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Exploring the Territory of Shame

Building awareness of ways in and out of shame
through a co-creative investigation of metaphors
around the shame experience

Dissertation in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of
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Abstract

The aim of the present qualitative heuristic and hermeneutic phenomenological study was to create a broad and accurate picture of the shame affect and provide both a description of the experience of the torment of shame, and ways out of shame.

Five experienced psychotherapists, interested in shame, working as supervisors, trainers, managers of counselling and psychotherapy services, and writers of psychotherapy books, participated in seven semi-structured interviews totalling seven hours. The interviews focused on the use of metaphors when working with shame issues in therapy, supervision and training, which yielded 2155 metaphors. A thematic analysis was conducted on the 301 rated strongest metaphors in the data, which were coded and put into themes and sub-themes. This was condensed into a detailed discussion on the 22 most poetical and striking multi-layered conceptual metaphors offering the richest descriptions of the nature of shame and ways of dealing with it.

The analysis initially produced a picture of the phenomenon of shame as a complex process, made up of negative, positive and middle-ground metaphors about defences which were called 'bridging' metaphors. This showed shame as an experience of Isolation, Powerlessness, Sensory agony, Self-consciousness and Woundedness, with multiple ways of presenting itself (or camouflaging itself). The analysis also showed key consistent themes of ways out of shame as a secure Relationship, involving core conditions of warmth, non-judgementalism, empathy and trust; Knowledge, involving curiosity, vulnerability, recognising, exploring and understanding; Creativity involving imaginative/unorthodox use of language, inner and outer dialogue and image, creative adjustments and strategies; and Acceptance, involving acknowledging and accepting shame compassionately, with good humour, as a normal part of life. Defence mechanisms, both helpful to protect us, and unhelpful, to maintain stuck shame positions, were identified. Shame work involves becoming familiar with the deep and wide phenomenon of shame, talking about it, understanding the defences that hold us in shame, working through and reconciling to the reality of shame.

The researchers' metaphorical journey of exploration through the multi-faceted landscape of shame with the participants and her own seven year study of the heuristic shame experience led to healing and crystallisation. The metaphors were integrated into a map of the territory of shame, held together in the wisdom offered in 09's metaphor: "*Love is the antidote to shame*". The concepts of "The Four E's of Shame: Entering, Engaging with, Expressing and Embracing shame", and also "Creative Assertiveness" were introduced. 397 words

Acknowledgements

In tribute to Ken Evans, my mentor and friend – much missed.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

"What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from."
T.S. Eliot (1943)

1.1   My journey

My seven year journey through shame has been extraordinary. It has been a tough adventure and afforded me the privilege of meeting my eight co-researchers through the Practice Evaluation Project (PEP) and Final Project (FP), each participant a remarkable and talented person. Through this research experience, we connected in a deeply personal and private place.   I shared my own experience of shame with them, my tutors and colleagues throughout the Doctoral process, in terms of:

- the agony of the length of time this project has taken me – it has required a strong determination and whole-hearted commitment
- the realisation that shame is built into the experience of living and goes largely unnamed and unrecognised - shame is all around us everywhere, yet is so little acknowledged or talked about
- the complicated nature of the topic – I have grown in knowledge as I experienced the cyclical process, and peaks and troughs of shame, understanding when I had reached my limits and admitting when I needed help and seeking it out
- the importance of self–soothing through engagement and connection in bringing about respite from shame
- a realisation that light–heartedness is a good antidote to shame – I have learnt to anticipate shame as one of the 'givens' of existence, and to laugh at myself through this research. My shame does not consume me as it used to before studying the subject. If affected, I can get out of it quicker these days.

In homage to Ken Evans, my mentor and support, I want to say a huge thank you, and this doctorate is in tribute to him. Somehow, suddenly, his untimely and unexpected death at only 68, has given me the spur to complete this project, thus preserving his legacy of wise, non-shaming counsel. In his workshops he advised adopting an attitude of curiosity, not judgement.   Our shared topic is shame, and I would like, in collaboration with other specialist psychotherapists, to implement training programmes on shame which Ken promoted so brilliantly.

This project is about how therapists work with shame, whether it is with clients, supervisees, trainees, or themselves. The therapists who agreed to take part in the project are all highly articulate, experienced as therapists and trainers, and they all willingly agreed to participate in the research because of their enthusiasm and commitment to promote a better understanding of the phenomenon of shame. Their willingness to volunteer, thus making themselves vulnerable as part of this research, has been a privilege for me to witness. I thank all the people who have made a contribution to my professional knowledge and understanding of shame, and have shared parts of the journey with me.

I played the role of an explorer on a seven–year journey, bringing up the subject of shame in conversations at every opportunity, in unlikely places, leaving no pathway unexplored or undiscussed. I liken it to being on a geological expedition, akin to being a miner, as my methodology was "mining meaning", travelling in the footsteps of Van Manen (1997) who wrote: *"Phenomenological research is a being–given–over to some quest, a true task, a deep questioning of something that restores an original sense of what it means to be a thinker, a researcher, a theorist."*

I left no seam uninspected.   I have lived and breathed the process, in my real daytime world and even in my dreams. At a conscious and unconscious level the focus on shame has permeated my thinking. I could see shame all around me, yet to other people it was invisible. I wanted to talk about it, to bring it out into the open.

This all-embracing approach influenced my research when I reached the analysis phase, because it meant that I looked in great detail underneath the words of the metaphors. In my thematic analysis I kept refining the definitions of the sub–themes, and honing down the titles of my main themes until I felt I had found precisely the right word – my methodology became more tuned in to the language and I was searching in my mind for underlying meanings in the particular metaphorical concepts, which, by the very nature of complex metaphor, deepened. This applies to what Lakoff & Johnson (2003, p.139) refer to as non–conventional metaphors "*outside our conventional conceptual system, metaphors that are imaginative and creative… what we experience with such a metaphor is a kind of reverberation down through the network of entailments that awakens and connects our memories of our past experiences and serves as a possible guide for future ones*".

When selecting my participants, I chose people who wanted to go into some depth and poetical description around the theme of shame, who were interested in my desire to capture the sense of shame, verbalise the inexpressible and talk about how they work

with shame. They are all highly articulate people, themselves therapists and writers of therapy courses and books, people who head up therapy organisations and who are not afraid to express themselves – individuals who have a genuine interest in my research and would get involved; enthusiastically helping me to articulate an oft–inexpressed subject.

My research fitted with my professional life, dovetailing together with my psychotherapy practice and supervision of psychotherapists. During this time I have become increasingly aware of the phenomenon of shame, the helpfulness of metaphor, and how disabling it is for students, supervisees and clients to be in the grip of shame. Through conducting this research, I have found pictures and a language for shame. I would like now like to disseminate my findings, producing a practical handbook on shame for use in psychotherapy, training and supervision.

1.2   Personal context

I have worked in the fields of teaching and psychotherapy for the last forty years. My interest in metaphor evolved through reading English Literature as my first degree at university. Prior to that, as a young child, I was an avid reader. My mother made up stories, and Grandma used to recite poetry to me which she had learnt by heart. So I grew up with an innate love of poetical words and word forms, and was drawn to metaphorical language from a young age. I would seek refuge and escape in books. Poetry was full of promise, adventure, possibility, and magic. It was 'outside reason' and contained a rich world of creative possibility, it allowed me to enter domains of imagination and afforded the healing of old wounds, changing perspectives and producing a shift in energy.

Conversely, I experienced shame first hand. I was a sensitive, bullied, teased youngest sibling. My family alternated between my father's red hot rage and my mother's dark unhappiness.   As I grew up, I felt that I did not quite fit in with groups, was not quite right in my family, and could not express myself as I wanted to. My parents' marriage broke up when I was 15 and I began some damaging sexual behaviours. I felt frightened, different and self-conscious. There was no counsellor to talk to in those days.

My studies and independent streak sustained me. I needed to prove that I was not stupid and simply fighting the system. I was unaware that shame was in my character at core level. Upon entering the doctoral programme at Metanoia, I had no idea I would be studying shame. The subject found me as strong feelings of inadequacy, which have plagued me since early childhood, needed to be addressed before I could fully evolve! These feelings stem from such incidents as when my brother and his girlfriend sported

with me – they used to tie me up and hide me in dark cupboards as a game for them. They laughed at me, teased me, and when I was let out, they would give me the ropes to tie them up, and would further ridicule me, "You can't even tie the knots." I cannot tie knots to this day!

I have a strong memory of a school day when I witnessed a teacher verbally abusing a pupil and publicly humiliating her. This memory scarred me and influenced my becoming a teacher, advocating the more troubled, challenging pupils. I taught for seven years in secondary school and enjoyed teaching English, but always felt more empathetic to the problematic pupils, wanting to connect with them at a personal level, closer to core. I thought that their psychological difficulties were under-supported, and recognised an urgent need for the provision of counselling services. I then trained as a counsellor, undertaking my Masters on disaffected pupils with problems of school attendance. A colleague and I initiated a successful and necessary counselling service in the school, with positive and sometimes remarkable results.

One of my talented, astute colleagues accurately called me irreverent; meaning that I have an inbuilt rebellious streak that cannot accept the status quo. I abhor cruelty to the vulnerable by domineering individuals who take advantage and strive to control. This is the energy which has propelled me forwards, a 'helpful defence'.

Whilst on the doctoral programme, I have gone through several cycles of shame, paralysed by a sense of inadequacy and fear of failure. I have often doubted myself and my ability to see the process through, but I do not handle life superficially or give up. So it has been deep and painful learning for me. What has sustained me however, is the continuing support of friends, colleagues and family who have not wavered in their belief that I have identified a yawning need in psychotherapy practice, supervision and training, and that I will succeed in my venture.

1.3   The personal to the professional

In thirty years of practising as a counsellor within the NHS, teaching counselling in colleges, and working as a supervisor, I have worked with many people with shame issues that were not identified as shame. In my experience, no emphasis was placed on the subject in the humanistic or integrative schools of psychology and psychotherapy in the 1980's and 1990's. I did not learn about shame or its treatment on any training courses until 2004. But recalling years of working in the NHS with traumatised people, I now realise that shame is a form of relational trauma and/or abuse, presented in the form of anxiety, personality disorder and relationship problems – avoidance, withdrawal, anger vented outwards or turned in on the self as depression. Additionally, the students and

supervisees I worked with have presented with similar problems, often in the form of difficulties with their levels of confidence to get written work done, feeling they were not good enough or were very closely under scrutiny, bringing large amounts of self-criticism and anxiety into the training situation.

This amounted, coupled with my own experiences, to a growing desire to expose the ever-present "Shame Phenomenon", lurking in the wings ready to pounce usually at a time when excitement is up and defences are down.

I am intrigued by the many faces of shame, never ceasing to be surprised by its complexity and ability to confuse and drive us into dark, defensive places and actions. Shame and its treatment has largely been ignored, not researched, not taken seriously: "*Given the potential impact of shame on mental health, an understanding of how we rebound from this emotion is critical. Yet to date, there is little research in this area*" (Van Vliet, 2008).

It is, therefore, my intention to utilise this research and subsequent handbook, exposing shame in its most common guises, and to create a linguistic tool to release the stronghold which shame has over people in our normal lives, often without our knowledge.

1.4 My motivation

I believe that metaphor, imagination and magic, though not scientifically truthful or evidence based, offer tremendous hope for a shift away from misery and negativity, towards a more hopeful stance on stuck positions. There is a sense with poetry and the use of metaphorical forms in language, that there can be a more abstract understanding of the world, which may not be logical, but can release understanding and energy, moving a person into a realm of purpose, beauty, ecstasy, excitement, joy, or peace. Wurmser, an expert psycho-analytic psychiatrist on shame, in 'The Mask of Shame' (1994, p.298) states:

"It is the essence of the great work of art that its meaning is many-layered, multidimensional, and in some few instances, possibly inexhaustible in meaning".

I now see that this whole project has been to do with moving people, myself included, beyond shame, into a positive, creative, richly imaginative psychology. This perspective can train us to see that we can lean on others for help, because we are all subject to shame, and struggling. I have learnt that we can help one another on our shame-journeys.

My background was in the world of poetry, literature and academic study as a defence against a difficult childhood.   It was creative imagination and intellectual pursuit that took me out of quite a miserable and shame-based childhood, into a world where I could escape and function well. I studied English Literature at King's College, London University, and, in particular, was much influenced by the depths of insight into the agony of human existence in the poetry of T.S. Eliot who said, "Humankind cannot bear very much reality" in The Four Quartets (1943). He captures the essence of scrutinising, cultural shame in living, old age and dying in the following extract from The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock:

For I have known them all already, known them all:

Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,

I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;

I know the voices dying with a dying fall

Beneath the music from a farther room.

So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—

The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,

And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,

When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,

Then how should I begin

To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?

And how should I presume?

T.S. Eliot (1915) The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

I was much influenced by the anguish of shame and agonising deep affects in the writings of Shakespeare. He could make dreadful intense affects like rage, hatred, terror, jealousy, and shame, so terrible, yet so powerful and accurate, through his metaphors and astounding use of language.   One great example, to my mind, is in the 'ashamed self-

knowledge' (Fernie, 2002) of King Lear as he is brought to his terrible realisation of core failure to recognise the genuine daughterly love of Cordelia: we are told in the quarto text of King Lear (1743) that he is feeling "*a sovereign shame… burning shame".*   His final shame is undiluted by blaming others – for the first time he is feeling shame more than he is feeling shamed. I have come to understand that Shakespearean shame turns out to be a choice between inner isolation and dissolution through death, or the dreadful experience of being imprisoned in metamorphosis, when the sufferer can experience redemption through dialogue – the way to relationship with the world outside the self is through reconciliation, acceptance, laughter and talking:

> "*Come, let's away to prison.*
>
> *We two alone will sing like birds i'th'cage.*
>
> *When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down*
>
> *And ask of thee forgiveness; so we'll live,*
>
> *And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh*
>
> *At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues*
>
> *Talk of court new, and we'll talk with them…" (Shakespeare, 1608)*

I did not realise at the time that I was drawn into the world of counselling to deal with other people's anguish and shame, thereby avoiding my own. Peck's writing in particular, of all the psychotherapy texts I have read, affected me most profoundly; particularly what he has written about love in psychotherapy (Peck, 1978, p.173) in terms of love being the essential ingredient for therapeutic change. I think love is the opposite to shame. Over the years I have had the good fortune to counsel many extremely talented yet shame-based people, but did not recognise or name it as the secret emotion, shame, until I began psychotherapy training and began to delve into the complexity of it.

My discovery was that psychotherapy can help people recover from the trauma of being shamed through a caring, loving relationship, and becoming genuine and vulnerable when opening up to shame. This has become my passion. Over twenty years ago when I first began to teach counselling, one of my gifted students (who was physically disabled) introduced me to the Velveteen Rabbit, a beautiful, simple children's story, written nearly a hundred years ago. My memories of the student and the rabbit, creatively intertwined, have stayed with me ever since. The Velveteen Rabbit is a symbol of the reality of unconditional and genuine love. It is not the outside that matters, it is the inside. Shame

makes people experience themselves externally as ugly, and then absorbing it to feel ugly inside. The Velveteen Rabbit tells a different story, of reclamation; that feeling loved over a long period through the tussle of living, makes us real. This is what I wanted to achieve through the painful struggle through shame of this doctorate.

Love is Real: Lesson from The Velveteen Rabbit

"What is REAL?" the Velveteen Rabbit asked the Skin Horse one day. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Velveteen Rabbit .

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in your joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand. But once you are Real you can't become unreal again. It lasts for always."

(Williams, 1922)

For me, there are strong connections between this powerful writing, my own journey and the journey of the participants in this research to explore and make sense of shame. I have been motivated to find the right language for shame, methods and language that 'rings true' and might bring about some healing of old shame-wounds. Simple direct pictorial language is a way to do this.

1.5   Integrating my learning into professional practice

This research has already led to substantial changes in my working practice, with regard to recognising, acknowledging, connecting into and embracing the physiological experience of shame as it occurs during therapy, and supervision. I have become comfortable walking with clients and supervisees around the subject of shame. I recognise it and bring it into the arena as soon as I can appropriately do so – without creating a downhill spiral and furthering the shame.

My spontaneous use of metaphor and visualisation have substantially increased.

Co-discovering a central metaphor to keep the work focused on the client's shame presentation has become natural to me in working with shame. Co-created maps and diagrams of the stages in the shame journey have become more usual, because plotting movement and progression through therapy, (or paralysis, avoidance, regression when there is a blockage to progress) is of particular value. Plotting these movements has a dual function of giving structure to the shame journey, and also normalising the process with a sense that this is a familiar well-trodden path, with a beginning, middle and end, and a likely improved outcome if they persevere with the journey. (This is in parallel with this doctorate, of course!)

1.6   Summary of my journey

This doctorate for me has been a metaphorical journey, seven years of exploring the phenomenon of shame. But in essence, my journey has been a lifetime from a child in an unhappy parental marriage, through adolescent rebellion, poetry, drama, stories, literature – T.S. Eliot, Shakespeare, The Velveteen Rabbit, teaching English and working as a counsellor, psychotherapist, supervisor, trainer, for over thirty years. This doctorate has been its own heuristic, personal and real life journey which I have shared with a group of key people. Before exploring what I have done and what my findings are, the next section will reflect on the research literature – other people's views of shame and metaphor and my Preliminary Evaluation Project (PEP) which is where my studies on shame began.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1   Definitions and descriptions of shame

Shame is universally regarded as one of the most potent, noxious and agonising of human emotions, often going unspoken and unrecognised. As an integrative, humanistic psychotherapist, I adopt an integrated view on shame.   I accept the psychoanalytic position that "*shame springs from trauma at any time in life from the approximate age of 18 months to 3 years"* (Erikson, 1950). Recent advances in neuro-science (Schore, 1994; Cozolino, 2010) have contributed to our greater knowledge of the effects of early traumatic shame experiences on infant brain development. However I also acknowledge the more commonly held view that *"it is an agonising experience of feeling judged by another person or the eyes of the world and experiencing deep within the core self, an essentially bad, rejected feeling"* (Gilbert, 2006). Shame is triggered initially from an external source, leading to an internalisation of feelings of exposure, adverse judgement, and self-consciousness, and experienced deep within as a feeling of attack to the core self, "*an inner wounding"* (Wurmser, 1994). Core shame is accompanied by dreadful, overwhelming, agonising feelings of isolation, unlovability and powerlessness, which requires non-judgmental soothing love and compassion from another, in order to be brought back to a state of emotional equilibrium, self-love, and self-compassion (Powell, 2013).

The psychotherapeutic literature on shame abounds with powerful pictures of shame. I am drawn to the writers who describe poetically. The analytic literature on shame is led by two key psychiatrists who approach shame from a medical model standpoint. Kaufman (1995) describes shame as *"a sickness of the soul"*, and Professor of psychiatry and psycho-analysis, Wurmser (1994) as a form of tragic mortal wounding, *"soul murder"*. They see shame in the medical model as an illness of the soul, to be cured. The opposite is a healthy soul, full of life and energy.

Gilbert (2014) refers to shame as *"the dark mirror within"*, Wurmser (ibid) refers to shame in many variants, as *"masked, disguised, unrecognizable – and neglected… It is ashamed of itself and has to hide itself…The hiding of shame is the shame about shame."* Bradshaw (1988) talks about *"the felt sense of toxic shame as the feeling of being exposed and seen when one is not ready to be seen… often manifested in dreams of being naked in inappropriate places, or in not being prepared, as in suddenly having to write your final exam without having studied for it"*. Bradshaw, in common with Lee (2008), suggests that accomplishments do not reduce toxic shame – shame is about a state of being, and his view is that no amount of doing will ever change it.

There are multiple descriptions of shame in psychotherapy literature – Yalom (1989) refers to the *"givens of human existence"* as needing to recognise our own isolation, meaninglessness, sickness and aging leading to inevitable death. He sees shame residing at a deep level in our physical, mental, emotional and existential weaknesses, when we are disconnecting from people and the world. Pattison (2000) stands out as highly relevant to my research, from the point of view of personal deep hurt caused by shaming, and suggests ways in and out of shame which are related to disconnecting from and reconnecting to social interaction. He puts forward an honest view that shame is a universal phenomenon, which he has experienced and, still experiences, first-hand, with characteristics of feeling "*trapped, self-rejecting, paralysed, passive and often depressed*". He attributes these feelings to "*a certain amount of abuse and neglect*" in his childhood, "*amplified by social institutions like church and school*". He states, "*There is some freedom in accepting a shamed identity*" (ibid).

All the literature I have seen on shame is in agreement that shame makes us want to hide, but there is less agreement about whether shame has any benefits. The analytic school in particular, and also the Gestalt school, tend to see shame as being linked to the need to protect what is vulnerable, and protects us before we are fully formed and ready to come out with a voice or authentic view of ourselves. The self cannot function effectively without some protection. "*Shame acts as a barrier to shield the self from physical intrusion and psychological attack.*" (Nichols, 1995, p.43) The positive side to shame is that it "*guards the boundary around the private self*," (ibid, p.337), which is a fascinating insight into some of the findings in this research about the need to establish a safe boundary and to learn where the boundary needs to go between self and other. (To be explored in the discussion chapter). Shame and its counterpart, pride, have been variously referred to as moral emotions, which "regulate social sensitivity", in terms of providing social cohesion and rules that bind societies and communities together (Trevarthen, 2009, p.79).

2.2   Definitions and descriptions of metaphor

The Oxford English Dictionary defines metaphor as "*the figure of speech in which a name or descriptive term is transferred to some object to which it is not properly applicable*" and "*two disparate ideas, images or concepts, brought together*". According to Shlain (2015), 'meta' in Greek means above and over and 'phor' means to bear across, so the word metaphor in itself is a metaphor with a meaning associated with two things being brought together, leading to something growing, changing, transforming, evolving.   This is probably largely the hope and aim of psychotherapy for most people practising and attending psychotherapy, certainly it is what I hope for in my practice of psychotherapy. Metaphor lends itself well to potential lessening of an affect as horrible as shame.

Shlain's definition of metaphor (2015) as *"the right brain's unique contribution to the left brain's language capability",* seems to encapsulate one of my main research intentions: the importance of the power of knowledge and language (left brain cognition) wedded to metaphor (right brain activity) as a creative device for understanding shame in order to bring about change, healing, transformation of shame into something positive and life-affirming. The idea of bringing together left-brain logic and language and right-brain imaginative and metaphorical creativity lies at the heart of this research.

Metaphors have a power in them to give expression to symbolic perceptions in a highly personal way. These sometimes are difficult to access through logical, linear A to B channels. The work of Lawley & Tompkins (2005) on Symbolic Modelling and the use of Clean Language (i.e. skilful very specific developing questioning to tune the client in metaphorically to the subject) is pertinent to the methodology and findings of the current study in terms of facilitating clients (albeit in a less structured way) to attend to and learn from their metaphoric expressions to help them better understand their internal processes around shame. *"Some clients benefit just from having their metaphors developed with a few clean questions. For some the process leads to a reorganisation of their existing symbolic perceptions, while for others nothing short of a transformation of their entire landscape will suffice"* (ibid).

Siegelman (1990, p.7) sees metaphor as "*a way of giving flesh and blood to the abstract and theoretical*", thus delivering "*a whole tangle of conscious and unconscious associations*" in an image which is economical and vivid. She states that there is a paradox in metaphor, which is that "the abstract is arrived at through the concrete, through the senses". The use of metaphor is a metaphor in itself, of concision and focus.

Linking my study with the writing of Lakoff & Johnson (2003), metaphors are conceptual and allow us to understand one domain of experience in terms of another – this is why I chose to explore the difficult subject of shame from the point of view of metaphor, to throw light on the experience of shame and see deeper meanings, the essence of shame, through metaphor rather than the obvious surface words. Lakoff & Johnson (2003) state, "*It is just not true that all thought is conscious, literal and disembodied.*" They see metaphor as the way the body and brain can shape what is unconscious, abstract and connected up in what they call an 'experiential gestalt'. "*Such gestalts are experientially basic because they characterize structured wholes within recurrent human experience. They represent coherent organizations of our experiences in terms of natural dimensions (parts, stages, causes etc. Domains of experience that are organized as gestalts in terms of such natural dimensions seem to us to be natural kinds of experience.*" (ibid, p.117).

Seligman (2008) and Rowan (1998) posit the idea that having a central metaphor is useful in helping a person play with painful affects and move forward in psychotherapy. Encouraging the use of the creative imagination to identify a meaningful metaphor and learn from it is explored by Kopp (1995 p. xiv) where he describes metaphors as "*mirrors reflecting our inner images of self, life, and others*". He invites us into the world of Alice, going through the looking glass and journeying beyond the mirror's image, entering the domain of creative imagination, "*where metaphoric imagery can become a key that unlocks new possibilities of self-created 'in-sight' and therapeutic change*".

The language of metaphor is powerful in terms of capturing and crystallising deep felt sensings and homing in on real lived embodied experience. Kvale (1996, p.275) refers to metaphors as "*data reducing and pattern making devices*". Metaphor can provide a way of making sense of shame where precise and literal language might not. Metaphor "*defies literal language and precise definition*" (Owen, 2001, p.79).

2.3   Literature on metaphor and shame

The therapist must at times introduce the topic of shame and name shame, to shine a light on the possibility that shame is in the mix, but unspoken, operating at an unconscious level. Yontef (2008, p.367) refers to *"jointly creating a shame language with the patient"* both verbal and non-verbal; this very much ties in with the methodology of this project and also provides some sort of solution or way forward through shame, in a joint endeavour. Finding language for shame in collaboration with the client seems of vital importance and is in my findings.

Generally on the emotions, which are target domains, i.e. abstract concepts – e.g. fear, sadness, anger, and specifically on shame, Kovecses (2000) gives a clear lexicon of metaphors. In his view, the principle origins, or sources of shame are: being seen with no clothes on, being filled with shame, being in a state of suffering, feeling diminished, needing to hide, feeling a divided self, feeling worthless, feeling damaged, feeling burdened. What is of relevance to my research findings, is that he suggests that some of the affects occur specifically with only one single emotional concept, so with shame, (which he and Lakoff & Johnson would refer to as the target domain) the source domains or origins of shame specifically are, having no clothes on, decrease in size, blocking out the world.

In the sense that shame is an abstract and elusive concept, I think the essence of shame is best captured through metaphor because it can be so personal, idiosyncratic, and

pliable, a creative exercise, an art form in itself, heightening understanding and experiencing, by bringing together two disparate things.

2.4   Literature on the role of the defences in shame

I look here at some of the studies on defences in shame and treatment options for ways forward out of shame, according to the different orientations.

The psycho-analytic literature on shame posits the view that, more than with any other affect, it is imperative to recognise, acknowledge and name shame and understand the strong defences that operate to prevent it from being revealed.

Morrison (2014) declares: "Narcissistic injury reflects a blow to the self and self-esteem, leading first to a searing experience of shame". This then generates the rage into a rage-shame cycle documented by Piers & Singer (1953) and Lewis (1971). Herman (2014, p. 267) notes that client shame is frequently disguised by other emotions – most notably anger and rage, but also envy, contempt and expressions of grandiosity.

A narcissistic presentation of pride and extroversion is a powerful way to defend against and conceal shame, as explicated by Nathanson (1992). The compass of shame developed by Nathanson (ibid, p.312 – see below, Figure 1) – illustrates the various defences against showing shame – withdrawal, attack turned in on self, avoidance and attack turned out on others – these are negative, dysfunctional, unhealthy reactions to shame, but often necessary for protection of the injured core self. His model of a Compass of Shame is depicted below:

Figure 1: Nathanson's Compass of Shame

In my Learning Agreement I suggested that a compass can be useful to find out where the self is located and also to point someone in the right direction, indicating the way to go. Therefore I developed my version of 'The Island of Shame' with the idea of using a Compass of Shame (Figures 11 and 12, pp. 107 -108) to indicate both what people experience in shame (i.e. the negative experience of shame) and how the compass can work to enable movement out of shame (i.e. the positive experience of shame).

Therapist use of self-disclosure is always a thorny issue between different modalities, but to get past the defences of shame, the consensus seems to be a lot more skewed towards the importance of *"an authentic therapeutic relationship that includes radical genuineness on the part of the therapist as well as appropriate self-disclosure"* (Rizvi et al., 2014, p.237). Morrison (2014) coming from a psycho-analytic modality, refers to defensive structures such as anger and rage, despair, contempt, and self-loathing which frequently conceal underlying shame: "*Anger can stand as a principal defence against unrecognised shame*". Gilbert (2014, p.337) also refers to the same principle that shame-based self-criticism and attacking are tied in with defensive anger and self-contempt, which supports my findings on self-protective withdrawal and defensive anger around shame and the need to offer a positive safe holding relationship as a counter to shame.

Most relevant in clarifying the theme of defences in this present research and giving systematisation to the themes, has been Vaillant's references to immature and mature defences. In 1977, Vaillant, a psychiatrist, wrote a seminal paper on defence mechanisms as a way of defending against shame, from a developmental point of view. He introduced a four-level classification of defence mechanisms, as follows:

Level I – pathological defences (psychotic denial, delusional projection)

Level II – immature defences (fantasy, projection, passive aggression, acting out)

Level III – neurotic defences (intellectualisation, reaction formation, dissociation, displacement, repression)

Level IV – mature defences (humour, sublimation, suppression, altruism, anticipation).

The Level IV categories are particularly relevant to this research as useful and helpful strategies for ways out of shame. The categories clarify a number of complex issues around dealing with shame, either in a negative way which maintains the shame, or in a positive way, which brings about relief, if not cure from shame. Vaillant makes a useful and pertinent hierarchical distinction between immature and mature defences. This can be applied to my findings in an informative way, to distinguish between useful strategies for getting out of shame, and less useful ways, which tend to keep people stuck in shame.

Nathanson (1992) pointed out that laughter is perhaps the best defence against the torment of shame. *"Comedy rarely does more than hint at the darker side of shame; perhaps some of its success lies in the delicacy with which it plays around the edges of what is hidden within each of us. We all live on some line between shame and pride".* He is viewing laughter as a helpful, useful, creative adjustment, in line with Vaillant's categorisation of humour as a useful mature defence.

The list of defence mechanisms is huge, and writing on the subject. Freud (1932) wrote in an extremely limited and inconsistent way on shame, seeing it as a reaction formation as a result of social anxiety, viewing it as a minor emotion, not as an emotion in its own right, like love, joy, surprise, anger, fear, or sadness. Anna Freud (1936) enumerated ten major defence mechanisms that appeared in the works of her father, Sigmund Freud : 1. Repression, 2. Regression, 3. Reaction formation – reversal into the opposite, 4. Isolation, 5. Undoing, 6. Projection, 7. Introjection, 8. Turning against one's own person, 9. Displacement, 10. Sublimation. Anna concentrated her time on : Repression, Regression, Reaction formation, Projection, and Sublimation.

Kernberg (1976) sees the primitive psychological defences of 1. Projection, 2. Denial, 3. Dissociation, 4. Splitting, 5. Devaluation, 6. Projective Identification as borderline and central to the organisation of personality when the child cannot integrate helpful and harmful mental objects together. This is particularly true of shame where these defences are in operation to maintain an organised sense of self.

Wurmser (1994) gives a useful synopsis of defences which protect and maintain shame, and make shame so difficult to recognise and impossible to eradicate. The Diagnostic and

Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-1V) published by the American Psychiatric Association (1994) included a tentative diagnostic axis for defence mechanisms. This classification is largely based on Vaillant's hierarchical view of defence mechanisms, including 1. Denial 2. Fantasy, 3. Rationalisation, 4. Regression, 5. Isolation, 6. Projection, 7. Displacement and all apply to an understanding of defences around shame, with some being more useful than others.

Grohol (2007) refers usefully to primitive defence mechanisms which are favoured by children and adults who have not learned better ways of coping with trauma and stress. He sees psychotherapy as important in helping a person become aware of what defence mechanisms they are using, how effective they are, and how to use less primitive and more effective mechanisms in the future, for example, sublimation, compensation and assertiveness. This has implications for this research which aims to introduce possibilities of positive creative ways to deal with shame-trauma rather than defensive avoidance.

2.5   Summary of my PEP – themes in shame

I carried out an unpublished Preliminary Evaluation Project (PEP) in Part 1 of my doctoral journey exploring the phenomenology of shame. This I consider to be a relevant, practical, integrated perspective on shame.

My main influence for the development of this Final Project (FP) has been my own work for the last six years on shame, summarised below in three key strategic diagrams from my PEP (2013) which provides a picture of the agony of the experience of shame and key findings of Isolation, Powerlessness, Self-consciousness and Woundedness lying at the heart of shame:
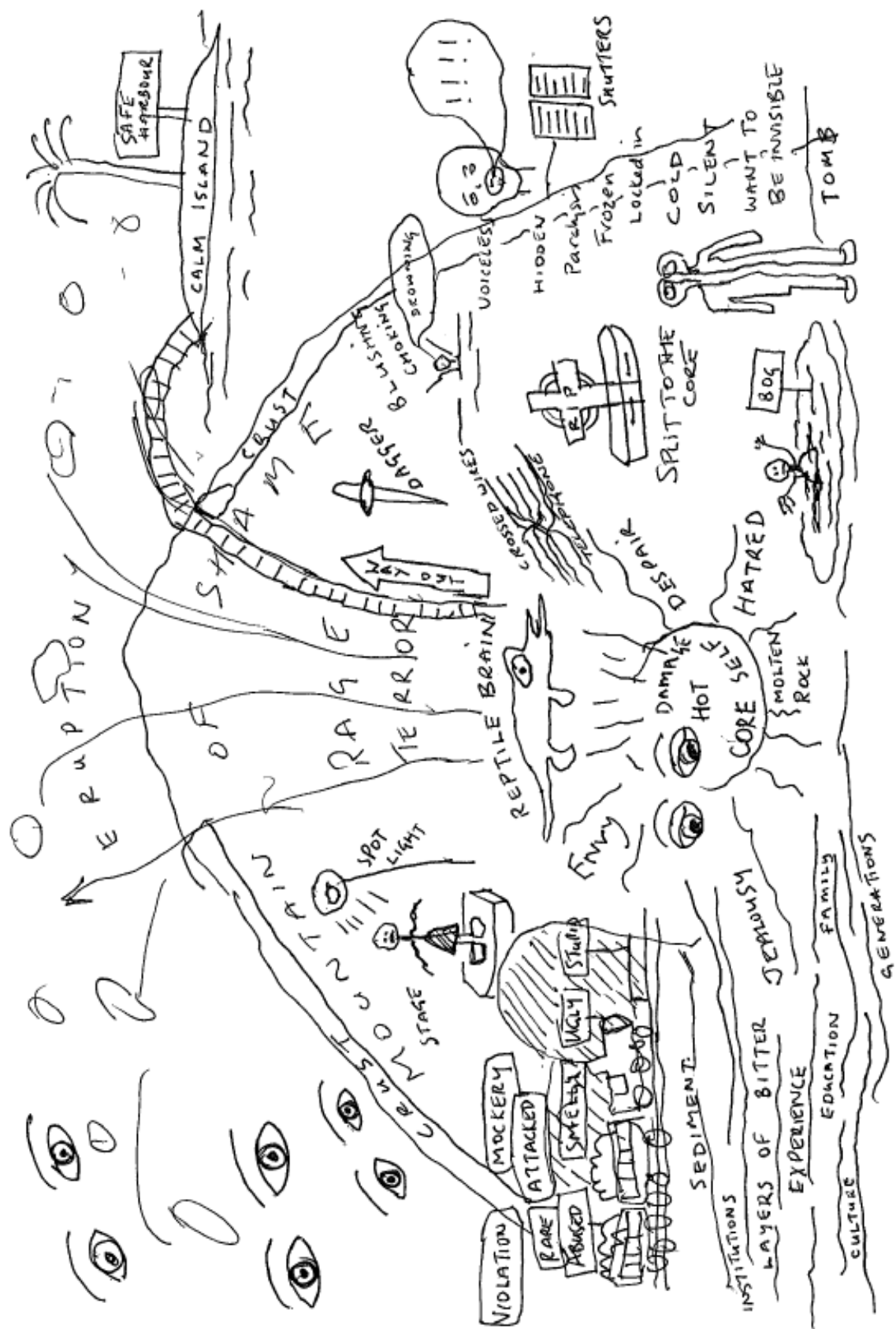
Figure 2: Mountain of Shame from the PEP

A thematic analysis was conducted to thematise the key components of core shame, which identified four main themes, Isolation, Powerlessness, Self-consciousness and Woundedness, shown below in white capital letters and nine subordinate themes shown below in black lower case:

UNLOVABLE / ISOLATED

DEFECTIVE /

WORTHLESS / LOST

ISOLATED unlovability, isolated, alone, neglected, abandoned, emptied, excluded, frozen out,, banished

WITHDRAW conceal, hide, shuttered, darkness, shrink, deep shadow, closed door

LOSS   of self, voice, face, size, safety, friends, prestige,

DEFECTIVE stupid, wrong, not ok, misfit, not wanted, unworthy,,

FROZEN silent, voiceless, stuck, motionless, locked, cold,blocked, paralysed, numb, drowning,shut away

POWERLESSNESS / LIKE

DEATH / HOPELESSNESS/

HELPLESSNESS/ FREEZING

DEAD assassinated, mortified, crucified,

SELF-CONSCIOUS blushing, reddened, pale, wanting invisibiility

SELF-CONSCIOUS / NEED TO HIDE / FLEE

WOUNDED/ ATTACKED/

FIGHTING

WOUNDED attacked, raped, damaged, violated, abused, pushed, ripped apart, poisoned, defeated

DISCUSSION

CORE SHAME

FIGHT anger, rage, attack, hot, primitive visceral reaction, defensive, hitting out shouting, fighting

Figure 3: Superordinate and Subordinate Themes of Shame from PEP

From the PEP, a number of themes evolved which led to the Final Project. Participants in the PEP interviews referred to ways out of shame. At the time this avenue was not developed due to time and word constraints, but provided the impetus for the second part of this research.

Examples below are some of the statements made by participants about ways forward: channelling shame into activity, achievements, creativity, poetry, icons, defences and growth strategies. I wanted to investigate further to see whether these themes were consistent.

Participant 1 spoke of entering a new path, setting up a counselling service, *"I have 2 others working for me, it's been quite tough but it has been lovely to nurture something and grow something so parts of my nature are still here … all that anti-oppressive ... rights ... egalitarian stuff is still there ... "*

Participant 1 also spoke of new growth, *"But there is this other nascent creature that's creeping up out of the primordial ooze".…* "*meant to be quality about it ... opening it up and seeing some parts of me that…I hadn't realised, when you have a [shame] situation, you tend to isolate it, or I do, hide it and freeze it in its time and place. I had not realised there were connections to a younger me…perhaps to a future me that I had hoped for, the writer"* … *"they used to call the bards 'the silver tongues' – their tongues have jewels ... . they can create beautiful pictures in people's heads with their words"*

Participant 2 said, "*Those sort of things had quite an impact on the way I was as a teacher ... to try and avoid doing that to anyone else ... to try and avoid shaming children ... one of the things that led me to become a counsellor"*

Participant 3 said, *"You can unshame yourself when you use all your resources".*

Participant 4 spoke of … "*when we go to a party he grabs me with that look what I've got… that sparkle in his eyes yes, so being prized ... is just being special ... the 'look what I have got' sparkle in his eyes."*

A further finding from the PEP was that Insight, Resources and Developments were viewed as helpful and positive ways out of shame, as seen in Figure 3 below, extracted from the PEP. This was the beginning of developing a main theme of Knowledge/insight as a way out of shame, and sub-themes of research, work, strategies, creativity, and icons. The concept of hot and cold Shame was introduced. This theme emerged again in the FP data and appears in The Island and Compass of Shame, closely connected to the theme of Defences.

Figure 4: The early evolution of Final Project themes from PEP to FP

2.6   Ways of treating / healing shame

Psycho-analysis and psychiatry largely disregarded shame as specifically needing in-depth analysis or treatment in its own right, since Freud dismissed shame as merely a defensive reaction formation. Possibly the same attitude still applies today. CBT places its emphasis on challenging negative affect e.g. shame, and suggests mindfulness programmes and structured rethinking of shame to diminish it. Third Wave CBT , including Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Compassion Focussed Therapy recognise and embrace the concept of getting to know unpleasant feelings, with the adage, "*Notice, accept, embrace*" (Hayes, 2012). Humanistic therapies see shame as healable if not curable, and place great emphasis on normalisation and empathic attunement. Gestalt Therapy suggests adopting a different style of relating, getting split off parts to communicate with each other to bring about integration.

Without exception, all major writers on the subject of shame refer to the importance of a secure trustworthy and honest relationship as an essential basic feature for the successful treatment of shame. The central shameful agony of feeling defective is not something to be cured and fixed, but healed. Shame occurs through interpersonal mis-relationship and agonising memories, "*governing scenes*" (Kaufman, 1995) of total unloveability, abuse, neglect and core rejection, *"Perhaps the deepest and most devastating aspect of neurotic shame is the rejection of self by the self",* (Bradshaw, 1988). The damage has to be rectified through the same relational channels, in reverse, through gentle, reciprocal

relationship, clear and firm limits without anger or judgement, and fine attention to detail. Herman (2014) states that, even in a behavioural treatment modality, the defences have to be let down, and successful treatment requires an emphasis on the therapist's empathic relational attunement and genuine positive regard for the patient to establish enough trust to partially let down the defences that protect the core self.

Cozolino (2010) refers to the importance of supportive therapeutic interventions to enable clients to move from negative shame and dysregulation, to positive development of strong neural pathways for healthy brain functioning of sensory, emotional and motor memory, and also for the production of endorphins for healthy affect regulation, *"an optimal bio-chemical environment for neural plasticity"* (ibid). Recent developments in neuro-science combined with the pioneering work of Brown (2014) suggest that the co-construction of autobiographical narratives in therapeutic or parent-child relationships assists in maximising neural network integration.

The shame affect has to be named and distinguished from other affects, experienced consciously and accurately. Kaufman (1995) is precise in his naming of the particular negative affects of anger, dis-smell, disgust, and contempt, the latter being a compound of anger and dis-smell. Shame must be distinguished from fear (the shaking response) and distress (the crying response), and self-consciousness, which is a manifestation of shame, needs to be distinguished from anxiety. This is part of the precision that is necessary in naming and recognising shame as a particular and distinctive affect which has not been correctly recognised in the past and still often if confused with other negative affects of distress, anxiety, guilt, anger. Much of the literature on shame refers to the affects and the need to distinguish them from each other. Also see Nathanson (1992); Tomkins (1962); Wurmser (1994).

The major shame writers, Kaufman (1995) and Wurmser (1994), see creativity as a powerful source of healing shame. They use a great deal of metaphor in their descriptions of this extreme affect. They also use powerful metaphors for healing shame. Wurmser (ibid) in the final chapter entitled "The heroic transcendence of shame" begins with a quote from Goethe, *"When man in his torment falls mute, A god gave me the gift to say how I suffer". "The greatest creativity arises out of nearly unbearable inner suffering"* (ibid. p.293). Wurmser presents an illuminating case study of a *"tragic hero"* Yona; he also cites the tension in a highly creative individual like Beethoven - tension in a creative person between the two poles of idealization on the one hand, and despair, anguish, catastrophe, fatal rage, and contempt for others and himself on the other … in the tension between these two poles his greatest art unfolded". Henry James's *"secret wound"* or

Dostoevsky's *"holy disease"* are also metaphorical examples of people who overcome a profound sense of woundedness, not just shame, but also *"grief, hurt, utter loneliness, rage and despair — through creativity and self–loyalty".* (ibid. p.293). These examples give a good insight into sublimation of horrible negative affects into art and creative channels, whether through musical composition, art or poetical enterprise.

Kaufman (1995) refers to *"restoring the interpersonal bridge".* Like many other psychotherapy writers, he sees working with shame as reparative, involving repairing developmental deficits and depending not on techniques and strategies, but on a security-giving, therapeutic or caring relationship.

Gilbert (2014, p.339) emphasises the importance of a non-judgemental relationship around shame, placing the therapeutic relationship as *"one of the most important sources of de-shaming",* in particular, through empathic attunement, validation and familiarity with our own *"shadow material",* because clients can experience themselves *"in the mind of another"* with acceptance, understanding and compassion.   In common with my findings about therapeutic transparency, *"being real",* which I have placed in the theme of Knowledge, Gilbert also cites psycho-education and normalising as important ways of de-shaming clients and also for the therapist to be prepared to acknowledge and accept responsibility for therapeutic ruptures and thereby move the therapy forward, (rather than leaving the client, or supervisee, in a stuck position of shame and self-blame).

The use of metaphor and creative visualisation is encouraged in working with shamed and traumatised clients, to make unconscious material conscious, bringing old memories to the surface and reshaping "*governing scenes",* because maladaptive patterns are rooted in governing memories which need to be reactivated directly within the therapeutic process, releasing all their imprinted affect.   *"Therapy by metaphor works because any therapy that activates imagery as well as language will be effective."* (Kaufman, 1995, p.158).

In common with other writers, Kaufman (ibid) refers to the importance of the therapist fully engaging in an emotionally available encounter and being open and vulnerable to re-experiencing shame. Brown's (2014) seminars on vulnerability, power, wholeheartedness and shame emphasised the importance of this work of engaging with shame. Shame is a trauma and techniques of trauma work apply – talking about it, writing about it and revisiting it.

Kaufman (ibid.) also refers to the concept of *"internal shame spirals"* which need to be interrupted and released, through conscious determination and sheer effort of will. He

suggests using the *"affect tool"* of deliberately refocusing attention back outside the self, for example into public speaking, dancing, sports, sexual activity, positive exercise and activity, rather than attempting to understand the experience while it is spiralling or snowballing, as this only embroils the person deeper in shame. Learning to master the shame by keeping the attention directed outwardly is named in the research by Kaufman (ibid) and others, because it diverts self-consciousness which is such a strong part of shame, away from the self to an external focus, with possible pleasant connotations and potential for the positive affects of pleasure, enjoyment and release.

Kaufman (1995) in common with Freud, refers to making the unconscious conscious and cites examples of using metaphor to create knowledge of self: *"We now have tied consciousness to language: through accurate naming we gain a vital measure of conscious control over what were perplexing inner states. Metaphor takes advantage of ambiguity to create knowledge of self."*

Indeed, using a metaphor of a deep landscape to be mined, Miller argues that shame is commonly seen as *'the bedrock of psychopathology' and 'the gold to be mined psychotherapeutically'*, to the neglect of other emotions and their interaction with shame, (in Gilbert & Andrews, 1998, p.151).

There is a substantial body of writing on core empathic therapeutic conditions from the person-centred school of Rogers (1961) and the Winnicott (1991)/ Bowlby(1995)/ Klein (1987) developmental tradition of psychology which ties in neatly with this research on the theme of empathic attunement and good mirroring as a way of allowing the infant to develop a sense of *'Feeling Grand'* (Klein,1987, p.77) and becoming a strong character through play and exploration, and the good-enough parent communicating back some recognition and acceptance of the child's experience.

Rutter (1991) challenges therapists to think about important boundary issues around entering the forbidden territory of a loving relationship. Thorne, in the historical case of the *'naked embrace'* (Dryden, 1984, p.57) also challenges mainstream thinking around maintaining water-tight, non-permeable, rigid boundaries, with no therapeutic self-disclosure, and encourages flexible, creative relationships to nurture growth in difficult areas of shame and acute distress. In Love and Psychotherapy (Peck, 1978, p.173), there is a sense that the author is pushing towards riskier therapy involving engaging and struggling with the patient around deeply felt shame issues. *"We are now able to see the essential ingredient that makes psychotherapy effective and successful. It is not unconditional positive regard, nor is it magical words, techniques or postures; it is human involvement and struggle … It is the willingness of the therapist to go out on a limb, to*

truly involve oneself at an emotional level in the relationship, to actually struggle with the patient and with oneself. In short, the essential ingredient of successful deep and meaningful psychotherapy is love … it is remarkable, almost incredible, that the voluminous professional literature in the West on the subject of psychotherapy ignores the issue of love … the closest Western literature gets to the issue is in those articles that attempt to analyse differences between successful and unsuccessful psychotherapists and usually end up mentioning such characteristics as 'warmth' and 'empathy'. Basically we seem to be embarrassed by the subject of love."

2.7   Aims and objectives of my research

The landscape of shame is subtle, poorly understood, under-researched. Shame may often go unrecognised. Shame is an extremely difficult, elusive and painful topic which besets everyone but is little talked about or researched. *"Given the potential impact of shame on mental health, an understanding of how we rebound from this emotion is critical. Yet, to date, there is little research in this area"* (Van Vliet, 2008). Shame is not immediately amenable to linear, logical language, so the concept of image and metaphor and particularly a compass, was adopted as a convenient navigational tool to pinpoint markers of shame and explore the terrain. Metaphors are a focus, because they operate at a deep level, crossing over between different senses, (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, olfactory, gustatory), and capturing the unconscious pre-verbal hidden submerged meanings. The process of exploring metaphor brings words, meaning and structure to the phenomenon of shame, which in its essence is wordless and unformed. Emphasis is placed on metaphor because it offers *"something primordial which defies literal language and precise definition"* (Van Manen, 2011, p.61) in order to capture some of the deeper felt sensings of the experience of shame.

The research sprang from Nathanson's concept of a compass of shame, to navigate a way across difficult territory when we are lost, confused, alone, disoriented, as happens with shame. The compass is a guide on a journey, and that is what I hope my doctorate will be for people interested in doing the journey.

The primary aim therefore was to explore and map out a landscape of shame and ways out of shame looking at metaphors used when describing shame.

A secondary aim was to carry out a qualitative analysis, identifying, examining and analysing any new themes in negative or bridging metaphors of the experience of shame to compare and add to the PEP findings, in addition to the main purpose of the FP, to examine and analyse in depth the key positive metaphors of ways out of shame. This

would build up a sense of all sides of shame and fill in any gaps in understanding bringing to light embedded themes and sub-themes to illuminate the landscape of shame.

The objective was to explore and harness the professional and personal accumulated shame-knowledge of five people, experienced psychotherapists – four of whom had written books – and all of whom have an active special interest in shame and are interested in metaphor. I wanted to put together a broad and deep picture of shame, a pool of collective knowledge about shame and ways forward with shame, drawing on the experience and acquired wisdom of these five very skilled psychotherapists, in interaction with myself. This would be a hermeneutic and heuristic exploration, seeking deep understanding and interpretation rather than offering explanation.

A third (more unconscious) aim was to reflect heuristically on my own personal journey across the shame landscape during the process.

A fourth post-doctoral aim is a work in progress, to produce a practical, experiential workbook using an expanded version of the metaphors and maps from the entire project, to help therapists, supervisors, trainers and researchers navigate an easier, more accessible pathway through the complex shame landscape. The emphasis was on a friendly, creative, active, easily accessible experiential way for shame to be out in the open and acknowledged as an important and necessary part of counselling training.

2.8   Research strategy

At every phase, interviews, analysis and writing up, I was largely working as sole researcher. This gave me overall control of the data allowing me to stamp my own personality onto the *"meaning-making"* process, yet the interviews themselves were co-creative discussions and the data was the result of these in-depth discussions. Going solo modelled my own independent streak, but opened me up to a greater likelihood of feeling isolated, inadequate and ashamed. Thematic analysis was my chosen methodology, because it provided *"a flexible, straightforward, accessible"* means of analysing the meaning of the interview transcripts, *"with a minimum of theoretical baggage"* (McLeod, 2011). I wanted to keep my creative self in the project face to face, bringing in my individuality and imagination, and using my knowledge of integrative / humanistic therapy and capacity for forming a good therapeutic relationship to maximum advantage in getting strong data in the interviews.   So the project completed as a mixture of my co-researchers' and my own story about a journey through shame.

I had previously undertaken the PEP. (See Appendix 1 for full version). The method of the PEP was replicated for consistency throughout the FP to ensure that there would be

consistency between the two parts of the project. As it turned out, I had such a wealth of rich data from the five FP participants, I did not need to draw on the specific metaphorical data of the PEP for my thematic analysis, but I have drawn on the findings, as outlined in my Literature Review, citing my own earlier work as a basis for the progression of the FP. I have referred to the PEP data in the Literature Review in section 2.5 and in Chapter 4, Table 1 and Section 4.1 where it has been useful for expanding on the data or to give a fuller picture of shame or ways out of shame.

The specific focus in both the PEP and the FP was on shame and metaphor and the phenomenological methodology using conversational interviews was identical in both. The difference between the two parts of the project was more in terms of emphasis; the PEP being more about gaining a description of shame, (for the PEP picture of shame see Figure 2) whereas the FP focussed more on ways forward out of shame, seeking out a description of antidotes to shame, and moving the interviews towards finding metaphors, concepts and ideas to create a picture of ways out of shame. See figures 10, 11 and 15. I wanted to double-check that the findings in the PEP (i.e. that shame is about feelings of Isolation, Powerlessness, Self-consciousness and Woundedness) had provided a sufficiently comprehensive view of the experience of shame, and that no important themes or sub-themes had been missed out.

Throughout Volume 1 of the Final Project, quotations are for the most part coded with the participant's reference number. For detailed codings, including full interview reference numbers and line numbers, please see Volume 2, Appendices 10 and 11.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1   Guide to Methodology

I interviewed five experienced psychotherapists, to explore metaphors of their personal experience of shame alongside their theoretical knowledge and perspectives on shame and ways out of shame. I then carried out a qualitative thematic analysis of the interviews. The transcripts were analysed for metaphors which were then coded, then reduced to sub-themes and major themes. The process was a journey in itself, initially identifying 2155 metaphors and eventually identifying 22 major metaphors and four key themes. These metaphors were identified, colour coded, cut up, stuck onto a map and put into a table.

I totally immersed myself in the lived experience of the process as advocated by Van Manen (2011) and got so absorbed in it that I lost my way a number of times and was overwhelmed.   From a heuristic perspective I am fascinated by new avenues of thinking, so must admit at times I went on a kind of "wild goose chase", drawn by an idea, and then going into shame because I had got behind.   I was overwhelmed, exhausted and ashamed and took a year off. However after a break I was able to re-engage with the programme with a clearer head, and continued. I re-examined the PEP data, carried out new interviews for the FP, and gradually made sense of the whole experience. The major themes and key metaphors were assembled into a model of an island entitled 'The territory of shame'.

Here follows a summary diagram of my method, showing how I engaged with the subject of shame in two separate cycles for the PEP and FP, each lasting for about three years, separated by a break at (iii). The methodology and stages of the process were identical for both. See Figure 5 below:

Steps in the Research Journey
from
Preliminary Evaluation Project
to
Final Project

VIVA

Production of Handbooks and Training Courses
- Creative Ways of working with Shame

Final Project

Creative synthesis

PK
(Andrew Reeves)

(v)

Completion of Island

Writing

PK
(Judith Ackroyd)

Explication

(iv)

Developing Island
with Defences

Selecting and refining
complex metaphors

nes

on

g Island

reating Tables

PK
(Alan Priest)

Creation of
Mountain of Shame

PK
(Stephen
Adams-Langley)

Thematic analysis
of PEP data

PK
(Val Thomas)

Immersion

Transcribing

Interviews

Recruitment
of volunteers

PEP
Write Up

PEP Idea

Preparation

Reading, vignettes,
info sheets &
consent forms.

(ii)

Placing Advert

PK
(Jane Speedy)

FP Idea

Recruitment

Preparation

Information Sheet &
Consent Form sent

Engagement

Skype Interviews

Immersion

Transcription

Anonymisation

Reading 6-7 times

Listing Metaphors

Colour Coding

Outline of
Island of Shame

Cups   Forming Themes

Shame Events on Heuristic Journey

G:>shame_ Left journal n a bush outside
coll1!9e as too embarrassed to hand in
(ii) Feeling inferior to peers
(iii) Overwhelmed. Daunted by the enormtty of
my undertaking
(iv) Exhaustion and fear of failure
(v) Men down - tack of self confidence in my
work and creativity

**Figure 5: Steps in Research Journey-from PEP through FP to Doctorate and
products**

Here follows a theoretical examination of the hermeneutic method and heuristic perspective, which underpins my methodology. I will then lead the reader through the journey of my method, based on Moustakas' (1990) model.

3.2   The hermeneutic phenomenological perspective

Hermeneutics is an implicit underpinning for qualititative research because it about interpretation, translation and seeking to understand meaning and ambiguity. The term *hermeneutics* originated from a Greek word hermeneuo, meaning interpretation, and also has associations with the messenger Greek god, Hermes, conveying both truth and ambiguity. The goal of a hermeneutic approach is to seek understanding, rather than to offer explanation or to provide an authoritative reading or conceptual analysis of a text.

 "*If one acknowledges that: understanding is as important as explanation, that interpretation is situated, that language and historicity inform interpretation, that inquiry can be viewed as a conversation between scholars, and that ambiguity is inevitable—and one seeks to integrate such understandings into one's approach to research, I suggest that inevitably, one cannot help but recognize the necessity of qualitative research as a medium to attend to these insights, and furthermore recognize hermeneutics as an implicit philosophical underpinning for research in the qualitative tradition*" (Kinsella, 2006).

Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur are the foremost representatives of the movement of hermeneutic phenomenology. Phenomenology becomes hermeneutical when its method is taken to be interpretive (rather than purely descriptive as in transcendental phenomenology). I wanted to interpret my data as well as describe it, and this grew as the project evolved.

Van Manen (2011) describes "theme analysis'" in hermeneutic phenomenological reflective methodology as the process of "recovering the theme or themes that are embodied and dramatized in the evolving meanings and imagery of the work".   Shame is a dark isolated place we go to, to hide, or are driven to, and a hard place to get out of, so my reflective methodology was chosen to gain access to the shame experience, which is difficult to uncover. Certainly the process of doing this project has been fraught with painful process issues, as would be expected in tackling such an elusive and difficult subject. Heuristic investigation for me has been a way of getting "*in touch with new regions of self*", and discovering "*revealing connections with others*", (Moustakas, 1988, p.5). "*Phenomenology means bringing to light what is there yet is perhaps not immediately obvious.*"

The hermeneutic style I adopted for the methodology was aimed at gaining an insight into the essence of shame, through a process of "*reflectivity, appropriating, clarifying and making explicit the structure of meaning of the lived experience*" (Van Manen, 2011p.77) through an in-depth analysis and write up of participants' metaphors. For the human sciences and specifically for hermeneutic phenomenological work, writing is closely fused into the research activity and reflection itself: "*Writing fixes thoughts on paper.*" (ibid. p.125). The process of my research has been to make shame "reflectively understandable and intelligible" (ibid. p.125). My research methodology encompassed writing verbatim transcriptions of the interviews, taking the metaphors, immersing myself in those, drawing shame landscapes, organising into themes, analysing, creating sub-themes, drawing links and then writing from my perspective about those emerging patterns. Research is the work of writing and for the philosophers, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, writing is its very essence. The imperative "*Write*", as Barthes puts it, "*is intended to recall 'research' to its epistemological condition: whatever it seeks, it must not forget its nature as language – and it is this which ultimately makes an encounter with writing inevitable*" (Barthes, 1986, p.318 in Van Manen, 2011 p.125). I echo Van Manen's words in his excellent chapter on Hermeneutic Phenomenological Writing, (ibid. p.126) *"What is writing? How is writing research (thinking, reflecting)? Certainly, writing is a productive activity. The writer produces text, and he or she produces more than text. The writer produces himself or herself. As Sartre might say: the writer is the product of his own product. Writing is a kind of self-making or forming. To write is to measure the depth of things, as well as to come to a sense of one's own depth".*

The writing of the Final Project, and in particular the writing in the Discussion and Conclusion, is the distillation and crystallisation of this project. The methodology is a combination of hermeneutic and heuristic. I consider it to be a co-creation of interviews and inner work combined into one key metaphor of the journey into the jungle territory of shame – ways in and out of shame. I took a combined hermeneutic and heuristic perspective, producing a hermeneutically extended version of a thematic analysis, with some heuristic enquiry elements introduced at key points ...   See Figure 6 below:
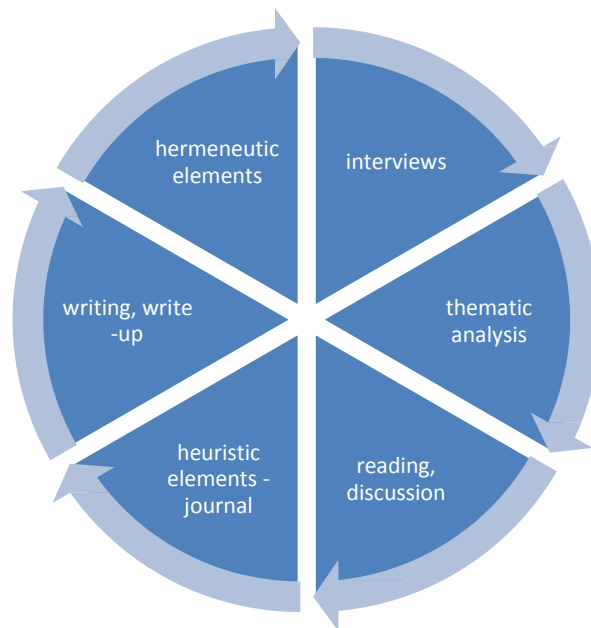
Figure 6: Key hermeneutic and heuristic methodological elements

In the discussion of complex metaphors in chapter 5, I come to a sense of the depth of the subject of shame and a sense of my own journey into those depths within it. I have realised that my own values seeped into the writing about the participants' metaphors, because I was choosing to write about what stood out for me as important. This created a bricolage bringing disparate parts of knowledge and practice together. It was like going on a journey through shame and finding human dignity through discovering my authentic voice. This is embodied in my core values of humanistic and integrative psychotherapy; humanistic because it does not judge and supports the person, no matter how hideous they are or feel they are; integrative because it brings a wide variety of approaches to reach out across a whole wide range of people with diverse needs. "*We are always inscribing values in our writing. It is unavoidable. As we speak about the people we study, we also speak for them. As we inscribe their lives, we bestow meaning and promulgate values.*" (Richardson 1990). In my investigation of shame, I was speaking for the underdog. I was giving a voice to the ones who need help finding a voice for their shame. In the Professional Knowledge seminar with Judith Ackroyd, participants were co-researchers, being given an opportunity to perform ourselves, our journeys and our names. I demonstrated my own doctoral journey as travelling round a spiral, starting small, being upstanding in the end, saying my name and finally owning my research. This was a powerful ownership which I sum up in Figure 5 (p. 35).

The concept of reflexive writing as described by Van Manen (2011, p.132) chimes with my doctoral experience: *"Language is a central concern in phenomenological research*

because responsive-reflective writing is the very activity of doing phenomenology. Writing and re-writing is the thing. Phenomenologists have commented on the reflexive character of writing. Writing is a reflexive activity that involves the totality of our being". Van Manen refers to this as recollective thinking, involving a deep process of touching some inner truth. "*This sort of writing needs to be oriented, strong, rich and deep*" (ibid, p.151). The main body of my discussion in the form of reflexive writing is in Chapters 5 and 6.

Hermeneutic means interpreting, reaching down deep into the meaning of the experience of thinking and feeling – *"I would say that a thought is felt to be deep, or a notion to be profound, if it debouches into a region beyond itself, whose whole vastness is more than the eye can grasp". (ibid, p.153). "Any text that may teach us something about the depthful character of our pedagogic nature is bound to aim for a certain hermeneutic: reaching for something beyond, restoring a forgotten or broken wholeness by recollecting something lost, past or eroded, and by reconciling it in our experience of the present with a vision of what should be. This kind of text cannot be summarized. To present research by way of reflective text is not to present findings, but to do a reading (as a poet would) of a text that shows what it teaches. One must meet with it, go through it, encounter it, suffer it, consume it and, as well, be consumed by it."(ibid, p.154)* These quotes define my doctoral experience and that of my participants on the subject of shame. In the final two chapters I have described that journey through the participants' transcribed metaphors, summarised in the map and description of the journey. It is my journey too.

3.3 The heuristic perspective

The term *heuristics* originated from a Greek word *heuristkein* meaning to find out or discover. This sort of research is not about testing hypotheses, but more about exploring, discovering and summing up the central metaphors of this research piece. The term 'exploring' has been in the title from an early stage in the research, and describes my own exploration into the territory of shame along with some fellow-travellers, also psychotherapists, who were keen to have an adventure, take a risk into an unknown research relationship with me, and perhaps go deeper into some unknown shame-territory for them.

From a heuristic point of view, I was unconsciously drawn to the subject out of a strong passionate desire to address my own shame; at the beginning of the doctorate I was well defended and experienced only a mild awareness of my unease and shame. I now recognise this was rooted in my own "tacit knowledge" about a subliminal feeling of self-consciousness, wanting to hide away from my fear of my sense of inadequacy being exposed, and not wanting to be exposed again to a horrible feeling of raw woundedness

and not fitting in to the mainstream. I was a well-defended rebel! My Academic Adviser reflected my rebel to me early in the doctoral programme, not shaming me in doing so, an enlightening liberating moment for me.

The project evolved over a seven year period starting with the PEP with four participants when I had no idea what that initial project would lead me into. This then led into the second project which was the FP, a tandem exploration with four new participants sharing the tandem with me (plus one from the PEP who was highly creative and very keen to continue in the project). The external data is drawn from my FP interviews – I was at the front of the tandem on what was actually becoming my own heuristic shame journey, though I did not consciously know it for the first three or four years, certainly not when I began in 2010. The interviews were the easy and pleasant part of the process, the humanistic conversational informal style required to talk about shame, came so naturally to me and riding that tandem accompanying the various participants was a joy.

For the analysis and write up, I was on the back seat of the tandem, sole-researcher, without a co-rider, wobbling along post-interviews, not knowing how to manage such an enormous number of fascinating and amazing metaphors. The huge amount of data was precariously poised on the saddle at the front of the tandem, and the pile of papers, books and articles was getting higher and more and more unmanageable. I felt alone. I was trying to hold up the whole bike at the same time as structure the journey in a direction which would lead to some distant goal of getting a doctorate. I was in the shame process, and was on my own journey through, into and out of, shame, in this endeavour to understand and map such a massive subject.

Looking back, I realise that the PEP phenomenological study of shame had sensitised me, the researcher, to "the contours of the phenomenon" (McLeod, J. 2011) of shame. I gradually became surrounded by the topic of shame, through reading, consultation with others and personal research – this process started as early as 2010.

3.4   The tacit process of qualitative research

Qualitative research cannot be fitted into a positivistic neat and tidy box. I think this research grew into a hybrid version of qualitative research, a process of creative merging of a number of perspectives, like an impressionist painting.

My initial intention was to explore the exterior data from my interviews, from the point of view of a phenomenological thematic analysis, hermeneutic in style. This evolved into entering my own interior world of shame, in the style of Moustakas, which became a heuristic enquiry at a personal level. The exterior and interior worlds slid into each other,

alongside each other, in a dual project of the participants outside, and me inside, but all in the same "big melting pot" (a metaphor introduced by participant 07) , mostly about shame, theirs, mine, everyone's. This is what this project became, and the main themes and most salient points have been summarised in the discussion of the most striking metaphors in Chapter 5.

From PEP to FP my shame was calling me to integrate itself through this doctorate, to give my shame a voice. The PEP only told half the story, the way in to shame; for the other half, I needed to engage in relationship with the participants, for them to be co-researchers with me in the interviews for ways out of shame. The metaphors and spin-off meanings were put into tables, which evolved more creatively into the islands of shame and unshame. This evolved into one complete block of land, joined up in the middle, arriving eventually at acceptance of "what is" and learning to live with the self and the agonising "it" of shame. The project is the product of my Entering, Engaging with, understanding, Expressing and Embracing shame, the Four E's of shame work.

The whole landscape of the territory of shame is the doctorate, with all eight participants from the total project, the learning that has come out of this creative endeavour, drawing on the help of friends, family, artists, colleagues, the acceptance phase of coming to terms with myself and my strengths and limitations, and the final products, the textbook and handbook of shame which will follow.

The research was both phenomenological capturing the structures of the shame experience from the left brain position of knowledge which participants already recognise and work with, and heuristic in terms of being a right-brain voyage of co-created discovery into an unknown territory. The project turned out to be not what I, the researcher, envisaged at the beginning; it is a hybrid of my own journey, inwards at a heuristic level and outwards into the experience and knowledge banks of all of the participants.

The research was conducted from a reflexive, reflective methodological position, which focuses on how consciousness interprets personal experience, in other words, what goes on in our minds. The intention was not to do precise positivist objective science – rather the intention of the FP was to cast a net over psychotherapists' metaphors and metaphorical concepts in talking about the experience of shame and ways out of shame. Methodology was based on a collaborative style of engagement using a client-centred, reflective, empathic model, which was free-floating as in psychoanalytic therapy with "floating attention" (Sandler, 1976), *"evenly hovering"* (Greenson, 1967), *"relational, dialogical and discovery–oriented"* (Finlay & Evans, 2009, p.27); to keep the

co-researcher *"close to the lived experience in the moment of talking",* (Van Manen, 2011, p. 67). Kvale (1996, p.239) refers to knowledge as "*the social construction of reality*" and *"knowledge-as-conversation"* which applies to my research as a conversational, naturalistic enquiry into the experience of shame, arrived at through discussion about shame, with the co-construction of metaphors implicit in this process. I selected metaphors, which are powerful, illustrative forms of symbolic thinking – the focus was on gaining metaphorical concepts that arose in the intimate, co-created symbolic space. Through focusing on metaphors, I invited the participants into an aesthetic shared experience to arrive at what Polanyi (1983) refers to as *"tacit knowing"* – in this case a co-created tacit knowing of a number of professionals wanting to go on a shared investigative shame journey together, without feeling coerced into having to overtly share what felt too painfully shameful to be expressed. The generalisations made from the study are derived from *"tacit knowledge of how things are",* leading to *"expectations rather than formal predictions"* (Kvale, 1996).

"Yet, the completion of the phases cannot be the focus. The idea of completion according to a set of guidelines is a verbal thought. If a verbal thought is the focus, the process will be mechanistic; only feeling can direct the process through the uncharted territory to global experience of the tacit dimension. Each of the phases in heuristics is not a labelled step on some ladder that lists all the necessary components of that step." (Polanyi, 1983) This sums up the tension I have experienced in competing methodological emphases – the journey through the territory of shame cannot be mechanistic according to a rigid set of guidelines to complete a set of phases.

The aim of my research was to dig down deeply into uncharted shame territory, and reach into some dark, poetical recesses of unconsciously-known shame experiences, going on an honest journey into shame with my participants, and sharing the difficult experience. My initial intention was to produce an accurate map of shame, based on participant data, but actually through becoming immersed in the subject, it also became my data. I inadvertently went through my own process of embracing my own shame and asking for help (which is one of the findings of antidotes to shame) particularly in the final months of writing up.

The following quotation highlights the difficulties I experienced with the struggle of the need for clarity in researching the complex topic of shame. My research question, 'What are the ways in and out of shame?', which was originally a hermeneutically styled interview question, turned into my living and breathing the questions and answers. My

own shame process became an authentic part of the research process. In the interviews also, self-disclosure came up as a necessary sub-theme for therapeutic healing of shame. I could not keep myself out of the process. I came across an article on the internet of a review of heuristic research, which encapsulates the problems I have encountered during this journey: *"If the topic is not adequately clarified it will be only partially formed; if only partially formed, research will not be able to unfold in heuristic self-inquiry. If the topic is personally painful, the researcher may unconsciously resist the actual personal problem and consider something less threatening as the stated-problem and thus avoid re-experiencing pain. The research will suffer from a split focus as the unconscious self continues to push the whole personal question into the research that is focused on an incomplete question or another stated question."* (Sela-Smith, 2015).

This research did not start out as a heuristic self-inquiry, as the focus was on ways therapists worked with shame in their clients, supervisees, trainees, themselves. Towards the end it became important for me to hone the personal and walk with pride and courage, and look at my own shame. I have had to learn about my own shame. I can now say, *"I now know I can embrace my shame – I know it and recognise it. I have survived the experience and feel I have come out the other end a better person – more authentic.".*

I conducted this qualitative phenomenological research from a post-positivist, constructivist, aesthetic perspective. The entire research programme was conducted through co-constructed dialogue, with a significant broad ranging team of highly motivated, involved, empathic, critical friends and colleagues to provide me with encouragement when I got lost in the boggy black hole of shame, which offered me some sense of community in a very isolating process. They also provided an important editing role of checking my findings for errors and repetition. Some of this team helped me reduce bias through a process of triangulation, rating my metaphors and flagging up inconsistencies, and omissions in my findings.

My intention was neither to produce a theory of metaphor, nor a theory of shame, but rather, to illuminate individualised, practical and imaginative ways for therapists, trainers, supervisors, writers, to enhance their work around shame. This was from a sum total of the experiences of the participants as recorded in the interviews; this conjoined with my own personal journey through the territory.   I used qualitative methods, and also included some basic counting of instances of particular recurring themes, which could be called quantitative. I had tried not to ask any leading questions in the interviews, but if I had influenced the direction the participants' metaphors moved in, I did not count those metaphors in my data.

The descriptions of constructivist methodology by Guba & Lincoln (1985) and Creswell (2007) feel closest to what I was aiming for in this research because it was a creative process where I was trying to get to a relative truth for each individual, and the researchers and I were at times constructing new understandings together, through the shared dialogue.

Wertz (2005) describes phenomenology as "*a low hovering, indwelling, meditative philosophy that glories in the concreteness of personal world relations and accords lived experience, with all its indeterminacy and ambiguity, primacy over the known*". This approach, he continues, is a way of "*securing insights into the human meanings of situations and the processes that engender them, the struggles and triumphs.*" This I feel, applies very much to my alternating sense of struggle and triumph, shame and pride, in doing this doctorate. It is reflected in the methodological struggle between internal heuristic, and external empirical hermeneutic research, looking at "*structures of meaning immanent in human experience*" (ibid, p.170). In noticing more and more metaphor in my day to day work and personal life, in picking out the metaphors from the interviews and focussing on them, and living them for a while, I experienced the naturally occurring struggles and triumphs of human beings in extremis, particularly in shame, my own and others', and searching for deeper understanding about ways out of shame. In short, I have been "*mining meaning*" (Van Manen, 2011).

3.5   A synopsis of my methodology

According to Giorgi and Giorgi (2005), four steps are involved in phenomenological methodology:

- Reading the entire description in order to grasp a sense of the whole
- Re-reading and demarcating spontaneous shifts in meaning or meaning units
- Reflecting on every meaning unit in order to discern what it reveals about the phenomenon
- Synthesising these reflections and insights into a consistent statement

This loosely applies to my research in the process of:

Transcribing

I became familiar with the participants' stories and presentations, through watching and transcribing the recorded Skype interviews.

Reading and re-reading

I read and re-read transcriptions, made notes, extracted and listed metaphors as units of meaning and sections of interviews with multi-layered significance. I reduced lists, colour coded, and rated metaphors.

Reflecting

I stayed with the reflections and insights and deepened my experience and understanding of shame and ways out of shame.

I attempted to make sense of the units of meaning through spontaneous free association around the strongest metaphors.

I immersed myself in the thick description of the rich data, which in the metaphors was often poetical, highly complex and not readily understandable.

I was becoming gradually more able to put ideas together into clusters of deep meanings which were not obvious or easy.   Language was helping to make sense and link the metaphorical pictures. Some patterns and themes became more clear through discussion with colleagues, advisers, supervisors, critical interested friends, and also through attending a range of creative Professional Knowledge seminars on Free fall writing (Jane Speedy),Imagery (Carol Holliday and Val Thomas), Co-operative enquiry (Stephen Adams-Langley), Passion and pragmatism (Alan Priest), Drama in research (Judith Ackroyd), reading and comparing with other writers and researchers on shame.

Discussion and drawings helped unpack the metaphors.

Synthesising through writing

Through continuing to write in the Final Project in a more systematic and concentrated way, honing the subject, looking for specific answers in the metaphors about the nature of shame and the desired and feasible outcomes of working on shame, I began to get a deeper and deepening sense of a whole picture of shame, including defences, not just the negative aspects of it which had been the focus in the PEP.

At this final write up stage, I brought the key aspects of the journey of discovery together into a creative synthesis and made a complete map of the co-researchers' amalgamated metaphors to produce a comprehensive picture of the territory of shame, including the defences, the ins and outs, ups and downs of the journey through the shame-territory. Here follows a flow chart of the stages in my methodology to clarify what I actually did:

```
┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Prepared participants-│     │                     │      │                     │
│ consent forms,        │     │ Interviewed 5       │      │ Transcribed         │
│ information sheets,    │     │ psychotherapists    │      │ interviews          │
│ vignettes             │     │                     │      │                     │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Organised the data into│    │ Underlined, colour  │      │                     │
│ lists - 1179 positive, 771│  │ coded, made notes,  │      │ Read and re-read    │
│ negative,  205 bridging│     │ marked with +, - or  +-│  │ transcripts 6-7 times│
│ metaphors             │     │                     │      │                     │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│                     │      │ Chopped metaphors up │     │                     │
│ Colour coded lists   │     │ - 710 positive, 350 │      │ Arranged into piles  │
│                     │      │ negative, 188 bridging│    │                     │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│                     │      │ Put metaphors in 15 │      │ Made an island, spread│
│ Incubated 18 months  │     │ named cups          │      │ metaphors out, used  │
│                     │      │                     │      │ blutac and paper clips│
│                     │      │                     │      │ to organise          │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Put metaphors in tables│    │ Rated metaphors     │      │                     │
│ - 258 combined positive│    │ independently - 122 │      │ Allocated into 14   │
│ /bridging,  28 negative│    │ strong/very strong  │      │ sub-themes          │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│                     │      │ Made into table of 4 │     │                     │
│ Realised added value │     │ themes, 21 metaphors│      │ 4 themes emerged    │
│ of defences          │     │ in each theme       │      │                     │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│                     │      │                     │      │                     │
│ Included defences    │     │ Made a complete     │      │ Finished Product    │
│                     │      │ island              │      │                     │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
```

Figure 7: Stages of the Final Project

3.6   Recruitment and participants

	Gender	Experience as a trainer, supervisor, director, writer	Experience as a writer of psychotherapy books	Length of interview
05	M	Yes	Yes	56 min (1 interview)
06	M	Yes	Yes	1 hr 56 min (2 interviews)
07	F	Yes	No	2 hr 10 min (2 interviews)
08	F	Yes	Yes	1 hr 13 min (1 interview)
09	F	Yes	Yes	1hr 23min (1 interview)

A purposive sample was recruited, by word of mouth, drawing five participants, two male, three female, from a pool of experienced psychotherapists. Four participants were known to the researcher as colleagues in a professional capacity for between five and ten years, and four had written books on psychotherapy. One had been interviewed for the PEP and wanted to continue to be involved in the final part of the project on ways out of shame.

They were selected for interviews on the basis that they were a) very interested in the project and topic of shame; b) mature therapists of high professional standing, actively working with shame issues as supervisors, trainers, writers; c) tending to use colourful language which would be metaphorically rich.

The participants were from an integrative/humanistic background, all white middle class British, who engaged with me in a particular interest in exploring shame. The age range of participants was 48 to 69; the average age was 58.

They formed a homogeneous group of experts in the field of shame in psychotherapy. They were willing to share their experience and expertise, drawing from their own lived wisdom and experience as counsellors, psychotherapists, supervisors, trainers and managers of counselling and psychotherapy services.

The participant who took part in the final additional interview was a colleague known by the researcher to be particularly able to fulfil all the above criteria, so would fit in well and be able to cover the topic skilfully and provide a further data-rich interview in a professional manner.

3.7   Pre-interview preparation

The preparation procedure was as follows:

Participants were sent an information sheet and consent form to sign through email. They were invited to ask any questions for clarification in an informal way. Nobody expressed any need for further information. They were all familiar with research, and comfortable, indeed keen, to be part of the project which they had already heard about through my work in the PEP.

Vignettes (see Appendix 4 for the complete version) were emailed to the participants about half an hour before the interview was due to take place, to prompt into the mood of shame before the interview began. There were seven vignettes in various degrees of intensity, ranging from mild embarrassment to extreme narcissistic wounding, so they could pitch their involvement in the interview at a level that felt right for them. The aim was to elicit responses which would not be thought through in too much detail that would have got them more into thinking mode than feeling mode. I wanted to elicit a range of emotional and intuitive responses to standard shaming situations ranging from mild embarrassment to acute shaming to give them enough time to react instantaneously, freely and emotionally to the material therein in a spontaneous way without getting dragged down deeply into the shame feelings that might be engendered. The vignettes provided participants with a choice of prompts, so they could talk about a level of shame that felt manageable for them, their own or other people's, and then ways forward out of shame.

The vignettes were created about myself or anybody, either in a dream-state or real-state, and were intended to be non-shaming creative prompts, in the sense that there is no shame involved in what we dream. Dream and reality are indistinguishable around shame subjects, both carrying great force. It took the heat out of my feeling judged if I thought people reading this might be thinking I had dreamt something rather than lived it – in a way it anonymised the material, as we are not really responsible or identifiable to others in our dreams! None of the data (either produced by myself or the participants) would be recognisable as necessarily real if participants chose to anonymise it in this way. In the vignette pre-amble, I stated, "*There's a crossover in this study between dream and reality.*" Some of the vignettes were my dreams, some were reality. For example, there was one about a dream of an agonising sense of exposure, incompetence and failure over a poor stage performance. *"Having to perform on a stage a flute solo, feeling totally unprepared, naked, making a real hash of the performance – leaving the concert hall,*

hiding my flute in the boot of my car in a black plastic bag, then getting in the boot of the car myself in a black bin bag".

"That includes me as well, to cover my own shame." I wanted to make it clear from the outset that everyone's material would always be heavily disguised and anonymised throughout the study, being on such a delicate subject. *"Shame is common but we all need to cover our own shame,"* I stated in the information sheet. I felt compelled to safeguard this and model sensitivity and empathy around it.

3.8   The journey of the method for Final Project

To clarify the journey of the research, I have divided what I did into Moustakas' (1990) six phases, from initial engagement, to immersion, to incubation, to illumination, to explication, to creative synthesis (see Figure 5 below). I have been through this process twice during this doctoral programme, once with the PEP and a second time with the FP, immersed at a deeper level, from my own experience of shame and the interview data. My methodology has been structured on the lines of Moustakas (1990) with some additions and alterations; the structure of Moustakas' methodology brings my project into a systematic yet creative structure which is necessary for the sake of clarification because the material of shame is so diverse and elusive.
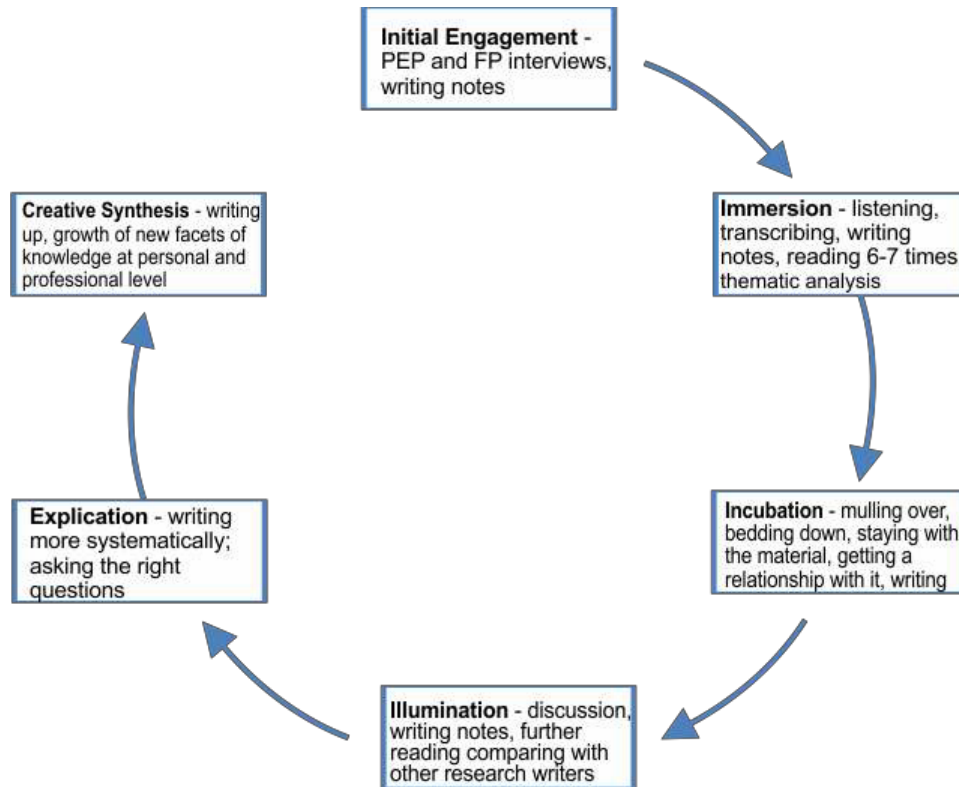
Figure 8 Moustakas' and my own six phases of qualitative research

3.9   Phases in the research process – the Moustakas model

Phase 1: Engagement, data gathering, interviews

Participants were called on Skype half an hour after the vignettes had been sent. Notes and jottings were made continuously throughout the process by the researcher, both during interviews and during the analysis process.

The method of data gathering for the FP was the use of semi-structured, in depth conversational interviews by Skype. The interview style was informal, which meant that creative dialogue was generated. The participants were given a free hand to go into as much depth as they wanted, without feeling coerced, for approximately an hour, but longer if they wanted. The interview style supported any difficult material which might arise unexpectedly, which could be processed as part of the interview itself, in many ways similar to a humanistic psychotherapy session.

I deliberately adopted a conversational style for the interviews because that would capture the real world of people. I did not want this research to be high and mighty, distant and highly intellectual or pompous. I wanted it to be accessible and to be myself in the interviews as I truly am as a therapist and as a real person, with a deep passion for and great interest in shame and finding ways of recovery from shame.

Interviews were conducted in an open, non-judgemental, non-directive way. My intention was to ease the difficult subject of shame through a natural conversational, informal, friendly style, the interviewer relaxing the participant and myself through humour, repartee, being real and relaxed. My aim was to elicit metaphors and metaphorical language threaded through a conversation about the process of shaming and ways forward out of shame. The emphasis of the Final Project was more towards finding positive ways forward out of shame than descriptions of the shame experience, and this intention was built into a minimal interview schedule and methodology, keeping the style light and informal and lending itself more to a creative unstructured conversational time to keep the energy flowing smoothly, and avoiding becoming a therapy session with participants moving back too far into heavy-duty shame.

Since the conversation was intended to be a genuine, spontaneous, real, natural, respectful and equal meeting of two intelligent minds on the subject of shame, with no layers of expertise or attitude of superiority assumed on the part of the researcher (which might shame the participant and result in a shut down of communication), paraphrase and reflection was used to draw participants out rather than a strict format or line of

questioning. It was considered vital to offer the participant a shame-free, loose, easy space in which to talk about shame rather than feel interrogated.

Any questions put to participants were open, with the use of the word how rather than the closed questions introduced with the words why or when? *for example , "So how would you characterise yourself there?" (09/66)*. There were no consistent questions as the conversations were intended to go into individual and personal varied directions on the subject of shame, into areas of shaming and unshaming which interested the participants and which they felt naturally able to talk about without self-consciousness. The interview schedule was occasionally to ask a few questions for descriptions of shame if it was a natural part of the conversation, e.g. "*What colour is shame?; What does shame feel like?; Does it have a taste or smell? What does it feel like in there?*" The questioning was limited, led by the direction the participant wanted to go in, providing they kept to the subject of shame or ways out of shame.

The only consistent thrust in the conversations, which was not actually phrased as fixed, structured questioning across all interviews was about how they worked with shame and helped clients and supervisees find ways out of shame. Here follows a fairly typical example of this in the interview with participant 09:

09: *Sometimes you've got to cut through that that kind of dense oppressiveness, otherwise it's too tortuous.*
M: *Yes, so what do you think happens … cutting through the dense oppressiveness ... do you want to tell me a bit about what are the mechanisms…. how do you cut through that – what do you do?"* (09/224)

Phase 2: Immersion

Transcription and anonymisation

The seven hours of interviews were transcribed in full by the researcher, which tremendously increased familiarity with the data. Names and places were anonymised with X's. Transcripts were sent to participants for them to check accuracy and ensure they felt safe on confidentiality issues.

Reading and re-reading

The process of data analysis began, in an intuitive, rudimentary way using colour pens to mark strong metaphors carrying some energy.

Transcripts were read in sequence 6 – 7 times each. In each re-reading, I was becoming more tuned in to the material and gleaning the "felt sensings" of each participant.

Thematic content analysis

At the second reading, I underlined metaphors, metaphorical ideas and images, marking them with a - or a +, in the margin, to indicate whether they fell into a negative (harmful, painful, unpleasant category or positive (benign) category. Those falling into both camps (called 'bridging metaphors' and later, defences) were marked with a – and +, Notes were made in the transcript margins and in a notebook.

At the third reading I began a slightly more systematic process of highlighting metaphors in the transcripts into a rough coding system. These metaphors were colour coded on the transcripts, roughly with black, red and blue for negatives and bright green, yellow, purple for positives.

By negative I meant having a connotation of pain, torment, misery, harm, alienation, stuckness – e.g. analogies of shame as being *"imprisoned inside the asylum,"* or *"sinking down in a big cup of tea, becoming less and less, more dilute I am dissolving before someone else's eyes"* (05). By positive I meant having a connotation of relief, release, pleasantness, connectedness, openness, movement – e.g., *"being in that chair with the arms round you."* (09). By bridging I meant those metaphors not specifically either negative or positive in connotation, where a participant was articulating some new insight about different ambivalent sides of shame through a metaphor, e.g. *"When they are able to talk about, explore and dig around in the jungle of their history and see life as it really was, not just how the defences created it"(06); "the push-pull of attachment"* (08); or 05 where he states he would *"retreat to his womb-like bedroom"*, negative because it is running away from shame, positive because he got self-protection there.

Listing and Coding

I extracted the metaphors I had colour coded into lists.   I made lists of all these metaphors, which at this early stage totalled 2155 metaphors – 771 negatives, 1179 positives, 205 bridging metaphors.

Colour codings were becoming refined and more sophisticated with each reading as notes were being made in margins and notebooks of emerging thematic patterns, i.e. emotional, physical, cognitive, spiritual, humour, process. Negative metaphors were colour coded as follows:

- red for difficult emotions around the experience of shame
- blue for physical responses – particularly past and present participle verbs
- brown for experience of struggle, the sense of being defective and wrong
- black for the potential for shame in the interview process itself
- grey for deeply shaming, intense experiences at core level

Positive metaphors were colour coded as follows:

- dark green for life, survival, energetic movement, nature, growth
- light green for bridge-building use of self by me
- purple for healing, moving forwards, resources, an actual change
- yellow for movement forwards, humour, energy, ways of lightening shame, colourful language, swearing.

By this stage I was seeing that certain strong metaphors had a number of themes and were getting a number of colour codings.

New abridged lists were made of negative and positive metaphors, and bridging metaphors, picking out only the most striking metaphors and eliminating all superfluous metaphors, e.g. the ones I had led the participant into, repetitive, or weak ones. The revised lists at this point were reduced down to a new file, resulting in being reduced to 350 negatives, 710 positives and 219 bridging metaphors. For these initial thematic groupings, see section 4.3 in Findings, and appendix 5 for the full version.

As I became more immersed in the re-readings, new colour codings were added to the positive range:

- turquoise for touch and therapeutic techniques for healing shame
- orange for technological events in the Skype recordings, e.g. squeaks, pulsing sounds, cut offs, breaks in transmission, "the Gremlins of shame" (06).

Cutting up and landscaping onto paper

The lists of positive and bridging metaphors were printed out and cut into strips. The strongest ones were colour coded with dots, some of greater thematic complexity with three or four dots, and placed in rough piles according to themes. I sketched a landscape

on the right hand side of a large sheet of white paper, with an evocation of "an island of unshame", roughly outlined with areas filled in for ways out of shame; this had been gradually developing in my mind out of the original idea of the Mountain of Shame in my PEP. I reserved a space for the FP negative metaphors at the edge of the paper on the left hand side to be incorporated at a later date when I had decided how to best blend them with the PEP findings. I put the cut up positive metaphors onto the island of unshame and distributed them around the island. I kept moving them around from place to place, trying to plot them in the right place in terms of clusters of developing themes of ways out of shame. In this process of shifting the strips, I was identifying themes which linked positive metaphors and eventually found they were roughly and broadly falling into a pattern of five or six main themes of ways out of shame on the island. At this stage the main themes were: Support / love, Psycho-education, Coming Out, Acceptance and an extra theme or sub-theme from the bridging metaphors to do with defences, which was not clear, neither positive nor negative. This was difficult to place anywhere. I had put all the metaphors into rough thematic areas on the landscape of un-shame, but this process was too unwieldy and was overwhelming me with so many strips of metaphors, particularly in the theme of Psycho-education. I began to use Blutack and coloured paperclips to organise them better but in doing this, the process lost its fluidity.

Phase 3: Incubation – period of not being sure – searching and pausing

The material became bedded down into my psyche through staying with the project-intention, which was to explore shame at a deep level, through metaphor, in language and pictures. It was like waiting to hatch an egg, or give birth – it needed time to grow. I kept it warm by talking about and dreaming about it! It felt like I was in a relationship with the subject, living, breathing and dreaming shame, for example I recall one striking and disturbing dream about a train journey, and being unable to get to the destination, leaving the bag containing my doctoral documents amongst strangers in another part of the train.

The complex themes and links emerged in an evolutionary way as I became totally immersed in the thematic analysis of the metaphorical material and mulled over the subject for a protracted period. But I was unclear what to do with so many metaphors and kept playing around with it trying out different ways of managing the data through a process of elimination and reduction down to key salient points.

I abandoned the island for the time being in favour of placing the clusters of strips into cups with thematic labels on, for incubation till a later date. (These were counted and put into a table – see Appendix 6). At this time I had an excess of valuable, rich metaphorical data particularly in the theme of Psycho-education and was still working on reducing the

metaphors down to a manageable number to fit into a table. I therefore separated out substantial chunks of the interviews, by opening up a new folder entitled 'Psycho-education interventions' for possible inclusion in a later publication, a handbook of shame. They could not all be fitted into a table but would be a valuable resource for teaching shame, collaborating with the participants.

The coloured themes incubated in those cups for a while and I put the island away while I concentrated on putting the data into tables and coding with words. The number of metaphors was still too numerous, so I went back over the original transcripts to reduce the list further and pick out the strongest coloured metaphors for each participant, which reduced the lists down to a new file, a combined total of 402 positive and bridging metaphors. The negative ones were put to one side to be analysed later, because they appeared to be falling into roughly the same sub-themes and themes as in the PEP and my intended emphasis for the Final Project was on ways out of shame to complete a full picture.

Forming tables and forming coding units with Roman numerals and letters:

4 separate tables were constructed for the each of the themes Relationship, Knowledge, Creativity and Acceptance, reducing positive metaphors down to 215 metaphors and bridging metaphors at this time subsumed into Knowledge (Appendix 10). The negative metaphors were still on hold for now.

Initially, a complex set of codings (see Appendix 9) was set up for these tables with 4 main themes for each of the main themes of ways out of shame: Relationship , Knowledge, Creativity, Acceptance, R,K,C,A, sub divided into 7 sub themes each, assigned with coding units in Roman numerals i – vii. (e.g. Ki, Kii, Kiii.) This was later abbreviated and further simplified down to the same 4 main themes, coded a – d for 3 or 4 sub-themes per main theme (see table 1 below p.69). I put the 215 positive metaphors
into tables for each theme, concentrating on ways out of shame. These were also coded with the participant's number and transcript line numbers (e.g. 05/241). See Appendix 10 for full table.

Rating: I asked three colleagues to rate 153 positive and bridging + metaphors (Appendix 7) and a short table of 24 (appendix 8) of the most striking negative metaphors in terms of strength, where 3 was very strong, 2 strong, 1 OK and 0 not immediately obvious. They rated 64 of the metaphors unanimously as very strong, 58 as strong (with scores of 2 or 2.5) and 13 as in between OK and strong (with scores of 1.5). This compared with 95

which I rated as very strong or strong. See Appendices 7 and 8. The ones scoring high became included in the final tables for the analysis, the rest were stored in separate files.

The metaphors rated 3 by all assessors were clearly definitely to be included in the thematic analysis. Any metaphors with consistently lower ratings, of less than 1.5 by myself and the independent raters were excluded as of no obvious impact. Useful discussion and adjustments went on as part of the rating process, a form of triangulation, deepening my understanding of what constitutes a powerful metaphor. This applied to deciding to include similes if used for metaphorical and linguistic strength to illustrate shame. It also applied to deciding to include swear words, if used for metaphorical impact, relevance to shame or intention i.e. to bring together two disparate ideas. So I included swear words relating to the subject of shame involving expression of strong affect or humour. I did not want to be too mathematical or pedantic about this, but differentiated at a deeper immersed gut level as a result of these discussions.

Very strong metaphors, where two unalike things are brought together with maximum impact, rated 3, are complex, and for the purposes of this research, tell a truth about a way to overcome shame and /or may include a story about an intensely shameful experience, often a painful memory or sharp situation with multiple meanings that can be unravelled. They evoke some deep emotional, visceral, intellectual and/or spiritual reaction in me. Generally they have a wealth of concepts and possible meanings at multiple levels.

Strong metaphors, rated 2, for me work as "verbal images", creating a picture or sensory impression. This aids understanding of shame. Language is used to create an image, sensory experience, or concept which is connected to a feeling of shame, but is less distinct, more distant than the higher rating. They may take the listener's mind to a slightly different place from the concrete literal words. It will be painful but possibly not as poignant or pointed as the striking ones rated at 3. This category is more conventionally down to earth and may contain clichés, homilies, adages, proverbs and sayings.

OK metaphors, rated 1, or 1.5, have weaker images, are possibly made up of shorter phrases and fewer words, though not necessarily. They generally feel less satisfying. They may feel incomplete – the underlying meaning may be unclear because the words are too scanty, shallow or 'flabby'. They might be very concrete and need more 'stuffing' to fill out some connection with a deeper truth.

Weaker metaphors rated at 1 or 0, of little impact are seen as marginal metaphors, not real metaphors in the sense of being active. Non-verbal utterances, body language, hints,

movements, hesitations came into this category and I decided not to include them in the final table.

<u>Negative and bridging metaphors</u>

I confronted the difficult area of working on the negative and bridging metaphors, which I had put to one side for incubation till I could decide what to do with them. I began putting the very reduced lists of strong negative metaphors on the nature of shame into Tables 2-5 (pp. 69-75) and created a new table of a sub-set of neither negative nor positive metaphors of defences against shame, into separate tables. These were also rated by myself and the raters – any metaphors which scored 2's and 3's consistently by all raters and myself were used to create Tables 14 and 15 – see Findings, pp.98-102.

One noticeable change was that I was gradually becoming more aware of a parallel process between me and my topic of shame around the theme of defences. I was ashamed of the confusion and paralysis I was experiencing about defensive manoeuvres, avoidance and camouflage of shame. This confusion needed unpacking. The struggle was deciding whether to place Defences as a new negative theme or as a positive way out of shame. To give an example: disappearing into a hole can either be negative, in the sense of being swallowed, an unhelpful defensive avoidance of painful affect, or as a positive survival strategy, a way out of a shameful situation. This metaphor initially was placed in the negative theme of Powerlessness, also linked to themes of Isolation, Self-consciousness, and even to some extent Woundedness. Yet, it could also be considered positively as a sensible survival strategy. This was the central dilemma for me now – where to put the theme of Defences.

Phase 4: Illumination – period of clarification – consolidating negative metaphors and defences in appropriate language

Illumination began as I escaped from codes, numbers and compartmentalising into tables, and returned to my natural flow of words and pictures of the island. This was a phase when the themes were gradually becoming more familiar and ideas were beginning to be bedded down and form more consistent clusters of themes, across the whole spectrum of shame, both in the descriptions of shame and also in terms of ways out of shame. I began looking at how the PEP and FP negative data, which until now I had been keeping separate for the sake of clarity and validity, could be combined into the drawing of an island incorporating both sides of shame and of un-shame.

The negative metaphors that had come up in the FP supported a similarly desolate picture of the territory of shame and ways into the territory of shame as in the PEP. In the FP, I

had re-discovered and re-identified the same negative themes of shame, with different metaphors, as in the PEP data – Isolation, Powerlessness, Self-consciousness with sensory aspects and Woundedness, and the Visceral defences, which had belonged in Woundedness but did not seem to quite fit there now as enlightenment was dawning on a bigger picture of shame and ways out of shame.

An extra interview was conducted, (Participant 09), to enrich and check out the quality of the thematic analysis to see whether there were any extractable new themes, points of clarification or if my data had reached saturation point. My interview style was the same as previously – the interview is included in Appendix 14 in full. Out of this interview came a total of 55 positive metaphors, and 6 new strong negative metaphors, again all rated highly by the 3 raters, which were incorporated into all the tables of metaphors. At this time, I also added 4 negative metaphors from 08 which I had previously missed (intrinsic, ice cube melting and soup fermenting and shaming supervisor). The main tables were adjusted to accommodate all the new data. More refined tables were produced now containing a total of 38 negative metaphors (see Tables 2-5, Findings section: p. 69-75).

The complex tables in Appendix 9 contained a great many overlapping themes for some of the more complex metaphors, which were numerically over-complicated. . I was dragging myself down further into what I now recognise as 'shame confusion', part of my defensive default position of withdrawal. Two significant critical friends and my AA were all advising me to reduce, reduce, reduce and I had a dream of a simplified 2 column table with simpler codings. I replaced the codings, which were much simplified to just be letters, (e.g. Ka, Kb, Kc) and the sub-themes were reduced to a total of 14 from 29. See Table 7, section 4.2, p.77 in Findings.

The new FP data sets of negative, defences and positive metaphors were compared with the original negative and positives metaphors from the PEP. Originally it had been my intention to amalgamate both sets of data from the PEP and the FP, but I decided to keep the FP data separate and analyse the new data independently of the PEP. This was because there was more than enough rich data in the FP to fulfil the demands of this particular piece of research, which was to describe shame and map ways out of shame. If the PEP had been included there would have been an even greater surplus of data. When the negative themes in the PEP and FP were compared, I found that the negative metaphor themes in the FP fairly consistently echoed the negative metaphor themes in the PEP i.e. Isolation, Powerlessness, Self-consciousness, Visceral Woundedness. There was only one modification to the theme of Self-consciousness, which seemed to include more sensory impressions – for clarity, I kept the same initial letter and called this

theme Sensory aspects/self-consciousness.   This data has been brought together in Tables 2 – 5 and in the discussion, section 5.7.

The journey of the theme of defences is interesting as part of the thematic analysis of this research.
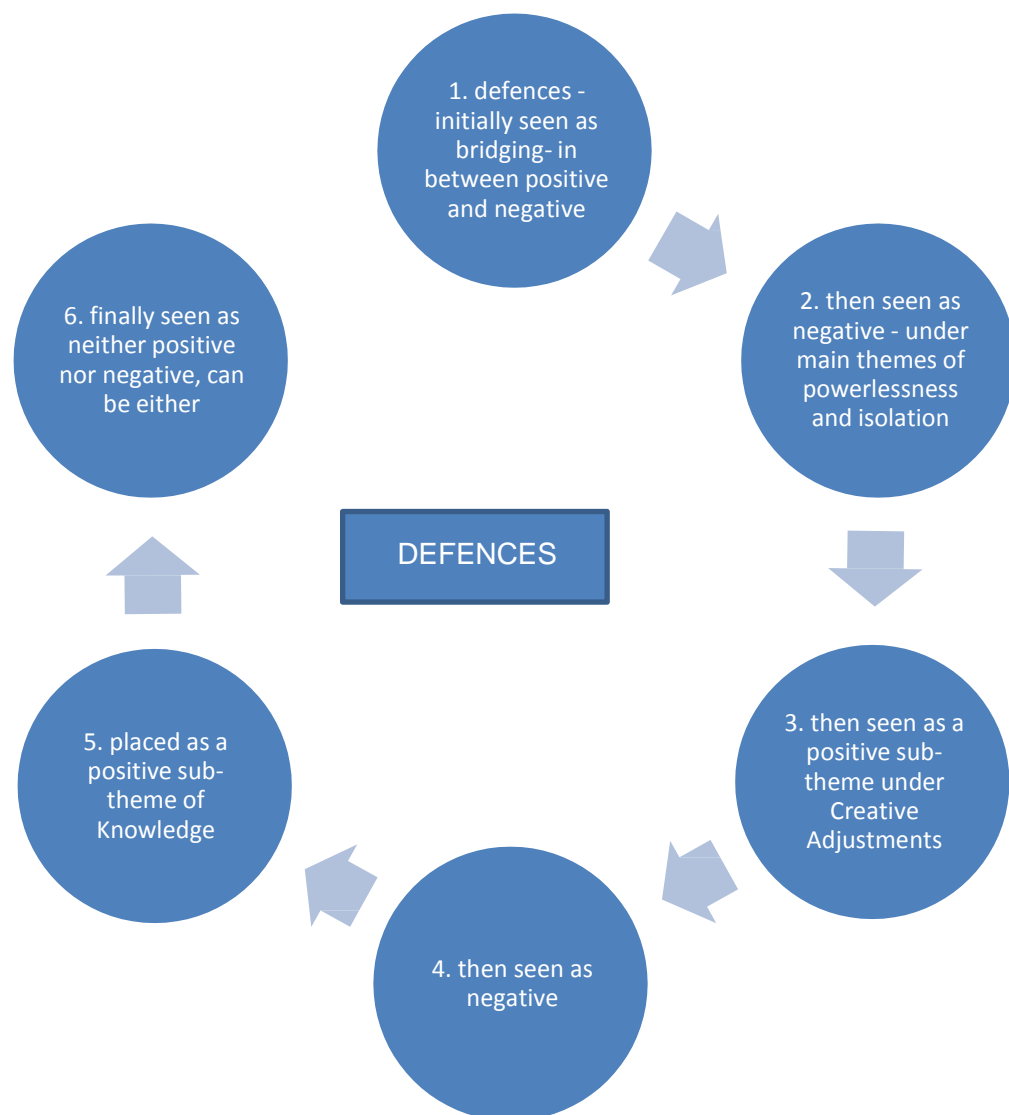
Figure 8: Journey of the theme of helpful and unhelpful defences as a way out of shame

Initially these metaphors of defensive reactions to shame were categorised by the researcher as Bridging Metaphors, in between positive and negative, with some connotation of spanning the island between the dark side of shame and the bright side of freedom from shame. This was abandoned in the tables in favour of simplicity, putting Defences into a sub-theme of Defences in negative metaphors (Table 16). Later this was

changed into the sub-theme of Creative Adjustments in positive metaphors. Finally Defences was placed as a sub-theme of Knowledge (Kd) as once we understand how defences operate around shame we can begin to deal with our shame face on. (See Tables 14 and 15 – unhelpful and helpful metaphors),

Through useful further discussion with my Academic Consultant, a further transformation occurred, as the realisation dawned on the researcher that defences do not necessarily have to be judged as either positive or negative, they merely indicate that shame is present. I view them as symptoms of shame, descriptors of its presence. They are there as a necessary part of shame when the pressure gets too much on us and we have to defend against our own shame when we are overwhelmed.   Defences protect us from shame but are not a way out. They help us avoid the agonising experience of shame. Shame exists with built in defences to keep it securely walled up and alive within these walls. Some therapists, according to orientation, would call these Defence Mechanisms (as in psycho-analysis), some would call these Manoeuvres, Behaviours or Coping Strategies (as in a more cognitive approach) and some would view these more positively and refer to them as Creative Adjustments, Survival Skills, Self-protection Skills (as in a humanistic or Gestalt approach). Since I work therapeutically from a predominantly humanistic, integrative framework, I decided to opt for a generalised thematic approach, telling the story humanistically from the most striking metaphors and not fretting about defining them in a complicated way, as for example in psycho-analysis or Grounded Theory. Therefore they are self-protective rather than defensive mechanisms, capturing the process and experience of shame in benign, compassionate language rather than pugilistic. The purpose is not to "split hairs", but to gain a useful practical picture of shame and ways out of shame, so the less complicated the language of definition, the better. In a useful and mutually enjoyable collaborative exercise, a kind of triangulation process, my Academic Consultant and I picked out the most striking metaphors that "spoke to" both of us. I used large pieces of paper, making copious notes and diagrams and looking out for any other themes emerging. I am recommending to keep the language around shame as everyday and positive as possible.

Phase 5: Explication – defences and complex metaphors

The researcher did not feel that a separate category of metaphors of defensive manoeuvres was necessary as a separate entity between negative and positive metaphors around shame. These defensive manoeuvres were elusive and unsettled, in keeping with their very nature, almost with a life of their own; they went through many changes in terms of where they were put, but ended up somewhere in between (neither

being called negative or positive) – simply they are. 06 referred to these as "less or more helpful".

Based on the insights of Vaillant on different levels of defences, from pathological, immature, neurotic and mature, I created Tables 14 and 15, which solved the enigma of using the terms negative metaphors and positive metaphors. Simply the defences exist, and sometimes they function adversely, sometimes they function beneficially. With the new terms, pathological, neurotic, immature and mature, it was possible to categorise the defences more systematically according to the metaphors which the participants had used on the topic of defences.

I highlighted in gold on the tables any metaphors which fell into three category themes or more, because they were complex and deeply meaningful metaphors which were particularly striking in their complexity and emotional impact, at the time of the interview itself, for the researcher, during transcription, and during reading and re-reading. Intuitively these particular metaphors appeared to fall into a special category all of their own, and I entitled them 'Submerged Metaphors' coining the phrase of Lakoff & Johnson (2003).

Strong highlighted metaphors which overlapped across a number of themes and had been given high ratings by myself and the raters, were put into a separate chapter called 'Submerged Metaphors' at this stage, and I began to write in depth. By picking out examples of strong striking evocative emotionally charged or visually strong language, predominantly metaphorical, it was possible to pick out units of meaning and focus on language, sensings and image, thus limiting and organising the data to be more manageable and take on a life of its own as a picture or model of ways out of shame began to emerge from these striking parts of the data.

The title, 'Submerged Metaphors' was no longer feeling precise enough, because some of these metaphors were tangible, obvious, visual and striking, whilst the submerged ones were less obvious and more subtle - they were all powerful metaphors.   At this point my energy grew as metaphors can speak volumes and as I wrote I began to pick up on deeper meanings, nuances and connections in the material. A visit to my Academic Consultant and useful collaboration loosened my creative thinking into grading the metaphors metaphorically as Gold, Silver and Bronze and Tin (which I did not put into practice, but it did loosen my thinking) rather than numerical 3's, 2's and 1's and 0's as in Appendices 7 and 8.   I became far less worried about putting the metaphors into the 'right numerical boxes'. An Excel spreadsheet written for me by my mathematical daughter helped me organise my understanding of deeper meanings in the metaphors, now that I

had separated out the strongest metaphors and the project began to take on a creative life of its own.   During a collaboration with another interested significant supervisory, critical friend, the seed was planted of the idea of a mobile to depict shame in a three dimensional way. This further helped me develop this idea during a supervision session with my loyal and trusted personal supervisor, to depict shame as an expansive, mobile, moving force which cannot really be captured in a fixed two dimensional or linear model. This overcame my difficult stuck position. I listed these complex metaphors into Table 13.

Phase 6: Creative Synthesis

The themes began to be broadened out again as I began to write up.   The most complex metaphors were put into a separate part of the discussion chapter.   From the original large rough sketch of a shame landscape with all metaphors from the list in the thematic analysis, a new revised "Territory of Shame" pen drawing was made, showing shame and ways out of shame as one island with bridges between the mountain or island of shame and an island of acceptance of shame, (Figure 9). This was further developed into another pen drawing of one joined up island with the defences as part of the island (Figure 10), and a leaf drawing showing all the themes joined up together in a creative synthesis of the metaphors' central message of a shamed heart which is also growing into healing as part of a whole leaf (Figure 12). This section was entitled "Finding Broader and Deeper Meanings inside the Metaphors", (section 5.7).

I then collaborated with a number of separate people to drive the project towards its destiny and not fall down its own black hole. A late draft of the write-up was sent to two of the five participants who had asked to read it, for checking on the issues of accuracy and confidentiality, for late revisions if necessary, not for a revision of my conclusions but to give them an opportunity to voice their objections or reactions, and continue their involvement in the products of the project if they so desired. Their feedback will be fed in at the Viva if it is of relevance.

The project, nearing its end, evolved into a collaborative relationship with my Academic Consultant, significant others, and a number of people forming a community connecting to the creative energy of the work, willing it forwards to its end goal, the fruition of the doctorate.

3.10   Ethics

I rigorously adhered to UKCP and BACP principles of safeguarding participants referring to the BACP Code of Ethics for Researching Counselling and Psychotherapy, (Bond 2004) which involves close attention to issues of confidentiality, trustworthiness and

consent. This is particularly relevant in a research project on the subject of shame which is a potentially distressing subject, involving *"vulnerable aspects of participants' lives or sensitive topics"* (ibid, 2004) needing to be handled with a firm, clear contract. I wanted to trigger discussion on the subject of shame but did not want it to enter the realms of deep therapeutic work as this was research, not therapy. But, people who voluntarily came forward to be in a research project on shame, however experienced as therapists, would be highly likely to have an interest in the subject, on personal grounds, not purely on intellectual grounds. So I would still have to be very careful how I conducted the interviews and build in contingencies if and when shame material was triggered. The same careful methodology was applied in the FP as in the PEP. Since I wanted to discuss shame, which might well trigger shame, the very thing that would get people into the shame spiral, I had to take full responsibility for handling this most difficult affect with assurance and a strong steady ethical approach and manage each participant with as much attention and care as I would in therapy, supervision or training around delicate shame, bearing in mind this research encounter would be limited to an hour or two of collaborative enquiry per participant.

I recognised the need for sensitivity, containment and management of intense emotion and strong feelings of vulnerability which would be likely to arise at any time, possibly unexpectedly, throughout the interview process, during and, especially, post-interview.   I and the co-researchers would need to have agreed safeguards in place so they would feel engaged in the process and well cared for. I was at pains to ensure that participants felt able to consult further with me to have follow-through, to address and embrace painful shame issues that might arise in the interviews. I had a sense of professional ethical responsibility very similar to a therapeutic or supervisory contract, and felt the importance of firm contracting. The implications of entering a strong emotional experience by participating in a piece of research on shame were carefully and comprehensively discussed over the phone with all participants in advance. I reminded them of the availablity of outside therapeutic agencies, e.g. BACP and UKCP and a good referral network should anyone be left with complex lingering painful or shameful feelings they might need to work through.

All participants were highly experienced, sophisticated psychotherapists who recognised shame in themselves, articulated fluently and knew how to care for themselves psychologically. Nevertheless it was still very important to offer containment, since the shame affect never fully goes away, however experienced we are. The general anticipated direction during interview was actually towards movement through and out of shame, because the emphasis in this FP was on finding positive ways forward out of

shame. This was borne out by what arose in the interviews and supported participants in the thrust forwards to explore, stay with and articulate the discomfort of their own shame experiences, client's, supervisee's, or trainee's experiences of shame. The research interviews, with an energetic leaning towards creativity and positive ways out of shame, offered them a wide choice of imaginative opportunities to move through telling their story or the stories of others, and not get "bogged down" in the darkness, isolation, exposure and agonising powerlessness of the shame experience. This definitely needed to be addressed but was not the central focus. I sought a full picture of both sides, the "ins and outs of shame", and the emphasis here was on "the outs" and on creative outcomes for the research..

Participants were thoroughly briefed in advance in an information sheet (see Appendix 2) as to the content and expectations of the interviews, and they signed a consent form (see Appendix 3). They were offered access to supportive debriefing from the researcher should it be required, and I did check out in advance of interview what resources for support they had in place to be on the safe side.

Follow-up interviews and / or private collaborative discussions were offered with the researcher as part of the research programme, if required, should participants wish to debrief and avail themselves of the opportunity to process raw shame-related issues which may have been raised in the course of the discussions. The two who opted for a second, follow up interview used that time to explore their process further and integrate the research experience and were happy for me also to record this second interview.

In the whole process of preparation, interview and post-interview, the methodological stance offered to participants was humanistic and collaborative, in order to provide a respectful, egalitarian, co-creative relationship and safeguard against difficulties around power, status, and culture. The vignettes (Appendix 4) were presented as prompts in order to actually engage participants in the subject of shame. The vignettes were carefully constructed to provide participants with a choice of prompts, so they could talk about a level of shame that felt manageable for them, their own or other people's, and ways out of shame. The vignettes were presented as prompts in order to actually engage participants in the subject of shame and were a subtle means of eliciting strong material from participants if they so chose, working at a level of metaphor, prompting difficult material whilst giving them freedom to be the pioneers, the first people to move around spontaneously on the imaginary evolving shame island, to enable participants to exercise freedom to pitch their responses where they wanted, and to have an escape route and move to something lighter without needing to feel pressured and go into shame. The let-

out clause is interesting ethically as a way of not coercing participants into doing something they do not want to do, very important with shame issues so we do not become defensive.

As all interviews in the FP were conducted at a distance by Skype, particular care was taken over how the interviews would end, tying up unfinished business, de-briefing one-to-one and during the closing of the interview, ensuring the participants managed the transition back to their physical surroundings. It was recognised that some people communicating on Skype are potentially subject to the Disinhibition Effect, and may actually reveal more information than they are happy to have disclosed (Suler, 2004); Ross & Anthony (2003).

Participants were consulted about just how much of the material would be transcribed, and given the choice to pull their material back up to one month post-interview. Without exception all agreed to full transcription. All participants were able to read through their transcripts. These were sent to them by email. They were invited to read through the transcripts to check for accuracy, make alterations if they disagreed with the way the interview had been transcribed   and request deletions of any content that felt too sensitive, personal or identifiable which they would prefer to be omitted. In the planning of the interviews went the proviso that, where the participant did not want some material to be transcribed, a discussion would ensue about a compromise, i.e. extracting and categorising the metaphors into the thematic analysis, but not transcribing those sections of the interviews which would compromise confidentiality or offend sensitivity. In cases where something was identifiable, an x was substituted for missing sections or details. One participant requested further anonymity, which was honoured and, in addition to particular identifiable features the researcher wanted to be anonymised, several potentially identifiable further features connected with work issues and personal life were deleted.

From the outset, it was made clear that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. It was also stated that their material would be destroyed should they have objections, up to one month after interviews had been conducted.

Chapter 4 Findings

The following section contains the key themes and metaphors from both the PEP (where the primary focus was on "Ways into shame") and the FP (where the primary focus was on "Ways out of shame").

The findings from the PEP identified four key themes associated with the negativity of shame, in section 4.1, which combines the metaphors from both PEP and FP identified with those themes:

- Isolation
- Powerlessness
- Self-consciousness
- Woundedness.

Section 4.2 shows the four key themes for 'Ways out of shame', based on the interviews in the Final Project:

- Relationship
- Knowledge
- Creativity
- Acceptance.

There were 73 metaphors from the PEP that were linked with ways out of shame, which were coded, but these were not analysed in detail as I felt I already had enough data in the FP.

The table below is a summary of all these findings. It shows far more negative metaphors in the PEP and far more positive metaphors in the Final Project, because the emphasis in the PEP interviews was on ways into shame and descriptions of shame, and whereas in the FP the emphasis was on finding ways out of shame. Defences came up randomly and were neither emphasised nor sought, and interestingly, the numbers are more or less equal between PEP and FP.

I did not undertake a long, detailed analysis of the negative metaphors in the FP because I had already carried this out in the PEP. The same four main negative themes with minor changes, as already mentioned, emerged as ways into shame and negative descriptions of shame, and four new positive themes emerged in the FP data analysis as follows:

Table 1 Overview of Numbers of chosen metaphors for each theme in FP and PEP

Final Project themes	Strong metaphors in Final Project	Total	Closest/ equivalent PEP theme	Number of selected metaphors in PEP	Total
Isolation, being cut off	9		Isolation, unlovability	14	23
Powerlessness, falling, losing self, disappearing	12		Powerlessness, loss, death	38	50
Sensory aspects describing shame, colour/taste, unpleasant feelings of self-consciousness	8		Self-consciousness- need to hide/ flee	18	26
Wounding, core self pain	9		Wounding, visceral reaction, hot/cold shame, defences	60	69
			Icons, images	19	19
Total negative metaphors		38	Total negative metaphors	149	187
Defences	36	36	Hot and cold shame, defences	37	73
Relationship	68		Activity, achievement, insight, resources, creativity, poetry, icons, strategies, work	8	76
Knowledge	75			30	105
Creativity	45			34	79
Acceptance	39			1	40
Total positive metaphors		227	Total positive metaphors (not coded or analysed)	73	300
Total		**301**		**259**	**560**

4.1 Negative Themes – descriptive themes of the negativity of shame

38 of the most interesting or strongest negative metaphors were chosen as a representative sample from the Final Project interviews, from a total of over 700 in the original list, reduced to 350 (see Appendix 5), because this work had already been covered in the PEP and thematic saturation point had apparently been reached. At least one example was chosen from each participant as an illustration of each main theme.

Here follow four short tables of the 38 negative metaphors chosen from the FP interviews showing themes of ways into shame and descriptions of shame. These findings supported the findings of themes in the PEP which can be found in its entirety in Appendix 1, where the four main themes of negative descriptions of shame were: 1. Isolation 2. Powerlessness 3. Self-consciousness 4. Visceral wounding. The findings in the FP support these as main themes with the addition of Sensory aspects to Self-consciousness.

These 38 negative metaphors in the transcripts of the FP interviews were picked out intuitively by the researcher as the most striking. They were all independently highly rated for strength. The main themes clustered around the same themes as in the PEP, that is: 1. Isolation   2. Powerlessness 3. Self-consciousness / sensory aspects 4. Wounding. A greater emphasis on sensory, physical aspects of self-consciousness was observed and was included in the title of the main theme in this part of the project.

From the negative metaphors offered by all participants, it was possible to build up a comprehensive description of a landscape of shame, which emerged as a picture of an island with a jungle, wild and untamed – a place of dark, hopeless despair and trauma. It is an intense, agonising death-like place to be. Some of the most striking images from the FP interviews mirrored the images in the PEP – a comparison can be made with the PEP Mountain of Shame on p.24 of this document and the new metaphors in the tables below, and they are not dissimilar. These metaphors corroborated the previous findings of darkness, trauma, despair, hopelessness. The idea of the shame landscape is developed in the write up of this project, particularly in the discussion section in the drawings of complete Islands of Shame on pp.106-107 and in the conclusion, p.177.

The 38 strong metaphors for descriptions of shame in this section were placed into main themes, as follows (with no sub-themes as the number of metaphors was small and the work had been covered in the PEP):

- I: Isolation, psychological imprisonment with 9 metaphors (Isolation, unlovablity, defectiveness in PEP)

- P: Powerlessness, disappearing, loss of cohesion and sense of self, cyclical nature of shame with 12 metaphors (Powerlessness in PEP)

- S: Self-consciousness/sensory aspects of shame/colours/tastes with 8 metaphors (Self-consciousness and need to withdraw from shame in PEP)

- W: Agony, core self pain, visceral wounding, hot, somatisation, fury turned in or out with 9 metaphors (Woundedness in PEP).

I will now take each of these four themes in turn, with short tables to summarise the best metaphors.

Isolation is a main theme of shame, because we feel the need pull away and maintain control by withdrawing from society's staring, judging eyes. It is a protection against the agony of exposure, where the feeling of core unlovability is so intense that it becomes less painful to pull away into a hiding place than to remain outside in the torment of feeling further scrutinised and attacked.

Table 2 Strong metaphors on the theme of Isolation in FP

CODE	THEME	METAPHOR	REF.
I	Isolation, imprisonment by shame	*The reality there is that with too many diversions we're going to be imprisoned inside the asylum, we will be cut out and won't meet the social rules*	05/218
I	Isolation, abandonment, abusive relationship	*There was nobody there – there was nobody looking out for me. Even my brother abandoned me because he knew that survival meant siding with mum and being like her, and carrying out the same kind of atrocities*	07/1/854
I	Isolation, self protection	*So I am going to keep very very still and go into this empty secret lonely place where no one can get in and no one can see me*	06/1/259
I	Isolation, abandonment, overwhelm	*Yes I think I would swing between going into the empty aloneness, er … and this place of being completely swamped … and washed in it … in the anguish*	06/1/652

CODE	THEME	METAPHOR	REF.
I	Isolation, abandonment, being cast out	*The fear was so intense ... . It was intense I didn't know what was going to happen – being outcast by my peers*	08/292
I	Isolation, abandonment, unlovability	*A sense of… Um (30 sec heartbeat) Being cut off ... . abandoned … isolated, unlovable on the outside*	06/1/157
I	Isolation, dissociation	*06 No it is not dark, erm it is not a colour thing, um. Er ... It's just it is more like an empty aloneness, Like an isolated cut off… M mm 06 and there's a kind of an an an empty aloneness, nothing inside me, nothing outside me, just um total … forlorn M forlorn mm 06 and I and I think some anguish, but I … I think in that empty aloneness I am disassociating*	06/1/190
I	Isolation, withdrawal	*Isolated my feeling self inside the bedroom*	05/7
I	Isolation, abandonme Relationship	*She was in a very dark place for a long time … had to be highly medicated … dense oppressiveness*	09/200/224
		Total 9	

Powerlessness is a main theme of shame, with aspects of falling down into a hole, disappearing, losing a sense of cohesion, becoming cold, drowning, paralysis, getting frozen, loss of body function, loss of brain function, being trapped in a repeating cycle. It is an interesting discovery from this research that one of the hallmarks is the feature of long-lasting repeated cycles of shame. See Figure 16 in the Conclusion. The theme of the cyclical and repetitive nature of shame came up in four of the five participants, in the sub-themes of powerlessness and acceptance. This is to do with the nature of shame which drags people down into a trap or spiral, which almost has to be unravelled or uncoiled. So this is a theme of expending substantial time and energy revisitng the bad experiences, as in PTSD, processing the trauma, relationally, in real time.

My heuristic sense with this aspect of the research was that shame needs to be "met" at the early point of the shaming, revisited, unravelled and thoroughly processed in detail, as in Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder.

Table 3 Strong metaphors on the theme of Powerlessness in FP

CODE	THEME	METAPHOR	REF.
P	Powerlessness Falling down a hole, loss of self, withdrawal, disappearing	*The trap door in my stomach would open and I would disappear into it*	07/1/531
P	Powerlessness Sinking down Loss of self. Loss of cohesion., withdrawal, disappearing	*Sugar lump sinking down in a big cup of tea, becoming less and less, more dilute* *I am dissolving before someone else's eyes*	05/63
P	Powerlessness Loss of cohesion	*Ice cube on a stick melting, losing balance*	08/312
P	Powerlessness Loss of sense of self, keeping quiet, not coming out, avoiding being true to self	*If I don't say my truth, if I betray my truth – if I go along with the collusion, I lose my sense of self – that's the sugar lump feeling*	05/332
P	Powerlessness The territory of shame Darkness, shadow, death, a valley	*The valley of the shadow of death, even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death*	07/2/201
P	The territory of shame, suicide, extreme need to escape	*When someone ends their life – it is all too much - need a way out*	09/731
P	Powerlessness Allowing other people to project their shame onto her. Couldn't fight back. Contamination	*I let people assault the house of myself and pull it down with their shame and give me their shame 07/2/511*	07/2/508
P	Powerlessness, stuckness Loss of sense of self – the boundaries of the body unbounded	*Four months of …something like drowning or having my ... the boundaries of my body um ... just expand into the ether*	08/250
P	Powerlessness Rising anger to defend herself Hopelessness	*I remember so young, her holding my head under the water as she washed my hair* *Yes, I remember at the time flailing to get her off but she was too strong 07/330*	07/1/330

P	Powerlessness to escape Cyclical nature of shame – repeats over and over again until it can be articulated and dealt with differently	*He has had to walk round the cycle with me again and again*	07/2/474
P	Powerlessness to escape Repeats over and over until it can be articulated and dealt with differently	*A recurring dream I had which I think started when I was ... just going to school*	06/1/70
P	Powerlessness Agony of humiliation, exposure (Also in Cd as complex metaphor)	*The dunce's corner with a vengeance 06/1/594 instead of looking into the dunce's corner and seeing the nail, I was in the dunce's corner and propping up the whole wall … everyone dining out on it*	06/1/599
		Total 12	

Sensory aspects/ self-consciousness This theme is about feeling judged and misjudged as defective and flawed in the disapproving eyes of the world, experiencing an unpleasant felt, bodily sensation of a temperature of hot shame or cold paralysing agony, horrible taste, or an oppressive deep darkness at core level. A sensory feeling of being 'seen', exposed, wanting to become invisible and disappear, swallowed up away from ridicule, humiliation and bullying.

Table 4 Strong metaphors on the theme of Sensory aspects/ Self-consciousness in FP

CODE	THEME	METAPHOR	REF.
S	The intrinsic nature of shame –feeling unsavoury, distasteful, gone off	*Shame is about your intrinsic being rather than anything you have done. You have this experience of it revealing something that is not savoury … a deep sense there is something wrong with you. You want to hide – re-wind the clock. This feeling of badness you have, well actually, it is illusory isn't it, it's not really there, but there is just this sense …something is not quite right, and the not quite rightness has got something to do with badness or unsavouriness, I don't see it as being to do with smell or sight …it is much more to do with taste.* *M: Is there a fruit that you might equate it with or a food?* *08: Well I suppose something that's gone off slightly – past its sell by date…maybe soup that has started fermenting, or gone off, but when you look closely it is fermenting or bubbling, something that looks like soup, like normal soup, like you could really eat it but when you look closely it is fermenting or it's bubbling or whatever… or cream that has gone over the top but it looks okay* *M Mm, you said past its sell by date, gone off… what would you do with stuff that has gone off?* *08 We tend to throw it away… which is quite interesting*	08/82 08/152
S	Taste of shame	*Bitter taste of shame*	05/34
S	Colour and nature of shame	*Shame is dark and blue, night blue*	05/37
S	Colour and nature of shame	*This deep ball of blackness in the pit of my stomach… nasty and hard ... I can feel it rising*	09/18/27
S	Felt sense of shame – the need to avoid being exposed	*There is a connection, I think, between ... if I am seen I will be put in the dunce's corner. So I am going to keep very very still and go into this empty secret lonely place where no one can get in and no one can see me*	06/1/258

S	Cutting off from the senses under extreme duress	*I think probably what happens is that my seeing and hearing are um ... probably somewhat paranoid … woops…(laughing)* *M sharp, very strong and intense* *06 yes, very very strong and intense… in the sense of disgust around ... Hearing and seeing… It doesn't go into smelling, even with the sense of disgust around it doesn't go into smelling ... it's more an emotional distance there (pause) mm, I am still with the nail a bit*	06/1/370
S	Temperature of shame	*Shame that is cold … from my mother*	09/364/ 377
S	Convoluted feelings around being exposed	*For a moment this one is, with my fatness – I ... I am starting to deal with that now …and I don't know how it got quite… I'm not sure how it got so convoluted ... saw the mockery on their faces ...* *to be shamed sporadically with my bigness … to keep the connection with with my original shaming*	07/1/175
		Total 8	

Woundedness The theme of Woundedness and visceral agony from shame is about feeling cut, stabbed, abused, raped, assaulted, in a traumatic physical, psychic attack at core level. The theme of damage to core self, which means a non-verbal early self, is evident in the metaphors of the Final Project; all five participants made references to effects of shame at intrinsic or core level, alluding to the work of disentangling shame as slow, delicate and painstaking.

Table 5 Strong metaphors on the theme of Woundedness in FP

CODE	THEME	METAPHOR	REF.
W	Core self agony Somatisation of shame The body feeling the burning shame inside Entrapment	*The torch of shame was burning inside of me. I developed a burning sciatic nerve… consumed by anguish and shame*	06/1/640
W	Core self shame - rage turned in	*Anger with our core self, towards ourselves*	05/409
W	Core self pain, inside	*A heart pain that won't go out*	06/1/533
W	Core self pain – rage turned out - the need to curse and vent fury	*I will be glad when you die you fucking monster*	07/1/388
W	Core self wounding, cracking open	*My wounding was so young and early My mother ... so distant It was like an egg, it just cracked open*	07/1/236
W	Core self pain of incision Embodiment of pain	*As a child it is a knee jerk defence whereas as an adult I knew it was happening ... it was like open heart surgery without an anaesthetic*	06/1/605
W	Core self wounding – recognising the irreparable damage	*I am permanently scarred*	09/82
W	Core self wounding – putting feelings on hold	*"I would feel the feelings, shame included, but put them on hold and re-visit them later, for to show you were wounded invited more ridicule*	05/19
W	Core self wounding	*I suppose it was to do with my mother giving me away …you know why would a mother give… not that I had ever thought that through logically in this way…but it must have been somewhere deep in my body as a belief mustn't it ... something intrinsic… I mean we are talking about a core intrinsic self now, aren't we… it goes right back to a core*	08/128
		Total 9	

I reduced these down to the strongest 9 for special consideration. These metaphors capture a dreadful sense in shame of being alone, imprisoned, defective, wrong, agonised, beyond being able to exercise free will, tortured, burnt :

Table 6 Examples of strongest metaphors to illustrate each theme and sub-theme for ways into shame

Main theme	Sub-theme	Metaphor	Participant/line ref
I	Being cut out, not meeting the social rules, exclusion	*Imprisoned inside the asylum*	05/218
I	Abandonment	*There was nobody looking out for me*	07/1/184
S	Defectiveness	*A deep sense there is something wrong with you – something not savoury – soup or cream that has gone off*	08/168
S	Core self agony, visceral	*Deep ball of blackness in the pit of my stomach – nasty and hard*	09/18
P	Loss of self	*The trap door in my stomach would open and I would disappear into it*	07/1/531
P	Loss of sense of self	*Four months of something like drowning or having the boundaries of my body expand into the ether*	08/250
W	Core self agony, visceral	*The torch of shame burning inside of me – consumed by anguish and shame*	06/1/640
W	Intense agony and exposure	*Like open heart surgery without an anaesthetic*	06/1/605
W	Core self wounding	*I am permanently scarred, it will never go away*	09/82

4.2 Codings – final data analysis – ways out of shame

In a more sophisticated coded analysis than in the PEP, four main positive themes emerged from the final data analysis as ways out of shame: 1) Relationship 2) Knowledge 3) Creativity 4) Acceptance. These were coded with the initial letter as a capital letter for the main theme – R for Relationship, K for Knowledge, C for Creativity

and A for Acceptance, and subdivided with lower case letters a,b,c, and d, simplified down into just 3 or 4 sub-themes for each main theme. Earlier very detailed workings on analysis of data with complex, multiple codings in Roman numerals are in tables in Appendices 8 and 9.

Final and simplified versions of data analysis tables are as follows:

Table 7 Coding for FP Themes of Ways Out of Shame

MAIN THEME	CODE	SUB-THEME	MEANINGS/ CODING UNITS	HEALING THROUGH:
Relationship/ support	Ra	Therapeutic relationship/ working alliance – aiming for secure connection	Touch, heart connection, core conditions, respect, empathy, warmth, congruence, unconditional positive regard, love, sharing, facing shame, slow timing,pacing, calm, gentle holding, use of self, affiliative 'we', working with hurt, ambivalent child, prizing, nurturing, normalising, fine tuning to body process, secure attachment, vocalisation, dialogue, connecting language with "I" and body experience	Empathy, non-judgement
	Rb	Relationship with significant others – relatives, colleagues	Secure, trusted, sharing, guiding, safety, boundaries, protection, being adult, helping, embracing shame, unselfconscious	Affection, security
	Rc	Interview relationship	Co-creation, dialogue, partially therapeutic, Use of metaphor, visualisation and humour Artefacts of this research relationship	Creative energy and dialogic encounter – "meeting in the middle" – collaboration
Knowledge / Acknowledge ment / Education	Ka	Exploring, insight, awareness, experience	Recognising, naming, describing, teaching, reporting, voicing, remembering, exploring, showing, illuminating, understanding, putting under spotlight, recognising need to defend and express, boundaries	Clarification of experience of shame

	Kb	Visualising	Using imagery, visualising, metaphor, sense of cohesion, body awareness	Entering the territory – sense of visual adventure – e.g. garden, jungle, dendrites
	Kc	Encouraging the voice	Creative dialogue, self-dialogue, expressing feelings, making the unconscious conscious, verbalising	Conversation communic-ation
	Kd	Need to self-protect / withdraw	Defence, hiding, withdrawal, staying still, isolating, intellectualising, blaming, self-justifying, raging – unhelpful for healing	Understanding these defences – gaining release
Creativity / Creative adjustments	Ca	Creative relationship Retreat to place of safety / nature	Support, dialogue with nature and animals, particularly dogs, safe haven, sense of contact, creative escape	Connection with nature e.g. dogs
	Cb	Imagination, art, poetry, religion	"The creative unconscious". Portal into another world, fantasy, magical thinking, mythology, freedom	Colours, words, metaphors, narrative, writing
	Cc	Rebuilding, redemption, work very hard	Re-construction, renewal, repair, grounding, success, co-creation, creation, stronger, resilience, newness after loss, freedom to live	Something successful from nothing, from the ashes
	Cd	Turning points, iconic memories	Symbolism, transformation of loss into gain, iconic memory, dialogue, moment of illumination, moment of healing crisis – change, re-configuration	Pictures
Acceptance / Integration / Reconcil-iation	Aa	Calm acceptance of painful reality of shame	Never goes away – managing shame, coping – part of the wisdom of getting older - gratitude	Solidifying, dealing with shame as it is – self regulation
	Ab	Common human experience, part of human life, the connective human bond,	Affiliation – we, nature's process, passing of time, time as a healer, stages, normalising, self-compassion, self- acceptance, going with the flow, forgiveness of self and others	Melting pot – existential acceptance

	Ac	Humour, natural, flowing, colloquial easy language	Making light, laughter, sayings, clichés, levity, swear words, okay to be vulnerable	Expressing feelings naturally, spontaneously –normalising, balancing, releasing, levelling

4.3 Themes

The final main themes were:

- Relationship
- Knowledge
- Creativity
- Acceptance

However, to reach these themes was a detailed and painstaking process that involved distilling and amalgamating sub-themes. I initially colour coded all the metaphors, then cut up versions on strips of paper and invited independent raters to rate the strength of the themes and metaphors. These rated metaphors have been placed in Appendices 5-8.

It is interesting to look at the evolution of the themes.

The largest groups of metaphors in the initial data analysis were psycho-education, which became the main theme of Knowledge, love and support, which became Relationship, and acceptance which stayed as Acceptance. There were some miscellaneous themes which did not particularly fit anywhere, for example nature went into Creativity but could fit across a number of different themes, into Relationship, Knowledge, Creativity and Acceptance. Coming out eventually turned into Creativity. Insight, Time, Fantasy, Swearing, Unconscious process and Defences, took longer to evolve due to the very abstract nature of those themes. These were eventually absorbed across themes. See Appendix 6 for summary table.

The largest group, Knowledge, went through a few changes before it gained its final name. The four obvious main themes which stood out early on in the analysis of the metaphors in the Final Project were Relationship, Empowerment, Coming Out and Acceptance. These were modified to Relationship, Awareness, Making Sense, and Creativity, (which included Acceptance as a sub-theme). They were divided up, using colour codings, as follows:

Main theme: Relationship

- Touch / contact
- Relationship and presence
- Conversation – the voice
- Affiliation
- Collaboration

Main theme: Awareness

- Insight
- Illumination enlightenment
- Reflection – mirrors
- The spark
- Hindsight
- Visibility
- Vision
- Making the unconscious conscious
- Defences
- Camouflage
- Appearance of shame – deceptiveness

Main theme: Making sense

- Psycho education
- Awareness
- Recognition
- Resources
- Building strength and understanding
- Getting to know the territory
- Understanding of unconscious process
- Stages towards independence

Main theme: Creativity

- Ordinary magic
- Co-creation
- Coping strategies
- Creative adjustment

- Acceptance
- Reality not fantasy
- Healing

These were later slightly again modified for the final time to be called Relationship, Knowledge, Creativity and Acceptance. These were put into the presented tables.

Initially the shame themes in the PEP were presented distinctively as negative metaphors of shame, and positive metaphors for ways out of shame, but as the Final Project part of the study progressed, it became clearer that it was not always possible to distinguish a clear divide between the negative aspects of shame and the positive aspects of shame, because there were many metaphors which did not fit comfortably into either category. A picture began to emerge of shame as a continuum including defensive manoeuvres which are neither positive nor negative, but reality, "just the way it is". I initially called these metaphors "bridging metaphors" and grouped them together as a middle of the road category, in the theme of neither positive nor negative, nevertheless existing as a real and very strong, live force in the picture of shame. This will be explored in detail in the discussion section on Defences (5.7). This aspect became clearer when various drawings were done and the Diagram of the Shame Landscape was produced. (See Figures 8 and 9 in Findings.)

Here is displayed the breakdown of occurrences of metaphors which were graded as strong by all 3 graders in the triangulation process, and which I selected as complex because they work at various levels of experience.

Table 8 Overview of Numbers of Metaphors for each theme and sub-theme of ways out of shame

Main theme	Sub –theme	Total metaphors for sub-theme	Reduced complex metaphors
Relationship			
Ra	Therapeutic relationship	43	8
Rb	Relationship with significant other	16	9
Rc	Interview/professional relationship	9	4
Total		**68**	**21**
Knowledge			
Ka	Exploring, insight, awareness, experience	34	6
Kb	Visualising	11	7
Kc	Encouraging the voice	8	2
Kd	Understanding and challenging unconscious process, defences, self-protection, withdrawal	22	6
Total		**75**	**21**
Creativity			
Ca	Creative relationship, adjustments, retreat to place of safety / nature, physis, a spark	13	5
Cb	Imagination, art, poetry, writing, religion, the 'creative unconscious', magical thinking	12	6
Cc	Success, building, rebuilding, adult coping strategies, action, hard work, renewal, grounding	14	4
Cd	Turning points, memories, iconic moments, moments of healing crisis, re-configuration	6	6
Total		**45**	**21**
Acceptance			
Aa	Calm acceptance of painful reality of shame, gratitude	11	4
Ab	Common human experience, part of human life, the connective human bond, going with the flow, self-compassion, the affiliative "we", stages, redemption, resolution, natural matrix, transformation	17	11
Ac	Humour and colloquial easy language	11	6
Total metaphors for acceptance		**39**	**21**
TOTALS		**227**	**84**

For the full original versions of the tables and breakdown of figures, of ways out of shame, see Appendix 11. For table of Complex Metaphors, see Table 13.

Relationship

A key finding that applies to all the categories of Relationships, personal and professional, is that, before shame can be approached and dealt with, a secure, trusted, non-judgemental, containing relationship needs to be established.

The main theme of Relationship is about connection, support and contact as a way out of shame. The strongest most striking metaphors in the theme of relationship cluster around the sub-themes of a strong therapeutic alliance offering safety, constancy, a strong ally, therapeutic presence, travelling alongside the shamed person as a firm, guiding presence with a macheté; providing core conditions of non-judgemental respect and genuineness; the I/thou of dialogic encounter is important as a safe container for shame work to be done. Love, empathy, "armchair containment", strong trustworthy relationship and comfort are important warming aspects for healing of shame. There needs to be gentle but firm handling, steadily, little by little, drop by drop, for doing shame work. Careful timing and pacing are essential. A client needs to experience a strong, supportive, consistent relationship to hold them through their shame.

Frequent reference was made by participants to the importance of good support and trustworthy connectivity to nature and others (particularly professional therapists, supervisors, family members and friends). The co-created research relationship was also referred to, or was implicit (see Rc, p.86). These metaphors identified safety and continuity of relationship as being at the heart of healing shame. Insecurity and broken relationship is at the heart of shame and needs to be reversed through a healing relationship.

On the theme of relationship, there were originally 68 strong metaphors,

- a safe therapeutic relationship, divided further into 6 sub-sub sections: the importance of touch, calm holding, therapist use of self, the working alliance, fine-tuning, core conditions: 43;
- a safe relationship with a significant 'other': 16;
- a professional / interview relationship: 9

See Appendices 10 and 11 for original tables.

See Table 9 below for reduced version of 21 chosen metaphors on Relationship:

Table 9 Strong, complex metaphors on the theme of Relationship as a way out of shame

	THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP (8 metaphors)
Ra	08: *A little taste of something, so they might be able to take it in and actually digest it ... . but it is just getting that taste of something different so if they had a very shaming parent or were shamed by who knows, a school teacher or whatever, you know they just get that little taste of something different so they know that there is that possibility out there … And then I think the next time you just give them a bit more and a bit more and a bit more and I think gradually ... . because I think that's how shame is, you know, I mean, sometimes it is one big shaming incident but more often than not it is like a little drop on a stone*
Ra	06: *I am entering into a journey with them. My understanding of the territory helps me invite them into this journey.*
Ra	06: *I ask … Where in your body are you experiencing some sensation? Do you know when you woke up where in your body you were feeling that sensation most in your body … of the shame? I'm giving them a tool in a way.*
Ra	06: *Yeah, I think it was it was a general all over feeling but there was a particular concentration um er in my er chest and and my stomach really ... . I think there both there and in my stomach, but I think probably yeah probably it was an … near the heart area*
Ra	08: *I think what I am trying to do is put the … the nice words, if you like, on top of the pain … that's probably what I am trying to do … at an unconscious level … not conscious* *M: It is an area here* *08: Yeah* *M: It's below the voice box* *08: Yeah, above the heart*
Ra	08: *I was thinking that actually there is a push-pull thing isn't there … that is, as you feel shame you want to disappear but you also want contact and that made me think about ... attachment…where you are desperate to have the mother but then the minute she picks you up you know, you want to push her away… and then once you have pushed her away you want her back again…Maybe that's what this push-pull thing is about… I am seeing it as something moving towards and then moving back, I don't know if you can see it (raises hands to make the movement) moving towards and back … yes, that sort of movement…I think that one stays still and then I think what probably happens is this, that you get closer and closer till it feels safe and then it sort of links up again and then another shaming and it goes like that again.* *What I am seeing is a wave on a beach, and this bit in between being footsteps on it. Smoothing muddy footprints – making sure the space (in between) doesn't have any footprints…* *Waves on a beach, slowly covering the footprints. I could get rid of the footprints so I am not giving her any badness ... . it's sort of flat, it's a very still sea but having waves ... . and here being the muddy footprints, but they are footprints in the sand. This is the disruption or the bad thing that has happened if you like… and the waves sort of coming, slowly covering them … do you see what I mean, getting rid of them.* *M: So what's… … Is this another person here?* *08: So it is sort of a healing relationship*

Ra	*09: An inner sort of warmth … solid … as opposed to shame that is cold – she [Grandma] gave me the warmth that I didn't get from my mother*
Ra	*09: She [Grandma] wouldn't even have known what she was doing … that knowledge comes from love ... . it feels to me as though love is a really important part of the antidote to shame, that unconditional love, that kind of purity of love*
	RELATIONSHIP WITH SIGNIFICANT OTHERS (9 metaphors)
Rb	*06: "Knock knock … where have you gone?" She would gently tap me on the chest or the head and say, "Where are you … where have you gone?*
Rb	*07: He was … the guide with the macheté who hacks the path out of the jungle and I just followed him at times*
Rb	*09: The antidote part of it is that that person loves you unconditionally – so when you are in their presence none of that horribleness exists. The confidence in myself and sense of self that I hang on to was thanks to her … I would have been much more fragile without her*
Rb	*09: An inner sort of warmth … solid … as opposed to shame that is cold – she [Grandma] gave me the warmth that I didn't get from my mother*
Rb	*M: I have a picture of a big breasted, rounded, matriarchal woman, with big boobs, lovely embrace, lots of breast, that's the picture I have got* *09 My sort of strongest memories of her, she was probably knocking on 80 – so if she was big breasted at any point they had kind of gone south … sitting in the armchair, with me either sitting on the arm, or slithered in next to her, with the dog sitting at my feet … it feels absolutely heavenly*
Rb	*09: If … I was not allowed out because I had been naughty, or whatever, she would always say, oh no, no I'm sure she wasn't (laughter) … I would go to granny's house after school and stay with her ... . I would be safe with her*
Rb	*09: I guess it's remaining constant with them, and showing them that unconditional love ... . that whatever they have told you, however hideous they feel, it's okay … thinking about it now, it sounds like being in the room with you, is like being in that chair with the arms round you*
Rb	*09: I guess it is kind of metaphorically creating that bubble and that warmth … it's almost something you want to do naturally from every aspect of ourselves – it's something we learn to naturally ooze – it is about the aspects of our being, how we sit, how we speak, our tone of voice, how we look at a person that never changes, whatever that person has told us, however hideous they feel about themselves, we might be the only person who stays constant and still cares about them … nothing is ever too much*
Rb	*09: She wouldn't even have known what she was doing … that knowledge comes from love ... . it feels to me as though love is a really important part of the antidote to shame, that unconditional love, that kind of purity of love*
	RESEARCH RELATIONSHIP (4 metaphors)

Rc	*06: Yeah, that probably feels more poignant actually – more as to how the experience of shame is … it appears more like a jungle than a garden, I have to say for me* *M: Maybe we have to make it a garden for our clients? You know to stop it being so frightening….* *06: Yes that's nice – turn a jungle into a garden and then tend to it …* *M: Turn it into something benign rather than malevolent, actually…* *06: Yeah, good idea* *M: So how might we … I mean … and so creatively … how might we go about doing that? It is an interesting idea ...* *06: Yes, and also the ... the idea of that is that when you have a beautiful garden, you still have to tend to it and look after* *M: Well the weeds are malevolent, you have ivy and stuff coming in* *06: Yeah, so just as you can't walk away from the garden and just enjoy it all the time, so you can't walk away from our own healing you know … it's like, the difference between cure and healing is that er we can be healed enough to erm er… to not feel ashamed of feeling shame*
Rc	*07: I think you have something there, there is a connection with my weight ... I love what you just said and it is absolutely that – it is about being substantial… or grounded.* *M: It is that word substantial then, I am a substantial person actually, so "to hell with you, you can call me what you like!"* *07: Yes* *M: And I think there is a bit of anger that I think is in you which is transformationally fabulous (laughter)* *07: Yes, I loved that, when you said it, something lit up inside me, I thought, that's it … that's exactly right, I am substantial now.* *M: Yep* *07: I can feel it in myself, I have arrived … I am here … I belong here as much as the trees and the stars*
Rc	*08: To get some poetry moving between us if we can get into that*
Rc	*06: I appreciated your presence – I felt you were alongside me*
	TOTAL COMPLEX METAPHORS FOR THEME OF RELATIONSHIP – 21

Knowledge

The theme of Knowledge, psycho-education, therapeutic techniques contained the largest group of metaphors. "Getting to know the territory of shame", through a strong, reliable, non-judgemental therapeutic, significant or professional relationship was regarded by all participants as vitally important as a way out of shame. Recognising, facing, naming, examining, exploring shame, achieving some understanding, particularly understanding of self, and acquiring a sense of personal boundaries, were considered very important for moving forwards through shame. The strongest metaphors about working through shame were to do with talking and learning about shame in fine detail, with a therapeutic helpmate, a fellow-traveller, inspecting shame with precision, and becoming familiar with the difficult and convoluted territory of shame and its unexpected twists and turns. All participants, in a variety of metaphors, referred to the importance of dialogue to bring out

into the open unconscious suppressed shame material.   All participants talked about addressing and expressing uncomfortable, painful feelings, introducing challenging communication about shame. Shame needs to be heard and seen. Acquiring knowledge of shame itself and Entering, Engaging with, Expressing and Embracing shame were seen as a means of empowerment to get through shame and move in a forwards direction.

On the theme of knowledge, there were originally 74 strong metaphors which clustered around the sub-themes of:

- Ka – exploring, insight, awareness, experience; broken down further for clarification as it was a large section into three sub-sections, recognising shame, exploring and setting boundaries: 33;
- Kb – visualising: 10;
- Kc – encouraging the voice: 9;
- Kd – making the unconscious conscious, understanding and challenging the defences: 22

Challenge as a sub theme was placed in Kd under the main theme of knowledge/ therapeutic technique around unconscious process, because the use of challenge to uncover shame as a relational intervention has to be used very carefully so as not to undermine trust in the relationship and potentially re-shame the client.

See Appendices 10 and 11 for original full versions. See Table 10 below for reduced version of 21 chosen metaphors on Knowledge:

Table 10 Strong, complex metaphors on the theme of Knowledge as a way out of shame

	EXPLORING, INSPECTING, GAINING UNDERSTANDING, AWARENESS, THE NATURE OF SHAME, BOUNDARIES (6 metaphors)
Ka	*05Toying with the idea of shame being like wanting the world to swallow you up and becoming socially invisible … the antidote to that is to hold one's own vision whilst being visible*
Ka	*06 Because very often when we lose our thinking … and don't know what's happening … we have this physiological experience, but we can now see it as a magnifying glass … ah I am experiencing shame right now … this is my physical and emotional experience which may include fear and … humiliation and all kind of things, because I think once we say to ourselves, "Oh it's shame I'm feeling … then there is a tiny gap inside, in between us – in terms of our reflection and the experience – and sometimes that gap is just enough to … allow us to ... . talk about it to … um share it ... . to understand what's going on ... . and then the gap could widen and we are not so overwhelmed by it … I am holding it for them indeed, but also giving them a*

	tool in a way…
Ka	*05 I never felt secure till I know at that moment where that tip point was like having a new motorbike … (indistinct)* *M where that tip point did you say?* *05 yes, drifting away from the road, then I feel a certain angle boundary I can't go* *M yes so you wouldn't go quite over the edge – you'd be able to pull yourself back* *05 in order to find out where the edge is.* *M right* *05 and I've never felt safe in relationships till we fell out and extend a bit, and I had found out where the boundary is in order to find out where the edge is ... make friends with it*
Ka	*05 I build up a core phenomenological perception of what they are doing, what happens when they feel shame and how they might do something differently in future*
Ka	*05 I build up a range of very thick description of the shame experience*
Ka	*06 Putting things under the spotlight or magnifying glass*
	VISUALISATION (7 metaphors)
Kb	*08 Showing the dandelion it is a rose – a prize rose it's a rose not a dandelion … I do it with clients, in terms of self-esteem ... . why would people bother to look after themselves, if they think they are just a dandelion … if you have been shamed it is very easy to quickly flip into thinking there is something bad about this person*
Kb	*08 Like tending a garden* *You go and water it* *You want the rose to survive*
Kb	*06 I do the dendrite thing – I show them about the brain and how the neural pathway is on the script of my own particular pathway. It's very overgrown, it's difficult, so we have to chop a new way through the jungle. As we are working more and more, we are clearing a new pathway.*
Kb	*06 Even when the garden's clear, we have to pay it attention from time to time like a good gardener would with the weeds and go back and give ourselves some nurturing and some time because it can grow over very quickly and grow back … we need to keep the weeds at bay*
Kb	*05 It's about knowing the territory of the relationship, knowing the terrain*
Kb	*06 I know the territory of shame experientially and theoretically – it is multi-faceted, deep and wide – not something to dip in and out of and suddenly get cured.*
Kb	*06 Now I am on a farm and it doesn't matter whether it's snow, rain, wind, brilliant sun, I can step out on the farm, and I just feel at home – the farm could be anywhere in the world so I can hug a tree (laughter) or lie in the grass or look at water rippling on the stones. and I feel totally at peace*
	ENCOURAGING THE VOICE , NORMALISING (2 metaphors)
Kc	*06 And I call these healing crises, moments of healing crisis…and sometimes we make mistakes as therapists in this situation because our own little kid inside is so hurt at that point - all we want to do … all we want to do is that*

	(holding hands up). *Sometimes we can either withdraw and not respond, or we can push them away. And then of course we can go back in the next session when we have processed what was going on, sometimes with our therapist, sometimes with our client, and then say look , last week, this happened and my response was to over react and in doing that I got caught up in repeating your history. I apologise. (Pause)* *and some clients say … tear up ... . and some of them break down and say this is the first time in my life – my father never said sorry to me or my mother never said sorry to me …*
Kc	*06 My little boy is always alongside me – he is never far away – I don't want to leave him behind any more – I will rely on him to tell me when I am feeling things my adult doesn't want to know and he will rely on me to bale him out intellectually*
	TEACHING/SUPERVISING UNCONSCIOUS PROCESS (6 metaphors)
Kd	*06 It is almost like they are unconsciously precipitating the crisis to repeat their history, but at a much deeper level saying, do something different now – don't be seduced with me into all this shit again – give me a different response … and I call these moments of healing crisis*
Kd	*09 So when he came back for the second session I thought, I am not going to go through another session like that. I thought we are going to be real here. So I started the session with, "I was intrigued by the last thing you said to me last session", and he said, "What was that?" so I said, "While you were writing your cheque you said to me "How did you feel about working with a killer." And he smiled and I said, "Is that how you view yourself?" He then started talking more seriously … It felt like we had cut away a bit of the crap.* *M Are we talking there about his self-boundary – the difference between real and not real, and you were kind of ... . challenging him?* *09 I just wanted to be real in the room with him. I said to him … "I felt uneasy", and we talked about it … and I asked him, "Is that how you wanted me to feel?"*
Kd	*06 We are time travellers. The past is always with us … It's like our past has come along right through into the present, swoosh, and it overwhelms the present … That's what happens in the transference of course*
Kd	*06 When they are able to get out of continuous blame games with other people … and talk, explore, dig around in the jungle of their history and see life as it really was, not just how the defences created it*
Kd	*09 [as a therapist] You've got to cut through the dense oppressiveness, otherwise it's too tortuous (09/222)*
Kd	*08 What we call our badness, because often it is really good stuff. You know like our anger gets shoved in that shadow quite a lot and it is such good stuff* *M Yes, it is … so … this is very important, such good stuff …* *08 yes definitely* *M It's how we view it then – we saw it as bad but actually it is good stuff* *08What we get rid of – the good stuff (indistinct)*
	TOTAL COMPLEX GOLDEN METAPHORS FOR THEME OF KNOWLEDGE – 21

Creativity

The main theme of Creativity clustered around a variety of sub-themes to do with creative adjustments, distractions or coping strategies as a way out of shame, for example, returning to childhood reassurance, pets, going into nature, or finding a safe "womb-like" place. Making shame seen and heard through art, writing, poetry and creative language was a frequent sub-theme. Putting words around the painful shame experience was seen to be of vital importance, shifting the shame narrative from an old form into a new form. For a number of the participants, this involved a process of revisiting the negative shame experience, putting words around the memory of that experience in speech, writing, narration, and with imagination and creativity, transforming it from a traumatic core memory into a bearable, more integrated experience. All participants referred to experiences of committing energy into building something up and achieving success. With imagination, and all the ingredients of relational support and care, (outlined in R and K), the shame experience could be reframed as a significant meaningful turning point, "a wake-up call" of symbolic, iconic proportions.

This theme is about creative ways of working through shame, in a process moving towards integration of shame experiences – turning fantasy into reality, fiction into non-fiction, becoming more grounded. There was a general sense from all participants that shame is socially engendered through painful, wounding experiences caused by other people, and that shame takes root inside us and has to be managed. Different participants had varying views on it, ranging from shame being a fantasy that has to be exorcised, to something that is very real which has to be lived with. But there was no discrepancy between participants that creative adjustments have to be found to deal with shame, even though some thought shame can be cut out and some thought it could not.

On the theme of creativity, there were originally 45 strong metaphors falling into this theme (see Appendices 10 and 11). The sub-themes were:

- Ca – childhood – connection with nature, retreat to place of safety, distractions: 13
- Cb – creativity in art, writing, language, magical thinking, imagination: 12
- Cc – hard work, success, renewal, building something up, grounding: 14
- Cd – Turning points, memories – moments of healing crisis, symbols, iconic memories, moments of healing crisis –complex metaphors: 6

These chosen metaphors on the theme of creativity were reduced down to 21 out of a total of 45.   The strongest most visual ones showed that creative activity, hard work, and the use of the creative imagination and unconscious could be a way out of shame.

Imaginative thinking, speaking and writing, story-telling, metaphor, pictures and images, art, leaning into nature, could bring about a reframing of shaming experiences.

See Table 11 below for reduced version of 21 chosen metaphors on Creativity:

Table 11 Strong, complex metaphors on the theme of Creativity as a way out of shame

	CREATIVE RELATIONSHIP (5 metaphors)
Ca	*05 I had a sense of support from nature – dogs, cats, pets*
Ca	*05 I had an ongoing dialogue with nature*
Ca	*06 We cried together on the bank of the river, the dog and I. It was a wake-up call*
Ca	*06 Nature was a place of curiosity exploration and wonder … I feel at home – I can hug a tree, or lie in the grass, or look at water rippling on stones, and I feel totally at peace*
Ca	*07 Being a kind of nature child, wanting to be more creative, so there is something that has been released*
	IMAGINATION, ART, WRITING, CREATIVE UNCONSCIOUS (6 metaphors)
Cb	*06 Yeah, I was thinking more of the painting on the Sistine chapel yes I can see that now with the fingers touching – yes I can see that – I guess I am picking at a nail trying to make some contact with it* *M something about connecting, reconnecting?* *06 Yeah, yeah*
Cb	*07 I introduce some art work, some creativity …* *And just say to them, you know, you don't have to be a greater drawerer, do it with your eyes closed. Just make marks on the page that makes you … that gives some feeling of your client and then we are going to talk about it. So it is just tapping into that deeper knowing, that pre-verbal out of awareness stuff ... . erm … that intuitive – you know, intuition to me isn't just a wild guess. It is about … it's about a conglomeration of knowing, that has happened …that your rational mind can't take in all at once* *M Mm, do you know where you hold that intuition? Can you locate it in your body?* *07 In my guts, definitely*
Cb	*08 Change the narrative slighltly, 'cause that is the thing about shame, just switching the narrative slightly*
Cb	*07 My crone is doing something else and going, "Sod that!"*
Cb	*06 I think somewhere inside me in this empty aloneness, there is some kind of glimmer, some little little spark of hope or faith*
Cb	*06 So I then went into this coping strategy of – let's build something successful from nothing ... . I needed professional success to feel good about myself. So it was like x became the ashes that was me ... a shame-based x*
	BUILDING, RENEWAL, HARD WORK, SUCCESS (4 metaphors)

Cc	*07 Funnily enough, you said, how did I break free from it? (the shame)* *When I was a child, I became an excellent swimmer… I used to win gold medals for it*
Cc	*07 I found this beautiful picture of hope and she was languishing on a hillock and she was blinded and her lute was broken ... I thought that was my hope now because I didn't want her to be that fairy tale thing any more… I wanted hope to be more grounded, more earthy, more real in the world*
Cc	*07 To keep the connection with my original shaming, not losing the connection, needing to make the story. Part of me was shattered and rebuilt*
Cc	*07 I have built my foundations – my foundations were built with the death of hope ... . That was the crone and I am starting to build my house of self*
	ICONIC MOMENTS, HEALING CRISIS (6 metaphors)
Cd	*06 The teacher put me in the dunce's corner, I must have done something wrong. I saw this nail, it had been bent over, and over the years the nail had become embedded in the paint, and I started to pick at it with my finger, and I said to myself, I will never forget being in this corner, I will never forget this and I never have. There is a connection between being seen and being put in the dunce's corner, so I am going to keep very very still and go into this empty secret lonely place where no one can get in and no one can see me.*
Cd	*06 The nail was covered in paint, and my spark of hope was covered… was well camouflaged, was well defended … I think I was protecting it in my isolation … I was protecting that little bit of faith and hope*
Cd	*06 The dunce's corner with a vengeance* *Instead of looking into the dunce's corner and seeing the nail, I was in the dunce's corner and propping up the whole wall … everyone dining out on it*
Cd	*07 It was a melting pot – and in some ways I am glad the shaming happened – I'm not because I can still feel the burn of it, but a part of me is thinking, those walls would not have come down as quick and as completely unless that had happened, and the walls had to come down*
Cd	*06 It was the cross roads … in the moonlight by water … the dog dropped a bloody big log on my foot. At that moment I thought, "you have got to get your act back together".*
Cd	*06 x the working sheepdog … I don't think I will ever forget the dog or the log. He is buried outside in the garden*
	TOTAL COMPLEX GOLDEN METAPHORS FOR THEME OF CREATIVITY – 21

Acceptance

Main theme: Acceptance as a way out of shame

The strongest most visual metaphors showed that shame is with us as a real part of the matrix of life and that we need to find ways to reconcile ourselves to it. There were many metaphorical suggestions from all participants, but these seem to coagulate into themes of self-acceptance through self-compassion, taking a lighter view of oneself, going easy

particularly into older age, and joining with other people in realising we are all inter-connected. The sub-themes were: Aa – painful reality; Ab - common experience, connective human bond, self-compassion; Ac – humour, language of ease.

Acceptance metaphors cluster around three sub-themes – of stoical, neutral or cheerful acceptance of the reality that shame exists (Aa), that it is a natural part of life as a human (Ab); rather than defend against it, it is better to engage in it and embrace it, through self-compassion, connective bonding and find a language for it, (Ac) through humour, easy language, cliché, swearing, the affiliative "we".   A major aspect of acceptance is about learning how to match expectations with reality (Kaufman, 1995, p.226).   The best we can do is to achieve a sense of integration, where we arrive at a feeling that our script makes sense and our story forms an acceptable coherent whole.

In the FP, an important sub-theme for clients and practitioners around working with shame appears to be aiming to achieve a sense of self-acceptance through gaining a strong relationship with self, getting connected with our core self through dialogue with others and linking up split off parts of ourselves through self-dialogue, moving towards integration. 08's metaphor about restoring the stone is about restoring everything that has been broken by shame, what has been placed into the shadow needs to be gradually reclaimed through the tender loving care of a good relationship, as Van Manen said (2011) "*restoring a broken wholeness*".

Humour developed as a separate sub-theme in acceptance, as it became clear that the participants who could talk about shame, accept it, see the funny side of it, make light of it and "take the Micky" out of themselves. Having gone through the process of facing up to their shame and processing it, they were better able to accept this part of themselves and live alongside it. This includes me, myself and my own development throughout this project.

I hesitate to use the word healing, as this might claim a complete recovery from shame, which I don't think is ever fully possible when shame can recur at any time as a given of the human condition. I have therefore decided to use the tamer word, "Acceptance" for the final category about reconciliation to the reality of shame, rather than trying to escape into a fantasy world of make-believe and happy-ever-after.

On the theme of acceptance, there were originally were 44 strong metaphors in this section. The sub-themes were:

- Aa – Acceptance of reality – living with shame as a human 'given ': 11

- Ab – Common human experience – part of human life - going with the flow   – self-compassion – the affiliative "we" – connective human bond : 19
- Ac – Humour and colloquial easy language : 14

See Table 12 below for reduced version of 21 chosen metaphors on Acceptance:

Table 12 Strong, complex metaphors on the theme of Acceptance as a way out of shame

	CALM ACCEPTANCE (4 metaphors)
Aa	*09 I think it will never go away – it comes up and I manage it, and push it back down again. But I don't think it will ever go away because I have talked and talked a lot about it in different places. Maybe that is the part that is human.*
Aa	*09 This deep ball of blackness in the pit of my stomach ... nasty and hard ... I can feel it rising ... I am trying to stay with it …My awareness of the black ball as I get older becomes greater*
Aa	*06 I thank God for my shame because it gives me enough humility to keep one foot on the ground and not go floating off into grandiosity*
Aa	*07 That kind of seesaw, I had to find a way of balancing it, and what it did was allow me to accept that is the way the world is, rather than the way I wanted it to be*
	NATURAL STAGES, PART OF A MATRIX, CONNECTIVE HUMAN BOND, COMPASSION (11 metaphors)
Ab	*07 How can I get this person to understand that there is this possibility of this whole land of compassion for yourself, forgiveness and love, that is necessary, that is fruitful, that will energise and bear you up and carry you on and lift…*
Ab	*07 Do you see the radiating spines on a leaf? We're all leaves … part of the greater whole, the tree, life…We are all connected with each other… I am happy that I am only one of the tiny little parts of the skeleton of the leaf. I have no grand ego that I have to be the central vein or anything like that…. I am just a part of that matrix and happy to be so*
Ab	*07 If a client is in a place where they think it is only them, sometimes it 's alright to say you have your shame, I have mine. It is just part of being alive. It is quite valuable in some ways… in my stomach, it is just part of me, part of my evolution. It is part of wisdom, I think it's part of that wisdom of getting older… it's something that is grounding… It's all part of the mix*
Ab	*07 It's the shame that drags you down, and pulls you, and sucks you in, but once you realise that, if you have been down this road, thousands of others have as well, it's just part of the human bond, we have all been here in some way or another*
Ab	*09 The ultimate thing about shame is self-compassion… which is to do with self-love… the ultimate is to do with the heart*
Ab	*07 The bond has restarted – I have held out an olive branch*
Ab	*05 The last cycle of the crisis – working to the conclusion that mankind is my kind – you don't have to be this or that ... or different – just accept*

Ab	06 You know it is not too difficult to see and feel when clients are moving more towards a greater capacity for self-compassion … when they are able to talk about their histories and see life as it really was, not just how the defences created it
Ab	08 I was thinking of water because I think shame … wears you down very very slowly and that's why I was thinking to get the self-compassion, it has to go in reverse … if you get a river, and it's splashing the same bit of stone over and over again, or a pebble in the sea, you know, eventually it gets worn down, doesn't it … there's an element in that, of getting worn down, so you have no resilience. The metaphor for unshaming is … restoring the stone, getting the stone to be whole again …
Ab	08 I totally cocked up, which we all do from time to time
Ab	07 I sense that, I can sense the difference …I know I am different. ... M the crone, I like that, that's quite funny isn't it? 07 yep, (shared laughter) yes, and you can be that in any way… you can make that in any way you like, like my little house I think M yes, so it's kind of…. homely isn't it… 07 yes, I am…there is a sense of repleteness at the moment…my little mud hut and the suspension bridge ... I didn't trust it. When I was talking about that moment of forgiveness the other day, there was the beginnings of self-compassion… and I am learning that each brick that I erect has been painfully wrought by me and it is of worth now…and nobody now has the right to take them down, it is about me saying so… the beginnings of worth, the beginnings of self-compassion
	HUMOUR, SWEAR WORDS, COLLOQUIAL EASY LANGUAGE (6 metaphors)
Ac	06 I have got over 100 sheep, if they have been too long in one field they are absolutely covered in shit – that is what shame is like. Sheep shit helps – wiping a sheep's arse. It is no respecter of status (laughter)
Ac	09 The way I think about it now, it's [humour] an antidote to shame… it makes me laugh, it takes me up into my head into a logical place
Ac	09 The image of the humour is energetic … like bubbles ... with bubbles you can float away ... by being able to laugh about it, it feels as though you could just float up and ... and go away from it and the shame doesn't matter
Ac	M I hope I will be able to use some of those pearls of your more elderly wisdom 05 Thank you for the elderly (laughter)
Ac	08 This is to do with old age, Meriel, and I am doing this training now and the word just won't come and I've just had to get used to it and I just have to say to people sorry the word won't come, or I'll let you know ... (laughter) M Fabulous, so how would you characterise yourself there… can you do a picture of that one 08 Well, the picture that immediately comes to mind is of a cartoon actually
Ac	06 So sometimes in this tricky messy, business of working with shame we do fuck up ... and I think our responsibility as therapists is then, although we are feeling pretty bad about it, to try and be curious … rather than judgemental – oh how would I do that? what was that about? Oh, I see what was happening ... . oh shit, let's go back and put it right (laughter)
	TOTAL COMPLEX GOLDEN METAPHORS FOR THEME OF ACCEPTANCE 21

4.4　Findings – further reduction down to 22 strongest Complex Metaphors

The above 84 metaphors were further reduced down to 22 as below, Table 13.

These complex metaphors overlap across a number of themes, as can be seen in the Table of Complex Codings in Appendix 10. They are complex in that they are multi-layered and none of them readily fits into one distinct theme. Therefore each one is discussed in turn in Chapter 5, see p.109.

I regard these as the most important in the whole piece, and the process of sifting reduced the initial data from over 2000 metaphors, down to this final crystallisation for ways of understanding shame. The main findings in these metaphors are the importance of:

- an empathic relationship whether in therapy, personal or professional life
- knowledge of shame and ability to allow exploration, visualisation, dialogue and challenge of defence
- creative adjustment and expression through imagination, achievement, tapping iconic memories
- calm acceptance, sense of connectivity to self and others and humour.

The journey through the territory of shame, like trauma, was suggested metaphorically by all participants as offering the benefits of a better, more authentic relationship with self, through their survival and recovery from shame, rather like a form of post-traumatic growth and rebuilding of character (Joseph, 2011). This has echoes in my own parallel process of growth through conducting this research.

Table 13 Complex Golden Metaphors

Page	Metaphor	Main theme	Reference	Coding
110	1.Grandma and the armchair	Relationship	09/346	Ra/Rb
112	2. Entering the territory of shame – invitation	Relationship	06/2/122	Ra
113	3. The rose and the heart	Relationship	08/591	Ra/Rb
115	4. Knock knock	Relationship	06/1/271	Rb
116	5. The push-pull of attachment – waves on a beach	Relationship	08/764/939	Ra/Rb
119	6.The new motorbike	Knowledge	05/229	Ka
122	7.The ground swallowing you up	Knowledge	05/407	Ka
123	8.The gap and the magnifying glass	Knowledge	06/2/229	Ka
126	9.The jungle, the garden and the dendrite thing	Knowledge	06/2/627	Kb/Rc
128	10. Cutting away a bit of the crap	Knowledge – use of self, normalising	09/568	Kc
134	11. Moments of healing crisis	Knowledge – unconscious process	06/2/367	Kd
136	12. The farm and a safe haven	Knowledge	06/1/408	Kb
138	13. The dog and the log	Creativity	06/1/677	Ca
140	14. The dunce's corner and the nail	Creativity	06/1/248	Cd
142	15. The Sistine Chapel	Creativity	06/1/388	Cb
144	16. Hope languishing	Creativity	07/2/80	Cc
146	17. A melting pot, an organic process and a leaf	Creativity	07/2/448	Cd
149	18. The black ball	Acceptance	09/133	Aa
151	19. The suspension bridge and the little mud hut	Acceptance	07/2/688	Ab
154	20. Sheep shit helps	Acceptance	06/1/766	Ac
157	21. Colours of shame	Defences	05, 06, 07, 08, 09	D
159	22. Soup or cream that has gone off	Defences – Paradox and opposition	08/168	D

4.5   Defences

All participants used metaphors about defences, in fact the word 'defence' is a metaphor itself, suggesting putting up a barricade for the purpose of self-protection and survival. Shame has to protect itself through defensive manoeuvring to keep itself alive. The defences deceive us into believing shame is a truthful valid part of us, when in fact it is neither truthful nor valid. The presence of defences is a powerful indicator that shame is lurking somewhere around.

In the FP data, references to the defences of denial, projection, fantasy, aggression, intellectualization, dissociation, and repression, occurred across themes in the groupings of metaphors. Many were initially placed into Kd, Cd and A, see Appendix 11, into the positive themes of Knowledge, Creative Adjustments and Acceptance, because Knowledge and understanding of defence mechanisms and Creativity were regarded as helpful by all participants to encourage clients and supervisees to address and accept our normal defences against shame.

Vaillant's distinction between immature (levels 1–3) and mature (level 4) defences clarified this issue. I picked out 36 metaphors of defences and divided them separately into 22 which seem unhelpful (Table 14) and 14 helpful (Table 15). Unhelpful means that we avoid dealing with shame head on, instead we skirt round it. Helpful means we are facing shame and dealing with it. Table 14 below shows the 22 metaphors of unhelpful, immature, circular, repetitive ways to avoid dealing with shame and keep shame festering:

Table 14 Metaphors of Unhelpful Defences maintaining Shame

Unhelpful defences against shame (pathological, immature or neurotic)	Best example of this in a metaphor from the data
Avoidance of experiencing shame – Level 1	*How can we so desperately defend – so we don't have to experience it [shame] 09/196*
Avoidance of real feelings of shame – projection – Level 2	*Almost telling me about all these violent things that happened with these different women, almost holding them up like trophies, rather than actually what he was really feeling which was a deep sense of shame about them … A collective of all the women he had treated abysmally 09/600 and 696*
Fight – Level 2	*He said, How do you feel about working with a killer? His passing shot at the end of the session 09/533*
Fight – Level 2	*Yes, I remember at the time flailing to get her off but she was too strong 07/330*
Fight – Level 2	*Anger with our core self, towards ourselves 05/408*

Unhelpful defences against shame (pathological, immature or neurotic)	Best example of this in a metaphor from the data
Avoidance – Level 2 Dissociation	*The spark in all of us … we protect and often lose touch with, particularly in times of real existential threat, of non-existence, the possibility of taking my life in the water ... . I have much more sympathy now with people contemplating suicide 06/1/732*
Avoidance hiding, withdrawal, Self-protection from shame being exposed – flight – Level 2	*Like a suit of armour. I am in here somewhere … erm … in this fat person 07/1/125*
Avoidance hiding, withdrawal from shame, hiding – freeze / flop – Level 2	*Then this voice in my head went, stay still … and I … possum, you know … what is our survival mechanism? Fight, flight, freeze, and I froze … played possum 07/1/341*
Projection – Level 2	*For about 3 months I had a shaming supervisor ... . people who can't take in their badness and project it onto someone else … I didn't feel safe at all 08/862*
Projection – Level 2	*I think it was out of fear that somehow she was clinically responsible and if something went wrong … and so I think, out of fear, she just sort of, dumped everything on me. Actually I have had that happen before by another supervisor, out of fear they said Oh, you have got to do this, and then I went to another supervisor who said, Oh no, I would never do that – that is really going to, you know, upset the relationship. That supervisor was definitely coming from a place of love* *M mm* *08 and the other one was coming from a place of – if this goes horribly wrong I will be culpable* *M so that's fear ...* *08 yeah* *M the one you are talking about is coming from a place of defensiveness* *08 yeah. So I do think that is something that is very difficult isn't it, when you are a supervisor, not to go into fear 08/908*
Disappearing Loss of power – isolation – flop – Level 2	*The trap door in my stomach would open and I would disappear into it 07/1/531*
Disappearing loss of power – isolation – flop Level 2	*Sugar lump sinking down in a big cup of tea, becoming less and less, more dilute … I am dissolving before someone else's eyes 05/63*
Disappearing loss of power – isolation – flop – Level 2	*My defence is to become non-actual 05/78*

Unhelpful defences against shame (pathological, immature or neurotic)	Best example of this in a metaphor from the data
Disappearing into aloneness or being overwhelmed by the anguish of shame loss of power – isolation – flop Level 2	*I think I would swing between going into the empty aloneness, er … and this place of being completely swamped … and washed in the anguish* *The fear was so intense … I didn't know what was going to happen* 06/1/652
Avoidance – immature – hiding, withdrawal from shame – flight Level 2	*That early non-attached place with my mother ... . why I backed off from her and found solace in the garden* 06/1/506
Avoidance – immature – knee-jerk natural reactivity – a useful self-protective function – a natural process – fight Level 2	*The child has a natural way of defending – although it is painful as a child, it is a knee jerk defence whereas as an adult I knew it was happening ... . it was like open heart surgery without an anaesthetic* 06/1/605
Avoidance – camouflage, disguise, not what it appears (the nature of shame) Level 3	*There is something there that is. Something isn't quite right, and the not quite rightness has got something to do with badness or unsavouriness. It is much more to do with taste. Which is odd isn't it? M is there a fruit that you might equate it with or a food? 08 well I suppose, something that's gone off slightly – you know, past its sell by date … maybe soup that has started fermenting, or you know gone off, but when you look closely it is fermenting or bubbling, something that looks like soup, like normal soup, like you could really eat it but when you look closely it is fermenting or you know, it's bubbling or whatever ... . maybe something like that … or cream you know that has gone over the top but it looks okay… it is about the whole adoption and fostering process, and you know, maybe me feeling this might be about to start again … I am going to be rejected by my peers now ... .* 08/186
Avoidance – camouflage, disguise, not what it appears (the nature of the effects of shame) – Level 3	*It is definitely water because it is disguised as goodness most of the time* 08/1065
Avoidance – withdrawal, flight hard to talk about our shame Unconscious parallel process – Level 3	*We walk on egg shells and allow it to intimidate our capacity to talk about it in a kind of parallel process* 06/2/185
Reaction formation –overcompensating for sexual abuse Level 3	*Protecting herself against the shame – she was so special to him* 09/164
Neurotic – intellectualisation Flight – Level 3	*A lot of the time I intellectualise it. I can feel myself trying to go back into my head and rationalise it all* 09/10
Avoidance – denial Flight – Level 3	*Sometimes I think I am able to be in denial about it* 09/145

On the other hand, Table 15 below shows metaphors of defences which can be deemed helpful, mature and more positive. They are inclined more towards Creativity, creative adjustments, and use of colourful language. In Acceptance also the metaphors show constructive ways to manage and defend against shame through humour, cliché and sometimes anger. What they all have in common is that they involve a theme of Entering, Engaging in, Embracing and Expressing the shame, the Four E's of shame, not avoiding. All of these metaphors are creative adjustments, because they are re-establishing and enabling connection. They are using words, humour, action or imagination to enable the person in shame to escape or move position, or at least shift position in some small way to release some of the stuckness of shame.

In psycho-analytic theory, "sublimation" is a mature type of defence mechanism where socially unacceptable, repressed impulses or idealisations are unconsciously transformed into socially acceptable actions or behaviour, possibly resulting in a long-term conversion of the initial impulse into more acceptable and manageable forms.

The following table shows helpful, Level 4, creative, "sublimating'" ways to express shame verbally and visually, making the defence into conscious knowledge and enabling exit from a defensive position around shame:

Table 15 More helpful defences on theme of humour, expression, creativity

Helpful, mature defences against shame	Strong example of this in a metaphor from the data	Ref.
Humour – Knowledge – bringing the defence of forgetfulness and fear of showing vulnerability up to the light – Level 4	*Do you remember what we were talking about yesterday? Probably not because your brain's gone. I said, How old do you feel? He said, Oh shit, about 6 – I needed to show my feelings, not lock them away.*	06/2/438
Humour – Knowledge – achieving a mature understanding – Level 4	*I do it in my teaching… almost every time I run a workshop, there will come a moment when suddenly I lose my thinking ... and now I say to people …oh I have lost my thinking ... . and sometimes, because I have already predicted it I say. Oh I told you I might (laughter)*	06/2/679
Sublimation– creativity – Level 4	*Funnily enough, you said how did I break free from it ...* *When I was a child, I became an excellent swimmer… I used to win gold medals for it*	07/1/438
Communication – Knowledge – making the defence conscious – level 4	*Shame as a sort of short hand – there are no go areas in shame, where we must not go. A certain taboo.*	05/209

Helpful, mature defences against shame	Strong example of this in a metaphor from the data	Ref.
Communication – words beginning to surface – Level 4 – creative acceptance	*I couldn't cope with seeing that ugly mother side that held my head under the water… these memories came back that I had held at bay for 30 to 40 years*	07/296
Altruism – Relationship – Level 4	*Coming from a place of love*	08/908
Anticipation – Knowledge – making explicit the defensive human need to avoid humiliation	*I think shame is the biggest driver, not the sex instinct, not the death instinct, but the moment by moment defence against the anticipation of humiliation*	06/2/470
Creativity – using colour to describe and express shame – co-creation – anger turned out into a creative image – Level 4	*The colour that comes to mind now is definitely red…fiery red and yellow ... red. I think it was about anger to be honest, one of the defences against shame*	08/43
Creativity – use of colour, colourful metaphorical language to describe and express shame – co-creation – Level 4	*I get into a defence of anger or rage then it becomes red of course, big big red*	06/1/349
Creativity – use of visualisation and metaphorical language to describe, consciously experience and understand shame – co-creation as a way of challenging the defences – Level 4	*When they are able to …talk about ... explore and dig around in the jungle of their history and see life as it really was, not just how the defences created it so yeah ... . M so you are giving them a place that's safe enough to not be scared of that jungle then you are with them in the jungle I suppose*	06/2/623
Creativity – working hard – sublimation – Level 4	*One of my coping strategies was to work very hard and create something very successful ... . the positive side of shame*	06/1/660
Creativity – through metaphor – challenging the defences – Level 4	*08 it has been quite interesting for me, because you know, I said a few things I didn't … hadn't thought of before, mainly through the metaphors you know M well I think it is fabulously rich 08 about the water and putting the bad stuff… getting rid of the good stuff*	08/1085
Creativity – use of metaphor to embrace the defence of anger and reframe anger as a valuable commodity – Level 4	*What we call our badness, because often it is really good stuff. You know like our anger gets shoved in that shadow quite a lot and it is such good stuff M such good stuff feels very important 08 yes definitely M it's how we view it then – we saw it as bad but actually it is good stuff 08 what we get rid of ... the good stuff (indistinct)*	08/1086

Helpful, mature defences against shame	Strong example of this in a metaphor from the data	Ref.
Creativity – through metaphor – challenging the defences – therapist taking charge, taking charge around client defences in the transference Level 4	*[as a therapist] You've got to cut through the dense oppressiveness, otherwise it's too tortuous*	09/222

Here in the Final Project, Defences, from being originally incorporated into the PEP theme of visceral woundedness and then Knowledge as a sub-theme in the FP, became an important, "floating' sub-theme in its own right, particularly represented in Tables 14 and 15. Defences can sometimes be viewed in the light of a healthy, strategic reaction to a difficult punishing shame situation, since sometimes it is better to take avoiding action than to enter and be re-shamed. Entering the territory of shame and challenging the defences has to be done at the right time, with the right company, and at the right pace. This is discussed in Section 5.5.

Defensive manoeuvres – fight, flight, freeze and flop.
I extracted ten metaphors on defensive manoeuvring which can be a temporary way of alleviating shame. For simplicity, these findings have been placed in Table 16 into standard, "pop-psychology" categories of fight, flight, freeze, flop – natural reflex reactions to shame in terms of perceived threat and acute wounding pain. In Freudian terms, these would be called aggression, projection, repression, and reaction formation. My original terms from the PEP, "Hot and Cold Shame", which can be found lurking in Figures 10 and 11, pp. 106-107, in this FP are probably more immediately graspable.

These strongest ten metaphors of defences were brought them together in the middle of the drawing of the Island of Shame, (see Table 4 below, and Figure 9). They include sub-themes of different forms of inhibition, self-protection and avoidance: fight (anger turned out) flight (hiding, withdrawal) freeze (avoiding, abdicating) and flop (passive withdrawal, submitting, giving up, turning anger towards self). I found that they occurred across all themes, and kept shifting from place to place, starting on the left of the island of shame as a negative but later moving closer into the themes of Knowledge, Creativity and Acceptance once they had been recognised, spoken about, owned and embraced. Recognition is the beginning of empowerment.

Table 16 Ten Metaphors of Defences Maintaining Shame

THEME	METAPHOR	REF.
Fight/flight Defence – hiding, withdrawal, camouflage self-protection from shame being exposed	*Like a suit of armour. I am in here somewhere erm in this fat person*	07/1/125
Freeze/flop Defence – .hiding, withdrawal from shame, camouflage	*Then this voice in my head went, stay still … what is our survival mechanism? Fight, flight, freeze, and I froze … I played possum*	07/1/341
Flight Defence – self-protective, social function of shame – social restraint, inhibition of shameful behaviour	*Shame as a sort of short hand – there are no go areas in shame, where we must not go. A certain taboo.*	05/209
Flight Defence Repression Stuckness and powerlessness Traumatic memory – she was not ready to deal with that trauma until a safe time to bring up the memory	*I couldn't cope with seeing that ugly mother side that held my head under the water… these memories came back that I had held at bay for 30 to 40 years*	07/2/96
Flight Defence Hard to talk about our shame, passive withdrawal, unconscious parallel process	*We walk on egg shells and allow it to intimidate our capacity to talk about it in a kind of parallel process*	06/2/185
Flight Defence – intellectualisation	*A lot of the time I intellectualise it. I can feel myself trying to go back into my head and rationalise it all*	09/10/29
Flight Defence – denial	*Sometimes I think I am able to be in denial about it*	09/145
Fight, Flight, Freeze, Flop Defence against shame – a natural process – self-defence	*The child has a natural way of defending – although it is painful as a child, it is a knee jerk defence*	06/1/605
Fight Defence of anger against shame	*The colour that comes to mind now is definitely red. fiery red and yellow ... red. I think it was about anger to be honest, one of the defences against shame*	08/43
Fight Defence of anger against shame	*I get into a defence of anger or rage then it becomes red of course, big big red*	06/1/349
	Total 10	

4.6 Development of all themes into the territory of shame – the key finding of the whole project

I carried out the analysis by putting all the main most striking metaphors and images into the above tables, moving these around between codings for the most satisfactory placements, but I still felt frustrated because there was no single truly accurate place to locate some metaphors, particularly on Defences. Shame is elusive. Clarity was gained by representing the metaphors of the shame journey pictorially in the following diagrams. The strongest negative, positive and defence metaphors were brought together into a shame island to embrace the whole picture of shame, with more negative aspects on the left and positive ways forward on the right and the defences threaded in between.

Throughout the project, I have developed the findings into a series of pictures, or mappings. The clearest two are below and there are others in Figure 2, p. 24 (from the original PEP, Figure 14, p.177, and the final Appendix 15. These show the evolutionary process of thematic shifts. The following drawing of the territory of shame summarises pictorially the rich and complex findings of my investigation, and of particular interest is that over time the defences became more central in the entire picture of shame, embracing both sides of the territory of agony and relief.

A significant realisation is that the initial complexity of my analysis, was replaced by simplified drawings becoming more and more simplified by the end of the project.

SKY OF NON-JUDGEMENT

HARBOUR OF SAFETY

GARDEN OF FORGIVENESS

FAY VOICE HILL

SPEAK BARK LAUGH

HEART OF VULNERABILITY

CATALYTIC SPARK

'I'M OKAY'

ACCEPTANCE COMPASSION

POETS CORNER

ART STREET

CREATIVITY COAST

GRAN ARMCHAIR

LOVE

FEELING HELD

RELATIONSHIPS

AWARENESS OF 'THE GAP'

SHAME DESCENDING

KNOWLEDGE

UNCONSCIOUS MADE CONSCIOUS

NOTICE 'HOLDING THE VISION'

CUT THE CRAP

NATURE

LEAF DOGS

THE MIX

HARD WORK STAYING WITH IT

ACTIVITY

BRIDGE OF GUIDE

BRIDGE OF

DENDRITE THING

BRIDGE OF

MACHETE

WOUNDING RIDGE

JUNGLE OF

POWERLESSNESS

BLACK BALL HOLE

FALL

BLUSH

HOT POOLS OF SELF CONSCIOUSNESS

CAUSEWAY OF

EBB & FLOW

MOUNT ISOLATION

HEART PAIN

FIGHT - RAGE

FREEZE - SILENCED PASSIVE

drowned by mother

FLIGHT WITHDRAW

CAVE OF HIDING

FLOP

PATH OF REPRESSION & DENIAL

BOG OF DISGUST

DUNCES CORNER

SKY OF JUDGEMENT

Sk

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STAYING –
WITH IT

C.oaSt,

R(tc.honsh i

NO

NATURE Creativity

LEAF – Dog

'Im okay

ACCEPTANCE COMPASSION

GARDEN OF FORGIVENESS

CREATIVITY COAST

PoT I's
CORNER

C.Ausowf'loF Muddy Footprints HARBOUR OF SAFETY

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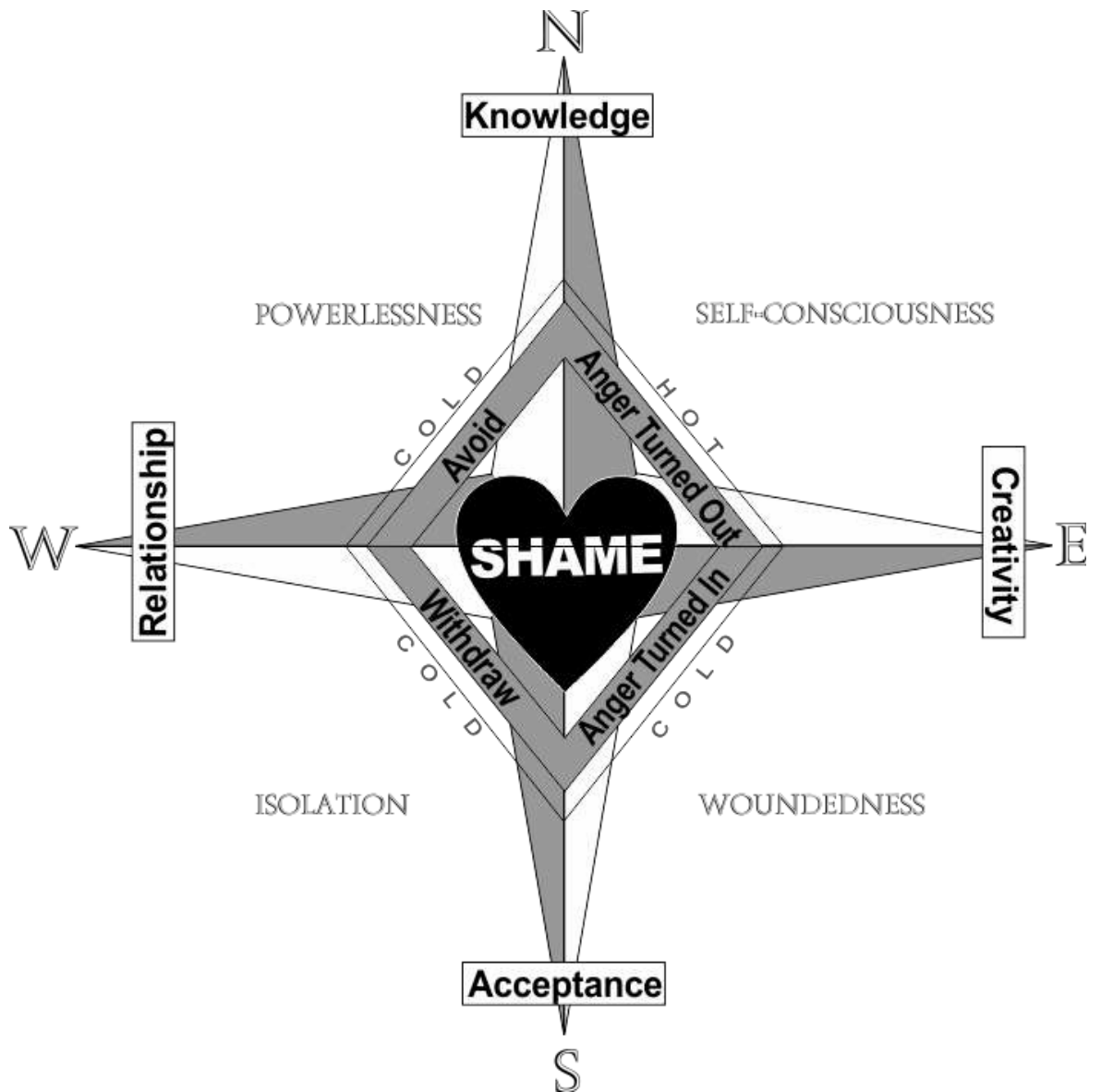C..MES of H• D•NG

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Figure 11: Meriel's Compass of Shame

Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1   The 22 strongest metaphors for ways out of shame – extracts, examples, exploring themes

This section, (see Table 13, p.97) investigates participants' use of complex metaphors with iconic / symbolic submerged layers of meaning around the experience of shame. The complex metaphors are the most sophisticated, strong, striking metaphors in the entire data set. They are the ones that stand alone as complicated and elusive. They frequently resemble metaphorical stories or sections of text which need unpacking. These metaphors are nuanced, and are rather like psychotherapeutic material in sessions with clients, where the meaning is not immediately obvious; there is a sense that there is something worthy of more serious, deep, extended, detailed attention. The following section enabled me to measure the depth of the metaphors and come to a sense of myself through intimately living with those sections of the interviews. The writing itself became a kind of self-making, which echoes Van Manen's words (2011), "*Writing is a kind of self-making or forming".*

During the thematic analysis, it felt difficult and increasingly futile to break up these complex metaphors and put them into many different themes because that exercise destroyed the sense of them. The initial lists of FP metaphors for the thematic analysis are in Volume 2, Appendix 5, p.100, showing the metaphors reduced and broken down into strips. In this process, some sense of depth, connectedness and meaning was lost. I therefore decided to look in detail at 22 of the most striking, powerful, "golden" metaphors, from the entire data set in the FP. These had been highly rated by a clinical psychologist, a colleague counsellor, and me. My Academic Consultant described them as 'energetic, dynamic'. See Table 13, Section 4.3.

The metaphors I chose are multi-layered, working at a level of simplicity in terms of mostly being quite concrete literal images, yet at the same time conveying nuances, e.g. a tipping point on a motor bike and moments of healing crisis, which are more abstract. This section contains metaphors which seem to carry a significance; this gradually works its way into a deeper level of awareness. I called them "submerged" to start with, aware that the term "submerged" carries metaphorical significance of going under, and could reflect the process of drowning in shame. I now prefer the title Complex Metaphors instead and have substituted this where possible.

These strongest metaphors are discussed in this chapter, showing several important and recurring ideas cutting across several themes. The best metaphors in each theme will

now be examined to highlight key points. Quoted extracts are italicised in boxes at the beginning of each section.

5.1.1   Theme 1: Relationship

A main theme was relationship. This theme divided into three sub-themes:

- Well boundaried supportive relationship in therapeutic environment or psychotherapy training environment
- Warm caring relationship in intimate family environment
- Supportive professional / research relationship with colleagues – shared moments in working environment where there is respectful equality.

The common ingredient for all these relationships to function was within a safe, non-judgemental, warm, caring atmosphere. A number of key metaphors highlighted the nature of a relationship for helping heal shame. Memories and images of these relationships were helpful to bring about soothing from the pain of shame.

Complex metaphor 1 – Grandma and the armchair: Main theme – Relationship (Rb)
Love is the antidote to shame – unconditional acceptance – a warm caring relationship with her grandmother – like a strong therapeutic relationship

> *An inner sort of warmth … solid … as opposed to shame that is cold – she [Grandma] gave me the warmth that I didn't get from my mother.*
> *She could be sitting in the armchair, with me either sitting on the arm, or slithered in next to her, with the dog sitting at my feet. It feels absolutely heavenly…*
> *She wouldn't even have known what she was doing … that knowledge comes from love … . I think, the confidence in myself and the sense of self that I hang on to was thanks to her.   I would have been so much more fragile without her.*
> *If I was not allowed out because I had been naughty, or whatever, she would always say, oh no, no, I'm sure she wasn't (laughter)* (09)

Participant 09 perfectly describes a relationship of unconditional love where she did not feel any shame. This extended metaphor of a memory of being snuggled up with her grandmother in an armchair with her dog, embraces many of the important themes in this research about therapeutic healing of shame. The picture of her all-accepting Grandma is a vivid description of a person who provides the necessary core conditions for trust and safety to be oneself without fear of being judged and rejected, i.e. shamed. 09 continues and elababorates on the nature of love:

> *Remaining constant ... giving unconditional love, naturally oozing, however hideous they feel, like being in that chair with the arms round you.*
>
> *It is about the aspects of our being, how we sit, how we speak, our tone of voice, how we look at a person. That knowledge comes from love.*
>
> *It feels to me as though love is a really important part of the antidote to shame, that unconditional love, that kind of purity of love* (09)

The warmth of the image of Grandma, who offered safe containment of frightening feelings of distress, insecurity and shame, when the participant was being bullied at school and not being held psychologically by her parents, is a powerful picture of what is needed for a way out of shame to occur. Her Grandma's natural oozing of unconditional acceptance was the building block of her confidence and sense of self.

This power of love from a significant other is another way of describing the provision of core conditions in therapy. Love is not a common word for therapists to use in our work, because it induces shameful fears of being unprofessional and unboundaried, and likely to be confused with emotional types of love other than the professional type of love which in Greek might be called "agape", meaning a deeply respectful admiring sort of love … or at times, "ludus" meaning playful love, for example when doing playful inner child work.

Using the word "love" in a therapeutic context, as Peck (1978), a psychiatrist, observed (see Literature Review, section 2.6, p.30) is unusual and often considered dangerous, because it steps outside mainstream formal boundaries into the territory of potential abuse, if it is confused with other forms of love, as in Greek,"*eros*" for erotic love, and "*mania*" for love that is uncontrolled and passionate. Peck, (ibid) defined love as an act of will, not an emotion: "*The will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth*". The importance of deep commitment to a client's personality growth and constancy of concern was evident in the participants across the board. Three of the five actually named this as love.

To mention love can induce embarrassment, which is a small version of shame, so is relevant here in this research where I have been looking at shame and determining ways out of shame. I contend that love is a way out of shame and the metaphors around relationship found in the interviews underline the importance of human involvement, struggle, engagement and willingness to engage in the difficult discussion and process of dealing with shame in a genuine interaction; this was modelled by me in the conversational research style I adopted and also in the genuine dialogue that took place.

It also has occurred in my commitment to this piece of research which has been a genuine and long-drawn out struggle, a parallel process with shame itself.

So what is the key learning in the "Grandma" metaphor?   No judgement. She is like an icon, representing constancy, solid holding and unconditional love. This echoes the seminal teaching of Rogers (1961) on providing core conditions as necessary and sufficient for therapeutic change to occur. "*Love is an important antidote to shame.*"(09)

Complex metaphor 2 – Entering the territory of shame: Main theme – Relationship
(Ra) Embarking on a journey of exploration – a quest with an experienced guide with personal knowledge of shame – no sudden cure

I am entering into a journey with them. My understanding of the territory helps me invite them into this journey. I know the territory of shame experientially and theoretically – it is multi-faceted, deep and wide – not something to dip in and out of and suddenly get cured (06).
It's about knowing the territory of the relationship, knowing the terrain (05)

This metaphor is about embarking on a journey across a shame landscape working in partnership with a shame-based client; all participants referred to the therapeutic process as some kind of journey into the unknown, one talked about a guide with a macheté and two participants in particular used the metaphor of the territory of shame. A number of factors stood out in the "Territory" metaphor:

- That it is important to acknowledge that work on shame is a complex undertaking, like a journey with a hoped-for destination
- It is a dual undertaking, the therapist (with personal conscious knowledge and experience of shame) accompanying the client on a journey
- The therapist's understanding of the territory of shame helps in the invitation to the client to undertake the journey
- That understanding has come through an acknowledgement of his own lived experience of shame throughout his life
- His empathy has come through his own painful experience of shame
- His journey through shame has taught him that there are stages to shame
- Starting with initial resistance to naming feelings of shame because clients have lived with it all their lives
- To acknowledging the emotion sometimes
- To accepting shame as a normal part of life.

- His own woundedness is his biggest resource, because it enables him to stay alongside clients, and enable them to enter into their shame (06).

This participant describes his personal perspective on a journey into the territory of shame, and I consider that this is one of the "golden metaphors" in this study because it clearly sums up the experience and understanding of shame – "*it is multi-faceted, deep and wide*", not to be taken on lightly, quickly, or to expect a sudden cure. My experience on this doctoral journey has been that this quotation is exactly right. The participant perfectly captures the nature of shame in the analogy with a complicated, unpredictable, deep and wide ranging, multi-faceted phenomenon like a journey of exploration into unknown territory.

Complex metaphor 3 – The Rose and the Heart: Main theme – Relationship (Ra)
Healing through a secure connection – a loving touch, emphasising and deliberately visualising – soothing the wounded heart

08: *Yeah, yeah, another thing I have found that really helps, Meriel, is if … um, when you are telling someone they are a rose, or you are saying something nice about someone, instead of it just going in one ear… and out the other … I get them to take it and to put it in their body like that – can you see what I am doing?*
M: *Yes … embracing it … to incorporate it*
08: *Because once it has touched the body it is easier to embody it, if you take it and actually touch your body while you are trying to take it in, it is much easier … to embody it, the goodness, I am not saying it is going to change people immediately, but, over time ...*
M: *What part? I couldn't see but I think you were touching your heart*
08: *Yes just there, yeah, just there, top of my chest really, sort of the um …*
M: *Yes the … well – above the heart*

> 08: *I think what I am trying to do is put the… the nice words, if you like, on top of the pain …that's probably what I am trying to do … at an unconscious level …not conscious*
> M: *It is an area here, it's below the voice box*
> 08: *Yeah, above the heart (08)*

Touch, whether physical, emotional, therapeutic or spiritual reaching out and connection, is an important finding for healing shame, occurring seven times under the theme of Relationship, see Appendix 11, Table 4. Quotes in this section demonstrate the agony of heart pain in shame, and the need for deep healing to provide necessary conditions of tenderness, sensitivity, deep caring and concern. The above extract from 08 demonstrates use of a metaphor of a healing rose at a bodily level. Touch is a powerful healing agent around shame, as there is something soothing about a loving touch, as with a mother caressing a baby or young child needing to be reassured. There is a link with the material of 06, who spoke of therapeutically reawakening some dormant part in a shamed person through touch, *"I seek to touch that small part of them – the child's curiosity and yearnings that have been hidden for so long … that lifefulness in them".*
The theme here feels like a cross between physical and spiritual touch – in particular, of the heart where shame is held. The heart needs to receive healing from shame through using visualisation of a rose touching the heart area to bring about a sense of healing. The heart can be regarded as the centre of the core self, where shame and hope can both reside when thinking in terms of spiritual wounding and being healed.

One way of healing shame is to make the unconscious conscious, so here the suggestion is to convert the wounded heart to a healed heart through communicating and receiving a rose within a caring, watchful, emotionally-attuned therapeutic relationship, a relationship of the heart. This is the therapist's personalised use of focussed imagery as in Gilbert (2009). The therapeutic technique here is to work with the visualised and felt senses around a rose, of fragrance and cleansing, and letting the client receive it as a gift or symbol of cleansing, growth and goodness, a way of receiving healing from the pain of shame.

There are 14 references to the heart in interviews with 06 and 08, and of particular significance to note, seven references to the shame inflicted on the heart by three different participants in the seven hours of interviews, all referring to heart pain, indicating a need to reach down into the heart to bring about a feeling of connection. Another participant describes an agonising, shaming experience in adulthood and likens the pain to:

> *"open heart surgery without an anaesthetic"* (06)

This participant experiences heart pain – and it is possible in the Skype recording to hear his heart beating in the silent dissociative period he is having.

The heart is a sensitive and totally vital organ, representing our centre, the pump for the energising blood and oxygen to flow round the body and keep all the vital organs alive, including the brain and central nervous system. So references to the heart and the pain inflicted on the heart through shame are all relevant to the theme of a needed, tender connection at heart level for true healing to occur.

Complex metaphor 4 – "Knock, Knock" out of a dissociative experience: Main theme – Relationship (Ra – the co-created relationship for healing – going to another place – being retrieved – coming back

> *"Knock, knock, where have you gone" she would gently tap me on the chest or the head and say, "Where are you … where have you gone?" Mmm er … 30 sec Heartbeat… well actually I heard her and because she persisted and I believed that she meant well, I think what happened is that at that point I allowed myself to to ... open up and come out* (06)

This participant suggests that a deeply personal, intimate relationship that is both strong and gentle at the same time, is a way that can bring a person out of their isolation. This was in a significant relationship with a close partner. The gentle "Knock knock" on someone's chest or head is a metaphor of asking for permission to enter a private place, a sanctuary, an invitation to become part of a deeply personal, empathic, healing relationship. Finding a way to make a connection is an important aspect of healing shame and has to be done with great sensitivity and genuine caring, whether therapeutic or personal. This participant graphically describes dissociative experiences where a caring partner with great empathic listening skills was able to draw him out gently because he trusted her.

He is talking about having gone away somewhere, emotionally or cognitively.   He has gone into another unpleasant place, a dissociative isolated place. This links with the idea that shame comes lurking back. It is possible to go to that bad place and maybe the person is not even aware that they have gone there. Hence the importance of somebody else "knock knocking", retrieving and gently coaxing them out.

I would go so far as to say that there is a possibility of healing shame through the relational closeness, whether it is in therapy, supervision, training, research or a personal relationship, where one person trusts the other enough to be fully open and vulnerable –

in this instance there was a reaching out and a sharing of very painful material, which brought about a true connection and a way forwards on the journey of processing agonising shame.

Complex metaphor 5 – Waves on a beach and the push-pull of attachment: Main theme – Relationship (Ra/Rb) – the ambivalent nature of attachment – wanting contact and rejecting – need for secure holding – supervision

"Maybe you could have the image of somebody reaching out a hand and saying you know you are not going to drown in the flood any more… but do you know what I was thinking of Meriel and this might be quite important, I was thinking that actually there is a push / pull thing isn't there… that is, as you feel shame you want to disappear but you also want contact and that made me think about erm… attachment

M: Mm

08: The push-pull of attachment

M: Very good, tell me about push/ pull what that's like

08: Well I can't remember which attachment one it is now, but I think it is avoidant attachment isn't it, where you are desperate to have the mother but then the minute she picks you up, you want to push her away… then once you have pushed her away you want her back again, maybe that's what this push-pull thing is about

M: Erm … something about the badness-goodness split, and push-pull … I am drawn to the good … I think we are uncovering something important here between us ...

08: Yes, I suppose that's right … once you have been shamed, you have taken the badness on yourself haven't you. So maybe you are reaching for the goodness because ... . you have taken that person's badness on yourself. What I am seeing is a wave on a beach, and this bit in between being footsteps on it.

M: So is it like that, kind of up and down, undulating?

08: No, sorry, I didn't … no, it's sort of flat, you know, it's a very still sea but having waves

M: Right ...

08: And here being the muddy footprints, but they are not muddy footprints, they are footprints in the sand but you know, this is the disruption or the bad thing that has happened if you like… .

M: Mm

08: And the waves sort of coming, slowly covering them ...

M: Right

08: Do you see what I mean, getting rid of them? … so it is sort of a healing relationship

> *... . I think a lot of shame happens from people who feel badness and can't take in their own badness – they project it onto someone else … it is like they can only gradually take the badness back* (08)

In contrast to the four previous examples of metaphors of secure attachment, this metaphor is a strong descriptive picture of the ambivalent nature of a shame attachment – and belongs in the category of Relationship, also being about Knowledge, Creativity and Defences. The metaphor applies to the therapeutic alliance, which needs a non-judgemental stance and an empathic knowledge of shame, with an understanding of the powerful forces of ambivalence and the need to face up to shame, but pull away for a little while if the feelings become overstimulated and too intense. (Stern, 1998) talks about over-stimulation of the infant, causing withdrawal. This needs to be understood by the therapist, supervisor, trainer, or caring family-significant-figure, who models a steady, reliable, responsive stance and does not react counter-transferentially to the strong feelings coming up in the transference relationship springing from an unconscious source of difficulty.

08/862 in the following extract, is summing up the difficulties she had in her own supervision when she had felt judged, let down and made to feel bad and hence, shamed:

> *I mean for about three months I had a shaming supervisor and in the third month I phoned up and said, look, I am not going to come back It is a sham, this supervision, I don't feel safe at all ...   I can't say anything that is going on*
> *M: Yeah*
> *08: And um, well, let me tell you what happened with her, because I was working for X agency as a supervisor.   I was allowed to give everybody an hour a month*
> *M: Mm*
> *08: And she kept saying you know it is not enough, you are working with very vulnerable clients ...you have got to go back and tell them, you know… and….*
> *What you are doing is wrong and all this stuff, and erm … I have had lots of other supervisors for ... this job, well about three, who had never said anything like this and I thought it's probably because she doesn't understand the client group*
> *M: Yes*
> *08: She was shaming all the time*
> *M: Mm*
> *08: She was really … and I think it was out of fear that somehow she was clinically responsible and if something went wrong … and so I think, out of fear,*

> *she just sort of, dumped everything on me. Actually I have had that happen*
> *before by another supervisor, out of fear they said you have got to do this, and*
> *then I went to another supervisor who said, Oh no, I would never do that – that is*
> *really going to, you know, upset the relationship. That supervisor was definitely*
> *coming from a place of love*
>
> *M: mm*
>
> *08: And the other one was coming from a place of – if this goes horribly wrong I*
> *will be culpable and …*
>
> *M: so that's fear."* (08/ 760-900))

I have quoted small sections from a long extract, because this shows what is needed in the therapeutic and also in the supervisory alliance, in terms of calm holding, good attunement and provision of safe boundaries, which, particularly in therapy, is not too invasive but not too weak and floppy either. (Supervision can arguably be more robust and challenging, but this is a discussion for another time.) The metaphor of the push-pull wave highlights the importance of good timing in therapy, noticing when a client is ready to do the work of entering and beginning to heal the shame. The client cannot be forced to enter that difficult journey before they are emotionally prepared to do it. This needs patience and careful preparing of the ground on which to do the work.

This metaphorical push-pull story of therapeutic conflict unravels and seems to belong mainly in the category of Relationship, with the ingredients of contact, safety, observing core conditions of non-judgementalism, empathy, holding, (08 calls it love) and good attunement, reaching out and giving a little of the right amount at a time. See the list of codings (p.77), sub-theme Ra, for the necessary ingredients that came up in this research for the metaphors for a strong therapeutic alliance.

This ties in with the "Knock, knock" and "Grandma in the armchair" metaphors, which offer pictures of an all-embracing non-judgmental figure who provides core holding, a nurturing and a safe environment in which to feel able to be one's real self, to self-express, stretch and grow through emotionally difficult shaming and frightening times. I consider that supervision, training and research settings need to offer therapeutic core conditions of valuing and being valued, so participants do not feel shamed in those settings, but because the nature of supervision, training and research is different and not primarily about the supervisee's or student's therapeutic change, concepts of defensive avoidance of shame do need to be addressed quickly as soon as transference issues begin to surface.

5.1.2   Theme 2: Knowledge

A main theme was Knowledge. This theme divided into four sub-themes:

- Exploring
- Visualising
- Encouraging the voice
- Unconscious process.

All of these themes apply to acquiring knowledge about shame, through therapy, supervision, training workshops and research

Complex metaphor 6 –The new motor bike: Main theme – Knowledge (Ka) – exploring and pushing boundaries – finding the edge, the tipping point, limits, safe boundaries – positive aspects of shame – keeps one foot on the ground (protection)

This metaphor is about somebody looking to discover boundaries, and to work out, through experience, where the boundaries of self begin and end, and where the boundaries of other people begin and end. The metaphor is a strong one, working with the idea of a journey on a motor bike being a journey of self-discovery and where we are in the environment.

> *I think, it [shame] might be useful very early on in childhood – part of being socialised … there are no go areas where we must not go with shame.*
>
> *M: Mm*
>
> *05: Social life of shame   ... shame about life, sex, being an adult, not accepting so easily. Shame as a short hand … there are no go areas with shame.*
>
> *M: So it's a kind of short hand to go through the experience*
>
> *05: A certain taboo.*
>
> *M: Mm*
>
> *05: There are certain limits over which you should not go, social limits. The reality there is that with too many diversions we're going to be imprisoned inside the asylum.*
>
> *M: Do you have a picture for that, almost like going too far and then having to kind of come back to rebalance – do you have a picture of that?*
>
> *05: Memories of being on a new motor bike (indistinct) … I've always pushed the boundaries to the extent of knowing where the boundaries are, but I've been hard-wired wanting to know where the boundaries are – pushing, pushing, pushing on a motor-bike, at a certain speed or angle, until I felt I knew where the limits are and then suddenly feeling afraid, in relationships and the physical environment … (indistinct)…*

> *how does it feel on a corner before it starts going away, drifting away. I never felt*
> *secure till I knew at that moment where that tip point was*
> *M: Where that tip point was, did you say?*
> *05 Yes, drifting away from the road, then I feel a certain angle… a boundary beyond*
> *which I can't go*
> *M: Yes so you wouldn't go quite over the edge - you'd be able to pull yourself back*
> *05: In order to find out where the edge is.*
> *M: Right*
> *05: And I've never felt safe in relationships till we fell out and extended a bit, and I had*
> *found out where the boundary is ... exploring the edge, making friends with it (05)*

05 referred to an important theme of exploring shame with a respectful awareness of the need for boundaries, no-go areas we must not enter.   He was the only participant specifically to name shame as a useful inhibitory, unconscious, restraining force, "*a short hand towards socialisation*", acting as a social taboo to stop children and adults from pushing behaviour too far beyond acceptable social limits. His metaphor of riding a new motor bike contains complex meanings about pushing at boundaries to discover a range of memories and experiences which have not been tested out. There is a theme of "*making friends with the edge*", having to learn the boundaries around freedom, in the sense of accepting limits. He talks succinctly in metaphor about shame but unfortunately the recording is not always clear.

This is a multi-layered metaphor of daring and exploration, paralleling the therapist and client relationship on an expedition through unexplored unconscious shame-terrain, discovering memories, sometimes going beyond a tipping point in the transference, working out realistic possibilities, and keeping the momentum moving forwards. This parallels my doctoral journey too.

The two male participants saw the positive aspect of shame as being a regulator of behaviour and a spur to high activity whereas the female participants had very little to say positively about shame, only one who said that it did occasionally have a useful levelling effect but that mostly shame was something to get through, which we have to come to terms with. I can't really back this up with substantial research, but would say my hunch is that this finding might say something about one of the differences between the male action-driven psyche, and the female more relationally driven psyche. The female might be more inclined to be conciliatory and back down – this could be an interesting further piece of research on the difference between genders on hanging on to a strong ego and

not admitting shame, or letting go of defensive self-protective manoeuvring to disguise shame.

The literature on the positive side to shame tends to be on the theme that it "*guards the boundary around the private self*" (Nichols, 1995, p.337), not specifically about gender differences in defending the private self. The self cannot function effectively without some protection, whether male or female. "*Shame acts as a barrier to shield the self from physical intrusion and psychological attack*" (ibid, p.43). This view of positivity in shame is a fascinating insight into some of the findings in this research about the need to establish a safe boundary and to learn where the boundary needs to go between self and other, and also with a restraining function in terms of stopping people become grandiose, which one male (06) and one female (07) referred to in some depth. This concurs with the finding in this research about the need to establish a safe boundary, to learn where the boundary needs to go between self and other and not to become grandiose, as with 06 who refers to a positive aspect of shame as keeping a narcissistically inclined person away from grandiosity. "*I thank God for my shame because it gives me enough humility to keep one foot on the ground and not go floating off into grandiosity*" (06). This has to do with finding a common middle ground between the extremes of narcissism and shame, (Nathanson, 1992) to which I wish to add my findings with humour, intelligence, vulnerability and authenticity as a way of diffusing narcissistic pride (see metaphor 10, p.137).   I only found one piece of research dating back to 1986, (O'Leary, J.; Wright, F.) on gender differences in defending shame, which suggested that men avoid admitting to shame where grandiosity is conscious and central, and women are more likely to disavow their grandiosity. Where this is so, there is more sensitivity to shame. Women seem to cluster here.

Shame is always relational and can only be healed through finding a safe self-boundary and getting a good balance between over-exposure, (being extremely extroverted/ narcissistic/ visible/ noisy) and under-exposure, (being extremely introverted/ submissive/invisible/ quiet). I think this issue of gender differences would be a fascinating further study.

 What I have discovered in the research is that becoming more comfortable in the sense of where my personal authentic boundaries lie, i.e. what is me and what is not me, and being more confident to express and be myself, vulnerable and real, is a positive step forwards in coming to terms with shame and our true sense of core identity, as in the metaphor of being comfortable in our own skin and for example the work of Klein (1987, p.84).

**Complex metaphor 7 –The ground swallowing you up / holding one's vision whilst being visible: Main theme – Knowledge – ** (Ka)   becoming socially invisible – antidote is to "hold one's vision" – staying true to self

This participant is referring to a contrast between being swept over or devoured by the experience of shame versus strength to stay with the experience and keep the feet on the ground.

> *I'm just toying with the idea of shame being like wanting the world … the ground to swallow you up and … becoming socially invisible, and how the antidote to that is to hold one's own vision whilst being visible – what happens, with guilt, and also with shame, we have anger with our core self we become angry with ourselves*
> *M: Mm, do you have any kind of image of that to add … to that sense of self violation?*
> *05: I think, accepting we can't ever get things right … guilty never being able to get it right in other people's eyes but if we are true to ourselves, that shouldn't be … so much a thing to do … The loss of our social image isn't the end of it. The self-image is not the be all and end all, the roles we play … what we ought to be … If my soul can, can live with being different ... that is what is important for me these days.*
> *M: Is that something we can convey to our clients or do we have to go through it to learn it?*
> *05: I think we have to go through it to learn it (05)*

The participant is echoing the theme of powerlessness in shame, which figured a lot in the PEP, referring to the all-encompassing, commonly expressed, terrible feeling around shame of losing cohesion and disappearing into the ground and becoming socially invisible. The feeling of the way shame devours people is extremely strong – we want to hide away. He speaks graphically of the antidote to this feeling of becoming invisible, as "*holding one's vision*", meaning to keep the eyes on one's own true beliefs or sights, and staying seen by others. This ability would develop out of Knowledge about shame, realising the need to stay focussed as a way out of shame. So he sees the need to be authentic and hang onto a vision of self and not allow ourselves to be swept away by pressure of social forces stronger than ourselves. He is touching on some of the sub-themes in Creativity, staying grounded, building a sense of who we truly are, being true to ourselves, being strong and determined to hold onto a vision of something we can become by staying vulnerable and visible. It also ties in with the sub-theme in Creativity of using the imagination to be seen and heard. I like the participant's use of the metaphorical word "*toying*" here because it serves as a reminder of the idea of playing lightly with an idea, with a sort of enjoyment of the play. This also links with the theme of

developing a lightness of being around shame, playfully engaging in the process in a light or humorous way. This will be found as sub-theme (Ac) in the section on Acceptance.

Complex metaphor 8 – The gap and the magnifying glass: Main theme – Knowledge

(Ka)   being aware of – reflecting – naming – inspecting the experience of shame with precision

Working with shame needs to be detailed and precise, initially to recognise, identify and then to "unpack" shame.

> *Very often when we lose our thinking when we go into shame … and don't know what's happening erm ... we have this physiological experience, but we can now see it as a ... er ... as if through a magnifying glass if you like … we can say – ah I am experiencing shame right now. This is my physical and emotional experience which may include fear and … humiliation and all kind of things, because I think once we say to ourselves, "Oh it's shame I'm feeling", then there's a tiny gap in between ... er ... us ... us in terms of our reflection and the experience and sometimes that gap is just enough to … allow us to … talk about it to ... um share it … to understand what's going on   ... . and then the gap could widen and we're not so overwhelmed by it   ... .*
>
> *M: Does someone need to be at that point of …**the gap**? (my intonation – strong)*
> *06: Mm*
> *M: So it's relational? Do you see that as relational? ...   [interesting overlap here]*
> *06: Yes, definitely, yeah*
> *M: So you, you can't do the gap on your own?*
> *06: Well, I .. I think you can, but not … er ...I think… I don't think you can do it on your own, in terms of getting a truly deep understanding of what your experience is …*
> *M: mm (06)*

The metaphor of a gap implies a space between separate things rather than being all bunched up together, and has a connection with slowing time down, maybe even a silent pause. The shame affect has to be named and distinguished from other affects, experienced consciously and accurately. It is about standing back, being objective, taking a perspective, being aware of it, naming it and then managing it.

As outlined in the literature review, Kaufman (1995) is precise in his naming of the particular negative affects of anger, dis-smell, disgust, and contempt, the latter being a compound of anger and dis-smell. Shame must be distinguished from fear and distress (the crying response); self-consciousness, which is a manifestation of shame, needs to be distinguished from anxiety. This is part of the precision that is necessary in naming and

recognising shame as a particular and distinctive affect which has not been correctly recognised in the past and still often is confused with other negative affects of distress, anxiety, guilt and anger. The literature on shame refers to the affects and the need to distinguish them from each other (also see Nathanson, 1992; Tomkins, 1962; and Wurmser, 1994) .This area of research is still in its infancy, informed by neuroscientific discoveries of brain structure and emotional pathways. (See also the discussion on "the dendrite thing", in Complex Metaphor 9.)

Participant 06 is highlighting the idea of a gap which can be enlarged once the client has realised and owned the fact that what s/he is experiencing is shame. The metaphor of using a magnifying glass to carefully scrutinise the experience of shame and help see and understand it more clearly is quite powerful. He also referred to the idea of a barometer to give precision to the relational space between himself and his client:

> *I try and be like an emotional and intellectual barometer   ... . I really want to key in and tune in to what is happening for the client and me, in the space between us"* (06)

The image of a gap between an experience and awareness of that experience is helpful to bring about a slowing down in thinking … in the gap, that space provides an opportunity in time and space to register something difficult a bit differently, to maybe bring some new insight into an old shaming situation. In the safety of a trusted relationship, through sharing and talking, it might be possible to create a wider perspective on the experience, maybe to see it through the eyes of another and not be quite so self-critical. All five therapist-participants gave insights into their awareness of the need to slow down and make space for clients to experience their shameful feelings, talk about these feelings and explore their understanding of shame. Through the dialogue, would evolve clearer insights into the territory of shame, to enable them to move on through shame and out the other side.

The literature on neuro-science supports this finding, because the person has time to process in the pre-frontal cortex. New discoveries in neuroscience (Cozolino, 2010) suggest that the pre-frontal cortex is where emotions can be processed and reflected on – so the shamed person moves from emotional dysregulation to regulation. Once there is an awareness of the gap, the person can experience a choice to revert back into shame or make a decision to take a more mature line, be assertive and in control. But the gap is the first thing to recognise.

During the actual recorded Skype interview with 06, a "lived world" (Van Manen 2011) experience of the gap occurred in the shared silence. I, the researcher, experienced the

sound of the heartbeat of the participant's shame and pain, which he was describing as "a heart pain that won't go out" (06/1/533) – something profound happened which was to do with mutually experiencing his shame as he slowed himself down. I asked him where in his body he was experiencing the shame sensation and he paused and went into the lived "here and now" experience during the research interview, rather than just talking about it. There is an interesting phenomenon here of resonating with the silent shame, being connected in the silence, like a quiet piece of music, the pregnant pause as the conductor picks up his baton before he brings the orchestra in, between movements in a symphony, or the silence at the end of a performance before the applause. The conductor picks up and works with the resonances in the musical story, just as the attuned therapist or researcher picks up and works with the resonances and nuances in the client's or participant's story.

06 recounts a repetitive dream he used to have which was a dream about shame.

> *06: It was about being exposed …er… I think being seen as naked and …um … I think …er… dirty, disgusting, not good enough, um all that kind thing, but I think probably it was more the disgust … that people would look at me and be disgusted. All that kind of thing, people would see me and be disgusted or laugh. And then I would feel really humiliated. And I I … I never actually got to the situation where the children actually saw me … I would wake up before um …*
> *M: Do you know when you woke up where in your body you were feeling that sensation most in your body… of the shame?*
> *06: I think it was it was a general all over feeling but there was a particular concentration um … er… in my… er… chest and and my stomach really . I think there both there and in my stomach, but I think probably yeah probably it was … near the heart area (06)*

It is useful to spend time looking microscopically at the experience of shame, especially from a bodily point of view since shame is intimately tied up with a sense of exposure of innermost secrets.

> 06: *I ask … where in your body are you experiencing some sensation? Do you know when you woke up where in your body you were feeling that sensation most in your body… of the shame? I am giving them a tool in a way* (06)

06 experiences and captures his sense of shame graphically and metaphorically in 30 seconds of silence, which could be called a living example of *"the gap"*, a sense of dissociative, empty aloneness. When I, the researcher, question him as to where in his

body he experiences the shame, he replies in his chest, stomach and heart. Where he volunteers to return there to find out the answer to my question, "was it dark in there?" there is a further ten second silence with a sound on the recording resembling a slow heartbeat. The fascinating aspect about this section of the recording is that the participant describes himself as having disappeared, and my experience of this section, as researcher, as recorded on Skype, is that a sound like a heartbeat is audible during both periods of silence, one for 30 seconds, followed by one for 10 seconds – which feels very like being tuned right into his bodily and emotional experience in that gap place.

This is very difficult to describe and to explain, but both 06 and I later commented how extraordinary the experience had been. I feel it is worthy of documentation although it falls outside the remit of strictly being metaphorical language… it almost belongs in a category of its own, called "The gap"… which I think of as a metaphor of space, silence and time standing still. There are further examples of a slight sound of a heartbeat at 06/1/509 when he is talking about a non-attached place with his mother. "*I think that shame was part of the process then … Why I backed off from her and found solace in the garden*", and 06/1/532: "*Yes I think that anguish is a feeling of the heart for me where it's like   ... . anguish for me is like a heart pain that won't go out. It won't extinguish …(5 sec pause… heartbeat). And so maybe it is better to feel shame than that*"

I think these metaphors best capture something of the profound sense of isolation and cut-offedness of shame, a total sense of being suspended outside time and space and disconnected from the real world of being awake and alive. This seems akin to the sense of shame that was captured in my PEP of shame being a total separation from people and reality, and in the negative metaphors in Table 2, p.69, of this Final Project on the theme of Isolation.

Complex metaphor 9 – The jungle, the garden and the dendrite thing : Main theme – Knowledge (Kb) – visualisation as a safe way to move into and through traumatic shame – the jungle of our life history – chop a way through – turn into a garden – new neural pathways

The meaning of this metaphor is to see shame as a complicated, untidy jungle which needs to be recognised, faced up to, explored, talked about and understood, (and the defences which give a false disguised sense of the person) then organised and turned into a more manageable garden.

> *When they are able to talk about their histories now, and erm ... when they are able to get out of the continuous blame games with other people, but mostly they are able to ... just talk about ...explore and dig around in … the jungle of their history and see life as it really was, not just how the defences created it so yeah ...*
>
> *M: So you are giving them a place that's safe enough to not be scared of that jungle then ... you are with them in the jungle I suppose*
>
> *06: Well I do the kind of dendrite thing … you know, I I I show them about the brain*
>
> *M: Yes*
>
> *06: And how we have these neural pathways and how the neural pathway is on the script of my own particular route through the pathway. And er, it's very overgrown, it's difficult, so we have to chop … chop a new way through the jungle*
>
> *M: Is that your picture then? What it's like in there? That's a good one!*
>
> *06: Yes, it is like a jungle… and as we are working more and more, we are clearing a new pathway, but we have to have to be careful and even when it's clear, we have to pay it attention from time to time, like a good gardener would with the weeds … and go back and give ourselves some nurturing and some time, because it can grow back   ... . grow over very quickly and grow back*
>
> *M: The garden is safer than a jungle … I was thinking about the contrast, you know – the jungle adventure ... has wild animals that might jump out and bite you ...*
>
> *06: Yeah, that probably feels more poignant actually – more as to how the experience of shame is … it appears more like a jungle than a garden, I have to say for me*
>
> *M: Maybe we have to make it a garden for our clients? You know to stop it being so frightening   ... .*
>
> *06: Yes that's nice, turn a jungle into a garden and then tend to it   ... .*
>
> *M: Turn it into something benign rather than malevolent, actually…*
>
> *06: Yeah, good idea*
>
> *M: So how might we… I mean … and so creatively how might we go about doing that? … it is an interesting idea.*
>
> *06: Yes, and also the ... the idea of that is that when you have a beautiful garden, you still have to tend to it and look after it*
>
> *M: Well the weeds are malevolent, you have ivy and stuff coming in*
>
> *06: Yeah, just as you can't walk away from the garden and just enjoy it all the time, so we can't walk away from our own healing you know (06)*

This is a complex extended metaphor operating at many different levels, which was one of the most difficult to place in any one category. Triangulation produced three different answers. I therefore placed it in the theme of Knowledge because my own felt sense of

this metaphor is the helpfulness of being able to visualise the neural pathways and connections in the brain, to become familiar with the sense of the tangled, dangerous, overwhelming vastness of the jungle of the brain and compare that with the tidy order and organisation of a garden. This section of the interview was part of a discussion about teaching the subject of shame, building on the idea of using visualisation and imagery to help clients see that shame is like an overgrown unruly jungle which needs to be navigated around, understood and brought under control. It has weeds which have to be cleared as this is unwanted growth which can run amuck if insufficient attention and care is taken over it. "*We have to pay it attention from time to time, like a good gardener would with the weeds*" (06).

The metaphor of "the dendrite thing" further illustrates the idea of explaining to clients and trainees that our brains are made up of a network of neural connections and with shame, a new way has to be chopped, like chopping through the jungle, to reconfigure a new pathway and clear some of the shame away, making way for new growth.   These strong metaphors of shame being likened to a jungle, dendrites and a garden also fit very well into categories Relationship, Knowledge, and the category of Creativity and Co-creation, because it is about a co- created dialogue between two people (researcher and participant) where the participant and researcher come to a mutual picture and the participant says, "*That's nice, turn a jungle into a garden and then tend to it*": I separated out and placed this sentence in the category of Relationship because of the therapeutic and / or research relationship and the fact that it takes two to have a therapeutic or research relationship which is creating this evolving dialogue. This can also be categorised under Knowledge as a therapeutic technique – using visualisation and imagery (in particular ways with particular clients, to be nurturing).   The metaphor also belongs in a category of Acceptance because it concerns the fact that we defend against shame strongly, but shame is inescapable and a part of us that somehow we need to accept, reconfigure and integrate as best we can, with the care and dedication of a keen gardener.

Complex metaphor 10 – "**Cutting away a bit of the crap": Main theme – Knowledge** (Kc/Kd)   challenging avoidance – encouraging the real voice to come forward – helpful use of strong content to ventilate strong emotion – swear words diffuse strong emotions

This lengthy section is about the use of strong language and swear words to jar and produce a therapeutic shift, often largely springing from an unconscious need to convey difficult shameful affect. "*Cutting through the crap*" is one of the metaphors that fits into all of the themes, Relationship, Knowledge, Creativity, Acceptance – the language is

colourful and the meaning is powerful at many levels. Some time will be spent in detail examining this sub-theme of encouraging the voice.

> *His passing shot at the end of the first session ... how do you feel about working with a killer? …* (09)

> *So when he came back for the second session I thought, I am not going to go through another session like that. I thought we are going to be real here. So I started the session with, "I was intrigued by the last thing you said to me last session", and he said, "What was that?" so I said, "While you were writing your cheque you said to me, 'How did you feel about working with a killer'. And he smiled and I said, "Is that how you view yourself?" He then started talking more seriously.* (09)

This participant refers to a difficult initial session with a client when she was on the receiving end of a projective identification of a disturbed shamed client who, in his youth, had run a woman over, and had subsequently been involved in violent unsuccessful relationships with women over an extended period of time, 20 years or so. In the research interview, she talks about having challenged the client:

> *09: It felt like we had cut away a bit of the crap*
> *M: Are we talking there about his self-boundary – the difference between real and not real, and you were kind of … challenging him?*
> *09: I just wanted to be real in the room with him. I said to him … "I felt uneasy", and we talked about it … and I asked him, "Is that how you wanted me to feel?"* (09)

"*Cutting away the crap*" is a strong complex metaphor, with strong undercurrents of irritation, refusal to be "'crapped on", disgust and setting boundaries, in this case where a client was presenting with serious shame-based material that he could not tolerate to look at in himself. The client was projecting this unwanted material onto her in a strong projective identification to avoid having to feel his own shame himself.

The relevant metaphors relate to killing, wounding, attacking, shooting, fighting and, cutting, her unspoken frustration with him. The therapist-participant is left feeling understandably unsettled after the session. She challenges him in the next session because she feels it is imperative to break the projection where the client is not working but dumping his unbearable feelings of shame and guilt onto her.

I have placed this metaphor under Knowledge because it demonstrates when a client needs to have some firm boundaries set around unconscious shame processes. As participant 09 says,

> *He pushes and pushes and pushes the boundary until they [his girlfriends] end the relationship.*

It is important for the therapist to model safe, firm boundaries around shame in order to contain, hold and encourage the client on, towards seeking some recovery from shame.

This is a strong example of how the experienced therapist was quick to become aware of a client's defensive avoidance of shame, and active in challenging the avoidance. Interestingly, in the use of her words, "*cut away a bit of the crap*" she did not speak directly to the client's face, but this was possibly her way of diffusing her own shame around her irritation.   Presumably, swear words in supervision are more safe and useful in diffusing a therapist's sense of anger or frustration with a client, than swearing directly at the client – 09 was firm, yet gentle and well boundaried in her challenge to the client, using the pejorative word "crap" only in the discussion in the research interview about the client to process what she was feeling transferentially in relation to this client.

> *09: Whereas with this chap … I kind of felt, had there been another couple of sessions where he was dancing around like that, it felt for me as though I would be stepping into an abusive relationship with him … which is his speciality …*
>
> *M: yes, so he was challenging you, I think, at a really unconscious level probably. I don't know whether it was deliberate*
>
> *09: I think it's what he does with women*
>
> *M: But your shadow side kind of was aware that, oh my God, this guy is trying to frighten me or something*
>
> *09: Yeah*
>
> *M: To put you into a submissive female role …*
>
> *09: Yeah*
>
> *M: Could have been very abusive towards you actually, could have been really frightening…*
>
> *09: Yeah*
>
> *M: But I think he was wanting to get the measure of you, to see whether he could mess about with you*
>
> *09: Well that's how it felt, it felt like yeah, he was testing me out – and are you scared of me? That was the feeling of it…. how do you feel about working with a killer? And I am*

> *frightening you?….*
>
> *M: Yeah*
>
> *09: And actually, you know, he did put the wind up me a bit but…*
>
> *M: But you are up for it aren't you?*
>
> *09: I think I felt I had no option, really because, otherwise I was going to feel horrendous … after the second session, I wasn't going to go through that again because it was a really uncomfortable session*
>
> *M: So there is something about ... . right, well, with shame there is something about the capacity to wound, or to be wounded … and I think he probably represented something for you … who could wound you or kill you ... . oh shit! – there is something about visceral wounding with shame … you know, that it cuts us deep, sort of at a survival level … that you were able to actually say in a sense you were saying no, don't go too far with me – don't mess with me*
>
> *09: Yeah*
>
> *M: There is a kind of testing of the boundary, that is very interesting there…*
>
> *09: Well also, probably, I think it touched my fear of failure, erm … as I said before I do feel as if I have failed.*

<u>Swear words – leaky disclosure of vulnerability?</u>

Swear words, such as shit, crap or bloody are seen by the researcher as metaphorical at certain times, when they are used creatively and intuitively to convey a dimension beyond the literal. Sometimes they enhance impact, convey meaning of disgust or shock, gain attention, heighten energy, build rapport, or suggest a relaxed attitude. This section focuses on participant and researcher's use of swear words, and appears to link in with the idea of being vulnerable in relationship when it is safe to be so. Swearing can mean defending against becoming too vulnerable too soon in relationship. Swearing is functionally uninteresting and less useful when it is not metaphorically descriptive but simply an expression of anger. Jay, (2009), refers to the evolution of the uniquely human facility for swearing being to do with taboo words communicating emotion information (anger, frustration) and refers specifically to sexual words, profane or blasphemous, scatological or disgusting objects, animal names, ethnic, gender or racial slurs, ancestral allusions, substandard vulgar terms and offensive slang. Linge (2006) refers to this as an "*adaptive strategy*" with psychological health and well-being benefits.

Here is another strong example of a piece of work a participant undertook with her own therapist over a shaming experience she had held at core level since very early childhood, where she was expressing her rage, with very strong swear words:

> *I will be glad when you die you fucking monster* (*07*)

07 was referring here to a healing moment in therapy when she was not feeling judged, given permission to write a letter to her mother venting some long-held, furious, shameful, damning feelings towards her rejecting mother who had wanted to abort her and had tried to drown her. There is release of rage and, in cursing, an articulated desire for revenge, and probably, at some deep unconscious level, an attempt to equalise and balance out the wrong in the expression of the curse.

These metaphors delineate vulnerability, where something "not quite okay" is not being said in a standard "polite" integrated fashion, perhaps leaking out some vulnerability. They cluster together around the theme of material arising from the participant's own shame, my shame, the client's or supervisee's shame. They are strong words, considered in social circles as offensive or risqué, relating to dirt, bodily fluids, faeces, sexual fluids, private body parts, sexual practices, as well as blasphemy.   Sometimes these words are helpful strategies when used assertively to redress some sort of violation, as in abuse or violence.

At other times, my hunch is that these words might diffuse attention from the actual shame a person experiences, by shocking the person on the receiving end into a feeling of wanting to distance himself / herself, and thereby avoid getting into a confrontation which would keep the two people engaged in a dialogue. This would perpetuate the shame felt by one of them and keep the sense of humiliation and exposure going. Possibly the reddening that occurs in shame also might be a way of distancing the other person, the reddening signals that the shamed person is "hot under the collar" and this may also serve a similar function of pushing the other person away.

This sub-theme of swear words has been one of the most difficult themes to categorise, with some avoidance, because of the "not quite okay" nature of putting "rude" words into a research paper, and, interestingly, I postponed writing this section for that reason, as I am not keen to enter my own sense of exposure and uncertainty, with this bit of the findings being read by people, experts on Freud and unconscious processing, who know a lot more of "the right words" than I do about transference phenomena and the world of psycho-dynamic therapy and have explained away the use of swearing and joking as defensive avoidance.   I am stating this from my "creatively assertive" position, and now, interestingly, a further observation is that the shame feeling has dissipated, as I do now know a fair bit about the processes operating around shame and how and when I / we shy away from exposing our vulgarity or ignorance. So here I go, drawn by theme Ac,

Acceptance through humour, onwards and upwards into the fray of my own depravity, ignorance and ineptitude, with a chatty light step I hope!

My sense of this from these interviews and my own experience is that our defences play a massive part in defending ourselves from what we really do not want to face up to, that, particularly in educational and more authoritative roles, like training and supervision, (and even in writing up doctoral dissertations), we do not at all times know as much about the "proper things" as we like to think or put across to our students, supervisees and trainees. I think it may apply less to our clients when we work with them in therapy where we may have been trained and accustomed to recognise and name what I have come to think of as the shame-transference through conducting this research (my term – Oct 13th 2015). One reason I am drawn to this doctoral subject however, is that I do not think I recognised, or maybe I was not taught about shame-transference. I really want to address these important training issues and bring something honest and important to the field of psychotherapy and counselling training in the sequel to this doctorate.

Humanistic therapists are "allowed" to bring their appropriate self-disclosure of feelings – which might be transference material – out into the open, uncovering the underlying shame dynamics of what is going on under the surface, to dispel or dissipate the complexity of the disavowed material and deal with it directly. Participant 09 is very clear on this in some of the metaphors she uses, particularly in terms of "*popping the idea out on the table*", and it being the client's prerogative whether they rise to the challenge or not:

> *I have just popped it out onto the table, and if the person wants to pick it up they can, and if they don't, well ... I will maybe pop it out on the table again   (09)*

Into this sub-theme of swear words, I would also place times in the interviews when the participant and I the researcher, were talking about modelling vulnerability, in the fact that shame is a common and normal feature of life, and we can sometimes counteract it through humour, or swear words used in a normalising, natural sort of way. On the theme of keeping our feet on the ground in the humbling, messy, real world of clearing up excreta, and not having pretensions about it, I suppose 06 and I are talking conversationally and naturally about being in a rather dirty and unpleasant situation, like "*wiping a sheep's arse*", or "*walking around in shit*". There is an interesting parallel here with the idea that working with clients in shame, is a crude process of walking around, wading around often, with them unflinchingly in their own disgusting material … the detritus of their / our broken and complicated lives, mistakes, messes and muddles. It is all too easy for any of us, whether therapists or not, to judge other people adversely, and

take on a rather "high and mighty" position, hiding behind all sorts of things. We can hide behind our orientation (being a closed book and not self-disclosing our own shameful weaknesses and human leanings at all). We can hide behind our snobbery, well-mannered upbringings and prejudice. We can hide behind our defensive positions. We can hide behind our "holier than thou" attitude, "Oh no, I would not ever have done <u>that</u> myself". We can hide behind our self-protective walls. There are plenty of examples in the metaphors in this text, and I know myself that I can and do, at times, hide behind other people's stuff as an avoidance of looking at my own flawed character.

Complex metaphor 11 – Moments of healing crisis: Main theme – Knowledge (Kd) a turning point – another example of strong language to challenge or diffuse, used as an antidote to shame

A healing moment can happen in therapy or in the person's actual life.   It is a moment of potential enlightenment, when they are poised on the brink of a choice, either to stay caught up in defensive, self-protective stuck behaviours or patterns of behaviours, or make a choice to face up to shame, break out and deal with it. This is an extremely important theme on the subject of turning points or tipping points in an adult person's life, when a "make or break" moment is reached. An opportunity arrives, either in a devastating life event or in a strong, holding, therapeutic, supervisory or training encounter, to address a locked-up, suppressed shame pattern, largely operating at an unconscious level.

Inevitably yeah, in an enduring therapeutic relationship, the client finds a way of shaming you … it's almost as if they are repeating their history in order to get you to react in a negative way, to go through with them their script again in that and all that work

M mm

06: and I often see this in the form of projective identification where… I mean … and I think at that point … erm … when we feel the shame that the client has projected onto us and then they begin to behave towards us sometimes in sarcastically and humiliated manners in the way that they were treated

M: mm

06: then we need to dig deep and not over-react or under-react … but to find a way of saying to the client, you know, when you just spoke to me like that er ... I felt blah blah blah ... which is an experience of shame, right now, so remind me who did this to you…

M: mm

> *06: and what is happening to you now between us, what's going on?*
>
> *M: mm*
>
> *06: Very often, by the time a client gets to the point of doing this, [projecting] they are ready for it anyway ... It is almost like they are unconsciously precipitating the crisis to repeat their history, but at a much deeper level saying, do something different now – don't be seduced with me into all this shit again – give me a different response … and I call these moments of healing crisis.   (Pause)*

"*Don't be seduced with me into all this shit again*", is a further interesting example of the therapist using strong language when difficult feelings have been stirred up. By talking about the subject metaphorically in sexual and excretory bodily terms, (i.e. seduction and shit) in a research, training, or supervisory setting, the underlying affect can be recognised, released and worked through.

Two participants referred to the power of a therapeutic apology as a way to diffuse a therapeutic crisis and as an opportunity for healing from an abusive shaming relationship to occur, where shame is re-experienced differently and the wounding experience is re-configured as becoming more bearable.

> *And sometimes we make mistakes as therapists in this situation because our own little kid inside is so hurt at that point – all we want to do … all we want to do is that (holding hands up in a gesture of submission).*
>
> *M: mm*
>
> *06:   Sometimes we can either withdraw and not respond, or we can push them away. And then of course we can go back in the next session when we have processed what was going on, sometimes with our therapist, er … sometimes with our client, and then say look you know. (Pause) Last week this happened and my response was to erm ... over react and in doing that I got caught up in repeating your history. I apologise".*
>
> *M: Wow   (06)*

Therapeutic ease seems to be a good recipe for healing, where the therapist is able to be vulnerable and real.

> *And some clients say… tear up ...   and some of them break down and say this is the first time in my life – my father never said sorry to me or my mother never said sorry to me … ... so sometimes in this tricky messy, business of working with shame we do fuck up ...   and I think   our responsibility as therapists is to then, although we are feeling pretty bad about it, to try and be curious about our… this rather than*

> *judgemental – oh how would I do that, what was that about, oh, I see what was*
> *happening, oh shit, let's go back and put it right " (laughter)* (06)

It is important to note that there are other poignant examples of moments of healing crisis from participants involved in shaming situations at the hands of shaming regulatory / educational institutions, e.g. participant 08, about four months of institutional shaming, which was agony waiting for a complaint, or also in the PEP participant 03 about being shamed by BACP, participant 04 shamed by Social Services, or participant 07 about being rejected by the group and supervisor. What they all have in common is that a very supportive person (or sometimes a loyal dog) helped them to get through. There are implications here for training and practice in terms of not reshaming people through high-handed judgementalism. Institutions and supervisors, in positions of power and authority, need to consider coming from a position of curiosity and love, rather than judgement and fear. If we approach a supervisee or client's difficulties and challenge their defences in a non-shaming way rather than judging their behaviour as bad, going deeper into underlying metaphors rather than blaming and shaming, professional standards could be maintained and upheld in a more accepting atmosphere.

Complex metaphor 12 – Stepping out onto a farm … I feel totally at peace: Main theme – Knowledge (Kb) visualising the great outdoors as a safe retreat from shame – therapeutic knowledge

Getting closer to nature was recognised by all participants as a soothing activity to escape from painful shame. Visualisation of nature came up frequently as a strong therapeutic device to bring about feeling more solid, safe, secure and grounded in reality

> *As soon as I could walk and get out into the garden, I found a haven, and my*
> *attachment patterns from the age of about two, as soon as I could crawl became very*
> *linked to nature rather than people … and nature was a place of curiosity and*
> *exploration and wonder. Not surprisingly, now I am on a farm and it doesn't matter*
> *whether it's snow, rain, wind, brilliant sun, I can step out on the farm, and I just feel at*
> *home – the farm could be anywhere in the world so I can hug a tree (laughter) or lie in*
> *the grass, or look at water rippling on the stones. And I feel totally at peace.* (06)

Nature is seen as a safe haven to retreat to, in real life or visualisation. One of the sub-themes of ways out of shame which I have placed in the category of Knowledge is that of getting closer to nature. These metaphors of nature convey many themes, and could have been been put into Relationship, Creativity, Acceptance or Defences. There are

multiple references in the various interviews to land, feeling grounded and secure with the feet on the ground, which is an effective way to stabilise and feel better in a shaming situation. The theme of safe haven actually arose originally in the PEP and this is discussed in the Methodology section in terms of only using the FP metaphors in the analysis, not the PEP metaphors. As well as offering soothing, connection and distraction, nature can give us a useful perspective on the insignificance of our problems in the grand scheme of things and help us towards acceptance.

07 referred to the idea of the therapist being a safe haven and a safe harbour to achieve a sense of integration:

> *I hadn't quite realised how much but she would use me as her safe haven, her stable base … I am now the safe place for my clients – for that sea of hopelessness and helplessness to crash into, for them to know there is a process, I don't know I'm stretching for this ... that there is the possibility of being the harbour, hoping they will integrate me … that solidness into themselves (07)*

I have incorporated the concept of the safe harbour into Figure 10 of the territory of shame (see p.107). This doctorate can be a place of safety, integration and refuge for me from the searing pain of shame. The safe harbour can offer a place where the anguish and terror can come to rest and be healed. The therapist in the therapeutic alliance can offer the client a place where solidity and integration can happen – when the client can integrate that firm sense of the other into the self. If there is no divide, no judgement, no wall, healing can happen. In my diagram of the Shame Island, connecting up to the peninsula, which is the other side of shame, the creative free side, the side of knowledge and stability, and the side of acceptance, the safe harbour can be a healing place to come back to.

Gilbert (2009) puts forward quite a structured programme for using active compassionate visualisation techniques as a way out of shame. From my research findings, I posit that offering clients, supervisees or trainees, an opportunity to create their own shame islands, explore, discuss and journey round the territory with a guide, would be a powerful way of working. More structured journeys with specific guidance and use of particular techniques, or less structured journeys co-created spontaneously and moving along freely without specific techniques, could be tailored according to the mix of the people working, in a dyad, or a larger group and the therapist's particular inclinations.

5.1.3   Theme 3: Creativity

This theme divided into four sub-themes:

- Creative relationship with nature
- Imagination
- Building up
- Turning points.

All of these themes apply to using creativity imaginatively, intuitively and naturally and building up creativity as a creative adjustment to shame and a way of moving forwards.

Complex metaphor 13 – The dog and the log: Main theme – Creativity (Ca) nature as a healer – a turning point – a symbol of transition, remembered

The metaphor best ties in with the theme of Creative Adjustment through connection and relationship with nature. This was an important transformative moment when the dog dropped a log on his foot, and saved him from suicide.

> *It was the cross roads really … in the moonlight by water… the dog dropped a bloody big log on my foot ... at that moment I thought, "You have got to get your act back together. We cried together on the bank of the river, the dog and I. It was a wake-up call. x, the working sheepdog … I don't think I will ever forget the dog or the log. He is buried outside in the garden* (06)

The number of data items including dogs in the whole data set is quite large, with no less than 33 mentions of dogs altogether in all interviews which includes interviewer responses (but not introduction of the topic). The metaphor of dog-relationship, which I have included in the Creativity theme, rather than Relationship, (because it is a creative relationship with a non-human rather than a human relationship) works at two levels, one is in the literal meaning of the dog, the other is in the symbolism of the loyalty, constancy, straight-forward capacity for a great friendship and honest, uncomplicated ways of communicating.

Placing the "dog and log" metaphor in one particular main theme was a struggle. The metaphor is about a turning point where there is a clear choice to continue on the same path, or do something different. I decided the metaphor best ties in with the theme of Creativity through connection and relationship with nature. To me it seems it is about creative adjustment through a relationship, and a vocalisation of shame through nature – this was an important transforming moment when the dog dropped a log on his foot,

shocking him out of his intention to commit suicide and getting him in touch with strong shameful feelings. The transformation comes later in the processing of the memory and reconfiguration of the meaning of the incident that stands out in his memory as an iconic moment.

Dogs are an important source of comfort and healing. The example of 06 beautifully and poetically illustrates this point of a strong bond with a dog, and takes the metaphorical concept (of a dog's devotion and healing powers) one step further with a deeply personal story of the strong relationship he had with his dog, who effectively broke his dissociative trance when he was on the point of taking his own life, by dropping a big log on his foot. The bond with this particular dog was so strong that effectively the dog was tuning into his anguish in his perception and rescued him from the situation, through breaking his desire to walk into the water in the moonlight … the moon was drawing him in, and the dog interrupted him. He refers to this as a turning point, a wake-up call to the responsibilities of his real life, which took him away from the impulse to commit suicide.

The role of dogs in bringing about a change of scene, breaking fixation on a negative painful atmosphere in a difficult, turbulent and critical family life, is also mentioned in a less dramatic way by two other participants, (*mad family* 05), (*mother not loving and warm* 09), highlighting the importance of making a link with nature, dogs and animals to escape the unpleasantness of a shaming situation and feel better. The dog is like a transitional object to bring comfort at a time of insecurity and distress. Four out of the five participants, (05, 06, 07, 09) referred to dogs as good companions, offering going for a walk as a way to get away from shame. 09 and 05 as children would walk in nature and talked about the dog's role to help them defend against difficult home circumstances and escape from the negative experience of home life.

Two dogs intervened during the two extended interviews , with 06 and 07, at particularly intense moments. 07's dog actually entered the interview at a salient positive point:

> *Like I say there is the part of me that was shattered and rebuilt*
> *M: Mm*
> *07: I am more pleased with … here is x, (the dog) he comes for a cuddle*

One (06) thought it was a dog barking when he was deep in a silent pause thinking about shame and experiencing it; he said he thought he could hear a dog barking, which I heard as the pulsing of a heartbeat and is on the recording as a strong pulse. There was the sound of a dog barking in the background with 06 a number of times.

Dogs work as a symbol in these interviews in terms of offering respite and soothing from the anguish and distress of shameful painful experiences. This applied both to memories of painful childhood experiences and adult shamings also. In all cases, participants felt reassurance from dog/s, and generally it came across that the loyal devotion of dogs provided a secure base, guidance, a loyal unfailing relationship, unconditional acceptance and love, without judgement, as a powerful agent in helping to get through. These are the core conditions that are needed in the therapeutic alliance. Dogs do it naturally! Recently I heard a GP referring to dogs as an excellent anti-depressant.

It is also of note that the dog is buried in the garden. The turning point, the life-saving event, is memorialised and preserved.

Complex metaphor 14 – The dunce's corner and the nail: Main theme – Creativity
(Cd) an iconic turning point, a critical painful memory – the nail as a symbol

> *The teacher put me in the dunce's corner, I must have done something wrong. I saw this nail, it had been bent over, and over the years the nail had become embedded in the paint, and I started to pick at it with my finger, and I said to myself, I will never forget being in this corner, I will never forget this and I never have. There is a connection between being seen and being put in the dunce's corner, so I am going to keep very very still and go into this empty secret lonely place where no one can get in and no one can see me…The nail was covered in paint, and my spark of hope was covered… was well camouflaged, was well defended … I think I was protecting it in my isolation … I was protecting that little bit of faith and hope … The dunce's corner with a vengeance. Instead of looking into the dunce's corner and seeing the nail, I was in the dunce's corner and propping up the whole wall … everyone dining out on it* (06)

This metaphor conveys the agonising sense of exposure to ridicule and public humiliation, and the fact that the memory of the traumatic sense of exposure was seared into his memory on the two dreadful occasions he was citing as times of terrible public humiliation, which are in some way, seared together in his mind as one of the "*governing scenes*" that Kaufman (1995) refers to. Placing this metaphor in a particular main theme was a struggle, with a variety of opinions in the triangulation process between three people. Is a traumatic memory which became a turning point about Knowledge, Creativity or Acceptance?   What struck me about this example was the poetical style in which the story was told, I think suggesting that the two separate shaming incidents 06 is here referring to, have been processed and understood, bedded down into his psyche and to some extent, integrated enough not to knock him flat with shame and remorse every time

he recalls the story. He has re-scripted the shameful situations, is willing to make himself vulnerable in the telling, but does not re-experience the trauma in the telling. It shows he has successfully titrated the experiences and can live with the memories, although painful, but no longer feeling red-searing hot-raw shame when he revisits the memories.

A strong theme here is Knowledge – making sense of a memory that takes on iconic significance. The sub-theme of Icons seems best to belong in Creativity.   Like the armchair and the dog and the log, these are metaphorical stories, lengthy extracts in the data that are not easily placed into one qualitative target domain or category. Iconic significance here conveys multiple layers of meaning – symbolism, love, connection, gratitude and compassion to name a few. The theme of Creativity gives flexibility and scope as a place to put the extended metaphors which are stories that people have created / embellished in their minds, of special heightened significance and not easily explained at a rational level.

This example reflects the poetical side of this research: the way we, people, participants, you and I, can use words in an elaborate way to embroider an experience and make sense of it. It can then become a whole integrated bedded-down memory, helping us arrive at a sense of acceptance. The poetic language reconfigures the terrible shaming experiences which become something different from how they started. These are positive, creative adjustments, and are not unhelpful, negative defences because they attempt to put words around the experience, face up to the difficult shaming experience without running away, embrace it and stay with the rising difficult sensations, employing the Four E's of Entering, Engaging, Expressing and Embracing shame.

Likewise, I have placed "the dunce's corner and the nail" extended metaphor in Creativity rather than Acceptance because it has a story of its own: he was sent to the dunce's corner for some now forgotten misdemeanour and he picked at the nail covered in cream paint that was in this corner. In a sense, all his emotions of upset and shame became concentrated into this memory of an intense experience with the nail being an object that can pinpoint and somehow represent his intensity. The nail could take on all sorts of projected meanings on my part, the researcher, for example seeing the nail as a crucifixion object, or the paint on the nail covering up and camouflaging the pain in the nail underneath, in fact it could represent any of the themes of shame; it is a solitary nail, and he is a solitary boy in the dunce's corner, being made to stand up on his own (negative theme 1, Isolation; or theme 2, the nail is stuck in the woodwork or wall, is fixed, covered in paint and has been there for a long time, maybe, and useless, not serving any function (Powerlessness and Hopelessness); or theme 3, the nail represents the young boy

standing out in front of the class, a painful object of scrutiny (Self-consciousness and Exposure); or theme 4, the boy is in a very painful situation, the nail representing something like the pain and public humiliation of being on display like Jesus Christ on the cross when he was crucified (Wounding, leading eventually to spiritual transcendence and a form of Acceptance).

Any of these meanings are possible, but the main point for me is that the nail takes on iconic and symbolic significance. In my role of researcher, I chose not to delve deep into the therapeutic avenue, although this would have had therapeutic potential. The participant was taking part in a piece of research, and was bringing the picture into the interview as a highly significant memory of a shaming incident which had seared itself into his being, "I said to myself, I will never forget this and I never have"

Complex metaphor 15 – The Sistine Chapel: Main theme – Creativity (Cb) holding out a hand – reaching for connection – looking closely – tuning the senses to beauty

The theme in this section is healing shame through revelation, the creative imagination, curiosity, art work, connection to deep levels of meaning, beauty, silence.
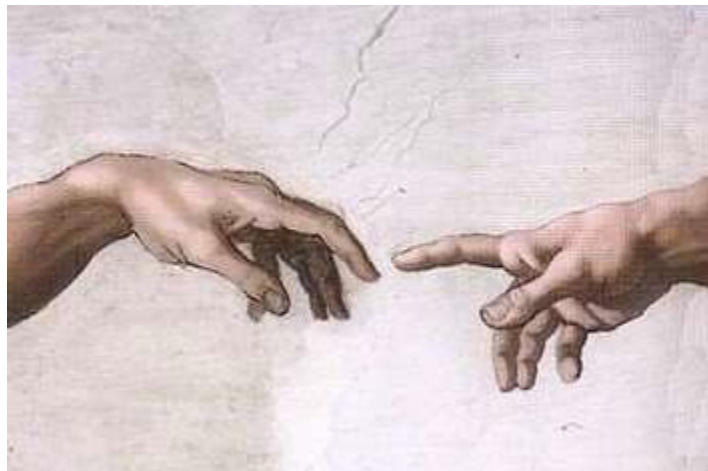
> *I was thinking of the painting on the Sistine chapel ceiling. Yes, I can see that now with the fingers touching – yes I can see that – I guess I am picking at a nail trying to make some contact with it*
> *M: Something about connecting, reconnecting*
> *06: yeah, yeah (06)*

> *"being acutely aware of… the silence and I am waiting to hear what is being said , almost like an animal, being acutely aware of what's going to… what might happen next so my hearing and my seeing become very very intense"* 06/1/363

The nail (metaphor 14) and this Sistine Chapel metaphor link up, and need to be considered together. This section attempts to embrace the mystery and power of metaphor as I embrace a deeper discussion about revelation of shame. The great mystery of faith and shame begins to unfold.

This metaphor was initially placed in Acceptance, but I decided to shift it to Creativity because it is to do with art, imagination and mythology as ways of converting shame or shameful episodes in human history, into an art form. Channelling shameful energy into an appreciation of great art, music, literature, dance, is a powerful distraction to shame's negative destructive energy and a useful cipher. The way 06 describes the nail is faintly poetical, at least wistful, and almost escapist; the Sistine chapel is poetical, in the same sort of way, an avoidance of the agony of shame, turning the horror of the present into an art form that people in future generations can admire. The extracts show the power of poetical language or pictorial narrative to reframe a traumatic incident and beautify or somehow transform it from something negative into something aesthetically pleasing.

There is an attempt to cover up the shame and hide. This appears in terms of the defences – the paint on the nail covers the shiny sparkling life force of the nail. Camouflage is a theme which recurs in a number of the interviews, that is a disguise which shame uses to protect itself from being recognised – it is not easily recognised because it cowers away and puts a protective covering around itself, either darkness or a non-descript colour like beige so nobody notices. Shame wants to hide away. Whereas in the Sistine Chapel image of the touching fingers, there is a connotation of being highly visible right out there on the ceiling of the chapel … there is no cover up, a lot of the figures are naked, and the stories of shame in the bible are depicted clearly, not disguised or toned down. The figures are expressing their shame and anguish and making contact, which is a way through shame. This links with the earlier reference to holding out a hand and reaching out in the push-pull relationship of Metaphor 5 of the waves on the beach, symbolising paradoxical hesitation and resistance.

These metaphors come under the theme of Creativity but could equally have gone into Acceptance, They are most delicate and difficult and need to be approached with an air of the sacred. It has an elusive feel about it, yet this metaphor feels revelatory and most important for the whole of this project.

In this piece of the interview there is a shared attempt to dig down deep and find meaning. All the elements of healing shame are brought together, Relationship (between participant and researcher), Knowledge (searching for meaning), Creativity (in the co-created conversation and deep exchange) and Acceptance of what is. In this interchange, is an elusive, tentative struggling to find meaning in the shared endeavour of the searching for the words, slowly advancing words towards making meaning. The silences, pauses and hesitations are metaphors in themselves. In the sharing of difficult concepts there is an attempt to rekindle the spark of lost hope, to bring about a reconnection: this is where the picture in the middle of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel of an attempt to reconcile the forces of evil and goodness comes into play, where God is reaching out a finger to the world and Adam reaching out to God. Indeed the images of agony and strife sum up the forces of the biblical history of mankind's shame. Michaelangelo was striving to depict this in his great masterpiece. We have to come to an eventual death, and achieve an existential acceptance of that fact. Yalom's (1989) "givens of existence", ageing, meaninglessness, isolation, and death tie in here; creative endeavour can help us delve into a sense of deeper meaning and coming to terms with our existential angst, of which shame is a part. The themes I found in this research – negative themes of Isolation, Powerlessness, Self-consciousness and Woundedness and positive themes of Relationship, Knowledge, Creativity and Acceptance are represented in great works of art.

Complex metaphor 16 – Hope languishing: Main theme – Creativity (Cc) giving up fantasy and pretence – a make-believe world in favour of a more solid, grounded reality – no more rose-tinted glasses

The theme in this section is about phases of this participant's creative adjustment through shame and disillusionment to new awareness and acceptance.

> *I found this beautiful picture of hope and she was languishing on a hillock and she was blinded and her lute was broken ... I thought that was my hope now because I didn't want her to be that fairy tale thing any more … I wanted hope to be more grounded, more earthy, more real in the world" much more ... dealing with the world as it is – it is reality. I have ... I have loved hope, I have lived for hope, and she has broken her bond with me. As a child, as a teenager and a young adult, I hoped for ever more that there would be … you know, I took my direction … erm ... straight on to never never land, you know, a little left of the morning star. I did that, and I don't want to do that any more.*
>
> *M: So do you feel disillusioned? Is there …. anger in the disillusionment or can you be*

> *sort of neutral and tolerant now? More like in a Buddhist way, sort of accepting?*
>
> *07: Yes, accepting, that's how the world is, no ... no more rose tinted glasses, no more erm ... let's pretend*
>
> *M: I see*
>
> *07: No more, let's find the best out of this ... just, this is the way the world is* (07)

I have placed this metaphor from 07 into the theme of Creativity. This encapsulates a very important aspect of the resistance and misery encountered in dealing with shame. We can invent hope and make-believe as a way of avoiding shame-agony. This participant is here referring to her own Creative Adjustment to shame through use of poetical words, story and magical thinking. She is describing how she needed to reconfigure herself and remake her own life story to be real, rather than a fantasy or make-believe story. Her imagery is powerful, capturing a sense of a transition from a former sense of herself as child-like, yearning and naïve, who has gone through a painful journey, undergoing the agony of being blinded and her music broken; being forced to give up a false imaginary hope, and this being replaced by a more realistic sense of groundedness and reality. This is a less romantic picture, but more solid and down to earth. This participant talks at length about her ordeal through shame and trauma, using imagery of disillusionment and finally reaching a sense of acceptance, stoical and resigned, "*this is the way the world is*".

This participant shares a common theme with all participants that Relationship is a necessary way forward through shame, making links and connecting up with others, "*I have held out an olive branch*". She has rebuilt something that was shattered, a new grounded reality based on hard work and determination to get through and succeed. The shaming has been a learning experience. All participants referred to a process of growth, building or creating something out of the shame experience, (see Appendix 11, Table 2 and 3 for full version) and this participant shares the feeling with all participants that life's shaming experience has made her stronger and wiser. There is a parallel process between the hard work of the research experience and the experiences of the participants, particularly 06, 07 and 08 to build success from out of the ashes of their shaming experiences: "*One of my coping strategies was to work very hard and create something very successful from nothing*" (06).

This leads into a further strong metaphor:

Complex metaphor 17 – A melting pot, an organic process, a leaf: Main theme – Creativity – (Cd) the universal connecting human bond – a transformative experience – growth – something new out of the alchemy

This theme is about the alchemical effects of shame which brings about change into a unifying and painful gestalt of human experience.

> *It was a melting pot – and in some ways I am glad the shaming happened – I'm not over it, because I can still feel the burn of it, but a part of me is thinking, those walls would not have come down as quick and as completely unless that had happened, and the walls had to come down* (07)

This metaphor was very difficult to place as it is a creative image which is to do with Relationship, acquiring Knowledge through experience and Acceptance. 07 is here voicing a deeply shaming experience which is still traumatic and "live" in some ways, and contradictory. She is acknowledging the agony of the experience in the way she felt burned and traumatised by the humiliation and exposure of the shaming she received in a group – yet at the same time is reconciling to the agony of experience at a deep transpersonal level. She is talking here about the defensive walls that she had erected around her which needed to come down for her to experience her real self.

What is a melting-pot? It is a pot where things get put over a heat, and get to a hot temperature and then change form. It is an alchemical experience, being burnt, refined, transformed, reconfigured. The old way of life is burnt up and is replaced by a new better version, more connected to other people, more alive. A major aspect of the healing of shame is a realisation that we are all interconnected in shame, like spines on a leaf. This is shared with all participants in the final 11 examples of the sub-theme of the human bond in Ab.

> *It's the shame that drags you down ... and pulls you and sucks you in. But once you realise that if you have been down this road, thousands of others have as well, it's just part of the human bond, we have all been here in some way or another … erm …*
> *M: Do you see the bond, in a way? How would you … describe that connective bond between people?*
> *07: Do you, do you see the spines on a – the radiating spines on a leaf…*
> *M: Mm,*
> *07: The little veins*
> *M: Oh yeah, the skeleton of the leaf,*

> *07: And we are all… like in the spider web … connected with each other, but I like the leaf one better because it is something organic and real 07 Do you see the radiating spines ... the little veins on a leaf?*
>
> *M: Oh yeah, the skeleton of the leaf,*
>
> *07: We are all … the spider web… connected with each other… I am happy that I am only one of the tiny little parts of the skeleton of the leaf. I have no grand ego that I have to be the central vein or anything like that…. I am just a part of that matrix and happy to be so*
>
> *M: Something about rubbing along with the person you are next to?*
>
> *07: That's right, yes,*
>
> *M: The cell…. You happen to be next to…*
>
> *07: That's right and understanding…. that kind of mutual … I don't know…. what do they call it … Symbiotic, it can be mutually beneficial. We don't have to war and fight … the trick is persuading the other person that it's … this is the way the world is. Most people rank don't they? (holding hands up)*
>
> *M: Well, if we are equal. Just teeny weeny little cells then it doesn't matter, does it, who is who and what's what?*
>
> *07: And all the ranking stuff, because if the middle leaf looks up there's leaves above it and if it could look down, there's leaves below – but it doesn't matter, we're all leaves….*
>
> *M: 'Cause what is that leaf a part of?*
>
> *07: The greater whole, the tree… life ... for me…*
>
> *M: Yeah, so the … just being a small part, a small part… of the whole*
>
> *07: Is enough …*

So we come full circle back to relationship and connection with other human beings as an essential ingredient for the healing of shame within a safe, interconnected network, not separated and isolated from each other.

There is an amalgam of sub-themes here, which shows a further aspect to coming to terms with shame as a mixture of Creativity and Acceptance, which I am naming 'Creative Acceptance'. This is the idea that we are all in the melting-pot together. If we add 'Mankind is my kind' from participant 05 to the Melting Pot and 'all parts of the same leaf' metaphors from participant 07, we have a good mix of metaphors!

> *05: Eric Eriksson said the last cycle of the crisis was working through to the conclusion that mankind was my kind, so you didn't have to be different, or to be this or that. Just really accept. If it's taken to extremes it's part and parcel of the act of becoming social*

> *and this fear of rejection, because all it really is we are dependent on others, in the*
> *sense we can't survive without them, which is true, at one level, we can't survive and*
> *get our social needs met without them, But we are more interdependent than dependent*
> *or independent … so mankind is my kind … I am not going to beat myself up if I get*
> *something wrong for you. I will beat myself up if I get something wrong for me.*
> *M: Mmm, so there is a sense of peace within that*
> *05: Yes, mm*
> *M: And arriving at some sort of acceptance of self*
> *05: Yes, I think so .mm*
> *M:: And arriving at a sense of all the flaws, acceptance of everything that's gone ...*
> *05: mm:…*
> *M: I hope I will be able to use some of those pearls of your more elderly wisdom*
> *05: Thank you for the elderly*
> (Mutual laughter)

09 shares the same view as 06 that shame is here to stay, that we can never be cured of
it.

> *09: Whatever I do, I think, it will never go away … as you say, it is something that*
> *comes up, and then I manage it, and push it back again. But I don't think it will ever go*
> *away because I have talked a lot about it in different places. Maybe that is the part that*
> *is human.*
> *M: Yeah, the human part*
> *09: The part of being … I don't know… sort of evolving that we go through life taking*
> *lots of different shame*

As was pointed out in the Introduction, Lakoff & Johnson (2003) posit the view that
thought can be embodied and embedded in unconscious, not literal process. They see
metaphor as a powerful way for the body and brain to shape what is unconscious,
abstract and connected up, in what they refer to as: "*experiential gestalts … These*
gestalts are experientially basic because they characterize structured wholes within
recurrent human experiences … They represent coherent organizations of our
experiences in terms of natural dimensions (parts, stages, causes etc.)… Domains of
experience that are organized as gestalts in terms of such natural dimensions seem to us
to be natural kinds of experience"(ibid, p.117).   The metaphors of the leaf, the mix and
the melting pot symbolise the unifying gestalt of acceptance of the fact that we are part of

a whole much larger picture, that we need to integrate in order to become whole human beings, connected and interconnected, and at peace with ourselves.

5.1.4 Theme 4: Acceptance

This theme divided into three sub-themes:

- The reality of shame – accept it with equanimity
- We humans and shame are part of the natural matrix
- Humour and colloquial language as a way of dealing with shame

Complex metaphor 18 – The black ball: Main theme – Acceptance (Aa) reconciling to the longevity and reality of shame – nasty, hard, heavy

This section is about the theme of reconciling to the visceral nature of shame as dark and heavy, which participant 09 states she recognises and accepts as part of getting older.

> *I carry ... this deep ball of blackness in the pit of my stomach ... It's black and it feels … nasty – and it almost feels hard – It's something I have carried ever since my marriage failed and it's interesting. As I am talking about it I can feel it rising … But my awareness of the black ball as I get older becomes greater.* (09)

The fact that this participant is able to articulate her shame lucidly, suggests this metaphor of the black ball of shame fits into the Acceptance theme as a way out of shame. In understanding that as she has aged, she has become increasingly able to explore and accommodate this awareness of shame. A number of different themes apply – the negative theme of a sense of Powerlessness, as well as Relationship, Knowledge and Creativity as ways out of shame:

R – Relationship – talking about what the shame feels like through the research interview;
K – Knowledge – Kd and D – Defences. She realises what happens when feeling the ball of blackness of shame, she wants not to feel it, but instead to go into her head and intellectualise it. She recognises that her defence mechanism of intellectualisation comes into operation to avoid feeling uncomfortable feelings;
C – Creativity – she is very self-aware, and creatively makes an immediately accessible image to capture the sense of the awareness of the feeling of dark oppressive heaviness around her shame, which sits heavily in the bottom of her stomach.

Her further metaphor of seeing the ramifications implies a visual sense of spreading branches, almost like new neural pathways of understanding of the implications of her deeply shameful feelings.

> *I think as time goes on I can see all the ramifications* (09)

So it seems there is another theme here of a journey she has made around her deeply distressing experience and felt sense of her "ultimate failure"… that in what she is saying here, she voluntarily has chosen to stay with the painful feeling in the pit of her stomach, and not avoid it by rationalising – echoing the theme of knowledge, embracing shame at a level of physical awareness (in the pit of her stomach and voicing this sense), emotional awareness (feeling the sadness and ambivalent, difficult shame affect), cognitive awareness (knowing she does not feel comfortable about the choice she was compelled to make, so a feeling of cognitive dissonance and discomfort) and acceptance awareness (expressing and staying with this feeling in a highly articulate way, accepting the discomfort).

There is a theme here of the negativity of shame, the heavy, black, oppressive feeling around the failure of her marriage, so this would predominantly fall into the negative theme of a sense of powerlessness and failure, a weighed down feeling at visceral core level, like a feeling of carrying a burden that is inescapable and dark.

She states that she tries to deal with the heavy feeling in the pit of her stomach by "*going back into her head and rationalising it all*": another example here of a defence mechanism of not wanting to deal with and process her feelings at gut level, but instead, avoiding by going up into her head and intellectualising the difficult, unbearable feeling that she calls shame.

Another interesting aspect of this section of the interview on the "black ball" metaphor is her reference to a growing awareness of the phenomenon of shame: "*my awareness of the black ball as I get older becomes greater*", with the recurring sub-theme of the benefit of being realistic in the ageing process. The very fact that she is articulating the experience with the language of metaphor, so that it is possible to visualise and see the phenomenon of shame as a black ball at the bottom of her stomach, means that she is able to perceive and articulate her experience of shame in a graphic way, at some level thereby distancing herself from the shame, making herself a distinct entity from the shame. This is very different from the experience of either being unaware of shame as a phenomenon, and simply being overwhelmed and bowled over by it, or else to react violently by freezing, fleeing, flopping or fighting. Four of the five participants recognise shame at body level in the stomach. 06 refers to this at gut level, "*I think I got pretty experienced at working with clients with their shame and staying with them even when*

they have just dumped on me, and I am really down in my gut…" 07 experiences shame as "*falling through a trap door in the pit of my stomach*".

The metaphor of the black ball of shame works at many levels and I would argue is a demonstration of a key aspect in the journey of coming to terms with shame, even maybe healing from shame through the dialogue and facing up to the depth in her stomach of the horrible feeling of being a failure in respect of a failed marriage.

Complex Metaphor 19 – The journey – crossing a suspension bridge and building a little mud hut: Main theme – Acceptance (Ab)   working through shame experience –, arriving stronger – building up – creating a garden

The mud hut is the doctorate, arriving at the destination and becoming finally developed and established on the map of the landscape of shame … see Figure 15, p. 177. The theme of moving through stages of development, with a dual sense of moving through time and place, is strong in this extract. The participant's language is highly metaphorical, her ideas creative.   This participant has been interviewed four times, spanning four years. For her the transition has been hard, to take on the role of a wise woman, "*the crone*". She has struggled with her journey through the territory of shame, struggling across a bridge between shame and non-shame. The bridge is a metaphor of joining up the two separate fragmented places, from shame to non-shame. She had difficulty trusting the bridge, which she had formerly thought to be a wobbly, rope bridge:

> *07: There was a swing bridge, no, one of those little bridges that was made of rope and slats of wood 'cause it was such a precarious transition … '*
> *M :Oh, well you needed to have something underneath that wasn't precarious then…. maybe that's what you're talking about bricks for*
> *07: Yes, yes, I needed a permanence.* (07)

She discovered it was a stronger suspension bridge, founded on a good relationship with her guide, the "*man with a macheté*" to get her out of the shame island and into a place where she could feel more secure with her building of her little mud hut – a metaphor of nature, simplicity and stability which would represent some solid achievement very personally satisfying for herself. This is a strong metaphor for 07 to express a sense that she is arriving at a state of acceptance and forgiveness for herself.

> *07: It was a good picture, I liked the fact there was a summit and you could crest the summit and come down the other end*

M: Well, this is my… the second bit of the research I think, is fascinating because coming over the crest and out of that experience ... either through, or round or whatever… different people do ... and then finding there is a bridge across or an island – and there is a continuation beyond shame

07: Yes … I sense that, I can sense the difference … I know I am different now … and there is a sense of me going from one stage, if you like, from my older mother archetype into my crone if you like. That's perhaps the transition that is happening …

M: The crone, I like that, that's quite funny isn't it?

07: Yep, (shared laughter) yes, and you can be that in any way… you can make that in any way you like, my little house …

M: Yes, so it's kind of ... homely isn't it …

07: Yes, I am … there is a sense of repleteness at the moment … my little mud hut and the suspension bridge ... I think the suspension bridge is apt because I didn't trust it. I didn't trust the crossing … there was nothing underneath me, there was just a … belief, a hope, a different kind of hope. When I was talking about that moment of forgiveness the other day, there was the beginnings of self-compassion … and I am learning that each mud-brick that I erect, has been painfully wrought by me and it is of worth now … and nobody now has the right to take them down, it is about me saying so … the beginnings of worth, the beginnings of self-compassion, so now that I can give it to myself, I am more sure I can give it to others. (07)

This extended metaphor was very difficult to place in one simple theme, operating at multiple creative levels of meaning, which after many changes, ended up in Acceptance since this is the overweening theme. It could have been placed in Relationship, Knowledge of the territory of shame, or Creativity.

Other participants echo the same feeling of arrival at a stronger sense of self through travelling through shame experience and finding compassion, in different metaphors and in different ways, and some of the strongest are to be found in Tables 11 and 12 under sub-themes Creativity and Acceptance. All participants, and 09 in particular, also voiced this sub-theme of arriving somewhere much stronger. 07, the youngest of the cohort of participants, expressed this theme particularly creatively and metaphorically as experiencing a new sense of a connective human and therapeutic bond, enabling her to step into a new place, feeling more able and ready now to face up to herself and accept herself as she is. This is an important aspect of arriving at a new sense of self-compassion after a difficult transition from a redundant persona to rebuild a new persona which is more robust and real. She acknowledges the hard work that has been involved

in getting this far on this task of building herself up from the ashes, (an image shared with 06), from ground zero, and determinedly and painstakingly making a strong and dependable personhood out of the devastation and agony of the past shaming experiences. She also values the co-created imagery built up through this research project – see Table 9 (sub-theme Rc) and Appendices 10 and 11.

One participant talked about arriving at a stronger sense of self to out-talk shame, through an important piece of self-equipping – allowing what Rowan (1990) refers to as a sub-personality to come forward and speak. This would enable a younger self aspect to have a voice and set up a dialogue with an older self: "*My little boy is always alongside me – he is never far away – I don't want to leave him behind any more – I will rely on him to tell me when I am feeling things my adult doesn't want to know and he will rely on me to bale him out intellectually*" (06). This dialogue allows a healing process to take place through being able to respect and articulate different positions inside the head, away from shaming outer influences.

The group of participants was a homogeneous group of thoughtful, people, all psychotherapists, in between middle and old age, (late forties to late sixties), so there was quite a pool of life experience and calming wisdom emerging into the theme of Acceptance of reality, forgiveness, redemption, compassion for self and others and Acceptance of being part of a whole, going through life stages, sub-themes of Aa and Ab; the relevant ones are below:

These were quotes from a range of participants to show that they all had something to say about the relevance of stages through life, and adopting an attitude of compassion towards the self.

> *The last cycle of the crisis – working to the conclusion that mankind is my kind – you don't have to be this or that ... or different – just accept* (05)
> *You know it is not too difficult to see and feel when clients are moving more towards a greater capacity for self compassion … when they are able to talk about their histories and see life as it really was, not just how the defences created it* (06)
> *There is a sense of me going from one stage, crossing from my older mother archetype into my crone. That's perhaps the transition that is happening* (07)

The theme of acceptance is here, (theme Ab) that of being a small part of a larger whole. The theme of natural growth, fruitfulness, is built into this. Also the idea that weeds tangle people up, which could metaphorically be the weeds of shame … and tending the weeds

is important. Growth, care and diligent gardening are built into these metaphors, and the theme of being a therapist who treads carefully and tends the clients and supervisees around shame, with knowledge and understanding of the importance of the work, and needs to be both gentle and also, at times, firm, cutting away "a bit of the crap",i.e. to be proficient at the job, and well-boundaried, like a good gardener.

> *Yes, and also the idea of that is that when you have a beautiful garden, you still have to tend to it and look after it*
>
> *M: Well the weeds are malevolent, you have ivy and stuff coming in*
>
> *06: Yeah, so just as you can't walk away from the garden and just enjoy it all the time, so you can't walk away from our own healing you know*
>
> *M: Mm*
>
> *06: It's like, the difference between cure and healing is that we can be healed enough to not feel ashamed of feeling shame,*
>
> *M: mm*
>
> *06: this is the thing, I can still feel shame but then when I realise what is going on I can say oh it's that again and I don't feel ashamed of it any more, it's part of who I am…*(06)

These metaphors coming together form the beginnings of self-compassion: the connective human bond, where we realise we are part of nature's natural matrix. These metaphors form an important centrepiece of the island of shame which has been developed as a direct result out of the rich metaphors of all participants (see Figures 10 and 11, pp. 106-107).

Complex metaphor 20 – Sheep shit helps: Main theme – Acceptance (Ac) natural humour – bodily processes – bringing down to earth – equalising

> *I have got over 100 sheep, if they have been too long in one field they are absolutely covered in shit – that is what shame is like"* (06)

> *And you know I can only just breathe and inhale and I don't believe it, but I just try and accept the things I have achieved by merit but … I have too much shame in me to let that go to my head and start floating around and er … telling them all what they should be doing. You know I do see some of my colleagues do that and I think God almighty, get back into therapy.* (Laughter.) *Life is too short and sheep shit helps I have to say, when I have to wipe a sheep's arse… it helps… it is no respecter of status*
>
> *M: So keeping one foot on the ground in the shit, in the sheep shit!*

> *06 That is a very good analogy … shame is one foot in the shit" ...* (Laughter) (06)

There is a new co-created theme evolving here now of the swear words having a humorous quality to them and often there is a fine line in comedy between being funny and going too far and causing offence.

This metaphor, seemingly light-hearted, actually carries an illuminating, deep truth, that shame is very much to do with bodily processes, the aftermath of the digestive process, resembling sheep shit. We can learn humility and equality from the experiences around it. It links with the theme of Acceptance, the way life is, and we are a part of the matrix. Shame is a normal part of life, something we have to live with. Shame and sheep shit share the characteristic of bringing us down to ground level and removing a sense of superiority.   Shame, like excrement, becomes messy, when it is not properly dealt with and directed to an appropriate place. To carry the metaphor further forward, therapy is probably the place where shame needs to end up, where it can be properly processed and dealt with. Shame, like shit, can be messy in the wrong place. Or it can be good compost, producing new growth. Maybe creatively we can re-construe it as we begin to understand the parallel between shame and shit, healing shame and composting which is about producing nutrients. Being vulnerable and talking about excrement, excreting and other bodily functions, and other embarrassing bodily processes, could be and is sometimes an important part of dealing with shame. There is a difficult and important aspect of shame to do with its messiness, complexity and contradictoriness. Disgust, opposition, extremity and paradox are rife around the subject, so, with shame, we are never quite sure what we are dealing with.   We just know it evokes extremely strong visceral feelings; it feels like torture, uncomfortable, painful, animal and primitive. This was touched on in the PEP section on visceral reactivity, (Appendix 1, pp. 19-21) but was not expanded.

So sheep shit here is seen as a leveller or equaliser of power and status differentials, and a bringer down to the stark natural realities of life about basic bodily process, highly significant with shame. These two extracts from 06 contain strong metaphors on the theme of life's unpleasant mess and disgusting detritus around shame, which is an ordinary experience to be dealt with calmly, without the need either to make a big deal of it and complain, or to become grandiose and unwilling to take on the mess and nasty, smelly jobs in life. We have to accept, talk and take on our own shame. 05, 06 and 09

emphasise the importance of accepting this aspect of shame as a 'given' and that we have to learn to manage it. But 05 has a slightly different take on it, saying, well shame at one level is something to be named, recognised and addressed, and yet on the other hand, it is not a good thing to dwell on it!

> *When we realise that shame is no big deal, well it is a big deal, it's an experience, but no-one's doing it to us – we are doing it to ourselves* (05)

His view is unique to the sample, that shame has to be exorcised, cleanly and quickly, but is worthy of note to show the extreme and contradictory responses shame can produce in people:

> 05: "*Something important for me is that shame is not something real, it is something in our imagination. It is our fantasy we do to ourselves, we all have shame and we deal with the shame, we need to exorcise it in in an exorcism way. We turn ourselves against ourselves. Mmm* (chuckles)
> *M: Integrating all the shit* (laughter)
> *05: Okay…*
> *M: Feels much too important to lose it* (05)

Pendulation is a phrase coined by Linge (2006) to bring about a linking up of negative with positive affects, and help make some contact with a sense of joy in the future, things not being all "doom and gloom". The theme of humour is developed in the Discussion section (5.6) on pendulation effects.

06, 08 and 09 all refer to the need both to level off differences and ward off grandiosity, and that humour can be a powerful tool for this. Use of cartoons and light-heartedness can be effective in smoothing off feelings of shame.

> *You know, people go, "oh my God, I have met, oh I never thought I'd meet the author of that book, you know and I"… so maybe I quite enjoy losing my words occasionally in training because then they think, oh God, she is just a normal human being* (Laughter)
> *M: So we have got that sense of normalising again, or equalising then to the person*
> *08: Yeah, it is about equalising, yeah…* (long pause) …
> *M: I mean, how is that different here? Can you tell me a bit about that?*
> *08: Um, yeah, because I suppose I don't go into humour when I am there and losing my words, but I might say something like um, yeah, you know, this is just one of the disadvantages of getting old, or something like that. You do lose your words and …*

> *maybe it'll come a bit later, or whatever. But inside I am not worried at all … I am not*
> *going into shame ... I am just saying this is how it is.*
> *M: So it's normalising, this is just normal, accepting it*
> *08: Yep*
> *M: Nothing I can do about it* (08)

So there is a contradictoriness about the different participant's views of shame, which shows the arbitrary nature of shame that makes it very difficult to pin down.

These themes I feel are best represented as a series of moving mirrors, which is developing into an artefact of this doctorate, maybe a mobile, because shame is elusive but strong and harsh when experienced.

Shame once in slight awareness, or even prior to awareness, gets pushed down, camouflages itself under a string of inventive defences, so people do not realise what it is they are experiencing. That is why all participants, myself included, refer to the need to explore its many facets and reach an understanding of what constitutes the territory of shame. 05 talks of gaining thick description, 06 talks in depth about the need to unpack the experience with a magnifying glass and barometer, and tune in to shame in a sensitive and precise way, 07, 08 and 09 all women, talk about the defences against shame in different abstract guises.

Complex metaphor 21 – Colours of shame: using imagery of colour to enter the emotional world of shame and enable people individually to portray the pain and darkness of shame: Main Themes – Defences and Knowledge(D/Kd) Shame has no specific colour, but tends to be viewed as dark and bland; is associated with reddening, blushing, exposure and stop lights

> *As I said, as the nail is covered up in cream paint, so my spark of faith or hope, or*
> *whatever it is, my life spark that I am protecting against, is covered up, that I am*
> *protecting against gets covered up, not in a creamy paint, but in some kind of misty*
> *grey. I don't think it was dark in the sense of black … I didn't want to actually die, I just*
> *felt I needed to hide, and I learnt how to control my breathing so that I wouldn't make a*
> *sound. And I think that's where I go, when I go into myself, as I remember in the dream*
> *… this empty aloneness I um I'm um ... and I think that's where I go* (06)

> *Sometimes er ... if er ... I get into a defence of anger or rage then it becomes red of*

> *course, big big red* (06)

> *The colour that comes to mind now is definitely red.*
> *fiery red and yellow ...red. I think it was about anger to be honest, one of the defences*
> *against shame* (08)

Colour is an important feature of metaphor, because it taps directly into visual aspects of the quality of the subject it is describing e.g. shame, or anger, which may not be easily expressible in concrete form: so the colour conveys something about affective experience. An interesting finding was that although shame was evoked in the metaphorical language of colour, often unprompted by a direct question, the only consistent colour was red when describing the defence of anger against shame. In describing shame, participants evoked shame in a range of generally bland colours including black, dark blue, beige, grey, cream, black, red, fiery red and yellow, but there was no consistency. 05 described shame as dark and blue, night blue, 06 described it as a grey mist, 08 fiery yellow and red, 09 as beige and bland and as a black ball. This says something about the manifold nature of shame and the fact that it is difficult to recognise and pin down. Camouflage is relevant here, that colour is used in camouflage to hide, and the colours named for shame tend to be dark or bland.

Tomkins (1962) named eight primary affects: interest, enjoyment, surprise, distress, fear, shame, contempt and anger. To gain further insight, I asked seven separate people independently of this study, what colour they would view these primary affects: sadness, fear, anger, joy, surprise. Then for secretive emotions – shame and guilt, and I added in jealousy and envy. (See Appendix 13.) There was no consistency for any of these affects apart from anger which came out as red / crimson, and joy which came out as yellow in five cases out of seven, jealousy which came out as green in five cases out of seven. Sadness, fear, surprise, guilt and shame were all inconsistent. Emotion is shown to be a very personal experience, each with its own colour, therefore it is really important to listen and probe into the personal meanings for the individual.

Shame meant seven different colours for seven different people, the only common feature amongst them was the darkness of tone in browns, green, black and grey for five out of the seven.

Shame	Dark brown	Brown	Purple	Black	Mauve	Dark green	Dark grey

A suggestion for future research could be to take a much larger sample size to determine whether these small scale findings apply consistently particularly to rage and shame as defences, comparing experiences of streaming emotions in full flow such as anger and joy, where the experience is clear. But with shame, fear and sadness, somehow the experience feels confusing, because one emotion can overlap with another. That is why the findings in this study are interesting because shame is complicated, not uniform. It seems important to unpack the meaning of the different emotions for each individual and really listen accurately.

The three participants 06, 08 and 09, who referred to shame in terms of needing to defend against shame with anger, described it as red (one added orange and fiery). This gives a sense of blood rushing upwards into the face and neck when one is embarrassed. Mollon (2014) stated that the function of the reddening with embarrassment has not been properly explained and he invited anyone in the audience to come up with an explanation. 08 described shame as a rush of colour, like a sexual rush.

For me, I believe the reddening is nature's way of showing somebody right up, to stop them continuing to do what they were doing which was shameful, which until they were feeling caught out and exposed and reddened they did not realise or did not want to admit they were doing, which would be embarrassing to be found out. Perhaps the reddening is an alert signal that, like a red light, signifies "Stop". Indeed Mabey (2008) speaks of the colour red as "nature's all-purpose alert signal". This is very interesting and thought provoking, for red in nature certainly attracts our attention, being probably the strongest colour, so this would somehow cause the reddening person to feel even more exposed, so in the most likely event, would be likely to want to hide and so would turn away, run away, withdraw, escape and thereby stop the shaming, exposing situation.

The colour red also links in with the theme of blood and a beating heart to pump the blood round the body. The heart is mentioned 14 times in the interviews with 06 and 08. The word "bloody" is strong and visceral, to do with wounding and expressing anger or frustration. Used as a swear word in the interviews, it occurs 12 times: used by the researcher ten times and two times by the interviewee 06 in all the interviews, which to me seems like an attempt on my part to activate some anger and energy and get the interview moving and possibly to diffuse tension in the interviewee, to normalise, informalise the conversation and make it less stilted, which would have inhibited the connection and limited the depth and breadth of the interviewees. It would be fascinating to follow this up in a study of therapists coming forward with an interest in the subject of swearing in therapy and supervision.

Complex metaphor 22 – The nature of shame – soup or cream that has gone off:

Main themes – Defences and Knowledge (D/Kd) Something with a bad taste – disgusting – shame lurking and repetitively coming back

This feeling of badness you have, well actually, it is illusory – it's not really there, but there is just this sense … that there is something there that is … something is not quite right, and the not quite rightness has got something to do with badness or unsavouriness ... it's funny I don't see it as being to do with smell or sight – it is much more to do with taste. Which is odd isn't it?

M: Is there a fruit that you might equate it with or a food?

08: Well I suppose something that's gone off slightly – past its sell by date … maybe soup that has started fermenting, or ... gone off, but when you look closely it is fermenting or bubbling, something that looks like soup, like normal soup, like you could really eat it

M: Mm

08: Or cream that has gone over the top but it looks okay

M: Mm, you said past its sell by date,

08: Yeah yeah

M: So it's gone off

08: Yeah yeah

M: So what would you do with that then…

08: Sorry?

M: What would you do with stuff that has gone off?

08: We tend to throw it away don't you … which is quite interesting yeah

M: So relating it into this would be ...

08: Sorry?

M: So relating that … I would throw it away, to yourself there… what would you ... ? … I mean I don't want to take you too upset here, you are well able to look after yourself, but…

08: Yeah, no well, I mean that's definitely, I mean you have put your finger on the nail, really, haven't you, it is something about the whole adoption and fostering process, and you know, me ... feeling that this might ... maybe it is me feeling that this might be about to start again.…I am going to be rejected by my peers now.

The metaphor of "off" soup or cream conjures up the sense of shame as something unsavoury, bad, unpleasant, which looks alright on the surface but is fundamentally "off".

It links in with the theme of hiding our shame behind defences, using clever disguise, of which the use of camouflage is one example.

Metaphors of camouflage abound in the Final Project, disguised and hiding, not easy to dig out, lurking in the background. The theme of the contradictory, paradoxical nature of shame was beginning to put in an appearance in the PEP. It is not what it appears, it is not visible, but well camouflaged. In the PEP I stated on p.25, "*Opposition and paradox is an emerging sub-theme in shame, which needs to be highlighted and further examined*". Since that time, the themes of opposition – (that, every dark aspect has its lightness) and paradox (that shame comes in disguise) have become a little more apparent in the section on defences; see Sections 4.5 and 5.5.

This metaphor about cream and soup that has gone off reveals themes about the deceptive nature of shame, working at a number of levels. It is about the unsavoury taste of shame, something essentially bad and disgusting, about the untrustworthy appearance of shame which looks good on the surface, but belies what is underneath, something that has gone off. The underlying meaning for this participant links in with the shaming effects of having been adopted as a young child, and the painful shameful feelings attached to rejection – feeling defective and not good enough, but not wanting to show this painful affect. She mentions it might "start again", as if the feeling of being rejected, a core rejection of adoption, has never gone away, but is lurking in the background, hidden, waiting to come back.

Talking about it is the way forward – the sensitive therapist can work with this, using plenty of reflection and a slow pace, as I hope the above abridged extract demonstrates. This is research but does give an example of the therapist in me staying with the topic, digging down below the surface, trusting the metaphor to reveal its own inner truth, which the participant does herself, being given the time and space to make her own reflective links between the metaphor of feeling unsavoury and her early childhood experience.

The theme of camouflage, which means that the surface appearance of shame is different from the underlying reality, is an important one in terms of therapists needing to work sensitively with client shame, not to take the presentation at face value. This involves looking out for underlying shame when a client has some traumatic shaming history, yet appears to be looking good like the soup, but shame of rejection, abandonment, an abusive history, is fermenting and bubbling away under the surface. Shame takes time to crawl its way to the surface, into speech. The therapist needs to be both alert, yet patient, when dealing with defences around shame, whether in therapy, supervision, training or research.

5.2   A new super-theme: Creative assertiveness – speaking my truth

The concept of "Creative assertiveness" has grown out of the themes of Creativity and Knowledge, and the Four E's, Entering, Engaging, Expressing, Embracing the need to speak out, push the voice forwards, be free-thinking and expressive, artistic, poetical, daring with words and images and find imaginative to move forwards out of shame. Boundaries are of vital importance with shame work,: learning the limits as to where I begin and the other person ends, and where I end and the other person begins. Holding back is necessary at times, yet speaking and expressing uncomfortable, difficult truths which the other person might not want to hear is also necessary at times. The way of healing shame is to vocalise what may feel very uncomfortable but true, not what we want to say, but once out, the shame-tension diffuses. If I do not say my truth, I lose my sense of self, the self-boundary that divides me from the other person,

> "*If I don't say my truth, if I betray my truth – if I go along with the collusion, I lose my sense of self – that's the sugar lump feeling*" (05)

The opposite to the sugar lump feeling of dissolving into nothingness would be not dissolving, therefore it would be to do with being solid, with a sense of self-dignity and self-worth, having substantiality.

5.3   Reflection on research interventions

My comments on vulnerability and risk-taking in shame work apply to therapy, supervision and research and my own pathway on this doctorate through sharing my vulnerability in talking about my own authentic struggle and dealing with it.

This research has posited the view that it is not enough for the therapist to be empathically attuned, and mirroring when working with shame. It is important for the therapist to go one step further and become vulnerable, enabling the client not to feel scrutinised and judged. In a strong therapeutic alliance, the therapist and client together can explore experiences, play and experiment together with ideas, safely and creatively around shame.   This is mutually challenging, demanding and stretching for therapist and client, whether in therapy, supervision or training. This is to do with becoming real in the relationship, vulnerable and sharing the self, sprinkling some transparency, finding a way to break down the barriers of staying hidden behind a façade or mask of superiority and pride. It is about the fact that shame is normal and common. I think that successful therapy around shame is about taking risks and really engaging with the client or supervisee, gauging with careful timing when it is appropriate to become vulnerable and

authentic, modelling letting the defences down – in other words, to explore and come through the territory of shame, together, two human beings sharing the rocky road, preferably with another key finding, a dog!!! (Since dogs did present themselves as a key finding around shame.)

Over the last ten years as a therapist, I have had an empathically attuned dog present in the room. It is interesting the dogs appeared quite regularly in the interviews, as a metaphor of comfort and solace, and in two cases, an actuality. A dog appears to contribute a sense of simple trust and loyalty.

Laughter and humour, swear words used in a strong, informal and honest way, sometimes with comic effect, thread their way through the interviews, and are captured in Ac under the theme of Acceptance, but also come through in the dialogue in the theme of Knowledge and teaching on the subject of shame. Particular participants had certain humorous speech styles, e.g. 06 teaching about "taking my little boy with me", and "I told you I might".   There were shared jokes about ageing and being overweight, which made for a lightening of these difficult subjects, creating a breather in the form of some light relief, making it more palatable to continue. At the time of transcribing I felt some shame as I was not adopting a conventional interviewing style, but I think it enabled conversation to flow naturally: the humour created a kind of bond through laughing together – it is a pleasurable, bonding connection between two people when the joke is mutually understood and shared.

In the professional research relationship (Theme Rc) there were moments of pure co-creation where there was a shared sense of achieving something akin to a therapeutic breakthrough. The ingredients of humour, trust, high energy in the relational connection, pleasure in connecting up in understanding and a shift in the participants' view of themselves around a shameful subject occurred particularly with 06 in the heartbeat sequences as described in 5.1.1, Metaphor 4, and also with 07 (table 9) in the sections on her self-image, which she referred to as her fatness. I had a mental image of her as a big strong ship steaming through the water; between us we managed to reconfigure her view of herself as substantial, a woman of great substance, bearing the weight of her wisdom and her significant place in the world with aplomb. "*I think you have something there, there is a connection with my weight. I love what you just said and it is absolutely that – it is about being substantial*".

Participants, without exception, myself included as a co-researcher, used laughter and humour. With respect to Tomkins' positive affect theory (1962) on enjoyment-joy and interest-excitement, there were many examples in the interviews of positive

acknowledgement, affect attunement, vitality effects (Stern, 1985) and strong relational connection in operation. Humour seems to be tied to the positive affects – laughter releases tension. At some level I think it is a powerful agent in unlocking and unravelling the tightness and tension of shame and trauma generally, like the idea of "*gallows humour*" when people are working with disturbing morbid subjects, dying, dead, sick, ill, hospitalisation and mortuaries. It reverses the negativity – Resnick (1997) alludes to "*the recursive loop of shame*". It is my contention that humour can play a part in reversing this process, helping to unravel the damage that shame causes when it "winds us up".

5.4   The positive effects of the research

I hope my participants felt they gained from the intellectual and therapeutic stimulus of the interviews, being able to talk about any aspect of shame in a safe environment.

I have arrived at four principles from the themes of Relationship, Knowledge, Creativity and Acceptance as a framework and set of aims for working with shame. All four principles can be specifically applied as a calming, solid framework within which to work, and the third and last are both part of the framework and hoped for outcomes in working with shame –

- Armchair containment
- Wise guidance
- Creative assertiveness
- Balanced integrity

I have found the knowledge, demeanour and experience of the participants, and the model I have developed out of their combined knowledge, extremely useful in my practice and personal life. I intend the findings to be disseminated in a handbook and for this work to continue.

5.5   Thoughts on defences and defensive manoeuvres – hot and cold shame

Defences was a recurring theme in my findings. As shown in Nathanson's Compass of shame (Figure 1), and my own compass (Figure 11), we employ four basic natural defence strategies to barricade and camouflage our vulnerable core-self structure against being seen as defective and wounded by shame. We aggress, hit out, or oppose; over-compensate and over-react; project, where we blame others; introject where we blame ourselves; repress memories, forget and deny; isolate.   More positively we can sublimate shame through creative activity or we can undo through slowly processing our shame. The findings in Table 4 showed metaphorical examples of these forms of barricading and camouflaging, and suggested a range of therapeutic opinions and perspectives on how

and when to help clients loosen shame, sometimes with supportive interventions, sometimes with challenging interventions.

All participants referred to the defences as a way of protecting the self. Defence mechanisms were seen mostly as maintaining shame rather than healing it, because we are avoiding dealing with our shame head on: "*We walk on egg shell and allow it intimidate our capacity to talk about it*" (06/2/195). It is the job of the therapist to enable the shamed person to dismantle their shame in a way that is bearable and effective, so the defences can become integrated as an acceptable part of shame.

The use of swearing in the interviews, by researcher and participants, has been a revealing aspect in this research of unconscious, disavowed, uncomfortable subjects arising in the transference and counter-transference. I now recognise this in my work and refer to this as shame-transference. I do not think this has been adequately acknowledged to date in psychotherapy and counselling training and would like to develop this in the sequel to this doctorate.

Therapeutic work around shame and its defences is paradoxical, oppositional, with difficult transference and counter-transference material to deal with.

The strongest metaphors identified natural reflex reactions to shame in terms of wanting to ward off the perceived threat of acute wounding pain. 09 referred to a client who overcompensated for sexual abuse by making herself more special to the perpetrator. This is a good illustration of reaction formation, showing a client's unconscious need for protection to avoid having to experience very uncomfortable realities of abuse to the core-self.

Vaillant's work was helpful in elucidating my findings that defence mechanisms are either primitive and only effective in dealing with shame in the short term, or mature which are more effective with regard to shame in the long term. This research suggests that acquiring knowledge, including an understanding of the defence mechanisms, e.g. sublimation, compensation and voicing shame (assertiveness), and finding ways to put into practice constructive ways of dealing with shame, was considered by all participants to be helpful, particularly sublimation through hard work, humour and imagination (See Tables 10, 11 and 15).

It is unusual to see assertiveness as a defence mechanism, but Grohol sees assertiveness as a helpful defence mechanism, or coping strategy to deal with shame. 09 talked about "cutting through the crap", meaning involving the voice speaking up. This is not passive holding back, nor is it aggressive acting out, but rather it is an assertive,

strong, no-nonsense expression of a therapeutic willingness to engage in the unpleasantness of what the client is hiding in. "Crap" here is a metaphor meaning a messy, muddly, negative situation, the fact that the client is covering up his feelings of shame – the therapist here wishes to challenge and "get real", to cut through the defensive pretending and hiding behind twisted, game-playing words. There is energy in the use of the word "crap". She invites the client to make a creative adjustment and turn a negative into a positive. Humour can also be a helpful defence in reducing the intensity of a situation, placing a softening bubble of laughter between the person and the shaming experience, or as 09 said, *"The image I have, then of the humour is it is energetic, almost like bubbles… By being able to laugh about it, it feels as though I could just float up and … and go away from it and the shame doesn't matter…"*

Imagination can also help produce a shift in perspective and help a person stuck in shame to explore other potentials and possibilities in a creative way as 07 said, *"I still have a sense of the fairy tale ... once upon a time, long long ago there was an evil witch … when does the happy ending come?.* Likewise, 06 said, *"In my child ego state I had managed to save her life – I probably had magical thinking in my child ego state."* Another strong finding in this research was that shame can be alleviated by developing a voice to communicate the shame. 07 said, *"Art work taps into all that preverbal, out of awareness stuff … it gives me a voice that I didn't have as a child"* – the voice of assertiveness can be viewed as a very useful defence mechanism around shame, acting as a powerful weapon to loosen the powerful all-encompassing effects of shame.

5.6   Development of Themes

I was interested that the metaphors seem to contain what Lakoff & Johnson (2003) describe as "experiential gestalts", or organised categories of metaphors, and have placed them in the following categories as they show a development of themes, moving between opposites of shame into openness. These structures came out as themes of Physical orientation, i.e. isolating, shutting, hiding away, retreating in shaming or mixing, sharing, coming out of hiding in unshaming; Places, i.e. dark voids and holes, asylums, dunces's corner, an unruly jungle, messy, confusing, painful places of torture in shaming or light bright natural places of vision, openness, a well-tended garden; Buildings, i.e. retreating to place of safety like a bedroom, a womb, or building bridges, mud hut as a way of getting to a safer place, in un-shame; Objects, nail, in shaming or armchair in unshaming; Physical sensation heart pain, burning, blushing, freezing cold, dying and drowning, blindness, disappearance, in the judgements of shame, or loving open vulnerable heart, warmth, life, spark, physis, creative energy in un-shame; Madness in the torture and

insecure, psychiatric feel of the sensation of shaming, as opposed to safety, security, sense of self-coherence in un-shame; War in the experience of being attacked and wounded in a shame situation, as opposed to calm, peaceful forgiveness, gratitude, open-heartedness in un-shaming; Seeing, being invisible, unseen in shame, as opposed to being visible and seen and out in the light; Worldly values, being a failure, useless, stupid, voiceless and powerless in shame, and being a success, useful, a creative power, with knowledge and meaningful words to say out in the world.

The theme of Relationship (sub-themes) Ra, Rb, Rc   illustrates the caring relationship as a way of softening the defences through dialogue, not monologue. The picture of the whole shame landscape I developed was one of some significant person being there to model honesty, being real and caring enough to enable the other to be honest, real and care for self, and trust enough to come out from behind a defensive brick wall and become vulnerable, more open to well-timed challenge to the defences that may have held the shame bound up for a long time. This is delicate work.

The theme of Knowledge (sub-themes Ka, Kb, Kc, Kd) involves an understanding of the defences, the therapist or caring significant person, or professional researcher being able to recognise, see past and challenge at an opportune time the defensive manoeuvring. The mechanisms of avoidance we employ when we cannot bear to feel the intensity of the wounding effects of abuse, assault or attack on our core self, came up in the metaphors. These mechanisms need to be uncovered, understood and unlocked through meticulous and painstaking work, probably in therapy and supervision, or marriage to someone sensitive, non-judgemental, understanding and able to empathise with the underlying agony and experience of shame – certainly it needs to be a safe, contained, robust and (at times) challenging relationship.

The theme of Creativity (sub-themes Ca, Cb, Cc,Cd) means finding creative ways to bring shame up out of hiding, talk about shame and our defences, and reconfigure the self in a non-shaming way. This can work in the natural flow or rhythm of two people meeting together in harmony.

The theme of Acceptance (sub-themes Aa, Ab, Ac) involves acceptance that shame is part of our psyche.   The theme of calm acceptance of reality came across the interviews in the form of shame being a "given'" and experience of life being a good teacher. The Buddhist principles of not fighting against shame but rather embracing it is where we can arrive at when we have done some shame-work on ourselves and have realised that facing up to our shame, not defending against it, not being all high and mighty, talking

about it and getting used to accepting it in ourselves and others, is a way forwards to release from shame.

Compassion and self-compassion arose as a theme in all participants. It became clear that one of the best antidotes to shame is to develop a feeling of being kind to ourselves, to take on a belief that our self-care is very important. Part of this then is to find things to do to self-soothe and self-regulate, pleasurable pastimes and not fighting against the self and others. Gilbert (2014) has contributed greatly to this field..

There were a number of examples of humour being used for affect-attunement. Linge (2006) refers to the idea of needing to create a distance from a strong affect, e.g. shame or distress, and sharing an emotional state of enjoyment, which is referred to as "humour attunement", defined as the capacity to share an inner affectual state, integrated with a cognitive perception (Tomkins, 1982). On an intrapsychic level "pendulation" between the different affectual states comes into play through humour which both opens us and distances from the strong emotion, bringing a certain relief from the negativity. From the interviews, I would suggest that humour was a catalyst to bring about a slight shift away from shame-tension, achieving a kind of balance to stay with the negative affect of shame at the same time as having access to the positive affect of joy. I felt this happened in a number of the humorous exchanges and it was the humour that made it possible to stay with the subject of shame by moderating it in some way, giving a different perspective and helping towards integration.

5.7   Finding broader and deeper meanings inside the metaphors – exploring the essence of shame in a leaf

The deeper meanings inside what I had originally called, the negative metaphors, which were really about the agony of shame, became apparent as the project evolved. I realised that the body senses of touch, hearing, taste and vision, are powerful agents for therapists to use to bring shame up to the surface, so that work on shame can take place. Shame has a lot to do with the bodily sensations of sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing, therefore these senses can be used to enhance visualisation with the use of particular metaphorical forms of language, by eliciting descriptions of taste, colour or textures of shame from the client, or supervisee. I found in the interviews (for example with 08 on touch, or 06 on colour) that shame was activated through use of metaphor, making shame more tangible and accessible. The picture of shame developed out of the close attention to metaphors, captured in the detailed analysis and coding process in the tables.

By the end of this project, I have abandoned the simplistic, dichotomous concept of negative ways into shame and positive ways out of shame, in favour of adopting a broad

and deep picture of a journey across an island representing more of a multi-faceted spectrum of shame. The data, both from the PEP and FP, was very rich, and showed shame to be a deeply physical experience. The data captured the different senses – the harsh touch of abuse (touch), the scalding humiliation of a jeering voice or group (hearing), the sense of disgust around off-food or bodily waste products (taste, smell), the dark, black gloom of hiding in the cave of shame (sight), the chill of rejection and ostracisation (kinaesthetic). These sensory themes were neither good nor bad but provided a picture of the difficulty of exposing shame. It became clear to me that a person in a state of shame was hard to recognise because of needing to conceal the secret of their shame and loneliness. Becoming familiar with the subject, particularly the defence of camouflage, hiding inside a suit of armour, needs to be recognised as an important aspect of shame. Providing a safe, affirming atmosphere, conducive to encouraging a person out of hiding and being seen, is fundamental to the journey through shame. An alternative, complete picture of shame which could be further developed is of a leaf, which also forms a heart. This represents Entering, Engaging with, Expressing and Embracing shame in its entirety – the leaf and the heart are vibrant parts of natural life.

These ideas can be more fully expanded in therapy, supervision and training, and will be developed in the shame workbook to follow.
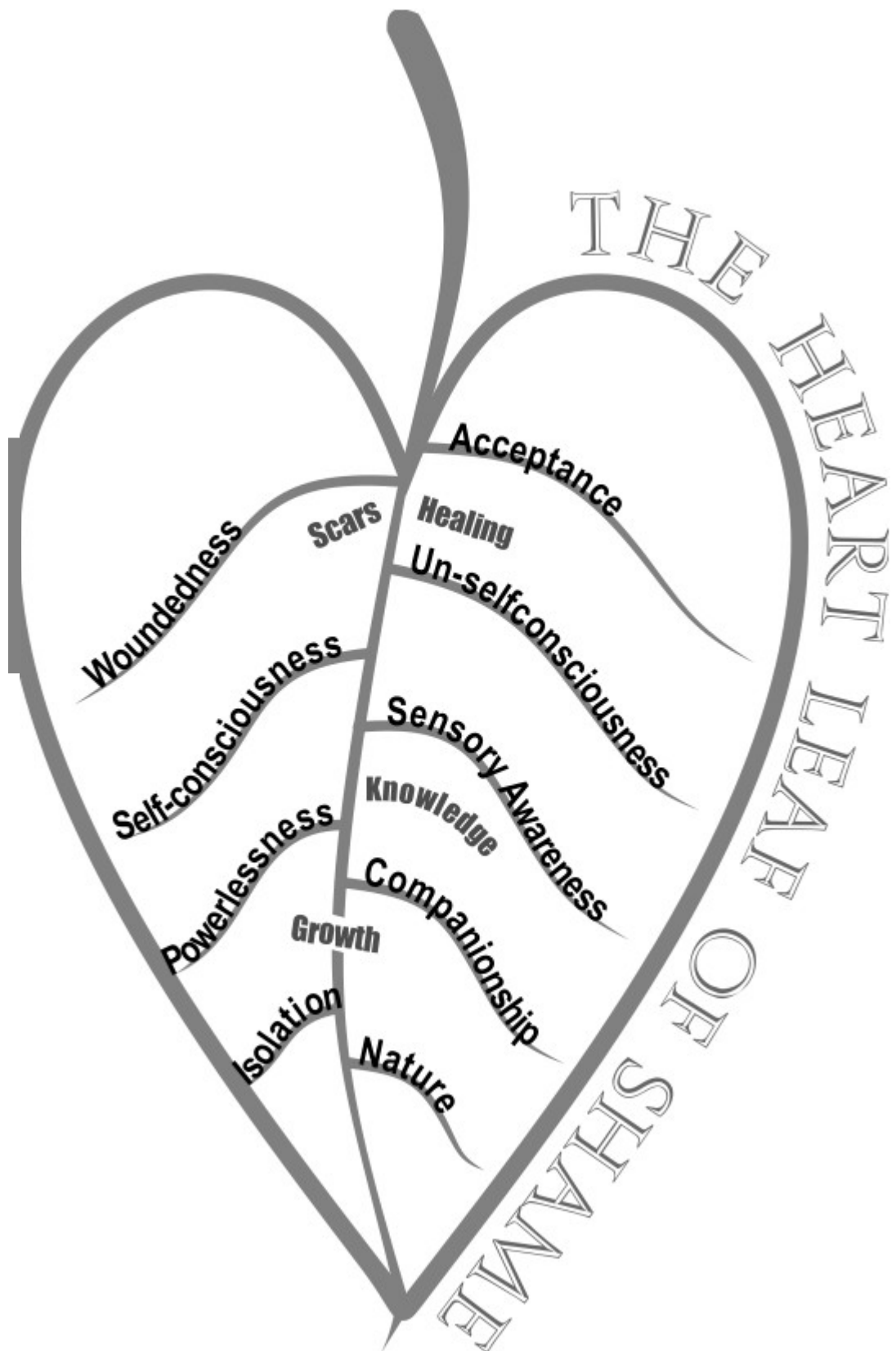
Figure 12: The heart-leaf of shame

Chapter 6 Conclusions

6.1   Reflecting back and looking forwards

The practical method was to draw on the metaphorical language that came up in the interviews. This will be used as a model for therapy, supervision and further workshops.

The intended products from this research are:

- a workbook for practitioners to refer to and use with clients and supervisees as a clinical tool for recognising and working with shame
- to use this as a handbook in conjunction with training, and to produce modules on teaching shame experientially in shame workshops and counselling / psychotherapy training courses in universities, colleges and schools
- to publish some articles in therapy magazines. The emphasis is on a friendly, creative, active, easily accessible experiential way for shame to be out in the open and acknowledged as an important and necessary part of counselling training.

6.2   Limitations of the study

The research was only directed at humanistic / integrative psychotherapists known to the researcher, so the study lacks a broader multi-orientational standpoint.

There was a small sample size of only five participants in the FP so no definite quantitative conclusions can be drawn.

The participants were all known to the researcher on a professional (not friendship) basis, so there might have been a response bias. Participants might have been trying to please me too much by using metaphors they felt I would like. However, even if this were the case, the metaphors would still stand as powerful descriptors of the shame experience and antidotes to shame.

The sample was limited to white, British, middle-aged psychotherapists.

It was a qualitative hermeneutic and heuristic study which was a 'drill down' into details rather than looking across a larger sample. This limits the conclusions that can be drawn – sensed, not proven.

6.3   Future Directions

- A further interesting research piece could be developed comparing various ways of recognising and dealing with shame from a purely CBT, psycho-analytic, NLP or TA perspective, comparing different schools' understanding and treatment styles.

- Humour / swearing came up as an important sub-theme for diffusing the tension of shame. It would be useful to look in more detail at the concepts of "affect-atunement" (Stern 1990), humour-attunement and "pendulation effect" postulated by Linge, (2006) in relation to the use of humour (laughter) and swear words (anger/difussion). An in-depth study could be carried out to highlight humour specifically in relation to shame in a broader perspective with a few survivors of shame who actively use various types of "colourful language" around shame.

- On the theme of Creativity, I also think it would be beneficial to develop the concept of "Creative Assertiveness" around shame, plus the concept of discovering more about shame and its defences through tapping into the creative unconscious, maybe research looking at spontaneous free-fall expression through writing, drama, and artwork.

- An interesting direction to go in would be looking at gender differences – Bly & Kaufman (1995) looked into the subject of shame in men's lives but I have found no similar research into the subject of shame in women's lives. A comparison of masculine and feminine use of shame metaphors and whether the principles of Relationship, Knowledge, Creativity and Acceptance equally apply in helping both genders to overcome shame, would be interesting. I observed a tendency in the men to use mechanical technical metaphors (motor bike, magnifying glass, barometer) and the women to use more round, soft metaphors (armchair, waves, leaves). Both genders used many references to natural phenomena and the importance of grounding and anchoring.

- In-depth research on shame across cultures and religions would be fascinating, to investigate a small sample e.g. how Japanese people feel about the practice of hari-kari, for disgrace brought onto an individual, and its underlying cultural causes, or about attitudes towards a Muslim father's "honour killing" of his daughter for falling in love with the wrong sort of man because she had brought dishonour on the family.

- As touched on in Chapter 5.1, pp.118, 119, 136, an area for further investigation would be the damage caused by shaming in supervision and educational institutions, and the converse. Further research comparing shaming and non-shaming intervention styles would be most interesting. I cannot do more here than flag up the importance of non-judgemental, non-shaming, honest, stabilising approaches of firm holding of vulnerable clients, for psychotherapy supervisors, and trainers to maintain high standards of professional conduct in training and supervision. I believe my model could offer a practical application in such settings, maybe used as a pilot teaching or supervision resource.

- An important deduction for me from this research is that the therapist who has done some shame-work and consciously and personally owned their shame, would be more useful as a therapist working with shame issues, and more likely to recognise the shame-transferences in operation, than the therapist who is not personally and consciously owning their own shame. This would be a fascinating area for a future research project.

6.4   My Heuristic Journey – reflections on the process

I identify with Moustakas (1988, p.17) *"It reflects a leap into the unknown, a letting go, a falling into the river that flows into a new stream of consciousness. This is his "leashless " path, the way not limited or confined by methodological structures. It is the place of self-honesty, self-dialogue, and self-disclosure."* I have immersed myself in it but many times I have nearly drowned in that river. I have had the push-pull of resistance. There is a vicious circle of shame about shame and especially in the early days I got caught up in it, but I have learnt to observe myself with tenderness, as an outsider looking on. I think my own transformation has been through sticking with this doctorate, aiming to finish it and doing so.

On this journey, I have been determined to come out of my shell, express myself as I really am and shed the old hidden, shameful version of me! I have engaged in and have almost completed this process. At times I talked with the participants about "*wading through shit*" or making a joke about "*this bloody doctorate*" being a penance – and there are examples of this in the transcripts, which I do feel a bit ashamed about but can now speak. The subject is relevant to coming out and healing shame. I think I wanted to equalise and normalise with the participants, using self-disclosure to make them more relaxed around the difficult subject of shame, to help them see I am ordinary and not going to judge them even if they show their vulnerability, make mistakes or reveal something they feel intensely bad about. It is modelling being relaxed, open, vulnerable and colloquial, which is a way through shame. "*Sometimes in this tricky, messy business of working with shame, we do fuck up*" (06). The conversations were co-created and natural, sometimes opening up and stretching into uncomfortable areas, using strong "*shameful*" language naturally and good humouredly.   Allowing myself to be vulnerable and using the words, "I apologise" has been an important learning for me. It has been a difficult journey. This meant not blaming others for my shortcomings. It meant taking responsibility. It meant just doing my best. This is part of self-acceptance (section Ac).

Now I have the map of shame. The route passes across a causeway from one side to the other, which is the calm, loving side of non-judgement, not judging myself, not judging

others, but approaching life, people and myself from a new perspective. Being able to ask for help and opening up to vulnerability are key learnings – I learnt a great deal from the participants and from the Professional Knowledge seminars in this respect and want to communicate the benefits of going through the doctoral shame journey. It has been worthwhile although extraordinarily painful at times. I want to pass that on to others, just as my generous participants trusted me and passed their experience and knowledge on to me. My role has been to bring their stories together, through the nuanced meanings of the metaphors, and combine their stories with my own, my own dark side of the shame island, and come out the other side still alive and glowing with the achievement, hard won. I now can express, accept my shame, and am learning to live with it. This doctorate is a testimony to that fact, imperfect as it is. I now know the territory of shame and believe I am well-equipped to act as a guide for others not so far along the path who may be struggling with shame, whatever their role.

This research has highlighted for me the importance of metaphor in everyday life and therapy.   From my Academic Adviser saying at the start of the project, "*You have the green light – go ahead*", to the Director of the programme reassuring me, "*You are on a well-trodden path*", to participant 09 talking about "*Grannie's armchair"* or "*the black hole of shame"*, I realise that metaphors are a creative stretch, offering an element of connection between two points in the brain, between a word and a picture, often linking up two senses, visual, tactile, olfactory, and auditory. An accurate well-timed metaphor can be a powerful, steadying healing force, linking the right hemisphere with its visual images to the left hemisphere with its words and meanings. Because shame is elusive and very difficult to pin down with mere words, it is ideally suited to the sensory and visual world of metaphors.

Before this doctorate I do not recall recognising shame in clients and had not consciously recognised that it was shame I was feeling. I felt and sensed shame cycles; my antennae were drawn to it. This research found me. Now my journey is completing, the circle is almost formed. Shame makes sense and I see the place of defences in warding off shame.   I can anticipate it and I have developed an interior strength to assert myself over my shame. Now I speak up more, look out and up, instead of disappearing. I have created a new phrase, "Creative assertiveness", within the psychotherapy of shame journey and found my own creative voice through the process.
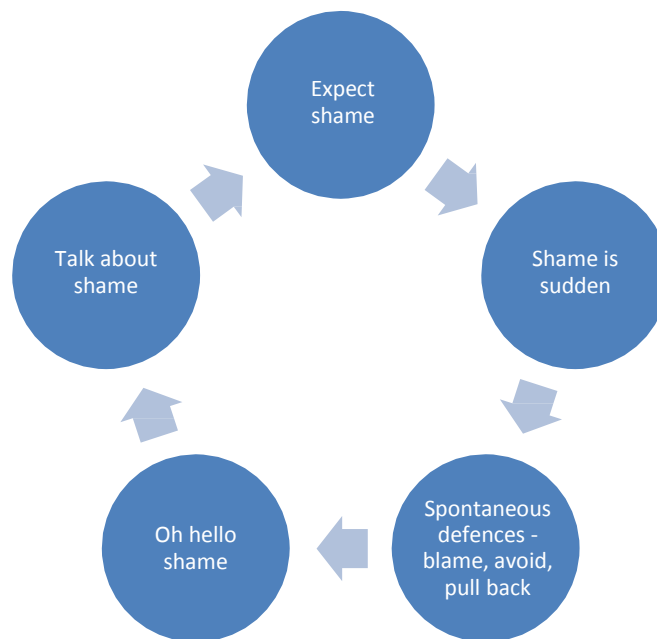
Figure 13: Knowing and talking about shame cycles

6.5   Writing up and reflecting on key learnings

Shame is relational. Relationship is the basis for activating shame and also for healing shame. The recovery from shame can grow out of trust – over time – in a slow process. There is no full cure but definite relief.

Coming out of the isolation of shame is slow and hard. Someone else has to help bring us out with their knowledge and experience of shame, sharing a willingness to be vulnerable. A collaborative, respectful, caring relationship and careful dialogue are essentials. The risk of being vulnerable and open has to be a joint enterprise.

Shame does not have any logic. It is not susceptible to rational debate or cognitive restructuring. Another way has to be found to deal with it, somehow finding a way to by-pass the defences that so sturdily protect us against revealing it and dealing with it.

One key metaphor that stood out from the interviews was: "*Love is part of the antidote to shame*" suggesting that a loving, holding, compassionate relationship is a powerful way to overcome shame. It seems to me this is achievable through connected dialogue with someone else, and inner dialogue, leading to healing through tender holding, love, care and compassion for self.

It has been good to know that my findings in both the PEP and FP merge comfortably with the literature on shame. I hope this work on shame, which is universal, will feed into the growing matrix of understanding of something universal about life – that we are part of

the matrix, part of Metanoia – which is to do with love and connection, joining, acceptance and unity, being a better way than shaming atrocities, isolating hostility and disconnection. There is power and creativity in love and commitment, to deal with and relieve shame. One participant said in a very touching part of the interview,

"*I learnt about love over the years.   I think somewhere inside me, inside this empty aloneness, there is some kind of glimmer, some spark of hope or faith. For years I didn't know it was there and I didn't know what its significance was. But I think I was protecting it in my isolation. I think at the end of the day I was protecting that little bit of hope and faith*" (06)

I think the power of the shame journey is in coming out into faith in ourselves. What I have concluded from the reflections on this doctoral experience, heuristic, hermeneutic and phenomenological, is that I am glad I undertook the journey, have learnt so much through the sharing, and want other people, therapists, supervisors, clients, trainees, to be able to face, learn and grow into the subject of shame using a metaphorical model. Shame work is not so much about technique, more about respectful care for self and others. It is to dare to become vulnerable and "creatively assertive", speaking and drawing from the true heart of all of our shame. Shared shame is a universal shame and we all have it and can learn so much from each other.

The key antidotes to shame are love, inner and outer dialogue, creativity and laughter.

6.6   Summary of the shame journey through metaphor

The original shame mountain of the PEP was full of despair, darkness, trauma and hopelessness, with the idea evolving of another possible island across a stretch of water that separates the two. The other island was separate, a potential. From the shame place, it was not easily reachable.

Through this doctoral journey, I evolved a series of pictures of the landscape of shame (summarised in Figures 2, 10, 11 and 15). The FP picture of the Shame Island was of a jungle, wild and untamed. Isolated people disappeared into the island. It had a black ball symbolising despair and hopelessness. Black is heavy and dark, a non-colour.   A ball suggests a circular thing, like a hole or tangled mass, conveying the idea of cyclical repetitive movement round and round, and a hole, a black hole, a void to fall into.   There was a trap door in the stomach of shame to fall into. Within the shame island, existed an isolated "I", not a "we". Wounding and pain went on there. It was an intense, agonising death-like place to be. This picture corroborated the PEP findings of Isolation, Powerlessness, Self-consciousness and Woundedness.

Then the shame landscape gradually simplified and synthesised itself as the write up of this project went on, particularly in the Discussion around the metaphors and in the later drawings of complete Islands of Shame (Figures 10, 11 and 15, below).

Figure 14:   Final Drawing of the Territory of Shame

I have discovered that there is definitely a way off the mountainous Shame Island, via the bridge of relationship. It is a suspension bridge, suspended in mid-air.   The work of unshaming is to build up a strong relationship between the Shame Island and the other side – which takes time and effort. The link starts off as a fragile wobbly bridge and gradually becomes more solid over time. The work is to build up a good connection between both sides, and work towards eventual integration and reconciliation.

Having a guide who can be a trusty partner, friend, therapist, supervisor, trainer or co-researcher, is a key ingredient for the journey of release from shame. The mature therapist or guide, without shaming

- Holds the process together, firmly
- Lets shame unfold over a period of time

- Challenges the ducking and diving defences
- Introduces new concepts of the existence of shame
- Shares and normalises the familiar territory of the shame experience
- Supports new growth – encourages new neural internal and external pathways (dendrites and solid achievements)
- Helps the shamed person to become grounded, substantial, knowledge-based rather than shame-based
- Stays the course, does not give up, models survival through difficult times.

Through the help I have had on the doctoral journey, I have discovered and explored the two islands of shame and unshame, and a bridging part in the middle. For me this achievement has been built on Creativity, Determination, Hard Work, Experience, Collaborative Relationship, Knowledge, and illuminated by a spiritual spark of life, faith and hope. It is beginning to have Acceptance, Integration and Gratitude on it.

I have also discovered something rather amazing – that the two islands can be connected, not by a rickety wobbly bridge, but by a strong bridge of Relationship which can become stronger. The whole island is two interconnected islands with a causeway in between. It has both Shame at one side and Acceptance at the other side. There is often a push-pull between the two, a push-pull of attachment and detachment, coming forwards then withdrawing, success and failure, the oppositions of real life, the ebb and flow, assert and protect.

Through the ingredients I discovered in the FP, that with a loving, caring, solicitous relationship, and even a little magic, a person can trust enough to take a risk and embark on the journey of exploring the Mountain of Shame Island – that is a place of despair, confusion, agony, not being able to bear to be seen there. Over a period of gradually learning about and experiencing the territory of shame, accompanied by an experienced guide, helpmate and travelling companion, no longer needing to be alone and stand alone in judgement and self-judgement in that bleak shame-landscape, knowledge of shame builds. The shamed person becomes more in touch with their own self. It is possible, through the ingredients of Relationship, Knowledge, including knowledge of the Defences, Creativity and Acceptance, to learn to live well alongside shame on the dual island of shame-and-ways-out-of-shame.   Gradually, with a good spirit for hard work, it can become more like one island as integration, forgiveness and self-compassion come in.

6.7   Summary of findings

Shame is a dark and hidden phenomenon. This project has been a way of illuminating the subject, a gradual development of understanding and insight gained through my co-researchers, helpers and my own heuristic process on this journey through the territory of shame.   This is a practical and relatively straight-forward framework for therapists, supervisors and trainers to make shame more understandable and manageable and apply to their work in dealing with this complicated subject.

Different themes have become clearer as ways out of shame. This is a creative process. Gilligan's (2012) concept of "*the creative unconscious"* allowing the unconscious mind to be a trustworthy source of wisdom to provide intuitive, non-intellectual ways out of shame has gradually emerged in a transformative kind of parallel process between me and the interview material. I have discovered in myself something I want to share with others and call "Creative assertiveness", which can give a voice to our creative unconscious mind, and, opening up to the love and support of others, help us find a way out of shame.

My main message about ways out of shame is from the four main themes, Relationship, Knowledge, Creativity and Acceptance, in addition to an important sub-theme, Defences, a complicated and arbitrary sub-theme, because Defences can be a way out of shame, but can also be a way of maintaining and exacerbating shame.

Relationship

Love and self-compassion through an attuned empathic relationship, without judgement, are necessary ingredients for dealing with shame. Working with shame is painstaking, detailed work, requiring curiosity, patient application and sensitivity on the part of the practitioner. Shame work is less about technique, more about cultivating trust, empathic attunement, establishing genuine connection, fine-tooth combed adjustment to the nuances so the person feels cared for.

 The damage from the shaming experience(s) can be gently and suitably unravelled for each individual in a personally meaningful way. This relationship can be transformative.

Knowledge

Doing shame work is like undertaking a journey through difficult, painful and dangerous terrain, beset by obstacles and strong defences. We have to face up to the confusion of our "shame demons" (SPH, personal communication, 2016) and build up knowledge of the territory, particularly getting help to recognise our own version of the defences we each use, protecting ourselves from feeling shame. In this way we gain understanding

and insight, so learn to manage and minimise shame. Honest dialogue, hard graft and willingness to be open and vulnerable are important on the journey. There appears to be no total cure for shame; the consensus of participants in this study, including the researcher, is that it is hard-wired; normalisation and self-regulation through coping strategies and cultivating healthy work and leisure activities are useful but do not cure shame. Being cured of feeling ashamed of feeling shame seems to be a useful and achievable goal: "*The difference between cure and healing is that we can be healed enough to not feel ashamed of feeling shame, I don't feel ashamed of it any more, it's part of who I am.*" (06) We can transform our attitude towards it, embrace it, take it on and not keep running away and defending against it.

Creativity

Creative, imaginative expression of talents – art, writing, poetry, successful achievements – are effective ways of channelling the negative shame energy into positive fields. Particularly with shame, a person needs to find their own individual ways to name, explore and express shame through personally meaningful metaphors, pictures, stories and activities that make sense for them. So their own brand of shame will be defined, channelled, refined and re-defined through the metaphor, art, etc. Their shame experiences can then be re-configured in a way that makes shame smaller, less threatening and possible to live with.

Acceptance

This entails finding self-compassion and love and accepting that shame will never fully go away.   Normalising the shame as a common negative emotion and the need to vent it, talk, ask for help and receive help, or laugh about it, is part of the healing process. We need to accept that we are all part of a universal matrix, and that love, connection, vulnerability, humour and lively curiosity are key ingredients to face shame and get through, or even embrace shame. Like trauma, shame was seen by all participants in some way as having led them into something or somewhere that was better or more real, rather like post-traumatic growth and rebuilding of character.

Defences

Defensive manoeuvring is part of shame, to protect us from over-exposure – some defences are helpful e.g. coping strategies and creative adjustments, some are unhelpful covers and avoidances. Anger, withdrawal, avoidance and closing off sometimes are useful protectors of shame for short amounts of time, to re-charge, but not carried to an

extreme for extended periods of time because we become too entrenched in those negative mind-sets.

There appears to be a cycle of stages of shame.   There is an optimum process of healing shame which appears to run like this:

Shame event > hardening and defending > time elapsing > seeking therapy > relationship building > acquiring knowledge > softening defences > creative endeavour > self-compassion and love:
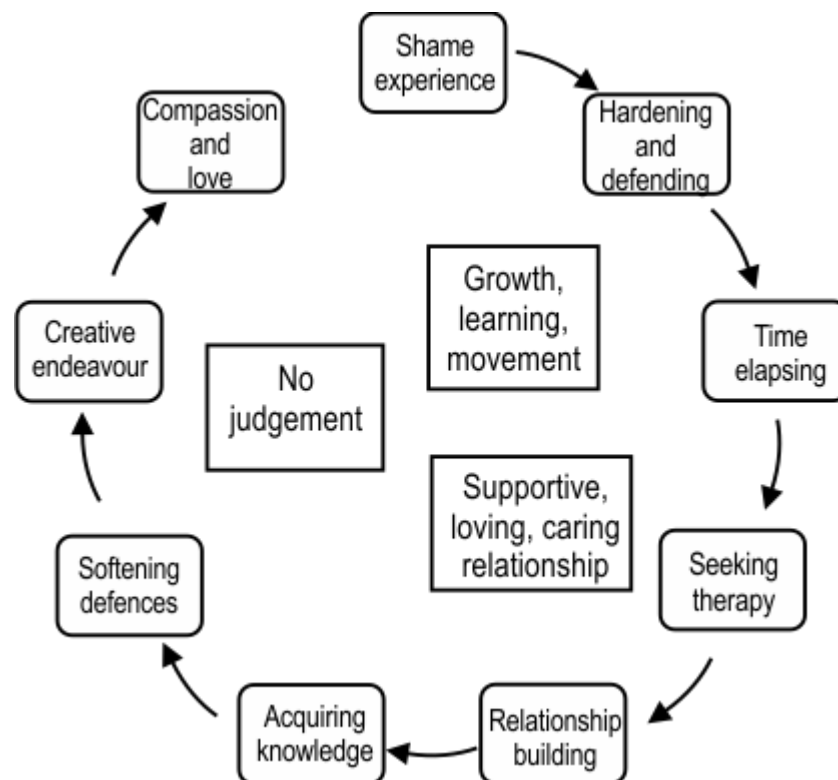
Figure 15: Stages in the cycle of healing shame

Less successful outcomes involve staying stuck on the circle of stages or repeating the same process over and over again without apparently learning from experience, taking responsibility or making progress..
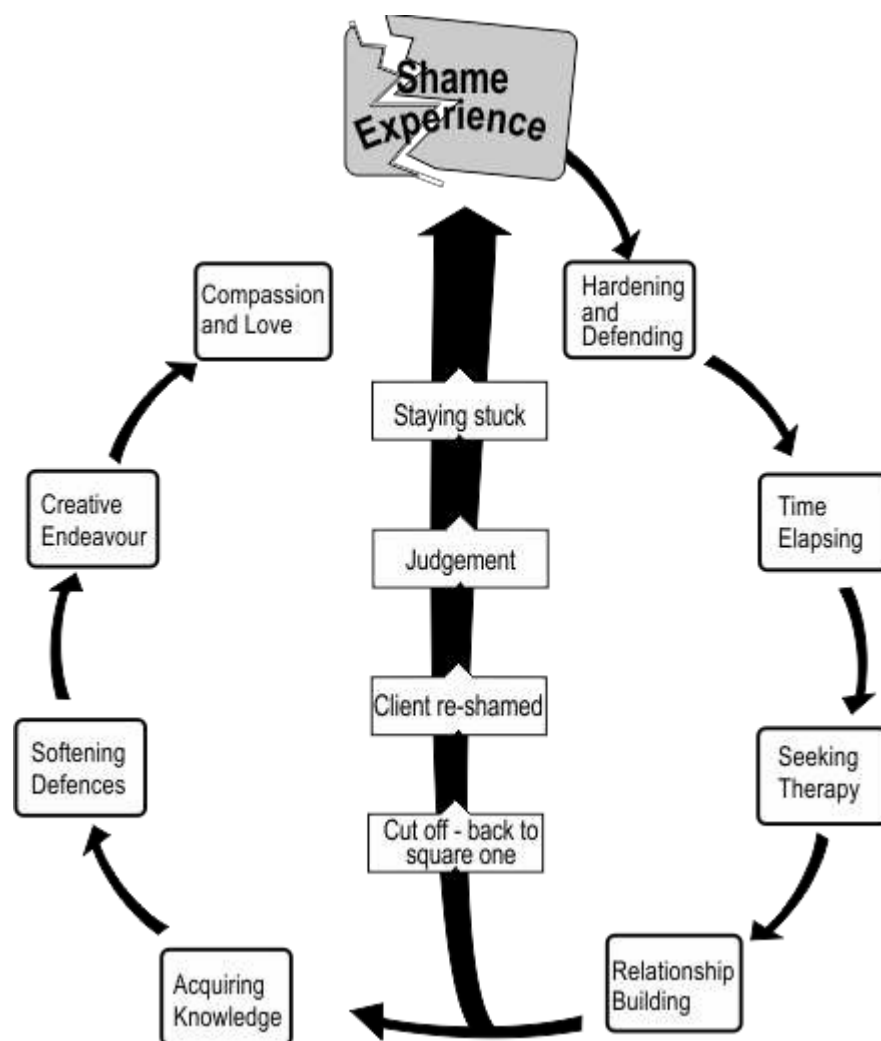
Figure 16: Interruptions to the cycle of healing shame

A full picture of shame needs to embrace shame, giving both description of the shame process and downwards spiral of shame and defensive manoeuvres for ways to deal with shame and ways out.

6.8 Implications for psychotherapeutic practice and educational value of the research

The impact of my research work on the profession is to offer a flexible evolving resource for therapists, supervisors and trainers to use and adapt creatively and to provide a means of acknowledging and contextualising shame, and importantly, recognising the defences that accompany shame and working with shame rather than against it. The model intends to give strength, courage and support on this difficult journey. This is a model which I intend to be disseminated into psychotherapy training, schools, and GP health settings. I have been invited to run a series of training workshops for G.P.

counsellors, supervisors and health workers, and in addition, a university psychotherapy department and special needs department in a secondary school. I plan to publish an article summarising my research in a psychotherapy journal and to produce a handbook entitled "A Journey through the Territory of Shame" containing psycho-educational material and including twenty semi-structured exercises for use by therapists, supervisors, and trainers. The model for the handbook and workshops will be to develop an experience with shame words, pictures and metaphors, inviting participants to enter a shame journey, use the model in a pictorial, creative and flexible way to find a personal pathway out of shame and see their shame-work through to fruition. Shame tends to go unrecognised, and unspoken, engulfing people and causing them to withdraw defensively. This model hopes to bring shame out of the shadows and provide a safe framework or loose structure to enable people in various teaching groups and therapy situations to undertake this difficult journey, familiarise themselves with shame, get past the defences and find some healing.

The model of the 4 E's is now evolving into 5 E's, which is a model that can be applied to working with shame in a systematic, yet flexible and creative way: Entering, Engaging, Exploring, Expressing and Embracing shame. A series of exercises will offer a structure for the journey and provide a way to meet and face (or bi-pass, simply noting the defences and leaving that work for another time). In my semi-structured model, the metaphors in therapy, supervision and training workshops will be co-created through mutual discussion, rather than imposed, therefore the participant will be empowered, and be given responsibility to grow and co-create a personal pathway. Accompanied by a trusty courageous guide who has worked with their own shame and is willing to engage equally and evolve the model, the E's evolve into more 'ease'.   It is my hope that participants will arrive at an acceptance that shame never goes away fully, but can learn to live with it. Other therapists will be able to replicate and develop my model by using metaphors (e.g. the leaf, the island, the mountain, the territory, the knots of the recursive shame loop) as prompts, to co-create their own dialogues with clients, supervisees and in training. Participants in the programme will be encouraged to engage in their own creative dialogues, find their own metaphors, make their own narratives, poems, draw their own images and maps of their own individual journeys through the territory of shame whilst being strongly supported and guided on their way.

6.8   Last words

I have come back full circle from 30 years ago, with T.S. Eliot, Peck and the Velveteen Rabbit to now. Shame work is about allowing the world of poetry, the power of words, laughter, the dream world and the world of the imagination, "the creative unconscious", to surface and carry us on in time. My seven main sources of inspiration for this project have been Van Manen, Linge, Vaillant, Peck, T.S. Eliot, Williams and Wurmser, and at the heart of this research have been the participants who so generously gave their time and shared their expertise and insight in the interviews in so many ways, even unconscious ones. I also wish to say that I put myself, body and soul, at the heart of the research and without this application and commitment, I could not have done it. This project has brought some collective wisdom together, of writers, therapists, trainers and supervisors, and confirms the power of relationship for healing shame in ourselves and people who come to see us for therapy, supervision and training around shame. The project brings a positive perspective to what is a very dismal and dark subject. It offers a positive way forward out of shame.

This doctorate about shame is also about my personal journey, having created an island of fantasy from the participants' best metaphors around shame, through sticking with the journey across the landscape, sharing with the participants, meeting the ups and downs and repeated cycles of shame, learning and growing, and reaching acceptance of my own strengths and weaknesses. The doctoral journey has been my Ithaca. It was the seven year journey that mattered, not a pass or fail.

My doctoral journey has many facets and, at the end of my Final Project, I realise I became part of the territory I was investigating.   I experienced a full range of difficult shame feelings as described by all the participants in their rich array of metaphors, yet I am glad I undertook the marvellous journey. My shame, which I barely acknowledged at the beginning of the journey, feels transformed, not totally, but to a great extent, into solid acceptance through beautiful metaphors, mutual sharing and becoming real, arriving back where I started but in a new and different way. I am reminded of the extract from Four Quartets at the start of this doctorate, which ends:

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.   (T.S. Eliot 1943)

I also cite the Ithaca poem here to sum up the theme of what has been a wondrous journey. The final metaphor, arrival at Acceptance:

Keep Ithaca always in your mind.

Arriving there is what you're destined for

But don't hurry the journey at all

Better if it lasts for years

So you're old by the time you reach the island

Wealthy with all you've gained on the way

Not expecting Ithaca to make you rich.

Ithaca gave you the marvellous journey

Without her you wouldn't have set out

She has nothing left to give you now

And if you find her poor, Ithaca won't have fooled you.

Wise as you will have become, so full of experience

You'll have understood by then what these Ithacas mean.

<div align="center">Konstantinos p Kafis (1911)</div>

The last word is mine because I have found my poetry voice through this doctoral journey.

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My Ithaca – a tribute to all participants and helpers on my journey

You have helped me on my journey to my Ithaca island

I was alongside you, sensed, felt and could understand.

How brave you were to let your shame be viewed

I cannot say your names but want you to know my gratitude.

I reached out my hand to you asking for your gifting

You gave me more than I ever dreamt, so uplifting.

Thinking I was interviewing you in the joy of flow

You were interviewing me too, I didn't know!

You met my shame-child too,

You let me be myself, and I let you

Now I know I'll be alright with a trusty guide

And a safe retreat where love and truth abide.

This is the place to stop.   It is now.

69,158 words

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