phenomenon. That is, it is treated as either a source of connection (between whites who share the same experience), or an aspect of difference (in relation to subjects of colour).

In a mode of psychic equivalence, the psychological experience of whiteness may also be conflated with aspects of external reality. In Maxine's narrative, for instance, the complex and overdetermined set of feelings that she has about being a white psychologist in a government institution (encompassing various experiences of deficiency, ineptitude and alienation) is reduced to a single practical cause: there is no place for her in this context because of racial quotas. Here, there is a sense in which these internal and external realities reflect and confirm one another. Maxine's experience of incompetence and of being out of place in the public setting validates the fact that there are practical realities that limit her chances of working more permanently in this context. Conversely, the fact that there may be relatively few opportunities for white psychologists to practice permanently in a public setting supports her experience of inadequacy and estrangement in this context. Both the internal reality (of ineptitude and exclusion) and the external reality (of employment opportunities for clinical psychologists in South Africa and white clinical psychologists in particular) are confirmed or consolidated as being absolute truths, and there is a diminished sense of the complexity of both of these realities. It becomes more difficult, for example, to see how Maxine may also work effectively in this context, and how she may herself choose not to engage with this context (rather than simply being excluded). It also becomes more difficult to think more broadly about ways in which she may contribute as a clinical psychologist that involves neither full-time employment in public health or full-time private practice. Rather, the narrative that dominates and that acquires the weight of fact is that there is no space for her to contribute as a psychologist in the South African context outside of private practice with primarily white clients.

Maxine's anxiety about being identified within the research and judged for having said something racist or prejudicial may also be interpreted in relation to psychic equivalence. Here, the experience of harbouring an innate 'bad' whiteness (that is racist and oppressive regardless of whatever her conscious beliefs and intentions may be) conflates with an imagined reality in which she is 'outed' as being fundamentally racist. Because she fears her own bad inner whiteness and unconscious racism; she imagines that – regardless of how carefully she has weighed her words and tried to avoid any form of prejudice - she will be seen in the final analysis as being a 'bad', racist white person, and punished accordingly. It is as though there is an essential inner truth that might be transparently evident to others.

Having argued thus far, there are two qualifications that I wish to make.

Firstly, it might seem that I am proposing that mentalizing about race involves recognizing race as a purely mental or psychological experience, and one that has no 'actual' reality. Rather I want to suggest that it is precisely the complexity of race as both a symbolic/representational phenomenon and as an objective, real-world process, which makes it challenging to mentalize about. The challenge is to hold in mind a complex subjective/intersubjective experience, an equally complex set of historical and material circumstances, and a sense of how these are intimately related – but not the same. For example, Maxine might consider ways in which she unconsciously adopts subtle forms of racial prejudice or superiority. In addition, she might consider the fact that there are historical and economic process that affect the distribution of resources, that couple race and class, and keep people locked into racialised poverty. She might also consider the relationship between these processes. However, mentalizing also requires a sense of how these processes are distinct. In other words, her thoughts and feelings about race, including any possible covert forms of prejudice or superiority, do not directly maintain racial oppression. Nor will exorcising all forms of racial bias from her mind directly alleviate this oppression. Mental experience and material processes may be inextricably related, but they are not equivalent.

It might also seem that I am suggesting that mentalizing is a purely individual process. It is important to emphasise that this is not the case, as mentalizing is understood to be constrained and/or facilitated by the relational setting (in this case, the interview relationship) as well as the broader social context.

I have discussed Maxine's concerns about anonymity. She worries that a reader might find her talk racist/prejudicial, and that this may influence her future employment prospects. In the following extract she responds to my question about who she fears might read and take issue with her comments in our interviews:

Maxine: (…) let's say, uh I don't know one of my potential employers or something (okay, okay) maybe the head of a, of, maybe **(she names a specific individual)** whose the head of the **(she names an institution)** (…) (right) and the one who was like 'you whiteys need to know' (yes) you know, if she somehow read it and was like 'Oh my god that's Maxine (okay) that's disgusting I'm never gonna employ her', okay (okay) so that's the worst case scenario (…)

While (as Maxine herself is well aware) this may be an exaggerated concern, the fact that it arises presumably does reflect something of the context in which she is speaking and the way in which white talk about race may be received. Specifically, it speaks to a context in which racism (and in particular white racism) is closely monitored and where accusations of racism carry weight (Durrheim et al., 2011).

As I have argued, Maxine adopts a discursive mode that draws her awareness to the notion of subtle racism, compatible with a consciously anti-racist stance; and to the idea that her own racism and involvement with racist practices may be invisible to her, given her social position. It is therefore utterly conceivable for her that she may come across as racist – even *be* racist – without being aware of it, and despite the fact that this is not something that she condones. This alone makes it risky for her to speak about race: there is a potential of discovering or revealing something about herself that is at odds with her self-concept. In addition however, she is speaking in a context in which she imagines that her talk will be scrutinised for signs of racism; that any trace of racism will be viewed as defining (i.e. it is a matter of either being racist or not); and that the implications of being found to be racist are potentially significant. The risk of speaking about race therefore increases.

In this context it may well be adaptive for her to speak about whiteness in a manner that reduces complexity. By openly demeaning whiteness she may be less open to accusations of racial superiority. Furthermore, if she criticizes her own whiteness she may pre-empt and ward off external criticism. As suggested in Chapter 5, Maxine at times speaks in a way that reflects less critically on whiteness. However, this requires her to manage the risk of not appearing aware enough of her whiteness or contrite enough in relation to it. She tends to return to an unambiguous acknowledgement of the significance of her whiteness as a problematic position, even when this involves a degree of reification or simplification.

It is also important to note that in the context described here speaking about race is likely to be anxiety-provoking, and that this emotional arousal may impact mentalizing more generally. Mentalizing is conceptualised as an affective and relational rather than purely

cognitive capacity. It is understood to develop in the context of affective relational experience, and throughout life is most needed but also most challenging in the context of such experience (Fonagy et al., 2004).

This larger context also has implications for the smaller scale context of the interview, adding a level of complexity that may also contribute to emotional arousal. On the one hand the interview is a face to face exchange in which we both pursue a degree of harmony and mutuality. I am aware that Maxine is doing me a favour by participating in the interview, and that she is making herself vulnerable in the process. I am also motivated to establish a sense of rapport and trust that will make it possible for her to share her experience. Maxine, who often checks whether her responses are of interest to me and relevant to the research, demonstrates a sense of responsibility towards me – she strives to be a helpful participant and to provide me with material that will be useful. There is a basic level of affinity and care that structures our engagement with one another.

On the other hand, we are both aware that the interview will be critically scrutinised, both by myself in the process of analysis, and by eventual readers. Regardless of the sense of safety that may be established in our immediate engagement with one another, there is a risk of later evaluation that may be less benevolent. In a sense there are two forms in which the interview unfolds – first, as a face-to-face conversation, and then again, as research data. Within the interview as a face-to-face conversation it enhances a sense of alliance to underplay the differences between us, and to emphasise our whiteness as a shared experience. My field notes document my concern to demonstrate that I do not judge Maxine for the experiences that she associates with her whiteness. One way in which I do this is by emphasising the ways in which I identify with her experience, and not the instances where I differ. Within the interview as a document for analysis, however, it is important for both of us to display a critical stance in relation to whiteness and to distance ourselves from problematic aspects of whiteness. Here, talking too cosily about our shared whiteness may be construed as being insufficiently aware or critical of our whiteness. Consequently, there is conflict between what constitutes 'safe' talk in the interview as a personal exchange, and in the interview as a document for analysis. This may be regarded as a further source of anxiety within the interview, which may also make it more difficult for us to hold onto a mentalizing stance (that is, to track our own thoughts and feelings as well as those of others).

One way in which we may be seen to manage this conflict is by ridiculing other whites. This facilitates our 'joining', whilst at the same time allowing us to distance ourselves from whiteness. In this way, the social context (which encompasses both the immediate

interpersonal context and the broader social context) pushes us towards a simplified, less mentalizing way of thinking about whiteness.

In conclusion, how we mentalize in relation to whiteness in these interviews reflects complex contextual factors that have to do with both the interview relationship and the broader social environment. Here, mentalizing is both an individual psychological and a social process. The social context provides various languages for thinking about mental experience, and it disciplines or rewards particular ways of thinking that may be more or less mentalizing. For example, insofar as racism is commonly spoken/thought of as a trait that is either present or absent, it is difficult and risky for an individual speaker to approach it differently. In addition, the social context impacts on how safe or threatening it may feel to speak about raced experience, in a way that is also likely to support or inhibit mentalizing.

4.   Conclusion

This chapter examines the ways in which the discursive strategies employed in the interviews with Emma and Maxine may be understood to facilitate and constrain mentalizing. Specifically I argue that the discursive orientation of Emma's talk tends to limit exploration of raced experience. Within what may be understood as a 'pretend' mode of thought, the racial struggles 'out there' in the social world are cut off from the domain of personal psychological experience. Maxine's language by contrast encourages exploration of raced experience but at times in a manner that collapses a sense of the symbolic, or of the meaning that whiteness can acquire within experience. Within this mode of 'psychic equivalence', whiteness is reduced to either an inner racial essence or to a completely predetermined social role, the parameters of which are set. While there may be an awareness of the significance of race, this significance is treated as being singular and fixed. However, I emphasise that this relates to a large extent to the context of the talk that may support such simplifications.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This research has examined interview encounters with two novice white clinical psychologists, looking specifically at how whiteness is spoken about in relation to psychological identity and practice. Engaging a psychosocial methodology, it aims to look at the use of language and the primary discourses that speakers draw on (that is, the level of social construction), and what may be going on within and between individual subjects in relation to this use of language (that is, the level of subjectivity, affect and 'minds').

In terms of the use of language, both speakers are found to do discursive work to manage their association with a morally tainted white identity, linked with the history of colonialism and apartheid. However they do so in different ways: one, Emma, by appealing to a type of racial innocence grounded in notions of individualism and universal humanity; and the other, Maxine, by highlighting an uneasy awareness of her white positionality and privilege grounded in a constructionist sensibility. Emma's approach, I argue, accomplishes the following: constructing race in terms of cultural difference, it erases or downplays the intersection between race and class and the significance of racial inequality and oppression; engaging discourses of individualism and common humanity, it constructs subjects as individuals in relation to other individuals in a way that elides social context; and engaging a discourse of colour blindness it constructs the self as being free of racial consciousness and enculturation. The overall effect I suggest is a narrative of racial innocence that denies implication in a history of racial oppression as well as ongoing racial inequality.

Maxine's approach, I argue, positions her as being inevitably implicated in white privilege and racism in ways that she is bound to be ignorant of. This has particular implications for how she speaks about her identity and practice as a clinical psychologist in the South African context. Firstly, it highlights a construction of interracial practice as difficult, with the white psychologist failing to relate to the client of colour. Secondly, it highlights moral or social shortcomings of whiteness that may implicate the white psychologist's practice. Overall, whiteness is constructed in terms of deficiency. Another effect of Maxine's talk is that it positions her as having little control or agency in terms of making a meaningful contribution to clinical psychology practice in this context. Her whiteness disqualifies her from socially relevant practice and positions her as having no choice but to pursue a career in private practice, working predominantly with well-off white clients. At the same time, there is prominent discursive struggle within Maxine's talk as she works to balance this critical narrative with talk that allows for a more positive and

empowered construction of identity. The overall effect I suggest is a discourse of uneasy whiteness that involves prominent ambivalence and uncertainty.

In terms of the second level of analysis, relating to subjectivity, I consider the possibilities that this discursive activity facilitates or closes down in terms of mentalizing; that is, holding in mind both self and other.

Here I argue that Emma's reliance on a discourse of racial innocence closes down mentalizing in relation to more difficult, intractable aspects of raced experience in clinical work, relating to (1) untranslatable differences in perspective or positionality as well as (2) issues of inequality. I propose that this discourse may be understood in terms of a 'pretend' mode of thought, where aspects of the wider social context and of race in particular are experienced as being unrelated to intimate personal experience. In this way there is a sense in which external and internal worlds are detached from one another. I also comment on how the discourse of racial innocence positions the subject as having relatively full awareness of and direct access to the ways in which race surfaces (and more often does not surface) in her own and others' experience, with the effect of curtailing exploration of this experience. This I suggest is another sense in which mentalizing is inhibited within this discursive mode. I also reflect on how I collude with this closing down of exploration by taking Emma's talk at face value, finding that there is little to say about or interpret in relation to her talk, as well as by not having a follow-up interview with her. These responses, I suggest, point to my own difficulty in holding onto a mentalizing stance in relation to Emma's mind as well as my own.

In analysing the ramifications of Emma's discursive activity I also try to highlight complexity, in that although there are ways in which her language seems to shut down mentalizing there are other ways in which it seems to support it. In comparison with Maxine, whose language obliges her to remain ever-vigilant of the significance of white privilege, Emma seems more able at certain points to engage with experiences unrelated to race as well as experiences that trouble a single narrative of white privilege/black oppression.

Considering the implications of Maxine's discursive activity, I argue that her language enables her to mentalize in a way that is particularly sensitive to the interpellation of her own intimate personal experience (that is, thoughts, feelings, and interpersonal relationships) with a wider social context that encompasses a range of discourses and practices related to race. This, I suggest, produces an experience of her own mind as being marked by complexity and contradiction, as well as a sense of not being able to ever fully know the parameters of her raced experience. The sense of 'not knowing', I observe,

encourages a sense of curiosity and exploration, but in a more anxious, defensive mode expresses itself as vigilance and fearfulness about discovering or revealing reprehensible features of her own whiteness. I note that this mode of mentalizing in relation to raced experience – that is, experiencing the social realm as having a vital presence within personal psychological experience – is conducive to (and in Maxine's talk may in fact be informed by) a relational or intersubjective psychoanalytic approach that seeks to engage political and social realms in the domain traditionally demarcated as 'psychological', and that brings these dimensions on board in terms of what must be thought about and reflected upon in therapy/analysis.

After considering the ways in which Maxine's discursive approach seemed to support mentalizing, I consider instances where mentalizing diminishes. In particular I argue that the discourse of uneasy whiteness makes it possible to ascribe a fixed significance to whiteness, which in turn makes it more difficult to hold in mind the complexity of raced experience. Specifically there are points in the interviews with Maxine where both she and I gravitate towards a unitary account of whiteness, and one that emphasises a moralistic and essentialist sense of 'bad' whiteness. I interpret Maxine's anxiety about being exposed as being racist and having this implicate her career as a vivid expression of this notion of 'bad' whiteness. I find the concept of psychic equivalence, which equates external (concrete, factual) reality and internal (subjective, symbolic) reality, useful in terms of understanding the reification or essentialisation of whiteness. Within a mode of equivalence, I suggest, whiteness becomes a stable essence within individuals rather than a complex social process. In our fixing of whiteness I also find that it becomes a fulcrum for a whole range of experiences related to race, but also to aspects of clinical psychology practice in the South African context and novice practice in particular. At times, I maintain, we struggle to hold these aspects of experience in mind as related but nonetheless distinct.

The challenge of the psychosocial methodology that I set out in this study is to engage with subjective experience without losing a sense of social construction; for example by giving a final explanation at the level of individual psychology. For this reason I have been concerned with how the context of my and Maxine's talk impacts our capacity to mentalize in relation to issues of race and whiteness. One aspect, I argue, is that the context makes available certain discourses that may encourage or inhibit mentalizing. Both Emma and Maxine's talk reflect discursive repertoires of the wider context, and as detailed above, place constraints on what can be felt and thought about. However in reflecting on the interviews with Maxine I also consider how context - both the broader social context and the relational

context of the interviews - may make it unacceptable or risky for us to hold in mind the complexity of raced experiences, pushing us towards an oversimplified account of whiteness.

The decision to attend to context in this way is certainly conceptually motivated, reflecting as I indicate above a desire to hold onto a sense of social construction. However in the process of analysing and writing I have also been aware of this serving an emotional and interpersonal function for me, in that it has allowed me to avoid the anxiety-provoking possibility that the research might show up some form of racism in the participants or in me. Often I have felt hamstrung; unwilling or unable to pursue certain lines of thought for fear of what might be revealed. Thinking and writing has been slow, uncomfortable and laden with anxiety, as I have continuously wrestled with what I feel I dare to include and how I dare to reflect on this. Indeed, I have found it conceptually and ethically important to refrain from making interpretations of the psyches of the participants. However at times I have also wondered whether, within my anxiety about exposing something that might be construed as racism, my use of psychoanalytic theory and interpretation has been overly cautious and that I have favoured discursive explanations (where the psychosocial goal that I present is to balance discursive and psychoanalytic explanations). Otherwise put, I have felt that it has been safer and easier for me to look at the ways in which discourses use subjects than to look at the ways in which the subjects themselves put discourses to use.

On the one hand the above reflections speak to the difficulty of thinking and talking about race and whiteness within the present South African context, which may have implications for clinical practice as well as the training of psychologists. It raises questions about how psychologists might cultivate or be assisted to cultivate awareness and reflexivity in relation to issues of race, when there seem to be strong contextual motivations to avoid or simplify engagement with this aspect of identity.

On the other hand the reflections speak to the difficulty of integrating a discursive or contextual sensibility with the type of engagement with subjectivity, affect and relationship that is well-developed within psychological (and specifically psychoanalytic) thought. This has implications for both research and practice. In terms of research methodology, the present study makes a modest contribution to a broader psychosocial endeavour to integrate subjectivity (personal experience) with identity (social categories that subjects identify with).

In terms of practice, the study highlights tensions between contextual and individualistic modes within clinical psychology in South Africa. In this regard there has been an interesting parallel between method and content: methodologically the tension between contextual and individualistic thinking is emphasised, but the case studies

themselves also highlight this conflict. Broadly speaking, Emma's case presents a prominently individualistic mode, whilst Maxine's case presents a more contextual and constructionist mode, also at times in conflict with individualistic thinking. Of relevance to the practice of clinical psychology in the South African context, the research highlights the following implications of these modes of talk.

Firstly, it highlights how the individualistic mode that is still prominent within clinical psychology, particularly in its alignment with psychiatry, can be seen as being implicated in maintaining white privilege. It does so specifically by making it possible for white subjects to avoid engagement with whiteness, and to underplay the benefits that they have accrued from whiteness. Scholarship on whiteness has demonstrated how such strategies keep whiteness invisible, normalising white cultural dominance (Frankenberg, 1998).

Secondly, the research highlights potential challenges of thinking and talking about race in the context of clinical practice, and in particular factors that may make it difficult to hold onto a reflective or mentalizing stance in doing so. Training practitioners who are able to engage with this aspect of their own as well as clients' experience may require exposure to discourses that challenge the individualism of traditional clinical thought. However, it may also require more than intellectual exposure in the way of supporting mentalizing capacity in this domain. Fonagy et al. (2004) stress that mentalizing is a relational capacity that is cultivated in in relation to other minds. Mentalizing begets mentalizing, and it is often through being held in mind that one develops the capacity to hold oneself in mind. In view of this, supervisory relationships may have a particularly important role to play in developing novice psychologists' capacity to feel and think clearly about issues of social identity, including race and whiteness, in the context of their practice.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

Rhodes University Department of Psychology brinkscholtz@gmail.com
073 787 3426

05/08/2015

Mr. Hugh Amoore, Registrar
University of Cape Town

Dear Mr. Amoore,

<u>Request for permission: recruitment of research participants</u>
I am writing to request permission to approach a member of staff in order to circulate a recruitment notice to students. In particular, I wish to approach the programme co-ordinator of the clinical psychology professional training, with an eye to approaching currently registered clinical psychology interns.

I am a current master's (M1) clinical psychology student at Rhodes University, conducting research into ways in which white intern clinical psychologists in South Africa experience their own 'whiteness' within the context of their developing sense of professional identity. My research (supervised by Prof. Lisa Saville-Young, l.young@ru.ac.za) makes use of both discursive analysis and psychoanalytically oriented interpretation in order to examine some of the ways in which 'whiteness' is articulated and experienced in relation to clinical work, but also within a specific interview encounter (i.e. between myself as researcher, and research participants). I suggest that accounting for one's 'whiteness' as a psychologist in the present South African context might be a complicated task, and that better understanding the ways in which individuals accomplish it may further an understanding of the significance of raced experience within an evolving professional psychological identity in this context.

The research has received ethical approval from the Rhodes Department of Psychology.

I am looking for five clinical psychology interns who would be willing to engage in a face to face interview of approximately one and a half hours, at a convenient time and location during (month). Care will be taken to ensure the anonymity of participants, and specifically to ensure that participants are not identifiable in the final report, nor in notes and transcripts made available for supervision and examination purposes.

I would be grateful to hear whether you are able to allow this.

Sincerely
Brink Scholtz

Appendix B: Participant Informed Consent Form

Copies of this form signed by both research participants are in the researcher's possession, but are not included here so as to protect confidentiality.

Informed consent: Participation in research project

I, ……………………………………………………………………………, agree to take part in one 90 minute interview at a time and private venue of my convenience, arranged with the researcher.

I have been made aware of the following:

1.   The title of the research, which will be submitted in partial fulfilment of the criteria for a master's degree in clinical psychology, is: 'A psychosocial reading of community service clinical psychologists' talk about 'whiteness' in relation to an emerging professional identity'.

2.   The researcher, Ms. Brink Scholtz, is currently registered as an intern clinical psychologist at Rhodes University, and the research supervisor is Professor Lisa Saville-Young.

3.   The research adopts a psychosocial perspective to examine interview encounters with white intern/community service clinical psychologists, in which questions of 'whiteness' and 'personal and social/professional identity' are a focus of discussion. It comprises a broader analysis of four interviews, and a more in depth analysis of one interview that is deemed particularly revealing of affective and relational investments in discourses.

4.   Potentially identifying data (including names, biographical information, and details of training institutions and internship sites) will be removed or adapted in order to ensure the anonymity of participants. This will apply both with respect to the final report, interview transcripts (made available for supervision and examination purposes).

5.   The final research report will be sent to participants, who will be invited to raise concerns in respect of anonymity, which the researcher will be obliged to address before final submission.

6.   Audio recordings and transcribed interviews will be stored as encrypted zip files/password protected documents on the researcher's personal storage device.

7.   Stored audio recordings and interview transcripts will be available for the researcher's future use, in potential publications or further studies. However it will be available for her use only.

8.   Care will be taken to interview, analyse and write in such a way that participants are unlikely to feel negatively represented or appraised. The focus of the research is not to evaluate but rather to empathically describe and elaborate. However, should any aspect of participation cause embarrassment or offence to a participant, this should be raised with the researcher who will endeavour to address the participant's concerns.

9.   Should a participant request more information about the research in order to provide meaningful consent, the researcher will provide this. This will be documented in research notes and if relevant, taken into account within the analysis.

Signed: …………………………………………………………………..

Date: …………………………………………………………………..

Appendix C: Interview Schedule

(1) Can you tell me about your background and what brought you to this work?

(2) Tell me about your experience of training to be a clinical psychologist and your first years of work?

(3) What were some experiences that you had around race or being white during this time (i.e. training and first years of work)?

Appendix D: Transcription Notation

This notation is based on the transcription system developed by Gail Jefferson Atkinson & Heritage, 1984).

cu-	A dash signals a sharp cut-off of the previous word or sound
(mm)	Word within brackets represents the speech of the other speaker (that is, not the speaker whose turn it currently is to talk)
(laughing)	Description in brackets details non-verbal aspects
( )	Unclear speech with no approximation made by the transcriber
?	A rising tone
.	A 'natural' ending
,	A comma-like pause
...	A longer pause
[ ]	Square brackets denote overlapping talk

In addition I used the following notation for extracts presented in the dissertation:

(...)	Omitted section of speech (not omitted in full transcript). At the beginning or end of extracts in indicates that this is not the point at which this speaker's turn started or ended.
Bold text	Researcher's insertion
Italicized text	Researcher's translation

Appendix E: Sample Pages: Analytic Procedures

A: Ja, then I read I reread the documents which you sent then I see there's something there's an opportunity to kind of review (yes) um to see just to check you know anonymity and everything (yes) so that reassured me.

B: Yes, yes, absolutely, and, ja I mean and when we spoke the, at one point, your your experience of I think you almost described it as a sense of shame related to a sense of privilege was quite ja that was quite marked so, ja I suppose I'm wondering if what you felt afterwards was linked to that or if it was, was it a concern that, I might have misunderstood your experience...

A: No I think I'd like to I guess I want to look at myself as someone whose part of a kind of modern South African society where I'm aware of um issues of race and equality and um, I wondered if there were aspects of what I was saying that were maybe somehow racist or reinforcing stereotypes or um, Ja I don't know I guess it's just a continuation of the theme of guilt and shame (mm) about even just talking about race from a white as a white person or (right), ja.

B: Right. My sense was that, you you took a huge amount of care all the time to, um, to be, mmm, not to not to essentialise racially and, ja, I suppose not to, to problematize I suppose the construct of race I think you did quite consistently um, and part of what I remembered from our conversation was that it often became quite difficult for you to kind of know how to even speak in terms of race because you were trying to be very precise about, what exactly it was that you were speaking that you know that wasn't about skin colour but about things I suppose in this context overlap with race a lot like socio-economic experience and certain kinds of (mm) cultural experience and

Handwritten annotations (left margin):
(referred self/view/ identification: 'aware'

Concern about saying racist/ stereotyping things.

guilt/shame arises in talking about race.

Handwritten annotations (right margin, top):
Also a way of reminding me of this & conveying importance of confidentiality, conveying ███ true character

Handwritten annotations (right margin):
Race not as biological construct, but cultural (& other forms of difference).

Handwritten annotations (bottom center/right):
Might express racist, stereotyping views even when consciously/explicitly anti-racist — Because of Modern/ New Racism ↓ Compatible with anti-racist stance Inadvertent, Unavoidable

↓

Talking about race then very risky.

Anxiety, urgent mn to convey ███ I don't see you as racist Fundamentally I know you are good. Also uncertainty — how will I write about this? — Will have to take all 'badness' upon myself to protect ███

Handwritten annotation (bottom left, red):
Reassuring — you're okay because you're not speaking in biological or essentialist terms.

hospitaal en toe ek 'n ████████████ jy werk met alle tipe mense alle ouderdomme alle kleure so dis nie asof jy dit meer so erg besef nie dit (ja) is, ja, of jy jy die persoon anders hanteer of ja ek dink dis as 'n kind is ek grootgemaak jy hanteer all mense dieselfde dis nie asof jy (mm) hulle anders hanteer of hulle op 'n ander vlak sien (mm) as hulle van 'n ander kleur is nie (mm) um (mm, mm), ja. Maar ja ek dink people come from different backgrounds um, ja but I think you have to when you when I do therapy I'm I listen to that person's experience of their own background no matter which ra – from which race they are (okay) ja so I think I treat every person individually for – ja where they come from specifically where they come from and (ja) hear their story um, (mm) ja but I I didn't (mm) it's not that I, ja I I ja I thought a little bit about the topic before I came here and then I actually didn't know what I'm gonna say because I don't actually see people so differently I I rather hear a person's own account of their experience of their background of their race, ja. I don't know whether (mm) this answers the question (mm) but ja.

B: Absolutely it does (ja? ja?). Has that – I mean you you mentioned that that's very much the way in which you were raised (mm) but I'm wondering if there's been any change over the years (ja) or if it's felt like this to you all the time (mm) that you, ja that you don't – (mm) almost what you're saying that you don't notice race (ja?).

C: I think um I had an experience last year um, and I don't know whether this is right but that's what I've heard, um when I applied for the for the internship programme I applied at all the places in ████████ and then I I eventually got a place at ████████████████ but my application – and they phoned or the lady actually told me at ████████ that um I'm accepted at at ██████ but my application just has to go through HR um but then HR didn't accept my application and, I don't know whether this is right but um I was quite upset about

---

Handwritten annotations:

General 1st response: Race is absent —
((Concern: why is it so present for me when?))

In ████████
began to notice race less.

Non-racism:
· Don't treat people of colour differently
· don't see them as inferior.

Interest in individual experience / account of ████████

Straightforward: Don't view / treat people differently based on race. Don't see Black people as inferior. Something it is possible to refrain from. One can entirely avoid it.

Focus on individual humanity in therapy ←

Raised non-racist; race becomes issue when encounter (potential) anti-white discrimination
Assumption: Way to be aware of race as white person is being negatively affected by it.

Individual position, Individualism
(If you ~~are not racist, do not~~ take race into account, ~~racist~~ your race should not be taken into account.)

Appendix F: Rhodes University Ethical Approval

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT Tel: (046) 603 8500/8501 Fax: (046) 603 7614 e-mail: psychology@ru.ac.za

RESEARCH PROJECTS AND ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

3 June 2015

Brink Scholtz
Department of Psychology
RHODES UNIVERSITY
6140

Dear Brink

ETHICAL CLEARANCE OF PROJECT PSY2015/23

This letter confirms your research proposal with tracking number PSY2015/23 and title, 'A psychosocial reading of intern clinical psychologists' talk about 'whiteness' in relation to an emerging professional identity', served at the Research Projects and Ethics Review Committee (RPERC) of the Psychology Department of Rhodes University on 3 June 2015. The project has been given ethics clearance.

Please ensure that the RPERC is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators.

Yours sincerely

Dr Jacqueline Marx
CHAIRPERSON OF THE RPERC