

**A POSTMODERN, SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF CURRENT
DREAM-RELATED DISCOURSES AND PRACTICES**

Hermann Werner Nell M.A.

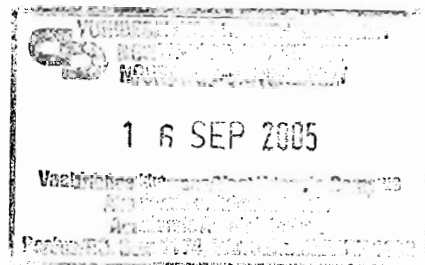
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Promoter: Prof. M.D. Herholdt

Assistant-promoter: Prof. A.M.E. Naudè

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ABSTRACT

Title: A postmodern, sociological exploration of current dream-related discourses and practices

The study was prompted by the lack of existing research with regard to what people locally think and believe about dreams. The study aimed to uncover, explore, and describe current, local dream related beliefs, discourses, and practices (in the Vaal-Triangle area of South-Africa), using a postmodern, social-constructivist, as well as a generally sociological approach. In support of this aim, a literature review of various religious, cultural, and psychological dream related discourses was executed. Semi-structured, qualitative interviews were conducted with twenty respondents who were purposively selected from the administrative database of a Vaal-Triangle University on the basis of culture and gender. The interviews were recorded and the edited transcriptions thus derived served as basis for a thematic qualitative analysis of the respondents' dream related beliefs and practices. The findings were also examined with regard to cultural and gender related patterns, as well as in relation to existing dream discourses.

Findings included that dreams were accorded differing degrees of importance by the respondents, that dreams were believed to originate both from internal factors such as an individual's mental and emotional state and neurological processes, as well as from external factors such as daily events and experiences, deceased relatives, and God. Furthermore, dreams were believed to serve several different functions such as mental processing, releasing pent-up emotions, expressing fears or desires, predicting the future, or providing warnings and solutions to problems. Dreams also often served as basis for decisions and actions, most often in order to avoid a negative outcome, or actualize a positive scenario shown by a dream. Several types of unusual dream experiences were reported, including precognitive dreams, dreams that provided contact with a deceased relative or ancestor,

spiritual experiences in dreams, as well as sleep paralysis. The most significant sociological findings included that dreams often influence the nature and content of social interaction between individuals, frequently serving as a source of humour and entertainment; that the mother often serves as the “keeper” of knowledge about dreams, and that local dream discourses and practices might in part be transmitted matrilineally.

Key words: dreams, discourses, beliefs, sociology, postmodernism, social-constructivism

OPSOMMING

Titel: 'n Postmoderne, sosiologiese ondersoek na huidige droomverwante diskoerse en praktyke

Hierdie studie is onderneem weens 'n geïdentifiseerde leemte in bestaande navorsing betreffende wat mense in die algemeen van drome dink en glo. Die doel van die studie was om kontemporêre droomverwante gelowe, diskoerse en praktyke in die Vaaldriehoek (area in Suid-Afrika) te ondersoek en te beskryf deur gebruik te maak van 'n postmoderne, sosiaal-konstruktivistiese, sowel as 'n algemeen sosiologiese benadering. Ter ondersteuning van hierdie doel is 'n literatuurstudie van verskeie religieuse, kulturele en psigologiese droomdiskoerse gedoen. Voorts is semi-gestruktureerde, kwalitatiewe onderhoude gevoer met twintig respondente wat doelbewus op grond van geslags- en kulturele faktore geselekteer is vanuit die administratiewe databasis van 'n Vaaldriehoekse universiteit. Hierdie onderhoude is genotuleer en die geredigeerde transkripsies het as die basis vir 'n tematiese, kwalitatiewe ontleding van die respondente se droomverwante gelowe en praktyke gedien.

Die bevindinge van die studie is ondersoek met betrekking tot kulturele en geslagsverwante patroonmatighede, sowel as in verhouding tot die bestaande droomdiskoerse. Uit die bevindinge blyk onder andere dat drome verskillende vlakke van belangrikheid vir die respondente gehad het; dat sommige respondente geglo het die oorsprong van drome kan toegeskryf word aan beide interne faktore, soos byvoorbeeld 'n individu se verstandelike en emosionele toestand of selfs neurologiese prosesse, en eksterne faktore, soos byvoorbeeld daaglikse gebeure en ervarings, afgestorwe familieledes, of aan God. Die respondente het ook geglo dat drome verskeie funksies het, soos byvoorbeeld kognitiewe prosessering, die uitlaat van opgekropte emosies, die uitdrukking van vrese of wense, die voorspelling van

die toekoms, asook die voorsiening van waarskuwings en oplossings vir probleme. Drome het verder dikwels gedien as die basis vir besluite en aksies, gewoonlik om 'n negatiewe uitkoms te vermy wat deur 'n droom getoon is, of om 'n positiewe uitkoms te realiseer. Verskeie tipes ongewone droomervaringe is gerapporteer, insluitende prekognitiewe drome, drome wat kontak met afgestorwe individue gebied het, spirituele ervaringe in drome, sowel as slaapverlamming. Die belangrikste sosiologiese bevindinge sluit in dat drome gereeld die aard en inhoud van sosiale interaksie tussen individue beïnvloed, en dikwels as 'n bron van humor en vermaak dien. Voorts word die moederfiguur oorwegend beskou as die bron van kennis oor drome, en die bevindinge toon ook dat algemene droomdiskoerse en praktyke gedeeltelik matrilineêr oorgedra word.

Sleutelwoorde: drome, diskoerse, gelowe, sosiologie, postmodernisme, sosiaal-konstruktivisme

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as a general orientation to the study. As such, the chapter commences with a brief orientation to the study followed by a discussion intended to clarify the nature and scope of the research problem, as well as the intended objective of the research. It then proceeds to explain the methodology that will be followed in order to achieve these ends as well as the central theoretical framework underpinning the study. This section will be followed by a few comments on the scientific relevance of the study and a brief outline of the structure and format of the dissertation.

1.2. Orientation and problem statement

Dreams are an essential part of human nature, and the significance thereof has preoccupied humankind in many diverse ways. In the contexts of culture, religion, and science various systems of beliefs, discourses, and practices relating to dreams have been developed, which sought to make sense of, and utilize these nightly phenomena. The earliest written references to dreams are found in the Chester Beatty papyrus which was discovered in Egypt, near Thebes, and was written around 1350 B.C. It is believed to be a copy of a much earlier document written around 2000 B.C. This document sets out various cultural dream related beliefs and practices that were prevalent at the time (Delaney, 1998:14). The Bible is replete with references to dreams, the most familiar being perhaps the dreams of Daniel and Joseph. The Greeks made extensive use of dreams and developed elaborate practices for eliciting healing and guidance from dreams, which the Romans elaborated upon in subsequent years. Dreams also occupy a position of great significance in the contexts of religions such as Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, and Taoism as well

as in contexts such as the Native American and African cultures (Fahd, 1966; Hunt, 1989; Jedrej & Shaw, 1992; Kruger, 1992; Delaney, 1998; Irwin, 2001). In some form or other, almost all cultures and religions have therefore generated certain beliefs, discourses, values, and practices related to dreams and dreaming. These were mostly rooted in tradition, religion, superstition, and general cultural worldviews and beliefs, and until the mid-20th century, thinking about dreams was dominated by these cultural, religious, and tradition based discourses (Delaney, 1998: 65).

However, with the rise of the scientific method and the discipline of psychology, drastic changes occurred in the ways in which human nature and the phenomena related to it were viewed and approached. These changes also had a pronounced impact on the study and understanding of dreams. Especially important in this regard was the publication in 1900 of Sigmund Freud's seminal work, *The interpretation of dreams*. This represented a new approach to dreams, in that these phenomena were viewed and explained in terms the discourse of depth psychology (Freud, 1948). Based on this, new practices and methods were created for working with dreams.

Carl Jung (1933, 1974, 1984) expanded and modified Freud's approach to dream analysis in subsequent years. The analysis of dreams became a central facet of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. Various other approaches to dream analysis developed, most notably the phenomenological approach of Medard Boss (1977).

Together, these three researchers are regarded as the architects of modern dream work (Delaney, 1998: 7). In fact, Gayle Delaney, one of the foremost contemporary dream scholars, states that if one has a good understanding of the work of Freud, Jung and Boss, it would be possible to make sense of any modern interpretive method (1998: 65).

As can be deduced from the above, few radically new approaches to dream analysis have been developed in the last few decades, although the initial theories proposed by Freud, Jung and Boss have been refined, modified, and

expanded upon by modern dream researchers such as Arnold Mindell (1982), Stanley Krippner and Joseph Dillard (1938), Jayne Gackenbach and Jane Bosveld (1989), Tony Crisp (1994), and Gayle Delaney (1997, 1998). As such, the psychological theories of Jung, Freud, and Boss came to dominate thinking on the subject of dreams (Delaney, 1998: 65). This situation might inadvertently have led to the marginalization and disregard of dream discourses and practices which were not in accord with the former theories, in that such discourses appear to have received much less scholarly attention than the dream theories of Jung, Freud, and Boss.

Generally speaking it can be observed that a great amount of emphasis has been placed, especially in Western culture, on the value and credibility of modernist science, which is based on a predominantly positivist approach (Van der Walt, 2002: 28-29). As a result, any theories which were formulated as a result of empirical research or psychological experimentation based on the dictates of the scientific method were accorded a high level of prestige, credibility, and scholarly attention. Conversely all discourses and theories which were not backed by scientific and psychological research were generally accorded a much lesser degree of importance and scientific interest.

The dream theories of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Medard Boss represent the former category, and consequently came to dominate our understanding of dreams. This situation might likely have led to the subsequent marginalisation and disregard of cultural and religious dream discourses as well as current, non-scientific (i.e. not derived from the scientific method or any scientific discipline such as psychology) dream related discourses and practices. The religious and cultural dream discourses and practices referred to above have generally been comprehensively documented and explored by scholars (Hall, 1997: 4766). However, this is not the case with local, current dream discourses and practices. Hall (1997: 4766) supports this when he states that very little research has been executed that focuses on current dream related discourses and beliefs.

It is important to note that in the context of the present study, current, local, non-scientific discourses are defined as contemporary discourses which have neither been derived from the scientific method or scientific disciplines such as psychology, nor been formalized as scientific, psychological, or religious theories, and therefore tend to be more individualized and informal than such discourses. It is important to note that current, local discourses might be influenced to a greater or lesser degree by existing formalized discourses, and could also contain elements that are not reflected in any formalized cultural, religious, psychological or other dream related discourses. Put quite simply, the concept of current, local discourses is used in the present study to refer to those beliefs and ideas about dreams held by the proverbial man in the street.

The researcher's contention that the nature and value of these current, local discourses might have been marginalized and disregarded by the psychological dream theories seems to be supported by the observation that the vast majority of dream related PhD dissertations and post doctoral studies that could be located on databases such as EBSCOHOST, SABINET, FERDICAT, R-SAT and OCLE were strongly influenced in their approaches by the theories of Jung, Freud or Boss. Hall (1997: 4766) supports this contention when he says that in spite of there being a wealth of historical, anthropological, and psychological literature on the many types of dreams and dreaming, there has been scant research on what people think and believe about dreams.

In addition, as will be discussed in chapter three, an overview of several "popular psychological" books on dreams that are aimed at the mass market (Miller, 1979; Crisp, 1994; Kaplan-Williams, 1996; Linn, 1996; Holbeche, 1998) also indicated that the dream theories espoused by the majority of these authors are noticeably influenced by the theories of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. Furthermore, almost all the dream related research that could be located dealt with the contents, structure, and analysis of dreams and a proportionally limited amount of research dealt with people's beliefs, attitudes, and discourses

about dreams, a conclusion that is echoed by Hall (1997: 4766). Certainly almost no significant research in this regard (that the researcher is aware of) has been undertaken in the South-African context. An extended search of various databases (SABINET, FERDICAT, R-SAT, OCLE, EBSCOHOST, and NEXUS) could not locate any recent South-African, and especially Vaal-Triangle based research that focused specifically on current, non-scientific dream related discourses and practices. Even internationally, very little contemporary research dealing directly with this topic could be located (Hall, 1997).

From a social constructivist perspective, such a lack of knowledge about a phenomenon as important as dreaming is deemed lamentable. Sharing the conceptions of the postmodern perspective, the researcher believes that there is an intrinsic value in diversity and in the local, as opposed to an exclusive focus on the general and the universal (Kvale, 1997: 34). From this perspective, an individual can only be understood within his or her contexts, and as such contexts are influenced by local and individual factors, the consideration of local beliefs and discourses is essential. As such, a central concern of the social-constructivist perspective would be the resurrection and uncovering of such discourses and practices (Kvale, 1997: 34).

Of additional relevance to the present study is the fact that very little current research dealing with dream related beliefs and discourses specifically from a sociological perspective could be located. In fact, Bastide (1966: 199) states that for sociology, that appears to be interested only in man awake, the sleeper might as well be dead. The trend of “psychologizing” dreams and dream studies has resulted in a marginalization of dream related research and understanding based on other approaches, such as sociology (Bastide, 1966: 199; Hall, 1997: 4766). Along with Bastide (1966: 199-200) the researcher wishes to pose the following questions: “The question I have asked myself is whether the sociologist is right to ignore the other half of our life, to envisage

man standing and sitting, but never asleep and adream...How well founded is this radical division between the psychic and the social...Is it not about time to re-establish channels of communication between these two...In short, is it not time to attempt a sociology of the dream?" It is believed that there is intrinsic value in approaching the study of dreams from a sociological perspective, as is the intention of the present study.

Considering that the study of social and cultural beliefs, discourses, and practices is a central concern of sociology (Ferrante, 2000: 86) this lack of attention is surprising, and has led to a limitation in our understanding of the phenomenon of dream related beliefs, discourses, and practices from a sociological perspective. For too long sociology has ignored the dream, and left it mostly to psychology to discover in the web of our dreams the profound motivations of our actions, and to anthropology to study the dream's place in society (Bastide, 1966: 199).

In summary, a significant gap therefore exists in our knowledge and understanding of current, local, non-scientific dream related discourses and practices in the South-African context. This gap is especially evident in the field of sociology, where little dream related research appears to have been undertaken.

Put quite simply, we know very little about what the proverbial man in the street thinks and believes about dreams. The disregard for this situation that is reflected in the lack of research on this matter, might at least in part, be a result of modernist conceptions of scientificity that tend to disregard current, local discourses as being unscientific and therefore less valid and worthy of study. From the postmodern, social-constructivist and sociological perspectives, which are the preferred approaches of the present study, the undue amount of emphasis placed on the empirical, the scientific, and the psychological (as defined by a modernist understanding of these terms) is questioned (Van der Walt, 2002: 29). The researcher shares this position and also agrees with the ideas of Rorty (1990: 362) that the postmodern view permits us to see the

descriptions of ourselves we find in one of the natural sciences as on a par with the various alternative descriptions offered by poets, novelists, sculptors, mystics and other generally “non-scientific” sources. As such, it is believed that there is value and validity in exploring current, local dream related discourses and practices from a postmodern, sociological perspective.

The researcher therefore wishes to propose the following general research question: What are the nature of current, local, non-scientific dream related discourses and practices within the South-African, and more specifically, the Vaal-Triangle context?

1.3. Goal statement

This study sets out to answer this question. The goal of the study can therefore be stated as follows:

The aim of the study is to describe, explore, and uncover current, local, non-scientific dream related discourses and practices with a specific focus on the Vaal-Triangle area of South-Africa.

This has been accomplished by employing semi-structured, qualitative interviews which were guided by broad themes that were identified during the literature review, in order to record local dream related discourses and practices. The data that was accrued was then qualitatively and thematically examined with the purpose of identifying and exploring current, local dream related discourses. The study focused on the Vaal-Triangle as the researcher resides here and also has access to an extended database of a local university which facilitated the selection of respondents.

In order to accomplish this aim, the following secondary research questions have been addressed:

-What are the dominant cultural, religious, and psychological dream related discourses and practices that might be reflected in (and perhaps influence) current, local dream related discourses and practices?

-To what extent are current, local dream related beliefs and discourses reflected (or not) in existing psychological, religious, cultural and other dream related discourses? And, related to this, might there be unique elements reflected in these local discourses that are not found in the latter types of discourses?

-What are the most significant sociological aspects of current, local dream discourses and practices?

In order to answer this question, the following sub goals were postulated:

-To engage in an extensive literature study on dreams, with a specific focus on various cultural, religious, and psychological dream related discourses and practices. This will serve as an essential backdrop to the qualitative analysis that will be undertaken of the interviews.

-To qualitatively examine local dream related discourses and practices as reflected in the interviews, with the aim of ascertaining the extent to which existing psychological, religious, cultural and other dream related discourses are reflected in (and might possibly influence) current dream discourses and practices, as well as to uncover and describe any unique elements of such discourses which are not reflected in the latter types of discourses.

-To reflect upon the most significant sociological aspects of current, local dream beliefs and practices as revealed by the interviews.

As only scant research on dream related beliefs, discourses and practices has been undertaken specifically from a *sociological* perspective, this study might contribute towards filling this void in sociological research. As most current dream based research is executed within the field of psychology and anthropology (Hall, 1997: 4766), the study of dreams from a sociological perspective might provide a fresh, alternative perspective on the phenomenon by approaching it from a different context. Consequently, at the conclusion of the study, the researcher reflected upon the sociological implications of the research findings.

Such an interdisciplinary approach to the understanding of dreams has many benefits. Noegel (2001: 45) states that an interdisciplinary study of dreams leads to a new appreciation for the subtleties of dreams, the divinatory, ontological, and ideological contexts of their interpretation, and the variety of methodological frameworks that can be used to understand them.

In addition, the information acquired from this research could prove valuable to counsellors and psychologists working with their client's dreams. In any counselling or therapeutic approach informed by a postmodern, sociological approach, a sensitivity to the specific context and local knowledge and beliefs of a client is considered very important (Kvale, 1997: 34; Gergen, 1997: 24). The research findings could contribute to this end by serving to heighten the sensitivity of counsellors and psychologists to potential differences in approach and perspectives on dreaming between Western and African dreamers, as well as between male and female dreamers. Postmodern therapeutic approaches such as narrative therapy often seek out and build upon client's natural inclinations, resources, and strengths (e.g. White & Epston, 1990; Freedman & Combs, 1994). The results of this study show that dreams often constituted an important natural resource in healing and coping with specific problems, which has several promising implications for therapy and counselling.

1.4. Central theoretical framework

The present study will be approached from a postmodern, social-constructivist perspective. The latter approach in turn, will be situated within a broadly sociological context in that the focus and the object of the present study concerns itself with social, cultural and gender related beliefs, values and practices with regard to dreams.

This approach will govern the way in which the research topic is understood and approached, and will also dictate the research methodology to be used in this study.

Although postmodernism is anything but precise, clear, and coherent (Rosen, 1996: 38), a unifying theme that runs through the divergent descriptions of postmodernism is that there does not exist a set of immutable objective truths in the “real” world to serve as the bedrock, or grounding upon which knowledge can be built (Rorty, 1990). The researcher shares the view of Anderson (1993: 27) who elaborates on this idea when he states that: “The emergence of a postmodern narrative in the human sciences challenged the modernist perspective of seeing and thinking about the world and our experiences in it. The modernist view is that knowledge is objective and fixed, and the knower and knowledge are independent - presupposing universal truths and objective reality. Postmodernism refers not to an era, but to a different, discontinuous theoretical direction: Knowledge is socially constructed and generative, and knowledge and the knower are interdependent - presupposing the interrelationship of context, culture, language, experience, and understanding.”

Various theoretical and conceptual frameworks have crystallized out of the general postmodern approach. The most significant of these as far as the purposes of the present study is concerned, is the social-constructivist approach. Although there are a variety of constructivist models, they all hold in

common the epistemological belief that a totally objective reality which stands apart from the knowing subject can never be fully known (Rosen, 1996: 05). According to the social-constructivist theory, reality is socially constructed through interaction between individuals through the medium of language. As such, knowledge cannot be considered as constituting an objective reflection of reality (Gergen, 1985: 266; Anderson, 1993: 22).

The researcher does not, however, adopt the extreme relativist position that there are no essential truths. Instead, he adopts the view that on some level an objective reality does indeed exist, but that we are limited in our capacity to know that reality in any complete manner. As such, our understanding can at best be partial approximations rather than reflections of any ultimate reality. As no map can ever be equated to the territory it describes, so no theory can ever capture the entirety of any phenomenon it seeks to explain, and as such, the researcher does not believe that a position of finality can or should be taken with regards to any theory. This position is to some extent shared by researchers such as Mahoney, Guidano, Kelly, and Piaget, and is often referred to as *critical constructivism* (Rosen, 1996: 11).

A social constructivist approach is liberating in that it prevents scientific rigidity which might impede the discovery of even more useful and applicable perspectives and theories. This approach therefore invites us to consider the social origins of taken for granted assumptions and directs us to question the axioms or fundamental propositions underlying descriptions of persons. It also accords value to the local, the contextual and the individual (Gergen, 1985: 267-268), and as such, was considered a valuable approach to the study of local dream discourses and practices.

In evaluating discourses and beliefs, a social constructivist perspective does not concern itself with the bedrock validity or “truthfulness” of such a discourse, but with the adaptive and pragmatic utility of these discourses and

constructions for the individuals or social unit embracing them (Rosen, 1996: 5). From this perspective therefore, the constructions and discourses that constitute someone's personal truth cannot be evaluated by a standard of comparison that posits an objective reality. Yet it can be assessed in terms of the "fit" of such a construction within the total ecology of the individual's construct system or the social group into which that system is integrated (Rosen, 1996: 5).

The social-constructivist theory provides us with a radically new picture of human reality as amorphous and ever changing. From this perspective, meaning can no longer be objectively measured or established. This offers a degree of liberation from the need to objectively prove all ideas and concepts before they can be accepted as having some validity. This also invariably presupposes a high level of ambiguity as far as truth is concerned. From a social constructivist perspective, such ambiguity is not eschewed, but embraced. This idea is supported by Freedman and Combs (1994: 32) when they state that where a modernist worldview would invite us to close down options and work methodically to identify a universally applicable interpretation, a postmodern approach invites us to celebrate diversity. Again, the researcher does not take an extreme position of relativism with regard to reality. He does however believe that given our inability to arrive at a full and final understanding of ultimate reality and truth, adopting a degree of relativism will serve as healthy antidote against premature truth claims and the resulting closing down of alternative perspectives.

1.5. Research design and methodology

In order to attain the goals set out in a previous section, a qualitative approach to research was employed. Such an approach is in keeping with the postmodern, social-constructivist epistemology that was chosen as orientation towards the research.

The focus of the study centered on obtaining an insider-perspective as opposed to an outsider perspective (Mouton, 2003: 194).

The advantage of such an approach is the fact that the qualitative researcher attempts to understand people in terms of their own definition of their world. Such an approach is considered to be essential in a study such as this as it allows the researcher to enter more fully into the context of the respondents. The aim of the study is to describe the dream related beliefs and discourses of the respondents in terms of their own language and unique context, and this necessitates a unique approach. As was stated earlier, most current dream based research approach the topic from an outsider-perspective. The latter perspective usually takes the form of an established psychological theory of dreams and dreaming which serves as a “lens” for studying and examining dream related phenomena. As the intention of this study is the exploration of current, local, non-scientific dream related beliefs, discourses, and practices, a qualitative, “insider-perspective,” approach is deemed to be the most appropriate.

In the social-constructivist context it is also realized that the researcher forms part of the research process, and that the research findings represent a co-construction of the researcher and the respondents (Schurink, 2001: 298). As such, the researcher will not strive to attain any elusive goal of objectivity, but will rather attempt to evince an awareness and transparency to his own influence in the research process.

Unlike most quantitative approaches to research, in which the elements of the research design (such as hypothesis formation, measurement, and sampling) are specified prior to data collection, design elements in qualitative research are usually worked out during the course of the study (Mouton, 2003: 195).

Based on this, the research design and methodology will be discussed only in broad terms at this point. In chapter four, a more detailed discussion of these matters will be undertaken.

Firstly, the epistemological basis for the study has been established by means of an in-depth literature review of the central tenets of postmodern and social-constructivist thought. The researcher focused especially on the work of Anderson and Goolishian (1988, 1992), White (1988, 1990), Rorty (1990), Gergen (1985, 1992, 1994, 1997), Freedman and Combs (1990, 1994), and Rosen (1996). These sources were selected based on criteria such as the scope of influence that these works exerted, the generally agreed upon authoritativeness of these sources, and the observation that these authors are amongst the most frequently referred to in both general and scientific literature on dreams.

Following this, a thorough literature study was undertaken with regard to dreams. In this section the focus fell on major cultural, religious, scientific / psychological and local dream related discourses and practices. This section served as an essential backdrop against which the qualitative analyses of the case studies have been undertaken.

The most important sources that have been examined with regard to dreams include Jung (1933, 1974, 1984), Freud (1948), Artemidorus (1975), Boss (1977), Miller (1979), Ullman and Zimmerman (1987), Kruger (1992), and Delaney (1997, 1998). These sources were also selected on the basis of their wide scope of influence, frequent citation and general authoritative status with regard to the fields they represent.

A qualitative survey was then conducted by means of semi-structured qualitative interviews which served to record the dream related discourses and practices of 20 individuals from the Vaal-Triangle area of South Africa. This area was focused on, as the researcher resides in this area, and working with respondents from this area was therefore much more feasible in terms of time, travel, and cost considerations. (Later studies are planned which will adopt a broader focus.) These respondents were comprised of students that were selected from a local University using a sampling method that combined

purposive and random sampling. The sample was purposively selected in terms of gender and cultural background in order to ensure diversity with regards to these criteria. Such diversity was deemed important for cross-cultural and cross gender comparisons of dream related discourses and practices.

It should be kept in mind that inclusivity and depth of description are generally more important in qualitative studies informed by a postmodern epistemology than representativity. In selecting a sample, the qualitative researcher aims for diversity in order to obtain a richer description of the phenomenon in question, rather than to obtain a sample that is statistically representative of the general population and upon which generalizations can be based (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 78-82).

The data accrued from the interviews have been qualitatively analysed with the purpose of identifying and exploring major and minor themes and sub-themes with regard to dream related discourses and practices that are reflected in the interviews. In addition, similarities and differences amongst the respondents were be explored, and comparisons were made to existing scientific and psychological dream related discourses and practices. This was done in order to determine the extent to which local discourses appear to reflect (and might possibly have been influenced by) psychological, religious, cultural, scientific and other discourses on the matter, and also to what extent the local discourses might contain elements not reflected in the latter types of discourses.

The information gleaned from the interviews were then presented in such a manner as to provide an overview, from an insider perspective, of the current, local dream related discourses and practices held by the respondents.

1.6. Overview of the study

Following on the present chapter, chapter two is devoted to a thorough exposition of the central theoretical framework of the study. The postmodern and social constructivist approaches are discussed, both in a general sense, as well as with specific reference to their implications for dream related practices and discourses.

In chapter three, an in depth literature study of various cultural, scientific, sociological, and religious dream related discourses and practices is undertaken.

Chapter four is devoted to a discussion of the research design and methodology that was followed in this study.

Chapter five centres around the qualitative exploration and analysis of the interviews.

Finally, chapter six serves to summarize the main points and conclusions made during the course of the study, as well as providing a critical review of the study and making recommendations for further research.

An appendix, containing the edited transcripts of the interviews follows the bibliography.

CHAPTER 2: EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1. Introduction

This chapter serves to establish and examine the major theoretical framework within which the present study is approached and conducted. The chapter will commence with an exposition of the postmodern and social constructivist approaches, which constitute the chosen epistemological position of the study. This will be followed by a more focused and in-depth examination of these approaches as they relate specifically to dream related discourses and practices. The latter will be examined with reference to premodern, modern, and postmodern times and the implications of each will be elucidated. This discussion will serve to lay the theoretical foundation for chapter four in which the research design and methodology of the study will be discussed.

2.2. Modernism and postmodernism

This study, although broadly sociological in nature, is approached from a postmodern, social constructivist frame of reference. As these approaches form the theoretical foundation for the present study, an in-depth discussion of each of these approaches will be undertaken, both generally and with regard to the specific relevance of these approaches to dream related discourses and beliefs.

In order to grasp the essential tenets of postmodern and social constructivist thinking, it is first of all necessary to distinguish between the central assumptions underpinning the modern and postmodern approaches, as much of postmodern thinking developed as a critique in response to the perceived limitations of the modernist approach. In addition, postmodernism depends heavily on the tenets of modernism for its existence (Van der Walt, 2002:28), and as such the two approaches are inextricably intertwined.

It should also be noted that it is not even clear that postmodernism has a sharply demarcated historical origin and duration. While a few scholars believe this to be so, others view it as a cluster of beliefs and attitudes that can be found across various historical eras (Rosen, 1996: 39).

It should, therefore, be kept in mind that in any discussion of the major tenets of modernist and postmodernist thinking, a certain degree of generalization and polarization is inevitable. Opinions on the subject differ widely, and debate is still ongoing on the most appropriate way to define the concepts of modernism and postmodernism (Kotze, 1992: 28; Lovlie, 1997: 119-120; Roux, 1996: 39; Kvale, 1997: 2). It is not the intention of this work to involve itself in such a debate, but merely to establish a general outline of the broader context in which this study will be approached and conducted.

Modernism is an historical periodizing term that refers to the epoch that followed the Middle Ages. In a major sense, modernism in Western culture may be linked to the process of mechanization, and its close association with advances in science and technology. There are many discourses of modernity, and the term is used to refer to a wide variety of economic, political, social and cultural transformations (Gergen, 1997: 18). However, within the context of the present study, the emphasis will be on the scientific and social implications of the modernist approach.

The modern era, which was characterised by positivism, was based on the idea that science can be valuable in itself, and that it can be divorced from personal values, metaphysical assumptions and interests, and can concentrate on discovering pure fact (Moore, 1982: 70; Gergen, 1997: 20). At the core of modernism lies the belief in a knowable world, and in the existence of universal properties. That is, it is presumed that there are principles, and possibly laws, that may be discovered about the properties of any subject matter. In addition, the modernist approach also believes in truth through

method. In particular, the belief is that by using empirical methods, and most particularly the controlled experiment, one could derive objective truths about the nature of the subject matter and the causal networks in which it is embedded (Gergen, 1997: 19-20).

Another central notion in positivist thinking, is that man has an essence and that our chief task is to mirror accurately in our own “Glassy Essence” the universe around us, which is seen to be made up of very simple, clear and distinctly knowable things. It is further believed that knowledge of the essences of these things will provide a master vocabulary which will permit commensuration of all discourses (Rorty, 1990: 357). As such, positivism has been offered as the only way to true knowledge (Moore, 1982: 70). It could even be argued that the scientific method represents the epitome or the ideal of modernist assumptions and aspirations.

The human and social sciences emulated the positivistic approach in order to assure greater validity and credibility in these sciences (Van der Walt, 2002: 30). It was believed that if the rules and methods that were responsible for the immense technological advances that characterized the modern era were applied to the social sciences, progress of a similar sort could be achieved across the spectrum of the social sciences (Gergen, 1997: 19). This resulted in the formulation of psychological and educational laws as reflections of scientific truth. Such findings were deemed to be good and acceptable because they had supposedly not been contaminated by human prejudice (Van der Walt, 2002: 30).

Since the 1960s, however, the scientistic dichotomism of positivism has increasingly been criticised. Moore (1982: 70) states that positivism had been rejected because it had been discovered to be in itself an approach to science pervaded with assumptions and prejudices as well as untestable prescientific conclusions.

Gergen (1985: 266) expresses similar concerns about the validity of the positivistic mode of inquiry by posing the following questions:

“How can theoretical categories map or reflect the world if each definition that is used to link category and observation itself requires a definition? How can words map reality when the major constraints over word usage are furnished by linguistic context? How is it possible to determine whether competing theories refer to the same entities, without reference to some other theory not contained in those under comparison? If each theoretical proposition depends for its intelligibility on an array of related propositions, what aspect of the prepositional network would be challenged by a disconfirmation of any single proposition? These and other telling questions have gone unanswered, and the lack of answers has left the empirical sciences without a viable logic of justification.”

Rorty (1990: 361) views any attempts at objectivity as conformity to the norms of justification for assertions and actions we find about us. Such conformity becomes dubious and self-deceptive only when seen as something more than this – namely as a way of obtaining access to something which grounds current practices of justification in something else. Such a “ground” is thought to need no justification, because it has become so clearly and distinctly perceived as to count as an objective reality. This is self-deceptive not simply because of the general absurdity of ultimate justifications reposing on the unjustifiable, but also because of the absurdity of thinking that the vocabulary used by present science has some privileged attachment to reality which makes it *more* than just a further set of descriptions.

It should be noted that these criticisms do not suggest a disqualification of any scientific or modernist position, only a relativizing of any such positions as constituting one among many valid alternative discourses about a given issue. This is also the view taken by the researcher, and as such, the most influential

modernist theories on the subject of dreams will be examined in a later chapter as valid discourses that might play an important role in influencing current, local dream related beliefs and discourses.

From the general criticisms levelled at the modernist stance, an alternative approach started to emerge. This approach, loosely referred to as “postmodernism,” represents an alternative set of assumptions and theoretical premises relating to reality and scientific inquiry. In general, postmodernism sees the Enlightenment, with its emphasis that reason and science lead us along a linear path toward unerring progress, as a failed project. Master discourses, such as those of Hegel, Marx, and Kant, with their totalizing and universal structure are rejected as they are considered to be suppressing and silencing other voices while privileging their own (Rosen, 1996: 39).

The postmodern era gradually started to affect thinking in various disciplines. In the 1950s and 1960s, postmodern themes were discussed within architecture, literary criticism and sociology in the United States. French philosophers such as Foucault, Lyotard, Rorty, Derrida, and Baudrillard then addressed postmodernity during the 1970s and in the 1980s the issue of a postmodern age came to general public attention. We have now reached a stage where the current age has been described as postmodern, especially in the fields of art, philosophy and the humanities (Kvale, 1997: 1).

However, it should be noted that postmodernism is anything but precise, clear and coherent. In fact, Rosen (1996: 38) states that anyone who thinks he or she knows exactly what postmodernism is and offers a clear, precise, and coherent definition to demonstrate that knowledge is probably mistaken, as postmodernism is fragmented, diverse, paradoxical, ironic, and contradictory. Different authors often describe postmodernism in different ways, yet this plurality of responses can in itself be considered as a defining feature of the

postmodern movement. Kvale (1997: 1) supports this idea when he states that the very concept of a unitary discipline is at odds with postmodern thought. However, despite these difficulties, it is possible to elucidate some of the main themes that permeate the postmodern approach.

A thorough reading of Rorty (1990) suggests that the one unifying theme that draws the many diverse perspectives on postmodernism together is that there does not exist a set of immutable objective truths in the “real” world to serve as the bedrock, or grounding upon which knowledge can be built.

Postmodernists have come to insist that reality is mediated to a particular individual through his or her own perspective, and regard reality as a mere construct of the human mind. According to constructivists, reality is not only a human or individualistic construct, it is also a social construct. That which humans supposed to be real, “out there,” is in fact cultural, made by man himself, and not given (Van der Walt, 2002: 31). However, the researcher considers this to be an extreme position, and chooses to adopt the view that an ultimate reality does indeed exist, but that this reality is too vast and complex to be comprehensively and perfectly understood by man. Just because the map is not the reality, does not mean that the reality the map refers to does not exist. As such, our observations, understandings and conclusions are partial, and might at best approximate such an ultimate reality. Yet, through according our partial perceptions and theories with a truth status, the researcher believes that we are in fact creating our own reality. By equating the part of reality that we are able to observe within the perceptual filters of human senses, thought and research with ultimate reality, we create our world in the image of our perceptions.

Most assumptions considered to be postmodern, seem to represent extensions of this basic idea that we cannot come to know reality (if it does in fact exist) in any final and conclusive manner.

In order to establish an outline of postmodern thought, the views of several authors with regard to postmodernism will be cited in an attempt to provide a broad conceptual outline of the most salient aspects of postmodern thought.

Anderson (1993: 27) provides the following summary of the nature of modernism and its implications for science by contrasting it with the assumptions of a postmodern worldview:

“The emergence of a postmodern narrative in the human sciences challenged the modernist perspective of seeing and thinking about the world and our experiences in it. The modernist view is that knowledge is objective and fixed, and the knower and knowledge are independent - presupposing universal truths and objective reality. Postmodernism refers not to an era, but to a different, discontinuous theoretical direction: Knowledge is socially constructed and generative, and knowledge and the knower are interdependent - presupposing the interrelationship of context, culture, language, experience, and understanding.”

Kvale (1997: 2-3) states that postmodern thought replaced a conception of a reality independent of the observer with notions of language as actually constituting the structures of a perspectival social reality. The modernist dichotomy of an objective reality distinct from subjective images has broken down and is being replaced by a hyperreality of self-referential signs. The modernist search for foundational truths and their belief in a linear progress of science was questioned, and in this process postmodernism went beyond the cognitive and scientific domains to permeate those of ethics and aesthetics as well.

The postmodern approach challenges assumptions about a basic subject matter by claiming that such an assumption would be engaging in an unwarranted objectification of discourses, and that such reification is fraught with various

ideological and value-related biases. To presume a subject matter is to mystify the valuational basis of one's ontology. Furthermore, postmodernism also challenges the idea of universal properties of subjects, claiming that such an endeavour would be to reify one's forestructures of understanding, and also to hide the valuational commitments in which the forestructure is enmeshed. As an alternative, postmodern thought invites the investigator to always consider his or her inquiries in its historical, cultural, religious and related contexts (Gergen, 1997: 24).

White and Epston (1990: 77-78) distinguish between what they term the logico-scientific and the narrative mode of thought: (The latter represents a postmodern theoretical framework, whereas the logico-scientific mode of thought represents a modernist stance.)

“The logico-scientific mode of thought involves procedures and conventions that warrant it as a legitimate endeavor within the scientific community, procedures and conventions that prescribe the application of ‘formal logic,’ ‘tight analysis,’ ‘empirical discovery guided by reasoned hypotheses,’ the production of universal rather than particular ‘truth conditions,’ and a theory that is testably right. . . The narrative mode of thought, on the other hand, is characterized by good stories that gain credence through their lifelikeness. They are not concerned with procedures and conventions for the generation of abstract and general theories but with the particulars of experience. They do not establish universal truth conditions but a connectedness of events across time. The narrative mode leads, not to certainties, but to varying perspectives.”

From the above it is evident that whereas the emphasis in the modernist approach falls on objectivity, empiricism, and positivism, the postmodern approach emphasizes the intersubjectivity and socially constructed nature of reality.

The utility of a postmodern view is that proclaiming that there are no objective truths we can claim to mirror completely permits us to see the descriptions of ourselves we find in one of the natural sciences as on a par with the various alternative descriptions offered by poets, novelists, depth psychologists, sculptors, anthropologists, and mystics. In this view the former are not privileged representations by virtue of the fact that (at the moment) there is more consensus in the sciences than in the arts. They are simply among the repertoire of self-descriptions at our disposal (Rorty, 1990: 362). However, it should be noted that such a position, if taken to an extreme, could result in an extreme level of relativism. The researcher distances himself from such an extreme view of reality. His position is that an external reality exists, but that we are limited in our capacity to know this reality fully. Yet, following Popper (1962: vii), it is believed that some models or theories will exhibit a higher degree of verisimilitude to such a reality than others based on the successfulness of such models. Popper believed that such theories or models will appear to us at a given moment to be a closer approximation to the truth than other known theories. Popper further argued that since none of these theories can be positively justified, it is essentially their critical and progressive character, the fact that we can *argue* about their claim to solve our problems better than their competitors, which constitutes their value and usefulness (Popper, 1962: vii). As such, some theories and positions might be more useful than other based on the level of verisimilitude thereof.

Although Rorty's statement cited above might make it seem as if postmodernism is an unscientific approach, it should be kept in mind that the postmodern approach developed partly as a result of criticisms of modernism, and as such, it represents an attempt to overcome the limitations inherent in the modernist approach by allowing for a greater degree of tentativity and relativity in social and scientific inquiry.

It is important to note, however, that a postmodern approach is not necessarily any less scientific than a modernist approach. In the modernist approach,

science came to be equated with a positivistic approach as is epitomized in the “scientific method.” Thus, whatever did not meet the exigencies of the scientific method, were relegated to the realm of the unscientific. From this perspective, and measured against the strict dictates of the scientific method, a postmodern approach would indeed be deemed as unscientific, and as such, rejected. However, the postmodern approach challenges this, and suggests that the alternative approaches towards understanding reality that it proposes can also be seen as a valid approach to science. In understanding and evaluating the postmodern approach it is very important to bear in mind that postmodernism represents a very different, and in some ways even discontinuous line of thinking. It is no less logical than a modernist approach, yet it follows a different system of logic to that of modernism, and as such, cannot be evaluated on the basis of modernist ideals and principles. A postmodern approach has much to say about alternative ways of approaching scientific inquiry. It is no less scientific than modernism, it only adopts a different scientific paradigm. It is within this paradigm that the present study is conducted.

It should be noted that when discourses are designated as being non-scientific in the context of the present study, this only refers to their status in relation to modernist conceptions of scientificity, in that such discourses were not derived from the scientific method. Yet from a postmodern perspective, they are not necessarily any less scientific in nature – they are merely seen as arising from an alternate and equally valid conception of reality and science.

Various theoretical and conceptual frameworks have crystallized out of the general postmodern approach. The most important of these as far as the purpose of the present study is concerned is the social constructivist theory, which represents a general refinement and continuation of the postmodern approach. This theory will consequently be discussed in greater depth in the following section.

2.3. Social constructivism

This theory is represented by a variety of researchers such as Gergen (1985; 1992, 1994, 1997), Berger and Luckmann (1987), Anderson and Goolishian (1988; 1993; 1992), Freedman and Combs (1994), Monk *et al.* (1996: 40), and Rosen (1996).

While there are a variety of constructivist models, they all hold in common the epistemological belief that a totally objective reality which stands apart from the knowing subject, can never be fully known (Rosen, 1996: 05). A central argument made by the French philosopher Richard Rorty (1990) is that the way in which we represent what we know to ourselves does not bear a one to one correspondence with a given reality existing independently of our knowledge of it. In this view, meaning and reality are created, and not discovered.

According to the social-constructivist perspective, knowledge cannot be considered as being objectively verifiable. Knowledge is seen as being socially constructed through the medium of language. As such, one cannot reach a position where a claim can be made of having discovered the ultimate truth. As knowledge and understanding is constructed within the context of language and as this process is situated in the social domain, knowledge cannot be considered as constituting an objective reflection of reality (Gergen, 1985: 266; Anderson, 1993: 22; Monk *et al.*, 1996: 34; Roux, 1996: 6; Kotze 1992; Berger & Luckmann, 1987: 15).

Kotze (1992: 10) summarizes the social constructivist position as follows:

“Wetenskap en kennis as die vrugte van wetenskaplike arbeid is dus in die taaldomein gelee en is as sodanig betekenis wat sosiaal in taal geskep word. Dit is nie weergawes van die werklikheid nie, maar eerder sosiale konstrunkte oor die werklikheid.”

Freedman and Combs (1994: 22) propose the following four ideas as representing a postmodern, and social constructivist worldview:

1. Realities are socially constructed.
2. Realities are constituted through language.
3. Realities are organized and maintained through narrative.
4. There are no essential truths.

These ideas challenge the notion that human beliefs, ideas or practices reflect any inherent or objective truth about human nature. Instead, a central tenet of the postmodern worldview is that beliefs, laws, social customs, habits of dress and diet – all the things that make up the psychological fabric of ‘reality’ – arise through social interaction over time. In other words, people, together, construct their realities as they live them (Freedman & Combs, 1994: 23).

There can be no one true story – no single, correct account of what is (Monk *et al.*, 1996: 40). Radical constructivists such as Humberto Maturana, Ernst von Glaserfeld, and Paul Watzlawick even go as far as entirely banishing all metaphysical reality from their worldview, and hold the position that there is no reality that extends beyond the individual’s own experience (Rosen, 1996: 6).

The researcher does not, however, take the extreme position that there are no essential truths. Instead, he adopts the view that on some level, an ultimate reality and truth does indeed exist, but that we are limited in our capacity to know that reality in any complete manner. As such, the researcher takes the position that our understanding is partial, and can at best be approximations rather than reflections of any ultimate reality. Given these views, the researcher believes that some theories and approaches will indeed prove to be closer approximations to such an ultimate reality than others, and that such theories will generally prove to be more useful in understanding and explaining certain phenomena. Yet, as no map can ever be equated to the territory it describes, so

no theory can ever capture the entirety of any phenomenon it seeks to explain, and as such, the researcher does not believe that a position of finality can or should be taken with regards to any theory.

This position is to some extent shared by researchers such as Mahoney, Guidano, Kelly, and Piaget, and is often referred to as *critical constructivism* (Rosen, 1996: 11). Furthermore, the researcher shares the sentiments of Popper (1962: vii) that: “As we learn from our mistakes our knowledge grows, even though we may never know - that is, know for certain. Since our knowledge can grow, there can be no reason here for despair of reason. And since we can never know for certain, there can be no authority here for any claim to authority, for conceit over our knowledge, or for smugness.”

A social constructivist approach is liberating in that it prevents scientific rigidity which might impede the discovery of even more useful and applicable perspectives and theories. The researcher is of the opinion that this is one of the main advantages of the social constructivist approach.

The social-constructivist perspective therefore invites us to consider the social origins of taken for granted assumptions. It directs us to question the axioms or fundamental propositions underlying descriptions of persons. It also directs our attention to the social, moral, political, and economic institutions that sustain and are supported by current assumptions about human nature (Gergen, 1985: 267-268).

In evaluating discourses and beliefs, a social constructivist perspective does not concern itself with the bedrock validity or “truthfulness” of such a discourse, but with the adaptive and pragmatic utility of these discourses and constructions for the individuals or social unit embracing them (Rosen, 1996: 5). From this perspective therefore, the constructions and discourses that constitute someone’s personal truth cannot be evaluated by a standard of comparison that posits an objective reality. Yet it can be assessed in terms of

the “fit” of such a construction within the total ecology of the individual’s construct system or the social group into which that system is integrated (Rosen, 1996: 5).

The social-constructivist theory provides us with a radically new picture of human reality as amorphous and ever changing. From this perspective, meaning can no longer be objectively measured or established. This offers a degree of liberation from the need to objectively prove all ideas and concepts before they can be accepted as having some validity. This also invariably presupposes a high level of ambiguity as far as truth is concerned. From a social constructivist perspective, such ambiguity is not eschewed, but embraced. This idea is supported by Freedman and Combs (1994: 32) when they state that where a modernist worldview would invite us to close down options and work methodically to identify a universally applicable interpretation, a postmodern approach invites us to celebrate diversity. Although the relativism inherent in the social constructivist perspective has often been criticised, it is felt that the merits of this approach include a richer, fuller, and more inclusive description of phenomena, which allows for a greater variety of perspectives and approaches, and as such, provide individuals with more alternatives and choices. In addition, although rejecting a totally relativised view of reality, adopting a degree of relativism will serve as healthy antidote against premature truth claims and the resulting closing down of alternative perspectives.

2.3.1. Discourses and beliefs

The concept of discourses is central to the postmodern and social constructivist approaches (e.g. Freedman & Combs, 1994; Gergen, 1994). As the focus of this study emphasises the study of discourses, it is important to discuss this issue in greater depth and provide a workable definition thereof.

In the context of the present study, a discourse is defined as a fairly coherent, socially or personally created set of beliefs, assumptions, and values which are often assumed by its adherents to be truthful and objective. In furnishing this definition, the researcher is not implying that it is necessarily more valid than others on the subject, but only seeks to provide a workable definition in line with general conceptions of the topic for the purposes of the present study. This view is to some extent supported by Freedman and Combs (1994: 32) when they refer to discourses as cultural stories which determine the shape of people's individual life narratives. They state that in any culture, certain narratives will become dominant over others, and will specify the preferred and customary ways of believing and behaving within the particular culture.

The idea of discourses, as it will be utilized in this study, bears a very close similarity to the general sociological concept of beliefs, which has been defined by one author as "conceptions that people accept as true, concerning how the world operates and where the individual fits in relationship to others" (Ferrante, 2000: 86). Given the great similarities in the ways they have been described, these two terms will be used interchangeably in the study. Following social-constructivist researchers such as Gergen (1985, 1994), the term discourses will be preferred, however, as it is most in keeping with the social-constructivist approach adopted in the study. Yet, in using both terms, the researcher is aiming for a marriage between a sociological and a social-constructivist perspective in this regard. However, the researcher makes the contention that discourses, by virtue of their socially constructed nature and existence, are, at least to a significant degree, sociological phenomena. *As such, the exploration of current dream related discourses and practices is seen as a primarily sociological endeavour.*

Beliefs, as well as discourses can be rooted in blind faith, experience, tradition, or the scientific method (Ferrante, 2000: 86). The latter point is very important as it touches upon a central point made in the study. As was mentioned earlier,

discourses, especially those created from the results of scientific inquiry, are often accorded a truth status and as such deemed to be objective and factual. A serious consequence of this is that other views and discourses pertaining to the matter (especially those not rooted in the scientific method) are marginalised, and at times, even disqualified. From a social constructivist perspective, this is seen as a serious problem, and as such the objective truth status of all psychological and scientific dream related theories are questioned. However, a social constructivist perspective would not take a position against any specific theory per se, only against such a theory's claims at objective truthfulness.

Thus, in adopting the social constructivist perspective, the researcher considers the major dream theories of Freud, Jung, Boss and others to be discourses, each one valid, but none being the final word. The moment that the truth claims of such discourses are challenged, the door is opened for the resurrection and exploration of alternative and previously marginalized discourses on the topic. It is exactly this which this study sets out to do, by intending to uncover, describe, and explore such marginalised discourses.

This should not be seen as an attempt to disparage or otherwise disqualify any existing dream theories. The researcher believes that these theories have a lot of value. Yet he also feels that they might have been accorded too much emphasis in the past, which has closed the door on research into alternative perspectives and approaches related to dreams. Following Gergen (1992: 57) the postmodern argument is not seen to take a position against any psychological or other theory, only against the posture of authoritative truth which is often evinced by such theories.

It should also be borne in mind that Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Medard Boss, and other dream theorists conceived of their theories within the circumscribed domain of psychology (see discussion in chapter three). This is entirely valid, although it represents only one, or at most, a few dimensions of reality being included in the conceptions of the theory. As such, although the insights that

have been provided by these approaches are valid and often useful, certain limitations exist in that such theories were developed within only one or a few contextual domains. Per se, psychological theories do not give primary considerations to cultural, religious, and sociological aspects of the phenomena under question and vice versa. As sociology has mostly ignored the dream (Bastide, 1966: 199), this resulted in a limited understanding of dreams from a primarily sociological perspective. Following Bastide (1966: 199) the researcher asked himself whether sociology is right to ignore dreams, and to envisage man standing and sitting, but never asleep and adream, and contends that it is time to attempt a sociological study of the dream. In examining current social dream beliefs and discourses, and emphasising the cultural and gender related aspects of such beliefs and discourses, an attempt was made to redress this gap.

In addition, in examining beliefs and discourses, it is important to recognize that these also exert very powerful influences on actions, as they are used to justify behaviour (Ferrante, 2000: 86). This characteristic of beliefs and discourses adds substantial weight to the points made earlier. Discourses and beliefs are not neutral; they exert a direct and strong influence on the ways in which we act with regard to specific issues. They govern our behaviour in their spheres of influence. Therefore, in the process wherein the master discourses on dreams appear to have led to the marginalization and disregard of alternative dream related discourses, it seems quite reasonable to suspect that not only the beliefs and assumptions reflected by these discourses, but also the behaviour and practices of people in relation to dreams might have been marginalised and disregarded.

The close link between discourses and practices is deemed so important that it has been expressed as a central element of the title of the present study.

To illustrate the nature and functioning of discourses, the following diagram was created as a simplified model of the manner in which the concepts of discourses and beliefs will be regarded in the present study:

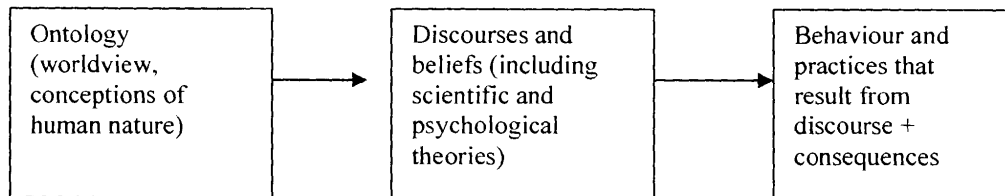


Figure 1

The root of each discourse and belief (here all scientific theories are included as being formalized discourses) is ontological. That is, it is based upon some implicit or explicit conception about the nature of the world and mankind. Upon these foundational assumptions, beliefs and theories are developed. These in turn, govern the behaviour and the specific practices that people engage in with relation to the sphere of life addressed by the discourse. This behaviour will have consequences, on both an individual as well as a societal level.

The following example is given to illustrate these concepts:

Medard Boss's theory (which will be discussed in great depth in the next chapter) claims to be objective and a-theoretical (Boss, 1977: xxi).

The major theoretical position of Boss can be stated as the belief that the dream should be interpreted in terms of its obvious manifest content, by uncovering the essential meaning of each dream element. He advocates that the analyst should look at dreams without any theoretical bias, seeing in the dream

experience only that which can be factually perceived to exist. In this way, the dream analyst attempts to avoid subjective interpretations (Boss, 1977: xxi).

However, even a brief examination of Boss's theory shows plainly that his entire discourse on dreams is built upon the foundation of a phenomenological and existentialist worldview (Boss, 1977: xxi). Herein we find the several explicit ontological assumptions. A central assumption in this regard is the idea that "every thing is what it is, not something else," and that the key task of the analyst is to penetrate the significance of each dream symbol until the essence of it is fully recognized. A phenomenological approach would call for an abandonment of all theoretical assumptions and all concepts which refer to things which cannot be factually perceived to exist (Boss, 1977: 3).

Several objections can be made to the claims of such an approach being a-theoretical, as several ontological and epistemological assumptions underlie the theory. First, we can clearly discern the ontological assumption that things possess an essence and a fixed reality, which can then be penetrated and known through a process of observation (epistemology). In this process we also find the implicit epistemological assumption that the knower stands outside the process of investigation and observation and can come to a full knowing of an object under study independent of his own part in affecting the process. The assumption is that another knower, examining the same dream symbol, will come to the same conclusion about its essential nature.

In disregarding the existence of unobservable phenomena such as the unconscious we also find the assumption that what can be observed has more importance than what cannot be observed.

The entire dream theory postulated by Boss (1977) is therefore dependent upon these ontological and epistemological assumptions.

The dream theory in turn, governs the specific practices engaged in by the phenomenological dream analyst or researcher.

For example, the specific practices of avoiding any kind of symbolic or metaphoric interpretations of dream symbols, discounting the possible psychic content of some dreams, etc. are all direct results of the specific discourse underlying the dream practices.

Following this line of reasoning, every dream related theory or discourse can be deconstructed and its underlying ontological assumptions exposed. The scientific method is no exception to this, and is founded upon a positivistic ontology, as was discussed earlier.

Following Van der Walt (2002: 29-31) the researcher adopts the assumption that no ontological position can claim to be fully and objectively reflective of any ultimate truth. Some positions might approximate such an objective reality more closely than others, and most will have at least some validity, yet from the social constructivist perspective none can claim to be the final word.

Of course, the social constructivist approach is in itself a discourse based on an underlying worldview, and as such, can be criticised. However, as it is not possible to take up a position that is situated outside the realm of ontology, values, or discourse (Van der Walt, 2002: 29-31), the researcher believes the best alternative to be to consciously align himself with a given ontological and epistemological perspective, and to be aware of its shortcomings and limitations. Choosing such a position with a certain degree of reserve is believed to be healthy measure in order to allow for other possibilities.

Following Gergen (1997: 24) it is believed that postmodern thought requires researchers to make their valuational and ontological commitments clear and to consider the motivation, roots, limits, and cultural context of his or her preferred discourse. Although most of these aspects have been addressed in previous sections, the researcher feels that a few additional comments are

required in relation to his valuational position and his motivation with regard to his choice of epistemology.

In this study, the values of inclusivity and comprehensivity formed the foundation for the choice of epistemological position, and it was felt that the postmodern and social constructivist approaches lead to a more inclusive and comprehensive approach in studying any phenomenon, and opens more doors than it closes, theoretically speaking. Furthermore, sharing the conceptions of the postmodern perspective, the researcher believes that there is an intrinsic value in diversity and in the local, as opposed to an exclusive focus on the general and the universal (Kvale, 1997: 34). From this perspective, an individual can only be understood within his or her contexts, and as such contexts are influenced by local and individual factors, the consideration of local beliefs and discourses is essential.

2.3.2. Deconstruction

Social critique and destabilizing scholarship are important aspects of the social constructivist approach, and the practice of deconstruction is often used in the context of this theory for these purposes (Gergen, 1994: 58-59).

Deconstruction is a practice in which assumptions and beliefs which are taken to be objective realities are unmasked, and the underlying, socially constructed aspects of the beliefs are exposed. Lovlie (1997: 123) describes deconstruction as the vigilant seeking out of blind spots or moments of self-contradiction where a text involuntary betrays the tension between rhetoric and logic, between what it manifestly means to say and what it is nonetheless constrained to mean. Finally, White (1991: 27) states that deconstruction has to do with procedures that subvert taken for granted realities and practices; those so called “truths” that are split off from the conditions and the context of their production, and those disembodied ways of speaking that hide their biases and prejudices. Many of the methods of externalizations “exoticize the domestic,”

thereby rendering strange the familiar and everyday taken for granted realities by objectifying them.

The strategy of deconstruction was gleaned from Derrida's reading of Heidegger, and entails raising persistent questions about our own texts and those of others, and denying the notion that any text is settled or stable (Lyon, 1999: 18).

In the context of the present study, all existing dream related theories and discourses, as well as the interviews given by the respondents can be considered to represent texts. In each case, multiple readings of each such text are possible, and consequently, no final reading or position can be taken with regard to such texts. Yet the researcher can, and will undertake his own reading of the texts, most specifically those provided by the respondents in the interviews, and present his findings as one possible reading of these texts.

In addition, the process of deconstruction was utilized extensively in the qualitative analyses of the interviews of the respondents selected for the study. Their dream related assumptions have been examined for the presence of underlying discourses and beliefs, and the implicit assumptions present in their beliefs have been uncovered. By "unpacking" the respondents' assumptions in this way, the researcher was also able to compare the individual discourses held by the respondents with existing psychological, cultural, religious and other discourses on the subject.

Furthermore, much of the present chapter could be viewed as an attempt to deconstruct many of the central tenets of modernism, and also of several modernist dream theories. The purpose of such deconstruction is that it makes us more aware of the extent to which certain modes of life and thought shape our existence, which might then place us in a position to choose to live by other modes of life and thought (White, 1991: 27). The postmodern approach was

presented as such an alternative, and its implications for the study of dream related beliefs and practices will be elucidated in a later section.

2.3.3. The importance of language

Among postmodernists and social constructivists, the role of language in constructing meaning, influencing our conceptions of reality, and even exerting tyranny over us is a theme of central importance (Rosen, 1996: 40). Whereas a modernist approach would view language as neutral, in the sense that words are merely linguistic symbols that represent or refer to something that exists externally, independently of language, a postmodern view sees language as creating, rather than just reflecting meaning.

Through language we determine meaning, we try to control things, and we close down certain possibilities and open up others (Rosen, 1996: 40).

Gergen (1997: 22), referring to the ideas of Derrida, point out that when we enter the process of description we invariably rely on the conventions of language. In fact, we must make use of these conventions or else we cannot communicate at all. Yet, these conventions simultaneously govern what can be communicated – or – more precisely, the ontological presumptions of a culture. Thus, as language guides the formation of our accounts, so does it construct an array of putative objects. One may never exit the language to give a true and accurate portrayal of what is the case. Understanding the world is thus a product not of the world as it is, but of textual history.

The implications of such a view are far reaching. It can be deduced from the above that if language is value laden and replete with implicit ontological assumptions, then no objective or value neutral science is possible, as scientific research is modulated, interpreted, presented, and disseminated through the medium of language.

However, the researcher is against such an extremist position with regard to language, and opts for a more moderate stance in this regard. If language were totally subjective, no coherent and more or less mutually intelligible communication would have been possible. The researcher also believes that the degree of linguistic subjectivity and distortion is related to the contexts of the communicators. He is of the opinion that distortions are much fewer in cases where communicators share the same culture, gender, religious affiliation, and so on, and conversely, that such distortions become more pronounced to the extent that the contexts of the communicators diverge from each other.

This has several implications for the present study. As the researcher is a white Afrikaans male, his fore-conceptions and worldview is likely to be more in accord with some respondents than others. Yet, as the issue cannot be avoided, the researcher believes the most acceptable alternative to be that he strives to consciously be aware of these problems of language, especially with regards to respondents with differing contexts from his own, such as female and African respondents, and account for this in the process of qualitative data analysis.

The view of language discussed in this section also has several other significant implications related to the present study. From this perspective, the language used in describing psychological, religious, and cultural dream related theories and beliefs are not just reflective and descriptive of an objective reality existing independently of these words, but in themselves serve to shape and give meaning to such a reality.

For example, of Freud's theory we could ask: "Does the "id" exist as an objective psychological phenomenon, independently of any theories or words used to refer to it, or is its nature and existence to some extent (at least) created and determined by the specific language used in speaking about it?" Thus, in a sense, it is possible that the theory developed by Freud, and the words that constitute it to some extent created and "made real" the existence of the "id."

From a postmodern perspective there would be no position from which any final statements can be made with regards to the ultimate, factual existence or lack thereof of the id.

This awareness of the generative and meaning creating power of language places an immense responsibility on the researcher, in that he has to remain vigilant in the language he uses during interviews, in describing his observations, as well as in reporting his research. It is considered especially important in recording and transcribing the interviews to retain the respondents' own words and language as much as possible, as the specific language used by the respondents to describe their discourses is considered to be as significant as the descriptions themselves.

2.3.4. Hermeneutics

No discussion of postmodernism and social constructivism would be complete without a reference to hermeneutics. Hermeneutics can be described as the art of interpretation and understanding. Its origins lie in the disputes around the interpretation of the Bible that arose during the reformation (Rosen, 1996: 26).

The emphasis of the hermeneutic approach initially focused on attempting to search out the intended meaning of an author in order to understand objectively the meaning of the literary piece produced (Rosen, 1996: 26). However, in the postmodern paradigm, a shift occurred in the way in which the hermeneutic process was viewed. Hermeneuticists such as Gadamer argued that readers approach a text with various foreconceptions and styles of reading already intact. Whatever interpretation is made of the text must therefore proceed on the basis of this forestructure. It is therefore not the text that dominates the reader, but the reader that dominates the text (Gergen, 1997: 22). In the hermeneutic philosophy of Gadamer we also find an attempt to transcend the subject-object dichotomy. In this view, understanding is not a matter of

forgetting our own horizon of meanings and putting ourselves within that of the alien texts or the alien society, it means merging our own horizons with theirs. Thus the interpreter enters into a dialogue with the text, and while there may not be a single correct interpretation, some interpretations are nevertheless considered better than others on the basis of criteria such as internal consistency and comprehensiveness (Rosen, 1996: 27).

This reflects the position taken by the researcher, who believes that the process of understanding any “text” is also a process of interpretation, and that consequently all understandings do not represent reflections of an objective external reality, but a co-constructive process that occurs between text and reader. The same process occurred in the context of the semi-structured qualitative interviews in that both the researcher and the respondents were actively involved in a meaning making process and were therefore constructors of knowledge and not conveyors and receivers of it (Schurink, 2001: 298).

To some extent, the process of qualitatively evaluating the information gleaned from the interviews can also be considered to be hermeneutic in that it is aimed at understanding the discourses related by the respondents through entering into a dialogue with the “text,” which is represented by the transcripts of the interviews. In this process, the researcher will not attempt to reach an ‘objective’ understanding of each individual’s personal discourse, but will attempt to merge his horizons with theirs in an effort to discern meanings in the “text” provided by the respondents. In addition, from this approach, no interpretation or understanding reached during the course of the research can or will be offered as representing any final or objective truth about the matter, but merely as one individual’s reading of these “texts.” Other researchers, “reading” the same “texts,” may or may not therefore reach the same conclusions.

Following on the general outline of the postmodern and social constructivist perspectives sketched in the previous sections, the next part of the chapter

concerns itself with these and other theoretical perspectives as they apply specifically to dream related discourses and practices.

2.4. Dream discourses and practices: A theoretical perspective

This section is devoted to a discussion of dream related discourses and practices from a theoretical point of view. Rather than examining specific discourses and practices as will be done in chapter three, this chapter examines the nature and epistemological bases of such discourses. To facilitate these ends, dream related discourses and practices will be discussed from pre-modern, modern, and postmodern perspectives, and the implications of each will be examined. This discussion fulfills the important function of providing a rationale for the approach and methodology adopted in the present study. As a very limited amount of literature could be located that specifically dealt with dream discourses from a theoretical and epistemological point of view, much of what is discussed in the following sections are based upon conclusions drawn by the researcher on the basis of the literature study (which is reflected in chapter three).

It is important to mention that the discussion of dream related discourses in terms of premodern, modern, and postmodern contexts is not intended to be an attempt at any definitive classification, but merely to serve as a loose framework for the purpose of clarifying and examining the emphases found in each stage. Elements of each context or era can be found in all the others, and no system of dream beliefs is purely of one type or another. However, certain general emphases and tendencies can be observed, and it is these that will be discussed in the following section.

2.4.1. Dream related discourses and practices in a pre-modern and prescientific context

Prior to the emergence of the modern era, which came to be dominated by a positivistic outlook and the scientific method, knowledge was accrued and generated by very different means. At this level, knowledge is classified as pre-theoretical and prescientific (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 35). Von Grunebaum (1966: 5) states that broadly speaking, most civilisations before Descartes, as well as the dream theories they adhered to, can be referred to as pre-modern. In the context of the literature study, the dream discourses of the Native Americans, the Egyptians, Africans, ancient Chinese, Hindus, Muslims, Jews, and Christians can therefore be considered as being generally pre-modern.

An overview of dream related discourses and practices in ancient and pre-modern societies such as those mentioned above (see chapter three for an in depth discussion of each) provides a fairly clear picture of the way in which dream related discourses were created in these civilizations.

As “primitive” man experienced the phenomenon of dreams, he was faced with the task of attributing meaning to these nightly phenomena in order to render them intelligible. A review of existing research of dream theories in pre-modern cultures as discussed in chapter three reveal that such cultures generally made sense out of the dream experience by viewing and understanding it in the context of their general cultural, religious, mythological, and traditional views of the world and of reality, a view that is supported by Von Grunebaum (1966: 4-8). Society therefore provides a framework for oneiric thought. In this way, dream phenomena became an integrated part of these cultures (Bastide, 1966: 200-201).

For example, if the religion of a specific culture emphasized good and evil, such as is the case with regard to Christian and Islamic religious beliefs (see discussion in chapter three) then these themes often came to assume a central

role in the dream theories of this culture. For example, in both the Christian and the Islamic tradition, a clear distinction is made between Divine and diabolical dreams. In instances where a central role was assigned to ancestors, such as in the majority of African cultures (see chapter three), we find that dreams are often seen as a channel of communication between the ancestors and the dreamer, and so on.

Each person, and in turn each group of individuals, had to draw upon the religious, mythological, and cultural discourses that were prevalent at that time and location, in order to formulate and construct their own beliefs about dreams (Freedman & Combs, 1994: 32). These conceptions in turn, governed the dream related practices individuals engaged in. These conceptions were also rarely questioned or challenged, but mostly accepted on the basis of tradition and cultural or religious authority, a situation that was further reinforced by the common tendency in pre-modern cultures to crave absolute and relatively static truth (Von Grunebaum, 1966: 5). In this way the cultural narratives influenced the individuals of that culture to ascribe meaning to specific life and dream events and to treat others as relatively meaningless (Freedman & Combs, 1994: 32). Some of the most prominent religious and social conceptions to be found in pre-modern cultures include the belief that the universe, and with it, the individual life are centred on God or on fate, that ultimate reality is transcendental and that this worldly reality is its sign or symbol, and that no clearly perceived dividing line between the natural and the supernatural, and the possible and the impossible existed (Von Grunebaum, 1966: 5-6). Based on such beliefs, pre-modern dream discourses often interpreted dreams as representing either objective, non-psychological “outside” reality, or as fulfilling the function of a means of communication between the dreamer and some transcendental power or entity (Von Grunebaum, 1966: 6).

From an overview of the dream related discourses and practices presented in chapter three, it appears that pre-modern dream related knowledge was not

accumulated in any systematic manner, but was instead mostly generated by intuitive, inspirational, and observational means, as well as by inference and expansion upon existing cultural and religious conceptions. The dream discourses of pre-modern cultures appear to be reflections and natural extensions of the worldviews espoused by these civilizations (Von Grunebaum, 1966: 4-7). As is suggested by the literature review, it seems that few, if any attempts seem to have been made to test or verify the assumptions that were held about dreams in any systematic manner. However, assumptions and techniques were often refined in the light of informal observation and personal experience. The knowledge gained in this manner was then transmitted to subsequent generations, which led to the evolution of dream related discourses over time.

Furthermore it can be observed that changes in religious, cultural, or mythological conceptions were often mirrored in changed conceptions about dreams. For example, as traditional African black individuals were exposed to the influences of Christianity, their dream beliefs and practices underwent certain changes which reflected this influence (Mbiti, 1997: 513).

An overview of available literature on dream discourses and practices which is reflected in chapter three led the researcher to conclude that the general acceptability and “truthfulness” of a given dream theory was not determined by any requirements of scientificity, but by the degree to which the ideas espoused by the dream theory were in accord with general cultural, religious, traditional, and societal beliefs. For example, in cultures where the emphasis falls on the group and the collective as opposed to the individual, we rarely find any attempts at viewing dreams in any manner which could be considered psychological, and dreams are often interpreted in terms of collective norms or in terms of objective and non-psychological facts and conditions (Von Grunebaum, 1966: 6). This is the case with several African discourses on dreaming, as is discussed in chapter three. For the African to consider his

dreams as premonitions, these dreams must consist of images that correspond to those images that are basic to his waking civilization and there must exist a system of easy translation from collective to individual representations (Bastide, 1966: 200).

In contrast to this, a much more personal, psychological view of dreams is generally assumed in cultural and religious contexts that emphasises individuality, such as Western civilization. Despite the advance of science and its proclaimed objectivity, the researcher wishes to argue that such cultural influences and values are even central to the theories of Freud, Jung and Boss. All these dream theories focus on the individual and adopt the assumption that dream contents mostly reflect internal or external psychological processes or events that are directly related to the dreamer (see discussion in chapter three). This strong focus on the individual as opposed to the cultural or the collective seems to be a reflection of the general value placed upon the individual in Western culture. This contention lends further support to the idea that any claims of value free science should be seriously questioned.

In summary it can therefore be suggested that in a pre-modern context dream related discourses and practices were dominated by various religious, cultural, and mythological conceptions and ideas. In chapter three, many of these discourses and views will be examined in greater depth.

2.4.2. Dream related discourses and practices in a modern and scientific context

Following the emergence of positivism and the modernistic era, a radically new approach to the accumulation and systematization of knowledge developed. The scientific method was adopted and new standards for the acquisition of knowledge were set. Theoretical or scientific knowledge could be distinguished from pre-theoretical knowledge in that the former is the product of rigorous scientific procedures, consisting of scientific judgements and information

knowledge in the form of concepts, propositions, statements and conclusions (Van der Walt, 2002: 11). In the modernist approach, knowledge is regarded as the conceptual scaffolding and the foundation for subsequent knowledge production (Van der Walt, 2002: 13).

Von Grunebaum (1966: 5) claims that most dream theories that were formulated from the time of Descartes onward can generally be considered as modern theories. As such, the dream theories of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Medard Boss, as well as the bio-psychological dream discourse can be considered to represent modern dream theories (see chapter three for an in-depth discussion of these theories).

Modernism is characterized by the pervasive belief that by using empirical methods, and most particularly the controlled experiment, one could derive objective truths about the nature of any subject matter and the causal networks in which it is embedded. Derivative of this assumption is the belief that as empirical methods are applied to a science such as psychology, we will learn increasingly about its fundamental character. As such, false beliefs can be abandoned, and we move toward the establishment of reliable, value-neutral truths about various segments of the objective world (Gergen, 1997: 20).

With the rise of the scientific method and the discipline of psychology, the process of knowing and discovery relating to dreams increasingly fell under the domain of modernist science, as attempts were made to adopt a scientific approach to the understanding and study of dreams.

In this regard, based upon the literature study reflected in chapter three, two general streams of thought can be discerned. For the purposes of the present discussion, these will be termed the bio-psychological and the psychological approaches.

The former approach (which is discussed in detail in chapter three) was the result of rigorous application of the scientific method in an attempt to study the phenomenon of dreaming in sleep laboratories. In this approach, all preconceived notions of dreams having any deeper significance were cast aside. Dream phenomena were reduced to measurable physiological and neurological indicators, and from such studies, theories about the nature of dreaming emerged. In these theories one finds ample evidence of the reductionist tendencies common to many modernist approaches in that dreams came to be regarded as biological and neurological oddities that had no deeper meaning. At most, dreams were seen to serve some necessary neurological function, and at worst, represented a nonsensical enigma. From this perspective, there was no need to interpret dreams as they were seen to lack any coherent deeper meaning. (See chapter three for an in depth discussion of this approach.)

However, yet another parallel, and more influential stream of modernist inquiry developed with the rise of the discipline of psychology. Especially important in this regard was the publication in 1900 of Sigmund Freud's seminal work, *The interpretation of dreams*. This gave rise to a new discourse (that of depth psychology) that sought to explain the phenomenon of dreaming from an alternative perspective and lead to the creation of new methods for working with dreams.

Carl Jung (1933, 1974) expanded and modified Freud's approach to dream analysis in subsequent years. The analysis of dreams became a central facet of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. Various other approaches to dream analysis developed, most notably the *Dasein* / phenomenological approach of Medard Boss (1977).

Together, these three researchers are regarded as the architects of modern dream work (Delaney, 1998: 7). In fact, Gayle Delaney, one of the foremost contemporary dream scholars, states that if one has a good understanding of the

work of Freud, Jung and Boss, it should be possible to make sense of any modern interpretive method (1998: 65).

Few radically new approaches to dream analysis have been developed in the last few decades, although the initial theories proposed by Freud, Jung and Boss have been refined, modified, and added to by modern dream researchers such as Arnold Mindell (1982), Stanley Krippner and Joseph Dillard (1988), Jayne Gackenbach and Jane Bosveld, (1989), Tony Crisp (1994), and Gayle Delaney, (1997, 1998). In terms of the social-constructivist perspective, the theories of Freud, Jung and Boss can therefore be considered as master discourses.

In Western culture there was (and to a great extent still is) a tradition that privileges the knowledge derived from the scientific method over those derived through other means. The results of this are far reaching in that most non-scientific knowledge are either marginalized or disqualified with regard to their legitimacy. This imbues the scientific discourse with an inordinate amount of power whilst simultaneously disempowering alternative discourses that do not comply with the dictates of the scientific method. In this regard the French philosopher Michel Foucault (1980) argued that society tends to create master narratives or discourses about specific topics that seek to explain these issues, and which in turn also govern the practices people engage in in relation to such issues. These master narratives then come to dominate the manner in which a certain issue is viewed and thought about. All other narratives or discourses that are not compatible with the master narrative, tend to be marginalized and disqualified, and therefore they are mostly lost from mainstream awareness. White and Epston, (1990: 23) commenting on the ideas of Foucault, describe the process as follows:

“...it is the isolation of specific knowledges from the discontinuous knowledges that circulate around them that invests their discourses with the effect of power.

This isolation is essentially achieved by the development of ‘objective reality’ discourses that qualify these knowledges for a place in the hierarchy of scientific knowledges.”

Rosen (1996: 39) echoes these ideas when he states that master narratives tend to suppress or silence other voices, while privileging their own.

It is argued that in the academic context, the dream theories of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and to a somewhat lesser extent, Medard Boss seem to have evolved into master narratives that have generally been accorded a degree of “objective truth” status, even if only among their followers. As was stated in chapter one, these master discourses seem to have influenced and conditioned the majority of dream related research (Delaney, 1998: 65). In turn, this might possibly have led to the marginalization or disregard of many current dream related discourses and beliefs which diverge significantly from the central tenets of these master discourses. The apparently scant scientific interest and research with regard to current, local South-African dream related discourses, beliefs, and practices seems to support this view. These contentions are also supported by Moore (1982: 72) who states that our understanding of most social and psychological phenomena (including dreams) came to be dominated by scientific and psychological thought, with a subsequent marginalisation and loss of local, non-scientific dream related discourses and practices. Hall (1997: 4766) further elaborates upon this idea when he says that in spite of there being a wealth of historical, anthropological and psychological literature on the many types of dreams and dreaming, there has been scant research on what people think and believe about dreams. Put quite simply, the dominance of the master discourses on dreams appear to have contributed to the present situation in which we know very little about the dream related discourses and practices of the proverbial “man in the street.”

It therefore appears that the knowledge and understanding about dreams that were derived through the application of scientific procedures were elevated and accorded a high degree of credibility, whereas most knowledge that derived from other sources, such as intuition, mystical revelation, informal observation and experience, religious conceptions and the like (as is the case with most pre-modern dream discourses) were relegated to the sidelines as being unscientific and therefore less valid. Due to modernist insistence on the scientific acquisition and verification of knowledge in order for it to be accorded a truth status, most of what can generally be referred to as pre-scientific dream related discourses and their related practices might therefore have been disregarded and rejected as being untested and therefore unscientific. As such, many pre-modern dream discourses and their relics appear to have been relegated to be confined in museums and in tomes of anthropological and historical literature. Whereas anthropological, historical, and religious research has focused upon the dream related discourses and practices held by different cultures and religious groups at various times, very little research has been dedicated towards studying contemporary local dream related discourses. Currently, we therefore have only a very limited inkling of the nature of such discourses (Hall, 1997: 4766).

The dictates of the scientific method therefore became the criterion against which various discourses and theories were evaluated with regard to their value and supposed truthfulness.

In addition to potentially marginalizing current dream beliefs and practices, it also appears likely that these master discourses might exert a significant influence on the dream beliefs and discourses of the proverbial man in the street. This possibility is emphasised by Freedman and Combs (1994: 32) who state that cultural discourses determine the shape of our individual narratives, and that people make sense of their lives (and the phenomena in it, such as dreams) both through the cultural narratives or discourses they are born into, as well as the personal narratives they construct in relation to the cultural

narratives and discourses. The intention of the present study is to address these issues by exploring the extent to which this might indeed be the case, or not.

2.4.3. Dream related discourses and practices in a postmodern context

Due to the perceived limitations of the modernist approach, it has attracted a lot of criticism. As was discussed earlier, a growing number of individuals and groups started to question the basic premises of the modernist approach, and an alternative way of perceiving and approaching reality coalesced out of these inquiries and reflections, an approach loosely referred to as postmodern (Van der Walt, 2002: 29-34).

Following Rorty (1990: 362) the researcher believes that one of the utilities of the postmodern approach is that it considers the descriptions of phenomena we find in one of the natural sciences as on a par with the various alternative descriptions offered by poets, novelists, sculptors, anthropologists, and mystics. The researcher wishes to expand somewhat on this idea in stating that this perspective would consider the dream related beliefs and practices of the proverbial “man in the street” as valid alternative perspectives on the subject.

The postmodern and social-constructivist approaches call for an alternative way of understanding and studying dream related beliefs and practices.

However, in a survey of existing literature on the subject, the researcher found very few references to any dream related studies that were executed from a predominantly postmodern approach. Although the postmodern approach has already been applied to many fields, such as art, literature, psychology, history, and many others, it appears from a review of existing literature and research on the subject, that the study and understanding of dream related discourses and practices from this perspective is generally still in the beginning stages. As such, this represents, at least to a great degree, uncharted territory. In this section the researcher will therefore seek to reflect on the implications of the

general premises of the postmodern approach for an alternative approach to the understanding and studying of dream related beliefs, discourses, and practices.

The postmodern, and more specifically the social constructivist approach rejects the notion of objective or singular truths, and occupies itself with the exploration of alternative discourses (Monk *et al.*, 1996: 40). From this perspective, no dream related theory can therefore make any claims of reflecting any final truths on the matter. Conversely, no approach can be rejected outright as nonsensical and totally lacking in validity. This opens the door to a radically different approach to the study of dreams in which all existing dream related discourses and practices, including scientific and psychological, as well as local, cultural, religious and generally prescientific dream discourses and practices become valid objects of scientific inquiry, a point that is echoed by Rorty (1990: 362). This is seen clearly in the fact that the postmodern and social-constructivist approaches are concerned especially with the resurrection and uncovering of previously marginalized discourses (Foucault, 1980; White & Epston, 1990: 25-27). This theme ties in very strongly to the aim of the present study, which seeks to approach the study of dream related beliefs and practices from a postmodern, social constructivist perspective in an attempt to uncover and resurrect discourses and practices which might otherwise have been marginalized or have gone unnoticed by modernist approaches.

It is not the intention in this work to debunk any modernist position on dreams, but merely to challenge some of the limitations which might occur in these positions. Following White and Epston (1990: 77) and Gergen (1985: 266) the researcher believes that the appropriateness of applying the modernist, or logico-scientific mode of thought and the production of scientific theories in the domain of the human sciences, should be seriously questioned and challenged.

However the researcher also disagrees with the implied complete disqualification of the modernist, or logico-scientific mode of thinking in the context of the social sciences. A social-constructivistic approach would have us assign value to both approaches. Conversely, it would also argue against elevating one position totally over the other (Freedman & Combs, 1994: 21). As the emphasis in the study of dream related beliefs and practices in the past has been on the modernist or logico-scientific mode of thinking and research, the goal of this work is to address this gap by approaching the current topic from a postmodern, social constructivist mode of thought. The intention is not to disqualify or debunk any other approaches, merely to address an area that has heretofore been underrepresented.

At this point a special mention needs to be made with regard to psychoanalysis, which forms the foundation for two of the most influential current dream theories, namely that of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. A postmodern approach would challenge the theoretical fundamentalism so often evinced by the proponents of these theories (Freedman & Combs, 1994: 21). From a postmodern perspective, concepts such as the id, ego, superego, unconscious, drives, archetypes, and defenses which have been reified by their proponents and projected into the outer world where they are intended to be accepted as objective truths about human nature (Rosen, 1996: 21), are seriously questioned. In fact, these practices led Bruner (cited in Rosen, 1996: 21) to personify psychoanalysis as the “essentialist sinner.” While the researcher does not share this extremely negative view about psychoanalysis, he does agree that the basic premises underlying psychoanalytical and other dream theories need to be challenged and deconstructed in order to reveal their underlying bias and socially constructed origins.

The researcher has no intention of disqualifying or debunking any psychoanalytic dream discourses, but merely to challenge their position of authoritative truth. In a postmodern approach, concepts such as the id, ego and superego might still prove to be useful metaphors in describing and

understanding phenomena, yet in this approach these concepts are considered to be social constructions that do not necessarily reflect any independently existing objective external reality.

As such, this study has not been approached from the perspective of any particular dream theory. From a theoretical point of view, the intent of this study was to adopt an ‘insider’ perspective, which allowed the research subjects to give an account of their own realities in this regard which have not been subject to interpretation through the lens of an existing dream theory. Instead, the primary aim of this study was to give voice to these potentially marginalized discourses and to collect, describe, and report these discourses. These discourses have also been examined for the ways in which they might reflect, or have been influenced by existing cultural and religious discourses on the matter. It is important to note that this approach should not be taken as an attempt at neutral or objective science, but merely as an attempt to view, describe, and study dream related discourses from a broad sociological and social constructivist point of view that is detached from a specific adherence to any major dream related theories.

This has direct implications for the choice and utilization of the research design and methodology of the present study, which will be discussed in chapter four.

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter examined the most important assumptions and precepts underlying the postmodern, and more specifically the social constructivist approaches, which constitute the chosen epistemological and theoretical framework of the study. This discussion served to furnish the theoretical basis for the research design and methodology that was followed in the study.

Following this, differing epistemological and theoretical approaches to the study and understanding of dreams have been examined, with specific

reference to pre-modern, modern, and postmodern dream discourses, beliefs, and practices.

The next chapter examines various specific religious, cultural, and psychological dream discourses and practices.

CHAPTER 3: DREAMS

3.1. Introduction

This chapter serves to provide an overview of the most important dream related discourses, theories, and practices that have been prominent in different historical, religious, scientific, social, and cultural contexts.

The chapter will commence with a discussion of the dream related discourses and practices found among various diverse cultural and religious groups, and from there will progress to a discussion of the dream theories of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and Medard Boss, who can be considered to be the main architects of modern dream interpretation (Delaney, 1998: 7). As such these theories will be examined in great depth.

This will be followed by an examination of contemporary popular discourses on dreams as reflected through the media and popular psychological literature on the subject.

It is beyond the scope of the present study to present a comprehensive and fully inclusive study of all the diverse cultural, social, religious, and psychological approaches to dreams due to the complexity of many of these discourses, as well as the vast amount of anthropological, psychological, historical and other research which has been executed on the subject of dreams (Hall, 1997: 4766). Consequently, the aim of the present discussion is to provide a general overview of the most influential cultural, social, religious and psychological dream related discourses and practices.

This will serve as an essential backdrop against which the dream related discourses and practices, as revealed through the qualitative interviews, can be examined and understood. It should be mentioned clearly that these dream related theories will not be utilized as a lens to interpret the findings, but merely as a source of potential insight into the discourses that might potentially

underlie the respondents' personal discourses, beliefs, and practices. The present chapter therefore serves the important function of facilitating the contextualization of the research findings.

3.2. Pre-modern cultural and religious dream related discourses and practices

This section will examine the most important dream related beliefs and practices of several ancient and tribal civilizations and religious groups, most notably, the Native American Plains Indians, the Egyptians, the Jewish and Hindu cultures, the Greeks and Romans as well as Christian dream traditions. As half of the respondents selected for the study are from African cultures, special attention will also be given to an examination of traditional African dream related discourses and practices.

Such an overview is important as aspects of modern dream theory have been strongly influenced by the ideas held by these civilizations and religious groups, as will be discussed later. In many cases dream theories are tied to the sacred writings of the religions espoused by various cultures, and as such have survived into the present day along with the religious teachings where they continue to guide people's thinking about dreams. In social constructivist terms it could be said that these ideas constitute master discourses that inform people's personal constructions about the value and use of dreams.

3.2.1. Dream traditions among the Plains Indians

Unfortunately, comprehensive research on the dreams of Native American Plains Indians are sadly lacking. Irwin (2001: 95) supports this when she says that to date, few single works have been dedicated exclusively to the subject of Native American dreams and visions. The dream ethnography is tucked into paragraphs and short citations often as an aside or as a peripheral concern of

the ethnographers. Another problem encountered in attempting to study the dream of contemporary Plains Indians is the fact that dreams are considered very sensitive and sacred issues, and as such, most Plains Indians are very reluctant to share their dreams even within a circle of relatives, much less with Westerners who might be conducting research on the matter. This secrecy about dreams also existed historically, in that dreams were rarely recited in public or in private, as doing so was believed to losing the power of the dream.

However, despite these obstacles, several historical documents exist that, when combined with information gleaned through oral traditions, provide a good overview of the nature and importance of dreams amongst the Plains Indians. From this it is clear that dreams played an extremely important role for the Plains Indians, both culturally and spiritually (Eggan, 1966: 237). In fact, the importance attached to the dream is indicated by the Hopi term for it, *dimoki*, which is translated to mean “the staff of life” (Eggan, 1966: 242). Perhaps the most important function of dreams in these cultures is tied to the practice of the vision quest.

The tradition of *hambleyapi* or crying for a dream or vision, predates even the use of the sacred pipe and is the centre of Plains Indian spirituality (Irwin, 2001: 93). In this practice, young men at puberty would isolate themselves from the rest of the tribe by going off into the wilderness after observing rituals of purification and preparation. During this time they would fast, sleep in a special place referred to as a medicine wheel (Linn, 1996: 52), and pray for a dream or vision that would reveal for them their role in the tribe (Irving-Hallowell, 1966: 282; Delaney, 1998: 12). This emphasis on dreams and visions acquired either spontaneously or via a vision quest is one of the central ----- and unifying factors among the many Native American religious traditions (Delaney, 1998: 12; Irwin, 2001: 93). Due to the great importance attached to such visions and dreams, as attested to in the earliest historical records of these cultures, close attention was given to their contents, enactment, and the ways in

which dreaming contributed to cultural transformation and personal achievement (Irwin, 2001: 93). Such dreams served to validate, through direct personal experience, the existence of other than human persons. It also served to engender, at an early age, self-confidence in meeting the vicissitudes of life. The dream fast was the most crucial experience in a man's life, as it determined a great deal of his destiny as an individual. In the process he also acquired knowledge of the specialized powers that would be of potential benefit to his fellow human beings (Irving-Hallowell, 1966: 289; Linn, 1996: 52).

It is important to note that the Plains Indians did not make any linguistic or practical distinction between the experience of a dream and that of a vision. Neither did they consider it relevant whether the recipient of such a dream or vision was awake or asleep during the reception of such a dream or vision. It was believed that such a dream could come to a person as much during waking hours as during sleep (Irwin, 2001: 93-94; Irving-Hallowell, 1966: 274). At the same time however, dream experiences were not confused with events while awake. Qualitative differences were recognized as well as the fact that the kinds of persons who played the major roles in dreams are not those with whom the individual is most concerned in waking life (Irving-Hallowell, 1966: 274).

The functions of dreams and visions in Native American cultures were strongly tied to their deeply held religious values (Eggan, 1966: 260-263). Dreams were considered to be primary sources of guidance, and also served to provide affirmation of the sacred qualities of the religious world. In addition, it was believed that a person could receive special powers and abilities through such a dream or vision. In these cases, the dreamer would be in a state of altered consciousness (either in sleep or during a vision quest), while receiving a gift of extraordinary ability, usually from a humanlike dream spirit or ancestor or an animal totem, and also usually accompanied by specific directions for actions, dress, and songs. The dream experience would be considered validated

if the person could enact and demonstrate these powers successfully to the other members of the tribe. Dreams were also believed to provide a means for meeting or interacting with ancestors or the recently departed dead (Irwin, 2001: 94; Delaney, 1998: 12; Irving-Hallowell, 1966: 274). Furthermore, dreams were considered by the Hopi Indians to present solutions to problems, and also to reflect the dreamer's personal situation at the time of the dream, as well as his level of cultural integration (Eggan, 1966: 260-263).

Overall, dreams in the Native American culture represented a crucial aspect of social identity, and personal spiritual empowerment. Dreams sanctioned roles of religious leadership, participation in healing rites, ceremonies, dances, warfare expeditions, gender identity, and social activism (Delaney, 1998: 12). These visionary dreams resulted in the ability to perform healings, to acquire special knowledge of herbs, to lead gender specific rites, and to attain the ability to resolve conflict and provide sound leadership in times of crisis (Irwin, 2001: 103; Irving-Hallowell, 1966: 274).

An interesting gender difference amongst Plains Indians is that while men usually sought dreams in a structured vision quest, women did not do so (Delaney, 1998: 12), and their dreams and visions were based on the sudden and spontaneous arising of very intense, vivid, visionary dreams, without the dreamer making any attempt to seek such a vision. However, a pervasive pattern seems to be that these spontaneous dreams would arise especially under circumstances of stress, loss, isolation, or illness. In this case dreams seemed serve the function of guiding the women through these difficulties (Irwin, 2001: 95-96).

In the dream related discourses and practices of the Plains Indians we find several features which generally tend to be common characteristics of the dream beliefs and practices of primal societies. The Plains Indians, like most other primal cultures believed that in dreams one enters another real world, a

world of power and spirit. In this world one could call upon and meet elders, matriarchs or patriarchs, as well as deities.

Another common feature of dream related practices in primal cultures is that interpretation of dreams rested primarily with tribal elders, shamans or priests (Delaney, 1998: 12).

Remnants of Native American dream beliefs and practices can still be found today in that many Westerners hang circular webs called dream catchers above their beds in a half-serious attempt to catch nightmares before they get to the dreamer. Observation of esoteric shops in many of the major shopping malls in South-Africa readily reveals the popularity of such dream catchers in this country. This tradition has its origin in the Native American dream tradition (Delaney, 1998: 29). Furthermore, there seems to be a resurgence in interest in Native American traditions, philosophies, and practices as is evinced by the significant number of contemporary popular books on the subject such as those by Linn (1996) who is partially of Native American descent herself, and Ted Andrews (1999). Both authors discuss several dream related beliefs and practices that are informed by the Native American approach.

Thus, although the Native American culture appears to be historically and geographically remote from South-Africa, its potential influence on local dream related beliefs and practices cannot be discounted.

3.2.2. Egyptian dream discourses and practices

The oldest surviving dream book in existence was found in Egypt, near Thebes. It is a hieratic papyrus written around 1350 BC, but is believed by scholars to be a copy of one written 2000 BC. It is called the Chester Beatty papyrus, named after the man who donated it to the British Museum (Husser, 1999: 65; Delaney, 1998: 14). As such, a brief look at the contents of this Papyrus will serve as a good starting point to the discussion of Egyptian dream beliefs and practices.

The Beatty papyrus lists images and gives fixed interpretations based on contraries (the interpretation of a dream image as meaning its opposite), verbal and visual puns, and on cultural associations with these images (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 34; Delaney, 1998: 14).

The following brief extract from the Chester Beatty papyrus (pages 5 and 7) will serve to provide an idea of the outline, structure, and style of the document:

“If a man sees himself in a dream...

sitting in an orchard in the sun:	good; it means pleasure
dislodging a wall:	good; it means absolution from all ills
(eating) excrement:	good; eating his possessions in his house...
eating crocodile (flesh):	good; (acting as) an official among his people...
eating notched sycamore figs:	bad; it means pangs
drinking warm beer:	bad; it means suffering will come upon him”

(Husser, 1999: 66).

However, in the discussion of dreams in ancient Egypt it is important to take cognizance of the fact that, although the ancient Egyptian civilization lasted 3500 years, not a single mention of dreams has survived up until Egypt’s first intermediate period (2150-2055 B.C.) (Szpakowska, 2001: 30).

The first inklings of the way in which the Egyptians viewed dreams were provided by the way in which they referred to dreams by means of the Egyptian writing system of hieroglyphics. The concept of dreaming was referred to by a combination of two terms, *qed* and *resut*. *Qed* is derived from the word “sleep.” When this sign was followed by the word *bed*, it meant sleep, but when it was followed by the sign *resut*, it meant dream. *Resut* means awakening or seeing (Szpakowska, 2001: 31), to keep watch, be awake (Husser, 1999: 59), and is

denoted by an image of an open eye. Egyptian words were followed by a determinative at the end, which indicated the semantic category of the word. A study of hieroglyphics revealed that Egyptians did not have a verb for dreaming, only a noun (Szpakowska, 2001: 31).

From all this it appears that a dream was seen as an object of a verb of visual perception – it was something seen, not done. It was not an event arising from within the dreamer or an activity performed by an individual; rather it had an objective existence outside the will of the passive dreamer (Szpakowska, 2001: 31). It also appears from the above that dreams were seen more as a kind of awakening than an unconscious process (Husser, 1999: 59). Yet this was no ordinary waking state. In fact the sleeper was often associated with the dead and with the inhabitants of the netherworlds. When, each night the sleeper awakens into the dream world, he enacts the awakening of the dead into the world beyond (Husser, 1999: 60).

Yet this process also held many perils for the dreamer who might encounter the demons and dark forces of the uncreated world of the night. To counteract this, magical formulae or representations of the evil spirits to be warded off were often inscribed on the bases of headrests; or magical formulae might be recited by the dreamer upon awakening with the intent of freeing himself from any evil influences he might have encountered while dreaming (Delaney, 1998: 14).

One of the most famous of these incantations come from the final section of the Chester Beatty papyrus, and takes the form of a dialogue between the goddess Isis and her son Horus (who is regarded as the prototype of every dreamer) in which the latter asks the goddess to purify his dreams of any ill effects caused by Seth (Husser, 1999: 60).

Some of the oldest surviving references to dreams in the Egyptian culture can be found in texts known as “letters to the dead.” These letters, dating predominantly from the first intermediate period (2150-2055 B.C.), were written to a deceased relative or acquaintance, usually requesting some sort of favour on behalf of the living individual, and then left in the tomb of the

addressee. The contact between the living person and the deceased would then hopefully take place within a dream. Thus, the dream in these texts functioned as a sort of liminal zone, a transparent area between the walls of two worlds that allowed beings in separate spheres to see each other (Szpakowska, 2001: 30-31).

Yet although the Egyptians saw the netherworld as being inhabited both by the dead and by the gods, the latter would not appear in dreams until centuries later, in a period known as the New Kingdom (1570 – 1069 B.C.). During this time, fundamental changes occurred in the Egyptian worldview, and these were reflected in their perception of dreams. The New Kingdom Pharaohs introduced dreams into their royal biographies as a means of access not to the dead, but to the gods. At this time, Pharaohs also wanted to make it clear that the gods communicated directly only with them, within the private milieu of dreams. These so called royal dreams can generally be classified as being fairly typical message dreams and most of these dreams express one of three themes: the announcement of victory (such as the dreams of Amenophis II and Ptolemy IV); a request to look after a sanctuary or statue (e.g. Thutmosis IV and Sesostris I); and the promise of kingship (as is exemplified in the dreams of Thutmosis IV and Tantamanati) (Husser, 1999: 61).

A few centuries later, however, this exclusive royal prerogative would change as the non-royal elite were also allowed to have their dreams interpreted and recorded (Szpakowska, 2001: 32-33).

The principles according to which such everyday dreams were interpreted were quite varied and not always identifiable. However, what is clearly recognizable in this regard is the association of ideas, often based on very fanciful etymologies, on assonance or paronomasia, as well as the idea of interpreting by contraries (e.g. if you dream of death you will have a long life) and associations (Husser, 1999: 68; Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 34). The

symbolic value of objects and beings seen in dreams also occupied an important role in dream interpretation. Unfortunately it is hard to ascertain exactly how such symbolic interpretations were carried out as the references to it were varied, and might have been mythological, social, or psychological, and also as the principles that can be discerned were not applied systematically (Husser, 1999: 68).

A study of the Chester Beatty papyrus also reveals that dream images were often interpreted by means of their opposites, a conclusion supported by Melbourne and Hearne (1999: 21). For example, in the extract of this document given at the start of this section, eating excrement is considered a good omen whereas drinking warm beer was considered a bad omen. From the papyrus it also appears that interpretations were generally simple, and designated only as good or bad.

From what is known, dreams and their interpretation were highly valued in ancient Egypt (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 21) and dream interpreters in this country were well educated and of high status. They were special temple priests called Masters of the Secret things, or Scribes of the double house of life or Learned ones of the Magic library (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 35). Husser (1999: 65) supports this when she states that dream interpretation was the business of specialists in sacred and religious writings, who were specially appointed for the task of dream interpretation and known as *hery-heb hery tep*, which, translated, means “he who bears the ritual and is at the head.” These priest readers were members of the House of Life which transmitted, taught, and cultivated all the sciences that were necessary for the life of the sovereign and the gods, such as theology, ceremony, astronomy, medicine and magic. These priests and specialists were in charge of collections of papyri (similar to modern libraries) containing knowledge about omens and dream images (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 21; Delaney, 1998: 24).

Although these arrangements might appear strange to the average modern individual, the researcher can't help but note the great similarity this bears to present day psychologists who study at institutions known as universities and acquire tomes of modern papyri (books) in order to become "keepers of the sacred knowledge of dream interpretation."

Evidence of the use and value of dream interpretation to the ancient Egyptians exists to this day in modern translations of the Christian Bible, where the well known story of Joseph interpreting the Pharaoh's dream is recounted in great detail. The great rewards bestowed upon Joseph for this service seems to reflect the high esteem in which a person who could interpret dreams was held.

The Egyptian god of dreams was called Serapis, and great temples were built at Thebes and Memphis to honour this god and his function (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 21). This also indicates the revered status that dreams had in ancient Egypt.

The Egyptian god Bes was also believed to preside over dreams in that he was seen to protect sleepers against the demons of the night and send them pleasant or good dreams. People often made appeals to Bes in the form of rituals and magic spells (Delaney, 1998: 15).

Egyptians were also known to practice a form of dream incubation (Delaney, 1998: 16; Husser, 1999: 69-70; Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 21). Incubation is a term historically used to describe a variety of practices and rituals carried out before sleep which were aimed at causing a person to dream about a particular topic, mostly about the solution to some type of problem in the dreamer's waking life. Often this solution was seen to be given by the god Serapis (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 21; Delaney, 1998: 16) or some other deity (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 35).

From this discussion it seems fairly clear that in ancient Egypt, dreams and their interpretation and uses were seen as belonging primarily to the domain of magic and of the gods. Dreams were seen as omens from the spirit world and as the recall of real events on a spiritual plane (Delaney, 1998: 15; Husser, 1999: 60). The divinatory function of dreams was assigned a far lesser role (Husser, 1999: 59). As dreams was seen to be magical in nature, not everyone could interpret dreams, and the interpretation of dreams was relegated to a selected few (which one could perhaps compare to present day psychologists).

Many of the Egyptian attitudes to dreams were passed on to later civilizations and greatly influenced the way these civilizations thought about dreams. The Greeks especially, borrowed heavily from the Egyptians and took over many of their gods, magic learning, medicine and dream lore (Delaney, 1998: 16). The following section will examine Greek dream beliefs and practices in greater detail.

3.2.3. Greek dream discourses and practices

The Greeks took what they considered to be the best of the Egyptian dream heritage, and also adopted whatever ideas and practices which were found to be of value from their associations through trade and conquest (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 38; Delaney, 1998: 32). However, despite inheriting many of their dream related practices and beliefs from the ancient Egyptians they went far beyond mere imitation, and of all ancient peoples, the Greeks had most to say about dreams. The Greeks as a nation respected their dreams, believing that they were messages from the gods, that they foretold the future, that they are means of curing illnesses, and that they enable one to speak with the dead and witness events taking place at great distances (Delaney, 1998: 32; Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 22). These beliefs were also typical of the neighbouring ancient civilizations, but the Greeks, more consistently than

others, also tried to give a rational account of dreams and a scientific approach to their interpretation (Delaney, 1998: 32).

According to Greek mythology, it was Prometheus who taught human beings the art of interpreting dreams, so that they might discover the intentions of the gods (Delaney, 1998: 33).

Greek literature such as Homer's *Odyssey* and *Illiad* (Husser, 1999: 78), as well as other works by Euripides, Aeschylus and Plutarch are replete with references to dreams and provide clues as to how dreams were viewed at the time. In these texts, dreams are generally seen as direct messages sent by a god, most notably from Zeus, (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 38; Husser, 1999: 79) in the form of a ghost, deity, or divine messenger who discreetly hovers or stands above the head of the dreamer and delivers a message. Often, these dreams serve as predictors of the future and as communications with the gods (Delaney, 1998: 33; Husser, 1999: 78-80). In fact, all the dreams recounted in the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey* are initiated by a divinity, and with the exception of one dream, all of these serve the function of directing a message to the dreamer and are therefore essentially message dreams (Husser, 1999: 79).

In the *Odyssey* it is seen that more importance is accorded the dreamer, her mood and the general atmosphere surrounding the dream, which hints at a growing interest in the psychological dimension of dreams (Husser, 1999: 81). Interestingly, it is clear from Homeric and other literature that even though dreams are sent by the gods, they can nevertheless be fallacious, and, in some cases they can even be a deliberate piece of trickery on the part of the god (Husser, 1999: 81).

A key issue that is also apparent from Homeric literature was to distinguish between divine (true) and demonical (false) dreams. Homer himself stated, based on a Greek pun, that true dreams entered via the gate of horn, whereas false dreams came via the gate of ivory (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 22).

Greek historians such as Herodotus and Xenophon recounted dreams as important turning points in military and political history due to the warnings and predictions they provided to important men at crucial and decisive moments (Delaney, 1998: 33).

Later, the Greeks began limiting their focus on dreams more and more to the problem of healing. Cults specializing in sickness and cure were established, and temples were erected in their honour (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 38). In these temples, an elaborate set of rituals, known as dream incubation, was practiced extensively.

Several incubation temples were erected and dedicated to the cults of Serapis, Trophonius, Amphiaraus, Isis, and Asclepius (Delaney, 1998: 33; Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 38) as well as Dodona (Husser, 1999: 78).

The most important of these cults was that of the mythical doctor Asclepius, who was later raised to the status of a God. Elaborate rituals were performed to Asclepius at the more or less 420 shrines dedicated to him (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 22; Delaney, 1998: 33; Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 38).

Typically, an ill person would journey to such a temple, walking for five miles along the *via sacra* (sacred road) which leads to the temple. These temples were renowned for their aesthetic and architectural beauty. Surrounding these temples were multiple stone stellae which contained inscriptions of the famous cures that Asclepius has granted to other pilgrims. The traveller would then take a ritual bath, and perform purification rituals and preliminary sacrifices before going to sleep in a special place in the temple. Hopefully, Asclepius would then appear to the dreamer in the form of a bearded man, a boy, a snake, a dog, or himself, and would touch the sick or injured part of the ill person, who would supposedly be healed by this act. The travellers generally stayed on in the temple until they had such a dream. Once the person had the promised dream, he supposedly woke up healed, paid fees to the priest and made

offerings of gratitude to Asclepius. In cases where the dream did not result in a direct healing, the dream would be taken to the temple priests for interpretation and the guidance therein would be followed by the individual (Delaney, 1998: 33; Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 38-39; Bührmann, 1978: 109).

Despite the possibility that modern scholars might frown at such an approach to dreams which might easily be labelled as superstitious, many early Greek scientists concurred on the efficacy of such dreams. Two of the most renowned early Greek physicians, Rufus and Galen documented Asclepian cures (Delaney, 1998: 34). Galen, the father of modern medicine, became a healer as a result of a dream in which Asclepius cured him of a fatal illness. Galen used dreams for diagnostic purposes and Asclepius was said to advise him in dreams about therapy and even about operations (Bührmann, 1978: 109).

It could be speculated that these dream rituals might indeed have had a curative effect of some kind through the powerful suggestive effect they induced as well as through the strong sense of expectancy engendered by the whole setting. This phenomenon, known as the placebo effect, is well recognized by modern medical researchers and could furnish an explanation for the purported efficacy of the practice of dream incubation.

The researcher also feels it is noteworthy to point out the similarities between the Greek, Egyptian, and Biblical practice of dream incubation and the Plains Indian vision quest. Both practices involve that the dreamer first purify and isolate him or herself in a sacred location, and then ritually obtain a dream, often from a higher or divine entity, that would bring healing, insight or direction.

The first discussion of dreams from a medical standpoint is attributed to Hippocrates, and titled *On Dreams*. Hippocrates considered dreams a potent diagnostic tool in ascertaining a patient's state of mental and physical health.

Being primarily a physician, Hippocrates' main interest in dreams related to their health and diagnostic related applications, although he also admitted that some dreams might be sent by the gods and augur the future (Delaney, 1998: 34). Dreams which are considered to give warning of illness are referred to as prodromic dreams (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 22), derived from the Greek word *prodromos* which means "running before" (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 40).

In the words of Gayle Delaney (1998: 35): "The fact that Hippocrates recognized that mental illness is not caused by the gods or by evil spirits, and that through an understanding of their imagistic metaphors dreams can indicate the state of health or illness of the mind, is very noteworthy. This marks him as the first, and perhaps the only, writer on the subject to have understood these two important points before Freud, who was not to write on the subject until another twenty-four hundred years had passed."

The Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle were fascinated by dreams and put forth many explanations of their supposed causes and functions. These two philosophers also accepted Hippocrates's teachings about the use of dreams as medical diagnostic tool.

Plato was concerned with how dreams affected people's lives (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 39) and acknowledged that some dreams fulfilled repressed wishes, and encouraged people to attain a high and pure state of mind before sleep in order to have dreams of truth and insight.

Plato saw dreams as irrational, and as such in need of interpretation that applied reason in order to understand their prophetic, diagnostic or revelatory significance (Delaney, 1998: 37). Plato also seems to have adopted a critical stance towards dreams which diverges from the idea of a divine source of dreams when he said that: "In all of us, even in good men, there is a lawless wild beast nature which peers out in sleep" (quoted in Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 22).

Aristotle, in turn, reduced dreams to being mere sensory afterimages of perceptions made in the waking state or by movements of blood in the sensory organs. Furthermore Aristotle believed that dream images are distorted by the dreamer's emotions, full stomach or state of health. He considered prophetic dreams to be mere coincidences, and denied that God sent dreams to man, thereby striking down the theory that the gods were the source of dreams (Ullmann & Zimmerman, 1987: 39; Delaney, 1998: 37). Aristotle's reasoning was that since the gods have complete command of the reasoning process, they would, if they sent dreams, send them only to those who could make use of them, such as wise and rational people. But as he felt that dreams were visited indiscriminately on all people, he concluded that the gods had nothing to do with the occurrence of dreams (Kruger, 1992: 84; Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 40). Aristotle authored three treatises on dreaming, *De somno et vigila*, *De somniis*, and *De divinatione per somnum*, which quickly came to be considered as highly authoritative works on the subject. As such, the Aristotelian view of rejecting the divine origin of dreams as well as associating dreams with physiological and psychological processes influenced the perspectives of many subsequent scholars of dreams, most notably the European Christian views on dreaming (Kruger, 1992: 84).

In rejecting most of the superstition surrounding dreams, Aristotle assumed an extreme reductionist approach and thereby made no attempt to investigate the instructive truths that dreams might offer of an emotional, problem solving or creative nature (Delaney, 1998: 37-38). He did, however acknowledge (as did Hippocrates before him) that dreams might be used by physicians as indicators of an ailment or malfunctioning of the body that has not yet manifested itself externally (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 40).

From this discussion it is clear that Greek conceptions of dreams and the resultant dream related practices they adopted are complex, varied, and often

contradictory. Yet their importance and influence on other cultures, especially the Romans, is unquestionable. The next section will therefore examine Roman dream related discourses and beliefs.

3.2.4. Dream discourses and practices of the Romans

The Roman attitudes and approach to dreaming were largely inherited from those of the Greeks, and covered much the same ground between extreme scepticism on one hand, and superstitiousness on the other (Delaney, 1998: 38).

Both Virgil and Plutarch commented on the value of dream interpretation. Plutarch often included dreams as turning points in his biographies of famous people (Delaney, 1998: 38). It also seems clear that the Romans generally considered dreams to be special communicatory devices capable of providing both current and future information (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 22).

At the time of Julius Caesar it was firmly believed that important events, births, and deaths would be announced by prophetic dreams. In fact the emperor Augustinus took this aspect of dreams so seriously that he made a law that anyone who dreamed about the commonwealth must proclaim it in the marketplace (Delaney, 1998: 38-39).

Amidst the prevailing belief in the predictive and prophetic nature of dreams, the philosopher Cicero adopted a contrary opinion which he expressed in his essay *On Divination*. He insisted that obscure dreams are not at all consistent with the majesty of the gods and that it was foolish to prophecy with a rare coincidence that occasionally makes one dream come true when most never do at all (Delaney, 1998: 39).

According to Cicero, the causes of dreams were imagination and desire. Eventually Cicero came to the conclusion that dreams are not entitled to any credit and respect whatsoever and called for a rejection of dream divination,

saying that such superstitious practices have oppressed the intellectual energies of all men and has betrayed them into endless imbecilities (Delaney, 1998: 40).

About two hundred years after Cicero, Artemidorus of Daldis wrote the most complete and famous dream-interpretation manual to survive from ancient times. Artemidorus was a Greek who travelled widely during the height of the Roman Empire. He devoted his life to the study and interpretation of dreams, and as such, his books were based on a wide reading of past masters, as well as on his extensive personal experience. His five volume book, *Oneirocritica: The interpretation of dreams*, records over 3000 dreams and summarizes Greco-Roman dream theory from the late fifth century B.C. to about 140 A.D. His texts were to become the basis for most comprehensive dream interpretation systems until the time of Freud (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 22; Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 41; Delaney, 1998: 40).

Artemidorus's approach was pragmatic, practical, and naturalistic (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 22; Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 41). Artemidorus was interested only in dreams that predicted the future, and had no interest in what dreams might have had to say about the personality and internal conflicts of the dreamer. In his *Oneirocritica*, Artemidorus clearly defines two types of dreams:

“A dream that has no meaning and predicts nothing, one that is active only while one sleeps and that has arisen from an irrational desire, an extraordinary fear, or from a surfeit or lack of food is called an *enhypnion*. But a dream that operates after sleep and that comes true either for good or for bad is called an *oneiros*...” (Artemidorus, 1975: 184).

Thus, although Artemidorus did concede that certain dreams could be produced by either fear or unfulfilled desire, as well as physiological conditions, he did not regard these dreams as being at all significant, as he focused his attention

and his method of interpretation almost exclusively on discovering the future through dreams.

It is interesting to note that many centuries later Sigmund Freud would revive some of these ideas and adopt the view that almost all dreams result from unfulfilled desires. This will be discussed in more depth in a later section.

In interpreting dreams, Artemidorus worked by a method of analogy. He would enquire about the dreamer's status, profession, state of health, economic circumstances, social customs, beliefs and mood before sleep in order to help him formulate an analogy or metaphoric bridge between the dream images and a prediction of the future. It also helped him to refine the interpretation of a dream according to the special conditions of the dreamer. Artemidorus insisted that without sufficient knowledge of the dreamer's entire context, the interpreter would be unable to draw relevant analogies to the images and actions in the dream (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 22; Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 41; Delaney, 1998: 43). In Artemidorus's (1975: 189) own words: "You should learn local customs and the peculiarities of every place if you are not already acquainted with them. Travelling and extensive reading will provide you with the best information on the subject. For books on dream interpretation are not sufficient in themselves to assist you, but you need other sources of information as well."

Furthermore, Artemidorus (1975: 185) classified dreams into the following two categories by stating that all dreams fall into two groups, referred to as the theorematic and allegorical. Theorematic dreams are those which come true just as they are seen, whereas allegorical dreams are those which disclose their meanings through riddles.

He was also of the opinion that symbols could mean opposite things to different people, although there were some symbols which he considered to be

universal in meaning, such as the act of ploughing being representative of sexual activity (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 22).

In this regard Delaney (1998: 42) states that it was Artemidorus's emphasis on recognizing the metaphoric nature of dream images and of entire dreams, and his willingness to adapt meanings to a dreamer's circumstances that distinguish him from most dream interpreters before (and long after) him.

In fact, based on Artemidorus's sensitivity to context and culture and the variation of meaning within these, it could even be argued that a slight hint of what would today be referred to as postmodern thought emerges in these conceptions!

The influence of Artemidorus can still be detected today in that Sigmund Freud incorporated several of Artemidorus's conceptions into his own theories. In addition, an overview of several modern popular psychological dream books written for the layman also often reveal clear Artemidorian influences. For example Miller (1979: 141) states that: "To dream of seeing many beautiful children is portentous of great prosperity and blessings." Artemidorus (1975: 191) state that dreaming about male children means good luck.

As such, the legacy of dream related theories and practices left by the Romans, and more specifically by Artemidorus can be considered as very significant with regard to (at least some) present day dream related discourses, beliefs and practices.

3.2.5. Jewish dream discourses and practices

The dream theories of the early Jews were in many ways similar to that of the Egyptians, which is not surprising given the fact that the Jews were captives of Egypt (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 36). However, the Jews developed a monotheistic faith centering around their God *Yahweh* which was grounded in a collection of writings known as the Old Testament and the Talmud. This led

to a shift in the way in which dreams were viewed, as now *Yahweh* was seen to be the initiator of all divine and good dreams (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 36). Noegel (2001: 54) elaborates upon this idea when he says that the Jews' monotheistic belief system left little room for any agent other than *Yahweh*, the God of Israel, in the dreaming and interpretative process. As such, many studies of Jewish dream traditions focus on a study of dream references in the Old Testament and the Talmud. However, it should be kept in mind that this process does have certain shortcomings as Noegel, (2001: 54) points out, in that the Old Testament preserves no ritual texts, and all of its dream accounts occur in literature. This makes it difficult to reconstruct any ritual or mantic constructs prevalent at the time.

In the Old Testament, two basic types of dream accounts can be distinguished; namely message dreams and symbolic dreams. Although this classification was first made by Artemidorus of Daldis, it is still commonly accepted among contemporary scholars, although not without criticism (Husser, 1999: 99-100). Noegel (2001: 45) also accepts and uses this classification but points out that it has certain limitations in that not every dream account fits neatly into one of the two categories, and also that considerable overlap exists between the two categories. However, these classifications do provide a useful means of examining and understanding biblical dreams, and as such, it was decided to utilize this framework to discuss dreams in the Hebrew Bible.

Message dreams tend to be direct messages seen to come from God, and their contents were often auditory in nature as opposed to symbolic dreams which were also messages, but these were veiled in more enigmatic and metaphoric images, and as such, were of a generally visual nature (Noegel, 2001: 45; Husser, 1999: 100).

In the Old Testament dreams often take the form of being literal messages from God or His angels (Delaney, 1998: 17; Husser, 1999: 91; Ullman &

Zimmerman, 1987: 36-37), and as such, these dreams generally did not need any specific interpretation as the messages they carried were explicit. Mostly, these messages took the form of divine warnings, orders or promises (Delaney, 1998: 17; Noegel, 2001: 55-57). In other instances, the message was more obscure, and the important role of the interpreter was strongly emphasized, as without him the message would remain enigmatic (Husser, 1999: 92; Noegel, 2001: 54-55).

For example, in Jacob's dream recounted in Genesis 28: 13-15, God appears in his dream, identifies Himself, and promises Jacob that: "The Land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken of."

Implicit in these dream accounts is the assumption that dreams constitute a channel of divine communication. Through dreams God could reach out and make contact with man. From this it is clear that in many instances at least, dreams belonged to the realms of the sacred and the divine. Noegel (2001: 54) support this contention by stating that the Jews saw dreams as divine in origin.

Unlike dreams in the Greek tradition, divine messages were never delivered by an intermediary or divine messenger. The divine nature of the dreams were felt and experienced passively by the dreamer as a special state and by the presence of God himself (Husser, 1999: 101), who made direct contact with His chosen people in order to provide them with guidance (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 36).

Husser (1999: 92) suggests that many message dreams might not have been real dreams at all, but attempts to supply a framework that was both familiar and in which divine interventions were theologically acceptable. Ullman and Zimmerman (1987: 36) take this notion further when they say that dream interpretation was used by the rabbis and sages of the Talmudic period for the purpose of moulding social, religious and political behaviour and thoughts. These contentions are supported by an examination of Old Testament dreams which reveal that in nearly every case the text uses a dream to demonstrate God's creative hand in Israelite history or to bolster and contrast a biblical figure's character and abilities, which are invariably centred within the theological discourse of *Yahweh* and his covenant, and reflect the inabilities of foreign kings and mantic professionals (Noegel, 2001: 56). As such, oneiric accounts in the Old Testament should be regarded with a degree of circumspection.

In addition to the type of dreams which were deemed to be direct messages from God, there are also a few instances of *symbolic dreams* in the Old Testament (Noegel, 2001: 56; Husser, 1999: 99). Most notable among these include Joseph's dream in which the sun, moon and eleven stars all bowed down to him, as well as Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue, and the butler's the baker's and the pharaoh's dreams that were interpreted by Joseph (Delaney, 1998: 18-19; Husser, 1999: 106). Symbolic dreams were also considered to be of divine origin (Husser, 1999: 92).

As these dreams were symbolic, and therefore not as explicit in their message and intent, interpretation of these dreams were required. It is uncertain on what basis such symbolic dreams were interpreted, but Delaney (1998: 19) mentions that these dreams could perhaps have been interpreted on the basis of the Near Eastern and Egyptian dream books and practices. Noegel (2001, 56-57), referring to Joseph's interpretations of the Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker, show

that these dreams were interpreted on the basis of verbal puns and metaphorical correspondences.

What is clear, however, is that almost always the interpretation of such dreams was carried out by a third party rather than by the dreamer (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 37; Husser, 1999: 93). The interpretative skills of such a person were often seen to be rooted in his close relationship with God. As the dream was seen to come from God, it would be logical that it would also be He who would grant the interpretation (Husser, 1999: 92). As such, an individual who was considered to have a close relationship and deep connection to God would be in the best position to discern or be granted the divine meaning of the dream. The Bible consistently portrays foreigners as not having the divine wisdom, like Israelites, to decipher enigmatic dreams (Noegel, 2001: 55). Throughout the Bible there are cautions about selecting and believing an interpreter and warnings against false prophets who made up dreams for their own gain (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 36).

Philo (c. 30 B.C.E. – c. 40 A.D.) was the most important Jewish philosopher of Hellenic Judaism. He was the author of a trilogy on dreams, called *De Somniis*. In this work, Philo (cited in Delaney, 1998: 19) delineates three categories of dreams:

- Those in which God originates the movement and invisibly suggests things obscure to us but patent to Himself.

- Dreams in which our own mind, moving out of itself together with the mind of the universe, seems to be possessed and God-inspired, and so capable of receiving some foretaste and foreknowledge of things to come.

-Dreams that arise whenever the soul in sleep, setting itself in motion and agitation of its own accord, becomes frenzied, and with the prescient power due to such inspiration foretells the future.

Much is also said about dreams in the Talmud, a collection of writings compiled by scholars and Rabbi's between 200 B.C.E. and 300 A.D. The writers of the Talmud express conflicting views and opinions about dreams, ranging from expressions of disdain for dreams to discourses on good and bad dreams and how to make the best of them (Delaney, 1998: 20).

According to the Talmud, there is a part of the soul that travels away from the body in dreams and has experiences that are pictured in dreams. Elsewhere dreams are seen as omens and prognoses of one's illness (Delaney, 1998: 20).

These ideas are to some extent echoed in the Jewish mystical system known as the Kabbalah. Rabbi Laibl Wolf (1999: 37), one of the foremost contemporary scholars of the Kabbalah, explains that when we sleep, we experience a profound dislocation and disintegration of our inner duality (that of the physical and spiritual). We seemingly lose consciousness, and our soul becomes dislocated from the body. Through our dreams we become, albeit imperfectly, conscious of the higher realms and our presence within them.

M. Caquot (cited in Delaney, 1998: 21) classifies Talmudic techniques of dream interpretation into four categories:

- Literal application of a verse in the Bible to the object seen in the dream.
- Application of a verse in the Bible by a play on words.
- A play on words pure and simple.
- Transparent allegory.

Generally seen, dreams were considered to have both an external source, either from God and His angels, or from demons, and an internal source which showed the dreamer what was going on in his heart (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 36).

Fasting and prayer were considered to be very helpful practices in obtaining a dream that is “real” and that will accurately foretell the future, as well as to elicit good dreams and mitigate the influence of bad dreams (Delaney, 1998: 20).

Generally however, although for centuries many Jews probably consulted local dream interpreters who claimed to read the future from dreams, the practice of necromancy was officially frowned upon (Delaney, 1998: 18), most likely because of biblical injunctions against divination (Kruger, 1992: 83).

A very noteworthy point was that dream interpreters were encouraged to take into account the dreamer’s personality, occupation, age, life circumstances and mood at the time of the dream. Apparently thus, many rabbis were well aware of the limitations of using dream books that decoded images in isolation from the context of the entire dream (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 36; Delaney, 1998: 20-21). This awareness of the individualized nature of dreams signals a giant leap in thinking about dreams that is in many ways echoed by the writings of Artemidorus.

As is evident from the above, Jewish dream discourses, beliefs, and practices were varied and often complex, and generally centred around their monotheistic faith which was rooted in the Old Testament. With the coming of Christianity, these ideas were both continued and modified, as will be discussed in the following section.

3.2.6. Christian dream beliefs and practices

The early Christians inherited and continued the Jewish dream beliefs, practices, and traditions of the Old Testament. As such, much of what was discussed under Jewish dream beliefs also pertains to Christian dream interpretation. In both traditions, dreams were considered to be sources of inspiration, insight and prophecy from God (Delaney, 1998: 47). Overall, it can be said that the coming of Christianity did little to alter ancient dream theories, although it did have to reinterpret many of these in the light of Christian philosophy and morality (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 42).

The New Testament contains several references to dreams. Most notable amongst these are the four dreams of Joseph, the dream the three wise men shared warning them not to return to Herod after locating Jesus, the dream of Pilate's wife, and the dreams of the apostle Paul, which told him to change the direction of his missionary plans from Asia to Macedonia and the West (Delaney, 1998: 47-48).

There are also several references in the Bible (Gen. 28: 10-17; 46: 1-4; 1 Sam. 3; 1 Kgs 3: 4-15; Isa. 65: 4; Ps. 3: 6; 4: 6; 17: 5; 63) that are reputed to give evidence of the fact that dream incubation was practiced in Israel in biblical times (Husser, 1999: 91).

Dreams were generally considered to be quite an important phenomenon amongst the major Christian writers and church fathers of the first three centuries A.D, such as Clement, St. John Chrysostom, and Augustine. Virtually all of them believed in the revelatory power of dreams. Dreams were seen to either portray or predict real events, as was reflected in the stories of the lives of several Christian saints and martyrs who had precognitive dreams. In addition, it was believed that one could have meaningful encounters with God and His angels through dreams; that God spoke with mortals in dreams

(Ullmann & Zimmerman, 1987: 42-43; Delaney, 1998: 48). According to both Clement and Augustine, dreams played a central role in revealing the relationship between man and God (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 43).

Augustine's views on dreams were especially influential and many of the most important treatises on dreams written from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, such as Albertus Magnus's *Summa de creaturis*, Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*, Jean de la Rochelle's *Summa de anima* and others were based on his theories (Kruger, 1992: 62).

The influential church father Tertullian, who lived in the early third century made a simple but highly influential classification of dreams. Dreams were divided into two categories, those dreams emanating from God, and those emanating from the Devil and his demons. Thus, although it was strongly believed that God spoke to His people through dreams, one had to be ever vigilant not to fall prey to dreams of the Devil which would tempt one into greater contact with evil. Sexual dreams, especially fell under this category, and were seen to emanate from the Devil (Kruger, 1992: 44-45; Delaney, 1998: 48-49). In this regard the researcher shares the opinion of Delaney (1998: 49) who, in referring to the common notion held by Plato and others that passions denied in waking would always surface in dreams, speculates that the Church's condemnation of most human passions as sinful assured an inexhaustible crop of dreams that would be labelled as demonic by the Church.

In the fifth century, Synesius of Cyrene wrote a book on dreams that was held in high esteem by the Eastern Church. According to Synesius dreams revealed bodily illnesses and cures, they gave man insights and solutions that escape them when awake, and they can also serve as channel through which God could teach man, reveal His truth, and show man the future. He also believed that dreams were the product of the imagination, which he believed to lie halfway between reason and sensory experience (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 43;

Delaney, 1998: 49). Importantly, Synesius stated that the essential nature of dreams is personal, and that they must be understood by the dreamer in terms of his own life. He encouraged people to keep a dream journal and constantly check dreams with experience. His method of interpreting dreams was through finding metaphors and analogies (Delaney, 1998: 50).

Very interestingly, Synesius also believed that myths are based on dreams, and that, as such, a familiarity with mythology would help in the understanding of dreams (Delaney, 1998: 50). Interestingly, fifteen hundred years later Carl Jung would revive this idea and assign a central role to mythology in the interpretation of dreams.

A rather negative view of dreams emerged from the writings of Jerome, a contemporary of Augustine, who was a gifted but troubled church father. After a very intense dream in which he was condemned and tortured for showing a greater interest in the classics of literature as opposed to Biblical literature, his focus changed drastically. He especially warned against false dreams, and the possibility of demonic influence. He associated dreams with witchcraft, and considered any undue attention paid to dreams as superstitious (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 43).

The following centuries were characterized by a stagnation in thinking on dreams as an increasingly negative view on dreams developed.

Care was taken to encourage the belief that dreams were not from God and should therefore be ignored. As the church was seen as the ultimate authority due to it being considered as the keeper of the Word of God, it discouraged any reliance on dreams for divine insight as communication as being unnecessary. Certainly, any dream related experiences or interpretations that fell outside the strict doctrines of the medieval church were looked upon with great suspicion and even condemnation (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 43).

This trend of ignoring dreams was reaffirmed in the late twelfth century by Thomas of Froidmont who stressed the dangers in dreaming and warned strongly against a belief in dreams. He stated that those who placed their faith in dreams showed a lack of faith in God, and that an undue attention focused on dreams threatens to lead us away from God, who should be the rightful object of our attention (Kruger, 1992: 83). This negative view of dreams was further reinforced in the thirteenth century by Thomas Aquinas, who could not reconcile the idea of man having free will with God speaking to man in a dream, thereby disavowing the possibility of any deeper significance to dreams (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 44).

The radical shift from viewing dreams as being (at least in some instances) of Divine origin, and a prime channel of Divine communication to that of seeing dreams as negative, deceptive or even downright evil seems to have had its inception with the reintroduction of Aristotle's major dream treatises, *De somniis*, *De somno et vigila*, and *De divinatione per somnum*. These works reintroduced into European Christian discourse the possibility that dreams were never divine in origin (Kruger, 1992: 84). As thirteenth century considerations of the dream became increasingly involved in Aristotelian thought, it departed significantly from late antique and earlier medieval dream theory (Kruger, 1992: 85).

However, full acceptance of Aristotelian positions was the exception rather than the rule as the denial of divine dreams clashed with biblical and patristic authorities, which did allow for the possibility of divine dreams. As such, most of the important scholars and writers on dreams during the middle ages allowed for exceptions to their general dream theories in conceding that divine dreams can and do occur in some instances. Yet these concessions were usually followed by a warning that as dreams come in so many varieties, it is very difficult for the average dreamer to distinguish between divine and useless dreams, and that the dreamer is best advised to be wary (Kruger, 1992: 84-85).

A generally negative view of dreams prevailed until the end of the middle ages when Martin Luther came upon the scene. He believed dreams could further self-knowledge by showing us our sins. Yet he himself was so upset by his dreams that he prayed that God no longer speak to him through them (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 44).

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that Christian dream related discourses and practices show a great deal of variation, both contemporaneously and across different eras. Traces of Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Jewish conceptions of dreaming can be found in many Christian discourses, and this hybridization resulted in a very complex and often contradictory tangle of Christian dream related discourses and practices.

3.2.7. Hindu dream beliefs and practices

The dreaming state has always been of great interest to the simplest as well as to the most sophisticated people of India (Delaney, 1998: 23). This might be due to the fact that both the Vedas and the Upanishads, which constitute the central body of religious writings in the Hindu philosophy, are replete with references to dreams.

In the Treatise on Dreams in the *Atharva Veda* (1500 BC), long lists of favourable and unfavourable dreams are given (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 22). Generally, images of aggressiveness, power, violence and blood, including amputations were good omens, whereas images of loss of hair, nails and teeth were seen as bad omens. Dreams in which the dreamer was active were generally considered favourable, whereas passivity on the part of the dreamer was not propitious (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 22).

Another common interpretative method reflected in the treatise on dreams is the use of opposites, a technique that requires a dream image to be interpreted as its logical opposite. For example, sorrow could mean happiness, and a man who dreamt that his head, foot or penis was cut off was thought to have had a lucky dream (Delaney, 1998: 24). Interestingly, as will be discussed in a later section, both Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, albeit, in differing ways, considered the interpretation of dreams through their opposites to be very important.

In addition, the Treatise states that only the last dream remembered in the night should be interpreted and that unrecalled dreams have no consequences. The Treatise also prescribes various methods for cancelling the effect of bad-omen dreams. These methods include rites of purification, sacrifice, and gifts to the Brahmans (Delaney, 1998: 24).

For Hindus the highest goal to be sought is Samadhi, a supreme, mystic state of unitary consciousness of direct union with the divine, where the aspirant is free of any illusions, desires, thoughts and images, yet conscious and aware at the same time (Ferrante, 2000: 465; Delaney, 1998: 25). In sleep, a person was seen to occupy the intermediate world that stood between this world and the world beyond (Hume, 1979: 134).

According to Hindu philosophy, as reflected in the Upanishads, there are four states of consciousness:

- The first is the waking state, characterized by the awareness of things external to the body, sensual enjoyment of gross objects, and conviction as to the identity of the physical body.

- The second is the dreaming state in which a person is aware of internal phenomena and enjoys mental impressions. This is an intermediate condition between waking and deep sleep. The mind is now active, though independently

of the sense organs, and is without consciousness of the gross body. In this state man is a purely mental being.

-The third state is that of deep dreamless sleep. In this state a person is entirely unaware of the external world, and also of the internal world. In this state sleep covers up consciousness, and thoughts and knowledge apparently vanish. In this state the person “desires no desires and sees no dream...(and is) in the embrace of the intelligent Soul...Verily, that is his true form in which his desire is satisfied, in which the Soul is his desire, in which he is without desire and without sorrow” (Hume, 1979: 136).

-In the Fourth state one reaches the supreme mystic state of unitary consciousness referred to earlier. This state transcends all others and is the supreme goal of the aspirant (Hume, 1979: 133-139; Delaney, 1998: 25).

From this it can be seen that the dreaming state is in fact considered an integral part of the structure and evolution of human consciousness. The Upanishads teach how one may use dreaming as a stepping stone to recognize the illusory nature of waking and dreaming so that one may attain the supreme fourth state (Hume, 1979: 134-139; Delaney, 1998: 25). In this respect dreams can indicate things with which the subconscious is burdened and from which it has to be freed, such as binding memories, embedded notions, tendencies and habits as well as undesirable seeds from the past which have to be pulled so that these undesirable fruit may no longer recur. These ideas are echoed in the *Brihad-Aranyaka* Upanishad (Hume, 1979: 136) which states that when a person dreams that he is being killed or overpowered by others, or when he dreams that an elephant is tearing him to pieces, or he seems to be falling into a hole – in these circumstances he is imagining through ignorance the very fear which he sees when awake.

Thus, dreams are used as a method of gaining self-knowledge, of becoming aware of the things that might be standing between the aspirant and the attainment of the fourth state of Samadhi.

Although there are many references stating that in dreams the spirit can leave the body and have encounters with other spirits, both alive and dead, other dreams were seen as mental creations, and as memories and reflections of past experiences. The latter types of dreams were often interpreted using metaphor and fixed symbols (Delaney, 1998: 26-27). In commenting on these kinds of dreams, the *Brihad-Aranyaka* Upanishad (Hume, 1979: 134) states that: “There are no chariots there, no spans, no roads. But he (the dreamer) projects from himself chariots, spans, roads...For he is a creator.” Thus, in dreams man was seen to have powers of creation similar to Brahman.

From the above it is clear that dreams and the dream state were considered to be an integral part of human consciousness and intricately linked with the religious and spiritual doctrines of the Hindu culture. As such, dreams were often viewed and interpreted in terms of the role they played in supporting the spiritual growth of the dreamer.

3.2.8. Chinese dream beliefs and practices

Chinese historical documents and literature contain many references to dreams, but very few works are devoted directly to the subject of dreams. However, a review of the literature pertaining to Chinese dream beliefs shows that most of their dream conceptions were tied strongly to Taoist conceptions of reality which were and to some extent still are very prominent in this culture (Ferrante, 2000: 471). A central tenet of Taoism is the relative and illusory nature of existence (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 40), and this affected the way in which the Chinese came to understand dreams. The ancient Chinese were profoundly philosophically engrossed in the paradox of dreams as a separate

existence and pointed out that life itself could be a dream (Cleary, 1998: 78-79; Melbourne & Hearne, 1999:21; Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 40). In this regard the philosopher Chuang-Tzu (350 BC) stated that “while men are dreaming, they do not perceive that it is a dream. Some will even have a dream in a dream and only when they wake will they know it was a dream. And so, when the great awakening comes upon us, shall we know this life to be a great dream. Fools believe themselves to be awake now” (Cleary, 1998: 79; Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 21-22).

Another important source of information about the Chinese approach to dreams is found in the Taoist dream book, the *Lie-Tseu*. This book provides a coherent theory of dreaming, and engages in an in depth examination of the causes of dreams. According to the *Lie-Tseu*, waking wishes, illness and environmentally caused factors can cause or distort dreams. In this approach a lot of emphasis was placed on the value of recognizing the cause of a particular dream, as to do so would supposedly help the individual to recognize a dream’s illusory nature and thereby enable the person to go beyond the dream and perceive a deeper truth that transcends it (Delaney, 1998: 30).

According to general Chinese belief, the superior part of the soul (*hun*) left the body in dreams and was free to meet distant or departed loved ones and holy beings or contact inner, corporeal demons and spirits (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 22). (In this regard Confucius often mentioned seeing and conversing with his mentor, the Duke of Chou, in his dreams.) It was also believed that waking desires and physical conditions such as indigestion could have a marked influence on dreams. For the Chinese the mind and body were inextricably linked and there are no indications that the Chinese ever viewed dreams as a purely psychological phenomenon. In fact, most dreams were viewed as omens and were therefore seen as neither of a psychological nor a physiological nature (Delaney, 1998: 28).

Delaney (1998: 28), commenting on the findings of Michel Strickmann, emphasises that the meaning that the Chinese attributed to dreams was always determined by context, which above all included the social position and function of the interpreter. For example, medical texts suggest primarily psychophysiological interpretations of dreams, whereas religious texts show spiritual interpretations of dream material.

Furthermore, the rights and responsibilities of dream interpretation and management of divinatory practices fell on the high officials in the Chinese court, thus centralizing the authority over dreams (Delaney, 1998: 30).

The ancient Chinese recognized the following six types of dreams:

- ordinary dreams,
- terror dreams,
- dreams based on the day's thoughts,
- dreams of waking, dreams of joy,
- and dreams of fear (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 22).

In the mid-second century A.D., Wang Fu wrote a treatise on dreams, called *Essays by a hidden man*, which identified ten types of dreams (cited in Delaney, 1998: 29-30):

1. Direct dreams
2. Symbolic dreams
3. Concentrated or essential dreams, produced by the dreamer's concentrated sincerity
4. Thought dreams, in which a dreamer recalls his or her waking thoughts
5. Dreams whose meaning varies with the status of the dreamer
6. Dreams produced by the environment
7. Dreams corresponding to the season
8. Antithetical dreams

9. Dreams indicating physical disorders and imbalances
10. Dreams whose meaning varies according to the dreamer's temperament and personal likes and dislikes.

Similarities can be found between these two classifications in that dreams produced by the environment and dreams in which a dreamer recalls his waking thoughts appear to be similar to dreams based on the day's thoughts as defined by the latter classification.

In other ways, the emphases of the two classifications are quite different. Whereas the latter classification seems to focus predominantly on the internal, psychological (emotional and mental) aspects of dreams, the former classification includes these conceptions to some extent, but also expands it to include external, seasonal, environmental, and physiological factors.

The Chinese were also especially concerned with defending themselves against bad dreams and nightmares through the use of superstitious practices. A third B.C tomb in Hupeh details specific spells used to ward off nightmares. Certain methods for expelling evil spirits and counteracting their effects (which include bad dreams) are still practiced today in China. The Chinese have a number of gods who supposedly eat up bad dreams, and representations of these gods were (and still often are) worn as protective talismans against bad dreams (Delaney, 1998: 31).

It can be noted that this practice bears great similarity to the Native American use of dream catchers to ward off nightmares and other negative dreams.

In summary, it appears that Chinese conceptions of dreaming were strongly influenced by their predominant Taoist religion, and as such, great significance was attributed to the phenomenon of dreaming, as the dichotomy between dreaming and waking life were seen to reflect the deeper spiritual duality between earthly life and the spiritual dimension. In addition to this, several classifications describing different types of dreams were developed, and this,

along with the context of the dreamer were considered in the interpretation of most dreams.

3.2.9. Buddhist dream beliefs and practices

Dreams play a very important role in the Buddhist tradition, as is reflected in the frequent references made to dreams in the sacred Buddhist texts of India and Tibet (Young, 2001: 9).

The most famous dream in Buddhism is referred to as the conception dream of Queen Maya, the Buddha's mother. In this dream Maya sees a magnificent white elephant that, by striking her right side with its trunk, is able to enter her womb. Although many versions of the dream has evolved over time, it is one of the earliest images of Buddhist iconography and appears in various important sites in Buddhist history, such as *Sanchi*, *Bharut*, *Sarnath*, *Amaravati*, *Ajanta* and *Gandhara* (Young, 2001: 10).

In general, dreams are believed to be given to the individual by some external agency rather than being created by the dreamer himself. This external agency can take any form, ranging from the divine to the demonic. As such, dreams were considered to be a major way in which to communicate with deities (Young, 2001: 11-13).

Buddhists also often used rituals for the purpose of dream incubation. In her research Young (2001: 12) found that there were various ritual means for Buddhists to have a dream, such as performing a specific ritual, going to sleep in a sacred place, praying for a dream, or simply concentrating the mind on having a dream before going to sleep.

Dreams in this tradition were also deemed of especial importance with regard to their capacity to foretell the future (Young, 2001: 13).

In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition it is believed that when an individual dreams he has a highly mobile “mental body” referred to as the dream body in which the dreamer undergoes all the experiences of dream life (Rinpoche, 1998: 107).

According to the tenets of Tibetan Buddhism there is a very close correspondence between the subtle states of consciousness we move through when we fall asleep and dream and the process of dying, which the Tibetan Buddhists divided up in stages known as *bardos*. As such, how one’s mind is during the sleep and dream states indicate how one’s mind will be during the *bardo* states. For example, the way you react to dreams, nightmares in your sleep, shows how you might react after you die (Rinpoche, 1998: 107). As such, the yoga of sleep and dream is a central practice in Tibetan Buddhism in which the practitioner strives to maintain conscious awareness during his dream experiences and regulate his actions in these experiences. This training is intended to prepare the practitioner for the process of dying, so that he will be able to go through the process in a conscious and ideal manner, thereby attaining liberation (Rinpoche, 1998: 108).

Buddhist dream beliefs and practices therefore appear to be derived mostly from the central religious and spiritual conceptions underlying this religion. As was the case with the Hindu and Taoist dream beliefs discussed before, the Buddhists view dreams as a separate state of consciousness which bears some similarity to the after-death state. Furthermore, dream incubation was practiced, often with the intent to foretell the future or make contact with a specific deity.

3.2.10. Islamic dream beliefs and practices

As Islam is practised by about one seventh of the world’s population, it is important to take note of Islamic dream discourses and practices, and subsequently this section will be devoted to an examination of the most

important dream related beliefs and practices found in the Islamic religion and culture.

The Islamic oneirocritical tradition emerged at the intersection of ancient Near Eastern, biblical, Greek, and Asian concepts of dreaming, synthesizing and Islamicizing these traditions into its own unique and rich heritage (Hermansen, 2001: 73). Although strongly influenced by Greek, Jewish, and other Near Eastern thought, Arab-Muslim dream interpretation reached heights no other civilization seems to have known (Fahd, 1966: 351). According to Fahd (1966: 351) dream literature represents for Islam the most authentic cultural heritage of its Semitic past. Dreams assumed a role of central importance in Islamic culture, and there was hardly any phase in the life of the community and the individual where dreams did not play a part (Von Grunebaum, 1966: 11).

The Arabic language uses the word *hulm* to refer to ordinary dreams, nightmares, and more unusual dream experiences, while the word *ru'ya* or *manam* is used for a divine revelation in a dream. A well known Muslim affirmation states that *ru'ya* comes from God, but *hulm* comes from Satan (Husser, 1999: 88). Here we see a repetition of a very common theme in the dream theories of premodern societies, namely the division of dreams into good and bad based on their perceived divine or diabolical origin.

According to Islam, dreams were man's main channel to the divine, and therefore they were able to provide man with theological enlightenment either through direct revelation, or through elucidating theological doctrine. As such, dreams were valued very highly in Islam (Von Grunebaum, 1966: 11-15; Delaney, 1998: 54; Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 37). In the earliest authoritative sources on Islam, such as the *Qur'an* and the life and practice of Mohammed, a significant role is given to dreams as reflecting both spiritual and real-world truth and in establishing the connection of everyday reality to another dimension often referred to as the *ghaib*, the absent or unseen realm

(Hermansen, 2001: 74). Indeed, the first portion of the *Qu'ran* itself was revealed to Mohammed in a dream (Bland, 1947: 72; Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 37-38).

However, an important point is raised by Fahd (1966: 352) who states that chroniclers of Muslim history sometimes used the dream as subterfuge for telling aspects of past history. A similar point was raised with relation to biblical dreams, and it seems reasonable to suspect that this practice might also have existed in other cultures.

Hermansen (2001: 74-76) conducted an in depth study of the dream related significances and themes of the most authoritative collection of the sayings of the prophet, *Sahih al-Bukhari*. This text includes a whole chapter on dreams and their significance, and the following can be seen as the major themes from these collected reports:

- That dreams were considered to be very important in the Islamic tradition (Von Grunebaum, 1966: 4; Hermansen, 2001: 75).

- That dreams were often a form of prophecy, either with regard to personal matters, or in relation to political issues (Von Grunebaum, 1966: 13-18; Hermansen, 2001: 75).

- Particular dream symbols are discussed as well as the ways in which they were interpreted by Mohammed. It is clear from these reports that Muhammed interpreted both his own dreams and that of his companions (Hermansen, 2001: 75; Fahd, 1966: 356). Mohammed himself had a great respect for dreams and each morning after prayer he would ask his disciples what they had dreamed, and then proceeded to interpret those dreams which strengthened their faith (Fahd, 1966: 356; Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 37-38). It is further believed by later followers of Islam that the prophet Mohammed might himself appear

in the dream of a Muslim and provide him with a personal message (Von Grunebaum, 1966: 11).

-Various strategies are recommended for incubating good dreams. Amongst other things, various *hadith* reports advise that one should try to go to sleep in a state of ritual purity in order to have good dreams (Hermansen, 2001: 74-76).

-Frequent references are made to ways to mitigate any potential harm or distress from bad dreams. Bad dreams were seen to come from Satan (Husser, 1999: 88), and the dreamer was encouraged to protect himself against such a dream in various ways (Hermansen, 2001: 75; Bland, 1947: 75). In one report, the dreamer is told to spit three times on the left side if he sees a bad dream, recite passages from the *Qu'ran*, and give charity in order to mitigate the potential evil effects of the dream (Hermansen, 2001: 75). It was also considered very important that the Muslim dreamer learnt to distinguish between divine and diabolical dreams (Bland, 1947: 75).

-Several reports state that a dream gets its power and its effect from being voiced to others. In this regard dreamers were cautioned not to relate their dreams to enemies or impious persons, but to tell their dreams only to knowledgeable persons and loved ones (Hermansen, 2001: 76). Dreams were considered to be interpreted best by good Muslims and great care was taken to ensure that heresy was not promoted in any interpretation (Delaney, 1998: 54). In fact, one of the fundamental principles of Islamic dream interpretation is the importance of seeking truthfulness in the interpreter and maintaining caution or secrecy when sharing dream interpretation.

Islamic dream manuals also constitute an important subgenre of divinatory literature in Islam. Most commonly, these texts, such as those of the highly regarded theologian and dream authority *Abdalghani an-Nabulusi* (1641-1731), take the form of a dictionary of dream images, which are usually prefaced by

the author's comments on methodology and technique (Von Grunebaum, 1966: 6-7; Fahd, 1966: 358). Contemporary scholarship has traced the evolution of these dream manuals to the translation into Arabic from Greek by *Hunayn ibn Ishaq* of the manual of Artemidorus (Fahd, 1966: 358). Although some adaptations were made to the symbols and their interpretation for cultural and religious reasons, many of the essential ideas and organizing principles that gave shape to the developing oneirocritic tradition in Islam may be traced to this source. In fact, Artemidorus' systematization of oneiric material was to serve as a central model throughout the middle ages in the East and also the West (Fahd, 1966: 358; Hermansen, 2001: 76).

In interpreting dreams, Muslim interpreters would use the following methodologies:

- Divination using the etymology of the dreamer's name or the name of the object that figures prominently in the dream (Hermansen, 2001: 77-78).

- Extrapolating metaphorically from the characteristics of the objects seen in a dream. For example, dreaming of a peacock was believed to indicate a wealthy, good-looking foreigner as peacocks are highly attractive birds who flaunt their feathers, and which are foreign birds to the Arabian peninsula (Hermansen, 2001: 77-78). Von Grunebaum (1966: 10) elaborates on this by stating that the vast majority of dream interpretation in Islam occurred by means of association between the dream elements and certain aspects of objective reality, such as finding correspondences between the dream images and ideas in the verses of the *Qu'ran*. The Muslims borrowed from the Jewish dream tradition the basic method of applying sacred texts – in this case from the *Qu'ran* – to dreams in order to assign interpretations (Delaney, 1998: 21).

-In addition, correspondences and associations were also sought in the text of the Prophet's sayings, in proverbs and poetry (Hermansen, 2001: 74-76), and also in current sayings and common expressions (Von Grunebaum, 1966: 10).

-Furthermore, dreams were often interpreted by means of opposition and inversion, in which something in a dream might actually be considered to mean its opposite (Hermansen, 2001: 74-76).

-The time of year and the state and character of the dreamer were also considered in interpreting the dream. In this regard astrological influences and references, as well as the personality and level of spiritual development of the dreamer were seen as essential aspects to factor into any good dream interpretation (Hermansen, 2001: 77-78).

-However, Mohammed himself felt that some dreams had a physiological cause which eliminated their value. Such dreams were those of wine drinkers, people with evil personalities, eaters of certain foods (such as lentils and saltmeats), and the dreams of small children (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 38).

Hermansen (2001: 83-84) comments on the state of contemporary Muslim dream practices by saying that the most persistent themes arising in the consideration of dreaming among contemporary Muslims are the interaction with modern Western theories of dreaming, and the persistence of meaningful dreaming as evidence for religious truth. Dream manuals of the traditional sort continue to be produced, translated and adapted for popular consumption in Muslim societies. New developments include works that recount the dreams of contemporary Muslims as proof of the validity of religious truth and experiences. General anthropological studies of contemporary Muslim societies note that great significance is still generally attributed to dreams amongst contemporary Muslims and that dreams are often used as basis for motivating real life decisions and actions.

3.2.11. Dreams beliefs and practices in African cultures

As the present study was conducted on a racially heterogenous sample of students that was purposefully designed to include African respondents, a thorough examination of the most important dream related discourses and practices prevalent in the African culture is essential. Within the context of the African cultures, a wide array of dream related beliefs, discourses, and practices can be found. A thorough examination of each of these traditions is beyond the scope and intention of the present study. As such, the following discussion will focus primarily on the dream related discourses and beliefs found amongst the most prominent African subcultures that exist in Southern Africa.

Unfortunately, very little research has been conducted that specifically focuses on the African dream culture from an “insider perspective.” Although the importance of dreams in African cultures is well-documented, most dream studies in African cultures have adopted either an anthropological standpoint that focuses predominantly on the social function of dreams, or a psychoanalytical orientation that has resulted in the imposition of a Western perspective on African dreams (Schweitzer, 1996: 73). Jedrej and Shaw (1992: 6) support this when they state that there has been a general neglect of dreaming in African anthropology and religious studies, and that most studies that do exist were conditioned by Western conceptions of religion and psychology.

The researcher could locate only a very small number of studies that focused primarily on the beliefs that African individuals have *about* dreams. Hopefully the present study will make a modest contribution towards providing more insight into this facet of the African dream culture.

In African life dreams play a central role, as is evident both in African religion and in African Christianity (Mbiti, 1997:511). Compared to most Western

cultures, Africans seem to more readily appropriate dreams and visions as things to remember and heed, rather than as things to ignore and shelve (Hayashida, 1996: 79-80). Over the years, a kind of dream culture has evolved in African life, a deeply religious dream culture which is rich in vocabulary, in symbols, in images, in responses, in interpretations, and in institutions. At the same time, this dream culture is subject to change, adjustments and resistance against threats to its existence (Mbiti, 1997: 512-513).

Especially important in the latter regard was the expansion of Christianity in Africa, which has brought about an encounter between Christian beliefs and African dream culture. Christianity has not erased traditional dream culture, but has merely modified and expanded it (Mbiti, 1997: 513; Mfusi, 1984: 66).

Hyashida (1996: 80) echoes this when he says that the traditional African who becomes a Christian does not leave behind his or her predisposition to dream.

However, Hyashida (1996: 80) goes on to mention that in the South-African context, the black self-hatred generated by the Eurocentrism which accompanied the missionary movement has created some degree of embarrassment in blacks who felt closely tied to the African culture and African past. Thus, African Christians from the mission church tradition might in some instances have concluded that dreams must be put aside once conversion has taken place, as they were told to put aside the charms, the traditional rituals, the healers, the dances, the ancestral spirits and all things “pagan,” “irrational,” or “superstitious.”

This argument has great relevance in the context of this study. As the study will include African respondents, and as all the African respondents that participated in the study indicated that they adhere to the Christian faith, it will be worth noting the extent to which Christian based discourses might have influenced, modified, or perhaps even marginalised or subjugated traditional African dream related discourses and practices.

Although there are varied traditions, dreams are often seen in African cultures to possess the following functions and characteristics: They serve as a link to the spirits of deceased ancestors, which are referred to by terms such as *midzimu*, *amakhosi*, *idlozi* and *ithongo* (Mbiti, 1997: 514-515; Jedrej & Shaw, 1992: 6). Dreams are also seen to be sources of inspiration, insight and instruction with regard to musical and artistic endeavours. The composition of many traditional hymns, for example, is said to be inspired by dreams or shown to the musicians in dreams. Yet this process of dream inspiration also occurs in areas of craftsmanship such as weaving, woodcarving, and stonework. In and through dreams many people are called to particular duties, professions, missions, or work, of either a short or a long duration. Examples of such callings include that of medicine men and women, healers, priests and priestesses, diviners, prophets and warriors. Such a calling would often then be confirmed by the rest of the tribe through their dreams (Mbiti, 1997: 514-515; Schweitzer, 1996: 74). It is interesting to note the great similarities between Native American Indian and African dream practices in this regard.

An important aspect of African dream beliefs is that dreams are regarded as being “true,” in the sense that dreams in general are likened to oracles and perceived to be just as truthful as the pronouncements of any external oracle. As a result, this leads many Africans to attempt to make their dreams come true. Dreams therefore proved acceptable accounts for action (Mutwa, 2003: 173-174; Jedrej & Shaw, 1992: 8-9). However, it should be noted that this state of affairs is moderated somewhat in African cultures with a strong belief that misleading spirits may affect dreams (Jedrej & Shaw, 1992: 8-9).

Furthermore, in African cultures dreams play a role in explaining the causality of events such as illness, loss, gain, etc. They also seem to serve a central function with regards to institutionalization and authority, in that dreams can act to legitimize and sanction certain behaviours and social positions (Jedrej & Shaw, 1992: 12-13).

Dreams also provide the opportunity to contact traditional and non-traditional Deities (such as Jesus Christ in the latter case) (Jedrej & Shaw, 1992: 6). This was also true in the negative sense in that dreams were also often perceived not just as signs of witchcraft, but as direct experiences of it (Jedrej & Shaw, 1992: 8).

Finally, dreams also seem closely tied to the topics of illness, health, and death. In this regard dreaming has been linked to the cause and treatment of diseases, magic, sorcery and witchcraft, medicine and healing rituals and observances and exorcism of unwanted spirits (Mbiti, 1997: 515-520).

In addition to these general beliefs and practices, various specific African cultural groups have developed unique understandings and practices related to dreaming. The next section will therefore examine the dream related beliefs and practices a few of the most prominent indigenous Southern-African cultures.

3.2.11.1. Dream views of the Xhosa

Amongst the Xhosa of Southern Africa dreams are considered to be very important (Schweitzer, 1996: 75; Bührmann, 1978: 106). A respected Xhosa healer and diviner even went as far as to state that if people do not dream then he will not be able to work with them (Bührmann, 1978: 105).

The Xhosa live in an undivided world in close contact with each other and with their ancestors. In this world everything was considered to have meaning. This meaningfulness does not, however, consist of rational, intellectual concepts, but a holistic sense of a totality of being (Bührmann, 1978: 109). It is in this context that Xhosa dreams beliefs and practices need to be studied and understood.

The Xhosa have two words to refer to dreams, namely *ithongo* and *iphupha* (Schweitzer, 1996: 75) or *uguphupa* and *amathonga* (Bührman, 1978: 111). The distinction between the two terms is fundamental, in that *iphupha* might refer to any dream, especially bad dreams, while *ithongo* refers to a dream from the ancestors and contains a message from these ancestors which need to be understood by the dreamer, often by means of a diviner, who acts as interpreter (Schweitzer, 1996: 75; Bührmann, 1978: 106).

The *ithongo* or *amathonga* are dreams about good things which come from the ancestors and are often interpreted by dancing and singing, a process which is considered to aid interpretation by clarifying the blood and increasing perspiration and bloodflow (Bührmann, 1978: 112).

In these dreams Schweitzer's (1996: 75) research has shown that the ancestors can take many forms, appearing as persons, or as animals. When ancestors reveal themselves as persons, they are very often recognized as grandparents or parents, or even as an *Igqira* (healer). When appearing as animals, the ancestors can take two forms, that of *izilo* or *iramncwa*. While *izilo* refers to any general animal, *iramncwa* is a beast of prey, or a larger feared animal, and this form is assumed by the ancestors when they are dissatisfied with the living's proceedings.

The *izilo* is very often considered to be a messenger, as is illustrated in the following example of a Xhosa dream recorded by Schweitzer (1996: 76): The dreamer dreamt that a brown bee approached him and sat on his head. The *Igqira* interpreted this dream by saying that the bee was a messenger sent by someone who has been appointed, especially the brown bee, which is considered to be a river bee, and therefore a direct messenger from the river, unlike an ordinary wild bee. The message was that the dreamer's ancestors pointed out to him that he should become an *Igqira*. The bee, an animal

associated with work and diligence, indicates the need for the reader to work at becoming knowledgeable and fulfil his potential in becoming a healer.

It is considered very important to obey the injunctions of these kinds of dreams. It is believed that ignoring such dreams will result in the displeasure and even anger of the ancestors, which could in turn lead to misfortune, illness and even madness not only for the dreamer, but also for his family or clan (Bührmann, 1978: 110).

The second kind of dream described by the Xhosa is the *iphupha* or *uguphupa*. Although these dreams are not attributed to the ancestors, they do throw light on an important aspect of the life world of the group. Through *iphupha*, the dreamer is occasionally vulnerable to an ominous or intrusive element, in the sense that the person might be confronted by a dirty spirit such as a *tikoloshe* (described as a small, hairy man with a large penis which he carries over his left shoulder) or *mamlambo* (a snake familiar which is capable of changing its form). These entities are often associated with the activities of witches (Schweitzer, 1996: 79). Bührmann's research (1978: 111) concurs with this view in that *uguphupa* are described as being bad dreams, which most often come from people or bad spirits. However, he also mentions that the ancestors can also be behind these dreams in instances when the latter are dissatisfied with the dreamer. Finally, bad blood is also considered to be a contributing factor to such dreams.

Interestingly Bührmann (1978: 112) goes on to note that if dreams are being interpreted through a process of singing and dancing the diviner will stop it if it becomes clear that it is an *uguphupa* dream.

As is clear from the previous sections, it can be seen that the interpretation of important dreams is an activity that is most often executed by the traditional healers rather than primarily by the people themselves.

It is believed that dreams must be related immediately upon awakening, otherwise it would disappear “like a whiff of air” (Bührmann, 1978: 110). In order to be able to interpret dreams, it is considered important for the body of the interpreter to be ‘fresh,’ and exhilarated, a state that is achieved through dancing, singing and medicine (Bührmann, 1978: 111). The dancing and singing is considered to wake up and rise the *umbelini*, a kind of spiritual energy residing in the lower half of the body, which, when it rises to the higher parts, increases the diviner’s natural gifts and abilities of interpretation.

The Xhosa also practice a form of dream incubation that bears a close resemblance to ancient Greek and Egyptian dream incubation practices. Such dreams were not only sought in order to gain insight into a specific problem, but also to effect a cure through the mechanism of the dream itself (Bührmann, 1978: 109-110). Clients had to wash themselves in a particular medicinal liquid called *bulaw* which was prepared by the healer from the roots, stem and bark of plants. This practice ensured the ritual cleanliness that was necessary in order to obtain a healing dream. This liquid also had to be imbibed, often to the point where it induced vomiting, which was considered to increase internal purity and the requisite ‘freshness’ of the body. Drinking the *bulaw* was also considered to induce good dreams, or *amathonga* and to increase dream clarity and recall (Bührmann, 1978: 111). Once a dream is received and interpreted by the diviner or healer, the dreamer is urged to act on the dream in order to promote healing and prevent more serious illness (Bührman, 1978: 110).

3.2.11.2. Dream beliefs and practices of the Zulu

Dreams are considered to be extremely important in the Zulu culture. Mfusi (1984: 18) states that the role that is played by dreams in Zulu thought-patterns is so important that without dreams true and uninterrupted living is not possible. In fact, many traditionally oriented Zulu people believe that something is wrong if they do not dream.

Although the esoteric lore of many black cultures such as that of the Zulu people were often kept secret from outsiders in order to protect this knowledge (Mutwa, 2003: xiii; Mfusi, 1984: 33), one of the most venerated high sangomas of the Zulu nation, Credo Mutwa, made the decision to make much of this traditional lore available to the public through his many books on the topic (Mutwa, 2003: xiii). Having been elevated to the rank of high Sanusi (one of the highest ranks a sangoma can attain), and having undergone very extensive training under several of the most respected Zulu sangomas (Mutwa, 2003: xxiv), very few people are better qualified to give an account of the traditional Zulu view of dreams. As such, the following section will draw extensively upon Mutwa's discourse (2003: 173-177) on the Zulu view of dreams.

The Zulu word for sleep is *butongo*, which means: "the state of being one with the star gods." The word for dreams is *ipupo* which is derived from the verb *pupa*, which means "to fly" (Mutwa, 2003: 173). From this we can deduce that the Zulu view the dream plane as a real and otherworldly dimension of being. It is believed that during sleep a person's spirit leaves his body and actually undergoes the dream experience (Mfusi, 1984: 18).

The Zulu believe that if you dream of something, that thing should be enacted in the light of day. That is, you should attempt to do the thing that you have dreamt (Mutwa, 2003: 173). In this regard Mutwa (2003: 174) goes on to cite several examples of ordinary Zulus spending a lot of money and going to great lengths in order to enact their dreams through activities such as visiting distant relatives. As dreams are viewed as actual experiences in another plane of existence, many dreams are viewed as not requiring any interpretation but are acted upon directly (Mfusi, 1984: 18).

From Mutwa's writings it is apparent that a major function of dreams in the Zulu culture is providing the dreamer with guidance. The more attentive a

dreamer is to his dreams the more of these guidance dreams he is said to receive. In Mutwa's (2003: 174) own words: "It is very good for a person to take dreams seriously, because we believe that if you do act out the dream, the creative force of the soul that makes the dream recognizes this, and brings you more dreams that guide you and make your life richer and more interesting. We believe that dreams notice the fact that you notice them." Mutwa (2003: 174-175) goes on to mention that many black people watch their dreams especially closely when they reach a crisis in their lives, and suggests that people often receive valuable guidance through this channel. He cites several examples of various Zulu individuals (including himself) receiving helpful guidance from dreams.

Another key feature of dreams according to the Zulu perspective, is that dreams often serve as warnings of danger or of something else that might lie ahead. Mutwa cites an example from his own life where a dream warned him not to board a specific train. A short while later, that specific train was involved in a terrible accident near the Jaboulani station in Soweto (Mutwa, 2003: 176).

Mutwa (2003: 177) explains the nature of these precognitive dreams by referring to the Zulu belief that the human being has several souls (three if one is female, and two if one is male), and that one of these souls, carrying the essence of the person, can travel into the future and actually experience things before the physical body does. Upon returning to the body, this soul can then impart the knowledge gained on its journey to the physical person.

Mutwa (2003: 176-177) states emphatically that some dreams are more important than others. He states that a widely accepted "fact" in the Zulu culture is that dreams with a really serious message behind them have a very strange characteristic in that they are almost always brilliant in colour, and that they come just before the dawn is about to break. These dreams are often forgotten upon awakening but recall of them is triggered later in the day

through some event. Dreams that recur are also considered to bear an important message.

Dreams play an especially important role among Zulu indigenous practitioners, and are used especially in the diagnosis and treatment of illness among patients. Dreams are also regarded as the primary channel through which the ancestors communicate with such indigenous practitioners for the purposes of guiding the healer in matters of healing (Mfusi, 1984: 18). In the treatment of patients' diseases, an *inyanga*, for example, would dream of an ancestral member who would show him what type of medicine and herbs are to be used to effect a patient's cure (Mfusi, 1984: 19).

In fact, many indigenous practitioners claim that it would be impossible for them to work without dreams as dreams are believed to be their "eyes in the work" (Mfusi, 1984: 19).

In some cases a patient suffering from illness is requested to report his or her dream to an indigenous practitioner for analysis which would then form the basis of the diagnosis and treatment of the illness (Mfusi, 1984: 19).

Dreams also serve the crucial function of being the indigenous practitioners' call. Among the Zulus, most indigenous practitioners do not start their profession from personal choice, but instead have experienced a very definite call into this role from an ancestor or even more directly from God. Many such calls are communicated through dreams (Mfusi, 1984: 19). In a study undertaken by Mfusi (1984: 60) 100% of his respondents (which consisted of Zulu indigenous practitioners that included *sangomas*, *inyangas* and *umthandazi*) experienced dreams in which they were called into the office of indigenous practitioner.

From the foregoing discussion of African dream beliefs and practices it can be seen that great similarities in this regard exist across various African cultures.

All emphasise the importance of the ancestors, and point out that dreams can serve as channel for communications with the ancestors, as warnings or omens about future events, as a calling into a special profession, as a source of guidance, and as a vehicle to support healing.

The researcher could not locate any research that dealt specifically with dream related beliefs and practices in the Sotho or Tswana cultures, and as such, this section does not include any references to these cultures. This situation suggests that research is needed that focuses specifically on the dream beliefs and practices of these cultures.

3.2.12. Summary

An examination of the dream theories and practices of these diverse cultures reveal remarkable underlying similarities, and certain themes are encountered quite consistently. Ullman and Zimmerman (1987: 45) echo this observation when they state that for almost two thousand years man had done little but amplify and rearrange his notions about the nature and meaning of dreams.

The foregoing discussion of dreams theories in premodern cultures clearly indicate that the predominant ideas about the nature and meaning of dreams theories came predominantly from religious, spiritual, cultural and intuitive sources.

This trend changed drastically in the nineteenth century, as rationalism became openly antireligious. The age of science began to batter down superstitions and old assumptions about dreams and questioned many of the existing traditional and intuitive dream theories (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 45). Following the development of the concept of the unconscious by Johann Fichte and Friedrich Schelling, the idea started to emerge that dreams might provide some clue to a buried portion of the human personality (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 45-46). The spirit of intellectual investigation that characterized the latter part of the nineteenth century extended to the phenomenon of dreams, and dreams became

an object of intellectual study, a trend that was marked by the publication of Sigmund Freud's masterpiece, entitled "The interpretation of dreams." With this, a new era of dream related discourses and practices dawned. In the next section the ideas of Freud and his contemporaries will therefore be explored in greater depth.

3.3. Late 19th and 20th century dream discourses and practices

3.3.1. Introduction

This section will focus on the work of the three most influential dream theorists of modern times: Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Medard Boss. According to Delaney (1998: 65) and Hunt (1989: 5), they are the architects of modern dream interpretation, and Delaney claims that someone with a good understanding of the work of these three theorists will be able to make sense of any modern interpretative method. The work of these men forms the three main currents of the psychodynamic understanding of dreams, and every contemporary method of interpretation uses some combination and development of the ideas and practices of these three European psychiatrists (Delaney, 1998: 65). In fact, as will be shown in a later section, even the majority of contemporary, non-scientific books on dream interpretation are heavily influenced by the ideas of Freud and Jung.

From a social-constructivist perspective, the dream theories of Freud, Jung, and Boss could therefore be viewed as master narratives or discourses which have had a great influence on the shaping of much of current western thought on the topic of dreams. As current, local discourses are generally strongly influenced by master discourses on a given topic (Freedman & Combs, 1994: 16-18), it is therefore also probable that such discourses on dreams espoused by individuals will likewise reflect elements of these dream theories.

As such, it is crucial to examine these theories in greater depth, as it will make it possible to execute a much more thorough qualitative analysis of the

information accrued through the interviews. When studying current, local discourses on a given subject, as is the intention of the present study, a thorough understanding of any master discourses that might influence the construction of such discourses is essential.

An important point to note is that the dream theories of Freud, Jung, and Boss will not be approached from a primarily psychological point of view. Instead, in this study they will be approached from a sociological and social-constructivist perspective. *This means that these theories will be viewed as social discourses or master narratives that are operating on a societal level to influence general beliefs and practices related to dreams.* From such a perspective, the emphasis placed on these psychological theories of dreaming within the context of a sociological and social-constructivist study can be fully justified.

3.3.2. Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud is considered to be the father of modern dream analysis. His synthesis of concepts of dream formation, causation and interpretation ignited an explosion of interest in discovering the psychological meaning of dreams. According to Delaney (1998:72), everyone who writes seriously about dreams after Freud is either restating him or reacting against him. In addition, until Freud's *Interpretation of dreams* which was first published in 1900, there had never been a truly scientific approach to the understanding of dreams (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 47). As such, an understanding of Freud's dream related theories is essential in order to appreciate the work of his descendants. In fact Freud's dream theory is considered to have set the standard against which all other are compared (Hunt, 1989: 5). This section will therefore be devoted to an in depth discussion of Freud's dream theories and practices.

In order to grasp Freud's approach to dreams, a basic understanding of his psychoanalytic theory of personality is required. The following section will therefore furnish a brief account of Freud's theory of personality.

Freud saw the individual as a unit consisting of three separate aspects (the id, ego, and superego) that function together to ensure the survival of the individual, and to allow him to experience as much pleasure as possible and at the same time minimize the experience of guilt attached to this (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 42). The id is the innate, primitive component of the psyche and is in direct contact with the body from which it obtains energy for all forms of behaviour. This energy is attached to the life and death drives, which are contained in the id. The id functions according to the pleasure principle, meaning that it seeks immediate and complete satisfaction of its drives without considering anything but its own immediate gratification. The id is therefore totally selfish and unrealistic, as it has no contact with external reality and is therefore not capable of actual drive satisfaction. The only form of drive satisfaction that the id can in fact accomplish is wish fulfilment, a process in which the id creates images of the desired object and fantasizing that they have appeased the drive (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 43). This point is especially important with regard to Freud's view on dreams, as will be discussed later. As the id cannot satisfy any drives directly, the development of a second subsystem of the personality that is reality orientated is required. This system is referred to as the ego. It develops from the id because it is necessary in order to ensure the individual's survival. It is formed by contact with the outside world and serves the id's needs by striving for drive satisfaction. However, unlike the id, which is unrealistic, the ego takes both physical and social reality into consideration. The ego therefore uses rational thinking and sensory perception to judge and weigh up situations before carrying out an action. The ego is therefore capable of planning how to satisfy drives by postponing such gratification. The ego satisfies its drives by seeking and finding appropriate objects for drive satisfaction, and investing these with psychic energy (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 43-

44). However, the ego's position as executor of the id's wishes is a very difficult one as the ego not only has to experience the constant pressure from the id and also has to accommodate all the demands and realities of the physical environment, but it also has to consider and accommodate the moral codes of society. These moral codes become internalized into the personality in the form of the superego. The latter functions within the personality as a representative of society's moral codes and has the function of pressurizing the individual into abiding by these codes. It reinforces this by punishing the individual by making him feel guilty about immoral wishes and actions and holds up a relentless, perfectionistic ideal of moral behaviour (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 44-45).

These conceptions of the human psyche form the basis of Freud's views on dreams, which will now be examined in greater detail.

Freud's view on dreams

Freud believed that almost all dreams represent an attempt at wish fulfilment and even goes as far as to propose a formula of dreams which states that: "The dream is the (disguised) fulfilment of a (suppressed, repressed) wish" (Freud, 1948: 128-129). He did however allow for exceptions in this regard in admitting that dreams may sometimes merely represent the repetition of a traumatic event. Yet even in these instances Freud believed that a wish might lie concealed underneath the manifest content of the dream (Freud, 1948: 140). According to Freud, these wishes, which originated from the id, are of an infantile, sexual, or aggressive nature, and as such unacceptable to patients, due to the strict codes of their superegos. As such, these individuals were then unconsciously forced to use deceptive, camouflaged dream imagery to achieve symbolic gratification of their suppressed needs. Much of his interpretative approach was derived from this basic theoretical proposition (Freud, 1948: 140-165; Delaney, 1998: 67 & 68).

According to Freud, dreams result from the repression of desires, which, due to the influence of the superego, can only be fulfilled in a distorted way during sleep. During waking life, the ego guards against these forbidden and immoral wishes and drives by keeping them below the level of conscious awareness, in a process known as repression (Freud, 1948: 147). However, during sleep the preconscious censor is less effective in keeping the forbidden desires at bay, and these drives can now succeed in breaking through into consciousness in disguised form, where they are experienced as a dream (Freud, 1948: 110). The forbidden urges, called the latent dream content, undergo a transformation which Freud calls dreamwork (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 57; Hunt, 1989:6).

In this process the unacceptable urges and inner images from the id are transformed into less threatening images, which are referred to as the manifest dream content (which is also the part of the dream that can usually be remembered and related by the person). Dreamwork therefore serves to alleviate the guilt experienced through disguising the true nature of the urges and images in a way that they are not perceived for what they truly are by the superego (Freud, 1948: 111, 147; Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 57; Hunt, 1989:6). By camouflaging the latent wish in this way, the ego was able to harmlessly and symbolically gratify that wish (Delaney, 1998:68).

Freud (1948: 130) did mention, however, that in some dreams wish fulfilment is not disguised, such as when a thirsty dreamer dreams of actually getting up and drinking a glass of water. Freud referred to these dreams as convenience dreams, and remarked that these dreams are usually short, simple and pleasant.

Freud believed that one of the most important ways in which dreamwork occurred was by means of reversal, or the turning of something into its opposite (Freud, 1948: 141-147; Hunt, 1989: 6-7). This would serve to effectively disguise the manifest meaning of the dream content and so bypass the superego's stringent moral code of propriety. Freud mentioned in this regard that when a dream obstinately declines to reveal its meaning, it is always worth

while to see the effect of reversing some particular elements in its manifest content, after which the whole situation becomes immediately clear (Freud, 1948: 147).

Freud viewed dreams as the royal road to the unconscious and frequently used dream analysis in therapy. In this regard he developed a technique called free association. In this method elements of the dream are used as stimulus words to which the patient must respond by revealing everything that comes to mind, irrespective of whether he regards it as apt, pleasant, appropriate, or not (Freud, 1948: 109-110, 112; Delaney, 1998: 66; Meyer *et al.*, 1993:58; Hunt, 1989:7). In fact Freud (1948: 110) even went as far as to state that if a dreamer is unsuccessful in finding the solution of the dream, or its true meaning, it will be because he has permitted himself to become critical and judgemental of his free associations related to the dream.

The free association method was aimed at going beyond the façade of the manifest dream and thus undoing the deception created by the dreamwork (Freud, 1948: 109; Delaney, 1998:66). Freud arrived at his theory of dream formation by hypothetically reversing what happens when we free associate. He reasoned that the largely verbal associations will follow the actual pathways of dream formation backward to one or more instigating wishes (Freud, 1948: 109), based on recent experiences from the previous day as well as more distant memories from early childhood (Hunt, 1989: 6-7).

It is therefore important to note that in interpreting dreams, Freud left the manifest and predominantly visual nature of the dream, to focus on the latent thoughts and memories that were considered to inevitably bear internal connections quite different from the connections in the original dream plot (Hunt, 1989: 7).

In addition, Freud also applied his wide knowledge of Greek and Jewish mythology, as well as his experience with patients, in the interpretation of

dreams. Based on this he developed and compiled a long list of dream symbols which in his experience tended to have a fairly specific meaning (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 58). However, Freud (1948: 113) did recognize that the same dream content and symbols may conceal different meanings in the case of different people or different dream contexts.

According to Freud, the majority of the dreams of adults deal with sexual material and give expression to erotic wishes, and he subsequently turned most of his formulations about how dreams work to the confirmation of this belief (Delaney, 1998: 71). Thus one tends to find that most of the fixed meanings that Freud assigned to given dream symbols were of a sexual nature. For example, Freud interpreted staircases as representing the sexual act, as one mounts and descends them rhythmically (Delaney, 1998: 69).

Thus, Freud believed that given enough time to overcome his or her resistances, the dreamer, through free association aided by well timed interpretations from the doctor, would come to the identification of the hidden wish that lay behind every dream (Delaney, 1998: 68).

Ultimately, the goal of Freud's dream interpretation was to help the dreamer to sufficiently overcome various defense mechanisms in order to bring to consciousness those repressed memories and wishes that Freud insisted were the driving force in every dream (Freud, 1948: 147). This conscious recognition or insight was thought to have a curative effect on the patient by freeing up energy previously invested in repression and symptom formation (Delaney, 1998: 68)

In summary, at the core of Freud's dream theory lies the belief that almost all dreams represent an attempt by the ego to fulfil a wish or desire contained in the id in a manner that would not result in punishment from the superego. To achieve these ends, the images reflecting these normally unacceptable wishes are transformed through a process known as dreamwork into seemingly

innocuous images which are not challenged by the superego, and thereby succeeds in symbolically gratifying the id's needs. Freud believed that through free association and mythological examination, this process could be reversed and the true meaning of the dream uncovered.

3.3.3. Carl Jung

Although initially a student and follower of Freud, Jung's views eventually diverged from that of Freud with regard to several major aspects of Freud's theory which led to Jung establishing his own theory. Jung could not accept Freud's mechanistic view of man which regarded the individual as the product of a suppressed sexual past. Although he accepted that behaviour was the consequence of past events, he maintained that it was also directed towards the future. Jung saw man as oriented towards a perpetual creative development in striving to achieve a complete self (Meyer, *et al.*, 1993: 75).

As with Freud, Jung's dream related views and practices can only be thoroughly understood within the context of his general psychoanalytical theory of the human personality, which will be discussed here in brief.

Jung viewed the human psyche as a dynamically structured totality or whole. Yet this whole was also seen as divisible. Jung divided the psyche into three levels, namely the conscious, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 77-78). An understanding of these levels is very important in terms of understanding Jung's approach to dreams.

Jung considers the essence of the conscious to be the ego. The ego comprises all conscious aspects of functioning including sensations, perceptions, feelings, thoughts, evaluations and active memory. The ego also functions both externally and internally. External functioning is the process by which the ego helps to structure reality through sensory perception and thereby facilitate interaction with the external world. Internal functioning refers to the way in

which the ego structures a person's awareness of himself to bestow on him his own identity which remains fairly constant over time (Meyer *et al.*, 1993:78).

Each person also has his or her own personal unconscious which can be regarded as a storeroom of individual experiences and interactions with the world and the accompanying interpretations of these experiences and interpretations. The contents of the personal unconscious are usually available to consciousness and there is a continual interaction between the personal unconscious and the ego. Jung distinguished three ways in which the contents of the unconscious can be formed: Firstly, psychic material becomes unconscious due to losing their intensity and being forgotten; secondly, some sensory perceptions are not intense enough to penetrate through to the conscious, but do enter the psyche subliminally; and thirdly because some mental information has been repressed into unconsciousness (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 78).

For Jung, the most important contents of the personal unconscious are complexes, which are considered as transformed instincts. These are instincts which have undergone too much psychization and therefore turned into autonomic complexes. The complex is seen to develop an autonomous existence, but is usually repressed from consciousness, where it functions as a kind of splinter psyche or "abscess in the unconscious" that continues to influence everyday life (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 79; Jung, 1984: 20).

A complex is seen as a composite of ideas or experiences loaded with specific emotional intensity. Complexes form when an archetype or instinct is combined with a personal experience. For example, an individual can develop a mother complex when his own experience with a mother is combined with the archetype of a mother.

In addition, traumas and moral conflicts are also considered to be common factors leading to the development of complexes (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 79).

The third level of consciousness is referred to as the collective unconscious and represents the inherited potential which has been transmitted from previous generations. It is a kind of blueprint which is not peculiar to the individual but universal to all human beings, and forms the foundation for the human psyche. The collective unconscious exists completely independently and is not influenced by the other levels of consciousness. However, the collective unconscious does influence the conscious (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 79).

The collective unconscious contains instincts and archetypes. Archetypes are primordial images and are regarded as innate psychic predispositions or intuitions influencing the person. According to Jung, archetypes form the basis of human thought and comprise the whole treasure-house of mythological motifs. Archetypes exist for each human experience and Jung lists a great variety of these, such as birth, death, sun, darkness, power, woman, man, sex, water, mother and pain (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 79-80).

Maternal love, for example, is an archetype not acquired by imitation. It is an inherited predisposition emanating from the collective unconscious which compels the mother to act in a certain way.

Jung stated that archetypes can be expressed through symbols, and regarded symbols as such an important manifestation of archetypes that he claimed that it is only through the analysis and interpretation of symbols – as is evident in dreams, fantasies, visions, myths, art and so on – that the collective unconscious and archetypes can be analysed and understood (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 80). As Jungian analysis of dreams is based very strongly on the archetypes that make up the human personality in that the majority of dream images are viewed and understood in terms of the archetypes such as the persona, shadow, anima, animus, and the Self (Kaplan-Williams, 1996: 35), these will be discussed briefly in the next section.

The Persona

Persona is the Greek word for mask or façade which Jung uses to describe a person's public self; the attitude or persona that an individual adopts in order to

move in the world (Jung, 1984: 51). It therefore develops in relation to the role which the individual must fulfil in society. The persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is. The persona usually consists of various masks, for example a person might be outgoing and extroverted with friends, serious and reserved at work, and pious and proper during a religious service (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 80). Jung (1984: 74-75) stated that people often become identified with their persona's, mistaking it for who they truly are. As this situation reflected an imbalance, Jung believed that such individuals will become a victim of their persona's, in that they will be forced to engage in acts that will compensate for this one-sidedness. Furthermore, Jung believed that this dynamic is very well revealed in dreams (Jung, 1984: 74).

The Anima and Animus

Jung believed that a person possesses not only the physiological traits of both sexes (such as the sex hormones), but also the psychological traits of both sexes. He therefore postulated that the anima is the female archetype which is present in every male on an unconscious level and is characterised by feeling, mood, and emotion (Jung, 1984: 81; Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 80-81). The animus, on the other hand, is the male archetype which is likewise present in each woman, and represents logic and rationality.

Jung further pointed out that the persona is usually in a supplementary relationship to the anima or animus. The latter two contain qualities which are lacking in the persona. For example, a woman who is externally very feminine will have a very masculine internal psyche and a very masculine man will be very feminine internally (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 80-81).

An important part of personality development according to Jung, is the integration of both the masculine and feminine components of the personality by allowing enough expression to both aspects of the psyche. A denial of one side of a person's nature can lead to problems, especially in that person's relationships (Meyer *et al.*, 1993:81). Jungian therapists believe dreams to play

a very important role in facilitating the integration between a dreamer's inner masculine and feminine natures by clearly revealing, and sometimes compensating for any imbalances in this regard (Kaplan-Williams, 1996: 58-68). In dreams the anima might be reflected in all female figures in the dream, and the anima by all male figures. In this view, a female person in a dream, and the dreamer's relationship with her represents the inner relationship that that individual (whether male or female) has with his or her inner female side (or anima), and vice versa for male dream figures (Kaplan-Williams, 1996: 58-63).

The Shadow

The shadow refers to the unconscious or dark side of a human being, a sphere that he or she is habitually unaware of (Jung, 1984: 51).

The shadow represents the primitive, animal instincts inherited by man in the evolutionary process. It is considered to be the strongest and most dangerous archetype because it contains the impulsive urges and emotions which are normally unacceptable to society and therefore repressed (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 81). Jung (1984: 76) describes the shadow graphically as "your brother, your shadow, the imperfect being in you that follows after and does everything that you are loathe to do, all the things you are too cowardly or too decent to do." Yet the shadow is not purely a negative force; it is also the source of vitality, spontaneity, and creativity. Jung placed a very high value on the integration of the ego and the shadow, and much of his approach to dreams is based on this idea. Jung believed that a person who denies his shadow is someone who does not fully acknowledge his humanness, and he attributed all kinds of psychological problems to a shadow which was either suppressed or uncontrolled (Jung, 1984: 76; Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 81-82). If a person denied his shadow, a reaction from the collective unconscious would loom up from the dark in the form of some personification. For example, a pious man who renounces and denies his sexuality, which is a normal part of human nature, might suddenly find sexual fantasies and peculiar desires arising in him as compensation for his repression (Jung, 1984: 76-77). The shadow emerges in

dreams when there are characters we do not like who invade our space, and when we behave in ways we would not in our public and waking life (Kaplan-Williams, 1996: 14).

The Self

In Jung's view, the human being is a complex organism whose totality contains opposing factors which can drive or attract him into action consciously or subconsciously. These opposing factors are found in all people, meaning that nobody is only either good or bad, introvert or extravert, masculine or feminine, because one part of each dyad always dominates on a conscious level and the counterpart dominates in the unconscious (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 76). At the core of the personality exists the archetype of the self which motivates man to integrate the various components of the psyche into a harmonious whole. It represents man's striving towards unity, integration, and wholeness. The self only surfaces when the conscious and unconscious are no longer in opposition, and accept each other to form a greater whole. Jung believed the self to be the central archetype that forms the nucleus of the personality around which all the other systems cluster. The self was not considered by Jung to be present at birth, it emerges only during the middle years of life. The development of the self is motivated by a religious and spiritual instinct and a transcendent function which constrains the psyche to try and reconcile its opposing systems into a new state of balance and unity (Meyer *et al.*, 1993: 82). Jung believed that the Self wants to influence and train the ego through dreams as it needs the ego's help in its process of ongoing transformation and integration. Jung even saw the Self as the cause and source of dreams in that he believed that the Self used the image making function of the psyche to portray dreams or "energy experiences while asleep" (Kaplan-Williams, 1996: 18).

These ideas form the basis of Jung's theory on dreams, which will be examined next.

Jung's views on dreams

Jung rejected Freud's belief that the dream was the result of an inner censor's efforts to disguise some latent meaning, and insisted that the manifest dream was the natural, not pathological, expression of the contents of the unconscious (Delaney, 1998:74). Jung (1984: 30) states that there is no reason to believe that the unconscious does not say what it means. He wrote that "the dream describes the inner situation of the dreamer... It shows the inner truth and reality of the patient as it really is: not as I conjecture it to be, and not as he would like it to be, but as it is" (Jung, 1974: 63). It follows from this that Jung also rejected Freud's belief that dreams might be interpreted by opposites or symbolic reversal (Delaney, 1998:75).

Jung also saw the expression of wishes as only one among the many functions of dreams, which could, in his opinion, express any drive, quality, or potential of the dreamer (Delaney, 1998: 74). Above all the dream was seen to portray the current situation in the unconscious, and was triggered by current inner and outer life events as well as our questions and our difficulties (Jung, 1984: 3). He also believed that dreams could warn, scold, congratulate, or revitalize the dreamer, as well as supply parapsychological information, and provide him or her with profound spiritual experiences (Delaney, 1998: 74).

Jung (1984: 3) saw dreams as playing a crucial role in therapy because he regarded dreams as being objective facts that arise independently of our expectations or volitional effort. Furthermore, Jung saw the main object of psychological treatment as getting to the messages of the unconscious and regarded dreams as the most important technical means of opening up an avenue to the unconscious (Jung, 1984: 3).

Jung's method of dream interpretation consisted of several parts. The first part is referred to as taking up the context. In Jung's own words: "I have developed

a procedure which I call 'taking up the context.' This consists in making sure that every shade of meaning which each salient feature of the dream has for the dreamer is determined by the associations of the dreamer himself" (Jung, 1974: 71-72).

Jung's central theoretical assumption that the human psyche is fundamentally a whole that has become divided through one half of each polarity being made unconscious and therefore seemingly absent from the manifest personality, and the other half conscious, and lived out; has several implications for his views on dreaming.

Jung believed that dreams act to compensate for the one-sided attitudes of waking life. Jung does not suggest that dreams display the simple opposite of conscious attitudes, but that the message or point of a dream might serve to show the dreamer what his waking attitude is missing or ignoring, and that this compensates for his exaggerated, or incomplete, one-sidedness while waking (Jung, 1984: 20; Delaney, 1998: 75-76). Through this process, Jung (1984: 20) believed that the dream represented an attempt to make us assimilate and integrate these aspects of our psyche which we have suppressed, repressed or otherwise not yet digested.

Therefore, in order to accurately interpret a dream, Jung believed that the therapist needs a thorough knowledge of the conscious situation in the dreamer's life at the time of the dream, because the dream was seen to carry its unconscious complement. Jung even went as far as to say that without this knowledge it would be impossible to interpret a dream correctly (Jung, 1974: 34-35). Jung also considered the age of the individual to be a very important factor in arriving at a valid interpretation of a given dream (Jung, 1984: 85).

Feelings in dreams also played a very important role in Jung's view on dreams. Jung believed that it was vital for each individual to develop his or her ability to feel to the point where the feeling function allowed the individual to richly

experience life, and he saw many of his patients' dreams as indications of the inadequacy of this function as well as indications for its development. Jung therefore took dream related feelings as indicators of the way the dreamer either consciously or unconsciously felt about the dream issue at the time of the dream (Delaney, 1998: 79-80).

The second step in Jung's process of dream interpretation is referred to as amplification. This process consists of relating dream symbols to mythological, religious, historical, and psychological themes such as the archetypes and the process of individuation (Delaney, 1998: 78; Hunt, 1989: 8). In amplification the dream might be paraphrased in more general terms to bring out its embedded metaphorical structure; it might be connected to cross-culturally common archetypal themes of mythology; or it might be transformed directly into a sort of expressive poetry by developing rhyme, wordplay and etymology from the original dream account (Hunt, 1989: 8)

Jung used to amplify the dream images of his patients by drawing upon his extensive and specialized knowledge of religion, mythology, and alchemy, or assist the dreamer in doing so herself if he or she had gained enough of this knowledge through reading and experience (Jung, 1984: 17; Delaney, 1998: 78).

Jung further believed that dreams and the images they contain could be interpreted both on an objective and a subjective level and stated that it is exceedingly important to know when to apply each level of interpretation. With this, Jung meant that a dream image could either refer to something or someone outside of the dreamer, in his external world (an objective interpretation), or to some aspect of the dreamer himself (the subjective interpretation) (Jung, 1984: 29).

The following example given by Jung (1984: 16-17) serves to conclude this section by illustrating his method of dream interpretation:

One of Jung's clients, a Swiss infantry officer who complained of great pains in his heels, dreamt that he was walking in the open somewhere and then stepped on a snake that bit him on the heel, causing him to feel like he had been poisoned. At this, the man woke up frightened.

After asking the man about his own thoughts about the dream snake, Jung proceeded to quote a biblical saying from Genesis which states that "the serpent shall bruise thy heel while thou art treading upon its head." Jung then suggested to the man that the snake might be metaphorical and that it could refer to issues with a woman. The man then admitted that three months earlier he arrived home to find his soon to be fiancé with another man. Although the man verbally denied that he had strong feelings about the matter, he was weeping. Jung claimed that this man had repressed his feelings about his girlfriend and at being jilted, and that this psychosomatically caused the pain in his heel. Once the man was able to get in touch with and express his feelings, the pain in his heel cleared up (Jung, 1984: 16-17).

It is evident from the above that Jung's dream theory is complex and multifaceted. Central to his theory is the emphasis on the importance of the personal and collective unconscious and its concomitant archetypes with regard to dreams, as well as the conception that dream images serve as metaphorical, mythological, or archetypal reflections of the dreamer's true inner and outer life situation.

3.3.4. Medard Boss: The phenomenological approach

Medard Boss was an analysand of Freud and a student of Carl Jung. Although originally adhering to Freudian thinking, after a meeting with the philosopher Martin Heidegger in 1947, which had a profound influence on him, his thinking altered and he developed his phenomenological or *Daseinsanalytical* approach to dreams (Delaney, 1998: 80).

Boss felt that the whole field of dream research had become “contaminated” by the development of psychoanalytical or dream theories which cause most analysts to approach dream analysis with a lot of unquestioned assumptions that govern and guide their interpretations of the dream. The net effect of this would be to force the dream material into the jargon and rationalizations of a particular school of psychiatry. Dreams thus interpreted would then express the therapist’s opinion as opposed to their own inherent significance (Boss, 1977: 14-16).

Based on these concerns, Boss stated that analysts can avoid distorting dream elements by means of their own personal speculations only when they stop assuming hidden and different meaning behind the significances that disclose themselves to the analyst directly from the given dream contents. Analysts should instead let the elements of the dreaming world remain exactly as they were when they revealed themselves to the dreamer (Boss, 1977: 25).

In this approach the analyst is re-educated to look at dreams without traditional theoretical bias, seeing in the dream experience only that which can be factually perceived to exist. The phenomenological approach strives to avoid exclusively “logical” conclusions and to adhere instead entirely to factually observable things, aiming to penetrate their significances and contexts with ever greater refinement and precision, until the very essence of them is recognized (Boss, 1977: xxi, 3).

Based on this approach, Boss developed his own strategy for understanding dreams. In this approach, he urges the analyst to attend to two circumstances in each dream: Firstly, the analyst must consider exactly for what phenomena the dreamer’s existence is so open that they may have entered and shone forth into its understanding light. This in turn would tell the analyst what phenomena are

not accessible to the perception of his dreaming state, or, in other words, for the entrance of which phenomena the dreamer's existence is still closed.

As a second step, the analyst needs to determine *how* the dreamer conducts himself toward whatever is revealed to him in the clearance of his dreaming world, particularly the mood that predicates his way of behaving.

If both of these can be accurately described, the analyst will have reached a full understanding of the dreamer's existence during the dream period (Boss, 1977: 24).

Based on these considerations, Boss (1977: 27) would then ask his patients whether they are able to recognize features of their own existence which are identical in essence with the traits of the phenomena which he could perceive in his dreaming state. Based on this approach Boss (1977: 26) believed that the proper insight will reveal itself out of the patient's heart and will then be embraced. This approach exists in contradistinction to the practices of Freud and Jung, who would often impose their own interpretations onto an individual's dream, based on their personal knowledge of psychology, mythology, and religion (Delaney, 1998: 79).

Thus Boss restricts his interpretation of dreams only to the qualitative essence of the manifest content that is found in the dream, and meticulously avoids interpretatively venturing any further than that.

This approach is in many ways diametrically opposed to that of Freud, who almost totally disregarded the manifest dream content in search of the "true" meaning of the dream, which, in his opinion, was to be found disguised in the latent aspects of the dream.

In fact, Boss (1977: 25) specifically mentions that the analyst should avoid asserting that any manifestation in the dream has an inherent significance beyond that of its manifest nature, or that it incorporates, represents, or symbolizes anything other than itself, as it appears in the dream.

However, as a point of critique the researcher wishes to point out that in this approach the analyst does to some extent engage in the kind of assertions that are warned against. In assuming that a parallel exists between a dream image and the dreamer's waking life, the idea of the dream image symbolizing or representing something beyond itself is implied. If dream images were only that and no more, then no parallels could be drawn between such images and the dreamer's waking existence. Such action can only be taken if the dream image does indeed represent or symbolize something beyond itself.

To illustrate Boss's approach, the following dream and an abbreviated interpretation thereof (which was undertaken by Boss) is given:

"Simple dream of a healthy European

I'm eating lunch with my old friend, M.H., in the Hohe Restaurant in Zollikon. The room is moderately occupied with people of both sexes. The voices of some women and of a few children can be heard somewhere, too. Sunlight is filling the dining room, warm and bright. We're very happy to be able to meet again in a place that's so peaceful and relaxed. We both order the same thing, an *entrecote café de Paris*. We eat heartily and talk about our children. I notice with satisfaction how much my guest is enjoying his meal, how he is really going at it with his teeth. Then I wake up, a little sad that my friend's visit has only been a dreamed event. The day before I had wished very strongly that he'd visit me again" (Boss, 1977: 29).

In interpreting this dream Boss (1977: 29-30) rejects the Freudian notion that wish fulfilment is at work in the dream. Instead he mentions that if the phenomenological, or Daseins-analytic approach is followed, and the facts are kept to the experience itself, it is seen only that several times the day before the dream, the dreamer consciously entered into a very specific relationship to his friend: he wanted his friend nearby. But once sleep and dreaming had begun,

his wishing for his friend to be near vanished; the dreamer's existential realm opened out, allowing him to perceive his friend as an immediate, sensed presence. Therefore there was no need for the dreamer to wish for his friend to be near.

In discussing the therapeutic application of the dream Boss (1977: 33) states that this dreaming subject shows no signs of neurosis, either when awake or in the dream. He did not feel pressed for time in the dream, nor was he bored. In space he was not hemmed in, nor spanning the cosmos in near psychotic anxiety. Instead he was serene, at ease, and engaged in a mutually warm relationship with a friend. At most, it could be indicated that women were conspicuously absent from the dream phenomena. This absence might move us to question the awakened subject cautiously regarding the openness of his waking existence to women. Yet such considerations would have merit only if the subject's distance from women was manifested in both dreaming and waking.

This account serves to summarize and illustrate Boss's methodology of avoiding any kind of symbolic association or amplification of dream images. He sticks to the manifest contents of the dream and focuses only on what the dreamer's existential reality is open to, and what it is closed off from, and then proceeds to relate this to the person's waking existence.

3.3.5. The bio-psychological discourse

An overview of dream related literature revealed yet another major discourse that emerged about dreams as a result of the scientific study of these phenomena.

Dreams first became a topic for scientific study when technical developments made it possible to monitor the various bodily changes that accompany the dream state. Subjects would sleep in sleep laboratory and then connected via

electrodes to a polygraph instrument that measures the subject's brain waves, eye movements and muscle activity during sleep (Louw, 1990: 396; Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 10-11).

From such research, and perhaps also influenced by behaviourist conceptions of reality that discount the importance of unobservable phenomena, a new theoretical stance and its resulting discourse emerged among some researchers. Mostly referred to as the bio-psychological or neuro-psychological perspective, this approach seeks to describe and explain matters such as dreams in terms of nerves and chemicals in the body, especially the brain (Benson, 2001: 115). As such, dreams are viewed as biological and neurological phenomena that have no social, cultural, or psychological significance.

In this discourse, dreams are seen as being a mere by-product of memory organizational processes going on in the brain, and also as the result of external environmental stimuli and internal physiological factors.

This process is often compared to a modern day computer which has to go off-line in order for the data to be rearranged. According to this perspective, short rerouting of several items would be reflected in nonsensical dreams, whereas modification of lengthy programmes would result in long, seemingly sensible dreams, and repeated dreams would be the result of constant interruptions in this process (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 27). Linn (1996: 31-32) states that many scientists believe that dreams are only neurons spontaneously firing in the brain, downloading the brain's unneeded information.

Other researchers such as Crick and Michison (cited in Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 28) see REM and dream sleep as the brain's way of coping with overload.

One researcher, cited by Louw (1990: 405) even goes as far as describing dreams as being nothing else than random thoughts, "similar to the incoherent thinking of senile and drugged individuals."

Houston *et al.* (1979: 144) declared that: "In short no one knows what dreams mean. We don't really know whether we should even bother to interpret them.

They remain a mystery, in spite of all the work that has been done with them, and in spite of the importance placed upon them by many investigators and clinicians.” The central conception here seems to be that dreams are unfathomable, and such a view has important consequences. If an individual views dreams as being an unfathomable mystery, he or she will not be likely to pay a great deal of attention to them as their importance and value will be viewed as questionable.

Tied to such ideas is the belief that dreams could be caused by random external stimuli such as the sound of an alarm clock or some other external noise which might trigger an entire scene in the sleeping individual’s mind, which is based on past experiences in waking life (Louw, 1990: 401). Similarly, movies and books to which a person were exposed to before sleep, as well as the temperature of the room, the need to urinate, the menstruation cycle and other external or internal physiological stimuli during the dream period are considered to exert an influence on dreams (Louw, 1990: 405). In this view, the dream images are therefore seen as the response to some external environmental, or internal physiological stimulus. As such, the dream images themselves would not be perceived to have any intrinsic meaning and would not therefore be interpreted except perhaps for attempting to locate the specific stimulus that might have triggered the dream.

It can be seen from the above that the emphasis in this perspective falls on viewing dream phenomena exclusively from a biological, neurological and “environmental stimulus” angle. In fact, to most bio-psychologists the ‘mind’ and ‘consciousness’ are simply activities of the brain (Benson, 2001: 115). The bio-psychological discourse therefore assumes a rather extreme reductionist approach (Benson, 2001: 115). As such, in this perspective any psychological, cultural, sociological and spiritual significance that dream might possess is ignored. No procedures for dream interpretation and no dream related practices are therefore to be found in this approach. In fact, the practice tied to such a

discourse is actually a non-practice, that of ignoring dreams (apart from their bio-neurological aspects) and not considering their content as being meaningful. Such a perspective would lead to a complete disqualification and ignoring of dream phenomena in an individual's life.

However, the researcher is strongly against such an extremely reductionist view of dreams and believes that given the vast amount of cultural dream related discourses and practices, dreams do have some significance that reaches beyond mere biology and neurology. However, from a social-constructivist perspective, this perspective cannot be discounted, as the possibility exists that some dreams, or at least a part of them, might be influenced by biological, rather than sociological or psychological factors. In fact, this possibility is even accounted for in the dream theories of many ancient civilizations, as had been discussed in an earlier section.

Furthermore, it is possible that the ideas espoused by this approach might have influenced general, non-scientific societal discourses and beliefs about dreams. A basic understanding of this discourse is therefore important in serving as a backdrop against which current, non-scientific dream related beliefs and practices can be understood.

3.4. Current popular dream related discourses and practices

By means of the mass media, various major psychological, social, mythological and religious conceptions about dreams and dreaming have been diluted, integrated, hybridized, and otherwise modified into what could loosely be referred to as a general “popular psychology” discourse on dreams. Often referred to as the advice / information genre, this is a form of media that transmits information, norms, and values which is ostensibly factual and accurate to the general population via self-help books, advice columns, radio and television shows and numerous articles in magazines and newspapers (Strong *et al.*, 2001: 11).

The layman generally lacks the interest and motivation to engage in an in depth study of psychological dream theories. And even then, in order to make sense of such dream theories, a fairly good basic acquaintance with the psychological personality theories on which these dream theories are based, is required. Because of the difficulties in this regard, and the fascination that the ordinary man has always had with dreaming, “popular psychological” discourses have emerged that serve to inform and cater for the proverbial man in the street. Books on dreams abound in bookstores, and although these are often not scientific or scholarly in nature, they do serve to influence people’s dream related perceptions, discourses, and practices, and therefore a thorough examination of these discourses is important for the purposes of the present study.

An overview of a few of several popular books on dreaming (Miller, 1979; Thurston, 1988; Crisp, 1994; Sechrist, 1995; Kaplan-Williams, 1996; Linn, 1996; Holbeche, 1998; Andrews, 1999; and Melbourne & Hearne, 1999) revealed the following general tendencies:

-The dream related views, approaches, and theoretical assumptions espoused by these sources very rarely represented any truly new ideas, but are most often just a rehashing, hybridizing, and compilation of existing theories on dreaming as discussed in this chapter. The examination of these popular books on dreams often readily revealed their theoretical biases. Several authors made their approach clear in the title or introductory part of their books, and others did not reveal their theoretical positions as plainly. Commonly, the ideas of Freud and Jung were found to play a large part in the dream theories of several dream books (e.g. Crisp, 1994; Kaplan-Williams, 1996; Linn, 1996; Holbeche, 1998). Eastern esoteric, New Age, and other religious conceptions also seem to influence the approach of many of these sources (e.g. Thurston, 1988; Sechrist, 1995; Linn, 1996; Holbeche, 1998; Andrews, 1999) and the emergence of a

renewed interest in Native American culture and practices also seem evident in some books (e.g. Linn, 1996; Andrews, 1999). Furthermore, the dream beliefs of Artemidorus (from which Freud himself derived many of his own conceptions, as was discussed earlier) also seem to play a prominent role in some popular books on dream interpretation (e.g. Miller, 1979). These contentions will be illustrated later on in the current section.

-The majority of these books take the form of, or include, as a major portion, a dream dictionary, in which various dream symbols are listed together with their supposed meaning (e.g. Miller, 1979; Thurston, 1988; Crisp, 1994; Sechrist, 1995; Linn, 1996).

This implies the existence of a dream belief that views dream imagery as discrete symbols with meanings that are to some extent innate or fixed. Simultaneously, it shows a disregard for the potentially interrelated and context dependent meaning of such symbols. Such texts to some extent obscure the perception of dreams as integrated narratives, and reduce them to a collection of discrete symbols.

It should be noted however, that certain authors do in fact caution against interpreting dream symbols without considering their context (e.g. Delaney, 1998; Melbourne & Hearne, 1999).

-After some study it also becomes apparent that the symbols so listed are often assigned vastly divergent meanings by different authors.

-An overview and comparison of various popular psychological texts on dreams reveal that the most common methods of dream interpretation were based on analogy. Such analogies were based on several different foundations. Metaphorical analogies seemed to be most common, in which a dream symbol is related to an aspect of daily life to which it bears metaphorical similarity. In addition, some interpretations were based on verbal or visual puns. In other instances, the dream symbols were related to some pre-existing theory or set of

beliefs. In the case of texts with a Freudian bias, a lot of symbols are assigned a phallic or sexual connotation. In texts influenced by Jungian ideas, symbols are often related to the archetypes, and so on.

In this section, some of the conclusions stated above will be illustrated by discussing actual examples from popular psychological literature on dreams.

For example, the dream symbol of a snake is assigned the following meanings by different authors:

“The Hebrew word for the serpent in the Garden of Eden is *Nahash*, which can be translated as blind impulsive urges such as our instinctual drives... If we think of a person’s life from conception to death we see a flowing moving event, similar in many ways to the speeded-up films of a seed growing into a plant, flowering and dying. The snake depicts the force or energy behind that movement and purposiveness – the force of life which leads us both to growth and death... So in some dreams the snake expresses our sexuality; in others the rising of that energy up our body to express as digestion – the intestinal snake; as the healing or poisonous energy of our emotions and thoughts” (Crisp, 1995: 332).

“For a woman to dream that a dead snake is biting her, foretells she will suffer from malice of a pretended friend. To dream of snakes, is a foreboding of evil in its various forms and stages. To see them wriggling and falling over others, foretells struggles with fortune and remorse... If they bite you, you will succumb to evil influences, and enemies will injure your business... To see them bite others, foretells that some friend will be injured and criticised by you” (Miller, 1979: 516-517).

“This is a very significant sign. It is not a sign to be feared. The snake has long been a symbol for healing. An example is the two intertwined snakes on

Hermes' staff which is used as the symbol of the medical profession... This sign can represent temptation, as in the serpent in the Garden of Eden... The snake is a powerful sign of transformation and resurrection. For just as the snake sheds its skin and grows, this sign can indicate that you are shedding your old persona and old beliefs to embrace a new path in life. The snake may also be a sign of sexuality, representing the male's penis... Is someone in your life being like a snake in the grass?" (Linn 1996: 202).

An examination of these interpretations readily reveals the most probable source discourses from which the authors drew their own interpretations. Crisp's reference to snakes representing the life force energy is an idea that was probably derived from Hindu philosophy. In this tradition, a snake is seen to represent the body's psychic energy which lies coiled at the base of the spine. This energy is referred to as *kundalini* in Sanskrit (Linn, 1996: 202). The connection of the snake to sexuality also has its origin in Hindu mythology, and might also be related to the temptation of Eve in the garden of Eden by the snake. This connection is also evident in the writings of Freud (Delaney, 1998: 69).

The author's reference to the Hebrew tradition is explicit, and requires no further comment.

We can further see that the author also bases some of his interpretation on the basis of analogy, a dream practice that was and is followed in many cultures. Therefore he equates snakes with the inner snake of the intestine.

Miller seems to adopt a wholly negative perspective on the meaning of snakes, seeing them as evil. This view probably stems from the Biblical reference to the snake that was the cause of Eve's fall in the Garden of Eden. Simple analogy also seems to play a role in that snakes are creatures which can bite, and thereby hurt and poison other creatures. This ability is metaphorically extrapolated and applied to the affairs of human beings in their hurting others or being hurt themselves.

Linn offers several divergent interpretations and generally makes the origin of her beliefs clear. The reference to the snake in the garden of evil in the role as tempter is clearly biblical. The reference to the Caduceus harks back to Greek mythology and an analogy between the meaning of this symbol and the purported significance of the snake in a dream. She also employs metaphorical analogy in that the shedding of a snake's skin is related to an individual shedding their own beliefs or persona.

The reference to snakes being representative of the male penis could reflect a simple analogy and might possibly stem from Freudian conceptions.

Furthermore, it has already been pointed out that the snake has also been connected to sexuality in the Hindu religion, where it is seen to represent the creative life force or *kundalini*.

The relation between dreaming about a snake and the possibility of someone in the dreamer's life being a snake in the grass seem to derive from an idiomatic analogy.

It is interesting to note that, although all three authors make use of analogy, they select greatly differing aspects of the snake on which they base these analogies, leading to vastly differing interpretations.

One more example will be given by examining the way in which a candle as dream symbol is conceptualized by various authors:

“Male sexual organ. Lighting a candle: a birth; prayer. If lit amid darkness: finding understanding or courage amid doubts, fears, depression. Occasionally a measure of how much time we have left in life. Idioms: burn the candle at both ends; not fit to hold a candle” (Crisp, 1995: 77-78).

“To see them burning with a clear and steady flame, denotes the constancy of those about you and a well-grounded fortune. For a maiden to dream that she is

moulding candles, denotes that she will have an unexpected offer of marriage and a pleasant visit to distant relatives. If she is lighting the candle, she will meet her lover clandestinely because of parental objections. To see a candle wasting in a draught, enemies are circulating detrimental reports about you. To snuff a candle, portends sorrowful news. Friends are dead or in distressful states” (Miller, 1979: 121).

“This is a universal symbol of light and connection to Great Spirit. You are touching the Great Light within all things. The spiritual life force within you; your true inner light” (Linn, 1996: 94).

Again we note that these interpretations are quite divergent and even contradict each other at times. Crisp’s identification of the candle with the male sexual organ seems to be greatly influenced by Freudian ideas on dream interpretation in which all objects which could vaguely be related to the male penis in shape or function, were assigned a phallic connotation.

Crisp also uses metaphorical analogy; just as lighting a candle will disperse the darkness, so will finding understanding help to dispel our fears.

He also assigns a timekeeping function to candles, and metaphorically equates the span of the candle in the dream with that of the human life and suggests a correlate between how much time the candle has left to burn and how long the person has to live.

Crisp then also derives a few associations through the process of idiomatic analogy.

Miller’s interpretations are more obscure, although some of his meanings also seem to derive from analogy. Miller, whose best selling text claims to be the most comprehensive and thorough study of dreams ever published (Miller, 1979), makes no bibliographical references in his text, so it is uncertain from which sources he drew his information. His strong focus on prognostication

and archaic descriptions are very reminiscent of the approach taken by Artemidorus, however.

Implicit in his discussion of dream symbols is also the firm belief that dreams serve to, at least in part, prognosticate the future.

Linn's views echo her openly declared Native American approach in that candles are seen as symbols of connection to Great Spirit. A generally spiritual interpretation of this image is also plainly evident. In part, Linn's interpretations also seem to be based on metaphorical analogy in that the light of the candle is likened to the Great Light within all things and the inner light that resides within an individual.

The previous discussion also serves to illustrate the point made earlier that the majority of sources which reflect such dream 'popular psychology,' do not represent any new theoretical or conceptual developments, but merely tend to rehash, restate, integrate, or hybridize the pre-existing ideas and discourses on dreams.

Although the popular psychology discourse on dreams is therefore not considered to be a new or separate dream theory or discourse, it is nonetheless significant to note as such literature might possibly constitute the main source of information on dreams for many individuals.

3.5. Conclusion and summary

This chapter provided an overview of the most important dream related discourses and practices that existed (and to some extent still do exist) in various historical, religious, scientific, and cultural contexts. A distinction was made between pre-modern dream related discourses and practices, such as those found in ancient cultures such as the Egyptians, Greeks, and Native

Americans and more “modern” and scientific / psychological approaches to dreams such as those of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Medard Boss.

This discussion also highlights the essential theoretical differences between these two broad divisions in that the dream related discourses and practices of premodern times can be seen to be most strongly influenced by religious, mythological, and cultural factors and beliefs, whereas, modernist methods of dream interpretations are informed by the discourses of science, specifically that of the discipline of psychology. Yet, it is interesting to note, that even in these modernist approaches, vestiges of the influence of mythological, cultural and religious discourses can still be clearly discerned. This for example, can be clearly seen in Jung’s approach of amplifying dream symbols by associating them to mythological figures and events, and Freud’s incorporation of Artemidorian dream beliefs.

As such, no dream related discourse or practice should be studied in isolation, but can only be understood within its cultural and historical context.

In the spirit of the social-constructivist approach, none of the discourses and practices discussed in this chapter are held to be necessarily true or false, or objectively ‘better’ than any other. Instead, they are discussed as alternative, valid discourses. As these discourses and practices arguably represent the most prominent dream related discourses and practices that were and are generally encountered, they also serve as the likely master discourses from which individuals draw upon in order to construct their own dream related discourses and practises. As such, the information gleaned from the semi-structured interviews will be qualitatively analysed and examined in terms of their correspondences (or lack of it) to these existing dream related discourses and practices. Only by a thorough understanding and awareness of existing theories will the researcher be able to discern the influence of such master discourses on the local discourses the research subjects hold about dreams.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to provide an essential background against which the findings made in this study can be contextualised. It will enable the deconstruction of the dream related discourses recounted by the respondents by uncovering the underlying assumptions and beliefs upon which their discourses are based. It will also enable the identification of aspects of the respondents' dream beliefs and practices that are not reflected by existing discourses on the matter.

In the next chapter, the research design and methodology that have been followed in the study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

This chapter serves to describe and elucidate the research design and methodology that was followed in the study. This will be done firstly by discussing the literature study as research method, and then by examining the characteristics and nature of qualitative research and discussing the relevance of this particular kind of research to the present study. Following this, the selection of respondents, the qualitative interviewing process, as well as the procedure of qualitative data analysis and issues pertaining to reliability, validity, and generalization will be examined in greater depth in as much as they will serve to facilitate the achievement of the goals of this study as was set out in chapter one.

4.2. The literature study

In order to conceive of the research topic in such a way that permits a clear understanding of the nature and meaning of the research problem and aim of the research, some background information is necessary (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 22; Fouche & De Vos, 2001: 64). The process of reviewing and presenting relevant literature on the research topic is referred to as the literature review and assumes a role of central importance in any scientific study (Fouche & De Vos, 2001: 64-65).

As such, in the present study a review of the most important available literature on dreams, especially with regard to major cultural, religious, scientific, psychological, and sociological dream related discourses, theories, and practices is essential. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 25) support this when they state that the importance of a wide and comprehensive literature review cannot be emphasized enough.

Such a literature study will serve the following important purposes:

-Firstly, the literature study provides an essential background against which the findings of the present study can be contextualized and better understood (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 23-25). In this regard it facilitates the process of qualitative analysis of the information obtained via the interviews, in that a thorough literature study of dream related discourses makes it possible to discern the influence of psychological, cultural, religious, sociological and other discourses in the current, local dream beliefs of the respondents. Conversely, it also enables the researcher to identify elements in the local discourses that are not reflected in the former kinds of discourses.

-Such a literature study also serves to sharpen and deepen the theoretical framework of the research by examining different theories related to dreams which are derived from various diverse contexts. This serves to create an interdisciplinary perspective, which, because of the complexity of this issue, is to be encouraged (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 23-25). This process also serves to provide a substantially better insight into the dimensions and complexity of the research problem (Fouche & De Vos, 2001: 65).

-The literature study provides the framework of the research and identifies the area of knowledge that the study is intended to expand upon (Fouche & De Vos, 2001: 66). This also serves to demonstrate that the researcher is knowledgeable about related research and the intellectual traditions that surround and support the study (Marshall & Rossman, 1989: 34).

-It also allows the researcher to identify gaps in the existing knowledge on dream related practices and discourses, as well as point out weaknesses in previous research on the topic (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 23; Marshall & Rossman, 1989: 34-35).

However, in *conducting* the interviews, the information gleaned from the literature study was temporarily disregarded as far as possible in order to ensure that the researcher was influenced as little as possible by theoretical assumptions and preconceived notions about the topic being researched. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 23) supports such an approach when they note that the literature study, although essential in research also carries some dangers. One may be influenced by the results of previous research, or one may accept without criticism their chosen characteristics and explanations so that one fails to discover new possibilities and to observe without preconceptions. One may develop the tendency to emphasize mainly what has been brought to one's attention, to work within an already established framework, instead of exploring new approaches.

It has already been pointed out in a previous chapter that these are very prevalent problems in current dream related research, which seems to be conditioned and determined in large measure by pre-existing psychological theories on dreaming. As has been mentioned above, this appears to have had a very limiting influence on research, and possibly supports the continuous marginalization or disregard of current, local discourses on the topic of dreams. In temporarily disregarding existing dream theories, the potentially limiting consequences mentioned above can be minimized to some degree. However, from a postmodern point of view, it is recognized that the researcher is to some extent influenced by his own theoretical and pre-theoretical assumptions about dreams, and as such, no claims of neutrality can be made regarding the processes of interviewing and qualitative analysis of the data.

The literature study represents an attempt to synthesise and integrate the research findings, theories, and general conceptions of the most authoritative dream scholars in order to represent an integrated overview of several of the most important cultural, religious, psychological, scientific and sociological dream related discourses and practices.

The literature study therefore focused comprehensively on the topic of dream related discourses and practices as found in various cultures and religions, and as expressed by the most important psychological schools of thought on dreams. The most important sources that have been examined with regard to dreams include Jung (1933, 1974, 1984), Artemidorus (1975), Freud (1948), Boss (1977), Miller (1979), Ullman and Zimmerman (1987), Kruger (1992), and Delaney (1997, 1998). These sources were selected based on criteria such as the scope of influence that these works exerted, the generally agreed upon authoritativeness of these sources, and the observation that these authors are amongst the most frequently referred to in both general and scientific literature on dreams.

In addition, a thorough literature study has been executed that centres around the topics of postmodernism and social-constructivism, which represent the central theoretical framework underlying the present study. This serves the important function of establishing a clear theoretical foundation which served as the basis for the research design and methodology, as well as for the analysis and reporting of the research. The fact that the rationale for the study is also directly related to several central assumptions of postmodern and social-constructivist thought necessitates a clear exposition of these theories.

The most important works which have been consulted in this regard include that of Anderson and Goolishian (1988, 1992), White (1988, 1990), Rorty (1990), Gergen (1985, 1992, 1994, 1997), Freedman and Combs (1990, 1994), and Rosen (1996). These sources were selected on the basis of their wide scope of influence, frequent citation and general authoritative status with regard to the fields they represent.

The literature that has been consulted with regard to dreams, postmodernism and social constructivism took the form of books, articles in journals, chapters in collected volumes, and PhD dissertations. In order to ensure that a wide scope of relevant literature has been reviewed in the course of the study, the

researcher made extensive use of the various databases and indexes (such as SABINET, EBSCOHOST, FERDICAT, NEXUS, R-SAT and OCLE) at the library of the North-West University in order to locate relevant literature. Following the recommendations of Fouche and De Vos (2001: 66) and Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 24), in the process of reading the material on the initial list of sources, the most relevant items were selected and their bibliographies and references were used to locate additional relevant information.

4.3. Qualitative research

De Vos *et al.* (2001: 15) state that the direction of the research process and the research methodology are determined by the choice of the researcher between a quantitative or qualitative, or combined quantitative-qualitative approach. The present study falls into the category of qualitative research. Since there are various interpretations of this concept (Schurink, 2001: 240-241), it is necessary to provide a brief exposition of qualitative research in general, as well as of the ways in which it was utilized specifically in this study.

One of the main styles of social research used by empirically minded social scientists in all disciplines is qualitative research. The term 'qualitative' is an indication that this approach concentrates on qualities of human behaviour, i.e. on the qualitative aspects as against the quantitatively measurable aspects of human behaviour (Mouton, 1988: 1). Snape and Spencer (2003: 3) remark that there is fairly wide consensus that qualitative research is a naturalistic, interpretative approach concerned with understanding the meanings which people attach to phenomena within their social worlds. Schurink (2001: 241) expands on this by saying that the qualitative paradigm stems from an antipositivistic, interpretative approach, and that it is ideographic and holistic in nature, and that the main aim is to understand social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life. Furthermore, the goal of qualitative research is

the “generation of contextually valid descriptions of social action which are based on objective (i.e. in depth) reconstruction and interpretation” (Mouton, 1988: 8).

Given the epistemological foundation of the present study (i.e. social constructivism), the qualitative approach was deemed to be the most appropriate and suitable choice for the research design and methodology. This is because the choice for more structured and quantitative approaches links up more logically with the positivist view on social science, whereas the choice for qualitative research methods is more in accordance with the tenets of postmodernism (Mouton, 1988: 9).

The following represents a brief outline of the differences between a quantitative, positivist and a qualitative, anti-positivist (which is concordant in this case with the researcher’s postmodern, social-constructivist epistemology) view of the nature of research in the social sciences:

- Against the positivist’s emphasis on the production of universal laws of human behaviour, the anti-positivist stresses the generation of contextually relevant description of human action (Schurink, 2001: 241; Mouton, 1988: 7-8)

- Against the positivist ideal of objective and controlled observation and measurement, the anti positivist strives to obtain the actor’s perspective, the insider view and then to reconstruct his or her life-world as accurately as possible (Marshall & Rossman, 1989: 11; Mouton, 1988: 7-8). Whereas the positivist, quantitative researcher believes in an objective reality which can be explained, controlled and predicted by means of natural laws, the anti-positivist, qualitative researcher discard the notion of an external, objective reality. They aim instead to understand reality by discovering the meanings that people in a specific setting attach to it. Their emphasis is on explanation, rather than prediction of behaviour (Schurink, 2001: 242).

-Whereas quantitative researchers use a deductive form of reasoning, qualitative researchers prefer an inductive form of reasoning (Schurink, 2001: 241).

-Against the positivist's insistence on overt behaviour which can be measured and operationalized, the anti-positivist aims at understanding the meanings, the significations and symbolisms of human behaviour (Mouton, 1988: 7-8).

The researcher shares these ideals, and as such, the research design and methodology of the present study will be developed in accordance with these aims. The nature of the research problem calls for an examination of qualitative aspects of human nature, in the form of beliefs, discourses, and practices in order to generate contextually relevant descriptions of these phenomena from an insider perspective. As such, a qualitative approach is considered most appropriate in order to address the exigencies of the research problem.

4.3.1. Characteristics of qualitative research

Marshall and Rossman (1989: 46) point out that it is very important in the context of research that is descriptive or exploratory (as is the case in the present study) that the characteristics and strengths of qualitative research methods be clearly elucidated. As such, this section is devoted to an examination of these aspects of qualitative research.

The following could be considered to constitute the key elements of qualitative research:

-qualitative research is directed at providing an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about

their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories (Snape & Spencer, 2003: 3-5; Marshall & Rossman, 1989: 11).

-samples are small in scale and purposively selected on the basis of certain salient criteria, and data collection methods usually involve close contact between the researcher and the research participants and tend to be interactive and developmental and allow for emergent issues to be explored (Snape & Spencer, 2003: 3-5; Marshall & Rossman, 1989: 11).

-data tends to be very detailed, information rich, and extensive, and analysis is open to emergent concepts and ideas and might produce detailed descriptions and classifications, identify patterns of association, or develop typologies and explanations (Snape & Spencer, 2003: 3-5). In this process the researcher relies on the respondents' words as the primary data (Marshall & Rossman, 1989: 11).

-outputs tend to focus on the interpretation of social meaning through mapping and "re-presenting" the social world of research participants, and the focus is on the observed present, even though the findings are contextualized within a social, cultural and historical framework (Snape & Spencer, 2003: 3-5).

-the research is conducted within a theoretical framework. While there may only be a small number of questions to orientate a study, further questions may arise during the course of research (Mouton, 1988:14).

-concepts are in the form of themes or categories rather than variables and data is analysed by extracting themes (Schurink, 2001: 243)

-the research design is flexible and unique and evolves throughout the research process. There are no fixed steps that should be followed and the research process cannot be exactly replicated. Tied to this is the fact that from a

qualitative perspective, reality is regarded as being subjective (Schurink, 2001: 242-243).

These views encapsulate the major goal and focus of the research that will be conducted in the present study. By means of semi-structured qualitative interviews the researcher intends to elicit a contextually relevant description of the respondents' dream related discourses and practices. The aim is to obtain an insider view of the respondent's own inner perspective and life-world as far as dream related discourses and practices are concerned. The data will then be analysed by extracting themes detected in the data. The emphasis will fall on meaning and understanding, as opposed to objective measurement and prediction. Where relevant, the findings of the research will be contextualized within a broader cultural, religious, and sociological context.

4.3.2. General purpose of the research

The research conducted in this study can be classified as being both exploratory and descriptive in that it is intended to explore and describe current dream related discourses and practices.

Exploratory research is defined as research aimed at investigating and obtaining insight into a relatively unknown research area (Fouche & De Vos, 2001: 124; Marshall & Rossman, 1989: 78). The need for such a study usually arises out of a lack of basic information on an area of interest (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 42). In the light of the lack of existing research on current, local dream related discourses and practices (as was discussed in an earlier chapter), the exploratory relevance and significance of the present study is clear.

In descriptive research, the analyst makes use of the synthesised data to prepare descriptive accounts, identify key dimensions, and map the range and diversity of the phenomenon under question (Spencer *et al.*, 2003: 214). The purpose of this type of research is to document the phenomenon of interest (Marshall &

Rossmann, 1989: 78). This reflects the aims of the present study to obtain a descriptive picture of current, local dream related discourses and practices, as well as identifying key dimensions and mapping the range of such discourses and practices.

A central aspect of descriptive and exploratory qualitative research is the procedure for the selection of respondents. The next section will therefore discuss the nature of the respondent sample as well as the process that was followed in order to select the respondents for the study.

4.4. Selecting the respondents

As it is a general feature of social enquiry to design and select samples for study (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 77) it is appropriate at this point to discuss the issue of sample selection as it is relevant to the present study.

First of all a distinction needs to be drawn between probability and non-probability samples. In a probability sample, elements in the population are chosen at random and have a known probability of selection, with the overall aim being to produce a statistically representative sample. Though probability sampling is generally held to be the most rigorous approach to sampling for statistical research, it is considered to be largely inappropriate for qualitative research. In fact, the principles of probability sampling can work against the principles of sound quantitative sampling (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 78-82).

Qualitative research uses purposive, non-probability samples for selecting the population for study. In such a study, units are deliberately selected on the basis of their characteristics in order to reflect certain features of the sample population. The sample is not intended to be statistically representative (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 78; Schurink, 2001: 253). Instead, the precision and rigour of a qualitative research sample is defined by its ability to represent salient

characteristics, and as such, it is these that need priority in sample design (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 82).

Although the present study mainly aimed to explore general dream related discourses and practices among South-Africans in the Vaal-Triangle, it was felt that the study could be enhanced by the incorporation of a few purposive sampling criteria. As such, two criteria were identified on which the purposive sampling approach was based. Gender and culture were selected as primary criteria for selecting the sample, in that an equal amount of male, female, Western, and African respondents have been selected. This was done in order to facilitate a qualitative comparison between the dream related discourses and practices reported by these respondents, in addition to a general examination of dream related discourses held by South-Africans (and specifically in the Vaal-Triangle area).

It is realized that dividing respondents into the broad categories of “African” and “Western” represents an oversimplification of a much more complex reality, as there are various subcultures within both the African and Western South-African cultures. However, including these as sampling criteria would necessitate a very large group of respondents and a much more complex design. As such, it was decided to reserve more focused explorations of various African and Western subcultures for future studies.

It is also important to provide a clear explanation of what the researcher means under the terms ‘African’ and ‘Western.’ The African respondents selected for this study were all black individuals, predominantly from the Sotho and Tswana cultural groupings, as these constitute the major African subgroup in the Vaal-Triangle area. With the term “Western” the researcher refers to both English speaking and Afrikaans speaking white individuals.

In addition, religious affiliation and age could conceivably also play a very important role in affecting the dream views and practices of respondents. As

inclusion of all these components as purposive sampling criteria would also result in a very large respondent population and complex design, it was decided to focus mainly on gender and cultural association for the purpose of the present study. However, the religious affiliation, age, and the specific cultural subgroup of each respondent have been recorded and considered in the qualitative analysis where relevant.

In any study, determining the size of the respondent sample is important. Qualitative samples are usually small in size due to three main reasons. First, if the data is properly analysed there will come a point where very little new evidence is obtained from each additional respondent. This is because a phenomenon only needs to appear once in order to be part of the analytical map. There is therefore a point of diminishing return in which increasing the sample size no longer contributes new evidence.

Secondly, statements about incidence or prevalence are not the concern of qualitative research, and as such there is generally no set requirement to ensure that the sample is of sufficient size to provide estimates or to draw statistical inferences (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 83-84). However, it should also be pointed out that despite these considerations, the researcher agrees with Lewis and Ritchie (2003: 263) that the findings of qualitative research can indeed be generalized under certain conditions. As this issue is of great importance in the research process, towards the end of this chapter a separate section will be devoted to an in-depth discussion of this issue.

Lastly, the type of information yielded by qualitative studies is rich in detail, and in order to do justice to each unit of data collected, and to prevent the task from becoming unmanageable, sample sizes need to be kept reasonably small (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 83-84).

In determining sample size it is also important to take into account issues such as the heterogeneity of the population, the number of selection criteria, the

types of data collection methods and the budget and resources available (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 84).

In the present study, only two purposive criteria were identified, namely culture and gender. As such, a very large sample group is not required. However, due to the relatively high level of heterogeneity of the sample population the sample size could not be too small either.

Finally, given the fact that the chosen method for data collection was the qualitative interview, which tends to be time consuming, the sample size had to be limited to some degree.

Based on all these considerations, it was decided to select a total of twenty respondents, of which five were African males, five Western males, another five African females, and five Western females. This sample size was considered to be large enough to provide a reasonable outline of dream related discourses and practices, yet small enough to allow for detailed analysis of each sample element.

Prior to the interviewing process it was decided that if after conducting the twenty interviews, it was felt that much greater richness of data could be acquired through additional interviews, or that it was found that certain themes were not sufficiently well represented to derive sound qualitative evidence, additional respondents would be selected to augment the data accrued in the initial interviews. Ritchie *et al.* (2003: 85) confirms that it is perfectly possible in qualitative research to supplement a sample by adding members to it, or to draw a second sample within the scope of the same study, as additional qualitative data can be reliably incorporated provided that the same method of data collection has been followed. This is because missing phenomena will add to the completion of the “map,” and frequency of occurrence is not a central concern.

However, in conducting the interviews, the researcher found that a point of data saturation was reached unexpectedly early on in the interviews, and towards the final interviews, very little new data was added to the entire “map” accrued thus far. As such, it was deemed unnecessary to select additional samples and this option was therefore not exercised.

The choice of an appropriate sample frame is of central importance in qualitative research. Samples can be generated in a range of different ways, yet it is important that the sample frame exhibits the following criteria:

- it must provide the details required to inform selection, in this case relevant information about gender and culture,
- it must provide a comprehensive and inclusive base from which the sample can be selected,
- it should be able to provide a sufficient number of potential participants to allow for high quality selection,
- it should be possible to manipulate and sort the criteria by which the selection is determined (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 88-89; Marshall & Rossman, 1989: 54).

The administrative records of a local university was selected as the sample frame to be used in the present study as it fulfils all the requirements stated above in that it contains detailed biographical information of over 3000 individuals from diverse cultural, gender, religious and age related contexts. As the database only contains student records, all the respondents selected for the study were registered students at this institution.

The university itself was chosen as its student population are diverse with regard to culture, race, gender, and age, and also as it is comprised of individuals from all over the Vaal-Triangle area.

After obtaining permission for using the university's administrative database for this purpose, the respondents were then randomly selected according to the following process: The researcher wrote out the alphabet three times on a set of 78 same sized pieces of paper, so that each piece of paper contained a single letter, and each letter of the alphabet occurred on three different pieces of paper. These were then put into a bowl and shuffled around. The researcher then drew three cards at random and recorded the sequence of letters. These three letters were then used, in sequence, to select a respondent from the alphabetically indexed database whose surname most closely approximated these three letters. For example, if the letters l, b, and t were drawn, the closest surname to this alphabetically might be "Lategan." This procedure was repeated until the required amount of respondents had been selected.

When eight respondents in a specific category of respondents (such as African males) were selected, any further respondents of that category that were selected were ignored. The selection process continued in this manner until eight respondents were selected in each category. The extra three respondents were selected in case any of the first five respondents were unwilling or unable to participate in the interviews. (For example, should respondent number two be unable to do the interview, then respondent six was approached, and so on.) In cases where more than three respondents in a particular category were unable or unwilling to participate in the study, additional names were drawn from the university database.

The respondents so selected were then contacted telephonically and their permission was sought to participate in the interviews, after they were given a brief overview of the aim of the study. If permission was granted, an appointment was set up for the interview. The location of the interviews often consisted of the researcher's office, although he also visited several respondents in their homes, depending on the preference of the particular respondent.

The following section examines and describes the semi-structured, qualitative interview which was selected as the preferred method of data collection in the present study.

4.5. The semi-structured qualitative interview

The semi-structured, qualitative interview has been chosen as the preferred method of information gathering to be used in the present study. As such, this method will be discussed in greater detail in this section.

As was discussed before, the present study has the dual intention of being both a descriptive and an exploratory study of dream related discourses and practices. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 43) state that there are two alternatives for the design of exploratory and descriptive research, namely the case study and the survey, which includes the use of interviews and questionnaires. Marshall and Rossman (1989: 78) support this notion by stating that in-depth interviewing constitutes a highly suitable data collection strategy in the context of exploratory and descriptive research. As such, for the purposes of the present study, the survey, and more particularly the semi-structured qualitative interview, has been selected as the preferred research method. The interview has been defined by Schurink (2001: 299) as one or more face-to-face interactions between an interviewer and an interviewee, where the purpose is to understand the interviewee's life experience or situation as expressed in his or her own words. Schurink (2001: 299-300) goes on to state that researchers make use of semi-structured face-to-face interviews to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about or perceptions of a particular topic. As this reflects the aims of the present study, the semi-structured qualitative interview is ideally suited to supporting the achievement of the stated research goals.

The qualitative interview has often been described as a conversation with a purpose, due to its naturalistic nature and the fact that it reproduces a fundamental process through which knowledge about the social world is constructed in human interaction (Legard *et al.*, 2003: 138; Marshall & Rossman, 1989: 82). As such, the interview has been described as the most important data collection method in the social sciences (Schurink, 1988: 136).

The use of interviews in qualitative research must be distinguished from their use in the context of survey research. In the latter, the emphasis is on structured responses to structured questions. It is assumed that the interviewer can manipulate the situation and has control over a set list of questions that have been formulated before the interview and which are to be answered rather than considered, rephrased, re-ordered, discussed and analysed. In contrast, qualitatively inclined researchers prefer to use more unstructured or informal interviews, i.e. interviews which employ a set of themes and topics in order to form questions in the course of conversation. This strategy gives informants an opportunity to develop their answers outside a structured format. The emphasis is on the conversation-like character of interviewing as a means of establishing rapport and trust between researcher and participant. This process also allows the participant's perspective on the social phenomenon of interest to unfold as the participant, and not the researcher views it, which reflects a fundamental assumption in qualitative research (Mouton, 1988:12; Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 107; Marshall & Rossman, 1989: 82).

The researcher who makes use of unstructured or semi-structured interviewing is therefore concerned with understanding rather than explanation; with naturalistic observation rather than controlled measurement, and with the subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of an insider as opposed to the outsider perspective that is predominant in the quantitative approach (Schurink, 1988: 137). As the goal of qualitative research is inherently

exploratory, the semi-structured interview is aimed at a process of discovery rather than one of verification (Schurink, 1988: 138).

The key features of the qualitative interview is that:

- it combines structure with flexibility,
- it is interactive in nature, in that the material is generated by the interaction between the researcher and the interviewee,
- it enables the researcher to achieve depth in responses in terms of penetration, exploration and explanation, and enables the researcher to explore fully all the factors that underpin the respondents' answers,
- it is generative in the sense that new knowledge or thoughts are likely to be created at some stage during the interview (Legard *et al.*, 2003: 141-142).

Two alternative positions on qualitative interviewing have been put forward. In the first, the interviewer is seen as a miner who unearths the metal of knowledge contained in the interviewee. In the process the miner is considered to be a neutral agent in that he does not contaminate the knowledge, but merely serves as a pipeline to extract and record the knowledge held by the interviewee (Legard *et al.*, 2003: 139).

This view runs contrary to the general postmodern approach adopted in the study. From a postmodern perspective, the assumption that by merely asking the right questions the reality of the other person could become known, is questioned. In this approach, the interviewer is not considered to extract meaning from an interviewee as much as co-create meaning with him or her (Schurink, 2001: 298). Furthermore, the postmodern approach holds that the researcher can never remain detached or impartial in the process of research.

Due to these views a second position has been offered by constructivists in which knowledge is not seen as given, but created and negotiated through the interactional process of the interview, so that the researcher therefore becomes an active player in the development of data and meaning. These views have naturally led some authors to express concern over the stability and validity of interview data (Schurink, 2001: 298; Legard *et al.*, 2003: 139-140). However, the researcher is of the opinion that the interview can indeed be meaningful beyond its immediate context. This contention is supported by Legard *et al.* (2003: 140) and also by Miller and Glassner (1997: 100) when they say that interviews provide access to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds. While the interview is itself a symbolic interaction, this does not discount the possibility that knowledge of the social world beyond the interaction can be obtained.

The methodological dimension of interviewing primarily concerns the “how” of interviewing: how the interviewer should go about constructing the most reliable and valid image (in his opinion) of reality in order to describe and interpret a social phenomenon (Schurink, 2001: 299). There is no universally acceptable method that can be used by social science researchers to construct reality, and therefore data collection instruments obtain significance only when placed in a particular context or meaning system (Schurink, 1988: 136-137). In the context of the present study, it is the postmodern and social-constructivist approaches that will furnish such a meaning system and determine the specific methodology that will be followed in designing and conducting the qualitative interviews. The next section will therefore examine the various types of qualitative interviews and identify the specific type of interview that is best suited to the purposes of the present study.

4.5.1. Types of qualitative interviews

Three main types of qualitative or unstructured interviews, which range from totally unstructured to relatively structured, can be distinguished (Schurink, 1988: 139; Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 106-107):

-The informal conversation type or in-depth interview

In this type of interview, also known as the non-scheduled interview, no questions are deliberately formulated. Instead, questions develop spontaneously in the course of the natural interaction between the interviewer and subject. Respondents are asked to comment on widely defined issues, and are free to expand on the topic as they see fit, to focus on particular aspects, to relate their own experiences on the general topic, and so on. The researcher usually does not acquaint himself with the existing literature, fearing that existing theoretical constructs might affect his or her objectivity.

The interviewer limits his own contributions to the interview to the absolute minimum. His role is to introduce the general theme on which information is required, motivate the subject to participate spontaneously, stimulate him through probing, and steer him back tactfully to the research topic when he digresses, and record the information he obtains. Usually no time limit is fixed for completing an interview (Schurink, 1988: 139; Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:107).

-Unstructured interviews using a schedule / the semi-structured interview

This type of interview is conducted with the use of a research schedule. This implies that the researcher will use mainly questions or themes that appear to be important as guidelines for the interview, based on existing literature. Although the questions appearing on the schedule need not be asked in a particular sequence, they do serve as a kind of control for ensuring that all

relevant subtopics are covered during an interview (Schurink, 1988: 140; Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:107). This type of interview is best suited for when there is a need for more specific and detailed information on the topic. The interviewer has a more defined goal and the types of questions to be answered by all interviewees are fixed (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 107). One of the main advantages of the semi-structured qualitative interview is that it enables the researcher to follow up on particularly interesting avenues that emerge during the interview so that the participant is able to provide more in-depth explanations (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 107; Schurink, 2001: 299-301).

-The open-ended interview

Strictly speaking, this type of interview cannot be regarded as a true form of qualitative interviewing, since only the answers are unstructured. In other words, an open-ended interview generally consists of a set of previously formulated open questions on an interview guide, carefully arranged, that are put to all subjects in a fairly similar sequence. This process has the advantage that it facilitates the systematic obtainment and comparison of data. However, the most important disadvantage of this method is that because the questions are structured, relatively little information is gained on the subject's world (Schurink, 1988: 141; Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 107).

Given the chosen social-constructivist approach of the study, the latter method was immediately rejected as being an unsuitable strategy for accomplishing the research aims. An overly structured interview would be counterproductive to eliciting a comprehensive description of dream related discourses and practices from an insider perspective.

The achievement of the stated research aims of the present study is dependent upon the obtainment of the respondents' subjective, "inner world" view, experiences, and practices related to dreams. Formulating and asking specific questions based on any kind of pre-existing discourse on the topic could likely

serve to further marginalise the respondents' own discourses by limiting, conditioning, or otherwise adversely influencing their responses.

The informal, conversation type interview was rejected on the basis of its total lack of structure. As certain general themes can be clearly deduced from a literature study on dreams, the researcher felt it was important that these themes be addressed in the interviews. As it is likely that many respondents have not exhaustively verbalized their beliefs and ideas about dreams, it was felt that general questions guided by specific themes might prove to be more effective in extracting their personal beliefs than an overly unstructured and non-specific invitation to share everything that they think and believe about dreams with the researcher.

As such, the researcher chose the semi-structured qualitative interview as the preferred method of data collection as it combines the features of flexibility and structure in an optimal way as far as the requirements of the present study is concerned. Such an interview allowed enough openness and flexibility to explore the subjects' dream related beliefs and practices widely, yet also contained enough structure to give focus to the interviews. This structure was created by the use of themes which served to guide the interviews.

Schurink (2001: 299) describes the semi-structured qualitative interview by saying that the researcher has a set of predetermined open-ended neutral questions on an interview schedule, but the interview is merely guided by the schedule, and not dictated by it.

The main advantage of using such a schedule is that they provide for relatively systematic collection of data and at the same time ensure that important data are not forgotten (Schurink, 2001: 300). The use of a schedule and themes to guide the interview also served to create a degree of consistency across the different interviews which facilitated the comparative qualitative analysis of the data. A disadvantage of this method is that it is partially conditioned by existing literature and theories on the subject, which might impede attempts to

enter the respondent's own world. To compensate for this, the themes were kept as general as possible, and respondents were also given the opportunity to comment freely on any dream related beliefs or practices that were not related to any of the major themes addressed in the interviews.

The aim of the interviews was to record the respondents' dream related beliefs, discourses, and practices as fully as possible from an insider perspective. In this process respondents not only responded to the general themes identified by the researcher, but were also given the opportunity to introduce new issues to the discussion.

In order to contextualize the responses, the age, race, religious affiliation, home language and gender of each of the participants in the study have been recorded prior to the interview. These factors were taken into account during the process of qualitative data analysis.

The following section is devoted to a discussion of the procedure that was followed in designing the interview.

4.5.2. Identification of guiding themes

This section focuses upon the nature and selection of the themes that served to guide the interviewing process.

Following the recommendations of Poggenpoel (2001: 342-343), these themes were selected on the basis of a review of existing literature on cultural, religious, psychological, scientific, sociological and other dream related beliefs, discourses and practices, and discerning the general themes, patterns, and salient categories that seemed to be commonly addressed in all of these discourses. These themes are not specific to any given discourse on dreams, but serve to define the general issues commonly addressed by most discourses on the subject.

Below is a list of the most important themes that were explored in the interviews as well as examples of typical questions that were often asked of the respondents in order to uncover their discourses and practices related to that particular theme:

-The importance of dreams

Typical questions included: Are dreams important to you? Why? How important are dreams to you? Why?

-Perceived origin and causes of dreams

Typical questions included: Where do you think dreams come from? What do you think causes dreams?

-Perceived function and purpose of dreams

Typical questions included: What do you believe are the function of dreams? Why do we have dreams? What role do they serve in our lives?

-The extent and manner in which dreams influence the respondent's actions and decisions in daily life.

Typical questions included: Do you ever base any actions or decisions on your dreams? Do your dreams ever affect the things you decide or do in your daily life? Do you ever do or decide anything differently because of something that you dreamed about?

-Unusual dream experiences and beliefs about these

Typical questions included: Have you ever had any unusual dream experiences? Can you tell me about these? After such general questions, more specific questions were asked: Do you believe that dreams can show the future? Have you ever had such dreams? Do you believe that it is possible for deceased

individuals or spiritual forces to make contact with you in a dream? Have you ever had such a dream?

-Strategies and methods of dream interpretation

Typical questions included: How do you make sense of your dreams? What do you do in order to interpret or understand your dreams? How do you decide what your dreams mean?

-Sharing dreams with others, and reasons for doing so

Typical questions included: Do you ever share your dreams with others? Why? For what purpose? With whom? Do you ever go to others for assistance in making sense of your dreams?

In cases where the dreamer answered in the affirmative, the researcher questioned the respondent as to the approach taken by this individual, their background, and influence on the respondent.

-Origin and sources of respondent's dream beliefs and practices

Typical questions included: Where do your ideas on dream come from? Where did you learn the things you know about dreams?

-Open theme

This theme allows for an open exploration of any other dream related beliefs and practices the subject might want to discuss that was not covered by the other themes. Questions included: Are there any other things with regard to your dream life that we have not talked about? Is there anything else you can think of that might be relevant to talk about that we have not covered so far? What other things have you noticed about dreams that we have not talked about yet?

With regard to each theme, further questions, often referred to as content mining questions or probes (Legard *et al.*, 2003: 150-151), were asked as

appropriate in order to elucidate, amplify, clarify, explore or otherwise follow up in the respondents responses to the general themes described above. Typical questions in this regard included: “Tell me more about...” and “Could you explain what you mean when you say...”

In addition, as the postmodern approach emphasises the co-constructed nature of knowledge and understanding, it was felt that the interactional process that occurred during the interview itself should be allowed to be co-determinative of the type of questions asked. As such, many additional questions were asked of the respondents which emerged in the context of the specific interactional process that transpired between the researcher and the respondent.

In formulating the questions to be asked of each respondent, care was taken to avoid leading, and ambiguous questions. Following the recommendations of Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 117) and Legard *et al.* (2003: 154-155), the researcher strived to keep all questions asked as open-ended and clear as possible. As much as possible, questions were kept simple, short, and understandable. Also, following the suggestions of Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 118) questions were often repeated either sequentially or at different times in the interview, using a different formulation and phrasing, as a method of further checking the veracity of answers as well as obtaining additional information on each topic.

4.5.3. Principles for conducting the interviews and facilitating the relationship with the respondent

In conducting the interview, the researcher endeavoured to adhere to the following basic principles of interviewing:

- Respect and courtesy

In conducting the interviews, the researcher, following Schurink, (1988: 147) endeavoured to always treat the respondents with respect and courtesy, never engaging in any action that would negate the intrinsic worth of a subject. This process included respecting the respondents' right to change their minds about some part of the interview or to choose not to answer a given question if they considered it to be inappropriate (Legard *et al.*, 2003: 147).

-Acceptance, understanding and non-judgementalness.

The researcher strove to accept the respondents despite their problems and shortcomings, and gave the reassurance that he empathised with the subjects and did not condemn or judge them. At the same time he sought to avoid emotional over-involvement with respondents as it was realized that not doing so could adversely affect his ability to view the information disclosed to him in a critical manner (Schurink, 1988: 147). It was also considered very important that the researcher be non-judgemental towards the respondent. This contributed to an atmosphere of trust and openness in which the respondent felt more inclined to reveal his personal views and opinions.

Another central way in which the researcher sought to create a non-judgemental atmosphere was through assuring respondents early on in the interview that there were no right or wrong responses. This follows the recommendations of Legard *et al.* (2003: 156-157).

-Confidentiality and privacy

Respondents were assured that any information that they impart to the researcher would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and would not be disclosed to any third party. They were informed in advance that the information they provide would be documented in the present study, but that it would be done anonymously in a manner that will ensure their personal privacy and dignity. This also benefited the research process in that if respondents sensed that the information that they provided would be treated confidentially, they might have felt freer and more secure in their interaction with the

interviewer and at the same time more willing to open up and allow a relationship of trust to develop (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 103; Schurink, 1988: 148; Legard *et al.*, 2003: 145).

-Integrity

Schurink (1988: 149) explains that it is essential for the maintenance of a sound relationship of trust that no false expectations be raised in the subjects, and that they be treated with absolute honesty. In conducting the interviews, the researcher clearly explained the aim of the research as well as the expected contribution of the respondent. It was considered very important to help the participant to understand what his or her role was at an early stage in the interview (Legard *et al.*, 2003: 147).

-Individualization

Schurink (1988: 150) states that everyone feels the need to be recognized and accepted, and that the recognition of differences is intrinsic to the principle of individualization. As people have this fundamental need to be recognised as persons in their own right, the interviewer should take care not to let the respondent feel that he or she is merely a number, since the latter will then be unlikely to reveal his or her true feelings. In conducting the interviews the researcher therefore sought to acknowledge the individuality of each respondent that was interviewed.

4.5.4. Conducting the interviews

Following the general recommendations of Legard *et al.* (2003: 166) and Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 116), the interviews were conducted privately, in a quiet setting such as the researcher's office or the respondents' homes, based on the preferences of the respondents, and it was ensured that no interruptions occurred. The seating arrangements were informal and of such a nature to encourage interaction and involvement.

The interviews usually commenced with an introductory conversation, which often concerned trivial matters, and served to establish an initial relationship and put the respondents at ease. Legard *et al.* (2003: 145) describe this as the first stage of the qualitative interview, and emphasise that it is a crucial time for establishing a cooperative relationship with the respondent as well as putting him or her at ease. Following the recommendations of Schurink (2001: 302) the researcher endeavoured to establish a cordial atmosphere so that the respondents would feel secure and have the confidence to speak freely.

Following this, the researcher explained the main aims of the research, and respondents were clearly informed about their role in the process. It was made clear that the interview was in no way a test, and that the researcher was interested in their personal views on the subject, and as such, there were no “wrong” answers. This step was considered very important in order to prevent respondents from altering their responses in order to gain the approval of the researcher, and also to convey the idea that the respondents’ information was acceptable and valuable, a condition that Marshall and Rossman (1989: 82) consider to be the most important aspect of the interviewer’s approach. Time was allowed before the interview itself for each respondent to ask any questions he or she might have had at that point.

Legard *et al.* (2003: 145) refer to this as the second stage of the qualitative interview in which the researcher introduces the research topic, provides a clear reiteration of the nature and purpose of the research, affirms confidentiality, and seeks permission to record the research. Schurink (2001: 302) also confirms the importance of clearly explaining the aim of the proposed investigation and the envisaged utilization of the results to each respondent.

The researcher then proceeded with the interview, by asking the respondent to discuss his or her views, beliefs, and practices related to dreams. In order to facilitate this process, as well as the qualitative analyses and comparison of

responses, certain general themes were identified which served as guidelines for the specific questions asked of each respondent. This process also served to provide a loose structure to the interviews and also ensured that all relevant aspects of the respondents' dream related beliefs and practices were explored and is a practice recommended by Legard *et al.* (2003: 146).

The use of themes was also deemed to be appropriate to the present study as such an approach allowed for some structure without confining the respondents' responses. It also allowed a degree in flexibility in the phrasing and adapting of the questions to each unique interview situation. In guiding the respondent through the key themes, both those themes anticipated by the interviewer as well as themes which emerged from the interview were explored in depth.

In every interview, care was taken to ensure that all the themes thus identified were covered. However, in order to preserve the fluidity and conversational nature of the interviews, this was not done mechanistically. As such, the sequences in which the various themes were covered sometimes varied from one respondent to the next. Following the recommendations of Schurink (2001: 303-308), in this process each respondent was viewed as the expert on his or her own dream related beliefs and practices and maximum time was allowed to the participant to tell his or her story.

The length of the interview was determined by the willingness of the respondents to be in the interview, the length and breadth of their responses and the necessity of covering all the themes central to the topic. Although the researcher initially scheduled 90 minutes for each interview, it was soon discovered that most interviews did not last longer than 50 minutes, in which time all the identified themes were explored in depth.

Following the recommendations of Legard *et al.* (2003: 146), after the interviews, respondents were thanked warmly for their willingness to

participate in the study, and the value of their contributions was affirmed. Time was also allowed for the respondents to raise any questions they might have had.

4.5.5. Recording and presenting the interviews

At the commencement of the interviews, permission was asked of each respondent to record their responses in writing. During the interviews, the researcher took detailed notes of the respondent's responses, using their own words and phraseology as far as possible. In this process, not only the verbal responses, but also the nonverbal elements of the interview were recorded. A shorthand system of codes was developed with which to record aspects such as inflection, hesitation, uncertainty, incoherent responses, emphasis, repetition of responses, etc. These elements were also considered during the process of qualitative analysis.

However, in order to maintain the informal and conversational tone of the interview, it was decided not to attempt to record the entire interview verbatim, and a limited degree of editing did therefore occur in that overly repetitive and tangential information were sometimes omitted.

It was purposefully decided to avoid audio or video recording of the interviews as it was felt that such a practice might constrain the respondents' responses to some degree, and impose a subjective sense of expectation on the respondents which might lead them to be 'appropriate' rather than authentic in their responses. As the primary aim of the interviews is to obtain an insider view of each respondent's personal dream beliefs, discourses, and practices, which necessitates a certain degree of trust and authenticity (Schurink, 2001: 303), it was decided that the presence of an audio or video recording instrument could limit the openness and spontaneity of response that was required.

Although it is realized that this approach has certain disadvantages such as diminished accuracy in recording responses, and interfering with the researcher's ability to fully focus on the respondent, it was felt that as far as the purpose of the interviews is concerned, the advantages of this approach outweighed the disadvantages. In addition, the act of writing down the responses in itself often served as an important tool to clarify the responses and highlight areas where further questioning was necessary.

At the end of each interview, these handwritten notes therefore constituted the raw data that has been accumulated during the course of the interview. Due to the important requirements of managing the data so that the researcher is able to make sense of the data and able to locate and cite descriptions in order to illustrate concepts (Poggenpoel, 2001: 334), a process of data reduction and minor editing was undertaken after each interview.

As such, in order to minimize the potentially distorting effects of time, directly following the interviews, the handwritten records of the interviews were transcribed electronically. In this process it was decided to omit the researcher's questions, as these can be clearly inferred from the interviews itself. Where unclear, the responses were slightly modified to reflect the question. This decision was undertaken in order to facilitate the reporting of the research. Respondents sometimes gave one or two word responses to specific questions in which their intent cannot be deduced without reference to the question. As such, by including the question in the response, the reporting of the interviews is significantly facilitated. This decision is also based on the fact that a thorough list of the themes and possible questions covered in each interview has already been given. As each respondent has been questioned about the same themes, the generic list of questions serves as a backdrop for all the interview reports.

Omitting the researcher's questions also serves to reflect each respondent's dream beliefs and practices as a continuous narrative, which provides a more holistic view thereof.

In addition, as the themes often overlap and related points might be discussed by respondents at different points in the interview, it was considered that it would be limiting and mechanical to organise the information according to specific questions or themes. Not doing so allows for a broader and more holistic analysis of each theme.

In transcribing the handwritten notes made of the interviews, the researcher carried out a minor degree of additional editing in that broken and highly incoherent sentences, repetitive answers, and interjections and comments that were peripheral to the topic of dream related discourses and practices were often omitted. Although the researcher recognizes that this practice can serve to distort the respondents' responses, it was felt that the alterations were minor, and that the benefits of increased clarity and coherence that was gained in this process outweighed the slight loss of accuracy that might have resulted from it.

The completed transcripts were then handed back to the respondents for editing and correction, as a further check to ensure accuracy. Any alterations, additions or deletions suggested by the subjects were then made until the subjects felt that the transcript accurately reflected their beliefs about dreams.

Lastly it is important to note that a few of the interviews were conducted in Afrikaans. Although the researcher initially recorded these interviews in Afrikaans, he decided to translate these interviews into English for the purposes of reporting them in the present study, as the Afrikaans version might not be accessible to many English speaking readers. It is realized that the process of translation is rife with difficulties, and it was decided to compensate for this to some degree by handing the translated version of the interview back to the respondents so that they could evaluate it and suggest alterations and

corrections. Furthermore, the Afrikaans versions of the interviews were referred to during the course of the qualitative analysis.

As it is believed that it is important for any reader to have access to the data that was utilized in the research process in order to render the research process that was followed more transparent, the records of the interviews are given in their entirety in the appendix. These records, along with the handwritten notes, constituted data upon which the qualitative analysis was based. The next section examines this process in greater depth.

4.6. Procedure for qualitative analysis

In this section, the process that has been followed in qualitatively analysing the data that was obtained from the interviews will be discussed.

Unlike quantitative analysis, there are no clearly agreed upon rules or procedures for analysing qualitative data. Approaches to analysis vary in terms of basic epistemological assumptions about the nature of qualitative enquiry and in terms of the main focus and aims of the analytical process (Spencer *et al.*, 2003: 200). Poggenpoel (2001: 344) elaborates upon this by stating that there is no right or wrong way to perform qualitative data analysis, but that the important issue is that the researcher should be able to logically account for stages in data analysis and that the final conclusions be based on the generated data.

However, despite the fact that there is no single generally accepted procedure for qualitative analysis, certain general requirements and guidelines for high quality qualitative research can indeed be discerned.

Spencer *et al.* (2003: 212) depict the stages and processes involved in qualitative analysis in the form of a conceptual diagram which is reflected below. This upward moving hierarchy is made up of a series of viewing

platforms, each of which involves different analytic tasks, enabling the researcher to gain an overview and make sense of the data. It should also be kept in mind that this process is not linear, and a repeated movement up and down this “ladder” is not only possible, but encouraged as a central part of the analytical process which will result in greater refinement of the analytical account (Spencer *et al.*, 2003: 200).

Seeking application to wider theory	
Developing explanations	↑
Detecting patterns (associative analysis)	↑
Establishing typologies	↑
Identifying elements and dimensions, classifying data	↑
Summarizing or synthesizing data	↑
Sorting data by theme (in cross-sectional analysis)	↑
Labelling or tagging data by concept or theme	↑
Identifying initial themes or concepts	↑
Raw data	↑

Figure 2

This process, in a somewhat modified form, formed the basis of the qualitative analysis procedures that have been followed in the present study. As such, the next section is devoted to an in-depth discussion of this process as it applies specifically to this study.

Firstly, the raw data was accrued by means of the semi-structured qualitative interviews as was discussed previously.

In most qualitative studies data reduction is considered a central task due to the generally voluminous, messy and unwieldy nature of the data (Poggenpoel, 2001: 334-335; Spencer *et al.*, 2003: 200). Marshall and Rossman (1989: 110)

state that the qualitative research design should include plans for recording data in a systematic manner that will facilitate the qualitative analysis thereof. The handwritten notes made during the interviews constituted the raw data accrued during the research process. Due to the need to make sense of the data as well as being able to offer descriptions in order to illustrate a given concept (Poggenpoel, 2001: 335), it was decided to transcribe and edit the handwritten notes in the manner discussed in section 4.5.5. A degree of data reduction also occurred in the process of manually recording the interviews, and also in omitting overly repetitive and tangential information.

However, as the intention of the research is to establish an “insider” description of the dream related beliefs, discourses, and practices of the respondents, it was considered counterproductive to reduce the data further than this, as it would fragment the narratives and impose the researcher’s own assumptions and theoretical biases onto the data to an unnecessarily high degree.

It is also realized that even in carrying out minor editing, some degree of fragmentation and distortion would inevitably have occurred. Spencer *et al.* (2003: 200) echo this idea when they state that there is no such thing as a purely descriptive, a-theoretical analysis, since all description involves selection and interpretation of meaning according to implicit, informal theories in use. However, in carrying out the editing processes mentioned in the previous section, the researcher attempted to aim for a compromise in that it represented the minimum amount of data reduction necessary in order to clarify the raw data without substantially altering its basic character.

The next stage of the analysis involved the common procedure of identification or generation of key themes, concepts, or categories. These are often chosen by the researcher and may include common sense themes, or themes that were influenced by the literature, or concepts devised by the researcher to capture the essence of talk and interaction (Marshall & Rossman, 1989: 111-113; Spencer *et al.*, 2003: 202-203).

This stage of the research has already been executed in the process of establishing the themes used to guide the qualitative interviews. It is these themes that served as guiding elements in the analysis. These themes have purposely been kept as general and open ended as possible, to minimize the imposition of the researcher's personal theoretical positions.

These themes were initially selected on the basis of a review of existing literature on cultural, religious, psychological, scientific, and other dream related beliefs, discourses, and practices, and discerning the general themes that seem to be commonly addressed in all of these discourses. These themes are not specific to any given discourse on dreams, but serve to define the general issues commonly addressed by most discourses on the subject.

These themes served as a useful way to get a "handle" on the data and greatly facilitated the analytical process. Marshall and Rossman (1989: 113) support this when they say that generating categories of data can serve as a very important focusing device in a qualitative study.

It is realized that this choice of themes is by no means neutral or complete, and that it has inevitably been influenced to some degree by the researcher's formal and informal theoretical assumptions. In addition, Marshall and Rossman's (1989: 113) warning was heeded that an overly structured and organized data collection strategy can filter out unusual and serendipitous findings which could serve to provide fresh new perspectives on the research topic. In order to compensate for this, apart from stating the themes as broadly and as open-endedly as possible, the researcher also allowed for the existence of an open theme in the data. This was done by inquiring about any of the respondents' dream related beliefs and practices that have not been addressed by the questions derived from the foregoing themes.

The next two stages were combined in that the data was labelled according to theme, and sorted, summarized, and synthesized based on the themes that were identified in the previous stage.

Spencer *et al.* (2003: 212-214) comment on this process by stating that after having generated and applied a set of themes and concepts in the first stage, the analyst then makes use of the synthesized data to prepare descriptive accounts, identifying key dimensions and mapping the range and diversity of each phenomenon.

Firstly, in order to facilitate a comparative analysis of the interviews, the themes used as the basis for the interviews were used as thematic categories for coding and exploring the data. Although it would seem logical to divide up the interviews based upon the questions and answers relevant to each theme, such an approach has an important shortcoming. This is due to the fact that a considerable amount of overlap exists between themes, in that a respondent's answer with regard to one theme often had a bearing on his or her views on another theme.

In considering all these points, and following the recommendations of Poggenpoel (2001: 336), it was decided to make use of color coding in order to extract the information relevant to each theme from the data. Each theme was assigned a specific color and the transcript of each interview was then read through very carefully. Every comment or reference that had any relation to the theme in question was then color coded using highlighting pens according to the chosen color for this theme. Such codings often overlapped in that a particular statement might have relevance with regards to more than one theme. In this way, the researcher was not limited to considering only the responses to the questions of a particular theme, but could evaluate each transcript holistically for the presence of each theme. This process also rendered the data more manageable in that it allowed for a more focused examination and qualitative evaluation of the data.

In addition, the color coding process also served to identify any data that did not relate to any of the identified themes. This un-coded data was both examined separately and in relation to the other themes in order to explore whether these might represent new themes or sub-themes of existing ones. In this process, following the suggestions of Poggenpoel (2001: 337-338), all statements that could not be grouped with the main themes identified in the research were examined and compared to each other in order to establish whether there might be underlying similarities which could point to the existence of new themes.

In describing the next stage of qualitative research, Poggenpoel (2001: 338) and Spencer *et al.* (2003: 214) state that once the nature of phenomena have been clarified and the data classified according to a set of substantive dimensions, refined categories or more abstract classes, the analyst may go on to develop typologies. The latter are specific forms of classification that help to describe and explain the segmentation of the social world or the way that phenomena can be characterized or differentiated.

The procedure of establishing typologies was not followed in the present study. This situation is due to the postmodern epistemological position of the study which considers any attempt at establishing clear cut typologies as limiting. However, from a social-constructivist approach it is possible to offer tentative descriptions of patterns and themes that were observed in the data. Yet the way in which this is executed is qualitatively different from a more modernist approach to the subject. Although conclusions and findings have been made in the present study, these have been presented as alternative ways of viewing the issue, and do not purport to represent any ultimate or final truth-claim about the subject.

In the next stage, the color coded data was examined with the intention of detecting patterns and associations within the data. Spencer *et al.* (2003: 215)

and Marshall and Rossman (1989: 112-114) describe this stage as the process of finding patterns and associations in the data and then attempting to account for why those patterns occur.

Each theme was examined in turn in order to identify common threads, associations, and sub-themes. This was considered to be a very important part of the analysis, as this process led to the identification and description of the major sub-themes permeating current dream related discourses and practices. The sub-themes that were thus identified were presented in chapter five in a two-fold manner. Firstly, the researcher provided a summary of the main elements of a given sub-theme, which was then followed by a series of direct citations from the interviews in order to illustrate the sub-theme under question in the respondents' own words. In this process, the researcher's summaries can be viewed as his particular "reading" of the interview texts, as was discussed in section 2.3.4. By comprehensively referencing each sub-theme with direct citations from the interviews, the full richness, scope, diversity, and subtle nuances of the responses are maintained and reflected. Due to the importance that is accorded to language in the social-constructivist approach (see section 2.3.3.) it was considered essential to allow the respondents' to voice their beliefs in their own words in this manner.

The present study did not follow the next stage described by Spencer *et al.* (2003: 215), which relates to the development of explanations, or similarly, to the development of theories (Poggenpoel, 2001: 338-339).

This is due to the fact that this study concerns itself mostly with a descriptive and explorative analysis of current, local dream related discourses, beliefs, and practices, and not with the development of typologies, theories, or explanatory accounts. Certainly, within the context of the chosen social-constructivist epistemology upon which the present study is based, no definitive causal relationships between aspects of the data are proposed.

However, an element of this practice has been followed in this study in that the dream related beliefs and discourses reflected in the interviews have been examined in a deconstructive manner with the intention of identifying *possible* underlying cultural, religious, psychological, scientific, and other dream discourses that might have informed the respondents' personal discourses. However, this process was not aimed at establishing explanatory accounts of the respondents' dream beliefs and practices, but was intended to highlight similarities and potential influences of existing dream discourses related to the respondents' personal beliefs and practices. It would be very difficult to trace the origin of most current, local dream discourses and practices to any specific cultural, religious, or psychological dream discourse with a high level of certainty. Due to this limitation, the emphasis on the deconstructive analysis fell on identifying cultural, religious, and psychological dream discourses that appear to *reflect* similar ideas to those cited by the respondents. In instances where it appears that a respondent's personal belief might have been *influenced* by such a discourse, this is stated as a tentative possibility and not as a conclusive certainty.

Furthermore, the findings were also examined in a sociological light, with the intention of identifying sociologically relevant themes and patterns in the data. However, in this process the findings have not been put forward as typologies or explanatory accounts, but merely as tentative descriptions of certain broad sociologically relevant patterns that emerged from the data.

The findings made during this process are comprehensively discussed in chapter five, and elaborated upon in chapter six.

4.7. Reliability and validity

In all research, the issues of reliability and validity assume an important role. As such, this section will be dedicated to an overview of these concepts as they are relevant to the present study.

Firstly it should be pointed out that the concepts of reliability and validity were developed in the natural sciences. Because of this, and the very different epistemological basis of qualitative research, there are real concerns about whether the same concepts have any value in determining the quality or sustainability of qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 1989: 145; Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 270). Poggenpoel (2001: 348) points out that qualitative research is very frequently evaluated against criteria appropriate to quantitative research and thereby found to be lacking. The researcher shares these opinions and concerns and believes it would be highly inappropriate to attempt to apply any quantitative measures of reliability or validity to the present study. However, in a broad sense, it is felt that it is indeed important that issues of reliability and validity be addressed. Poggenpoel (2001: 348) echoes this idea when he states that researchers need alternative models appropriate to qualitative designs that ensure rigour without sacrificing the relevance of the qualitative research. In order to do achieve these objectives, the concepts of reliability and validity have to be reinterpreted in the light of the qualitative and social-constructivist perspectives. Lewis and Ritchie (2003: 270) express similar ideas when they state that reliability, as it refers to *sustainability*, and validity, meaning *well-grounded* will have relevance for qualitative research since they help to define the strength of the data.

4.7.1. Reliability

Although the concept of reliability is generally understood to represent the extent to which research findings can be replicated if another study, using the

same or similar methods was undertaken (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 130; Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 270), the extent to which replication can occur in qualitative research has been seriously questioned (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 270). The implicit suggestion of the existence of eternal, universal truths which underlie such a view on reliability runs contrary to postmodern and social-constructivist notions. As alternatives, concepts such as trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, and consistency have been offered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 294-296).

Poggenpoel (2001: 351) and Lincoln and Guba (1985: 289-290) suggest the following question as measure of reliability in the context of a qualitative study: “How can we be reasonably sure that the findings would be replicated if the study were conducted with the same participants in the same context?”

The questions used in the face to face qualitative interviews have been standardized to some extent by the use of guiding themes. As all the respondents were therefore asked similar questions about the same themes, the measuring instrument can therefore be considered dependable, as repeating the questions as per the interview schedule with the same respondents would likely result in broadly similar findings. In addition, the qualitative interview is widely used and accepted as a dependable instrument for qualitative purposes (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003; Schurink, 2001: 297).

In addition, to ensure that a qualitative study conforms to the need of reliability, the following two requirements have been suggested: Firstly there is the need to ensure the research is as robust as it can be by carrying out internal checks on the quality of the data and its interpretation. Secondly, there is the need to assure the reader of the research by providing detailed information about the research process (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 272). This transparency allows the reader to assess whether respondents have been selected according to proper qualitative procedures, and to ascertain whether the qualitative

analysis of the data has been executed systematically and comprehensively, and whether identified themes were confirmed by multiple assessments.

Interpretations should be well supported by the evidence and the design of the study should have allowed equal opportunity for all perspectives to be identified (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 272).

In handing back the edited transcripts of the interviews to the respondents for editing or approval, the quality of the data was assured. Also, in minimizing the extent of data reduction and providing the records of each interview in the study, the quality of the data was further ensured.

In providing the full records of the interviews upon which the qualitative analysis was based, and in elucidating every step taken in the research process, the researcher attempted to create sufficient transparency in order to allow any reader to assess and follow each step of the research process.

To a large extent then, the reliability of the research will be determined by the reader, who must decide whether the findings made are soundly grounded into the raw data and appropriately justified.

4.7.2. Validity

The validity of findings or data is traditionally understood to refer to the correctness or precision thereof. This concept has two dimensions. The first, known as internal validity is concerned with whether the researcher is investigating what he claims to be investigating, and the second, referred to as external validity, is concerned with the extent to which the abstract constructs or postulates generated are applicable to other groups within the population (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 135; Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 273). Whereas reliability was concerned with issues of consistency and accuracy, validity asks questions such as “what is measured?” and “what do the results mean?” (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 135).

However, there have been attempts to move away from quantitative conceptions of validity, and to use instead other terms which are more appropriate to the context of postmodern, qualitative research. The terms “credibility” and “transferability” have been suggested as alternative and more appropriate ways to conceive of internal and external validity within the context of qualitative research. This is because the questions posed in the latter type of research are divergent from quantitative research questions and relate more to the validity of representation, understanding, and interpretation (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 273; Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 290-293).

Lewis and Ritchie (2003: 274-275) suggest that the validity of qualitative research findings can be assessed by addressing the following questions:

Firstly, is the research accurately reflecting the phenomena under study as perceived by the study population?

This gives rise to a series of subsidiary questions that lie at the heart of the question of the validity of the research:

-Sample coverage: did the sample frame contain any known bias; were the criteria used for selection inclusive of the constituencies thought to be of importance?

-Capture of phenomena: was the environment and quality of questioning sufficiently effective for participants to fully express and explore their views?

-Interpretations: is there sufficient internal evidence for the explanatory accounts that have been developed?

-Display: have the findings been portrayed in a way that remains “true” to the original data and allows others to see the analytic constructions that have occurred?

Poggenpoel (2001: 351) states that with regard to credibility (as qualitative version alternative to validity), the goal is to demonstrate that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described.

It is believed that these questions have been adequately addressed during the course of the research. Where exceptions to this occurred, these were elucidated clearly in the relevant section. As such, a repeat of the measures taken in this regard is regarded as superfluous.

Furthermore, Marshall and Rossman (1989: 145) state that an in-depth description of the findings showing the complexities of variables and themes (as has been done in chapter five) will be so embedded in the data that it cannot help but be valid.

Following Lewis and Ritchie (2003: 276) it is also believed that the validity of the research should (at least in part) be determined by the reader. Through providing a clear, detailed, and transparent description of the research process and the motivations underlying such processes, as advocated by Lewis and Ritchie (2003: 263) and Marshall and Rossman (1989: 145), the reader will be allowed to verify for themselves whether the conclusions reached by the researcher are valid or not.

The issue of validity is closely interlinked with conceptions about the extent to which research findings can be generalized. As such, the next section will discuss this issue in greater depth.

4.7.3. Generalizing from research

The issue of generalizing from research occupies a central role in research. However, as perspectives on generalization are strongly influenced by the epistemological and ontological positions of the researcher, many divergent views on the subject exist (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 263). Many postmodern researchers frown upon this practice and some even dismiss it as being totally irrelevant (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 263), as the practice of generalization runs contrary to the conceptions of relativity that are so central to these approaches.

Lewis and Ritchie (2003: 264-265) and Marshall and Rossman (1989: 145-146) suggest that generalization can be seen as involving three linked concepts. The first is representational generalization, which involves the question of whether what is found in a research sample can be generalized to, or held to be equally true of the parent population from which the sample is drawn. It also addresses the question of whether additional phenomena or perspectives would be found in the parent population which are not present in the study sample.

It should also be noted that this type of generalization involves very different issues in qualitative research than in quantitative research, and as such it would be totally inappropriate to evaluate or criticise such generalizations on the basis of quantitative criteria such as the idea of representative sampling. Qualitative research cannot be generalized on a statistical basis as it is not the prevalence of particular views or experiences, nor the extent of their location within particular parts of the sample about which inferences can be drawn. Rather it is the content or “map” of the range of views, experiences, outcomes or other phenomena under study, and the factors and circumstances that shape and influence them, that can be inferred to the research population (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 269). In order to distinguish between a qualitative and a quantitative paradigm, Lincoln and Guba (1985: 298) propose the concept of *transferability* as an alternative to generalization in the context of qualitative research.

The second concept related to generalization is referred to as inferential generalization and addresses the question whether the findings of a particular study can be generalized, or inferred to other contexts or settings that are beyond, but similar to the sampled one. Lastly, theoretical generalization is involved with drawing theoretical propositions and principles from the findings of a study for more general application. This therefore involves the generation of theoretical concepts which are deemed to be of wider application than the context of the study (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 264-265; Marshall & Rossman, 1989: 145-146; Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 146).

Several important questions must now be addressed: To what extent can or can't the findings made in this study be generalized, given the postmodern and social-constructivist ontological and epistemological position of the study? And if generalization is indeed possible, to what extent could this be so, and how should it be approached? The following section is dedicated to an exploration of these issues.

From a postmodern approach, the existence of a fixed, objective reality is challenged, which results in a highly relativized view of what constitutes reality. Furthermore, in the postmodern worldview the emphasis falls on the local rather than the universal. If such views are taken to an extreme, the practice of generalization would be viewed as being totally irrelevant due to the relative and subjective nature of the research findings.

However, the researcher disagrees with the contention that qualitative research findings made within the context of the postmodern and social-constructivist perspectives cannot be generalized. Although he accepts the social-constructivist notion that there is a great degree of relativity in most research findings, he also believes that the extent of this might be overblown by an overemphasis of the relativistic aspects of postmodern thought, and a downplaying of the extent to which contextual similarity occurs. It is believed

that a certain degree of consistency might indeed exist within specified contexts, but not necessarily across different contexts. As such, the researcher agrees with Marshall and Rossman (1989: 146) that a qualitative study's transferability to other settings beyond the context of the original sample population may be problematic in some ways. It would be risky and even inappropriate to generalize any findings made across such contextual boundaries. However, the researcher does believe that a certain amount of qualified generalization within the same general context in which the research was conducted can be made.

It is therefore concluded that a degree of representational generalization can indeed be made from the findings of the present study.

It seems quite reasonable to expect that, at least in the broader Vaal-Triangle area, African and Western individuals might hold similar ideas to those reflected by the respondents. Given the fact that a fairly high degree of data saturation was reached during the interviews, this possibility is not unreasonable.

However, it would be less appropriate to generalize the research findings into cultural and geographical contexts that are dissimilar to those addressed in the study. For example, as no Asian or coloured respondents were included in the study, the findings of the present study might not be relevant to these groups. As such the researcher feels that inferential generalization from the present study should only be undertaken in a highly tentative and speculative manner, as being suggestive of possibilities and definitely not of certainties. Such a position is supported by Lewis and Ritchie (2003: 268) who comment on the contentions of Cronbach that generalizations should be seen as modest speculations, working hypotheses, or extrapolations rather than as conclusions. If the research findings are considered in this light, then the data can be used responsibly to derive broad possibilities that might be applicable to other contexts. The researcher agrees with Lewis and Ritchie (2003: 268) that transferability depends on the degree of congruence between the "sending

context” within which the research is conducted, and the “receiving” context to which it is applied. Thus, the more similarity a given context bears to that of the parent population from which the sample was drawn for the present study, the more likely it is that generalizations might be applicable in such contexts. As it is very difficult for the researcher to anticipate, and to understand in depth, the range of other populations or settings which might hold appropriate resemblance, or for which the transfer of findings might have relevance, the role of the researcher is to provide a ‘thick description’ of the researched context and the phenomena found, which will then allow others to assess their transferability to other settings with which the reader is familiar (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003: 268).

The researcher feels that theoretical generalization would, in most cases, be beyond the scope and intent of the present study. Given that the primary aims of the study were cited as being descriptive and exploratory with regard to dream related practices and discourses, theory construction is not a concern of this study and has therefore not been attempted. In a few cases, where very strong associative patterns in the data were detected, very tentative and speculative hypotheses have been put forward in order to furnish one possible explanation for these patterns. Such a position is supported by Lewis and Ritchie (2003: 263) when they state that within the context of qualitative research, theories can indeed be proposed as long as they are understood to represent a fluid collection of principles and hypotheses, as opposed to being seen as fixed and immutable. Such a view would also be in accordance with a postmodern world view.

Based on the above, it is believed that *how* generalization is done is at least as important as whether or not it is executed in the first place. As long as a degree of reservation and qualification accompanies any generalizing claims, and they are presented as possibilities as opposed to certainties, it is believed that generalization in a postmodern context can be justified. By clearly making the

reader aware about the potential limitations of such a practice, the potential shortcomings of the process can be compensated for to a large degree.

Based on the above, it is suggested that the major themes and sub-themes identified in the dream related discourses and practices of the respondents might indeed be likely to be representative, at least to some degree, of general dream related discourses and beliefs among African and Western individuals in the Vaal-Triangle area. However, such representativity will not be inclusive or comprehensive, and may likely not apply with regard to individuals from different cultural or geographical contexts.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the research design and methodology that was followed in the study. The literature study and semi-structured qualitative interview were discussed at length, as they represent the central research methods utilized in the study. The rationale for the selection of these methods was discussed, and the procedure for the selection of respondents was also elucidated. This was followed by a discussion of the procedure that was followed in qualitatively analysing the data accrued from the interviews.

Finally issues of validity, reliability and generalization from the research were addressed.

The next chapter reflects the findings made during the course of the qualitative analysis of the interviews.

CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE EXAMINATION OF THE INTERVIEWS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the qualitative analysis of the data accrued from the interviews. As was explained previously, the analysis was executed thematically, in order to facilitate the integration, comparison, and presentation of findings. As such, this chapter is devoted to a theme by theme analysis of the interviews, and the identification of various sub-themes related to these.

5.2. Qualitative analysis of the major themes explored in the interviews

The main themes (stated in chapter four) which served as guideline for the interviews were utilized as a basis for the qualitative analysis. As such, in this section each theme that was identified as central to the study has been examined in turn, in order to identify all major and minor sub-themes that relate to it. Data from all the interviews have therefore been synthesized, compared, and presented with regard to these themes and sub-themes. It should be noted that a certain degree of overlap occurred in some instances in that certain sub-themes were deemed to be equally relevant with regard to several overall themes, and have therefore been discussed in more than one section. In several instances, citations from the interviews have been provided again in instances where a particular sub-theme is discussed for the second or third time. This was decided as it was deemed very important (and in keeping with the social-constructivist epistemology of the study) to present the sub-theme in the respondents' own words, which invariably illustrate the richness and subtle nuances of their beliefs and practices much more directly and comprehensively than the researcher's summarized account. In addition, although the references might be repeated, they are likely to be read and understood from a different perspective with regard to each sub-theme, a factor which also argues for the repeated inclusion of citations.

Where relevant, each sub-theme that is identified has also been related to existing dream related beliefs and discourses (as discussed in chapter three), and deconstructively evaluated in order to identify cultural, religious, psychological or other discourses that bear a similarity to, or might *possibly* have influenced the sub-theme in question. In this regard it should be clearly noted that statements about the possible influence of specific cultural, religious, and psychological discourses on given local discourses should be regarded as speculative.

In addition, this process also allowed the researcher to identify themes which do not seem to be reflected in any existing discourses described in the present study.

Where apparent with regard to a particular sub-theme, significant differences or similarities between male and female respondents, as well as between African and Western respondents have also been pointed out and discussed. However, it should be kept in mind that this is not a quantitative study and that the sample was not selected using quantitative criteria. As the emphasis in qualitative studies does not fall on matters such as frequency of occurrence, an overly quantitative approach has purposefully been avoided. Where a significant minority or majority of respondents expressed a certain view, this has mostly been indicated using general, rather than specific quantitative terms. These should be seen as being indicative of general patterns that emerged during the course of the research. Such patterns are not necessarily indicative of the situation in the Vaal-Triangle area in general. However, as such a possibility cannot be excluded either, it is possible that some of the patterns of prevalence identified in the interviews might indeed have relevance on a wider scale. As such, these findings are put forward as being reflective of the prevalence of certain beliefs and practices amongst the respondents, but only suggestive of similar patterns and possibilities in the general Vaal-Triangle area.

5.2.1. Theme 1: The importance of dreams

In this theme, the general degree of importance and significance that respondents attached to dreams was explored.

With regard to theme one, responses varied from indicating a total lack of importance and interest concerning dreams, to dreams being considered either occasionally, or generally very important.

The following sections illustrate these contentions by contrasting the divergent responses that were obtained during the interviews:

-Many respondents indicated that dreams held a very low level of importance to them. Reasons that were given for this lack of importance included not remembering dreams, and perceiving dreams as being illogical, weird, nonsensical, or uncontrollable, and therefore lacking in value. The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate these contentions: “Dreams are not really important to me. Most of the time, I don’t even remember my dreams” (Respondent 12); “I wouldn’t say that dreams play an important role in my life. They are just there. I don’t really dream that much” (Respondent 5); “Although I am quite aware of my dreams and often find them interesting, I don’t consider dreams to be important. My dreams are often weird, illogical and confusing, and they make no sense to me” (Respondent 3); “I remember a lot of my dreams, although I do not consider them particularly important. I don’t see dreams as being deep or spiritual things” (Respondent 2); “Dreams are not...important to me. In general I don’t think dreams mean much” (Respondent 7); “For me dreams are not important as they just happen and there is nothing I can do about it” (Respondent 11); “No, dreams are not really important to me. In fact, I hardly remember most of my dreams” (Respondent 18); “No, I don’t see dreams as important” (Respondent 19); “No, dreams are not important to me. I don’t think dreams mean anything” (Respondent 20).

The idea that dreams are generally unimportant is reflected in some cultural, religious and psychological discourses on dreams. As was indicated in chapter three, Aristotle believed most dreams to be mere sensory afterimages devoid of any deeper significance. This view is to some extent echoed by the bio-psychological discourse which views dreams in terms of neurological and biological processes and disregards any deeper significance or importance related to dreams (see chapter three).

-However, the majority of respondents indicated that their dreams had at least some importance and value to them, either generally, or only on specific occasions. A very common sub-theme that can be discerned here regards the distinction that several respondents made between important dreams, and relatively meaningless, and therefore unimportant dreams.

For example: “Dreams are sometimes very important to me. Not all dreams though, as I have many dreams that don’t seem to have any real meaning. But I have had several dreams that were very important to me” (Respondent 8); “My dreams are sometimes quite important to me. I have many dreams that are not important – I don’t care about these dreams, they don’t make any sense” (Respondent 4); “I also consider dreams to be important...I take my dreams seriously. Not all dreams though, as some dreams seem to have no meaning and seem silly” (Respondent 6); “In general, yes, I would say that dreams are important to me. But there are some dreams that are not too important” (Respondent 15); “I think dreams are important...but unrealistic dreams...are not important or useful” (Respondent 16); “Dreams are important to me to a certain extent, yes. I think that many dreams are meaningless...But there is also another kind of dream which is meaningful” (Respondent 13).

The perception that certain dreams are important and others are not is a pervasive sub-theme that emerged from the majority of the interviews. Several respondents made a clear distinction between these two “types” of dreams. Typically the unimportant dreams were seen to be simple reflections of

mundane events that happened during the day, of stress, or of something they have seen or heard, whereas important dreams gave solutions to problems, warned the dreamer about future events, served as channel of communication with deceased relatives or ancestors, were intrinsically enjoyable experiences, and provided insight and a helpful perspective on some life area. (As each of these issues will be discussed in great depth in later sections, no specific references are given at this point.)

The idea that some dreams are important and meaningful, whereas others are not is found in the majority of cultural, religious, and even psychological discourses on dreams. For example, as was discussed in chapter three, Freud believed some dreams to be due to physical factors such as hunger or thirst and therefore lacking in deeper meaning, but considered other dreams to be highly important. Even Aristotle, who generally regarded dreams as meaningless, conceded that some dreams might provide insight into the physical and medical condition of the dreamer, and are therefore important. Christian and Islamic dreams beliefs also reflect this dichotomy between important and unimportant dreams, often based on whether the perceived origin of the dream is diabolical, or divine, respectively.

-Only three respondents indicated that dreams occupied a position of high importance to them, and that they therefore took their dreams seriously: “Dreams are very important to me” (Respondent 9); “...I think dreams are important...I do take my dreams seriously” (Respondent 1); “Dreams are extremely important to my mother...I also consider dreams to be important and it is probably because I always saw that they were so important to my mother. In my opinion dreams can be very powerful. I will not generally disregard a dream as being inconsequential; I take my dreams seriously” (Respondent 6). It should be noted that even though respondent six considers her dreams as being powerful and important, she also considers some dreams to be meaningless.

Virtually all religious, cultural, and psychological discourses discussed in chapter three consider dreams to be important in at least some instances.

Based on the consideration of the previous sub-themes, it can be stated that one of the most uniform themes to emerge from the interviews is the idea that at least some (or all) dreams are unimportant and trivial. Not a single respondent considered every single dream to be important. It could even be stated that the only aspect with regards to which opinions differed is the degree to which all dreams were considered to be unimportant.

-One respondent indicated that the extent to which she, and people in general believe in themselves will affect the importance that dreams have to her or other people respectively. She stated: “I think that a very important thing in dreams is whether you believe in yourself and how you feel about yourself. If people do not believe in themselves and look towards other people for decisions, these kinds of people will not take their dreams seriously, it won’t be important to them, because they are not used to listening ‘inside’, to themselves. But if you believe in yourself your dreams will be more important to you. Some days I believe in myself more than others, and I find that how I feel about myself makes a big difference to my dreams” (Respondent 9).

Interestingly, this idea was also stated by the Zulu *sangoma* Credo Mutwa, and is discussed in chapter three. He believed that dreams are responsive to the attention we place on them and stated that dreams notice the fact that we notice them (Mutwa, 2003: 174-175). Seeing that the respondent cited above is of African origin, and considers her cultural heritage to be important, it is possible that her personal opinion in this regard is drawing upon a general African discourse on dreams.

-Two respondents (both African) mentioned that the extent to which a dream is memorable and elicits strong emotions serve as an indication of its importance or value. They stated: “But there are times when I know that the dream might become real. These dreams don’t go out of my mind, I keep on thinking about it, and it bothers me... When I dream and then wake up and quickly forget the dream, the dream is usually not special” (Respondent 14); “But there is also another kind of dream which is meaningful. These dreams arouse strong emotions and seems to stand out from the others” (Respondent 13).

This belief is also clearly reflected by Credo Mutwa (2003: 176-177) in the African discourse on dreams. As such, it is possible that these respondents’ (who are both African) personal dream beliefs might be reflective of general African dream discourses.

-One respondent initially indicated that he does not consider dreams to be important, but as the interview progressed he stated that his responses made him realize that dreams are in fact more important to him than he believed at first. In his own words: “No, dreams aren’t really important to me. Maybe in some ways, but not much” (Respondent 17). Later on in the interview the same respondent said: “You know what, now that I’m talking about it I’m realizing that my dreams are actually quite important to me. I know I said earlier on that they aren’t really important to me, but now I’m seeing that they are (Respondent 17).

It might be possible that the respondents who indicated that they consider their dreams to be unimportant might also change their opinion about this if questioned about their dream experiences at length. It appears from many of the interviews that dreams and dreaming are rarely considered in any deliberate, systematic manner, and as such, it is possible that some respondents might be unaware of the extent to which dreams affect their lives.

Despite the general individual variation amongst the respondents with regard to the degree of importance assigned to dreams, specific patterns do emerge when the findings are viewed from a sociological angle, specifically with regard to gender and culture.

A clear general trend can be discerned from the interviews in that African respondents generally attached much more importance to their dreams than Western respondents. No significant differences existed between the degree of importance that was assigned to dreams by male and female respondents.

When the responses are considered in the light of the literature study, it does seem that there has been some decline with regard to the importance attached to dreams as reflected by the respondent group. The literature study revealed that dreams generally occupied a position of great importance in most cultural and religious contexts. This is contrasted by the claims of the majority of the respondents that dreams have only a low to moderate level of importance to them. Exactly when and how such a change might have taken place is unclear. As was discussed in chapter four, it seems reasonable to suspect that the low to moderate level of importance attached to dreams by the respondent group might also be reflective of the general dream discourses and beliefs of individuals in the Vaal-Triangle area. However, as the sample was not primarily selected based on criteria of representativeness, this contention should be considered in a tentative light.

5.2.2. Theme 2: Beliefs about the origins and causes of dreams

With regard to this theme, the respondents' beliefs about the origins and causes of dreams were explored and recorded.

In the interviews, a remarkable degree of consistency was apparent with regard to certain beliefs and discourses about the origins and causes of dreams. The following sub-themes were identified:

-Nine respondents stated that (at least some) dreams are caused by the experiences and events that happened a day or so before the dream. This included the general conditions and circumstances of the respondents' lives at the time of the dream, which were also believed to often affect dreams, as well as factors such as watching a film, thinking about something during the day, or being engaged in a particular activity such as studying. The following statements taken from the interviews reflect these ideas: "Some dreams can also be caused by...the things that are on your mind during the day, or the events that occur in your life. For example, I might watch a scary movie and then have images from that movie in my dreams" (Respondent 8); "I think that dreams result from the things that happen during the day...Usually my dreams will have something to do with...some experience I had during the previous day or so" (Respondent 12); "Usually, if I dream something it is because I have been thinking about something. For example if I worry about an upcoming test or exam I might have dreams of an exam..." (Respondent 5); "My dreams are like a reflection of what's going on in my life. Often my dreams not only mirror, but also amplify what is happening in my life" (Respondent 10); "I think that you dream of the things that happened during the day (especially unusual things) and of the things that are on your mind before you go to sleep...So I think my dream was just like a "cutting and pasting" of events and images from my daily life" (Respondent 7); "My dreams are often the result of the circumstances in my life and the things I am busy with" (Respondent 6); "I think that other dreams are sometimes caused by seemingly unimportant images we see during the day, and by random memories" (Respondent 13); "I think that dreams come from that which you see and experience during the day...If I've thought about something during the day it might come out at night in my dreams. Maybe something you see triggers a bell, and you dream about it. It's what happens to you" (Respondent 18); "I think that dreams are also affected by your state of mind and the things you do during the day" (Respondent 19).

Western respondents cited this cause of dreams twice as often as their African counterparts. No significant gender related differences were noticed in this regard.

-Two respondents cited memories of past (as opposed to current) events as a cause of some dreams. This included traumatic events from the past which were perceived as being able to haunt the respondent in dreams. For example: “Some dreams can also be caused by your memories...” (Respondent 8); “I also think that your past can haunt you in dreams. When I was little I saw a very scary film in which people were attacked by bees, and ever since I have often been having terrible nightmares in which I am attacked by bees” (Respondent 9).

Two of the three respondents cited above are Western males.

Although the idea of past and present circumstances and events causing dreams is mentioned explicitly in a few cultural discourses on dreams such as those of Aristotle and *Wang Fu* (see discussion in chapter three), the respondents’ beliefs could also have been derived from the simple observation that the events, experiences, and conditions of an individual’s life are often reflected in their dreams.

-Related to the previous sub-theme was the belief that was expressed by one African male respondent that an individual’s general cultural and geographical environment plays a role in determining the kinds of dreams an individual has. The following excerpt from one of the interviews reflects this idea: “I think that dreams come from the environment you find yourself in. I won’t dream of being a monk in Asia because that is not my environment” (Respondent 16).

This sensitivity to the dreamer's context is also found in the dream discourses of Artemidorus, Carl Jung, and Sigmund Freud, as well as in the dream beliefs of the Jews, Muslims, and the Chinese (see chapter three).

-Another sub-theme which emerged with regard to beliefs and discourses about the origins and causes of dreams is the idea that emotional factors such as one's wishes and fears can play a role in causing certain dreams. Respondents also often mentioned that emotions such as worry, anticipation or desire could cause them to have certain dreams. Related to this, several respondents mentioned that their general state of mind (including whatever was on their minds) around the time of the dream has a strong bearing on their dreams.

The following statements serve as qualitative evidence for these conclusions: "I think that you often dream of things that you really want. Although this desire might not be on your mind consciously, you are unconsciously aware of it and it comes out in dreams...the dream just reflects my wish" (Respondent 8); "I think that dreams result from...things that I am worried about. I also sometimes dream of things that I still have to do, that bug me" (Respondent 12); "Your state of mind is very important. If I go to bed feeling sad or angry I know that I will have sad or angry dreams...I think dreams can come from many places, depending on your emotions and thoughts before you go to sleep" (Respondent 9); "Usually, if I dream something it is because I have been thinking about something. For example if I worry about an upcoming test or exam I might have dreams of an exam...I think dreams come from...emotional things" (Respondent 5); "I think dreams come from our state of mind. You may think of something and then it happens in a dream. I think that things that are unconsciously on your mind also affect your dreams" (Respondent 14); "So I think that the confusion, stress and worry contribute to dreaming more" (Respondent 10); "I think that you dream of the things...that are on your mind before you go to sleep...I think dreams are caused by emotions, by the feelings that you have" (Respondent 7); "I think that dreams are also affected by your state of mind and the things you do during the day" (Respondent 19); "I think

that dreams come...Maybe from anxiety...I also think that wishful thinking can affect dreams” (Respondent 20).

Female respondents cited wishes and fears as causative factors in some dreams twice as often as males. No significant cultural differences emerged with regard to this sub-theme however.

As was discussed in chapter three, the idea of dreams reflecting wish-fulfilment is noted in the dream beliefs of the Chinese, and is central to the discourse of Sigmund Freud, who stated that dreams are above all an expression of the desire for wish fulfilment. Freud in turn, drew on the ideas of Artemidorus who also believed that dreams could reflect desires or fears on the part of the dreamer (see chapter three). It is therefore possible that this commonly held idea amongst the respondents might have been influenced by the Freudian discourse on dreams, as this discourse is arguably the most contemporary and influential discourse of those cited here.

-A sub-theme of the former is the idea that dreaming frequency, intensity, and nature are affected by factors such as stress or worry. Most commonly, respondents indicated that they dreamt more often during times of stress, thereby implying that stress and related factors played a causative role with regard to dreams. For example: “I also noticed that I don’t really have many or important dreams when my life is going well, but that most of my dreams appear when things in my life are not going too well. So I think that the confusion, stress and worry contribute to dreaming more” (Respondent 10); “I also notice that I tend to dream a lot more when I am under stress. I think that your dreams might be trying to find a solution to the problem” (Respondent 6); “...these are frightful dreams...this has to do with my stress levels” (Respondent 2); “I tend to dream more when I am under a lot of stress” (Respondent 3); “If I am in turmoil or my relationships are bad I will have bad dreams...if I am at peace within and if my relationships are good then...my

dreams will be peaceful” (Respondent 15); “It also depends on your mood and state of mind. If I am stressing a lot, and if I get in less sleep, I often dream more” (Respondent 19).

Western respondents were much more likely to express this belief than African respondents, and female respondents in turn, cited this belief somewhat more often than their male counterparts.

This belief is not clearly reflected in any major religious, cultural, or psychological discourse on dreaming, except for a reference by Credo Mutwa in which he claims that black people watch their dreams especially closely when they reach a crisis in their lives (Mutwa, 2003: 174-175). Although the link between emotions and dreams have been stated clearly in several discourses, the degree of stress or negative emotion in an individual’s life does not appear to have been clearly correlated with causing an increased amount of dreaming. It is likely that this belief derives from direct observation by the respondents of their own emotional states and dreaming frequency. This contention is supported by the use of language such as: “I noticed that...” which implies personal observation.

-Somewhat contrarily, one Western female respondent stated that: “If I study a lot, I don’t dream, I think my mind needs to rest at these times (Respondent 7).” This reflects a belief that mental over-stimulation would result in her dreaming less in order to allow her to recuperate mentally.

No cultural, religious or psychological discourses appear to support this personal belief, and it appears likely that this belief was derived from personal observation.

-An additional related theme was that pent up emotions such as frustration or anger could play a causative role in some dreams, in order to allow such bottled up feelings to be vented. As this theme also relates to the perceived purpose of

dreams, and has therefore been discussed and referenced with regard to theme three, no supportive extracts from the interviews will be given here.

These ideas tie in strongly with Freudian conceptions of the human psyche. According to Freud, suppressed aggressive drives that exist in the id, and which cannot be expressed in waking life due to the constraints of the superego, can find expression at night in dreams when the superego is less alert (see discussion in chapter three). It is therefore possible that the Freudian dream discourse exerted some influence on the respondents' beliefs in this regard. However, this belief could also have been derived from personal observation.

Interestingly, both respondents who stated that dreams sometimes serve to release pent up emotions such as anger and aggression are females. It could be tentatively speculated that this function might be more prominent for females as they are often culturally more constrained in the direct expression of emotions such as anger and aggression (Strong, 2001: 168), and might therefore require additional channels for venting such emotions.

-Another sub-theme arising from the interviews is the belief that God or some supernatural entity might instigate certain dreams, and therefore play a causative role with regard to the dream (either directly or indirectly). The following statements extracted from the interviews illustrate this sub-theme: "I think there is some power that influences dreams, a power that looks after you" (Respondent 17); "I also believe strongly that in some dreams God can actually use the dream to give me a sign or guidance on some issue" (Respondent 8); "I think dreams come from many places...even from God...At one time I was hearing voices in my dreams" (Respondent 9); "I think that many other dreams are a message from God" (Respondent 14).

Western respondents cited a belief in the possible divine cause of dreams more often than African respondents. No significant gender related differences occurred in this regard.

As can be seen in chapter three, this idea is central to the Islamic, Jewish, and Christian discourses on dreams and is well reflected in the Bible. As the vast majority of the respondents identified themselves as having a generally Christian religious orientation, it seems very likely that these beliefs reflect a direct influence of the Christian discourse on dreams.

Interestingly, an overview of the findings made with regard to this theme reveals that some dreams were considered to be mundane reflections of ordinary events and memories, whereas other dreams were perceived to have a divine origin. This idea is reflected quite strongly in the dream related discourses of many societies as well as that of several of the respondents is that some dreams are mundane, and others are from a higher source, such as God (see chapter three).

-One respondent believed that witchcraft can play a role in influencing dreams. He stated that: "I also think that witchcraft can sometimes affect your dreams" (Respondent 13).

The belief that witchcraft can affect dreams is found in the dream beliefs of the Church father Jerome, and also in most African dream discourses (see chapter three). As the respondent is an African male, and claims that he values his traditional heritage, it is possible that the respondent's personal beliefs were informed by general African cultural discourses on dreams.

-Related to the former was the tendency for several (predominantly African) respondents to state that they believe that their ancestors influence, or might possibly influence certain dreams. In a similar vein, Western respondents (and

some African respondents) also stated that deceased individuals in general (as opposed to ancestors) might enter someone's dream, and thereby play a causative role in the dream. For example: "I do believe that you can make contact with a deceased person in a dream" (Respondent 8); "I do think that you could have contact in a dream with the soul of someone who is already dead, although I did not have any such dreams..." (Respondent 5); "I sometimes dream of people who are no longer living...when this happens it means that the dead person has some message he needs to communicate...Sometimes deceased relatives of a very ill person may appear in a dream..." (Respondent 1).

African respondents cited the belief that ancestors or deceased individuals can influence dreams twice as often as Western respondents. Male respondents in turn, were twice as likely to express this belief than female respondents. African male respondents were at least twice as likely to cite this belief than any other group of respondents.

As was seen in chapter three, the idea that the ancestors can influence dreams is central to the majority of African discourses on dreams. As such, the respondents' beliefs in this regard (and their use of the word "ancestors") almost certainly indicate that they have been influenced by African cultural discourses on dreams. As was expected, not a single Western respondent made any comments about ancestors. However, Western respondents often did state that they believed that deceased relatives could affect an individual's dream. The idea that dreams can serve as channel for communication with the deceased is found as early as ancient Egyptian times, when letters were written to the dead in order to elicit a dream visitation with the deceased (Szpakowska, 2001: 31). The idea is also explicitly stated in the Greek discourse on dreams, as was discussed in chapter three.

-Six respondents believed that dreams originate from the subconscious or unconscious mind of the dreamer. Interestingly, two respondents indicated that although they believed that dreams might derive from the unconscious or subconscious, they felt that there had to be another source, as they felt that the unconscious as dream source could not sufficiently explain the types of dreams they experienced. The following extracts from the interviews support this point: “I don’t really know where dreams come from, perhaps from our subconscious mind” (Respondent 12); “I think dreams come from the subconscious...” (Respondent 5); “I think that dreams come mainly from the unconscious” (Respondent 10); “I think dreams come from the unconscious, from things which you are not even aware of normally. I often dream of the past, of things and people that I have forgotten” (Respondent 19); “I think that dreams come partly from the subconscious. But not all of it. Dreams are sometimes too strange to just come from the subconscious” (Respondent 20); “I think that dreams come from the unconscious. But I’m not 100% sure of this because I sometimes dream of places that I have never seen in my life, so there must be something else. If dreams only came from the unconscious then I would only have dreamt of the past and of places that I had seen” (Respondent 17).

Western respondents were more likely to state that dreams originate from the unconscious than African respondents. No gender differences emerged in this regard.

This idea is almost certainly derived from psychological theories on dreaming, such as those of Freud and Jung. Prior to the development of psychology, which built upon the concept of the unconscious proposed by Johann Fichte and Friedrich Schelling, the concept of the subconscious was not clearly articulated (Ullman & Zimmerman, 1987: 45-46). As such, these ideas almost certainly reflect the influence of these psychological master discourses on dreaming. The concept of the unconscious espoused by these approaches

therefore appears to have found its way into the local discourses of several respondents.

-Certain respondents also held the view that dreams are at least partially caused by mental processing or neurological processes. For example: “I think that we often perceive things without realizing it and then at the end of the day our minds process all the things that happened during the day” (Respondent 12); “I think it’s just a matter of the synapses in the brain crossing and having “glitches.” Almost like crossed wires on a computer causing random associations and images to be triggered...it’s just a biological process” (Respondent 3); “Dreams come from the mind, it’s a natural process” (Respondent 11); “Your mind never switches off, and at night the impressions and images floating around in your mind might flash across your inner mental screen and you experience it as a dream. It’s just like neurons firing, triggering random events and memories in the brain” (Respondent 18).

Male respondents believed this to be true more often than female respondents. Western respondents were also more likely to state that some dreams are the result of mental processing or neurological processes than their African counterparts.

These ideas seem to reflect the main assumptions of the bio-psychological discourse. The use of neurological and biological language further reinforces the idea that these respondents’ personal beliefs were influenced by the bio-psychological discourse.

-One African male respondent indicated that the origin of certain kinds of dreams in which he felt paralysed and unable to run might be due to the position of his body during the dream which might have caused breathing difficulties. The following extract illustrates this point: “Sometimes I also have dreams in which I feel like I am paralysed and in which someone chases me

and I am unable to run. I think maybe this is just because of how I slept, that I might have had difficulty breathing or something..." (Respondent 16).

This contention also seems to reflect an influence from the bio-psychological discourse, as he reduces the dream phenomenon to a physiological and biological origin.

Interestingly, as can be deduced from the various citations given in this section, almost all the respondents directly stated or indirectly implied that dreams can come from several different sources. No respondent limited the origins of dreams to a single factor. The idea that dreams can originate from various causes and sources is common to almost all cultural, religious, and psychological discourses on dreams, as can be seen in chapter three.

In addition, an overview of the sub-themes identified in this section reveal that whereas several respondents believed that dreams come from within (caused by emotional factors such as desire or fear, or physiological and neurological processes) and are therefore intrapsychic phenomena, several others held the belief that dreams could have an external or extrapersonal origin. In such instances the source of the dream were variously described as God, the ancestors and deceased individuals. Several respondents also allowed for both possibilities in that some dreams were considered to have an internal, and others an external origin. Three respondents stated these possibilities directly and explicitly: "I think that dreams come from many places. Some dreams come from the outside, such as when I dream about things that happened to me during the day. Other times dreams come from the inside, such as when my thoughts and my feelings influence what I dream. I think many dreams come from the heart, from our feelings. And some dreams come from the ancestors, and maybe some dreams come from God" (Respondent 15); "I think that some dreams come from inside you and reflect your emotional state and the things that you are thinking about during the day. It comes from how your life is, the

state you are in. I also think that wishes and wishful thinking can cause you to dream things” (Respondent 16); “I definitely think these dreams must come from outside you. But I think that many unimportant dreams just come from something in your mind, maybe from something that you are worrying about” (Respondent 4).

These ideas are also commonly found amongst various cultural, religious and societal discourses as was discussed in chapter three.

Throughout the interviews it became evident that few respondents had given this topic (of the origin and causes of dreams in general) much thought before the interview. This conclusion is not just based only on the sketchy and minimalist responses that were given, but also by the observation that the majority of respondents experienced some difficulty in answering questions related to this theme. Most spent some time thinking about the answer and provided very brief, hesitant, and tentative answers.

This suggests that the respondents generally seems to have had no clearly formulated and thought out system of beliefs related to the origin of dreams.

5.2.3. Theme 3: Beliefs and discourses about the purpose and function of dreams

With regard to this theme, respondents were asked what they believed the functions, purposes and general meanings of dreams to be. A variety of different responses was elicited from the respondents, which are discussed below:

-A few respondents stated, even after persistent questioning, that they had no idea what the function or purpose of dreams might be. For example: “I don’t know what the purpose...of dreams might be...I don’t know why we have them” (Respondent 11); “...although I think that dreams probably do have

some function, I have no idea what that might be” (Respondent 7); “I have no idea what the function of dreams might be...” (Respondent 9).

Two of the three respondents citing this are African, and two are females.

-Almost all respondents stated that they considered at least some (if not all) dreams to be meaningless, and as such, often believed that dreams served no purpose or function. The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate this point: “...I have many dreams that don’t seem to have any real meaning” (Respondent 8); “My dreams are often weird, illogical, confusing, and they make no sense to me. I think it’s just a matter of the synapses in the brain crossing and having glitches. Almost like crossed wires in a computer causing random associations and images to be triggered...I don’t think that dreams have any real meaning or function” (Respondent 3); “Sometimes I have weird dreams that seem very confusing and make no sense. I think that is just my mind going berserk” (Respondent 10); “In general I don’t think dreams mean much...” (Respondent 7); “...some dreams seem to have no meaning and seem silly” (Respondent 6); “...some dreams are just dreams and don’t mean much...Other dreams don’t seem to have a purpose, it’s just memory” (Respondent 14); “Other dreams have no functions. These dreams are meaningless” (Respondent 13); “I have no idea why we have dreams. I can’t see any purpose in it...I don’t think there’s any purpose to dreaming” (Respondent 20); “I mostly don’t even remember my dreams so I can’t see how they can be important. No, I can see no purpose in dreams” (Respondent 19); “I don’t think dreams have any particular function. I can’t see why you would need to dream. It’s just random...It has no real purpose I can think of” (Respondent 18).

The idea that at least some (or most) dreams are meaningless, and therefore serve no function or purpose is most clearly reflected in the dream beliefs of

Aristotle as well as in the bio-psychological discourse (see chapter three for a full discussion of these discourses).

-Many respondents held the view that the function and purpose of some or the majority of all dreams had to do with mental processing of memories, impressions, and experiences. One respondent indicated that this process serves to assist in later recall of memories and events. Dreams were also often considered to serve as a reflection or “replay” of the events of the day. A few respondents took this notion even further by stating that dreams served a neurological function only.

For example: “I think that we often perceive things without realizing it and then at the end of the day our minds process all the things that happened during the day...I think that the purpose of dreaming is that our minds try to make sense of the day’s events and stores it in your mind so that you are able to recall it later” (Respondent 12); “I think it’s just a matter of the synapses in the brain crossing and having “glitches.” Almost like crossed wires on a computer causing random associations and images to be triggered...I think that dreams are an attempt to sort out and discharge these accumulated impressions and associations...it’s just a biological process” (Respondent 3); “During the day we gather impressions and at night in dreams we sort these impressions. It’s almost like defragmenting a computer, ordering the bits and pieces of data on it. It’s like you make sense of what has happened during the day. During the day you collect words and at night your dreams put these words together in a sentence” (Respondent 2); “The purpose of dreams is to make sense out of the circumstances in your life” (Respondent 6); “I think it’s just the brain that processes information when you sleep” (Respondent 13); “...dreams are just like a replay of the day’s events” (Respondent 15).

Four out of the six respondents cited above are Western. No gender differences were noted.

As was seen in chapter three, these ideas are very clearly echoed in the conceptions of the bio-psychological dream discourse in which dreams are reduced as remnants of internal and neurological processing of thoughts, impressions, and sensory stimuli. Given the biological and neurological terminology used by some of the respondents, it seems possible that this discourse might have exerted an influence in shaping some respondents' personal beliefs about the purpose of dreams.

-Another sub-theme that emerged from the interviews was the belief that dreams could serve as a mechanism for releasing or venting pent up emotions such as frustration or anger, thereby allowing the individual the opportunity and the freedom to express feelings and engage in actions that they might not be able or permitted to do in waking life.

The following extracts illustrate this contention: "The purpose of dreams is to discharge emotions that might have been bottled up during the day...if one is very angry at one's boss, it is often not possible to express this anger openly at the boss, but this anger can be vented in a dream...So most dreams are things in your subconscious...that have to come out, such as frustration or fear"

(Respondent 2); "I think the purpose of dreams is to help me get rid of frustrations...my dreams allow me to express emotions like anger and frustration that might be hard to express in real life. In a sense I could say that dreams are my freedom to do what I want. For example, in one dream I saw myself hitting someone who in real life did something that hurt me deeply" (Respondent 10).

Interestingly, both respondents who stated that dreams sometimes serve to release pent up emotions such as anger and aggression are females. It could be tentatively speculated that this function might be more prominent for females as they are often culturally more constrained in the direct expression of emotions such as anger and aggression (Strong, 2001: 168), and might therefore require additional channels for venting such emotions.

Carl Jung mentioned that individuals can have compensatory dreams in which they act out things in their dreams that they might not be able to express in waking life (Jung, 1984: 20). There is some possibility that his ideas in this regard influenced the respondents' personal beliefs with regard to this matter. However, it is perhaps more likely that the respondents' beliefs were derived from personal observation.

-Some respondents believed that the function of dreams is to make them feel better, and to provide them with a "boost" or an escape from reality. Related to this, some respondents stated that the experience and the enjoyment derived from a dream constitute valid functions of dreaming. The following extracts from the interviews illustrate this point: "I think the function of dreams is to make you feel better. It is easier and nicer to get up in the morning if you had a nice dream. I also think that dreams can..."boost" you" (Respondent 8); "...dreams are like a getaway or an escape from reality. Even though you might wake up from such a dream and you will find that the problem is still there, your dreams give you a bit of a getaway from your troubles. It feels good while you are dreaming this, like taking a break from your problems" (Respondent 5); "I've noticed that these dreams often have an effect on my mood...Sometimes it can make you feel good...a while ago I dreamt of my father who has passed on a few years ago, and it brought me comfort" (Respondent 17) "I think that most dreams...they're just there to be enjoyed" (Respondent 10); "Life would be less interesting if we did not have dreams. There are so many things that I have seen and experienced in my dreams which I never would have done in normal life, and if I didn't dream I would have missed out on that" (Respondent 16).

No clear gender or cultural differences could be detected with regard to this theme.

The belief that dreams serve to make the dreamer feel better, and provide him with enjoyable experiences is not clearly articulated in any major dream discourse discussed in chapter three. It therefore appears that this belief might have been marginalized or disregarded to some extent in the contexts of such discourses.

-Many respondents felt that one of the functions of dreams was to predict the future or to depict a potential future possibility. The following extracts from the interviews support this conclusion: “I think the function of dreams is to show you what will happen in the future” (Respondent 4); “...I do think that dreams can tell you about what might happen in the future” (Respondent 8); “I think the function of dreams is to show the future” (Respondent 9); “I think that dreams can sometimes show the future” (Respondent 5); “Dreams tell us about the future, about what is going to happen” (Respondent 1); “...dreams show us the future and warn us about things that might happen” (Respondent 14); “...some dreams can come to give you a premonition of something that might happen in the future” (Respondent 13); “Dreams...can warn us about negative things that will happen if we do not do certain things” (Respondent 15).

African respondents were twice as likely as their Western counterparts to believe that dreams could serve to predict the future. Male and female respondents were equally likely to state this belief.

The goal and function of such (and also sometimes other) dreams in turn was often seen either as providing a warning to prevent a possible negative outcome, or to provide motivation and inspiration to pursue or actualize a positive outcome. In addition, one respondent felt that in showing him a future situation, dreams helped him feel at ease when this situation actually occurred in waking life. The following sections examine each of these functions in greater depth:

-Several respondents indicated that they believed dreams to serve the function of motivating them to take actions or make decisions in order to avoid a negative scenario or outcome shown or warned against by a dream. Although extracts from the interviews with regard to this issue have been reflected elsewhere in this chapter, it was deemed appropriate to repeat some of these citations here in order to provide a rich description of the respondent's views in this regard, using their own words. The following extracts from the interviews illustrate the respondents' views: "...sometimes I might get a dream in which I fail one of my exams...the negative feelings of the dream motivate me to study harder in order not to have the events in the dream happen to me" (Respondent 8); "Sometimes...my dreams will show me a negative scenario with regards to some aspect of my life which will motivate me to make a different decision in real life" (Respondent 12); "If I dream that my friends have all passed their exams but I have failed, this will cause me to study harder" (Respondent 9); "...if I dream of water and fish, I know that this could show that I...might get pregnant. I had dreams like this recently and because of them decided to stop dating for a while, because I do not want to get pregnant again" (Respondent 1); "...if I had a bad dream, I might phone home to find out what is going on there and to make sure that everyone is ok" (Respondent 4); "In fact, these lion dreams became so intense that I did not want to go to sleep at night, and I even took the step of buying a gun for self-protection, even though I know there are no lions in the area where I stay" (Respondent 2); "Sometimes, if I've had a bad dream about someone close to me I might plan things differently, or be more attentive, such as watching my children closely when they are near a swimming pool...I remember one instance when I had planned to go somewhere and after a bad dream about this I decided to postpone the trip" (Respondent 6); "...I might for example dream that I am in a car accident and then I will drive very carefully the next day, or even avoid the car altogether. If I dream of a funeral I might phone home and see if everyone is ok" (Respondent 15); "So when the dream is bad, I'll sometimes do things to try to avoid it from happening" (Respondent 16); "I think that maybe the purpose of

some dreams is to give us a warning...These dreams show us the future and warn us against things that might happen...Another time I dreamt that a friend of mine was brutally stabbed at a shebeen. I warned her to be careful..."

(Respondent 14); "Dreams can warn you about something, like if you are in a bad relationship and your dreams warn you about that" (Respondent 17).

No clear gender or cultural differences were noted with regard to this theme.

-Conversely, several respondents indicated that they believed dreams to serve the function of motivating them, or giving them the confidence and inspiration to take actions or make decisions in order to actualize or pursue a positive scenario or outcome shown by a dream: For example: "I also think that dreams can motivate and "boost" you...For example, before one of my tennis matches I might dream that I win the game. I think these dreams prepare me and give me more confidence than what I'd normally have" (Respondent 8); "...if I dream I can do something then in real life I will try harder to get this right" (Respondent 11); "My dreams also sometimes motivate me to do things...I had a dream in which I was at a graduation ceremony and got a degree...The very next day I went out and bought the Sowetan and I found an ad for this university and I immediately phoned them for information...A few weeks later I enrolled...dreams show us possibilities. It is then up to us to work to make it true" (Respondent 15); "...sometimes, after I have dreamt of something I am more interested in making it a reality...some dreams...encourage you...Dreams also help us to set goals. If you had a good dream, then the dream can motivate you to make it happen" (Respondent 16); "Dreams can also push you in a certain direction...I think that dreams serve to inspire and motivate us. If I've planned something and I dream that I have achieved it, this motivates me...Other times my dreams will give me a push to make a move with regard to my business or perhaps even in a relationship" (Respondent 17).

Interestingly, all the respondents who cited this function of future predicting dreams were males. No clear cultural differences emerged with regard to this sub-theme.

The belief that dreams can predict, or provide warnings about the future is found in the vast majority of cultural, religious, and psychological dream discourses. Artemidorus' dream theory was concerned almost solely with prognostication, and the Native Americans, Ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Jews, Christians, Hindus, Chinese, Buddhists, Muslims, and Africans likewise believed that dreams could serve as warnings, or predictions about the future. In addition Carl Jung believed that some dreams are precognitive and serve to predict the future (see discussions in chapter three).

-One Western male respondent felt that dreams often served to help him feel at ease in new and unfamiliar situations by providing him with a glimpse into the future. He stated: "I also often have this 'déjà vu' feeling, like when I enter a room I might feel like I've been there before, and often it is because I have dreamed this. I think the function of this is to help me feel at ease in new places and situations. If I have seen a place in a dream, I'll feel more comfortable and at ease when I am in this place in real life. For example, before I went to Germany as an exchange student, I had dreams about what my guest family and their home looked like. When I arrived there I found that my dream images were mostly very accurate and this helped me feel at ease in my new 'home' a lot faster" (Respondent 8).

No cultural, religious, or psychological discourse discussed in chapter three appears to reflect such a view.

-Some respondents stated that dreams served to provide them with directions or suggestions for action, or solutions to problems. Dreams were also believed to assist the dreamer in making decisions. Related to this, some respondents felt

that dreams served the purpose of providing a channel for receiving answers to prayers. For example: “I also believe that dreams sometimes help you to solve problems, sometimes directly, by suggesting a solution, and other times indirectly, by making you see a situation from a different perspective. I can clearly remember one instance where I was faced with a troubling family problem. I had a dream about this that clearly showed me a solution to the problem. In real life I then went ahead and actually did what the dream suggested and it worked out very well, the problem was resolved” (Respondent 6). One respondent referred to his mother in this regard: “My mother often gets dreams from her ancestors and she always follows the advice and gets good results with it” (Respondent 13); “...my father appeared to me in my dream several times and he told me: ‘I am hungry – you haven’t fed me. You are forgetting me.’ Because of these dreams I decided to go back home...and we decided to slaughter a cow and have a feast...Some dreams give us direction, they tell us what we can or should do” (Respondent 15); “Dreams can sometimes give you answers. I often pray and then get answers to problems in my dreams” (Respondent 9); “It also helps you to make decisions” (Respondent 16); “Dreams can also push you in a certain direction, even though you may not always be consciously aware of this” (Respondent 17).

African respondents were twice as likely to claim that dreams could serve to provide them with directions for action or solutions to problems than Western respondents, and male respondents in turn, gave this kind of response twice as often as their female counterparts.

As was discussed in chapter three, the majority of cultural, religious, and psychological dream discourses (such as those of the Africans, Native Americans, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Jews, Christians, Muslims, and the theory of Carl Jung) reflect the idea that some dreams could serve to provide the dreamer with specific directions for action or solutions to problems.

-The qualitative examination of the interviews further revealed that several respondents believed that dreams serve as a channel of communication between the living and the deceased, such as departed relatives or ancestors. As citations from the interviews in support of this belief have already been given elsewhere in this chapter, they will not be repeated here.

African respondents cited the belief that dreams served as channel for communication with ancestors or deceased individuals twice as often as Western respondents. Male respondents in turn, were twice as likely to express this belief than female respondents. Lastly, African male respondents were at least twice as likely to cite this belief than any other group of respondents.

The functions of such contact included:

- bringing reassurance: "I had a dream in which my grandmother came to me and told me that she was ok...This dream brought me a great deal of reassurance and helped me cope much better with the grief over my grandmother's death...We both felt better because of the dream" (Respondent 8); "...a while ago I dreamt of my father who has passed on a few years ago, and it brought me comfort" (Respondent 17);
- delivering a message that was of importance to someone still living, including commenting on the behaviour of the living: "...I had a dream in which my grandmother came to me and told me that...nothing that happened was my fault...I had secretly been feeling guilty about certain things I should have done but didn't...This dream brought me a great deal of reassurance" (Respondent 8); "I have also had a dream in which my father's father came to me in a dream and gave me a message that related to my own father" (Respondent 13); "Some dreams...come to give you a message. They try to communicate with you and tell you what you should do. I think these dreams often come from our ancestors...For example, if one dreams of...this means that the ancestors are angry at you for something. If this happens to me, I will try to figure out what's wrong and try to fix it" (Respondent 13);

-communicating a need on the part of the deceased: “I sometimes dream of people who are no longer living...it means that the dead person has some message he needs to communicate. Often it is a sign that the dead person is not resting, because of some unfinished business. The person who had the dream must then try and help the deceased person come to rest, by doing something for him, such as putting a tombstone on his grave, for example” (Respondent 1); “For example, my father died several years ago. Now, in our culture, we have a tradition whereby we slaughter a cow and have a feast every year or so in order to honour and appease our ancestors. Now, for the last few years we have neglected to do this, and my father appeared to me in my dream several times and he told me: ‘I am hungry – you haven’t fed me. You are forgetting me.’ Because of these dreams I decided to go back home and I told my family about this dream and we decided to slaughter a cow and have a feast. We did this, and since then everything has been calm and peaceful. I mean that my father has not appeared in my dreams again. If you ignore these dreams of the ancestors then often things start to go wrong and you can have bad luck, so it is important to listen to the messages of the dreams in order to avoid this” (Respondent 15);

-preparing the dreamer to accept the impending death of someone: “Sometimes deceased relatives of a very ill person may appear in a dream in order to let the dreamer know that it is time for the person to join his or her deceased relatives. After such a dream you can expect the ill person to die shortly” (Respondent 1)

The beliefs that dreams can serve as channel for communication with ancestors is central to African and Native American dream related discourses (see chapter three). As many of the respondents in the study are of African origin, and also as several of these respondents explicitly used the word “ancestors,” it seems very likely that their beliefs in this matter might (at least in some instances) have been derived from traditional African dream beliefs. The belief that deceased individuals can communicate to a sleeping person through dreams is also reflected in the Egyptian and Biblical dream discourses. As this

belief presupposes a belief in the existence of an afterlife, it seems possible that the respondents' personal beliefs in this regard might have been influenced by religious discourses.

-Many respondents believed that dreams could serve as channel for spiritual experiences and divine communication and that God could send warnings or messages to a sleeping individual through dreams. However, many of the subjects who believed this did not experience such a phenomenon themselves. As citations from the interviews in support of the issue of the spiritual dimension of dreams have been given elsewhere in this chapter, they will not be repeated here.

Western respondents were more likely to give this response than their African counterparts. No gender differences were noted.

The belief that dreams can serve as channel for divine communication is reflected in many dream discourses. Carl Jung clearly articulated the idea that dreams could provide the dreamer with profound spiritual experiences (Delaney, 1998: 74), and, as was seen in chapter three, the Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Greek, and Egyptian dream discourses also reflect this idea. As the majority of the respondents indicated that they belonged to the Christian faith, it seems possible that their personal beliefs in this matter might have been influenced in some instances by the general Christian and Biblical discourses on dreams.

-One African female respondent stated that dreams served the function of providing self-insight. She stated: "I also think that dreams help you to know yourself, they show you who you really are" (Respondent 9).

This idea reflects a belief in the psychological function of dreams and as such, could be a reflection of psychological dream discourses such as those of Jung, Freud, and Boss.

-Some respondents also indicated that dreams can serve the function of providing feedback, guidance, insight, or a different perspective on a person's actions, decisions, relationships, and general life situation. Usually this happened in the form of perceived bad dreams which indicated to the dreamer that something in his life is amiss and needs to be addressed. The following excerpts illustrate this theme: "Dreams also tell you if something that you might be doing is good or bad. Sometimes my dreams will tell me that if I don't do a certain thing, something negative might happen, so my dreams can warn me about this" (Respondent 9); "Dreams show you the way you should live" (Respondent 1); "For example, if one dreams of...this means that the ancestors are angry at you for something. If this happens to me, I will try to figure out what's wrong and try to fix it...Some dreams...come to give you a message. They try to communicate with you and tell you what you should do" (Respondent 13); "Some dreams give us direction, they tell us what we can or should do...Dreams also make us question the things that we do and that we are involved in, and can warn us about negative things that will happen if we do not do certain things...If I have a bad dream this means that I am not at peace within or that there is a problem in one of my relationships...The bad dream will show me this and I will then take steps to correct this, I will try to make peace with myself and others. I believe that if I am at peace within and if my relationships are good then I will not get bad dreams, my dreams will be peaceful" (Respondent 15); "Sometimes dreams help you to make sense of things...they can show you something that perhaps you were not aware of" (Respondent 20); "I also believe that dreams sometimes help you to solve problems, sometimes directly, by suggesting a solution, and other times indirectly, by making you see a situation from a different perspective." (Respondent 6).

The majority of the respondents who stated that dreams can serve to provide feedback or guidance with regard to their actions or decisions were African.

As was stated in the discussion on African dream discourses, it is very common for African individuals to look to their dreams for guidance with regards to actions and decisions, and also to receive direction from their dreams (Mutwa, 2003: 174-176). As almost all the respondents cited with regard to this sub-theme are African, it appears possible that their personal beliefs in this regard might in some instances reflect elements of general African discourses on dreams.

-Another respondent mentioned that he believes that certain individuals such as healers and diviners receive guidance to enter these professions through dreams, and that dreams therefore serve the function of being a “calling” into a given profession. As this issue has been referenced with extracts from the interviews elsewhere in this chapter, it will not be repeated here.

This belief is clearly articulated in traditional African dream related discourses. As the respondent is an African male and considers his traditional roots to be important, it seems very likely that his personal belief in this instance draws upon the general African discourse on dreams.

-One African male respondent stated that he believed that someone can be healed by means of a dream and claimed that this has happened to his mother. This suggests that dreams might serve a healing function or purpose. In his own words: “I also think you can be healed by a dream. My mother was healed by such a dream. She suffered from excruciating pain, and one night my grandfather came to her in a dream and healed her, and since that time the pain was gone” (Respondent 13)

The idea that dreams can serve to heal an individual is perhaps most clearly reflected in Greek dream beliefs. Greek incubation temples often served the function of eliciting a healing dream. The idea is also clearly articulated in African dream discourses (see discussion in chapter three), and as the respondent is of African origin, his beliefs in this regard might be affected by such general African dream beliefs. However, it is also possible that this respondent's belief resulted from a personal observation and might therefore not have been influenced by any discourse.

-One Western male respondent indicated that dreams serve the function of helping an individual sleep better. In his words: "I also think that dreams cause you to sleep better" (Respondent 17).

This belief is not clearly articulated in any major dream discourse and might have resulted from personal experience and observation.

Although discussed in great depth with regard to theme seven, it can be mentioned at this point that the practice of sharing dreams with others for the purposes of entertainment and "fun" could be considered to some extent as representing a function of dreams. Dreams could therefore be viewed as serving the purpose of being a source of entertainment and conversation. In order to avoid unnecessary repetition, the reader is referred to section 5.2.7. for a more comprehensive discussion of this issue.

5.2.4. Theme 4: Dreams as basis for decisions and actions

This theme explored the extent to which respondents' decisions and actions were influenced on the basis of their dreams. It relates to any choice or activity that was consciously undertaken in the respondents' waking lives as a result of their dreams. This theme also concerns the specific kinds of actions and decisions that were based on dreams.

An overview of the interviews initially reveal no clear theme in this regard, as respondents often provided very divergent opinions on the matter. Whereas some respondents claimed that they never, or almost never, based any decisions or actions on their dreams, others admitted that they did do so fairly frequently. This situation was further complicated in cases where respondents claimed that their dreams have no influence in this regard and then later recounted an instance where the contrary seemed to be the case (such as respondent 14, for example). The next section explores each of these sub-themes in greater depth.

-Some respondents indicated that they never only infrequently base any actions or decisions on their dreams. For example: “I rarely base any of my decisions or actions on my dreams” (Respondent 12); “I also don’t base any of my actions or decisions on my dreams” (Respondent 5); “I definitely never base any decisions or actions on my dreams” (Respondent 3); “I can’t say that I’ve based any of my decisions or actions on my dreams” (Respondent 10); “I have...never based any of my actions or decisions on a dream” (Respondent 7); “I can’t say that I really base any decisions or actions on my dreams. Now and then I do, but I can’t think of any specific examples now” (Respondent 13); “Dreams don’t influence my actions and my decisions” (Respondent 14); “I can’t say that I ever base any of my actions or decisions on my dreams...even when a dream is about something familiar I’m definitely not going to base any of my decisions on it” (Respondent 18); “I won’t base any of my decisions or actions on my dreams” (Respondent 19); “I also never base any decisions or actions on my dreams. No, I can’t think of a single instance where I did this” (Respondent 20).

The tendency to disregard dreams as being inconsequential with regard to serving as basis for actions and decisions seem to be linked to reductionist modernist conceptions of dreams as being mere bio-psychological phenomena devoid of deeper significance.

In addition, an evaluation of the interviews reveals that respondents sometimes contradicted themselves with regard to this theme. One respondent mentioned that her actions and decisions were not influenced by her dreams, but described an instance in which this was indeed the case earlier in the interview. For example: “I dreamt that a friend of mine was brutally stabbed at a shebeen. I warned her to be careful...Dreams don’t influence my decisions and actions” (Respondent 14). It appears that the respondent might not have realized consciously that this particular action on her part was influenced by her dream. It is also possible that other respondents might have been similarly unaware of particular connections between their dreams and their decisions and actions. The respondents’ responses to this theme should therefore be treated with caution and are perhaps best viewed as a reflection of the degree to which the respondents were consciously aware of the extent to which they based their decisions and actions on their dreams. As respondent eight (citation reflected in the next section) states, it seems quite likely that most respondents are influenced to a greater extent by their dreams than they might consciously realize.

-Other respondents indicated that they did, at least on certain occasions, base actions or decisions on their dreams. The following excerpts from the interviews serve to illustrate this contention: “...dreams do sometimes influence my actions and decisions. This is not always a conscious thing. I think that many dreams subconsciously have an influence on how I see things and on some of my actions” (Respondent 8); “Dreams do sometimes affect my actions” (Respondent 9); “My dreams do sometimes affect my actions” (Respondent 4); “So I can say that yes, my actions and decisions are sometimes influenced by my dreams” (Respondent 6); “Yes, I do sometimes decide or do things because of what I have dreamed. Not often, only sometimes... sometimes, after I have dreamt of something I am more interested in making it

a reality. That is when it was a good dream” (Respondent 16); “Yes, I often base my decisions and actions on my dreams” (Respondent 17).

However, even in instances where respondents did state that they base certain decisions and actions on their dreams, it is clear that this is almost always very occasional and limited to specific aspects of the respondents’ lives. None of the respondents based a large proportion of their decisions or actions on dreams. The relative proportion of actions and decisions influenced by dreams seems to range from a nonexistent to a moderate level that affects only selected aspects of the respondents’ lives, but never exceeds this. From this it can safely be concluded that none of the respondents’ actions and decisions were comprehensively or substantially influenced by their dreams. The impact of dreams on their day to day living therefore seems to be marginal to nonexistent, especially as far as conscious awareness of this fact is concerned. However, the possibility that dreams exert a subtle, yet pervasive influence on the lives of the respondents which might not be recognized by them as such cannot be discounted either.

The tendency to base actions and decisions on dreams is extremely common and widespread amongst cultural, religious, traditional and psychological dream related discourses (see chapter three), and as such, it would be difficult to relate these beliefs to a single discourse.

A general theme which emerged in comparing African and non-African respondents is that there is a much greater tendency among African respondents to base their decisions and actions on their dreams than among Western respondents. If these findings are examined in the context of the African dream related discourses discussed in chapter three, it appears that remnants of the importance traditionally placed on acting upon dreams in these cultures (Jedrej & Shaw, 1992: 8-9) still survive in the local discourses of African respondents, although to an apparently lesser degree.

A tendency which emerged among Western respondents was that they generally placed a lesser importance on dreams and that it appears that their decisions and actions are less likely to be influenced by dreams than is the case among African respondents.

Interestingly, the Western female respondents had the lowest tendency to base their decisions and actions on their dreams. Of the five interviewed, only one respondent indicated that she definitely bases her actions and decisions on her dreams in some instances.

Unexpectedly, it also seems that males were almost twice as likely to base their decisions and actions on dreams than females. This difference is especially marked when Western males are compared with Western females, but not so when African male and female respondents are compared.

It should be kept in mind that this is not a quantitative study and that the sample was not selected using quantitative criteria. As such, these observations should only be considered in a very tentative and speculative light. They are by no means offered as being statistically representative or conclusive of any general patterns, but merely hint at certain possibilities.

An interesting association emerged in examining the colour coded transcripts of the interviews. There appears to be a very strong link between the degree of importance each respondent attached to his or her dreams and the extent to which this individual based his or her decisions and actions on the dream. This lends support to the contention made in chapter two that dream related beliefs would impact directly on dream related practices. Therefore, if dreams were believed to be unimportant, few dream related practices or actions were reported, and conversely, those who believed their dreams to be important,

often based actions or decisions on their dreams. This link appears strongly and consistently enough that it might have some degree of predictive value.

Amongst respondents who indicated that dreams did influence their decisions and actions, a variety of different types of decisions and actions were reported. The following sections are therefore devoted to an in-depth exploration of the various forms of influence that dreams have had in affecting respondents' daily lives.

-Most frequently cited in this regard was being motivated to take actions or make decisions in order to avoid a negative scenario or outcome that the dream was seen to warn the respondent about: "...sometimes I might get a dream in which I fail one of my exams...the negative feelings of the dream motivate me to study harder in order not to have the events in the dream happen to me" (Respondent 8); "Sometimes...my dreams will show me a negative scenario with regards to some aspect of my life which will motivate me to make a different decision in real life" (Respondent 12); "If I dream that my friends have all passed their exams but I have failed, this will cause me to study harder" (Respondent 9); "...if I dream of water and fish, I know that this could show that I...might get pregnant. I had dreams like this recently and because of them decided to stop dating for a while, because I do not want to get pregnant again" (Respondent 1); "...if I had a bad dream, I might phone home to find out what is going on there and to make sure that everyone is ok" (Respondent 4); "In fact, these lion dreams became so intense that I did not want to go to sleep at night, and I even took the step of buying a gun for self-protection, even though I know there are no lions in the area where I stay" (Respondent 2); "Sometimes, if I've had a bad dream about someone close to me I might plan things differently, or be more attentive, such as watching my children closely when they are near a swimming pool...I remember one instance when I had planned to go somewhere and after a bad dream about this I decided to postpone the trip" (Respondent 6); "...I might for example dream that I am in a

car accident and then I will drive very carefully the next day, or even avoid the car altogether. If I dream of a funeral I might phone home and see if everyone is ok” (Respondent 15); “So when the dream is bad, I’ll sometimes do things to try to avoid it from happening” (Respondent 16); “Another time I dreamt that a friend of mine was brutally stabbed at a shebeen. I warned her to be careful...” (Respondent 14); “There might for example be something I’d want to do, but a particular dream might cause me to stop this, and I’ll decide to rather wait and see what happens” (Respondent 17).

No clear patterns emerged with regards to gender or cultural differences related to this sub-theme.

-Another typical influence that dreams had on respondents’ decisions and actions involved being motivated to take actions or make decisions in order to actualize a positive scenario or outcome shown by a dream: “I also think that dreams can motivate and “boost” you...For example, before one of my tennis matches I might dream that I win the game. I think these dreams prepare me and give me more confidence than what I’d normally have” (Respondent 8); “...if I dream I can do something then in real life I will try harder to get this right” (Respondent 11); “My dreams also sometimes motivate me to do things...I had a dream in which I was at a graduation ceremony and got a degree...The very next day I went out and bought the Sowetan and I found an ad for this university and I immediately phoned them for information...A few weeks later I enrolled” (Respondent 15); “Other times my dreams will give me a push to make a move with regard to my business or perhaps even in a relationship” (Respondent 17); “...sometimes, after I have dreamt of something I am more interested in making it a reality...some dreams...encourage you...Dreams also help us to set goals. If you had a good dream, then the dream can motivate you to make it happen” (Respondent 16).

All the respondents who indicated that they took actions to actualize a positive outcome shown by a dream were males. No clear cultural differences were noted.

The practice of taking action or making decisions in order to avoid negative outcomes shown by a dream, or conversely, to actualize positive outcomes shown by a dream, is reflected in several religious, cultural and other dream discourses. It is well represented in African dream beliefs (e.g. Bührmann, 1978: 110; Mutwa, 2003: 174), and also encountered in the Greek, Native American, Jewish, Christian and Islamic dream beliefs (see discussion in chapter three). As several of the respondents cited above are African, it seems possible that their personal beliefs might have been influenced by general African dream discourses.

-Some respondents stated that they received directions or suggestions for actions or solutions to problems through their dreams, and then took actions in their waking lives based on the dream's advice or counsel. For example: "I can clearly remember one instance where I was faced with a troubling family problem. I had a dream about this that clearly showed me a solution to the problem. In real life I then went ahead and actually did what the dream suggested and it worked out very well, the problem was resolved" (Respondent 6). One respondent referred to his mother in this regard: "My mother often gets dreams from her ancestors and she always follows the advice and gets good results with it" (Respondent 13); "...my father appeared to me in my dream several times and he told me: "I am hungry – you haven't fed me. You are forgetting me." Because of these dreams I decided to go back home...and we decided to slaughter a cow and have a feast...Some dreams give us direction, they tell us what we can or should do" (Respondent 15); "It (dreams) also helps you to make decisions" (Respondent 16); "Dreams can also push you in a certain direction, even though you may not always be consciously aware of this" (Respondent 17).

African and male respondents were both about twice as likely to give this response than Western and female respondents, respectively.

The idea that ancestors can provide directions and make requests to the living is clearly articulated in African dream discourses, and as such, it seems quite possible that personal beliefs of respondents 13 and 15 (who are both African) have been influenced by the general African discourse in this regard. The idea that dreams can offer solutions to problems or directions for action is also encountered in the Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Greek and Native American dream discourses (see chapter three).

-One African female respondent mentioned that as a result of a dream in which she heard persistent voices, she had to drink certain traditional herbs in order to “heal” herself of this affliction: “At one time I was hearing voices in my dreams. I did not know who or what it was, but it was very real and very persistent. Eventually my parents gave me some traditional herbs to drink. Although I did not want to drink them, I eventually did so and the voices disappeared” (Respondent 9).

-One African male respondent (Respondent 15) stated that certain individuals are called into their professions by means of a dream. As such, as a result of such a dream, an individual might decide to enter a specific profession. As this belief has been discussed and referenced in section 5.2.5., no reference will be given here.

This idea is very clearly represented in almost all major African discourses on dreaming and has been discussed in detail in an earlier chapter. This respondent’s belief in this regard is almost certainly drawing on a general African cultural discourse about the dream calling of healers and diviners. This

possibility is supported by the fact that the respondent grew up in rural Lesotho and considers his traditional heritage to be important.

The researcher also considers the act of discussing dreams with other individuals as an action taken as a result of a dream. The interviews reveal that the vast majority of respondents do discuss their dreams with other individuals. It can therefore be reasoned that dreams sometimes have an impact on the nature and topics of the respondents' conversations with other individuals. No supporting extracts from the interviews will be given here as this topic has been discussed and referenced exhaustively elsewhere in this chapter.

Any time and energy spent in attempting to interpret or make sense of a dream is also considered to constitute an action taken as a result of a dream, even though it was not usually explicitly indicated as such by the respondents. Most respondents did at least spend some time attempting to make sense of their dreams, either on their own, or through discussion with other individuals. As this theme has been explored in great depth in a separate section, supportive excerpts from the interviews will not be repeated here, in order to avoid unnecessary repetition.

5.2.5. Theme 5: Unusual dream experiences and beliefs relating to such experiences

This theme relates to the respondents' beliefs with regard to unusual dreams, as well as their personal experiences with such dreams. The concept of unusual dreams was taken to refer to dreams that were seen to predict the future, provide contact with deceased individuals or ancestors, served as channel for religious or spiritual experiences, as well as other dream experiences considered unusual or "out of the ordinary" by the respondents.

With regard to theme five, the respondents recounted a wide array of different beliefs regarding unusual dream experiences. Several respondents reported personally having such experiences and described these in detail. The next sections examine the various sub-themes that were identified in greater depth.

-A few respondents stated that they did not believe that dreams could be a vehicle for unusual experiences such as those mentioned previously. Almost invariably, these respondents also stated that they never had any kind of unusual experience in their dreams. The following extracts from the interviews illustrate this point: “I didn’t have any unusual experiences in my dreams, and I don’t believe in this” (Respondent 12); “I have never had any extraordinary or special dreams” (Respondent 3); “I don’t see dreams as deep or spiritual things. I’ve never had any kind of extraordinary experience in my dreams” (Respondent 2); “I am not superstitious, I do not believe for example, that if you dream of someone dying that anything of the sort is going to happen...I have never had any unusual or extraordinary experiences in my dreams” (Respondent 7); “I haven’t really had any unusual experiences in my dreams...I don’t believe that God or the ancestors can come to you in a dream. Many people in my culture believe it but I don’t. Dreams are just dreams” (Respondent 16); “No, I’ve never had any unusual experiences in my dreams...I’ve also never had any dream that predicted the future, and I can’t see that someone would be able to do this, as we have no control over our dreams...No. I don’t believe that deceased people can come to you in your dreams. That is very superstitious to me, I don’t believe it” (Respondent 18); “No, I’ve never had any unusual experiences in my dreams...I also don’t believe that deceased people can come to you in dreams. I am not superstitious so I eliminate these things from my mindset” (Respondent 19).

The overwhelming majority of respondents who stated that they did not believe that dreams could serve as channel for unusual experiences (such as predicting the future or enabling contact with deceased individuals) were of Western

origin. These respondents were also more likely than their African counterparts to regard such beliefs as superstitious.

An overview of chapter three reveals that the vast majority of cultural, religious, and traditional discourses on dreams do indeed accept and describe unusual dream experiences such as premonitory dreams, contact with deceased individuals or ancestors, and religious experiences through dreams. As such, a total disbelief in such matters seems to be reflective of the general reductionist view taken by modernist science. This perspective is reflected most clearly in the bio-psychological discourse on dreams, and to some extent also by the Aristotelian view on dreams (see chapter three). It is possible that the respondents' personal beliefs in this regard might have been influenced by conceptions of the bio-psychological discourse.

-Seven respondents stated that they did believe that it was possible for dreams to predict the future, even though many of these respondents did not have such a dream themselves. The following extracts from the interviews support this conclusion: "...I do think that dreams can tell you about what might happen in the future" (Respondent 8); "I think the function of dreams is to show the future" (Respondent 9); "I think that dreams can sometimes show the future" (Respondent 5); "Dreams tell us about the future, about what is going to happen" (Respondent 1); "...dreams show us the future and warn us about things that might happen" (Respondent 14); "...some dreams can come to give you a premonition of something that might happen in the future" (Respondent 13); "I haven't had any dreams that predicted the future, but to a certain degree I do believe that this might be possible..." (Respondent 11).

African respondents were more likely to believe that dreams can predict the future than their Western counterparts. No clear gender related differences emerged in this regard.

As can be deduced from the discussions in chapter three, the belief that dreams are able to predict the future is commonly found in the majority of cultural, religious, and psychological dream discourses. This sub-theme has already been discussed in section 5.2.3 with regard to the belief that one of the functions of dreams is to predict the future.

Several respondents personally had dreams which they perceived to have predicted a future event. For example: “I had a vivid dream in which someone was dying from cancer...A month later things happened exactly as it was in the dream” (Respondent 8); “I have had dreams which later came true” (Respondent 9); “...I had a dream of a party where lot of people were preparing to get ready, and my grandmother told me that this means that someone might pass away. Three days later the father of one of my friends passed away” (Respondent 1); “...I dreamt on four different occasions that my husband died, and a week after my last dream he was shot and died” (Respondent 14); “I dreamt that my boyfriend was cheating on me and a while later it happened exactly like I dreamt it in reality” (Respondent 10); “I once...dreamed that someone was breaking into our house. I then woke up and discovered that people were breaking in at the neighbour’s house” (Respondent 13).

From the interviews it emerged that African respondents were about twice as likely to report precognitive dreams than Western respondents. No clear gender differences were noted.

-One African female respondent described two dreams which seem to have been premonitory but she stated that she believed them to be mere coincidence. In her own words: “Twice I had dreams which later came true, but I think it’s just coincidence” (Respondent 20).

As was seen in chapter three, both Aristotle and Cicero believed that prophetic dreams could be explained by coincidence.

-As a related theme to premonitory dreams, many subjects reported having “déjà vu” experiences which they attributed to their dreams. Many respondents described getting the feeling of having already been in a specific place they were in at a specific moment, or having already done an activity they were engaged in. The respondents frequently attributed these experiences to a dream in which they were at that particular location or performed the activity under question. For example: “I also often have this déjà vu feeling, like when I enter a room I might feel like I’ve been there before, and often it is because I have dreamed this” (Respondent 8); “The only thing I do get is that I will sometimes do something or be someplace and get a feeling of déjà vu, as if I’ve already done this or been there. I think I might often have dreamt this before the event and that is why it feels familiar” (Respondent 12); “A friend of mine might be saying something and I would have this déjà vu feeling...I think that sometimes when this happens I have dreamed about the conversation” (Respondent 5); “I often have a sense of déjà vu in that I might walk into a place and get the strong feeling that I’ve been there already. Often, in these instances I feel as if I have dreamt about it before” (Respondent 6); “Sometimes I also have a déjà vu feeling, as if something has happened before or I’ve been there before, but that’s because I dreamed about it” (Respondent 13).

No clear gender or cultural differences emerged with regard to the above sub-theme.

The researcher could not locate any references to this phenomenon in the cultural, religious, and psychological discourses he reviewed. Nowhere are déjà vu experiences explicitly related to dreams. Yet this was a very recurrent theme amongst the respondents. As the respondents’ comments in this regard were often accompanied by an example of such an occurrence, it seems likely that at

least some of the respondents derived their beliefs in this regard from personal observations.

-One Western male respondent indicated that although he did have déjà vu experiences that appeared to be related to his dreams, he thought that this was due to neurological factors that only made it seem like a true precognitive experience. In his own words: “I have had déjà vu experiences which sometimes feel like it’s something I’ve dreamt about before. But this is an illusion, because it is only a matter of the brain receiving the sensory impressions from the eyes twice which fools it into thinking that it saw it before” (Respondent 19).

These views are strongly echoed in the bio-psychological discourse discussed in chapter three, and the kind of language used by the respondent indicates that it is very likely that his own beliefs in this regard might have been influenced by this discourse.

-As was indicated earlier, several respondents believed that it was possible for a deceased individual or ancestor to make contact with a sleeping person through a dream, even though most respondents did not experience this personally. To illustrate: “I do believe that you can make contact with a deceased person in a dream” (Respondent 8); “I do think that you could have contact in a dream with the soul of someone who is already dead, although I did not have any such dreams...” (Respondent 5); “I definitely believe that you can make contact with the spirits of the deceased in your dreams...I have never had any dreams in which my ancestors contacted me” (Respondent 1); “I do believe it is possible for a dead person to come to you in a dream. My grandmother came to my mother in a dream...” (Respondent 4); “I’ve never had any dreams in which dead people came to me in a dream, but I do think this might be possible” (Respondent 17).

Male and African respondents were both about twice as likely to cite this belief than female and Western respondents, respectively.

The belief that ancestors are able to visit a living relative in the dreaming state is strongly articulated in all the African dream related discourses that were discussed in chapter three. As several of the respondents cited above are African, it seems very likely that their beliefs in this regard have been influenced by traditional African discourses on the matter.

Many other dream discourses also allow for the possibility that a deceased individual could contact a sleeping individual in a dream, such as the Native American, Biblical, and Egyptian discourses (see chapter three). Seeing that virtually all the respondents are Christian, it might be possible that some of the Western respondents who stated that they believed in the possibility of being visited by a deceased individual might have been influenced to some extent by Biblical discourses on the matter. However, personal experiences might also have played a role in this regard, especially in the following cases, where respondents reported a personal encounter of this nature.

-Some respondents stated that they personally had an experience in which a deceased individual, usually a close relative, or an ancestor came to them in a dream. For example: “One night, a few weeks after my grandmother’s death, I had a dream in which my grandmother came to me and told me she was ok...she also told me that she was ok and happy where she was now. This dream brought me a great deal of assurance...I am not absolutely sure whether the dream was a real contact with my grandmother or not. I think it was...” (Respondent 8); “At one time I was hearing voices in my dreams. I did not know who or what it was, but it was very real and persistent. Eventually my parents gave me some traditional herbs to drink...and the voices disappeared” (Respondent 9); “A while ago I felt someone touch my shoulder while I was dreaming. This felt extremely real...I had the distinct feeling that it was my aunt, who passed away a year ago” (Respondent 6); “...and my father appeared

to me in my dream several times and he told me..." (Respondent 15); "I have also had a dream in which my father's father came to me in a dream and gave me a message that related to my own father" (Respondent 13).

Male respondents reported more experiences such as this than female respondents. No cultural differences were noted.

-Many respondents believed that dreams could serve as channel for spiritual experiences and divine communication and that God could send warnings, messages, or answers to prayers to a sleeping individual through dreams. However, some of the respondents who expressed this belief did not experience this phenomenon themselves. To illustrate: "I also believe strongly that in some dreams God can actually use the dream to give me a sign or guidance on some issue" (Respondent 8); "I often pray and then get answers to problems in dreams...I think that dreams can come...even from God" (Respondent 9); "I think many other dreams are a message from God" (Respondent 14); "I have not had any spiritual experiences in my dreams, although I certainly believe that this is possible" (Respondent 10); "Yes, I do believe that God can affect someone's dreams. But it has never happened to me" (Respondent 17).

Western respondents gave this type of response significantly more often than their African counterparts.

The idea that dreams can serve as a channel for Divine communication is clearly articulated in several discourses, most notably in Biblical and Christian dream accounts and discourses. As virtually all the respondents indicated that they belonged to the Christian faith, it seems very likely that their beliefs in this regard were strongly influenced by these discourses.

-Some respondents reported personally having a religious experience in the context of a dream in that God or some other deity or spiritual force might have

given them a message or a warning. For example: “I have had spiritual experiences in my dreams in which I believe I received messages from God” (Respondent 6); “I often pray and then get answers to problems in dreams...” (Respondent 9).

Interestingly, both respondents cited above are female. No male cited such an experience, and no cultural differences were noted.

Another interesting aspect that emerges from an overview of the findings made with regard to this theme is that whereas the idea of diabolical dreams were prevalent in religious discourses of various cultures and historical epochs, such as those of the Christians, Muslims and Africans (see discussion in chapter three), this idea is not reflected by any of the respondents, except for a single reference that witchcraft might affect dreams. Amongst the respondent group, the perception that God or some other elevated source or being was behind a dream seemed to have persisted, whereas the belief that the devil or some other diabolical source was at work in some dreams appear to have been marginalized. It therefore appears that the “Devil” has lost some of his foothold in the discourses of the respondents.

While this tendency may or may not be reflective of the general population, it does raise some interesting questions which future research might seek to investigate more focusedly.

-One Western female respondent mentioned having had the experience of being aware that she is dreaming at the time of the dream. This experience is commonly referred to as a lucid dream (Delaney, 1998: 212). The respondent stated: “...I am sometimes aware that I am dreaming while I am still in the dream, and at these times I can sometimes affect my dreams” (Respondent 7).

Lucid dreams are clearly recognized and described in modern psychological dream related literature (Delaney, 1988: 212; Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 28).

However, the respondent's comments appear to reflect her personal experiences and observations rather than a personal belief, and as such, it seems likely that she was not influenced by any discourse on the matter.

-The belief stated by an African male respondent that certain individuals enter their professions after being "called" by a dream is also considered to constitute an unusual dream experience, but seeing that this issue has already been discussed and referenced with regards to other themes, no citations will be given here.

This belief is clearly articulated in traditional African dream related discourses (Mbiti, 1997: 514-515). As the respondent is African and considers his traditional roots to be important, it seems very likely that his personal belief in this instance draws upon the general African discourse on dreams.

-An African male respondent stated that he believed that someone can be healed by means of a dream and claimed that this has happened to his mother. In his own words: "I also think you can be healed by a dream. My mother was healed by such a dream. She suffered from excruciating pain, and one night my grandfather came to her in a dream and healed her, and since that time the pain was gone" (Respondent 13).

The idea that dreams can serve to heal an individual is perhaps most clearly reflected in Greek dream beliefs discussed in chapter three. Greek incubation temples often served the function of eliciting a healing dream. The idea is also clearly articulated in African dream discourses (Mbiti, 1997: 515-517), and as the respondent is of African origin, his beliefs in this regard might be affected by such general African dream beliefs. However, it is also possible that this respondent's belief resulted from a personal observation and might therefore not have been influenced by any discourse.

-One Western male respondent described what seems to be an out of body experience that he had a few years before the interview. “I walked to the toilet and as I came back I saw myself lying in bed. I don’t know what that was, but it was very strange” (Respondent 17).

This phenomenon might be an instance of false awakening, in which an individual who is still sleeping experiences a very vivid and life like dream in which he believes himself to have gotten up out of bed (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 37-38).

Alternatively, several dream discourses, such as those of the Hindu’s, the Egyptians, the Native Americans and the Africans, reflect the belief that in sleep, a part of the dreamer’s soul is able to leave the physical body and travel around (see discussions in chapter three). The possibility that this respondent’s experience was indeed an out of body experience can therefore not be discounted.

The same respondent also indicated that he sometimes feels paralysed and unable to move during a dream. He stated that: “I also sometimes feel paralysed and unable to move” (Respondent 17).

This phenomenon has been well-researched by dream scholars and is referred to as sleep paralysis. It is believed by some researchers to result from a temporary lack of synchronization between the atonia that characterises the state of dreaming sleep and the mind-alerting brain system (Melbourne & Hearne, 1999: 36).

Personally the researcher found it very noteworthy that so many respondents expressed their belief in the validity of such a wide array of unusual dream experiences such as those discussed in this section. Based upon the discussion in chapter two, it can reasonably be suggested that the general modernist intellectual climate prevalent in our society (and even more so in the academic

context in which the respondents were selected) would generally be averse to such seemingly irrational beliefs. The ideas that dreams can predict the future, or provide contact with deceased relatives could be considered incompatible with general modernist, scientific thinking. The pervasiveness of such beliefs and experiences in the face of seemingly opposing social master discourses appears to be a testament to the resilience of local discourses.

5.2.6. Theme 6: Strategies and methods of dream interpretation

This theme relates to the methods and strategies that the respondents used to interpret or make sense of their dreams. It concerns the specific practices they engaged in to render their dreams meaningful and understandable.

Throughout the qualitative interviews it became evident that very few respondents had an elaborate or comprehensive approach towards interpreting their dreams. Responses relating to this theme were often brief and hesitant, which suggest that the “methods” used by the respondents to interpret their dreams tended to be simple, intuitive, and often hitherto un-verbalized, rather than comprehensive, systematic, or clearly articulated.

A variety of different basic dream interpretation practices and strategies were mentioned by the respondents. Some of these bear a similarity to existing practices reflected in cultural, religious, and psychological dream discourses, whereas other strategies appear to be unaccounted for in such discourses.

-A few respondents stated that they do not consider their dreams to be important and therefore rarely or never attempt to interpret their dreams. Sometimes, the reason cited for this lack of interpretative attention paid to dreams was that dreams were experienced as being “weird,” illogical and confusing. The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate this point: “I don’t consider dreams to be important. My dreams are often weird, illogical and confusing and they make no sense to me...I never...put in any serious

effort at trying to interpret them...I sometimes try to make sense of them, but my dreams are mostly so weird and confused that I can't see any meaning in them whatsoever" (Respondent 3); "I don't really try to interpret my dreams...I sometimes wonder about what they might mean, but I don't really spend much time trying to figure them out" (Respondent 7); "I often don't understand the things that come up, it often makes no sense...I never try to interpret my dreams. They don't make any sense to me" (Respondent 20).

Interestingly, all the respondents cited above are females.

The lack of importance and consequent interpretative effort vested in dreams by these respondents seem to be echoed in the bio-psychological discourse on dreams (see chapter three), and as such, the respondents' personal views might conceivably have been influenced to some extent by such reductionist modernist discourses. It is also possible that their lack of interpretative effort might stem from personal observations that their dreams appear to make little sense and bear no obvious or recognizable relation to their waking lives.

-However, the majority of respondents did attempt to interpret or make sense of their dreams at least in some instances. This process was usually limited only to certain dreams; in general most dreams appeared to be left un-interpreted. It appears from the interviews that the majority of dreams are either not recalled or not considered important or meaningful enough to interpret. For example: "...some dreams are just dreams and don't mean much. I usually forget them and I don't think they have any meaning...But other dreams...are important...I often...try to make out what the dream was all about" (Respondent 14); "Sometimes I have weird dreams that seem very confusing and make no sense...I try to figure out what my dreams mean" (Respondent 10); "I do try to make sense of my dreams sometimes, but mostly I am unable to see any meaning in them" (Respondent 11); "...sometimes...I will try and see if I can make sense of my dream, but mostly it's just a load of nonsense...I rarely

remember my dreams, and my dreams are usually very jumbled and chaotic and I can make no sense of them” (Respondent 19); “I do sometimes try to interpret my dreams” (Respondent 12); “...when I interpret my own dreams...” (Respondent 1); “If I get a dream I will...try to figure out what it means...” (Respondent 4); “Yes, I do try to interpret my dreams sometimes” (Respondent 17); “...I will try to interpret my dreams...” (Respondent 15).

Any attempts at interpreting dreams reflect the underlying belief that there might be something to the dream that is meaningful and interpretable. As such, it can be seen that the majority of respondents believed that at least some dreams are potentially meaningful. The idea that dreams need to be interpreted in some manner or other is common to virtually all dream related discourses with the exception of the bio-psychological discourses and the dream views of Aristotle (see chapter three).

-Sometimes respondents mentioned that their dreams often only made sense some time after the dream in the light of some event or experience that they believed to be related to the dream. In these instances the respondents would not attempt any immediate interpretation of the dreams, but assigned meaning to a previously un-interpreted dream on the basis of some event that occurred in the respondent’s waking life after the dream. Very commonly, the feeling of *déjà vu* was cited as being caused by the respondent first dreaming about doing something or being someplace. In other instances an event occurred which was interpreted in retrospect to be predicted by the dream. For the sake of convenience, this process is referred to as retrospective dream interpretation. The following examples taken from the interviews illustrate this sub-theme: “Although I forgot about the dream, when we were all standing around her death bed, I remembered the dream and it was exactly what was happening now...I also often have this *déjà vu* feeling, like when I enter a room and feel like I’ve been there before, and often it is because I have dreamt this...Unfortunately I can only tell whether a dream has anything to do with the

future once it actually happened” (Respondent 8); “Usually I only realize that my dream was real after something happens, so there’s nothing I can do about it...Many of my dreams are very difficult to interpret though, because I can only be sure of them after something they showed me has happened” (Respondent 14); “Sometimes I only realize a dream’s influence some time after the dream” (Respondent 17).

Two of the three respondents who stated this observation are Western males.

The phenomenon of retrospective dream interpretation does not appear to receive much attention in the vast majority of religious, cultural, and psychological dream discourses. From the literature study, the only clear exception to this appears in the Zulu dream discourse in which Credo Mutwa claimed that certain specific dreams are often forgotten upon awakening but recall of them is triggered later in the day through some event (Mutwa, 2003: 176-177).

-With regard to the process of dream interpretation, the most frequently cited method appeared to be the use of analogy. Respondents would typically attempt to look for similarities between the dream imagery and contents and their lives in order to determine what their dreams meant. Most frequently, respondents would consider the events and circumstances of their lives in the day or days preceding the dream and attempt to relate the dream to this. The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate this process: “I do sometimes try to interpret my dreams. When I do this I usually relate the images in the dream to my life and see if I can find any connections” (Respondent 12); “Usually my dreams will have something to do with...some experience I had during the previous day or so” (Respondent 12); “When I try to understand my dreams I usually try to think of what is happening in my life or about what I talked about in the days before the dream and try to find how that relates to the dream” (Respondent 5); “...I generally try to look for similarities between my

dreams and what is happening in my life. For example, I often dream of being chased by something and trying to run away from it. I think this has to do with running from my fears” (Respondent 10); “When I try to understand my own dreams I usually replay them over and over in my mind and try to find points of commonality between the dream and my life” (Respondent 6); “I’ll look for links between the dream and my life” (Respondent 18); “When I try to make sense of my dream I will think about the dream and ask myself: “Can this be a reality? Could this happen to me?” If it could be, then I will try to draw a parallel between the dream and my life” (Respondent 19).

More Western than African respondents claimed that they interpreted their dreams via analogy. No clear gender differences were noted.

Interpreting dreams via direct or metaphorical analogy is a practice found in the vast majority of dream related discourses, such as those of the Egyptians, the Romans (specifically Artemidorus), the Jews, Christians, Chinese, and the Muslims. Even Freud’s dream interpretations were heavily based on the metaphorical similarities between dream symbols and aspects of the dreamer’s waking life, especially with regard to phallic and sexual references. Jung also considered dream images in a metaphoric light and attempted to draw analogies between such metaphoric images and the dreamer’s waking life (see chapter three for a more comprehensive discussion of each of these points).

-Many respondents reported that at least some of their dreams are literal and therefore require no interpretation as the meaning is directly evident from the manifest content of the dream. Although not directly articulated as such by many respondents, their references to the manner in which they interpreted a given dream often indicate clearly that the dream was understood literally (see respondent 15 for example). The following extracts from the interviews illustrate this sub-theme: “My dreams are very straightforward, so I don’t need to interpret them. They show me things as they are” (Respondent 14); “...I

might for example dream that I am in a car accident and then I will drive very carefully the next day, or even avoid the car altogether” (Respondent 15); “But if my dream is straightforward I will just look at it as it is, and interpret it as it is” (Respondent 13).

All the respondents who gave this response are African, and two of the three respondents are male.

A dichotomy between literal and symbolic dreams is reflected in the previous two sections. Respondents explicitly indicated that some dreams have to be interpreted via analogy, and are therefore symbolic, whereas other dreams are viewed literally. As was discussed in chapter three, the distinction between literal and symbolic dreams has been made by Artemidorus and is widely applied by scholars today in order to classify Biblical dreams (Husser, 1999: 99-100). Carl Jung also stated that dreams could be interpreted either on a literal or on a symbolic manner, or both (see chapter three).

-Related to such a literal understanding of dreams is the belief expressed by several respondents that sometimes a dream constituted an experience in itself and therefore required no interpretation as such. This dream experience itself was then used as the basis of the meaning assigned to the dream. Often, this kind of dream served to motivate or reassure the dreamer by means of the actual dream experience and emotions. Related to this, a dream was sometimes interpreted as constituting a valid and enjoyable experience in itself that required no interpretation. For example: “...I might get a dream in which I fail one of my exams...the negative feelings in the dream motivate me to study harder” (Respondent 8). In this case the respondent took the experience of failing his exam in the dream as being the significance of the dream as it motivated him to study harder. There is also the implicit assumption that the dream was interpreted as possibly revealing a future situation which could be averted by his own efforts. In another example, respondent 8 stated that:

“dreams can motivate and boost you...For example, before one of my tennis matches I might dream that I win the game. I think these dreams prepare me and give me more confidence...” In this case the meaning of the dream seems to lie in the experience itself as well as the emotions associated with it. This situation is also reflected in the following excerpts: “...a few weeks after my grandmother’s death, I had a dream in which my grandmother came to me and told me she was ok and that nothing that happened was my fault...This dream brought me a great deal of reassurance and helped me cope much better with the grief over my grandmother’s death” (Respondent 8); “Sometimes...my dreams will show me a negative scenario with regards to some aspect of my life which will motivate me to make a different decision in real life” (Respondent 12); “Then one day I had a dream in which I was at a graduation ceremony and I got a degree. I could feel the happiness of it and it inspired me...(dreams) can also motivate us to do things” (Respondent 15); “...a while ago I dreamt of my father who has passed on a few years ago, and it brought me comfort. I think that dreams serve to inspire and motivate us. If I’ve planned something and I dream that I have achieved it, this motivates me” (Respondent 17); “...some of my dreams are pleasurable...” (Respondent 3); “I think that most dreams don’t have any specific function, they’re just there to be enjoyed” (Respondent 10).

Four of the six respondents that cited this belief were males, and five of them are of Western origin.

It seems likely that these respondents’ practice of considering or interpreting the experience of the dream itself as constituting the meaning of the dream is based upon the immediate and compelling nature of the dream experiences themselves, rather than reflecting a particular cultural, religious, or psychological dream related discourse. No such discourse (as was discussed in chapter three) appears to contain the idea that a dream could serve as an intrinsically enjoyable experience.

-In some instances dreams were interpreted as reflecting either the wishes or fears of the dreamer. Related to this are aspects such as worry and anticipation which often formed the basis of the respondents' interpretation of a given dream. As this sub-theme has already been thoroughly discussed and referenced elsewhere, no citations will be given.

Female respondents were more likely to interpret dreams as an expression of wishes and fears than male respondents.

The idea that dreams can be understood in terms of the dreamer's desires and fears is very strongly expressed in the dream theory of Freud as its central theme. This idea also occurs in the dream theory of Artemidorus, Jung, and several other dream related discourses, as was discussed in chapter three. As Freud and Jung's theories are the most contemporary and prominent amongst these dream discourses, it seems possible that the respondents' personal beliefs in this regard might have been influenced by these theories.

-One African male respondent considered his relationship with himself and God to be a key determining factor in deciding what his dreams mean. He stated that "...I will firstly look at my life to see where I am in terms of my relationships with God, with other people, and generally. Secondly I will look within and ask myself: "Am I at peace within or am I in a mess?" Then from there I will interpret it. I will look for similarities between my dream and my life. If I have a bad dream this means I am not at peace within or that there is a problem in one of my relationships...if I am at peace within and if my relationships are good then...my dreams will be peaceful" (Respondent 15).

As was discussed in chapter three, this idea seems to echo cultural, religious, and psychological dream discourses in which a dreamer could be alerted to imbalances and misconduct in their lives through the medium of dreams. As

was shown in chapter three, the source of such injunctions could take the form of God (as is the case in Christian, Jewish, and Muslim dream discourses), the ancestors (as is the case in Native American and African discourses) or the person's own psyche which reflects to the person their own shortcomings (as Jung claimed). As this respondent is both African and Christian, it is possible that his personal beliefs might be reflecting general African or Christian dream conceptions.

-One African female respondent stated that she interpreted her dreams by considering the opposite meaning to what her dream revealed. "When I try to interpret my dreams I often take the opposite of what I have dreamt. I have noticed that very often when I dream of something, the opposite happens. For example, if I see myself failing my exam, I know that I will pass" (Respondent 9).

The idea of interpreting by means of contraries is found amongst the ancient Egyptians, as well as in the dream discourse of the Muslims, and is central to the dream theory of Sigmund Freud. In addition, the practice of interpreting by contraries is implicit in several African dream discourses. It is therefore possible that this respondent (who is of African origin) has been influenced by traditional African dream ideas.

However, it must be pointed out that in this case the respondent noted that she came to this conclusion after observing her own dreams and the outcomes that followed them in waking life. As such, it is possible that this respondent's dream belief in this regard was derived from her own personal experience as opposed to a particular cultural or religious discourse.

-Another very commonly cited interpretative practice was that the respondents would enlist the aid of friends, parents (mostly the mother), or some other individual such as a grandmother or spouse in order to make sense of the dream. As such, it could be considered as a strategy of dream interpretation in

that it was a deliberate action taken in order to gain insight into the possible meaning of a dream.

Whereas some respondents mentioned that they would do this as a matter of course, others indicated that they will first attempt to interpret the dream on their own, and would only seek the insights of another person if they were unable to discern the meaning of the dream by themselves. For example: “If I can’t figure out my dream by myself I will tell it to my mother, who will then tell me what my dream means” (Respondent 4); “If I can’t make sense of my dream I will sometimes go to someone else, especially my mother for help in understanding my dream...Now and then, I will discuss a dream with my friends to try and get insight on what it might mean” (Respondent 11); “...I might share a dream with a friend in order to try and get his or her opinion on the dream and see what they think of it” (Respondent 12); “I do discuss my dream with...my parents and my friends. I do this so that they can help me find the meaning of my dream. They often give me another perspective on it...they would give me interpretations based on their traditional knowledge of dreams” (Respondent 9); “I often tell my dreams to my friends and family...So we try to find the meanings of the dream by discussing our dreams with each other” (Respondent 5); “When I have a dream I often tell my dream to my grandmother, who will then explain to me what my dreams mean...Even when I interpret my own dreams, I think of what my grandmother would say about it...I often discuss my dreams with my friends...Sometimes we will try to interpret each other’s dreams” (Respondent 1); “I don’t usually interpret my dreams on my own, mostly I tell it to someone and see what they think...I am too close to it so I can’t always see it objectively” (Respondent 16).

African respondents were three times more likely than Western respondents to interpret their dreams through discussing them with other individuals such as parents and friends. No gender related differences were noted.

Discussing dreams with other individuals as a strategy of revealing its possible meaning was commonly practiced in many cultural and religious contexts. However, as was seen in chapter three, in the contexts of such discourses this process was formalized in that individuals took their dreams to a specific individual who was considered an authority on dreams, such as a shaman, healer, diviner, priest, scribe, witch doctor, rabbi, or psychologist (as opposed to friends or family). However, it appears, at least amongst the respondent group, that this practice has become very rare. Not a single respondent mentioned that they ever took their dreams to any formal authority such as those mentioned above. It therefore seems that such individuals have been replaced by friends and family as sources of insight into dreams. This shift might possibly be indicative of a more general trend amongst individuals in the Vaal-Triangle area. However, this contention is put forward with great circumspection and tentativity as it is realized that the respondent group is not necessarily reflective of the broader Vaal-Triangle community.

-Some respondents indicated that their method of interpretation was intuitive and based on the general “sense” they got from considering the dream. The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate this sub-theme: “I don’t really use any method to interpret my dreams – I feel that it’s not about the visual aspects of the dream, but that it’s the “under the surface effect” of the dream that nudges you in a specific direction. I can usually pick up the meaning of a dream instantly, I don’t really interpret it. I just get a feeling about what the dream means” (Respondent 17); “I just have a feeling of it. I wouldn’t refer to any other source such as a dream book or something. I just get a natural feeling for what it might mean” (Respondent 16).

Both respondents cited above are males.

No dream discourse discussed in chapter three appears to directly describe a process of intuitive dream interpretation.

-One Western male respondent stated that he interpreted his dreams by examining the specific sequences that occurred in the dream and attempts to determine the reason for any changes between dream scenes. In his own words: “I will try to follow the sequences of the dream and ask myself why the dream jumped from one scene to the next” (Respondent 18).

This strategy of dream interpretation does not seem to be mentioned in any dream discourse discussed in chapter three.

-One African female respondent indicated that her method for deciding whether a dream might be predicting the future was the extent to which the dream was memorable and remained in her conscious awareness. “...there are times when I know that the dream might become real. These dreams don’t go out of my mind, I keep on thinking about it and it bothers me. The more I try to ignore it the more strongly it is in my mind” (Respondent 14).

The idea that precognitive or other very meaningful dreams somehow “stand out” from ordinary dreams by their vivid and memorable nature is clearly articulated in the Zulu discourse on dreams (Mutwa, 2003: 176-177), and might also be contained in other African dream related discourses. As the respondent is African, it seems possible that her personal belief in this regard might have been influenced to some extent by African dream discourses. However, as is the case in many other instances, the possibility that this belief derives from personal observation and experience cannot be discounted either.

-Two respondents mentioned that in making their final interpretation, they will combine the input from other individuals with their own. For example: “When I decide what my dreams mean I put all the ideas of everyone together with my own ideas” (Respondent 9); “And they will give me their ideas and opinions and I will put it together with mine” (Respondent 16).

Both respondents cited above are African. This practice does not appear to be explicitly in any dream discourse discussed in chapter three.

5.2.7. Theme 7: Discussing dreams with other individuals and reasons for doing so

This theme relates to respondents' practices of recounting their dreams to others (or not). It also concerns whom the respondents shared their dreams with, and also the reasons that motivated them to do so. The qualitative examination of the interviews revealed the following sub-themes with regard to theme seven:

-A few respondents stated that they very rarely share their dreams with others. Related to this, a few respondents stated that they would only share their dreams if they deemed it to be very important. For example: "Nowadays I do not tell my dreams to others that much. I mostly keep them to myself unless they are important (Respondent15); "I don't really discuss my dreams with other people..." (Respondent 12).

-However, every single respondent mentioned sharing his or her dreams with others at some time, even in cases where he or she placed very little value on dreams, and even if this only occurred very infrequently in some instances. Interestingly, several clear patterns emerged with regard to whom respondents recounted their dreams to. When shared, dreams were almost always recounted to family and friends. The majority of respondents mentioned that their mother either was or still is the individual with whom they shared their dreams the most often. Almost as frequent, was the practice of telling dreams to friends. A few respondents also mentioned sharing their dreams with a spouse or partner. Also mentioned were siblings and grandparents. Lastly, respondents sometimes mentioned that they would discuss the dream with an individual about whom they dreamt.

The following excerpts illustrate these points: “I told my family about this dream...I will go to someone else such as my friends so that they can help me interpret it. When I was a child...I would very often take my dreams to my mother” (Respondent 15); “...I will often go to my parents and ask their opinion of what my dream means...Yes, I do discuss my dreams with other people, such as my friends and my parents, especially my mother” (Respondent 13); “I don’t usually interpret my dreams on my own, mostly I tell it to someone and see what they think...So I always end up discussing my dreams with my friends...I used to tell my dreams to my mom quite a lot when I was younger” (Respondent 16); “If I can’t figure out my dream by myself I will tell it to my mother, who will then tell me what my dream means...I don’t tell my dreams to anyone else, only my mother” (Respondent 4); “If I can’t make sense of my dream I will sometimes go to someone else, especially my mother...Now and then, I will discuss a dream with my friends...” (Respondent 11); “I often discuss my dreams with my mother and husband...” (Respondent 6); “I often tell my dreams to my mother and also my sister...” (Respondent 10); “When I have a dream I often tell my dream to my grandmother...I often discuss my dreams with my friends in the hostel” (Respondent 1); “I even told the dream to my father...I often tell my dreams to my mother...” (Respondent 8); “I do sometimes tell my dreams to others. If another person was in my dream I might mention it jokingly to that person the next day if I see him or her. I might say: “Hey, I’ve been somewhere with you!” ” (Respondent 20); “Now and then I’ll discuss my dreams with others, yes. Maybe I would do so if the dream...concerns someone else. In this case I might sometimes try to very subtly convey the message that I got in the dream to that person” (Respondent 17); “I’ll only discuss my dreams with others if it was very funny or if it is about someone that I know” (Respondent 19).

The sub-theme of the respondents recounting their dreams to their mothers appears to be very dominant. This is an interesting phenomenon as this practice is not clearly articulated in any of the major religious, cultural, psychological

and other dream related discourses discussed in chapter three. This practice suggests that mothers are often perceived by the respondents as possessing insight, knowledge, and understanding with regards to dreams.

Interestingly, a clear cultural pattern seems to emerge with relation to this sub-theme. African respondents mentioned discussing their dreams with their mothers and with friends more often than Western respondents. In fact, all the African male respondents and three of the five African female respondents mentioned discussing their dreams with their mothers. No clear gender based differences were found in this regard.

Virtually all dream discourses discussed in chapter three (with the exception of the bio-psychological discourse) support or encourage the sharing of dreams in at least some contexts.

-No respondent ever took any of their dreams to a priest, Reverend, *ngaka*, *sangoma*, psychic individual, or similar ‘knowledgeable’ person outside the circle of friends and family for assistance in interpretation. A few respondents actively stated that they did not believe in such individuals, either due to their Christian faith, or because of other reasons, such as believing that they are “conmen.” For example: “Although it is common for people in my culture to take their dreams to a *ngaka*, I do not believe in them because I am a Christian. I won’t go to them” (Respondent 1); “No, I won’t take my dreams to a *ngaka*, you can’t trust many of them, they are often conmen who are in it for the money” (Respondent 15); “...I don’t believe in psychics and all that...” (Respondent 8);

The practice of taking a dream to a learned individual such as a priest, Rabbi, *ngaka*, *sangoma*, psychologist, or spiritually pure individual is clearly articulated in several discourses such as those of the Egyptians, Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Africans. In addition, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and

Medard Boss also assumed such an authoritative role in relation to their clients, as was discussed in chapter three. It is therefore interesting that no respondent indicated ever taking their dreams to such an individual for insight or interpretation, and suggests a decline in the importance attached to such individuals amongst the respondent group.

-One African female respondent indicated that although she has never taken her dreams to such an individual, she might consider doing so if the dream seemed very important. The following excerpt from the interviews illustrate this point: “If I should have a dream that feels very important I might consider going to someone like a *sangoma* or a psychic person to find out the meaning of my dream, but up to now I’ve never had such a dream” (Respondent 5).

-From an overview of the interviews, several purposes can be discerned that motivated the respondents’ decisions to recount their dreams to others. Firstly, respondents shared their dreams in an attempt to gain insight into the meaning of the dream. Respondents would recount their dreams to friends or family in order to elicit their opinions and views on the dream. Sometimes, respondents would state that they would first attempt to interpret their dreams on their own, and only when they failed at this, would they share their dreams with others. For example: “When I tell my dream to others my main goal is to try and understand my dreams” (Respondent 13); “I don’t usually interpret my dreams on my own, mostly I tell it to someone and see what they think...And then they will give me their ideas and opinions and I will put it together with mine. I am too close to it, so I can’t always see it objectively” (Respondent 16); “If I can’t figure out my dream by myself I will tell it to my mother, who will then tell me what my dream means” (Respondent 4); “If I can’t make sense of my dream I will sometimes go to someone else, especially my mother for help in understanding my dream...Now and then, I will discuss a dream with my friends to try and get insight on what it might mean” (Respondent 11); “I often tell my dreams to my mother and also my sister in order to see if they might

have any insight as to what the dream might mean” (Respondent 10); “I do discuss my dreams with others...I do this so that they can help me find the meaning of my dream. They often give me another perspective on it” (Respondent 9).

The practice of recounting dreams to other individuals in order to obtain assistance in interpreting such a dream is commonly reflected in most religious, cultural, and psychological discourses on dreams as was discussed in chapter three. However, in these instances, dream interpretation was sometimes limited to some extent to learned or ‘spiritually pure’ individuals such as Priests, Rabbi’s, *ngakas*, *sangomas*, and psychologists, as is reflected in the Egyptian, Jewish, Christian, African, and psychological discourses on dreams. However, the practice of recounting dreams to friends and family does not appear to be explicitly articulated in these discourses, suggesting that such practices, if they existed in these contexts, were not accorded a high level of importance.

-Some respondents indicated that they never share their dreams with anyone else for the purpose of obtaining assistance in interpreting her dreams. The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate this: “I never take my dreams to other people for interpretation...” (Respondent 2); “I’ll only discuss my dreams with others if it was very funny or if it is about someone that I know. But I won’t go to others to try and understand my dream” (Respondent 19); “I don’t discuss my dreams with other people, except maybe sometimes when the dream was freaky or funny, or something like that. But for other reasons, no, I don’t” (Respondent 18).

A general pattern that emerged with regard to the previous two sub-themes was that individuals who did not place importance on their dreams generally tended not to recount their dreams to others for the purposes of interpretation. When these individuals did share their dreams, it was usually for a different reason, which will be discussed below.

-The second reason for the sharing of dreams that was cited was that dreams were often recounted to others as a source of entertainment. Several respondents noted that they often share their dreams with others solely for the purpose of “fun,” in that the dream might be humorous or otherwise entertaining. The following extracts from the interviews support this conclusion: “But sometimes I will just tell my dream to someone else because it is interesting or funny” (Respondent 13); “I sometimes tell my dreams to friends and family, but this is for fun, because a dream was funny or strange, not to try and interpret it” (Respondent 7); “Other times I’ll tell my dreams to others just as a joke” (Respondent 14); I’ll only discuss my dreams with others if it was very funny or if it is about someone that I know” (Respondent 19); “I will also tell my dreams to others if it was a funny dream or a nightmare” (Respondent 20); “I don’t discuss my dreams with other people, except maybe sometimes when the dream was freaky or funny, or something like that” (Respondent 18).

Interestingly, the researcher found no references to this practice in the dream discourses, beliefs, and practices that were discussed in chapter three. In addition to reflecting elements of theme seven, it can also be argued that sharing dreams with others for the purposes of entertainment can be construed as being a function of dreams, and can therefore also be considered as being reflective of theme three. However, no respondent consciously considered the telling of dreams to others “for fun” as a function of dreams. Usually this practice was revealed by the subject in response to the question: “Do you ever share your dreams with others? If so, why?”

No ancient or modern approach to dreams reviewed for the purpose of this study appears to contain any mention of recounting dreams for this purpose. It therefore appears that no master discourse reflects this function of dreams. In this sense, the research appears to have uncovered a seemingly marginalized and unvoiced dream related practice. In this practice, the telling of the dream

has intrinsic value in itself, through the entertainment value that the dream contains. This is similar to the telling of a joke or personal anecdote. Dreams therefore serve the function of being an interesting topic for conversation.

An examination of the transcripts of the interviews revealed several clear patterns with regard to cultural differences related to the reasons for recounting dreams to others. Western respondents were more likely to report sharing dreams with others for the purposes of entertainment and fun than African respondents. Conversely, African respondents mentioned sharing their dreams for the purposes of eliciting help in interpretation much more frequently than Western respondents. This inverse relationship also seems to be reflected in the fact that African respondents placed much more importance on their dreams than Western respondents.

No significant gender related differences were found in relation to this sub-theme.

-A third reason for recounting dreams to others can be discerned from the interviews. This was not as clearly or as frequently cited as the previous two reasons. Two respondents mentioned that they would tell their dreams to others in order to warn them about a potential negative event that they dreamt about. Sometimes the respondent would not share the dream directly, but might do so indirectly by just making general comments to these individuals, enquiring about their plans, and warning them to be careful.

The following excerpts illustrate this theme: "...I dreamt that a friend of mine was brutally stabbed at a shebeen. I warned her to be careful..." (Respondent 14); "Now and then I'll discuss my dreams with others, yes. Maybe I would do so if the dream...concerns someone else. In this case I might sometimes try to very subtly convey the message that I got in the dream to that person. For example, a while ago I dreamt that someone close to me was in danger and I went to this person and subtly asked him about his plans and warned him to be careful" (Respondent 17).

Although most dream discourses do not explicitly appear to address the issue of providing warnings to other individuals based upon a dream, the warning function of dreams is indeed articulated in the Greek, Jewish, Christian, African, and Muslim discourses on dreams, as is reflected in chapter three.

-A single respondent stated that he shared his dream (in which his deceased grandmother came to him in order to bring him comfort) with his father in order to assist him in coping with his own grief. The sharing of dreams in order to bring comfort, healing, or assistance to another individual constitutes a fourth reason for sharing dreams. He stated: "...I had a dream in which my grandmother came to me and told me she was ok...and happy where she was now...This dream brought me a great deal of reassurance and helped me cope much better with the grief over my grandmother's death. I even told the dream to my father and it helped him too. We both felt better because of the dream" (Respondent 8).

No dream discourse appears to reflect this reason for recounting dreams to others. However, from a counselling point of view this practice is significant, and the implications thereof have consequently been discussed in chapter six.

-The same respondent stated that he would often tell his dreams to his mother in order to "get it off his chest." This could perhaps be considered as a fifth reason for sharing dreams, in that the respondent implies that some dreams "weigh down" on him and that he can relieve himself of this burden through sharing such dream with his mother. In his own words: "I often tell my dreams to my mother. I do this just to 'get it off my chest'" (Respondent 8).

The findings made with regard to this theme make it clear that dreams do not remain intrapersonal experiences but enter the social domain and become externalized through conversation with others. The fact that all the respondents

recounted their dreams to others (even if only in some instances) appears to suggest that there might be something about the nature of dreams and dream experiences that impel people to share it with others. The findings of this sub-theme also hint at a sociological function of dreams, and will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter.

5.2.8. Theme 8: Sources of respondents' dream beliefs and practices

This theme relates to the perceived source of the respondents' personal dream related discourses, beliefs, and practices, and refers only to the respondents' *conscious* awareness of such beliefs and practices. It should be noted that respondents' conscious beliefs in this regard might be limited in several ways in that they might be unaware of subtle cultural, religious, and other influences permeating their dream beliefs. The deconstructive comments made with regard to most sub-themes serve to speculate and reflect on the possible sources of such consciously unidentified origins of specific dream beliefs and practices.

-Interestingly, very few respondents appear to have had much conscious awareness of the source of their dream related beliefs. Very few respondents gave a prompt reply to this question, and most thought about the question for up to a half a minute before either giving a reply or, as was the more usual occurrence, indicating that they did not know.

From this it can be concluded that the majority of respondents that participated in this study appear to have had no or limited conscious awareness of the origin of their dream related beliefs and practices. The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate this point: "I don't know where my ideas about dreams come from" (Respondent 5); "I don't really know where my ideas about dreams come from" (Respondent 7); "I don't really know where my own ideas about what my dreams mean come from" (Respondent 16); "I have no idea where my own beliefs about dreams come from" (Respondent 17); "I haven't the faintest idea as to where my ideas about dreams come from. My

grandmother has a few superstitions about dreams, but other than that, dreams are not important in my family” (Respondent 18); “I don’t know where my ideas about dreams come from” (Respondent 19); “I don’t really know where my ideas about dreams come from. There are no strong beliefs about dreams in my family, and we are urban Sesotho people, so we are not very traditional” (Respondent 20).

No clear gender or cultural differences emerged with regard to the above.

-Amongst the respondents who did cite specific sources, the most commonly mentioned were parents, and mostly the mother. For example: “My parents, who still adhere strongly to the Northern Sotho traditional culture...would often give me interpretations based on their traditional knowledge of dreams” (Respondent 9); “I learnt most of what I know about dreams from my grandmother. I would say that 80% of what I believe about dreams comes from my grandmother...” (Respondent 1); “Most of the things I know about dreams come from my mother” (Respondent 4); “I think that most of my own perspectives on dreams come from my mother. I also consider dreams to be important and it is probably because I always saw that they were so important to my mother” (Respondent 6); “I think that most of my own knowledge about dreams comes from my mother and my upbringing...” (Respondent 15).

African respondents were more likely than Western respondents to cite their parents as source of their dream beliefs. Interestingly, this seems to coincide with the finding that African respondents were much more likely than their Western counterparts to recount their dreams to their mothers.

-The mother in turn, usually inherited her beliefs and practices either from her own mother, or, relatedly, from dominant traditional, cultural, or religious conceptions of dreams. As such, it appears that cultural and religious influences were transmitted to the respondent via their mothers in these instances. The

following extracts from the interviews elucidate this contention: “My parents, who still adhere strongly to the Northern Sotho traditional culture...would often give me interpretations based on their traditional knowledge of dreams” (Respondent 9); “She (the respondent’s mother) got her knowledge from her parents. It is the traditional knowledge of our people” (Respondent 4); “My mother is very Christian in her approach and will usually find a Christian perspective on my dream” (Respondent 11); “She (the respondent’s mother) knows a lot about dreams and gets her knowledge from her mother who was a strong believer in our culture’s ideas and in dreams” (Respondent 13); “She (the respondent’s mother) would then interpret my dreams according to our culture’s knowledge which she got from her mother” (Respondent 16);

The sub-theme of the mother as “keeper of dream knowledge” recurs quite frequently in the interviews. It suggests that knowledge about dreams is often transmitted in a matrilineal manner. This tendency is not clearly reflected in the major dream related discourses discussed in chapter three. On the contrary, most dream related discourses seem to focus on males as the chief “keepers” of dream knowledge. As such, the origin of this tendency is unclear and represents a seemingly unarticulated discourse.

-Other respondents cited that cultural and religious beliefs and practices had a direct influence on their beliefs about dreams. Several African respondents also specifically mentioned that they sought to integrate their Christian beliefs with elements of their traditional African cultural heritage. For example: “I myself am a Christian, although I also consider some aspects of my traditional heritage (Northern Sotho) to be very important (with regard to dreams)” (Respondent 9); “...I would say that about 80 percent of what I believe about dreams came from my grandmother, and about 20 percent from my Christian religion” (Respondent 1); “But my religion also plays a role. I have always tried to link my Christianity and my Sesotho beliefs, to bring them together” (Respondent

15); “But I’d say that maybe both my culture and my religion play some role” (Respondent 20).

The tendency to integrate Christian and traditional African beliefs seems to mirror the arguments made in chapter three about the influence of Christianity on traditional African beliefs. Mbiti (1997: 513) stated that the encounter between Christian beliefs and African dream culture has not resulted in the erasing of traditional African dream culture, but has merely modified and expanded it. The statements made by the respondents cited above seem to support this contention.

-A single African male respondent stated that: “I also think that some of what I think about dreams comes from books and magazines...” (Respondent 16). Interestingly, no other respondent ever mentioned reading any books or magazines about dreams, a situation that might be reflective of a general lack of interest in dreams.

A few respondents stated explicitly that their culture or religion played no role in affecting what they believed about dreams. The following extracts from the interviews reflect this contention: “My Catholic religion also plays no role in how I see dreams. I don’t see any links between my religion and my dreams” (Respondent 5); “I don’t know much of the traditional practices of my culture (Sesotho) in interpreting dreams and it has no bearing on how I view my dreams...I am Catholic, but I don’t think that that has an influence on how I see dreams either” (Respondent 14); “But I don’t believe in that (his Zulu culture’s knowledge of dreams) too much anymore. I find that these traditional interpretations are less realistic and applicable in modern times for us young people. We are a different generation and the old ideas are not that realistic anymore...I don’t think that my religion (Catholic) or my culture influence what I believe about dreams at all” (Respondent 16).

Interestingly, all the respondents cited above are of African origin.

It should be noted that the respondents sometimes contradicted themselves in this regard by recounting certain beliefs or practices which seem to have a religious or cultural origin. For example, respondent 14 stated that: “I think that many other dreams are a message from God” and then appears to contradict herself by saying: “I am a Catholic, but I don’t think that that has an influence on how I see dreams either. I don’t see dreams as religious” (Respondent 14). This tendency appears to reflect the possibility mentioned at the beginning of this section that respondents might be consciously unaware of the extent to which their personal dream beliefs and practices are influenced by general cultural, religious, and other dream discourses.

-Although not mentioned specifically, a more holistic examination of the interviews revealed that peers (in the form of friends and spouses) might exert a noticeable influence on the respondents’ dream beliefs. This conclusion is made on the basis of the observation that most respondents mentioned that they discussed their dreams with friends or spouses in an attempt to clarify the meaning of their dreams. Being thus open to the ideas, interpretations, and influence of peers suggests that these ideas will in all likelihood impact on the respondents’ own ideas. Although not usually stated directly as such, the following examples lend support to this contention: “My own understanding of dreams comes mostly from my friends I would say. From hearing their views on it...it’s mostly general knowledge from others” (Respondent 16); “So we try to find the meanings of the dream by discussing our dreams with each other” (Respondent 5); “I often discuss my dreams with my friends...we will try to interpret each other’s dreams” (Respondent 1); “I often discuss my dreams with my friends, usually in an attempt to try and make out what the dream was all about” (Respondent 14); “... I will discuss a dream with my friends, to try and get insight on what it might mean” (Respondent 11).

The idea of peers as source of dream related beliefs and practices is not explicitly reflected in any of the discourses discussed in chapter three. This practice also ties in with the social constructivist idea that knowledge is socially constructed through interaction and conversation. From such a perspective, a discussion between two individuals concerning a dream would be seen more as a meaning making process than a meaning seeking process. Conceivably, the conclusions reached by the individuals at the end of such a discussion might be incorporated into their own personal discourses and thereby influence the way they perceive and interpret subsequent dreams. It is believed that there might be a lot of potential in researching this idea in greater depth.

-Contrary to what might be expected, not a single respondent espoused the theories of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, or Medard Boss. Despite the fact that all of the respondents were university students and that some of them were studying psychology, none of the respondents described any dream related beliefs and practices that consciously bore a direct relationship to any of these theories. Some respondents (who studied psychology) even stated directly that these theories had no influence on them: “Even though I had to study the theories of Freud and Jung in my first year, these theories did not really have any impact on my thinking and beliefs about dreams. I never took these theories seriously” (Respondent 3); “Although I studied psychology...this has not influenced the way I think about dreams in any way” (Respondent 7).

Both respondents cited above are Western females.

However, the influence of these theories did appear to emerge in certain general ways, such as the common beliefs that dreams were believed to originate from the unconscious, and could serve to reflect the wishes and desires of the dreamer. It seems very likely in general that aspects of dream theories such as those of Freud might have found their way into current, local dream discourses in a way that has become truncated from the original theory.

As such, respondents might often be unaware of the connection between a particular personal dream belief, and an existing dream theory.

Finally, one Western male respondent indicated that his own experiences serve as the basis of his dream beliefs. He stated: "...I think it's my own experiences" (Respondent 18). Although not explicitly articulated, personal observation and experience were implied by many respondents to play a role in some of their dream beliefs. As the respondents were not asked directly about the extent to which their own observations might have contributed to their dream beliefs, it is likely that the responses given in the interviews do not accurately reflect the extent to which this might indeed be the case. It is therefore possible that personal experience and observation played a significant role in influencing the dream beliefs, discourses, and practices of many of the respondents.

5.2.9. Theme 9: Open theme

This section represents the findings made with regard to the open theme. It serves to represent all dream related beliefs and practices related by the respondents that do not directly relate to the previous themes.

-Although indirectly related to other themes, several respondents expressed the belief that dreams can exert an unconscious or subconscious effect on an individual which can affect the individual's mood, general emotional state, as well as actions and perspective on certain aspects of life. The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate this sub-theme: "...dreams do sometimes influence my actions and my decisions. This is not always a conscious thing. I think that many dreams subconsciously have an influence on how I see things and on some of my actions" (Respondent 8); "Dreams can also push you in a certain direction, even though you may not always be consciously aware of this. Sometimes I only realize a dream's influence sometime after the dream...I

feel it's not about the visual aspects of the dream, but that it's the 'under the surface effect' of the dream that nudges you in a specific direction...I've noticed that these dreams often have an effect on my mood. This can go both ways. Sometimes it can make you feel good, and other times a dream can make me feel quite down that day" (Respondent 17); "...after my father died, and as I was mourning for him, I had a lot of sad dreams about my father and even woke up crying from such a dream" (Respondent 16).

Interestingly, all the respondents cited above are males.

This sub-theme can perhaps best be regarded as beliefs about the *effects* of dreams (as opposed to the function or purpose of dreams). The belief that dreams are able to exert a subconscious influence on individuals and thereby affect their moods, perceptions, and general state of mind does not appear to be clearly articulated in the dream discourses discussed in chapter three. However, it is suggested in the dream theories of Freud and Jung, in which the power of the subconscious mind to influence individuals has been greatly emphasised (see discussion in chapter three).

-Another sub-theme which emerged in the interviews is the issue of dream recall. Although not strictly reflecting dream a belief or practice, the issue of dream recall has been spontaneously brought up by several respondents and it was therefore decided to discuss these responses as an additional sub-theme. Several respondents indicated that they rarely remember their dreams, even though this question was not specifically asked of them. For example: "Most of the time, I don't even remember my dreams" (Respondent 12); "I forget most dreams very soon after I have woken up..." (Respondent 17); "In fact, I hardly remember most of my dreams. I may remember them just after I wake up, but they quickly go out of my mind and that's that" (Respondent 18); "I mostly don't even remember my dreams, so I can't see how they can be important" (Respondent 19).

Interestingly, all the respondents cited above are Western males.

-Conversely, a few respondents stated that they had active dream lives and recalled their dreams frequently. The following extracts from the interviews support this observation: “I am very aware of my dreams and have an active dream life” (Respondent 10); “I remember a lot of my dreams, although I do not consider them particularly important” (Respondent 2).

Both respondents mentioned here are Western females. The previous two sub sections are suggestive of an inverse pattern of increased dream recall amongst females and a lower level of dream recall amongst males. Seeing that the value of dreams to any person is dependent (at least to some extent, as subconscious influences cannot be ruled out) upon dreams being recalled, it might prove valuable to research gender differences in dream recall in greater depth in future studies.

-Related to this, several respondents mentioned that dreaming frequency, intensity, or recall seemed to increase when they were subjected to stress. Although this sub-theme has also been identified earlier as reflecting beliefs about the causes of dreams, it is equally relevant with regard to the sub-theme of dreaming frequency and recall. The following extracts from the interviews illustrate this point: “I also notice that I tend to dream a lot more when I am under stress” (Respondent 6); “If I am stressing a lot, and if I get in less sleep, I often dream more. The only times that I really remember my dreams is when I had a restless night or very little sleep” (Respondent 19); “I tend to dream more when I am under stress” (Respondent 3); “I also noticed that I don’t really have many or important dreams when my life is going well, but that most of my dreams appear when things in my life are not going too well. So I think that the confusion, stress, and worry contribute to dreaming more” (Respondent 10).

Of the four respondents cited above, three are Western females.

Most religious, cultural, and psychological dream discourses discussed in chapter three do not appear to address the issue of dream recall comprehensively, although scattered references to this issue do appear. In the Old Testament it was suggested that loss of dream recall was a punishment from God (I Sam. 28: 6). The Zulu *sangoma*, Credo Mutwa, does mention that many black people watch their dreams especially closely when they reach a crisis in their lives, and that dreams can provide valuable guidance during such stressful times (Mutwa, 2003: 174-175), suggesting that there might be an increased awareness and recall of dreams at such times.

Dream scholars such as Delaney (1998: 269) state that if a deliberate effort is not made to remember dreams upon awakening, most dreams will be rapidly forgotten. Based on Delaney's statement it could be tentatively concluded that the lack of interest in dreams, and the scant consequent attention paid to dreams by many respondents might in part be responsible for the lack of dream recall. The converse might apply to respondents who do recall their dreams.

However, respondent 2 claims that she recalls a lot of her dreams, and also states that she does not consider her dreams to be important. This challenges the notions cited above and points to the existence of more individualized, alternative explanations for dream recall, beyond factors such as the degree of interest and importance attached to dreams.

-One Western male respondent believed that the hemispherical dominance of an individual's brain might have a significant impact on how much an individual dreams. He stated that right-brained individuals might be likely to dream more than their left-brained counterparts. In his own words: "I also think it depends on the type of person you are. I think that very right-brained, visual people may dream more, and that very left-brained people, who might be more mathematical, will dream less" (Respondent 19).

The respondents use of the word “right-brained” and “left-brained,” as well as the functions he attributes to each hemisphere is almost certainly indicative of contemporary psychological theories of lateralization, in which the right hemisphere of the brain is seen to specialize in visual, spatial, and holistic skills, whereas the left hemisphere is believed to specialize in logic, language, analysis, and sequence (Benson, 2001: 116-117). No research could be located that focused on lateralization and dreaming, and as such, this might prove to be an interesting avenue for future research.

-In the course of the interviews, several respondents cited strong beliefs with regard to the meaning of certain dream symbols or events. The following excerpts from the interviews serve to reflect these beliefs: “...to dream about snakes is bad luck. Especially a black or golden snake would mean evil, that there’s some evil spirit. But the important thing is whether the snake bites you or not. If the snake did not bite you then nothing bad will happen...if I dream of water and fish, I know that this could show that I, or someone else might get pregnant” (Respondent 1); “...I had a dream in which I was struggling in the water and a relative died a week after that...dreams of snakes can show something about a pregnancy or a miscarriage. Dreaming of red meat can show that there will be a wedding or a funeral, as we would slaughter a cow on both occasions” (Respondent 4); “...if someone dreams of a person who is walking in mud then there might be bad news about that person” (Respondent 6); “...if one dreams of being chased by a swarm of bees, this means that the ancestors are angry at you for something” (Respondent 13); “...if you dream of a wedding, it might mean that someone will die. Dreaming of a snake shows a pregnancy” (Respondent 9).

Whereas some of these references are concordant with cultural dream discourses (such as considering bees to be messengers of the ancestors, which is reflected in African discourses discussed in chapter three), other references appear unsupported by such discourses (e.g. walking in the mud as indication

of bad news about an individual, snakes as reflective of evil spirits, pregnancy, or miscarriage).

In addition, some of the references, such as those pertaining to the meaning of snakes, appear to be contradictory. Snakes have been variously described as pointing to pregnancy, evil, evil spirits, and bad luck.

The contention made by an African respondent that dreams of weddings might point to a possible funeral seems to reflect the underlying strategy of interpretation by contraries, which appears prominent in African dream discourses (see chapter three).

-Several respondents mentioned experiencing intense nightmares that had an influence on their state of mind and on occasion also on their actions. The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate this: “In fact, these lion dreams became so intense and frequent that I did not want to go to sleep at night, and even took the step of buying a gun for self-protection...”

(Respondent 2); “I haven’t had any unusual experiences in my dreams, except perhaps for a few extremely intense nightmares” (Respondent 11).

-Some respondents expressed the belief that stress or a difficult situation during the day could cause the dreamer to have a nightmare. This could be considered to reflect a belief about the cause of nightmares. For example: “Like if I had a bad day for example, then I might dream about it or have a nightmare...”

(Respondent 15); “So if you are going through a rough patch in life, this will cause you to stress and you will be more likely to have nightmares”

(Respondent 11); “When I was little I saw a very scary film in which people were attacked by bees, and ever since I have often been having terrible nightmares in which I am attacked by bees” (Respondent 9).

This sub-theme can also be considered as being reflective of theme two in that it reflects beliefs about the causes of certain kinds of dreams.

The existence of nightmares is well attested to in the vast majority of cultural, religious, and psychological dream discourses (Delaney, 1998: 195). From a psychological point of view, nightmares are often believed to be caused by our efforts to deny a part of ourselves, our needs, and our experience. They are also considered to be indications of extreme conflict and stress in an individual's life and are believed to result from post traumatic stress (Delaney, 1998: 195-196). These ideas seem to be echoed in the beliefs of the respondents. However, it seems possible that the respondents formulated these beliefs in response to personal observations cannot be discounted.

-A few respondents claimed that if people do not heed the messages or warnings expressed by their dreams, things could start to go wrong for that individual. The following excerpts from the interviews support this observation: "If you ignore these dreams of the ancestors then often things start to go wrong and you can have bad luck, so it is important to listen to the messages of the dreams in order to avoid this...Dreams...can warn us about negative things that will happen if we do not do certain things. If you don't do the things the dreams ask of you then sometimes something negative will befall you" (Respondent 15); "Sometimes my dreams will tell me that if I don't do a certain thing, something negative might happen..." (Respondent 9).

Both respondents cited above are of African origin. As was discussed in chapter three, African dream discourses also clearly articulate the idea that dire consequences could result from ignoring certain kinds of dreams, and as such, it is possible that these respondents' personal beliefs might have been derived from general African dream discourses.

-A few respondents also discussed beliefs about the controllability of dreams, which related to the extent that they believed it was possible for an individual to influence or affect his or her dreams. Two respondents indicated that they believed that dreams could not be controlled in any way. They stated: "...we

have no control over our dreams” (Respondent 18); “It’s a natural process, something you can’t control. It happens automatically...they just happen and there is nothing I can do about it” (Respondent 11).

Both respondents cited above are males.

-Conversely, a few respondents indicated either directly or indirectly, that they are able to affect and control their dreams. The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate this point: “So what I often do before I go to sleep is to quiet myself and then visualize something that makes me feel good, such as walking in a forest. If I do this, I have better dreams” (Respondent 9); “If I am in turmoil or my relationships are bad I will have bad dreams...I will then take steps to correct this...then I will not get bad dreams” (Respondent 15); “...I am sometimes aware that I am dreaming while I am still in the dream, and at these times I can sometimes affect my dreams” (Respondent 7).

Two of the three respondents mentioned above are African, and two are females.

No dream discourse discussed in chapter three appears to address the issue of dream control explicitly.

5.3. Summary

This chapter served to reflect the qualitative analysis of the edited transcripts and handwritten notes derived from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the twenty respondents selected for this study.

The transcripts and handwritten notes were examined thematically with the purpose of identifying sub-themes reflecting the respondents’ dream related beliefs, discourses, and practices. The latter elements were systematically recorded and evaluated with regard to cultural and gender based considerations,

as well as with regard to existing religious, cultural, and psychological dream discourses and practices.

The next chapter provides a summary of the research findings, reflects upon the contributions, implications and limitations of the study, and puts forward recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter the main aspects and findings of the study will be reviewed and summarised, and the implications, value, and contribution of the findings will be discussed with specific reference to the fields of counselling, psychotherapy, and sociology. Following this, the perceived shortcomings in the research will be discussed, and recommendations deduced from the conclusions and limitations of the study will be made with regard to potential future research.

6.2 Summary of the study

The general aim of this study was to uncover, explore, and describe current, local, non-scientific dream related beliefs, discourses and practices (with a specific focus on the Vaal-Triangle area of South-Africa). In support of this aim, an in-depth literature study on various religious, cultural, and psychological dream related discourses was executed.

Through the use of semi-structured qualitative interviews, twenty respondents who were purposively selected from the administrative database of a Vaal-Triangle University on the basis of culture and gender were questioned about their dream related beliefs and practices. To facilitate this process, nine themes were identified which served to guide the interviewing process. The interviews were recorded and edited transcriptions were handed back to the respondents for evaluation and editing.

These transcripts, together with the handwritten notes taken during the interviews, served as basis for a qualitative analysis of the respondents' dream related beliefs, discourses, and practices. To facilitate this process, the themes used to guide the interviews were utilized as the basis for the thematic qualitative analysis. These findings were also examined with regard to cultural and gender related patterns, as well as with regard to existing cultural,

religious, and psychological dream discourses and practices. The following section summarizes the findings that were made during the course of the qualitative analysis and thereby fulfils the stated aim of the research by providing a descriptive account of current, local dream related beliefs, discourses, and practices.

6.3. Summary of the research findings

This section presents a summary of the dream related beliefs, discourses, and practices identified during the qualitative interviews with regard to each theme. In instances where clear cultural or gender differences were found amongst the respondents, these will be pointed out. However, observations and conclusions with regard to cultural, religious, and psychological discourses and practices have been made in a separate section, and as such, will not be noted here.

6.3.1. Theme 1: The importance of dreams

This theme related to the general degree of importance that the respondents attached to their dreams.

With regard to theme one, responses varied from indicating a total lack of importance and interest concerning dreams, to dreams being considered very important. The majority of respondents indicated that dreams had at least some importance to them, either generally, or on specific occasions. A very common sub-theme that could be discerned here is the distinction that was made by several respondents between some dreams that are meaningful and important, and others which are relatively meaningless and unimportant.

Only a few respondents indicated that dreams generally occupied a position of high importance to them.

Based on the above, it can be stated that one of the most uniform themes to emerge from the interviews is the idea that at least some (or all) dreams are

unimportant and trivial. Not a single respondent considered every single dream to be important. It could even be stated that the only aspect with regards to which opinions differed is the degree to which all dreams were considered to be unimportant.

Furthermore, one African female respondent believed that if people believed in themselves, their dreams would be more important to them, and vice versa. A Western male respondent initially indicated that he does not consider his dreams to be important, but stated as the interview progressed that his responses made him realize that his dreams were in fact more important to him than he believed at first. It was also suggested that the other respondents who indicated that they consider their dreams to be unimportant might also change their opinion about this if questioned at length about their dream experiences.

Despite the general individual variation with regard to the degree of importance assigned to dreams, specific patterns do emerge when gender and cultural groups are considered individually. A clear general trend can be discerned from the interviews in that African respondents generally attached much more importance to their dreams than Western respondents. No significant differences existed between the degree of importance that was assigned to dreams by male and female respondents.

When the responses are considered in the light of the literature study, it does seem that there has been some decline with regard to the importance of the dream as reflected by the respondent group. The literature study revealed that dreams generally occupied a position of great import in most cultural and religious contexts. This is contrasted by the claims of the majority of the respondents that dreams have only a low to moderate level of importance to them.

6.3.2. Theme 2: Beliefs about the origins and causes of dreams

With regard to this theme, the respondents' beliefs about the origins and causes of dreams were explored and recorded.

Many respondents believed that (at least some) dreams are caused by the experiences and events that happened a day or so before the dream. This includes the general conditions and circumstances of the respondents' lives at the time of the dream, which were also believed to often affect dreams.

Western respondents cited this cause of dreams twice as often as their African counterparts.

Some (mostly Western male) respondents cited memories of past (as opposed to current) events as a cause of some dreams.

Also identified was the belief that was expressed by one African male respondent that an individual's general cultural and geographical environment plays a role in determining the kinds of dreams he or she has.

Furthermore, many respondents believed that emotional factors such as one's wishes and fears, and related emotions such as worry, anticipation, or desire can play a role in causing certain dreams. Related to this, several respondents mentioned that their general state of mind (including whatever was on their minds) around the time of the dream has a strong bearing on their dreams.

Female respondents cited wishes and fears as causative factors in some dreams twice as often as males.

A sub-theme of the former is the idea that dreaming frequency, intensity, and nature are affected by factors such as stress or worry. Most commonly, respondents indicated that stress caused them to dream more. The majority of the respondents citing this belief are Western, and most often Western females. Only one African respondent claimed that the nature of his dreams is influenced by his inner state.

An additional related theme was that pent up emotions such as frustration or anger could play a causative role in some dreams, in order to allow such bottled up feelings to be vented. Both respondents claiming this are females.

Another sub-theme arising from the interviews is the belief that God or some supernatural entity might be behind certain dreams, and therefore play a causative role with regard to the dream (either directly or indirectly). Western respondents cited a belief in the possible divine cause of dreams more often than African respondents.

One African male respondent believed that witchcraft can play a role in influencing dreams. Several (predominantly African) respondents stated that they believe that the ancestors influence, or might possibly influence certain dreams. In a similar vein, Western respondents (and some African respondents) also stated that deceased individuals in general (as opposed to ancestors) might enter someone's dream, and thereby play a causative role in the dream. African respondents cited the belief that ancestors or deceased individuals can influence dreams twice as often as Western respondents. Male respondents in turn, were twice as likely to express this belief than female respondents. African male respondents were at least twice as likely to cite this belief than any other group of respondents.

Several respondents believed that dreams originate from the subconscious or unconscious mind of the dreamer. Western respondents were more likely to believe this than African respondents.

Certain respondents also held the view that dreams are at least partially caused by mental processing or neurological processes. Male and also Western respondents believed this to be true more often than female and African respondents.

Interestingly, almost all the respondents directly stated or indirectly implied that dreams can come from several different sources. No respondent limited the origins of dreams to a single factor.

In addition, whereas several respondents believed that dreams come from within, and are therefore intrapsychic phenomena, several others held the belief that dreams could have an external or extrapersonal origin. In such instances the source of the dream were variously described as God, the ancestors and deceased individuals. Several respondents also allowed for both possibilities in that some dreams were perceived to have an internal and others an external origin.

In general, throughout the interviews it became evident that few respondents had given this topic (of the origin and causes of dreams in general) much thought before the interview, and the respondents generally seems to have had no clearly formulated and thought out system of beliefs related to the origin of dreams.

6.3.3. Theme 3: Beliefs and discourses about the purpose and function of dreams

With regard to this theme, respondents were asked what they believed the functions, meaning and purposes of dreams to be. A variety of different responses was elicited from the respondents, and will be discussed below.

A few respondents stated, even after persistent questioning, that they had no idea what the function or purpose of dreams might be.

Almost all respondents stated that they considered at least some (if not all) dreams to be meaningless, and as such, often believed that dreams served no purpose.

Many respondents held the view that the function and purpose of some or the majority of all dreams had to do with mental processing of memories, impressions and experiences. Dreams were often considered to serve as a reflection or “replay” of the events of the day. One respondent indicated that dreams serve to assist in recall of memories and events. A few respondents took this notion even further by stating that dreams served a neurological function only. In general, female respondents were more likely to cite these functions of dreams than males. Furthermore, Western respondents were twice as likely as their African counterparts to claim that dreams serve a processing or neurological function.

An additional related sub-theme was that dreams could serve as a mechanism for releasing or venting pent up emotions such as frustration or anger, and thereby allow the individual the opportunity and the freedom to express feelings and engage in actions that they might not be able or allowed to do in waking life.

Interestingly, both respondents who stated that dreams sometimes serve to release pent up emotions such as anger and aggression are females.

Some respondents stated that the function of dreams is to make them feel better, and to provide him with a “boost” or an escape from reality. Two of the three respondents citing this function were Western males.

Related to this, some respondents stated that the experience and the enjoyment derived from a dream constitute valid functions of dreaming.

Many respondents felt that one of the functions of dreams was to predict the future or to depict a potential future possibility. African respondents were twice as likely as their Western counterparts to believe that dreams could serve to predict the future, whereas male and female respondents were equally likely to state this belief.

The goal and function of such dreams in turn was often seen either as providing a warning to prevent a possible negative outcome, or to provide motivation and inspiration to pursue or actualize a positive outcome. In addition, one

respondent felt that in showing him a future situation, dreams helped him feel at ease when this situation actually occurred in waking life.

Some respondents stated that dreams served to provide them with directions or suggestions for action or solutions to problems. Related to this, some respondents felt that dreams served the purpose of providing a channel for receiving answers to prayers. African respondents were twice as likely to claim that dreams could serve to provide them with directions for action or solutions to problems than Western respondents, and male respondents in turn, gave this kind of response twice as often as their female counterparts.

The qualitative examination of the interviews further revealed that several respondents believed that dreams serve as a channel of communication between the living and the deceased, such as departed relatives or ancestors. Both Male and African respondents were twice as likely to express this belief than female and Western respondents respectively. African male respondents were at least twice as likely to cite this belief than any other group of respondents.

The functions of such contact included bringing reassurance, delivering a message that was of importance to someone still living, including commenting on the behaviour of the living, communicating a need on the part of the deceased, and preparing the dreamer to accept the impending death of someone.

Many respondents believed that dreams could serve as channel for spiritual experiences and divine communication and that God could send warnings or messages to a sleeping individual through dreams, even though many of the subjects who believed this did not experience such a phenomenon themselves. Western respondents were more likely to give this response than their African counterparts. No gender differences were noted.

One African female respondent stated that dreams served the function of providing self-insight.

Some respondents also indicated that dreams can serve the function of providing feedback, insight, and guidance or a different perspective on a person's actions, decisions, relationships, and general life situation. Usually

this happened in the form of perceived bad dreams which indicated to the dreamer that something in his or her life is amiss and needs to be addressed. Almost all the respondents who stated that dreams can serve to provide feedback or guidance with regard to their actions or decisions were African. Another African male respondent mentioned that he believes that dreams serve the purpose of acting as a call for certain individuals to enter the professions of healing and divining. One African male respondent implied that dreams can serve a healing function and claimed that his mother had been healed by means of a dream. One Western male respondent indicated that dreams serve the function of helping an individual sleep better.

6.3.4. Theme 4: Dreams as basis for decisions and actions

This theme explored the extent to which respondents' decisions and actions were influenced on the basis of their dreams. It includes any choice or activity that was consciously undertaken in the respondents' waking lives as a result of their dreams. This theme also examined the specific kinds of actions and decisions that were based on dreams.

An overview of the interview transcripts initially reveal no clear patterns in this regard, as respondents often provided very divergent opinions on the matter. Whereas some respondents claimed that they never, or almost never, based any decisions or actions on their dreams, others admitted that they did do so now and then or fairly frequently.

This situation was further complicated in cases where respondents claimed that their dreams have no influence in this regard and then later recounted an instance where the contrary seemed to be the case.

However, even in instances where respondents did state that they based certain decisions and actions on their dreams, it is clear that this is almost always very occasional and limited to specific aspects of the respondents' lives. None of the

respondents based a large proportion of their decisions or actions on dreams. The relative proportion of actions and decisions influenced by dreams seems to range from a nonexistent to a moderate level that affects only selected aspects of the respondents' lives, but never exceeds this. From this it can safely be concluded that none of the respondents' actions and decisions were comprehensively or substantially influenced by their dreams. The impact of dreams on their day to day living therefore seems to be marginal to nonexistent, especially as far as conscious awareness of this fact is concerned. However, the possibility that dreams exert a subtle, yet pervasive influence on the lives of the respondents which might not be recognized by them as such cannot be discounted either.

A general theme which emerged in comparing African and non-African respondents is that there is a much greater tendency among African respondents to base their decisions and actions on their dreams than among Western respondents. Interestingly, the Western female respondents had the lowest tendency to base their decisions and actions on their dreams. Of the five interviewed, only one respondent indicated that she definitely bases her actions and decisions on her dreams in some instances. Unexpectedly, it also seems that males were almost twice as likely to base their decisions and actions on dreams than females. This difference is especially marked when Western males are compared with Western females, but not so when African male and female respondents are compared.

An interesting association emerged in examining the colour coded transcripts of the interviews. There appears to be a very strong link between the degree of importance an individual attaches to his or her dreams and the extent to which the individual bases his decisions and actions on the dream. This lends support to the contention made in chapter two that dream related beliefs would impact directly on dream related practices. Therefore, if dreams were believed to be unimportant, few dream related practices or actions were reported, and conversely, those who believed their dreams to be important, often based

actions or decisions on their dreams. This link appears strongly and consistently enough that it might potentially have some degree of predictive value.

Amongst respondents who indicated that dreams did influence their decisions and actions, a variety of different types of decisions and actions were reported. Most frequently cited in this regard was being motivated to take actions or make decisions in order to avoid a negative scenario or outcome shown or warned against by a dream, or conversely, to actualize a positive scenario or outcome shown by a dream. All the respondents who indicated that they took actions to actualize a positive outcome shown by a dream were males. No clear cultural differences were noted.

Some respondents stated that they received directions or suggestions for actions or solutions to problems through their dreams, and then took actions in their waking lives based on the dream's advice or counsel. African and male respondents were both about twice as likely to give this response than Western and female respondents.

One African female respondent mentioned that as a result of a dream in which she heard persistent voices, she had to drink certain traditional herbs in order to "heal" herself of this affliction.

One African male respondent made an indirect reference to certain individuals being called into their professions by means of a dream. He also mentions that he never had such a dream.

The researcher also considers the act of discussing dreams with other individuals as an action taken as a result of a dream. The interviews reveal that the vast majority of respondents do discuss their dreams with other individuals. It can therefore be reasoned that dreams sometimes impact the nature and topics of the respondents' conversations with other individuals.

The researcher also considers any time and energy spent in attempting to interpret or make sense of a dream to constitute an action taken as a result of a dream. Most respondents did at least spend some time attempting to make

sense of their dreams, either on their own, or through discussion with other individuals.

6.3.5. Theme 5: Unusual dream experiences and beliefs relating to such experiences

This theme relates to the respondents' experiences and beliefs with regard to unusual dreams, such as dreams that predict the future, contact with deceased individuals or religious experiences in the context of a dream, as well as other unusual dream experiences.

A few respondents stated that they did not believe that dreams could be a vehicle for unusual experiences such as those mentioned previously. Almost invariably, these respondents also stated that they never had any kind of unusual experience in their dreams. The overwhelming majority of respondents who stated that they did not believe that dreams could serve as channel for unusual experiences such as predicting the future or enabling contact with deceased individuals were of Western origin. These respondents were also much more likely than their African counterparts to regard such beliefs as superstitious.

However, many respondents stated that they did believe that it was possible for dreams to predict the future, even though many of these respondents did not have such a dream themselves. African respondents were more likely to believe that dreams could predict the future than their Western counterparts. No clear gender related differences emerged in this regard.

Several respondents had dreams which they perceived to have predicted a future event. From the interviews it emerged that African respondents were about twice as likely to report precognitive dreams as Western respondents. No clear gender differences were noted. One African female respondent described two dreams which seem to have been premonitory but she stated that she believed them to be mere coincidence.

As a related theme to premonitory dreams, many subjects reported having “déjà vu” experiences which they attributed to their dreams. Many respondents described having the feeling of having already been in a specific place they were in at a specific moment or having already done an activity they were engaged in. The respondents frequently attributed these experiences to a dream or dreams in which they were at that location or performed the activity under question. One Western male respondent indicated that although he did have déjà vu experiences that appeared to be related to his dreams, he thought that this was due to neurological factors that only made it seem like a true precognitive experience.

Many respondents believed that it was possible for a deceased individual or ancestor to make contact with a sleeping person through a dream, even though most respondents did not experience this personally. Male and African respondents were both about twice as likely to cite this belief than female and Western respondents.

Some respondents stated that they personally had an experience in which a deceased individual, usually a close relative, or an ancestor came to them in a dream. Male respondents reported more experiences such as this than female respondents. No cultural differences were noted.

Many respondents believed that dreams could serve as channel for spiritual experiences and divine communication and that God could send warnings, messages, or answers to prayers to a sleeping individual through dreams.

However, some of the respondents who expressed this belief did not experience this phenomenon themselves. Western respondents gave this type of response significantly more often than their African counterparts.

Some respondents reported personally having a religious experience in the context of a dream in that God or some other deity or spiritual force might have given them a message or a warning. Interestingly, only female respondents cited such an experience. No cultural differences were noted.

One Western female respondent mentioned having the experience of being aware that she is dreaming at the time of the dream. This experience is commonly referred to as a lucid dream.

Another African male respondent mentioned that he believes that certain individuals such as healers and diviners get their calling to enter these professions through dreams. The respondent himself did not have such a dream however.

An African male respondent stated that he believed that someone can be healed by means of a dream and claimed that this has happened to his mother.

One Western male respondent described what seems to be either a false awakening or an out of body experience that he had a few years before the interview. The same respondent also indicated that he sometimes feels paralysed and unable to move during a dream.

6.3.6. Theme 6: Strategies and methods of dream interpretation

This theme relates to the methods and strategies that the respondents used to interpret or make sense of their dreams, and concerns the specific practices they engaged in to render the dreams meaningful and understandable.

Throughout the qualitative interviews it became evident that very few respondents had an elaborate or comprehensive approach towards interpreting their dreams. Responses relating to this theme were often brief and hesitant, which suggest that the “methods” used by the respondents to interpret their dreams tended to be simple, intuitive, and often hitherto un-verbalized, rather than comprehensive, systematic, or clearly articulated.

A few respondents stated that they do not consider their dreams to be important and therefore rarely or never attempt to interpret their dreams. Frequently, the reason cited for this lack of interpretative attention paid to dreams was that

dreams were experienced as being “weird,” illogical and confusing.

Interestingly, all the respondents claiming this are female.

However, the majority of respondents did attempt to interpret or make sense of their dreams at least in some instances. Despite this, it appears from the interviews that the majority of dreams are either not recalled or not considered important or meaningful enough to interpret.

Sometimes respondents mentioned that their dreams often only make sense some time after the dream through some event or experience that they believe to relate back to the dream. In these instances the respondents would not attempt any immediate interpretation of the dreams, but assigned meaning to a previously un-interpreted dream on the basis of some event that transpired in the respondent’s waking life after the dream. Very commonly, the feeling of déjà vu was cited as being caused by the respondent first dreaming about doing something or being someplace. In other instances an event occurred which was interpreted in retrospect to be predicted by the dream. Two of the three respondents who stated this observation are Western males.

With regard to dream interpretation, the most frequently cited method appeared to be the use of analogy. Respondents would typically attempt to look for similarities between the dream imagery and contents and their lives in order to determine what their dreams meant. Most frequently, respondents would consider the events and circumstances of their lives in the day or days preceding the dream and attempt to relate the dream to this. More Western than African respondents claimed that they interpreted their dreams via analogy. No clear gender differences were noted.

Many respondents reported that at least some of their dreams are literal and require no interpretation as the meaning is directly evident from the manifest content of the dream. All the respondents who gave this response are African, and two of the three respondents are male. The previously mentioned responses also indicate that the respondents made a distinction between literal and symbolic dreams.

Some respondents indicated that sometimes a dream constituted an experience in itself. This experience was then used as the basis of the meaning assigned to the dream. Often, the dream experience itself served to motivate or reassure the dreamer. All of the four respondents that cited this belief were males, and three of them are of Western origin. Related to this, the dream was often interpreted as constituting a valid and enjoyable experience in itself that required no interpretation. Both respondents who mentioned this are Western females. In some instances dreams were interpreted as reflecting either the wishes or fears of the dreamer. Related to this are aspects such as worry and anticipation which often formed the basis of the respondents' interpretation of a given dream. Female respondents were more likely to interpret dreams as an expression of wishes and fears than male respondents.

One African male respondent considered his relationship with himself and God to be a key determining factor in deciding what his dreams mean.

One African female respondent stated that she interpreted her dreams by considering the opposite meaning to what her dream revealed.

Another very commonly cited interpretative practice was that the respondents would enlist the aid of friends, parents (mostly the mother), or some other individual such as a grandmother or spouse in order to make sense of the dream. As such, it could be considered as a strategy of dream interpretation. African respondents were three times more likely than Western respondents to interpret their dreams through discussing them with other individuals such as parents and friends. No gender related differences were noted.

Some respondents indicated that their method of interpretation was intuitive and based on the general "sense" they got from considering the dream. Both respondents who made these statements are males.

One Western male respondent stated that he interpreted his dreams by examining the specific sequences that occurred in the dream and attempts to determine the reason for any changes between dream scenes.

Two respondents also mentioned that in making their final interpretation, they will combine the input from other individuals with their own ideas.

One African female respondent indicated that her method for deciding whether a dream might be predicting the future was the extent to which the dream was memorable and remained in her conscious awareness.

6.3.7. Theme 7: Discussing dreams with other individuals and reasons for doing so

This theme relates to respondents' practices of recounting their dreams to others (or not), the reasons that motivated them to do so, and the specific individuals to whom they recounted their dreams. The qualitative examination of the interviews revealed the following major sub-themes with regard to these issues:

A few respondents stated that they very rarely share their dreams with others. Related to this, some respondents stated that they would only share their dreams if they deemed it to be very important. However, every single respondent mentioned sharing his or her dreams with others at some time, even if only very infrequently in some cases. Interestingly, several clear patterns emerged with regard to whom respondents recounted their dreams to. Almost always, sharing dreams was restricted to family and friends. The majority of respondents mentioned that their mother either was or still is the individual with whom they shared their dreams the most often. Almost as frequent, was the practice of telling dreams to friends. A few respondents also mentioned sharing their dreams with a spouse or romantic partner. Also mentioned were siblings and grandparents. Lastly, respondents sometimes mentioned that they would discuss the dream with an individual about whom they dreamt.

The sub-theme of the respondents recounting their dreams to their mothers appears to be very dominant. This is an interesting phenomenon as this practice is not clearly articulated in any of the major religious, cultural, psychological, and other dream related discourses discussed in chapter three. This practice suggests that mothers are often perceived by the respondents as possessing

insight, knowledge, and understanding with regards to dreams. Several respondents also implied that knowledge about dreams seems to be transmitted across generations in a matrilineal fashion.

In addition, a clear cultural pattern seems to emerge with relation to this sub-theme. African respondents more often mentioned discussing their dreams with their mothers and with friends than Western respondents. In fact, all the African male respondents and three of the five African female respondents mentioned discussing their dreams with their mothers.

No respondent ever took any of their dreams to a priest, reverend, *ngaka*, *sangoma*, psychic individual, or similar 'knowledgeable' person outside the circle of friends and family for assistance in interpretation. A few respondents actively stated that they did not believe in such individuals, either due to their Christian faith, or because of other reasons, such as believing that they are "conmen." One respondent indicated that although she has never taken her dreams to such an individual, she might consider doing so if the dream seemed very important.

From an overview of the interviews, several purposes can be discerned that motivated the respondents' decisions to recount their dreams to others. Firstly, respondents shared their dreams in an attempt to gain insight into the meaning of the dream. Respondents would recount their dreams to friends in order to elicit their opinions and views on the dream. In a few instances respondents stated that they would first attempt to interpret their dreams on their own, and only when they failed at this, would they share their dreams with others. However, some respondents indicated that they never share their dreams with anyone else for the purpose of obtaining assistance in interpreting her dreams. A general pattern that emerged with regard to the previous two sub-themes was that individuals who did not place importance on their dreams generally tended not to recount their dreams to others for the purposes of interpretation.

The second reason for the sharing of dreams that was cited was that dreams are often recounted to others as a source of entertainment. Several respondents noted that they often share their dreams with others solely for the purpose of “fun,” in that the dream might be humorous or otherwise entertaining.

An examination of the transcripts of the interviews revealed several clear patterns with regard to cultural differences related to the reasons for recounting dreams to others. Western respondents were more likely to report sharing dreams with others for the purposes of entertainment and fun than African respondents. Conversely, African respondents mentioned sharing their dreams for the purposes of eliciting help in interpretation much more frequently than Western respondents. This inverse relationship also seems to be reflected in the fact that African respondents placed much more importance on their dreams than Western respondents.

A third reason for recounting dreams to others can be discerned from the interviews. This was not as clear or as frequently cited as the previous two reasons. Two respondents mentioned that they would tell their dreams to others in order to warn them about a potential negative event that they dreamt about. Sometimes the respondent would not share the dream directly, but might do so indirectly by just making general comments to these individuals, enquiring about their plans, and warning them to be careful.

A fourth reason for sharing dreams was noted when one Western male respondent indicated that he shared his dream (in which his deceased grandmother appeared to him to bring him reassurance that she was “ok”) with his father in order to assuage his father’s grief.

In what could be considered a fifth reason for sharing dreams, the same respondent mentioned above also stated that he would often tell his dreams to his mother for the purpose of “getting it off his chest.”

6.3.8. Theme 8: Sources of respondents' dream beliefs and practices

This theme relates to the consciously perceived source of the respondents' personal dream related beliefs and practices.

From the analysis of the interviews it appeared that the majority of respondents used in this study had no or limited conscious awareness of the origin of their dream related beliefs and practices.

Amongst the respondents who did cite specific sources, the most commonly mentioned were parents, and mostly the mother.

African respondents were more likely than Western respondents to cite their parents as source of their dream beliefs. This observation seems to coincide with the finding that African respondents were much more likely than their Western counterparts to recount their dreams to their mothers.

The mother in turn, usually inherited her beliefs and practices either from her own mother, or from dominant traditional, cultural, or religious conceptions of dreams. As such, it appears that cultural and religious influences were transmitted to the respondent via their mothers in these instances.

The sub-theme of the mother as “keeper of dream knowledge” recurs quite frequently in the interviews. It suggests that knowledge about dreams is often transmitted in a matrilineal manner.

A few respondents cited that cultural and religious beliefs and practices had a direct influence on their beliefs about dreams. Several African respondents also specifically mentioned that as far as dreams are concerned, they seek to integrate their Christian beliefs with elements of their traditional African cultural heritage.

A few (all African) respondents stated explicitly that their culture or religion played no role in affecting what they believed about dreams, even though a few respondents appeared to have contradicted themselves in this regard.

A single African male respondent stated that some of his knowledge about dreams was derived from magazines. Interestingly, no other respondent mentioned obtaining any beliefs or knowledge about dreams via books, magazines, or other media-related sources.

Although not mentioned specifically, a more holistic examination of the interviews revealed that peers (in the form of friends and spouses) might likely exert a significant influence on the respondents' dream beliefs. This conclusion is made on the basis of the observation that most respondents mentioned that they discussed their dreams with friends or spouses in an attempt to clarify the meaning of their dreams. Being thus open to the ideas, interpretations, and influence of peers suggests that these ideas will in all likelihood impact on the respondents' own ideas.

Contrary to what might be expected, not a single respondent consciously espoused the theories of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, or Medard Boss. Despite the fact that all of the respondents were university students and that some of them were studying psychology, none of the respondents adhered to any of these theories. Some respondents (who studied psychology) even stated directly that these theories had no influence on them. However, the influence of these theories did appear to emerge in certain general ways, such as the common belief that dreams were believed to originate from the unconscious. It seems very likely in general that aspects of dream theories such as those of Freud might find their way into current, local dream discourses in a way that has become truncated from the original theory. As such, respondents might often be unaware of the connection between a particular personal dream belief, and an existing dream theory.

Finally, one Western male respondent indicated that his own experiences serve as the basis of his beliefs about dreams.

6.3.9. Theme 9: Open theme

This section represented all dream related beliefs and practices related by the respondents that did not directly relate to the previous themes.

Although indirectly related to other themes, several respondents expressed the belief that dreams can exert an unconscious or subconscious effect on an individual which can affect the individual's mood, general emotional state, as well as actions and perspective on certain aspects of life. Interestingly, all the respondents citing this belief are males. This sub-theme can perhaps best be regarded as beliefs about the *effects* of dreams (as opposed to the function or purpose of dreams).

Another sub-theme which emerged in the interviews is the issue of dream recall. Several respondents indicated that they rarely remember their dreams, even though this question was not specifically asked of them. Conversely, a few respondents stated that they had active dream lives and recalled their dreams frequently. Related to this, several respondents mentioned that dreaming frequency, intensity, or recall seemed to increase when they were subjected to stress. Of the four respondents who cited this belief, three are Western females. Although this sub-theme has also been identified earlier as reflecting beliefs about the causes of dreams, it is equally relevant with regard to the sub-theme of dreaming frequency and recall. One Western male respondent believed that the hemispherical dominance of an individual's brain might have a significant impact on how much an individual dreams. He stated that right-brained individuals might be likely to dream more than their left-brained counterparts.

In the course of the interviews, several respondents cited strong beliefs with regard to the meaning of certain dream symbols or events. For example, snakes were variously seen as indicating bad luck, unexpected pregnancy or miscarriage, or an evil spirit. Water and fish were believed to indicate possible pregnancy. Dreaming of red meat was believed to indicate that there will be a

wedding or a funeral, and it was also believed that if someone dreams of a person who is walking in mud then there might be bad news about that person. Furthermore, it was thought that if an individual dreams of being chased by a swarm of bees, this means that the ancestors are angry at him or her for something. Dreaming of a wedding was believed to indicate that someone could die.

Furthermore, several respondents mentioned experiencing intense nightmares that had an influence on their state of mind and on occasion also on their actions. Some respondents expressed the belief that stress or a difficult situation during the day could cause the dreamer to have a nightmare. A few (all African) respondents claimed that if people do not heed the messages or warnings expressed by their dreams, things could start to go wrong for that individual.

A few respondents also discussed beliefs about the controllability of dreams, which related to the extent that they believed it was possible for an individual to influence or affect his or her dreams. Two respondents indicated that they believed that dreams could not be controlled in any way. Conversely, a few respondents indicated either directly or indirectly that they are able to affect and control their dreams.

6.4. Conclusions about religious, cultural, and psychological dream related discourses reflected in the respondent's personal dream discourses and practices

In this section the findings of the study will be considered in the light of the literature study. In addition to the sources of the respondents' dream beliefs and practices that were directly mentioned in theme eight, a deconstructive examination of the statements made in the interviews provided some clues as to unspoken and perhaps unrealized cultural, religious, and psychological discourses which reflect, and might possibly have influenced the respondents'

dream related beliefs and practices. As this has already been done with regard to the specific sub-themes identified in chapter five, the emphasis in this section will be on a more general assessment of the findings with regard to the general cultural, religious, and psychological dream related discourses and practices that were discussed in chapter three. In this process, attention will be given both to the elements of the respondents' dream discourses and practices that appear similar to, and might have been influenced by existing dream discourses, as well as elements of the former that appear not to be accounted for by any such cultural, religious, or psychological discourses.

6.4.1. Cultural, religious, and psychological dream discourses reflected in the interviews

In chapter five, cultural, religious, and psychological dream related discourses were identified that bore similarities to the respondents' specific personal dream related beliefs and practices, and which might possibly have exerted an influence on the latter. With regard to discerning the influence of specific discourses on the respondents' beliefs and practices, a very tentative approach is necessitated by the fact that many specific dream beliefs and practices are commonly found in a wide array of cultural, religious, and psychological dream related discourses. A particular belief or practice cited by a respondent might therefore have been derived from several different discourses.

Furthermore, it is possible that a given dream belief might have been derived from personal experience and observation, even though it might coincidentally bear similarity to an existing cultural, religious, or psychological dream belief. As such, a deconstructive analysis is able to point out similarities and potential influences, but not certainties. The conclusions made in this section should therefore also be considered in a suggestive rather than a conclusive light as reflecting discourses and practices which *bear similarity to* those identified by the respondents and which might *possibly* have exerted an influence on their personal dream discourses and practices.

-During the interviews, several beliefs and practices were described which bear great similarity to (and might possibly have been influenced by) the dream discourse of Sigmund Freud. Several respondents stated the belief that dreams originate from the unconscious or the subconscious mind, and believed that wishes and desires played an important role in causing dreams. As was seen in chapter three, these beliefs constitute central tenets of Freud's theory. In addition, some respondents stated that their dreams allow them to express and vent feelings and frustrations that they might not be able to express in waking life, and other respondents indicated that they interpreted their dreams by the use of contraries. These ideas are also reflective of general Freudian dream conceptions (see full discussion of Freud's dream theory in chapter three).

However, it should be noted that many of the beliefs and practices cited above are also found in other discourses such as that of the Egyptians, Romans, and Africans and also the dream theory of Carl Jung. As several African respondents reported interpretations of dreams based on contraries, it therefore seems possible that their personal beliefs in this regard reflect general African, as opposed to Freudian dream beliefs.

-Some respondents stated that their dreams could compensate for waking life situations by allowing them to express parts of themselves which they are normally unable or unwilling to do in waking life. The belief that dreams sometimes act as compensatory mechanisms (as well as the above-mentioned beliefs that dreams can reflect wishes or fears, and are derived from the unconscious) are clearly articulated in the dream theory of Carl Jung (as was discussed in chapter three). It should also be pointed out that whereas both Freudian and Jungian conceptions might have influenced the respondents' personal beliefs in some instances, it is also possible that these beliefs were derived from other sources or even from personal observation.

- Furthermore, the ideas that dreams provide self-insight and feedback with regard to a person's actions, decisions, and relationships; that right brain dominant people would be likely to dream more; that stress in an individual's life could lead to nightmares; and the practice of interpreting dreams via direct or metaphorical analogy all seem reflective of general psychological dream theories such as those of Freud, Jung, and Boss.

-Biblical and Christian discourses also seemed to affect the dream beliefs and discourses of a number of respondents. The beliefs that God could communicate to an individual through dreams; that prayers can be answered through dreams and guidance given; and that dreams can serve as channel for spiritual experiences or predicting the future; and the belief that a person's relationship with God determines the nature of his or her dreams all seem to strongly reflect Christian and Biblical dream discourses. Although such ideas are also found in Islamic, Hindu, and to some extent also Egyptian and Greek dream discourses, it seems less likely that these discourses exerted a marked influence on the respondents as virtually all the respondents indicated that they belong to the Christian religion.

-Conceptions of the bio-psychological discourse were also prominently reflected in the statements made by several respondents. The respondents often adopted a very reductionist view of dreams by viewing them as mere by-products of mental or neurological processing of memories, sense-impressions, or experiences. As a result, dreams were often considered as meaningless. It is also possible that the lack of belief in the possibility of any deeper significance to dreams; the denial of the possibility of unusual dream experiences; and considering dreams as generally unimportant could derive from the general positivist and modernist scientific assumptions underlying the bio-psychological discourse.

-African discourses seem to still exert a strong influence on the beliefs of many (especially older) African respondents. Several African respondents still believe in the existence of ancestors and in the possibility that the latter might visit a sleeping individual in their dreams to provide important information or direction. The African belief that certain individuals such as healers and diviners get their calling to enter this profession through dreams was stated by one respondent. In addition, one respondent seems to have reflected a traditional African cultural belief when he stated that witchcraft can affect dreams. Many African respondents also stated that their parents often help them interpret their dreams by viewing it in the light of traditional African dream practices and beliefs, suggesting that such beliefs are still considered valid by some individuals. African respondents also attached a higher level of importance to their dreams, and were more likely to base their decisions and actions on their dreams than Western respondents. This tendency seems to reflect the general importance that dreams occupy in traditional African cultures. Furthermore, the beliefs that important dreams are particularly vivid and memorable; that some dreams only make sense some time after the dream; that dreams can be interpreted by means of contraries; and that negative things can befall a dreamer who ignores the injunctions given by his or her dreams are all reflective of general African dream discourses and practices. Although similar beliefs and practices are found in the Native American and Egyptian dream discourses, it is reasonable to suspect that African respondents would be more likely to be influenced by African dream discourses than by historically and geographically remote Native American and Egyptian dream beliefs.

-It also seems possible that vestiges of Artemidorian dream beliefs (which have been shown in chapter three to have influenced both the ideas of Freud as well as popular dream literature) might have affected the respondents' dream beliefs that dreams can serve to reflect wishes and fears, predict the future, give - - - - - warnings, and show potential outcomes of situations.

6.4.2. Dream discourses and practices not reflected in cultural, religious, and psychological dream discourses

In addition to reflecting existing cultural, religious, and psychological dream discourses, the qualitative analysis of the interviews also uncovered discourses, beliefs, and practices amongst the respondents that do not seem to be reflected in any such discourses. These beliefs and practices might have been marginalized or disregarded due to the influence of existing dream discourses, or they might have been derived from personal experience and observation. The fact that, in some instances, many of the respondents appear to have based these kinds of beliefs on personal examples, support the latter contention. In this section, several such beliefs and practices are discussed, thereby fulfilling a sub-aim stated in chapter one. It is believed that these unreflected beliefs and practices might in some instances have promising implications for future research, and these findings therefore constitute an important contribution of the study.

-In a general sense, it seems significant that no respondent consciously adhered to any specific psychological dream theory. Despite the fact that all the respondents were university students, no respondent consciously viewed or interpreted his or her dreams in accordance with any formally existing dream theory. This finding is perhaps rendered even more significant by the fact that several respondents were studying psychology as part of their curriculum. It also appears that many respondents' understandings and interpretative efforts with regards to dreams are relatively simple and intuitive, rather than complex, systematic, and formalized (as is the case in most cultural, religious and psychological discourses discussed in chapter three).

-Generally, there seems to be a decline in the degree of importance assigned to dreams by the respondents when compared to the level of importance assigned

to dreams in general religious, cultural, and psychological dream related discourses.

-As was directly indicated by some respondents, and implied by others, it appears that many of the respondents' dream related beliefs and practices which do not seem to be reflected by cultural, religious, and psychological dream discourses were derived from personal observation and experience. This includes the observation that dreams are often caused by memories of distant past events; that dreaming frequency and intensity are often affected by factors such as stress or worry; and that intensive mental activity could result in a decreased amount of dreaming in order to rest the mind. It might also include observations that dreams serve to make an individual feel better and provide him or her with a "boost" or an escape from reality, or an intrinsically enjoyable experience.

-Other beliefs and practices which do not appear to be clearly reflected in any cultural, religious, or psychological dream discourses include the strategy of dream interpretation employed by one respondent in which dreams were understood in terms of the specific sequences of dream scenes and the exact nature of the changes between such scenes; the recounting of a comforting dream to a relative for the purpose of assuaging the grief of the latter; the need to share a dream just in order to get it "off an individual's chest;" and the belief that dreams can affect an individual's mood and state of mind.

-One Western male respondent suggested that a connection might exist between the hemispherical dominance of an individual's brain, and dreaming frequency, and claimed that right-brained people might have more dreams than left-brained individuals. The researcher is unaware of any research which focuses specifically on the link between dreams and hemispherical dominance.

-One of the main sub-themes to emerge from the interviews was that dreams were often recounted to others for the purpose of entertainment and “fun.” Dreams thus often formed the topic of informal social conversation. This function of dreams does not seem to be reflected in any major cultural, religious or psychological discourse on dreams.

-A very common practice was that respondents tended to share their dreams with their mothers more than with anyone else, especially for the purpose of gaining assistance in interpreting the dream. Several respondents also indicated that their dream knowledge was derived from their mothers, and that their mothers often received their knowledge from their own mothers. No major cultural, religious, or psychological dream discourse reflects such a strong focus on the mother as “keeper of the dream knowledge.” The matrilineal transmission of dream knowledge also does not seem to be accounted for by any major dream discourse.

-Respondents often emphasised recounting their dreams to peers, mostly friends and spouses. It also became evident that peers appear to exert an influence on the respondents’ dream beliefs. Whereas recounting dreams to individuals who were considered to possess authoritative knowledge about dreams (such as *sangomas*, *ngakas*, priests, rabbi’s, psychologists, medicine men, etc.) is a practice commonly encountered in cultural, religious, and psychological dream discourses, the tendency to discuss dreams with friends, family and peers is not. This appears to represent a shift with regard to the specific types of individuals that respondents shared their dreams with.

-Many respondents claimed that they had déjà vu experiences which they attributed to their dreams. No clear link between dreams and déjà vu experiences could be located in the dream discourses that were examined during the course of the present study.

6.5. Value and contribution of the research findings

6.5.1. General scientific significance and contribution of the study

Considering the lack of existing research on local, current dream related discourses, beliefs, and practices, particularly in the South-African context, it is believed that the present study has gone some way towards addressing this gap in our existing knowledge regarding the subject, thereby shedding some light on a previously unexplored area of research.

As was stated in an earlier chapter, most dream related research tends to focus on dream content and meaning, and very little research has been dedicated towards studying attitudes, beliefs, and discourses *about* dreaming. In exploring and describing local, current dream related beliefs and practices, the study has contributed towards augmenting the scant existing knowledge and understanding in this regard.

The present study also serves to lay the foundation for later research which might focus more specifically on the dream related discourses and practices of specific cultural and religious groups, as well as examining local dream related discourses on a wider scale that extends beyond the Vaal-Triangle. As the issue of future research is deemed to be important, it will be discussed more comprehensively in a later section.

6.5.2. Value of the research findings in the contexts of counselling and therapy

In addition to contributing to existing dream research, it is believed that the findings of this study could have value to counsellors and psychologists working with clients. Dreamwork has long been a central part of many psychotherapeutic approaches such as those of Freud (1948), Jung (1933), and

Boss (1977). However, based upon the scant attention that dreams appear to receive in the context of postmodern approaches to therapy and counselling, it appears that interest in dreams as counselling or psychotherapeutic interventions has dwindled with the rise of the postmodern era. Some of the foremost proponents of postmodern counselling and therapy such as White (1988), Anderson and Goolishian (1988), White and Epston (1990), and Freedman and Combs (1990, 1994) make no reference in their works to the use or value of dreams in a counselling context. The researcher believes that dreams could be valuably incorporated into postmodern counselling or psychotherapeutic work with individuals as an important adjunct to other methods.

It should be noted that the suggestions and observations that are put forward in this section (as well as in section 6.5.3.) involve a degree of generalization from the research findings. The reader is referred to section 4.7.3. for a comprehensive discussion of the position taken by the researcher regarding the generalizability of the research findings made in this study. In brief, the following conclusions should be viewed as being descriptive of the situation existing amongst the respondent group, and only suggestive of conditions that might exist in the general Vaal-Triangle area, and, in a few instances perhaps, beyond.

Based on the findings of this study, the following implications and suggestions for the utilization of dreams in counselling and psychotherapy are put forward:

- Dreams could prove very valuable in assisting individuals with the resolution of grief over a deceased loved one. Several respondents indicated that their dreams brought them substantial relief and comfort in dealing with the loss of a loved one. If counsellors are aware of this they might enquire about an individual's dreams following the death of a significant other, and through discussion and "thickening" of this dream experience, support the client in

working through the grieving process. The counsellor could serve as an audience for the full recounting of the dream narrative, thereby adding subjective weight and importance to it. From a social-constructivist perspective, meaning is generated through social interaction. Therefore, in the interactional process in which the client recounts his or her dream to the counsellor or psychotherapist who listens and offers questions or comments, positive meaning can be generated around the dream experience, thereby reinforcing the therapeutic effects of the dream.

Additionally, the research findings suggest that this strategy can be effectively expanded in that a client might be encouraged to share such a dream (that brought him or her comfort) with relatives or other individuals who might also be affected by the loss, thereby assisting these individuals in dealing with their own grief.

-In a general sense the interviews revealed that many respondents still place value upon their dreams, look to their dreams for insight, and even base actions and decisions on dreams. As such, generally working with dreams in a postmodern or social-constructivist counselling or psychotherapeutic context could facilitate the therapeutic process by drawing upon the clients' inner resources. Postmodern therapeutic approaches such as narrative therapy often seek out and build upon a client's natural inclinations and strengths, rather than impose therapist-derived interventions in a directive manner (White & Epston, 1990: 15-17). The results of this study show that dreams often constituted an important natural resource in healing and coping with specific problems, and as such, counsellors might encourage and build upon such natural inclinations in order to effect therapeutic change. By utilizing a client's dreams in counselling or therapy, the counsellor is likely to be less inclined to assume a directive, therapist centred approach, which might be experienced as "dis-abling" by clients, and more likely to adopt a less directive, client centred, "enabling" approach.

-Many respondents stated that dreams often served to either warn them about a potential negative situation, or motivate them with regard to some valued goal or outcome. Dreams appeared to be particularly successful in motivating the respondents, perhaps because of the emotional and viscerally felt content of the dream. In some instances, this function of dreams could be effectively utilized to support other interventions aimed at either avoiding a negative outcome or pursuing a valued outcome.

-Dreams might prove especially valuable in working with African clients as both the research findings as well as the literature review suggest that African individuals often place a lot of importance on their dreams, and appear to be naturally inclined to look to their dreams for insights and solutions to problems. Perhaps dream work might fit in more closely with many African individuals' natural understandings, worldviews, and inclinations than many other methods of traditional psychotherapy which derive in large part from white Western European males.

-A very strong theme that emerged from the qualitative analysis is that dream beliefs and practices were very individual and varied widely. Individuals were almost as likely to view dreams as important as to view them as relatively devoid of significance. Whereas some individuals base important decisions on dreams, others hardly even notice their dreams. Perhaps the most important admonition to emerge from such observations is that each client needs to be related to individually as far as dreams are concerned. By briefly discussing the topic of dreams with a client, a counsellor can assess whether dreams might serve as important adjunct to the therapeutic process, or whether an enforced examination of dreams might prove counterproductive. In accordance with general postmodern and social-constructivist notions, the findings of the study therefore argue against a "one size fits all" approach to counselling or therapy as far as dreams are concerned.

-Related to the former point, the findings of the study revealed that clear gender and culture related differences occurred with regard to certain dream related themes. In any counselling or therapeutic approach informed by a postmodern and social-constructivist approach, a sensitivity to the specific context and local knowledge and beliefs of a client is considered very important (Kvale, 1997: 34). The research findings could contribute to this end by serving to sensitize counsellors to the importance of contexts such as gender, culture, and age in working with dreams. For example, the findings of the present study might help to sensitize counsellors to the fact that the existence of the ancestors and a belief in their ability to communicate with the dreamer and provide valuable insights is still a widely accepted fact amongst the majority of African respondents.

-The research findings also indicate that it might not prove useful or appropriate to work with the dreams of certain individuals who consider dreams to be meaningless and unimportant. Some counsellors or psychologists influenced by the theories of Freud, Jung, or Boss might perhaps be inclined to work with their clients' dreams as a matter of course. While this might be a beneficial approach in some instances, the results of the interviews suggest that it might not be a useful or preferred strategy as far as specific clients are concerned.

-Not a single respondent espoused the theories of Freud, Jung, or Boss, or consciously approached their dreams according to the dictates of these theories. Yet, as was indicated earlier in the study, most psychotherapeutic dreamwork proceeds from these approaches which are generally complex, comprehensive, and rely heavily on the interpretative skill of a trained therapist or counsellor. The results of the interviews suggest that the value of dreams to the respondents were often derived through more direct and simple means, such as the direct comfort, joy, motivation, warnings, or solutions brought by a dream experience itself. Many respondents obtained value from their dreams without

resorting to any elaborate interpretative strategies. The researcher does not argue against employing the methods of Jung, Freud, Boss or any other dream theory, but wishes to point out that it might be counterproductive to limit the exploration of the dream strictly to the dictates of these theories. A more inclusive approach, that also considers the dream more directly, might often prove as useful as a more reasoned interpretation based on a psychological dream theory.

-As was indicated elsewhere, from a postmodern and social-constructivist approach, local knowledge and practices are considered valid and significant. The findings of the study echo this premise and thereby pose an important implication for counsellors and therapists. Despite not being conversant with any specific dream theory, many of the respondents managed to develop, create, or discover ways in which to work successfully with their dreams. Notwithstanding the fact that many of the respondents' approaches to understanding and working with dreams did not appear to be in accord with formalized strategies of dream interpretation (such as those of Freud, Jung, and Boss), they nonetheless managed to find value in their dreams and use them to effect positive changes in their lives. Put simply, the research findings indicate that their methods often "work" very well. In the context of any counselling method informed by a postmodern, social-constructivist approach, it is believed to be very important to be aware of this, as the counsellor might otherwise inadvertently assume that local knowledge and methods with regard to dream interpretation are less valid than the counsellors' own knowledge derived from formalized dream theories. This suggestion ties in with the central injunction in many therapeutic approaches informed by the postmodern and social-constructivist approaches that "the client is the expert," implying that the client's views, knowledge, abilities, and beliefs are considered to be valid and important by the counsellor or therapist (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992). Devaluing a client's dream beliefs and practices could result in the marginalisation and disregard for the clients' own dream beliefs and

interpretative strategies, and thereby result in the loss of a valuable source of insight and therapeutic change, whereas respecting and utilizing the client's beliefs and strategies empowers the client to deal with a given issue by drawing upon his or her own internal resources.

6.5.3. Sociological implications and contributions of the research findings

The trend of “psychologizing” dreams and dream studies has resulted in a marginalization of dream related research and understanding based on other approaches, such as sociology (Bastide, 1966: 199). Most current dream based research is executed within the fields of psychology and anthropology (Hall, 1997: 4766), and only scant research on dream related beliefs, discourses and practices has been undertaken specifically from a *sociological* perspective. Along with Bastide (1966: 200) the researcher believes that there is intrinsic value in approaching the study of dreams from a sociological perspective, and poses the following questions: “How well founded is this radical division between the psychic and the social...Is it not about time to re-establish channels of communication between these two...In short, is it not time to attempt a sociology of the dream?” It is believed that the present study might contribute towards filling this void in sociological research, and thereby provide a fresh, alternative perspective on the phenomenon by approaching it from a different context. In addition to the contributions cited in the previous sections, the study therefore also represents an attempt to work towards the establishment of a sociological perspective on dreams.

Such an interdisciplinary approach to the understanding of dreams has many benefits. Noegel (2001: 45) states that an interdisciplinary study of dreams leads to a new appreciation for the subtleties of dreams, the divinatory, ontological, and ideological contexts of their interpretation, and the variety of methodological frameworks that can be used to understand them.

The following are presented as broadly sociological conclusions and findings made on the basis of the research findings:

-All the respondents who were interviewed stated that they shared their dreams with other individuals, even if only on some occasions. This was true even for respondents who regarded their dreams as utterly meaningless and lacking in importance. From the interviews it is therefore clear that dreams often form the topic of conversation between friends, parents and children, siblings and other individuals. There appears to be something impelling about the nature of some dream experiences that prompted the respondents to recount their dream experiences to others. Although dreams are intrapsychic phenomena experienced only by the dreamer, through the sharing of dream accounts with other individuals the dream becomes externalized and enters the social domain where it often impacts on the nature and content of the social interaction between individuals.

-Related to this, it appears clearly and repeatedly from the interviews that humorous or strange dreams were often recounted to other individuals for the purpose of entertainment and “fun.” It therefore appears that in a social sense, dreams often serve as a source of humour and enjoyable social interaction.

-Recounting dreams to others also represents a degree of emotional sharing, in that an individual reveals an aspect of his or her private inner world to others. It could be tentatively suggested that the process of sharing dreams with others might serve to create, maintain or perhaps even increase the degree of communication and connection between individuals.

-Another important sociological observation that emerged from the study related to the central role played by mothers with regard to dreams. It was noted that the mother often served as the “keeper” of knowledge about dreams, and was regarded by many respondents as possessing insight into, and

knowledge about dreams. Mothers were the individuals with whom dreams were shared the most often, and many respondents cited that they primarily shared their dreams with their mothers in order to obtain assistance in interpreting such dreams. Several respondents also stated that their own knowledge of dreams was derived, at least in part, from their mothers. Respondents often also indicated that their mothers got their knowledge of dreams from their own mothers. This suggests that local dream discourses, beliefs, and practices might in part be transmitted matrilineally.

-An overview of dream practices in various cultural and religious contexts (see chapter three) indicate that knowledge and interpretative authority regarding dreams was centralized and vested in specific individuals such as priests, shamans, *ngakas*, *sangomas*, rabbi's, psychologists or spiritually advanced individuals. The interviews indicate that no respondent ever took his or her dreams to such an individual who is considered an authority on dreams outside the circle of family and friends, as was the case in many cultural and religious contexts discussed in chapter three. All the respondents indicated that they only share their dreams within the circle of family and friends. This is suggestive of a decline in the importance and function of such dream authorities. It appears that there has been a shift in that dream authority that was previously vested in such individuals outside the circle of family and friends have been relocated within this circle.

-The findings of the study are strongly suggestive that dreams, although seemingly intrapsychic phenomena, serve as mirrors of the broader cultural, religious, and intellectual contexts of an individual, a point that is also made by Bastide (1966: 200-201). Existing conditions and changes in society appear to be reflected in the respondents' dream beliefs and practices. For example, the decline in the religious and spiritual importance assigned to dreams by the respondents seems to be paralleled by the general trend towards secularization

which has been observed by sociologists (Ferrante, 2000: 482; Wallace & Wallace, 1989: 380-381).

-Related to the previous point, the influence of the modernist, positivist, and rationalist era can also be clearly discerned in the reductionist views on dreams given by many of the respondents. Dreams were often described (using explicitly biological and neurological terms and language) as being little more than neurological and biological processes serving no significant psychological or spiritual function. There also appears to be a decline in the general degree of importance and significance accorded to dreams when the responses from the interviews are compared with the dream discourses discussed in chapter three. This is suggestive that the general modernist cultural and intellectual worldviews that are prominent in our society appear to exert a noticeable influence on individual dreams beliefs and discourses. From a sociological and social-constructivist viewpoint, personal beliefs and practices can never be divorced from social, cultural, religious, and other contextual beliefs and practices. The social-constructivist approach suggests that individuals derive and construct their personal beliefs and narratives from master discourses in society. It is therefore proposed that any given dream theory, whether individual or collective, can only be understood when the social, cultural, religious, and scientific contexts in which it is embedded are taken into account. This contention also calls for an increased amount of sociological attention to be paid to dreams. As such, this point is discussed comprehensively in the next section with regard to recommendations for future research.

-Furthermore, the enculturation and Westernizing influences to which African individuals have been subjected in South-Africa (Mbiti, 1997: 512-513) also appear to be clearly reflected in the decline of traditional African dream beliefs evinced by especially the younger African respondents. Older African respondents usually expressed more traditional dream beliefs than their younger counterparts. The latter often stated directly that they do not consider

their traditional beliefs and heritage to be important or relevant anymore, and consequently also indicated that they did not adhere to traditional dream beliefs and practices. This suggests that (at least amongst the respondent group, and possibly beyond this) Western culture might exert a corrosive and marginalizing effect on elements of traditional African dream beliefs and practices.

-A final sociological implication relates to the observations that very few respondents had a well-defined, comprehensive system of dream beliefs and practices, and also that a wide variety of sometimes greatly differing dreams beliefs and practices were reported, suggesting that there is an absence of a clearly articulated, unified, clearly defined, and comprehensive system of dream beliefs and practices in the respondents' cultural context. This situation is starkly contrasted by the situation that existed in the vast majority of traditional, cultural, and religious contexts discussed in chapter three. From the literature review it appears that historically most cultures had a fairly clearly defined and comprehensive system of dream beliefs and practices which were accepted by the individuals in that culture (even though such beliefs naturally evolved over time). The individual therefore did not need to define for himself what he believed about dreams, as his society (or religion) provided him with a culturally integrated view of dreams and guidelines for their use.

An overview of the interviews suggests the existence of a kind of cultural anomie as far as dream beliefs and practices are concerned. The term "anomie" is used here in a traditional sociological sense and refers to an absence of clear norms for a society or an individual with regard to a specific issue (Wallace & Wallace, 1989: 135). It appears that our culture (referring specifically to the Vaal-Triangle area of South-Africa) neither has, nor provides its members with a unified and clearly defined set of dream beliefs and practices. This situation leaves it up to the individual to construct, develop, adopt, or discover his or her own dream beliefs and practices, as is suggested by the widely divergent responses elicited from the respondents.

6.6. Limitations of the study

In a study such as this, certain imperfections in design, methodology, and qualitative analysis procedures invariably occur. As these imperfections could serve to affect the validity of the findings made in the study, a critical examination of these elements are necessary in order that their influence may be accounted for, and that future studies might benefit from taking cognizance of these factors.

Sample size

To some extent, the limited size of the research sample could be perceived as a shortcoming in that the examination of a larger respondent group might have revealed a richer and fuller picture of current, local dream related beliefs and discourses. However, contrary to the researcher's expectations, a near point of data saturation was reached within the respondent group, suggesting that the most important aspects of local dream related beliefs and discourses are likely accounted for.

Sample constitution

Another, perhaps more important shortcoming is the fact that the respondents were all drawn from a local university. While this has many advantages, such as providing access to a fairly heterogenous group of respondents from all over the Vaal-Triangle area, it does have certain limitations. It could be argued that all these respondents, being university students, might share a degree of intellectual orientation and level of education that is not reflective of the general population. The fact that all the respondents were studying at the university could therefore have served to minimize the degree to which the sample is inclusive of the full range of dream beliefs and discourses that exist in the Vaal-Triangle area. However, it should be pointed out that despite this

limitation, the results of the interviews indicate that very few respondents exhibited an overly intellectual or academic approach to dreams, and no respondent adhered to any formal dream theory.

6.7. Recommendations for future research

Based upon the conclusions and the perceived limitations of the present study, the following recommendations for future research are put forward for consideration.

Possible avenues for future research

Some of the findings made in the present study are suggestive of possibilities which could be researched more comprehensively in future studies. Firstly, it was found that a clear, inverse relationship existed between the amount of dream recall amongst male and female respondents. Female respondents were more likely to recall their dreams, whereas male respondents appeared to be more likely to forget their dreams. As the value of dreams to an individual to some extent presupposes that dreams are recalled, it is believed that there might be value in researching the issue of dream recall in greater depth, especially with regard to gender related differences.

Furthermore, one respondent suggested that dream recall might be affected by lateralization, that is, by the specific hemispherical brain dominance of an individual. He claimed that right-brained individuals might be inclined to have more dreams than left-brained individuals, and vice versa. As no research could be located that connected brain lateralization with dreams, there might be value in researching differences in dream recall, experiences, and content with regard to individuals who exhibit generally left or right-brained tendencies.

More sociological research

It has already been shown that very little sociological dream related research appears to exist. It was also pointed out that no dream theory, whether collective or individual, can be understood without considering the cultural, social, religious, intellectual, and other similar contexts in which such a theory is imbedded. This calls for much greater attention to be paid to dreams by sociologists. It is hoped that future research will build upon this study, and further the movement towards establishing a “sociology of the dream.”

More focused studies

A more comprehensive picture of dream related beliefs and practices could be obtained if certain groups of individuals are made the focus of further qualitative research, based on factors such as age group, specific ethnical group, economic class, and religious affiliation. This will facilitate the obtaining of a more comprehensive view of the dream related beliefs and discourses of such groups of individuals. While the present study did indeed take these factors into consideration to some extent, the main focus was on obtaining a more generalized picture of dream related beliefs and practices, with a focus on gender and cultural differences.

Researching the dream beliefs of specific cultural groups

Related to the former point, in the literature review it became clear that while significant research has been executed on the dream beliefs of the Xhosa and the Zulu, very little research could be located that dealt with the dream related beliefs and discourses of the Southern Sotho, Northern Sotho and Tswana cultures. Almost no studies were found that dealt with Venda and Tsonga dream beliefs and practices.

Considering the possibility suggested by the examination of the interviews that the advance of Westernization might be rapidly eroding traditional African dream beliefs and practices, it seems especially urgent to research and record for posterity the traditional dream related discourses and practices of these cultures. This point also gains added significance in the light of the spirit of democracy pervading the new South-Africa, which is reflected in the fact that the languages of each of these cultures have been raised to an official status. The dream beliefs of these cultures should be considered as being part of the South-African cultural heritage, and as such, needs to be preserved.

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APPENDIX: THE INTERVIEWS

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Introduction

This appendix contains the transcripts of the interviews that were conducted with the twenty respondents selected for this study, which formed the basis of the qualitative analysis reflected in chapter five.

The formats of the transcripts have been set out in a similar way in order to facilitate ease of reading and comparison between respondents.

As such, each interview has been prefaced by an indication of the particular respondent in question. In order to ensure anonymity to the respondents, while at the same time retaining ease of reference, each respondent has been assigned a number from one to twenty, and will be designated as such.

Following this, the respondent's age, gender, religious affiliation, race and culture have been listed. This information serves to contextualise the responses and plays an important role in the qualitative analyses that have been undertaken of each interview.

After the basic demographic information of each respondent has been given, the interview itself is presented. Each of these transcripts has been handed back to the respondents for correction and editing to ensure their accuracy in reflecting the respondents' views and beliefs.

Respondent # 1

Gender: female

Cultural group: Tswana

Religious affiliation: Christian, Old Apostolic church

Age: 21

Yes, I think dreams are important. Dreams tell us about the future, about what is going to happen. If you dream about something, some of it is going to happen. Dreams show you the way you should live, and can tell you when you are “off track.”

When I have a dream I often tell my dream to my grandmother, who will then explain to me what my dreams mean. She learnt how to do this from her grandfather, who saw visions. I learnt most of what I know about dreams from my grandmother. I would say that 80% of what I believe about dreams came from my grandmother, and about 20% from my Christian religion.

Even when I interpret my own dreams, I think of what my grandmother would say about it. For example, I know from my grandmother that to dream about snakes is bad luck. Especially a black or golden black snake would mean evil, that there's some evil spirit. But the important thing is if the snake bites you or not. If the snake did not bite you then nothing bad will happen.

A while ago I had a dream of a party where lots of people were preparing to get ready, and my grandmother told me that this means that someone might pass away. Three days later the father of one of my friends passed away.

I do take my dreams seriously. For example, if I dream of water and fish, I know that this could show that I, or someone else might get pregnant. I had dreams like this recently and because of them decided to stop dating for a while, because I do not want to get pregnant again.

I sometimes dream of people who are no longer living. My grandmother told me that when this happens it means that the dead person has some message he needs to communicate. Often it is a sign that the dead person is not resting,

because of some unfinished business. The person who had the dream must then try and help the deceased person come to rest, by doing something for him, such as putting a tombstone on his grave, for example.

Sometimes deceased relatives of a very ill person may appear in a dream in order to let the dreamer know that it is time for the person to join his or her deceased relatives. After such a dream you can expect the ill person to die shortly.

I definitely believe that you can make contact with the spirits of the deceased in your dreams, but I have never had any dreams in which my ancestors contacted me.

No, I have never had any dreams that solved a problem for me.

I often discuss my dreams with my friends in the hostel. Sometimes we will try to interpret each other's dreams.

Although it is common for people in my culture to take their dreams to a *ngaka*, I do not believe in them because I am a Christian. I won't go to them.

Respondent # 2

Gender: female

Cultural group: White: Afrikaans

Religious affiliation: Christian, Methodist Church

Age: 27

The purpose of dreams is to discharge emotions that might have been bottled up during the day. It gives an outlet for feelings that can't really be expressed during the day. For instance, if you are very angry at your boss, it is often not possible to express this anger openly at your boss, but this anger can be vented in a dream.

So most dreams are things in your subconscious (such as emotions) that have to come out, such as frustration or fear. I often worry about my child's safety and I think this comes out in a lot of my dreams. For example, in one dream I remember an intruder was trying to get in to our apartment and I frantically tried to close all the doors and windows. The intruder found an open window and as he came into the house I hit him on the head with a huge brick. As he fell down I saw that it was actually my own baby that I've hit. I think this dream has to do with my anxieties over my child's safety, and about protecting her.

I very often have dreams of lions. Usually these are frightful dreams in which the lions chase me or try to get to me and my baby. I think this has to do with my stress levels.

In fact, these lion dreams became so intense and frequent that I did not want to go to sleep at night, and I even took the step of buying a gun for self-protection, even though I know that there are no lions in the area where I stay.

I think that dreams come from your subconscious. During the day we gather impressions and at night in dreams we sort these impressions. It's almost like defragmenting a computer, ordering the bits and pieces of data on it. It's like you make sense of what has happened during the day. During the day you collect words and at night your dreams put these words together in a sentence.

I remember a lot of my dreams, although I do not consider them particularly important. I don't see dreams as being deep or spiritual things. I've never had any kind of extraordinary experience in my dreams (such as dreams telling the future or being visited by a deceased person).

I don't really spend a lot of time trying to interpret my dreams, but I do often wonder about their meanings, and sometimes try to figure out what something in my dream meant.

I never take my dreams to other people for interpretation, if I do try to figure out the meaning of one of my dreams, I do it by myself.

I don't really base many decisions or actions on my dreams. Apart from buying the gun I can't think of an instance where a dream influenced a decision I made.

I sometimes discuss my dreams with others, but usually in a lighthearted manner, such as recounting a dream that was funny for the purpose of entertainment and fun.

Respondent # 3

Gender: female

Cultural group: White: Afrikaans

Religious affiliation: Christian, Evangelic Reformed Church Age: 25

Although I am quite aware of my dreams and often find them interesting, I don't consider dreams to be important. My dreams are often weird, illogical, confusing, and they make no sense to me. I think it is just a matter of the synapses in the brain crossing and having "glitches." Almost like crossed wires on a computer causing random associations and images to be triggered. I also think that sometimes dreams are just the result of associations that happened in my daily life. I think that dreams are an attempt to sort out and discharge these accumulated impressions and associations. I don't think dreams have any real meaning or function, it is just a biological process. I tend to dream more when I am under a lot of stress.

I have never believed that something that I have dreamt would come true or that dreams can show the future. Although some of my dreams are pleasureable, I have never had any extraordinary or special dreams.

I never write down my dreams or put in any serious effort at trying to interpret them (I sometimes try to make sense of them, but my dreams are just mostly so weird and confused that I can't see any meaning in them whatsoever). I definitely never base any decisions or actions on my dreams. I might sometimes discuss my dreams with others, but do so for fun and entertainment, not anything serious.

Even though I had to study the theories of Freud and Jung in my first year, these theories did not really have any impact on my thinking and beliefs about dreams. I never took these theories seriously.

Respondent # 4

Gender: male

Cultural group: African: Northern-Sotho

Religious affiliation: Christian, Presbyterian

Age: 19

My dreams are sometimes quite important to me. I have many dreams that are not important – I don't care about these dreams, they don't make any sense. But other dreams are more serious. For example, if I have a dream in which something bad happens I know that this might mean that something bad is or might be happening in my family. I think that bad dreams can often show you something bad in the future. I have had such a dream. Last year I had a dream in which I was struggling in the water and a relative died a week after that. Other than this I did not have any unusual experiences in my dreams. I have never had any spiritual experiences in a dream. But I do believe that God can talk to people in dreams.

I do believe it is possible for a dead person to come to you in a dream. My grandmother came to my mother in a dream and told her things.

I think the function of dreams is to show you what will happen in the future. I can't think of any other functions of dreams.

I don't know where dreams come from. They just appear. I definitely think these dreams must come from outside you. But I think that many unimportant dreams just come from something in your mind, maybe from something that you are worrying about.

My dreams do sometimes affect my actions. For example, if I had a bad dream, I might phone home to find out what is going on there and to make sure that everyone is ok. And if I had a dream in which I failed my exams, this might cause me to study a bit harder.

If I get a dream I will first try to figure out what it means by myself. I will usually do this by trying to find what things in my life are like the things in my dream. For example, if I had a bad dream and I know that someone in my family is very sick, I know that the dream might have something to do with that.

If I can't figure out my dream by myself I will tell it to my mother, who will then tell me what my dream means. She got her knowledge from her parents. It is the traditional knowledge of our people. Most of the things that I know about dreams come from my mother. (For example, dreams of snakes can show something about a pregnancy or a miscarriage. Dreaming of red meat can show that there will be a wedding or a funeral, as we would slaughter a cow on both occasions.)

I don't tell my dreams to anyone else, only my mother.

In my family there is still a lot of traditional beliefs and also Christian beliefs. My mother will sometimes take her dreams to one of the people at the church to help her interpret it.

When I was younger I would sometimes dream of heaven and of trying to see what God looked like, even though I never succeeded in seeing this.

Respondent # 5

Gender: female

Cultural group: African: Zulu

Religious affiliation: Christian, Roman Catholic

Age: 20

I wouldn't say that dreams play an important role in my life. They are just there. I don't really dream that much. Usually, if I dream something it is because I have been thinking about something. For example if I worry about an upcoming test or exam I might have dreams of an exam, where I have to go and find my results on the university notice board.

I think dreams come from the subconscious and from emotional things. For example, as I said, if you worry about something you might dream about that. I think dreams can give solutions to the problems that you can't solve during the day. In this way dreams are like a getaway or an escape from reality. Even though you might wake up from such a dream and you will find that the problem is still there, your dream gave you a bit of a getaway from your troubles. It feels good while you are dreaming this, like taking a break from your problems. Most of the time the solutions only work in the dream, and not in real life. I have not gotten any solutions in my dreams that I could use in my real life to solve any of my problems.

I also don't base any of my actions or decisions on my dreams.

When I try to understand my dreams I usually try to think of what is happening in my life or about what I talked about in the days before the dream and try to find how that relates to the dream.

I often tell my dreams to my friends and family. I would ask them things like: "Have you ever had any dreams like that?" or "Why do you think I dreamt this?" and "What do you think this dream means?" So we try to find the meanings of the dream by discussing our dreams with each other. We also sometimes just tell our dreams to each other for fun.

If I should have a dream which feels very important I might consider going to someone like a sangoma or a psychic person to find out the meaning of my dream, but up to now I've never had such a dream.

My entire family is Roman Catholic and we do not follow any traditional Zulu customs or practices. I have never been exposed to any of these, and so I don't even know what the traditional Zulu beliefs about dreams are. My Catholic religion also plays no role in how I see dreams. I don't see any links between my religion and my dreams.

I don't know where my ideas about dreams come from.

I do think that you could have contact in a dream with the soul of someone who is already dead, although I did not have any such dreams, except perhaps for dreaming about my (deceased) grandmother. But I don't know if this was really her or if I just dreamt of her because I often see her photograph in the house. I also think that dreams can sometimes show the future. A friend of mine might be saying something and I would have this déjà vu feeling as if my friend has already said this to me before. I think that sometimes when this happens I have dreamed about the conversation.

I also sometimes dream of people who I do not know. I think that when this happens I am dreaming of my future. These dreams show things that I want to do in the future.

Respondent # 6

Gender: female

Cultural group: White: Afrikaans

Religious affiliation: Christian

Age: 37

I think that the purpose of dreams is to make sense out of the circumstances in your life. I also believe that dreams sometimes help you to solve problems, sometimes directly, by suggesting a solution, and other times indirectly, by making you see a situation from a different perspective.

I can clearly remember one instance where I was faced with a troubling family problem. I had a dream about this that clearly showed me a solution to the problem. In real life I then went ahead and actually did what the dream suggested and it worked out very well, the problem was resolved.

So I can say that yes, my actions and decisions are sometimes influenced by my dreams. Sometimes, if I've had a bad dream about someone close to me I might plan things differently, or be more attentive (such as watching my children closely when they are near a swimming pool, etc). I remember one instance when I had planned to go somewhere and after a bad dream about this I decided to postpone the trip. However, if something is important, I will still do it.

When I try to understand my own dreams I usually replay them over and over in my mind and try to find points of commonality between the dream and my life.

I think that dreams are caused by things that occupy or bother you in daily life. My dreams are often the result of the circumstances in my life and the things I am busy with. For example while we were building our house I had a lot of dreams about building. Other times I might have watched a film on a particular night and then have a dream that includes images or scenes from the film. This

could be the impact of the film, but I think it could also be that the film triggered something personal in me.

When there is something that concerns me or I am struggling with a problem I might often dream about this issue. I also notice that I tend to dream a lot more when I am under stress. I think that your dreams might be trying to find a solution to the problem.

I certainly believe that at least some dreams can come from God, or be affected by Him. I have had spiritual experiences in my dreams in which I believe I received messages from God.

I also do believe that it is possible to have contact with a deceased person in a dream. I have had an experience which might have been this. A while ago I felt someone touch my shoulder while I was dreaming. This felt extremely real, so much so that I woke up from it and expected to find someone in the room. I had the distinct feeling that it was my aunt, who passed away a year ago.

I do believe that dreams can show something about the future. I often have a sense of déjà vu in that I might walk into a place and get the strong feeling that I've been there already. Often, in these instances I feel as if I have dreamt about it before. I also sometimes get premonitory dreams in which I might see that someone dies. This usually worries me a bit until I see that this person is still ok after a while.

I often discuss my dreams with my mother and my husband, usually to try and make sense of my dreams. Other times I will tell my dreams to others just because the dream was interesting or perhaps funny. Usually I try to figure out the meanings of my dreams on my own though.

Dreams are extremely important to my mother and she pays a lot of attention to them. This is why I often discuss my dreams with her. I think that most of my own perspectives on dreams come from my mother. I also consider dreams to

be important and it is probably because I always saw that they were so important to my mother. In my opinion dreams can be very powerful. I will not generally disregard a dream as being inconsequential; I take my dreams seriously. Not all dreams though, as some dreams seem to have no meaning and seem silly.

My mother places a lot of importance on premonitions in dreams. For example she believes that if someone dreams of a person who is walking in mud then there might be bad news about that person.

Respondent # 7

Gender: female

Cultural group: White: Afrikaans

Religious affiliation: Christian, Dutch Reformed Church

Age: 21

Dreams are not particularly important to me. In general I don't think dreams mean much. I think that you dream of the things that happened during the day (especially unusual things) and of the things that are on your mind before you go to sleep. For example, a few days ago I found a spider in my room and a day or so before this event my mother suddenly slammed the car door in a way that gave me a fright. The other night I had a dream in which there was a spider and in which I got a fright due to a door slamming. So I think my dream was just like a "cutting and pasting" of events and images from my daily life. I don't think it means much. I think dreams are caused by emotions, by the feelings that you have. For example, since I have learnt that my uncle is suffering from a terminal disease I have been having a recurring dream about driving over someone who is lying in a road. I think this is just due to the shock of finding out that my uncle is dying. Just as I get a shock each time I have the dream, so I get a shock each time I think of my uncle.

Although I think that dreams probably do have some function, I have no idea what that might be.

I am not superstitious, I do not believe for example, that if you dream of someone dying that anything of the sort is going to happen. If I dream of someone dying I see it as just a dream and it does not bother me in any way. I have never had any unusual or extraordinary experiences in my dreams. The only exception to this is that I am sometimes aware that I am dreaming while I am still in the dream, and at these times I can sometimes affect my dreams.

I don't really try to interpret my dreams. I sometimes wonder about what they might mean, but I don't really spend much time trying to figure them out.

I sometimes tell my dreams to friends and family, but this is for fun, because a dream was funny or strange, not to try and interpret it.

I have also never based any of my actions or decisions on a dream.

Although I have studied some psychology in my 1st and 2nd year, we did not study anything about dreams and this has not influenced the way I think about dreams in any way. I don't really know where my ideas about dreams come from.

Respondent # 8

Gender: male

Cultural group: White: Afrikaans

Religious affiliation: Christian

Age: 23

Dreams are sometimes very important to me. Not all dreams though, as I have many dreams that don't seem to have any real meaning. But I have had several dreams that were very important to me.

My Grandmother died from cancer about two months ago. A strange thing happened a few months before this in that I had a very vivid dream in which someone was dying from cancer. I saw the entire family standing around the sickbed. This was before I have even found out about my grandmother's diagnosis. A month later things happened exactly as it did in my dream. Although I forgot about the dream, when we were all standing around her death bed, I remembered the dream and it was exactly what was happening now. So yes, I do think that dreams can tell you about what might happen in the future (although I don't believe in psychics and all that). I also often have this "déjà vu" feeling, like when I enter a room I might feel like I've been there before, and often it is because I have dreamed this. I think the function of this is to help me feel at ease in new places and situations. If I have seen a place in a dream, I'll feel more comfortable and at ease when I am in this place in real life. For example, before I went to Germany as an exchange student, I had dreams about what my guest family and their home looked like. When I arrived there I found that my dream images were mostly very accurate and this helped me feel at ease in my new "home" a lot faster.

Unfortunately I can only tell whether a dream has anything to do with the future once it actually happened.

I do believe that you can make contact with a deceased person in a dream. I had a dream which might have been this. One night, a few weeks after my grandmother's death, I had a dream in which my grandmother came to me and

told me that she was ok and that nothing that happened was my fault. (I had secretly been feeling guilty about certain things I should have done but didn't, etc). She told me that the things that I did do for her meant a lot more than the little things I might not have done right. She also told me that she was ok and happy where she was now. This dream brought me a great deal of reassurance and helped me cope much better with the grief over my grandmother's death. I even told the dream to my father and it helped him too. We both felt better because of the dream. I am not absolutely sure whether the dream was a real contact with my grandmother or not. I think it was, but I am not sure. But the important thing is that it helped me feel better.

I think that the function of dreams is to make you feel better. It is easier and nicer to get up in the morning if you had a nice dream. I also think that dreams can motivate and "boost" you. I often have dreams like this. For example, before one of my tennis matches I might dream that I win the game. I think these dreams prepare me and give me more confidence than what I'd normally have.

As another example: sometimes I might get a dream in which I fail one of my exams. When I wake up and realize that this was only a dream, the negative feelings of the dream motivate me to study harder in order not to have the events in the dream happen to me.

So yes, dreams do sometimes influence my actions and my decisions. This is not always a conscious thing. I think that many dreams subconsciously have an influence on how I see things and on some of my actions.

I also think that you often dream about things which you really want. Although this desire might not be on your mind consciously, you are unconsciously aware of it and it comes out in dreams. For example, I would like to have more money, so I could pay off my car, etc. and as a result I sometimes might dream

that I get money. I don't think this means much, the dream just reflects my wish.

Some dreams can also be caused by your memories, the things that are on your mind during the day, or the events that occur in your life. For example I might watch a scary movie and then have images from that movie in my dreams. These dreams have no purpose.

I also believe strongly that in some dreams God can actually use the dream to give me a sign or guidance on some issue.

I often tell my dreams to my mother. I do this just to "get it off my chest." She will listen attentively and it just makes me feel better. I don't really share my dreams with my friends, I don't see any purpose in that.

Respondent # 9

Gender: female

Cultural group: African: Northern Sotho

Religious affiliation: Christian, Lutheran Church

Age: 21

Dreams are very important to me.

I think that the function of dreams is to show the future. I have had dreams which later came true, even though at that time it seemed unlikely.

I also think that dreams help you to know yourself, they show you how you really are.

Dreams also tell you if something that you might be doing is good or bad. Sometimes my dreams will tell me that if I don't do a certain thing, something negative might happen; so my dreams can warn me about this.

Dreams can sometimes give you answers. I often pray and then get answers to problems in my dreams.

I also think that your past can haunt you in dreams. When I was little I saw a very scary film in which people were attacked by bees, and ever since I have often been having terrible nightmares in which I am attacked by bees.

If I study a lot, I don't dream, I think that my mind needs to rest at these times.

When I try to interpret my dreams I often take the opposite of what I have dreamt. I have noticed that very often when I dream of something, the opposite happens. For example, if I see myself failing my exam, I know that I will pass. I might also for example want my parents to buy me something. If I dream that they do not buy me this thing, then I know that they will buy it for me in real life. This kind of thing has happened to me a lot.

I think that a very important thing in dreams is whether you believe in yourself and how you feel about yourself. If people do not believe in themselves and look towards other people for decisions, these kinds of people will not take their dreams seriously, it won't be important to them, because they are not used to listening "inside", to themselves. But if you believe in yourself your dreams will be more important to you. Some days I believe in myself more than others, and I find that how I feel about myself makes a big difference to my dreams.

I also think it is very important how you go to sleep at night. Your state of mind is very important. If I go to bed feeling sad or angry I know that I will have sad or angry dreams. So what I often do before I go to sleep is to quiet myself and then visualize something that makes me feel good, such as walking in a forest. If I do this I have better dreams.

I think dreams can come from many places, depending on your emotions and thoughts before you go to sleep. It could come from your emotions, thoughts, something in your past or even from God.

I have had some unusual experiences in my dreams. At one time I was hearing voices in my dreams. I did not know who or what it was, but it was very real and very persistent. Eventually my parents gave me some traditional herbs to drink. Although I did not want to drink them, I eventually did so and the voices disappeared.

Dreams do sometimes affect my actions. If I dream that my friends have all passed their exams but I have failed, this will cause me to study harder. (This dream is different from the kind of opposite dream mentioned earlier).

I do discuss my dreams with others, especially my parents and my friends. I do this so that they can help me find the meaning of my dream. They often give me another perspective on it. My parents (who still adhere strongly to the Northern

Sotho traditional culture and who both occupy venerated positions in this culture) would often give me interpretations based on their traditional knowledge of dreams. For example if you dream of a wedding, it might mean that someone will die. Dreaming of a snake might show a pregnancy.

When I decide what my dreams mean I put all the ideas of everyone together with my own ideas.

I myself am a Christian, although I also consider some aspects of my traditional heritage to be very important. I see no conflict between our traditional beliefs and Christianity – they both have the same goal – both are looking for freedom.

Respondent # 10

Gender: female

Cultural group: White: English

Religious affiliation: Christian, Catholic

Age: 21

I am very aware of my dreams and have an active dream life. My dreams are like a reflection of what's going on in my life. Often my dreams not only mirror, but also amplify what is happening in my life. If something bad happens, it is usually several times worse in my dream, and if something good happens, it is even better in my dreams.

I think the purpose of dreams is to allow me to get rid of my frustrations. I am normally a very calm person and I don't get angry or annoyed easily. I think my dreams allow me to express emotions like anger and frustration that might be hard to express in real life. In a sense I could say that dreams are my freedom to do what I want. For example, in one dream I saw myself hitting someone who in real life did something that hurt me deeply.

I think that most good dreams don't have any specific function, they're just there to be enjoyed. Sometimes I have weird dreams that seem very confusing and make no sense. I think that is just my mind going beserk.

I sometimes try to figure out what my dreams mean. To do this I generally try to look for similarities between my dream and what is happening in my life. For example, I often dream of being chased by something and trying to run away from it. I think this has to do with running away from my fears. I often tell my dreams to my mother and also my sister in order to see if they might have any insight as to what the dream might mean. I don't really tell my dreams to anyone else.

I do believe that dreams can show something of what might happen in the future, and I have had one such dream. I dreamt that my boyfriend was cheating on me and a while later it happened exactly like I dreamt it in reality.

I have not had any spiritual experiences in my dreams, although I certainly believe that this is possible.

I can't say that I've based any of my decisions or actions on my dreams.

I think that dreams come mainly from the unconscious. I also noticed that I don't really have many or important dreams when my life is going well, but that most of my dreams appear when things in my life are not going too well. So I think that the confusion, stress and worry contributes to dreaming more.

Respondent # 11

Gender: male

Cultural group: African: Tswana

Religious affiliation: Christian

Age: 22

For me a dream is just a natural scene that appears. It's a natural process, something you can't control. It happens automatically. For me dreams are not important as they just happen and there is nothing I can do about it.

I don't know what the purpose or function of dreams might be. Dreams are just something natural. I don't know why we have them.

I think dreams are caused by your life situation. The things that are going on in your life at that moment will determine your dreams. So if you are going through a rough patch in life, this will cause you to stress and you will be more likely to have nightmares.

I think that anticipation can also cause dreams.

I'm not sure where dreams come from. I think dreams are just rapid, continuous scenes in the mind of a sleeping person. Dreams come from the mind, it's a natural process.

I haven't had any unusual experiences in my dreams, except perhaps for a few extremely intense nightmares. I haven't had any dreams that predicted the future, but to a certain degree I do believe that this might be possible. I have never had any dreams in which deceased persons or ancestors came to me, although I do think that this could happen.

I don't really base any of my decisions or actions on my dreams. Now and then a dream might motivate me. For example if I dream I can do something then in real life I will try harder to get this right.

I do try to make sense of my dreams sometimes, but mostly I am unable to see any meaning in them. When I do try to make sense of my dream I do this by thinking about what is happening in my life at that time and what I am anticipating and try to find a link to my dream. If I can't make sense of my dream I will sometimes go to someone else, especially my mother for help in understanding my dream. My mother is very Christian in her approach and will usually find a Christian perspective on my dream.

Now and then, I will discuss a dream with my friends, to try and get insight on what it might mean.

Respondent # 12

Gender: male

Cultural group: White: Afrikaans

Religious affiliation: Christian

Age: 23

Dreams are not really important to me. Most of the time, I don't even remember my dreams.

I think that dreams result from the things that happened during the day or things that I am worried about. I also sometimes dream of things that I still have to do, that bug me.

I don't really know where dreams come from, perhaps from our subconscious mind. I think that we often perceive things without realizing it and then at the end of the day our minds process all the things that happened during the day. I think that the purpose of dreaming is that our minds try to make sense of the day's events and stores it in your mind so that you are able to recall it later.

I do sometimes try to interpret my dreams. When I do this I usually relate the images in the dream to my life and see if I can find any connections. Usually my dreams will have to do with something I am worried about, or some experience I had during the previous day or so.

I rarely base any of my decisions or actions on my dreams. Sometimes, however, my dreams will show me a negative scenario with regards to some aspect of my life which will motivate me to make a different decision on real life.

I didn't have any unusual experiences in my dreams, and I don't believe in this. The only thing I do get is that I will sometimes do something or be someplace and get a feeling of déjà vu, as if I've already done this or been there. I think

that I might often have dreamt this before the event and that that is why it feels familiar.

I don't really discuss my dreams with other people and I never go to someone specifically for the purpose of helping me to interpret my dreams. Sometimes, however, I might share a dream with a friend in order to try and get his or her opinion on the dream and see what they think of it.

Respondent # 13

Gender: male

Cultural group: African: Southern Sotho

Religious affiliation: Christian

Age: 20

Dreams are important to me to a certain extent, yes. I think that many dreams are meaningless. They don't really arouse any emotions in me and I don't think that these dreams are important.

But there is also another kind of dreams which is meaningful. These dreams arouse strong emotions and seem to "stand out" from the others. For example I recently had such a dream, when I dreamt that I was in an accident.

When I try to interpret my dreams I will often go to my parents and ask their opinion of what my dream means. They have a lot of knowledge of our culture's (Southern Sotho) ideas about dreams. I do this especially if the dream is symbolic. For example, if one dreams of being chased by a swarm of bees, this means that the ancestors are angry at you for something. If this happens to me, I will try to figure out what's wrong and try to fix it.

But if my dream is straightforward I will just look at it as it is, and interpret it as it is.

Yes, I do discuss my dreams with other people, such as my friends and my parents, especially my mother. She knows a lot about dreams and gets her knowledge from her mother who was a strong believer in our culture's ideas and in dreams. When I tell my dream to others my main goal is to try and understand my dreams. But sometimes I will just tell my dream to someone else because it is interesting or funny.

I can't say that I really base any decisions or actions on my dreams. Now and then I do, but I can't think of any specific examples now.

I think that the purpose of dreams depends on the type of dream. Some dreams are symbolic ones, and these dreams often come to give you a message. They try to communicate with you and tell you what you should do. I think these dreams often come from your ancestors. These dreams (that come from the ancestors) are very important to me.

I also think that some dreams can come to give you a premonition of something that might happen in the future. I once had a dream where I dreamed that someone was breaking into our house. I then woke up and we discovered that people were breaking in at the neighbour's house. Sometimes I also have a "déjà vu" feeling, as if something has happened before or I've been there before, but that is because I dreamed about it.

Other dreams have no functions. These dreams are meaningless. I think it's just the brain that processes information when you sleep.

I also think that you can be healed by a dream. My mother was healed by such a dream. She suffered from excruciating pain, and one night my grandfather came to her in a dream and healed her, and since that time her pain was gone.

I think that some dreams definitely come from the ancestors. My mother often gets dreams from her ancestors and she always follows the advice and gets good results with it. I have also had a dream in which my father's father came to me in a dream and gave me a message that related to my own father.

I think that other dreams are sometimes caused by seemingly unimportant images we see during the day, and by random memories. I think it is sometimes just the brain – when you sleep the brain does not shut off, but I think it processes information, and this causes you to dream.

I also think that witchcraft can sometimes affect your dreams.

Respondent # 14

Gender: female

Cultural group: African: Sesotho

Religious affiliation: Christian, Catholic

Age: 50

Yes, dreams are important to me. Not all dreams though, some dreams are “just dreams” and don’t mean much. I usually forget them and I don’t think they have any meaning. But other dreams are real, they become real, and they are important.

For example, I dreamt on four different occasions that my husband died, and a week after my last dream he was shot and he died. Another time I dreamt that a friend of mine was brutally stabbed at a shebeen. I warned her to be careful but three days later my friend went to the shebeen anyway and was stabbed with a knife when some men came to rob the place.

I think that dreams come from our state of mind. U may think of something and then it happens in a dream. I think that things that are unconsciously on your mind also affect your dreams. But only some dreams are like this. I think that many other dreams are a message from God.

I’m not sure what the purpose of dreams is. I think that maybe the purpose of some dreams is to give us a warning. I don’t know from whom, maybe from God. These dreams show us the future and warn us about things that might happen. Other dreams don’t seem to have a purpose, it’s just memory.

I often discuss my dreams with my friends, usually in an attempt to try and make out what the dream was all about. We’ll put our ideas together and see if we can find out what the message of the dream was. Other times I’ll tell my dreams to others just as a joke.

I don’t go to anyone specifically for the purpose to help me interpret my dreams.

I mostly try to interpret my dreams by myself. My dreams are very straightforward, so I don't need to interpret them. They show me things as they are. Many of my dreams are very difficult to interpret though, because I can only be sure of them after something that they showed me has happened.

I don't know much of the traditional practices of my culture in interpreting dreams and it has no bearing on how I view my dreams. There are no one in my family who has any strong ideas or opinions on dreams.

I am a Catholic, but I don't think that that has an influence on how I see dreams either. I don't see dreams as religious. I've never had a religious experience in any of my dreams.

I've also never had any dreams that helped me solve any problems.

Dreams don't influence my actions and my decisions. Usually I only realize that my dream was real after something happens, so there's nothing I can do about it. I often don't know at the time of the dream whether the dream will become real or not. But there are times when I know that the dream might become real. These dreams don't go out of my mind, I keep on thinking about it, and it bothers me. The more I try to ignore it the more strongly it is in my mind. When I dream and then wake up and quickly forget the dream, the dream is usually not special.

Respondent # 15

Gender: male

Cultural group: African: Sesotho

Religious affiliation: Christian, Catholic

Age: 36

In general, yes, I would say that dreams are important to me. But there are some dreams that are not too important. Like if I had a bad day for example, then I might dream about it or have a nightmare, but I don't think that these dreams mean anything. They are not important.

But there are other dreams which are important. I would say that the most important dreams are those in which I dream about the ancestors, when people who died appear in my dreams. I always take these dreams seriously and try to find out the meaning of them, because these dreams often have an important message. For example, my father died several years ago. Now, in our culture, we have a tradition whereby we slaughter a cow and have a feast every year or so in order to honour and appease our ancestors. Now, for the last few years we have neglected to do this, and my father appeared to me in my dream several times and he told me: "I am hungry – you haven't fed me. You are forgetting me." Because of these dreams I decided to go back home and I told my family about this dream and we decided to slaughter a cow and have a feast. We did this, and since then everything has been calm and peaceful. I mean that my father has not appeared in my dreams again.

If you ignore these dreams of the ancestors then often things start to go wrong and you can have bad luck, so it is important to listen to the messages of the dreams in order to avoid this.

There are also other dreams which are very important, like the dreams that happen to people who have a calling such as healers, diviners, and ngakas. In these dreams these people are called into this profession and shown where to go and what to do; they are given direction. Things often go wrong for them until they listen to these dreams. When they do, everything comes right.

I have never had such a dream, these dreams only happen to people with a special calling.

I think that dreams come from many places. Some dreams come from the outside, such as when I dream about things that happened to me during the day. Other times dreams come from the inside, such as when my thoughts and my feelings influence what I dream. I think many dreams come from the heart, from our feelings. And some dreams come from the ancestors, and maybe some dreams come from God.

I think that many dreams have no purpose, like when I just dream about things which happened to me during the day. These dreams are just like a “replay” of the day’s events. But other dreams have important functions. Some dreams give us direction, they tell us what we can or should do. They can also motivate us to do things. Dreams also make us question the things that we do and that we are involved in, and can warn us about negative things that will happen if we do not do certain things. If you don’t do the things the dreams ask of you then sometimes something negative will befall you.

Dreams also remind us of who we are and where we come from. They remind us that the dead are still a part of our lives, especially when we start to forget them in our waking lives.

Yes, I do sometimes base my decisions and actions on my dreams. Like the time with my father’s feast. Also, I might for example dream that I am in a car accident and then I will drive very carefully the next day, or even avoid the car altogether. If I dream of a funeral, I might phone home and see if everyone is ok. My dreams also sometimes motivate me to do things. It has always been my wish to study and to get a degree. I have always thought about it, but until recently I didn’t do anything about it. Then one day I had a dream in which I was at a graduation ceremony and I got a degree. I could feel the happiness of it and it inspired me. The very next day I went out and bought the Sowetan and

I found an ad for this university and I immediately phoned them for information. I decided that this year I will budget carefully for it and I will do it. A few weeks later I enrolled, and as they say “the rest is history.”

Also, sometimes I may dream that I have a big house or a nice car. I feel that the reason I am on earth is to improve my life. So I use these dreams to motivate me to work harder in order to make these dreams a reality. It is as if the dreams say: “It is possible.”

I don't have too many unusual experiences in my dreams, no. Sometimes I dream of deceased relatives, like the dream of my father. I don't think that dreams show the future as much as that dreams show us possibilities. It is then up to us to work to make it true. If you believe in it and put in the effort you can make it so. But I don't think you can just sit back and think that something you've dreamed will just come true like that.

No, I won't take my dreams to a ngaka, you can't trust many of them, they are often conmen who are in it for the money. Most of the time I will try to interpret my dreams myself. To do this I will firstly look at my life to see where I am in terms of my relationships with God, with other people, and generally. Secondly I will look within and ask myself: “Am I at peace within or am I in a mess?” Then from there I will interpret it. I will look for similarities between my dream and my life.

If I have a bad dream this means that I am not at peace within or that there is a problem in one of my relationships. If I am in turmoil or my relationships are bad I will have bad dreams. The bad dream will show me this and I will then take steps to correct this, I will try to make peace with myself and others. I believe that if I am at peace within and if my relationships are good then I will not get bad dreams, my dreams will be peaceful. But if it happens that all is well in my life and I get a bad dream then I will pray about it and ask God to show me what it means.

If I can't figure out what my dream means or if I feel that it is a very important dream, that it has a message, then I will go to someone else such as my friends so that they can help me interpret it. Also, if I dream of a funeral or an accident, this can make me feel somewhat anxious and I might phone home to check if everything is ok back there and discuss the dream with someone to try and find out what it means.

When I was a child, I lived in Lesotho and I would very often take my dreams to my mother, who would interpret them for me according to the traditional knowledge of our people. Nowadays I do not tell my dreams to others that much. I mostly keep them to myself, unless they are important. I think that most of my own knowledge about dreams comes from my mother and my upbringing. But my religion also plays a role. I have always tried to link my Christianity and my Sesotho beliefs, to bring them together.

So I believe that the ancestors can speak to me in a dream, but I also believe that God can speak to me in a dream. Like I might dream of someone I know who is very sick, or I might dream of street children or homeless people, and it is like these dreams remind me of my Christian duty. These dreams wake me up and tells me not to "look the other way" when there is suffering and to help. And so I will then try to help where I can.

Respondent # 16

Gender: male

Cultural group: African: Sesotho / Zulu

Religious affiliation: Christian, Catholic

Age: 19

I think dreams are important. Because sometimes, after I have dreamt of something I am more interested in making it a reality. That is when it was a good dream. When I have a bad dream I'll try to avoid making it a reality. For example, the other day I dreamt that there was an explosion in one of the buildings here at the campus late one night, and because of it, I was a bit anxious about passing that way late at night (the respondent lives in the hostel on the university premises). So when the dream is bad, I'll sometimes do things to try to avoid it from happening.

Yes, I do sometimes decide or do things because of what I have dreamed. Not often, only sometimes. For example, in 2003 I was planning to go and study at Wits University and I had already been accepted there. And then I had a dream in which I saw myself at this university. In the dream I saw my papers being approved and I saw myself graduating. Now I have never before thought of coming here, so I do not know why I dreamt this. But then I had trouble with the accommodation at Wits and I decided to follow my dream and come to this university, which I did. And I am very happy that I chose to come here. This is another example of how I would try to make a good dream come true.

But as I said, this does not happen every day. Many of my dreams are unrealistic, like when I dream that I am flying or falling. How can you make that real? So some dreams are more important, they encourage you; but other dreams only exist in that life when you are dreaming. Realistic dreams are useful dreams, they are dreams of things that can really happen, but unrealistic dreams are about things which are impossible in real life, and they are not important or useful.

I think that dreams come from the environment you find yourself in. I won't dream of being a monk in Asia because that is not my environment. For example, my home is in the location, and it's a bit of a rough place – with lots of crime and violence. So the other night I dreamt that I was just hanging out with my friends there in one of the streets and some people came up and shot me in the head. Since then I have been a bit more anxious than usual at night. A few days ago my friends and me were hanging out outside in real life and I went home early because I thought of the dream and it made me feel uncomfortable.

I think that some dreams come from inside you and reflect your emotional state and the things that you are thinking about during the day. It comes from how your life is, the state you are in. For example, a few years ago my father died, and as I was mourning for him, I had a lot of sad dreams about my father and even woke up crying once from such a dream.

I also think that wishes and wishful thinking can cause you to dream things. For example if I see myself in a dream with a girl that I like in reality but have no chance with in real life I know that that is just my wish coming out in the dream. Yes, I think that sometimes dreams are also caused by the things that you are afraid of. Like my dream of being shot. I am afraid in the location because it is so violent and full of crime there, and that affected what I dreamt about.

I think the function of dreams is to somehow shape our lives. Life would be less interesting if we did not have dreams. There are so many things that I have seen and experienced in my dreams which I never would have done in normal life, and if I didn't dream I would have missed out on that.

Dreams also help us to set goals. If you have a good dream, then the dream can motivate you to make it happen. It also helps you to make decisions, like I did with my dream about being at this university.

I haven't really had any unusual experiences in my dreams. Maybe the dream about being at this university was unusual, because it showed something I did not think of that later happened. Sometimes I also have dreams in which I feel like I am paralysed and in which someone chases me and I am unable to run. I think maybe this is just because of how I slept, that I might have had difficulty breathing or something, I don't know.

I don't believe that God or the ancestors can come to you in a dream. Many people in my culture believe it but I don't. Dreams are just dreams. And when people die they are gone. Their soul might be somewhere, but I don't think they are able to reach or affect us here in this world. If they could, then my (deceased) father would not have allowed my mother and me to struggle so much with money. So no, if I have a dream of my father it is because I want to dream it, because I miss him and want to see him. It's just a wish.

I don't usually interpret my dreams on my own, mostly I tell it to someone and see what they think. The people I tell it to are my friends. I'll tell them: "Hey guys, I had this dream... What do you think it might mean?" And then they will give me their ideas and opinions and I will put it together with mine. I am too close to it, so I can't always see it objectively. So I always end up discussing my dreams with my friends.

I don't really know where my own ideas about what my dreams mean come from. I just have a feeling of it. I wouldn't refer to any other source such as a dream book or something, I just get a natural feeling for what it might mean.

Although I now mostly tell my dreams to my male friends (I would never discuss them with my girlfriend!) I used to tell my dreams to my mom quite a lot when I was younger. She would then interpret my dreams according to our culture's knowledge which she got from her mother. But I don't believe in that too much anymore. I find that these traditional interpretations are less realistic

and applicable in modern times for us young people. We are a different generation and the old ideas are not that realistic anymore.

My own understanding of dreams comes mostly from my friends I would say. From hearing their views on it. I also think that some of what I think about dreams comes from books and magazines, but as I've said, it's mostly general knowledge from others.

I don't think that my religion (Catholic) or my culture influence what I believe about dreams at all. I've never had any kind of religious experience in a dream and as I've said, I don't believe in that stuff about God speaking to people in their dreams.

Respondent # 17

Gender: male

Cultural group: Afrikaans

Religious affiliation: Christian: Old Apostolic

Age: 30

No, dreams aren't really important to me. Maybe in some ways, but not much. Many dreams are very confused and don't make much sense – these dreams are not important. They could have some meaning, but I don't know what it is. But other dreams make more sense, and I believe that they do have some meaning. I think such dreams can give you direction, they can show you something that perhaps you were not aware of. Dreams can warn you about something, like if you are in a bad relationship and your dreams warn you about that. Dreams can also push you in a certain direction, even though you may not always be consciously aware of this. Sometimes I only realize a dreams influence some time after the dream.

I forget most dreams very soon after I have woken up, but sometimes a dream will stay with me all through the day and I'll think about it constantly. I've noticed that these dreams often have an effect on my mood. This can go both ways. Sometimes it can make you feel good, and other times a dream can make me feel quite down that day. For example, a while ago I dreamt of my father who has passed on a few years ago, and it brought me comfort.

I think that dreams serve to inspire and motivate us. If I've planned something and I dream that I have achieved it, this motivates me. I also think that dreams cause you to sleep better. Sometimes dreams help you to make sense of things.

Yes, I do try to interpret my dreams sometimes. I don't really use any method to interpret my dreams – I feel that it's not about the visual aspects of the dream, but that it's the “under the surface effect” of the dream that nudges you in a specific direction. I can usually pick up the meaning of the dream instantly, I don't really interpret it. I just get a feeling about what the dream means.

Now and then I'll discuss my dreams with others, yes. Maybe I would do so if my dream was funny or weird or if I feel that it concerns someone else. In this case I might sometimes try to very subtly convey the message that I got in the dream. For example, a while ago I dreamt that someone close to me was in danger and I went to this person and subtly asked him about his plans and warned him to be careful.

Yes, I often base my decisions and actions on my dreams. Especially with my business. There might for example be something that I'd want to do, but a particular dream might cause me to stop this, and I'll decide to rather wait and see what happens. Other times my dreams will give me a push to make a move with regard to my business or perhaps even in a relationship.

You know what, now that I'm talking about it I'm realizing that my dreams are actually quite important to me. I know I said earlier that they aren't really important to me, but now I'm seeing that they are.

I think that dreams come from the unconscious. But I'm not 100% sure of this because I sometimes dream of places that I have never seen in my life, so there must be something else. If dreams only came from the unconscious then I would only have dreamt of the past and of places that I had seen. I think there is some power that influences dreams, a power that looks after you.

Yes, I do believe that God can affect someone's dreams. But it has never happened to me.

No, I've never had any unusual experiences in my dreams except for one time when I was in standard 9. I walked to the toilet and as I came back I saw myself lying in bed. I don't know what that was, but it was very strange.

I also sometimes feel paralysed and unable to move.

I've never had any dreams in which dead people came to me in a dream, but I do think this might be possible.

No, I don't think that dreams can predict the future.

I have no idea where my own beliefs about dreams come from.

Respondent # 18

Gender: male

Cultural group: Afrikaans

Religious affiliation: Christian, Dutch Reformed

Age: 21

No, dreams are not really important to me. In fact, I hardly remember most of my dreams. I may remember them just after I wake up, but they quickly go out of my mind and that's that.

I think that dreams come from that which you see and experience during the day, that which you are aware of. If I've thought about something during the day it might come out at night in my dreams. Maybe something you see triggers a bell, and you dream about it. It's what happens to you.

I don't think dreams serve any particular function. I can't see why you would need to dream. It's just random. Your mind never switches off, and at night the impressions and images floating around in your mind might flash across your inner mental screen and you experience it as a dream. It's just like neurons firing, triggering random events and memories in the brain. It has no real purpose that I can think of.

No, I've never had any unusual experiences in my dreams. I've never had a dream which God spoke to me or anything like that, but I can't see why it would not be possible.

I've also never had any dream that predicted the future, and I can't see that someone would be able to do this, as we have no control over our dreams. So no, I don't think so.

No, I don't believe that deceased people can come to you in your dreams. That is very superstitious to me, I don't believe it.

No, I can't say that I ever base any of my actions or decisions on my dreams. I hardly even remember my dreams. And even when a dream is about something familiar I'm definitely not going to base any of my decisions on it.

I don't discuss my dreams with other people, except maybe sometimes when the dream was freaky or funny, or something like that. But for other reasons, no, I don't.

I don't really interpret my dreams. Now and then, if the dream has something to do with something that is going on in my life at that time, I might think about it. I will try to follow the sequences of the dream and ask myself why the dream jumped from one scene to the next. I'll look for links between the dream and my life.

I haven't the faintest idea as to where my ideas about dreams come from. My grandmother has a few superstitions about dreams, but other than that, dreams are not important in my family. No, I think it's my own experiences.

Respondent # 19

Gender: male

Cultural group: Afrikaans

Religious affiliation: Christian, Dutch Reformed

Age: 22

No, I don't see dreams as important. I don't really think about dreams, so I don't have any strong opinions on it. Dreams are so confused and jumbled, I often dream about things that make no sense whatsoever. It's as if my soul is restless. It also depends on your mood and state of mind. If I am stressing a lot, and if I get in less sleep, I often dream more. The only times that I really remember my dreams is when I had a restless night or very little sleep. I also think it depends on the type of person you are. I think that very right-brained, visual people may dream more, and that very left-brained people, who might be more mathematical, will dream less.

I think dreams come from the unconscious, from things which you are not even aware of normally. I often dream of the past, of things and people that I have forgotten. I think in these cases you have done or seen something during the day that triggered these past memories.

I think that dreams are also affected by your state of mind and the things you do during the day. For example, if I've been studying hard for a maths test, then I might dream that night that I am studying. And if something bothers me, then I might dream about it.

I have no idea what the function of dreams might be. I mostly don't even remember my dreams, so I can't see how they could be important. No, I can see no purpose in dreams.

Yes, sometimes if I remember my dreams I will try to see if I can make sense of my dream, but mostly it's just a load of nonsense. When I try to make sense of my dream I will think about the dream and ask myself: "Can this be a reality? Could this happen to me?" If it could be, then I will try to draw a

parallel between the dream and my life. I might also think about how I might handle this situation should it actually happen in my life. But if the dream is unnatural or if it's about something that is impossible then it is useless.

But I won't base any of my decisions or actions on my dreams. Anyway, I rarely remember my dreams, and my dreams are usually very jumbled and chaotic and I can make no sense of them.

I'll only discuss my dreams with others if it was very funny or if it is about someone that I know. But I won't go to others to try and understand my dream.

No, I've never had any unusual experiences in my dreams. I've never had any religious experiences in my dreams. I also don't believe that deceased people can come to you in dreams. I am not superstitious so I eliminate these things from my mindset. I've never had dreams that predicted the future, but I think it might be possible. It is in the Bible that this can happen, so I believe that it is possible.

I have had déjà vu experiences which sometimes feel like it's something I've dreamt about before. But this is an illusion, because it is only a matter of the brain receiving the sensory impressions from the eyes twice which fools it into thinking that it saw it before.

I don't think that dreams are supernatural things in any way. It's physiological.

I don't know where my own ideas about dreams come from.

Respondent # 20

Gender: female

Cultural group: African: Sesotho

Religious affiliation: Jehova's Witness

Age: 25

No, dreams are not important to me. I don't think dreams mean anything. It's basically the subconscious coming to life when I am sleeping. I often don't understand the things that come up, it often makes no sense. I might dream of stealing something even though I am not a thief, or of being romantically involved with someone I don't even like.

I think that dreams come partly from the subconscious. But not all of it.

Dreams are sometimes too strange to just come from the subconscious. But I have no idea where the rest could come from. Maybe from anxiety. Like when I am nervous about oversleeping the day before a flight I might actually dream that I oversleep and I am late for the flight. I also think that wishful thinking can affect dreams.

I have no idea why we have dreams. I can't see any purpose in it. The fact that even babies dream confuses me. What do they dream about? I don't think there's any purpose to dreaming.

I do sometimes tell my dreams to others. If another person was in my dream I might mention it jokingly to that person the next day if I see him or her. I might say: "Hey, I've been somewhere with you!" I will also tell my dreams to others if it was a funny dream or a nightmare.

I never try to interpret my dreams. They don't make any sense to me.

I also never base any decisions or actions on my dreams. No, I can't think of a single instance where I did this.

I haven't had any unusual experiences in my dreams, no. Twice I had dreams which later came true, but I think it's just coincidence. I dreamt that I had a

baby girl, and I did. I also once dreamt of a person I last saw 10 years ago and unexpectedly ran into that person a few days later. But as I've said, I think it's just coincidence. It might be possible for a few people with special gifts to dream about the future like this, but not for me.

I have never had a dream in which a deceased person came to me, and I do not believe in that. I sometimes dream about people who have passed on, but it's just normal dreams.

I have never had any spiritual or religious experience in my dreams like God talking to me or anything like that. I don't know if this kind of thing can happen nowadays, and I doubt that it could happen to me. I don't think so.

I don't really know where my ideas about dreams come from. There are no strong beliefs about dreams in my family, and we are urban Sesotho people, so we are not very traditional. But I'd say that maybe both my culture and my religion play some role.

Summary

In this appendix the transcripts of all the semi-structured, qualitative interviews were presented, and biographical information relevant to each respondent was also provided. These transcripts, along with the handwritten notes made during the interviews, served as the basis for the qualitative analysis which is contained in chapter five.