Other, Othering, Otherness: An Exploratory Analytical Psychology Study with Traditional Healers.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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By

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"As above, so below, as within, so without, as the universe, so the soul…"

Hermes Trismegistus

Basjan

Abstract

This qualitative exploratory study examined how Traditional Healers in South Africa understand and work with experiences of other, othering and otherness—concepts central to psychological theory. Nine Traditional Healers from AmaXhosa and AmaZulu traditions participated in semi-structured interviews, representing both rural and urban practice settings.

The research addresses a critical gap in South African psychology by integrating historically marginalised indigenous healing knowledge with analytical psychology frameworks. This integration responds to the increased prevalence of othering phenomena in post-apartheid South Africa, ongoing theoretical debates about otherness, urgent calls for decolonising psychology, and analytical psychology's historical engagement with indigenous healing dating back to Jung's work.

Using an interpretivist research paradigm and qualitative case study design, thematic analysis revealed two overarching themes: (1) Alterity and Othering Within—internal subjective experiences; and (2) Alterity and Othering Without—external experiences relating to society, family, other healers, and clinical work. Each theme contains subthemes of Separateness with Connection and Agency, as well as Separateness, Unconnected, and No Agency, revealing that othering is central to the identity formation of Traditional Healers, including their calling (*ukutwasa*), spiritual development, and therapeutic practice.

Findings demonstrate that Traditional Healers have sophisticated, culturally grounded frameworks for understanding other, othering and otherness which parallel and extend analytical psychology concepts, including individuation, the ego-Self relationship, the collective unconscious, synchronicity, projection, and shadow work. Their practices emphasise ritual engagement, boundary maintenance, and a sustained relationship with

otherness, rather than complete integration—offering important corrections to mainstream psychology.

The study makes three central contributions: highlighting traditional healing as a parallel form of psychological knowledge; establishing analytical psychology as a theoretical bridge between Western frameworks and traditional healing; and demonstrating its transformative potential for addressing contemporary phenomena of othering. Implications include incorporating alterity experiences in clinical training, developing collaborative practice models, and advancing psychology's decolonisation in South Africa. Future research should expand to larger samples using collaborative methodologies that position Traditional Healers as co-researchers throughout all phases of the research.

Keywords: Traditional Healers, Analytical Psychology, Other, Othering, Otherness, Alterity, Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

Declaration

I, Alan Fourie, declare that this research is the result of my own work. I have given full acknowledgement of the sources referred to in the text. This study has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any university. This thesis has been formatted in accordance with APA Style, 7th Edition.

I acknowledge the professional editing services provided by Dr Carol Thomson, Research Associate of the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL) at Rhodes University, who edited this thesis for language, grammar, style, and structure. The editing did not extend to the intellectual content, research methodology, data analysis, or interpretation of results. I remain fully responsible for the content and conclusions presented in this work.

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List of Abbreviations

IKS:	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
SA:	South Africa
SAHRC:	South African Human Rights Commission
SAAJA:	South African Association of Jungian Analysts

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Chapter 1: Orientation

“The world hangs on a thin thread, and that is the psyche of man.” (Jung in *Matter of Heart: The Extraordinary Journey of C. G. Jung*, 1986).

Introduction

This thesis advances three interconnected arguments that together constitute the rationale for the research from which they emerge. Findings from the research make a new contribution to analytical psychology, the psychology of Otherness or ‘Alterity’, and South African psychology. The three interconnected arguments are as follows:

First, Traditional Healers in South Africa possess sophisticated, culturally grounded frameworks for understanding and working with phenomena of alterity and othering—frameworks that may have been systematically excluded from mainstream psychology through colonial and apartheid-era marginalisation. These indigenous knowledge systems are not merely “different” perspectives but seem to represent legitimate epistemologies that may have profound theoretical and clinical value.

Second, analytical psychology, with its emphasis on the unconscious, archetypal patterns, and the integration of shadow material, provides a uniquely valuable theoretical bridge between Western psychological frameworks and traditional healing knowledge systems (Berg, 2012). Unlike other psychological approaches, analytical psychology’s concepts—particularly projection, the shadow, and the individuation process—resonate deeply with Traditional Healers’ experiences and practices related to alterity and othering.

Third, the integration of traditional healing knowledge with analytical psychology holds potential for transformative change in addressing the phenomenon of othering in contemporary South Africa (Carter & Farah, 2018). This integration moves beyond mere acknowledgement of indigenous knowledge toward encouraging genuine epistemological

dialogue, with implications for clinical training, therapeutic practice, and the decolonisation of the field of psychology.

This chapter starts by providing the background to the development of the interconnected arguments above. It is against this background, together with theoretical debates and some practice success related to these phenomena, that this study is situated. Following this, the chapter presents the research questions that were formulated to guide the exploratory work of the study. Thereafter, an overview of the methodology is discussed, followed by definitions of the terminology within which this research is situated. The chapter closes with an outline of the chapters that follow.

Background to the study

Arguments are made against the idea of a universal, culture-free knowledge as applied to the South (Mkhize, 2021). These calls extend beyond the discipline of psychology (as will be illustrated further on in the thesis), and universities are increasingly being called on to integrate indigenous knowledge into curricula of all disciplines (e.g., Mekoa, 2018).

While there has been engagement between psychology and indigenous knowledge systems and practices (e.g., Ivey, 2013; Mkhize, 2009), a notable lack of published work exists on the intersection of depth psychology and indigenous healing. Vera Bührman's book, *Living in Two Worlds: Communication between a White Healer and Her Black Counterparts*, is considered a seminal work by those trained in the Jungian tradition and interested in the intersection of Western psychology and traditional amaXhosa practices. The book was published in 1984, and although analytical psychology in SA has continued to have informal contact with Traditional Healers[1], it was through an international conference

[1] The term "Traditional Healers" is capitalised throughout this thesis to denote respect for their professional status and to acknowledge their role as holders of indigenous knowledge systems, parallel to the capitalization of other professional titles such as "Psychologist" or "Analyst."

in SA of the International Association of Jungian Studies (IAJS) in 2017, and the start of a symposium in SA, a year before this in 2016, that more recent formal engagements have taken place. The symposium aimed to foster mutual understanding and dialogue between a group of Jungian Analysts and Traditional Healers.

Jung, and the theory of analytical psychology, has also taken a particular stance on the constructs of other, othering, and otherness. Jung's theoretical conceptualisations of other were from the outset linked to him personally (Papadopoulos, 2022). The other within is often described by those trained in the Jungian tradition as the unconscious and shadow; the persona is also linked to other, as a constructed identity (Huskinson, 2002). The collective other is represented by society, culture, and tradition, and the process of individuation, a central concept in analytical psychology, is also linked to the other as a constant dialogue with the other (within) (Jung, 1998).

The formulation of the interconnected arguments presented in the *Introduction*, however, also emerged through engagement with literature on the increased prevalence internationally of phenomena of other, othering and otherness, and it is to these that the discussion now turns. It should be noted at this point that this discussion is considerably expanded upon in Chapter 2.

The first phenomena are reactions to the migrant crisis and the social movements of "Black Lives Matter" and #MeToo. These have recently been widespread, highlighting what might be described as "shadows of the world" for those working within Jungian frameworks.

Reports on the integration of immigrants into European countries identify discrimination as the most negative of experiences for migrants (European Union, 2011/2018). Despite the recognition of the importance of the "Black Lives Matter movement", there is mixed public support in the USA (Ray, 2020). Although the #MeToo

movement represents an opportunity for awareness of sexual harassment, major gaps exist in the evidence base regarding initiatives to prevent sexual harassment (O'Neil et al., 2018).

Nationally, South Africa shares some similarities with the international trends of the migrant crisis, in the form of reported incidents of xenophobia. Although the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) defines xenophobia as "the deep dislike of non-nationals by nationals of a recipient state" (SAHRC, n.d.), the term is also associated with acute hatred, violence, and prejudiced discourses that lead to destruction in the name of nationalism (Saleh, 2015).

Given South Africa's history of institutionalised racial segregation, racism continues to be a dominant discourse amongst resident South Africans (SAHRC, n.d.). The systematised racial discrimination in SA dates to colonial rule and was enforced through the legislature, under Apartheid, when the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948. However, race as a distinguishing factor remains an enduring aspect of much SA legislation (South Africa Institute of Race Relations, 2025).

The following further examples of othering phenomena in South Africa are highlighted to illustrate the breadth and persistence of discrimination across different vulnerable populations, demonstrating the urgent need for a deeper understanding of these dynamics. Firstly, South Africa remains the epicentre of the HIV pandemic (The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2019). Stigma towards people with HIV remains a critical barrier to HIV prevention, diagnosis, and treatment (Dos Santos et al., 2014). These experiences of stigma represent a form of othering that has profound implications for public health and individual well-being.

Secondly, in 2016, 140 mentally ill patients died following transfer from institutionalised care into Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) that were grossly

under-resourced. This transfer followed the MEC of Health in Gauteng, at the time, cancelling a contract with a highly specialised chronic care facility, despite the outcry from public and professional groups in the country (Section27.org, n.d.). This tragedy illustrates how othering of vulnerable populations can have fatal consequences.

All the above demonstrate that this study, from the outset, needed to encompass a broad definition of general and specific types of prejudices and discrimination in the world through the constructs of Other, Othering, and Otherness. Psychology's theoretical engagement with these constructs, at least at an interpersonal level, tends to focus on the specifics of type, e.g., racism, sexism, and homophobia, over the general and shared dynamics of all forms of prejudice (Jones & Manda, 2006). On an intrapsychic level, the constructs are associated with the defence mechanisms of projection and projective identification (Bateman et al., 2010). They are also central constructs to the theory of identity formation. Individual identity encompasses ideas about an individual's understanding of who they are and who they are not; it is an individual's sense of uniqueness (Bhugra & Ventriglio, 2024).

Before moving on to an outline of the Methodology adopted for this study, the research questions that guided it are as follows.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to contribute to the field and guide the exploratory work of the study.

1. How do Traditional Healers make meaning of experiences and phenomena located by psychology within the constructs of other, othering and otherness?
2. How do Traditional Healers approach and work with such phenomena of other, othering, and otherness, within themselves and their work with clients?

3. In what ways might such knowledge complement analytical psychological understandings of other, othering, and otherness?

Overview of Methodology

At its broadest level, this is a qualitative research endeavour. Given the theoretical context discussed in Chapter 3, the research is situated within the framework of analytical psychology. To support the epistemological assumptions and conceptual frameworks discussed in chapters 2 and 3, this research is situated more specifically within a post-Jungian approach.

An interpretivist research paradigm was employed as the overarching framework, given its emphasis on socially constructed realities and subjective meaning-making in the world (Hiller, 2016). A qualitative case study design was chosen because it facilitated the in-depth, focused, and intensive exploration of the participants' experiences in relation to the constructs under investigation (Willig, 2013).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations informed the methodology and data collection from the outset, as is essential in this era of protecting participants and the data collected from them. Ethical permissions were obtained prior to any engagement with participants.

Sampling and Data Collection

Traditional Healers were recruited using purposive sampling and snowballing (Bryman, 2012; Willig, 2008). Variety of the sample was considered in terms of differing schools of training, additional training, and roles related to healing practices, as well as rural and urban settings of practice. Recruiting a diverse sample was important to ensure representation of different perspectives and practices within traditional healing, enhancing the richness and transferability of the findings (Smith, 1995).

Data were collected in two phases: firstly, an initial semi-structured exploratory interview that utilised an interview schedule (Kvale, 1999). The second phase followed the analysis of the data and consisted of a follow-up interview for member checking (Smith, 1995) and further exploration.

Data Analysis and Rigour

Data was analysed using Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021a). Themes are presented as a detailed and nuanced account of participants' experiences and reflections. Researcher reflexivity and positionality were considered (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), along with considerations of trustworthiness and consistency (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Researcher Reflexivity and Positionality Considerations

Reflexivity and positionality involve acknowledging the researcher's role in shaping the data collected, analysis, and interpretation (Yin, 2015), thereby promoting a deeper understanding of the research findings and their context. These considerations further align with interpretivist approaches and their emphasis on research as a co-constructed process between the researcher and participants (Bryman, 2012). Besides further discussion of these considerations in Chapter 4, reflexive notes appear before and after certain sections throughout the thesis.

Terminology

Given the theoretical approach of analytical psychology within which this research was located and the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) it engaged, the following terms are defined here:

Analytical Psychology

Also referred to as Jungian psychology, is a depth psychology that explores the unconscious dimensions of the psyche, particularly through dreams, myths, and symbols.

The goal of Jungian analysis is to foster individual psychological growth (individuation) and a conscious relationship with the Self, the totality of the psyche (Edinger, 1992).

Archetype

"Archetypes were for him [Jung] typical modes of apprehension, that is, patterns of psychic perception and understanding common to all human beings as members of the human race." (Hopcke, 1999, p. 13). This concept suggests that beneath individual and cultural differences lie universal patterns of human experience and meaning-making.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

Traditional knowledge encompasses the knowledge, innovations, and practices of indigenous and local communities worldwide, including indigenous knowledge, traditional ecological knowledge, intangible cultural heritage, traditional medicine, and traditional cultural expressions (Williams et al., 2011).

Psyche

"The psyche, as understood and elaborated by Jung, is much better seen as the totality of nonphysical life, both rational and irrational, both personal and collective, both conscious and unconscious." (Hopcke, 1999, p. 37). This holistic understanding of psyche distinguishes analytical psychology from approaches that focus primarily on conscious, rational processes.

Traditional Healers

Prior to the incursion of Western medicine, traditional healing systems were widespread in Africa, and people were identified as healers in different ways. Traditional Healers, referred to as *sangomas*, have graduated from a period of tuition and self-healing. They undergo a period of apprenticeship, and in South Africa are generally practitioners of

the art and philosophy of *ngoma*, a practice pervasive in Bantu-speaking areas of Africa south of the equator (van Wyk, 2005).

Ukutwasa

The word *ukuthwasa* is from the isiXhosa and isiZulu languages, which are Bantu languages primarily spoken in Southern Africa. It refers to the process of being called to become a traditional healer. It often involves spiritual experiences, dreams, and physical or psychological symptoms that signal a person's destiny to heal (Bührmann, 1984).

White and Black

The capitalisation of "White" and "Black" in South African academic writing serves important scholarly and ethical functions. First, capitalisation signals that these terms refer to socially constructed categories rather than biological realities, as Appiah (2007) argues that "capitalisation of both draws attention to the fact that they are socially constructed rather than natural" (p. 245). This distinction is crucial for avoiding the reinforcement of biological essentialism in research. Second, capitalising these terms acknowledges South Africa's history of racial oppression, recognising that "colonial and apartheid racial segregation led to enormous social inequity in South Africa and have left a legacy in our social practice" (Mayosi & Benatar, 2014, p. 1344). This typographical choice becomes part of the broader decolonisation project in academic writing. Third, capitalisation promotes linguistic equity by aligning scholarly language with the social meanings these terms hold for the communities they describe. Research shows that dictionaries for the South African public tend to ignore the most common South African senses of racial labels (Murphy, 1998), suggesting that capitalisation can help correct this exclusionary practice. Together, these arguments demonstrate that capitalising racial terms is not merely a stylistic

preference but a theoretically informed practice that respects both historical context and contemporary social realities.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 forms the first of two chapters that provide context and literature reviews. It provides a discussion of the broader social and theoretical context within which this thesis was initially conceptualised.

Chapter 3 is the second of the two chapters that provide context and literature review. It begins with a discussion of IKS, more specifically, as applied to traditional healing. The first and subsequent engagements of analytical psychology with traditional healing in South Africa are then explored. The second half of the chapter focuses on analytical psychology in relation to the constructs under investigation.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology used in this study. The research questions are presented, followed by a discussion of the theoretical considerations that guided methodological decisions. The ethical considerations, study design, sampling strategies, data collection methods, and data analysis are then explored, followed by an account of the processes involved as they unfolded, along with an explanation of the sources that justified the decisions made.

Chapter 5 forms the first of the two chapters that present findings and discussion. The first overarching theme provides the foundational framework for representing the data. The findings are considered in relation to the contexts and literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3, and a discussion follows each subtheme.

Chapter 6 is the second of the two findings and discussion chapters, presenting the second overarching theme identified within the data. The findings are again considered in

relation to the contexts and literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3, as well as in relation to Chapter 4 and the methodological decisions that guided the study.

Chapter 7 concludes the study's write-up. The research questions are reflected on and addressed. The study's limitations are then explored. This is followed by a discussion of the practical implications and future research directions. The chapter and thesis end with a reflection on the hoped-for contribution to knowledge and a closing statement.

Chapter 2: Context and Literature Review Part 1

Introduction

Reflexive Note. As I reviewed the literature on global phenomena of othering—the migrant crisis, Black Lives Matter, and #MeToo discussed in Chapter 1 —I noticed my own discomfort with the scale and pervasiveness of these dynamics of othering. This discomfort initially made me want to focus primarily on individual psychological processes rather than structural and systemic issues. I came to recognise this as a defence, however, against the overwhelming nature of collective othering. I worked to hold both individual and systemic levels of analysis throughout the research, recognising that Traditional Healers' experiences cannot be understood without attention to the broader sociopolitical context of marginalisation.

In light of the above, this chapter forms the first of two chapters that provide context and literature reviews. It expands on the discussion begun in Chapter 1, of the broader social and theoretical context within which this thesis was initially conceptualised. It does this through an exploration of recent past and current major international and national occurrences, directly related to phenomena captured by the constructs, other, othering and others, under study. The theoretical context is then further shaped through a discussion of psychology's direct engagement with these constructs, including its interventive or treatment strategies. The chapter concludes with the continued criticisms that "hang" over psychology, particularly in South Africa. The implications of these criticisms for the future directions of psychology, particularly the engagement between indigenous healing and depth psychology, are then explored.

The choice to integrate the context and literature review into these two chapters was made to enhance narrative coherence (Wolcott, 2004) and aligns with qualitative

research principles by showing how the research problem, theoretical frameworks, and empirical setting are interconnected rather than isolated (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Klopper, 2008).

Points of departure

This study from the outset conceptualised the constructs of other, othering, and otherness within the broadest and most generally accepted current definitions in the English language. Various dictionary sources, mentioned below, were consulted, and a comparison of definitions was made. The comparison was guided by the accessibility or potential understandability of the definitions of the terms to the eventual participants in the study. Sensitivity to the ease of translatability of the terms and definitions into other South African languages was also considered.

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED), online version, was the starting point. Through their own advertisement, this dictionary is understood to be the most widely accepted complete record of the English language (*Oxford English Dictionary*, n.d.). It gives current and historical accounts of the meaning of words. Since 2000, it has transitioned online, and its most recent print edition will likely be its last (James, 2000). The online space offers the advantage of continually updated resources. As such, other online dictionaries, mentioned below, were also consulted.

Yin et al.'s (2001) review of evaluations of learner dictionaries highlights that these evaluations are factual and descriptive, rather than evaluative, and as such, are not useful in guiding students to a source. A pragmatic approach was therefore taken in determining the best definition to follow. Through a comparison of the major online dictionaries (OED, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Cambridge Dictionary, Collins Dictionary, and Macmillan

Dictionary), considering usability and the parameters referred to above, Merriam-Webster and its definitions were chosen over the OED and other resources consulted.

The following definitions thus serve as parameters for the study; *other* as an adjective and pronoun refers to not the same or different; as a verb, *othering* refers to the act of treating or considering (a person or group of people) as alien to oneself or one's group (Merriam-Webster dictionary, 2019a); and *otherness* is defined as "the quality or state of being other or different; or something that is other or different" (Merriam-Webster dictionary, 2019b).

It was hoped that the breadth of the definitions above would allow for the exploration of the conceptual frameworks and interrelatedness between these constructs and other constructs and concepts to which they are most commonly associated, such as discrimination and prejudice (and all the general and specific forms of intrapsychic and external phenomena related to these).

It was further hoped that such a broad definition would allow for a critical view of the bias, which is intrinsic to the construction of any conceptual knowledge (McCray, 2006), as well as the assumptions of causality inherent in conceptual frameworks (Epstein, 2016). Lastly, it was hoped that the breadth of these dictionary definitions would allow for conditions of epistemic interrogation and expansion, as recommended by Lee et al. (2016), when exploring necessary conceptual change.

Putting conceptual debates aside, regardless of the field, or discipline of study, or the aspects or characteristics under study, there is a general consensus (Anderson & Ferguson, 2018; Azevedo et al., 2022; Suk et al., 2021) about the increase in prevalence of the *phenomena* that these constructs of other, othering and otherness, seek to capture. There is almost daily news reporting of international and national incidents. In what follows,

the first phenomena, the migrant crisis and the social movements of “Black Lives Matter”, and #MeToo are discussed. These have recently been widespread, highlighting what might be described as ‘shadows of the world’ for those working within Jungian frameworks. This is followed by a discussion of phenomena nationally that share some similarities with the international trends in the form of reported incidents of xenophobia, but also the history of SA.

Shadows of the world

International

Migrant Crisis. Internationally, the focus of other, othering and otherness phenomena at the start of this research was the “migrant crisis”. Anderson and Ferguson (2018) conducted a meta-analytic review of the demographic and ideological correlates of negative attitudes towards asylum seekers in Australia, finding a pervasive increase in the literature attempting to understand the impact of such positioning on migrants. The European Commission (2011) report on migrant integration identified discrimination as the most negative of experiences for migrants and as the most substantial barrier to integration into host countries. A later equivalent report (European Commission, 2018) estimated that only 54% of Europeans believe that the integration of immigrants is successful, with the majority overestimating both the number of immigrants and the number of illegal immigrants.

In addition to the European Commission’s ongoing research on the general experiences of migrants and public opinion, there is now also a focus on more specific aspects. A report on the state of implementation of the 2017 *Communication on the protection of children in migration* (European Migration Network, 2021) found that Member States generally lack specific strategies or policies for integrating minors with a migrant

background. Further, less than half of Member States made use of EU funding for programmes that prioritise the protection of unaccompanied children or families with children. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) research in this report also highlighted the remaining challenges and gaps in the practical implementation of policies and legislation to protect children in migration across the EU.

The European Migration Network (2022) study focused on the integration of migrant women in the main sectoral areas covered by the EU *Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion* 2021-2027 (European Commission, 2020). Although the majority of EU Member States had integration policies in place, only a few specifically addressed women in their national integration policies. Member states, overall, did, however, acknowledge the need for specific policies relevant to integration tailored to migrant women. Although labour market integration of migrant women was one of the main topics of debate across EU Member States, other challenges raised included discrimination, a lack of social networks, limited access to childcare, and other family constraints.

The integration of migrants into the labour market was the focus of the European Migration Network's latest research (European Migration Network, 2023). The main topic of debate across Member States was the length of the waiting period before applicants for international protection can access the labour market. None of the Member Countries reported a specific policy focusing on the labour market integration of applicants. Although most Member Countries implemented changes to their policy frameworks between 2017 and 2022, including measures to facilitate access to the labour market, the majority of countries reported language barriers as the main practical challenge. Other reported practical difficulties include the complexity or uncertainty surrounding certain aspects of the administrative procedures required to gain access to the labour market.

Besides the past and continued “migrant crisis”, Missinne and Bracke (2012, in de Freitas et al., 2018) estimate that 22.3% of minority persons in European countries have experienced discrimination on the grounds of their ethnicity. The psychological correlates of perceived ethnic discrimination are highlighted by de Freitas et al.’s (2018)meta-analysis. The study shows that on a personal and interpersonal level, discrimination is related to worse psychological functioning of people of ethnic minorities, emphasising the need for governmental agencies to develop systemic and concrete interventions to decrease ethnic prejudice in Europe.

#BlackLivesMatter. Another international incident relates to the acquittal of George Zimmerman, a policeman in the United States of America (USA), in 2013. This acquittal, for the killing of Trayvon Martin an unarmed Black seventeen-year-old, saw the dawn of the Black Lives Matter Movement in the USA (Azevedo et al., 2022). The online hashtag #BlackLivesMatter gained national support. The perceptions of increased targeting of and violence against African Americans at the hands of law enforcement led to #BlackLivesMatter as a social movement and put the spotlight on the systemic racism against Black people in the USA.

The movement gained international recognition and support following the death of Michael Brown in 2014 (Ray, 2020) in Missouri, and then again in 2020 following the deaths of Breonna Taylor in Kentucky and George Floyd in Minnesota, all three through police action. International collaboration of over fifty organisations and thousands of active participants form part of this movement today.

Despite the recognition of this movement’s importance, there has been mixed public support in the USA. It has undoubtedly emerged as a transformative force in contemporary American society and fundamentally reshaped public discourse around systemic racism and

police violence. It has also mobilised unprecedented collective action across racial and generational lines (Clayton, 2018). However, a report from the Pew Research Center in June 2020 indicated that while 67% of Americans expressed support for the movement, 30% were in opposition to it (Rojas, 2020). A follow-up report four months later showed a 5% drop in support among all ethnicities except for Black people. These statistics highlight a growing divide in public support across racial and political lines and the need for the USA to grapple with the extent of its systemic racism and the need to broaden the scope of research on race and ethnicity.

While it is generally acknowledged that Black Lives Matter reshaped conversations about police brutality and incarceration, it has not proceeded without its problems (Szetela, 2020). It is argued that the theoretical framework and strategic orientation of the movement, as understood through the work of its co-founders and the policy platform "A Vision for Black Lives," pose barriers to the realisation of the movement's own goals, which are explored below. These barriers further impact the possibilities for a broader vision of social justice. At the heart of these challenges lies the movement's complex relationship with othering—both as a mechanism it seeks to dismantle and one it risks reproducing in its own framing of solidarity and opposition.

Rojas (2020) summarises Szetela's (2020) main criticisms of the Black Lives Matter movement as presenting goals that are very difficult to achieve, prioritising Black oppression to the exclusion of others, and the movement's defenders overlooking its flaws through overly praising its achievements. He offers a counterargument that demonstrates the success of social movements, more generally, over the last 20 years and the expansion of the movement's goals through an examination of statements by its leaders. The lack of research on the effect of such movements on policy change is also cited as a

counterargument to the need for scholarly literature to explore the role of #BlackLivesMatter activists in police reform.

Although Rojas (2020) agrees with Szetela (2020) on the criticism of the movement's goals, he sees this "loftiness" of unattainable goals as noteworthy and as a strategy of the movement rather than a limitation. He further argues that the movement has been more intersectional and inclusive than previous moments, and as a result has advanced understandings of Black dehumanisation and pushed policing and criminal justice reform into the international spotlight. This intersectional approach directly confronts the historical processes of othering that have positioned Black communities as fundamentally separate from broader conceptions of humanity and citizenship.

#MeToo. Tarana Burke, an American activist, is recognised as starting the #MeToo movement in 2006 in an attempt to gain public and policy validation of experiences of sexual assault and harassment, particularly by women of colour in low-income communities in the USA (Murphy, 2019). Women are encouraged by the movement to disclose experiences of sexual harassment and abuse, hold perpetrators accountable for their actions, and provide support to one another. The movement gained momentum and further international recognition in 2017 following the publicity around the multiple sexual allegations by several famous actresses, over decades, against the film director Harvey Weinstein.

Suk et al. (2021) argue that the sharing of experiences of trauma through the #MeToo movement in digital spaces created a network of validation which supported and sustained the movement's initial potential. Their research highlights the influence of online communities in sustaining discourse that facilitates public testimony about trauma and validates common experiences. Their data also revealed that people from diverse

backgrounds, including celebrities and ordinary users, were part of the online network. This highlighted still further the prevalence of sexual assault and sexual abuse and built a sense of shared identity and experience.

While social movements are often associated with large societal changes, evidence of their causal effects is limited (R. Levy & Mattsson, 2024). The increase or decrease in the reporting of a sex crime to the police, as an important personal decision, was the focus of the effects of and as evidence for #MeToo in the R. Levy & Mattsson (2024) study. A moderate increase in the reporting of sex crimes to police was found. This result was consistent across multiple datasets from independent sources. Individuals' perceptions that sexual misconduct was a more serious problem following the #MeToo movement were the mechanism most consistent across their results.

Like the Black Lives Matter movement, the #MeToo movement has not been without its critics. Johnson & Renderos (2020) argue that although the movement has done a great deal to address sexual abuse and violence, this justice occurs when the "right" person speaks out. Women of colour, the very population from which the #MeToo movement originated, and transgender people are generally overlooked by the #MeToo movement. Onwuachi-Willig (2018, in Johnson & Renderos, 2020) cites "great evidence" that the movement only gained traction when white women, who were celebrities, became involved in it. Further, to date, the movement has focused primarily on cisgender women (biological women born female at birth), with forty-six percent of transgender respondents in a 2011 report being uncomfortable seeking police assistance because of the #MeToo movement (Johnson & Renderos, 2020).

O'Neil et al. (2018) believe the #MeToo movement represents an opportunity for the public mental health community to consider sexual harassment a health issue, with

implications for disease prevention in health promotion. However, they cite major gaps in the evidence base regarding whether initiatives to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace can effectively impact health outcomes. Furthermore, key questions remain about the health effects of backlash and hostile sexism that occur in response to such initiatives.

Globalization Trends. Current globalisation trends and the rights and freedoms of persons present a historical challenge to humanity (Alexandrova, 2018). Critical globalisation debates have in the past viewed globalising through the lenses of the Westphalian order, a principle of international law that establishes the sovereignty of states over their own territories. The current debates on the challenges of globalisation recommend urgent engagement with various spatial manifestations, facilitated through consideration of transnational interconnectedness and "unpredictability," which is achieved by examining both state and non-state, as well as public and private, instruments.

While it can be argued that the advent of social media and the growth of the internet facilitate an increased awareness of global issues and all forms of othering, it can also be argued that it has provided a platform of anonymity for users to express and cultivate othering, without consequence or direct responsibility (Keum & Miller, 2018). Besides the anonymity of a virtual reality, there is a lack of social and physical cues to "check" users' interactions and expressions. There is also an inclination for users on online platforms to seek out like-minded people who share similar prejudicial beliefs.

National

Shadows of South Africa. Given South Africa's history of institutionalised racial segregation, phenomena of other, othering and otherness dominate as racism amongst resident South Africans (SAHRC, n.d.). Apartheid, a system of racial segregation enforced

through legislation when the Nationalist Party came to power in South Africa in 1948, was not the start of systematised racial discrimination in the country; this dates back to the days of colonial rule (Maylam, 2017).

The Worden (1994) review of the history of South African and racial segregation attributes racism to the expansion of European colonialism. This began with the establishment of a fort at Table Bay and the Dutch settlement in the Cape in 1652, marking the beginning of hardships for the indigenous inhabitants of this area, including the Khoikhoi herders, the San, and the Khoi pastoralists. These groups were at times denied access to water resources and grazing pastures, with cases reported of Settler Commandos robbing them of their cattle.

Apartheid was a subsequent formation of a legalised system of racial discrimination, based on the emergence of Afrikaner nationalism (Worden, 1994). This ideology emerged in response to the threat of invasion from both British settlers and other cultural groups in the country and promoted Afrikaner supremacy and pride. It was in response to the privations following the South African War and subsequent economic depression of the 1930s that, through apartheid, a system that elevated “whites” over other racial groupings, through economic and political deprivation, the Nationalist party was able to take control of the economy, the political and education systems of the country.

With the birth of South Africa’s democracy and independence in 1994, the country faced the challenge of transforming past exclusive nationalism into an inclusive national government (Mhlauli et al., 2015) and defining a national unity that would not encourage revenge through ethnic, racial, or class exclusion. A large segment of Black people still remain uneducated, live in poor rural communities, and earn less on the labour market,

despite the democratically elected government's efforts to provide educational and employment opportunities since 1994 (Minnaar, 2024).

Xenophobia. Relatively recently in South Africa, the focus of the phenomena of other, othering and otherness shares some similarity with international trends, with the migrant crisis, in the form of reported incidents of xenophobia. Saleh (2015), in an attempt to explain the reasons African multiculturalism has become dangerously unstable, highlights the worsening violence against foreign nationals. Although the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) defines xenophobia as "the deep dislike of non-nationals by nationals of a recipient state"(SAHRC, n.d.), the term is also associated with acute hatred, violence, and prejudiced discourses that lead to destruction in the name of nationality (Saleh, 2015).

Political leaders and factions in South Africa have strategically stoked xenophobia through elite discourse that frames foreigners as economic threats and enemies of the nation, creating a permissive environment for violence that undermines democratic institutions and governance (Bastos, 2024; Jearey-Graham & Böhmke, 2013). These tactics include public scapegoating of migrants for structural failures, the use of liberation narratives to legitimise exclusionary violence, and deliberate state inaction that signals tolerance for anti-foreigner attacks, collectively contributing to cycles of instability and institutional erosion (Neocosmos, 2011; Sibanda, 2022).

The Claassen (2017) study on the determinants of South African xenophobia was structured in response to criticism of the existing research, which focuses on developing and advancing theories rather than testing them. The study combined individual-level Afrobarometer survey items (a pan-African, independent, non-partisan research network that measures public attitudes on economic, political, and social matters in Africa) with municipal-level census indicators. The results supported explanations of poverty,

deprivation, frustration with government, and social mobilisations of the local population and pointed towards mechanisms of scapegoating African immigrants. The difficulties are compounded by "...mounting evidence pointing to a laissez-faire or even deliberately hostile position (towards foreign nationals) of state institutions, be they the police, immigration or municipal services" (Segatti, 2017, p. 346).

Further criticism of the research into xenophobia in South Africa cites few studies exploring the gendered construction of it in the country (Akinola, 2017). Women and men do not experience xenophobia in the same way, with mostly non-violent forms associated with women. Yet, xenophobic attitudes toward foreign women should be seen within the general context of the prevalence of domestic violence in general and violence against women in South Africa.

Lastly, an important consideration that links with previous comments on globalisation trends is the role of news, more specifically fake news, and social media in the debates on xenophobia in South Africa. While social media and fake news are not acknowledged as the causes of xenophobia, they are increasingly understood as "vehicles" to spread tensions within and outside the country and escalate crises (Chenzi, 2021). While it is challenging to determine the exact number of South Africans on social media platforms and the extent to which they are exposed to fake news, it is clear that this is an emerging phenomenon that warrants further consideration.

Racism and Anti-Racism. Given the ever-increasing complaints of racism and prejudice, particularly on social media, the S.A. Human Rights Commission held a *National Investigative Hearing on Racism* in 2017, illustrating the "...urgent need for intervention and leadership by the commission in confronting discrimination and issues related to the right to equality" (Majola, 2017, p. 5). This commission followed 17 years after the first National

Conference on Anti-Racism, which aimed to address the then-prevailing perception that the existence of a democratic constitution meant the country had effectively dealt with racism (SAHRC, n.d.). The conference reported hope amongst its delegates for addressing the then-current manifestations of South Africa's divided past and concluded with the recommendation of "dialogue" as the critical approach in addressing racism and intolerance.

The second National Conference on Racism (Anti-Racism) was convened in June 2021 (SAHRC, n.d.), with the objective of conducting a situational analysis of the country's progress on issues of racism and developing solutions for a way forward to achieve South Africa's constitutional vision of a diverse, united society. The Commission acknowledged the increased prevalence of complaints related to hate speech, unfair discrimination, and harassment. Continued gross economic inequality was cited as being manifested in the unequal enjoyment of all rights, particularly by vulnerable groups. The gap between constitutional vision and the lived reality underscores how entrenched dynamics of othering and otherness obstruct the realisation of a truly united society.

The conference concluded with panel discussions of the general consensus in the group of the ineffectiveness of the previous conference and recommendations made for change, the continued divide in South Africa along racial lines in areas such as access to health care and employment, and the deep-seated prejudice, and unconscious prejudice in "…many adults who are the product of colonialism and apartheid…"(SAHRC, n.d. p.18).

While racism dominates the South African landscape, the stigma associated with HIV infection (Dos Santos et al., 2014) and, more recently, diagnoses related to poor mental

health, given the *Life Esidimeni* tragedy, expose the prevalence and depth of these phenomena (Ferlito & Dhai, 2018; Bhekisisa Special report, n. d.). [2]

As indicated in Chapter 1, South Africa remains the epicentre of the HIV pandemic (The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2019). There are an estimated 7.2 million South Africans living with HIV, and nearly 60 percent are women over the age of 15. Tuberculosis (TB), including multi-drug-resistant TB, further amplifies the HIV epidemic in South Africa, with hyper epidemics identified in KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga provinces. While important strides in expanding access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) and reducing HIV transmission have been made, advanced HIV disease remains a persistent challenge (Osler et al., 2018).

A historical overview of HIV infection in South Africa highlights a tragic period from 1998 to 2008, which has become known as the "denialist period" under President Mbeki, and that is estimated to have led to the death of an estimated 330,000 people who were not able to access antiretroviral treatment (Simelela et al., 2015). In 2000, President Mbeki organised an advisory panel that included several scientists who denied that HIV caused AIDS. This period highlighted the crucial importance of political will and evidence-based policy in combating the epidemic. It was also followed by a period that united civil society in unprecedented ways since the opposition to apartheid. Civil society took legal action, challenging policies in court and winning key victories that expanded access to treatment (Simelela et al., 2015).

[2] With the discussion of specific forms of othering both here and in preceding paragraphs the general increase in prevalence rates and importance of all other more specifics forms of othering associated with sexual orientation, gender, religion, age and socio-economic status are not denied.

Though access to treatment has continued to improve, the data show a significant proportion of patients with low CD4 counts either drop out of care or experience virological failure (Osler et al., 2018). This highlights the need to strengthen monitoring systems that identify patients who do not follow up and re-engage them in care. Coupled with this would be addressing structural factors that increase vulnerability to HIV.

Dos Santos et al. (2014) identified stigma as a critical barrier to HIV prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. People living with HIV experienced considerable levels of stigma and discrimination that negatively impacted their health, working and family life, as well as access to health services. Internalised stigma was also prominent, with participants blaming themselves for their status. Visser (2018) examined the change in stigma related to HIV over a 12-year period. The research was based on the premise that the reduction of HIV infection can only happen with the reduction in HIV-related stigma, both in people living with HIV and those not. Perceived community stigma remained high in all subgroups, and the research argued that this contributes to high levels of internalised stigma among people living with HIV. These findings are consistent with previous research.

In October 2015, then Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Health in Gauteng announced the end of a contract between the Gauteng Department of Health (GDOH) and *Life Esidimeni*, a highly specialised chronic care facility serving more than 2,000 mental health care users (Section27.org, n.d.). The justification for the move was the "deinstitutionalisation" of mental healthcare, but also, admittedly, to save costs. Although civil society expressed concerns, the South African Society of Psychiatrists (SASOP) wrote to the MEC to detail the serious risks associated with the premature cancellation of the *Esidimeni* contract. Healthcare users with varying diagnoses and needs were discharged between March and August 2016 to NGOs and hospitals around the province. The

conditions of many NGOs were grossly inadequate in terms of basic resources, such as medicine and the level of specialised care required, with untrained and inexperienced staff.

140 mentally ill patients subsequently died following their transfer, and this represented a profound ethical and human rights crisis and the need for systemic reforms to protect vulnerable populations. The tragedy exposed the "moral pathology" where political considerations and institutional pressures take precedence over ethical considerations (Dhai, 2018). It also served as a reminder of how most citizens in South Africa were treated before 1994, when they had been oppressed, considered subhuman, and their treatment lacked human dignity.

The role of the courts in this tragedy also came under the spotlight, with their initial decision to dismiss an application to prevent the transfer (Ferlito & Dhai, 2018). This highlighted what seemed to be systemic bias against mental health issues within the judicial system. The eventual awarding of constitutional damages to the families of the victims was seen as a landmark decision, recognising the state's violation of constitutional rights (Koen, 2018). Although this serves as a deterrent against future abuses of power and reinforces the importance of upholding constitutional values, it also underscores the inadequacy of financial compensation in addressing the profound loss and suffering of patients and their families and obviously is an extreme example of othering in the recent history of South Africa.

Psychology and Other, Othering and Otherness

Theoretical Focus

Focus on the Specific. Psychology's theoretical engagement with the constructs of other, othering and otherness, at least at an interpersonal level, tends to parallel the focus employed by other disciplines of the social sciences; by this is meant there is a focus on the

specifics of type, such as racism, sexism and homophobia, over the general, and shared by all forms of prejudice. It will be argued throughout this research that a focus on the specific does little to align with postcolonial critique of binary reasoning or logic (Jones & Manda, 2006) and suppresses "ambiguous or interstitial spaces" (Ashcroft et al., 2007, p. 18). Imenda (2014) emphasises the distinction between conceptual and theoretical frameworks, noting that the former is grounded in an inductive approach, whereas the latter employs deductive reasoning. The focus here, on the general, is an attempt to align with a more inductive and non-binary conceptual approach.

An overview of North American research on racism over the past 20 years, for example, shows a continued call for a shift away from the binary of Black and White. Notable scholars, such as Cole (2004), Marable (2009), and Alcoff (2016), believe that such a call facilitates increasingly complex understandings of the variety of experiences and identities related to race and racism, thereby aiding coalition-building. Others remain critical of such calls (Deliovsky & Kitossa, 2013) and current reviews of Allport's seminal work (first published in 1954) on prejudice and contact theory highlight his own contradictions in thought, including the nature of prejudice as both individual and situational, and his optimism versus his pessimism about reducing prejudice (Dovidio et al., 2005).

Identity Formation. An intrapsychic process most obviously linked to phenomena of other, othering, and otherness is that of identity formation. It is shaped by individual perception, social interaction, and cultural context. Individual identity encompasses ideas about an individual's understanding of who they are and who they are not; it is an individual's sense of uniqueness (Desrochers et al., 2004). In this way, identity or self is

inextricably linked to the concept of other. It is generally accepted that identity is not a fixed entity but a fluid and multifaceted construct (Bhugra & Ventriglio, 2024).

Through a review of Hegel's work on the self and the other, Riker (2022) highlights the dialectical relationship between the self and the other. One cannot become self-conscious of oneself unless one is recognised by another self-consciousness. A person needs to be recognised in the consciousness of another for there to be a sense of "myself" and "you". This dialectical relationship is further linked by Riker to self psychology's emphasis on empathy as the primary disposition of engagement with others (Mooradian et al., 2011). It is through this link that the crucial role of empathy in solving the problem of alterity and why persons need to engage with difference if they are to sustain the "vibrancy of their selves" (Riker, 2022, p. 101) is demonstrated.

Recent psychodynamic work emphasises that identity formation fundamentally depends on the ongoing interplay between projection and introjection throughout development (Amos, 2022). This perspective suggests that the self is not a static entity but emerges from continuous exchanges with others through these complementary mechanisms. Projection allows the developing person to test aspects of self in the external world, while introjection enables incorporation of valued qualities from others.

When these processes function adaptively, they facilitate separation-individuation and the formation of coherent internal representations (Amos, 2022). However, clinical disturbances arise when projection-introjection dynamics become rigid or pathological, producing what Ciccone (2017) terms "between-two" identities—hybrid or false self-states characterised by collapsed subject-object distinctions and claustrophobic anxieties. The clinical consequences of such structural compromise are

far-reaching. These pathological identifications impair the capacity for mourning, separation, and authentic self-experience, requiring therapeutic work that makes unconscious identificatory processes conscious and available for reflection (Ciccone, 2017).

The self-other divide has been critiqued by Gülerce (2014) for lacking moral, political, and cultural sophistication, having an excessive focus on the internalised and individualised aspects of identity. This divide is of more specific concern due to its potential to legitimise and essentialize various “identified” categories, reify certain asymmetrical positions, reduce social discourse to roles, and possibly justify malfunctioning societal structures. While also critical of the self-other divide, Paipais (2011) argues that rather than overcoming or dismissing the divide, it is necessary to understand it as a perpetual striving to preserve the tension and ambivalence between the self and the other.

The self-other divide is connected to othering on both intrapsychic and interpersonal levels, a process in which a dominant group defines another group as different and inferior, often leading to social distance and symbolic degradation (Bhugra & Ventriglio, 2024; Jensen, 2011). This process operates simultaneously at psychological and social levels. Internally, through projection and splitting mechanisms that expel unwanted aspects of the self onto the other, and externally, through institutional practices and discourses that reinforce hierarchical distinctions. Individuals and groups subjected to othering are not passive recipients, but actively respond and negotiate their identities

Jensen (2011) examines the potential of the concept of othering to describe identity formation in ethnic minorities, identifying two forms of agency. The first type, termed capitalisation agency, concerns appropriating elements of othering discourse to imbue the category of the other with symbolic value. The second type, termed refusal agency,

concerns articulating distance from the category of the "other" through explicit rejection and claiming normality. While such distinctions can be helpful in understanding the othering processes between dominant and minority groups, they also underscore the centrality of the concept of agency in the social sciences, as well as underline that there is little agreement on how this concept should be defined and understood (Cavazzoni et al., 2022).

Recent psychodynamic-sociocultural analyses reveal how negative social responses to disclosure intensify internalised self-blame among marginalised individuals through projective and introjective mechanisms (Somers, 2015). This work demonstrates that when survivors of trauma (e.g., sexual violence) encounter hostile or dismissive reactions from their social environment, they often introject these negative responses, transforming external blame into self-blame through internalised oppression.

Somers's (2015) analysis illustrates how sociocultural conditions create feedback loops between projection (society's unwillingness to acknowledge systemic violence) and introjection (survivors' internalisation of stigma and shame). This dynamic reduces agency by positioning marginalised individuals as responsible for their own victimisation, while simultaneously deflecting attention from structural inequalities and collective responsibility. Understanding these psychodynamic-sociocultural interactions is essential for therapeutic work with trauma survivors and for designing interventions that address both individual healing and social change.

Projection. Another intrapsychic process most obviously linked to phenomena of other, othering, and otherness is that of projection. One way of dealing with aspects of a person's internal world, which, if consciously experienced, might give rise to psychic pain or

unbearable anxiety, is by using a variety of what psychodynamic psychotherapy calls defence mechanisms (Bateman et al., 2010). Freud first introduced the term “defence” to assist him in understanding the cases of persons with “hysteria” that he was studying and treating at the time. He later came to realise that these cases were related to a specific type of defence, which he named repression, and went on to describe other types of defences. Freud acknowledged defences as normal psychological mechanisms to maintain an individual’s mental stability, but focused on them when they were used excessively or inappropriately at later stages of development, considering their connection to psychological disturbances.

In contrast to the classical picture of defence mechanisms, and with the further development of the concept, relational models see defence mechanisms as a “protective shield” within which the authentic self, or what Winnicott called the “true” self and Kohut the “nuclear” of the self, which develop and enable survival in the face of a defective relational environment (Bateman et al., 2010). Bowlby, basing his view on attachment theory, reframed defences in interpersonal terms. Positive primary defences were related to secure attachment, whereas secondary or pathological defences were associated with rejecting or unreliable attachment figures (Holmes, 1993).

While it could be argued that all defence mechanisms, to a greater or lesser extent, are connected to the constructs of other, othering and otherness, it is through the defences of projection and projective identification that there is the most obvious connection. Through projection, a person externalises unacceptable feelings and sometimes important aspects of themselves, attributing them to others (Bateman et al., 2010). To blame one’s neighbours, a neighbouring village, another cultural group, or a country, for various occurrences or faults extends as far back as recorded history. Although this appears to be a

normal trait of humanity, it is also a tragic and dangerous human trait, with extreme forms amounting to paranoia (Bateman et al., 2010).

Recent psychodynamic scholarship has expanded the understanding of projection beyond the simple externalisation of unwanted feelings. Contemporary work distinguishes between benign and malignant forms of projection, with the former serving communicative and adaptive functions in relationships, while the latter represents toxic evacuation of intolerable psychic states (Solano, 2019). This distinction is particularly important in clinical settings where practitioners must differentiate between projection as a normal interpersonal communication mechanism versus its pathological manifestations that require intervention.

Furthermore, group-level analyses reveal that projection operates not only individually but also collectively, functioning to maintain narcissistic cohesion within social groups by externalising ambivalence onto perceived "others" (Körner, 2020). This social-defensive function helps explain how prejudice and discrimination persist across generations, as groups project unwanted aspects of collective identity onto minority or marginalised populations to preserve internal coherence.

Emerging integrations between psychodynamic theory and neuroscience suggest that defence mechanisms, such as projection, may be understood through predictive processing frameworks (Stänicke et al., 2024). From this perspective, projection represents the mind's attempt to minimise prediction error by attributing internal states to external sources, thereby maintaining a coherent but potentially distorted model of reality. This neurobiological grounding provides empirical support for Freud's original observations, situating defence mechanisms within the context of contemporary cognitive neuroscience.

Projective identification, a technical term coined by Klein (Sandler, 1983), describes the shared unconscious dynamic in relationships in which a person projects unacceptable qualities onto another, with the other person internalising these projections, and the person believes they are characterised by the projected qualities. The original projection is thereby able to provoke the desired reaction from the other.

Contemporary clinical scholarship has considerably refined the understanding of projective identification, moving beyond Klein's original intrapsychic formulation to emphasise its interpersonal and communicative dimensions (Nielsen, 2019). Rather than viewing projective identification solely as an unconscious defence, current models describe it as a sequential, two person process involving: (1) the projection of an unwanted self-state onto another person, (2) behavioural pressure on that person to identify with the projection, (3) the recipient's internalization and enactment of the projected material, and (4) the projector's perception that their original projection has been confirmed (Nielsen, 2019).

This stepwise model has particular relevance for couples therapy, where partners frequently engage in reciprocal projective identification cycles that maintain relationship dysfunction. Nielsen's (2019) detailed analysis demonstrates how affects such as disgust, shame, and rage can be transferred between intimate partners through these mechanisms, creating self-reinforcing patterns that require therapeutic intervention to interrupt.

Recent organisational research extends projective identification beyond dyadic relationships to group and institutional contexts. Jarrett and Vince (2024) demonstrate how projective identification operates within strategic leadership groups during periods of radical organisational change, creating "emotional coalitions" that serve

containment functions for collective anxiety. Their longitudinal case study reveals that projective identification at the group level can either facilitate constructive transitional spaces for innovation or produce defensive rigidity that blocks organisational adaptation.

Jarrett and Vince's (2024) work has noteworthy implications for understanding how institutions manage change, suggesting that group-level projective processes require active recognition and working through by leadership teams. The organisational literature thus confirms that projective identification is not merely a clinical phenomenon, but a fundamental mechanism that shapes collective behaviour in professional, political, and social contexts.

Interventions focus

While theoretical and conceptual disagreements and debates continue, there appears to be less disagreement around the related practices of psychology or the efficacy of the interventions designed in relation to other, otherness and othering at least at an interpersonal level (Kende et al., 2018; Lemmer & Wagner, 2015).

Meta-analyses of the effectiveness of interventions based on Allport's (1954, 1979) intergroup contact theory show consistently positive effects. The original conditions or moderating factors for the effectiveness of contact proposed by Allport (1954), included conditions of equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and authority support. The Pettigrew & Tropp (2006) authoritative meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory shows overall positive effects, even beyond the racial and ethnic targets for which the theory was originally designed. However, subsequent research (Kende et al., 2018; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) has shown that structured programs with sanction authority had a

stronger effect, and there were no significant differences in mean contact-prejudice effects for samples rated as having or lacking common goals, cooperation, or equal status.

Others have applied Allport's theory to "real-world" interventions, yielding positive results for both direct and indirect contact (Lemmer & Wagner, 2015). Evaluations of programs aimed at reducing ethnic prejudice, using both direct (face-to-face) and indirect (virtual) contact, were conducted. The effectiveness of the interventions was tested both shortly after their completion and at least one month later. The contact interventions were consistently shown to improve attitudes towards ethnic minorities, and these changes persisted over time. Lastly, it was found that contact interventions not only improved attitudes towards individuals involved in the program but also generalised to outgroups and those not directly involved in the program.

Even researchers critical of such meta-analyses (Kende et al., 2018), who incorporate variables of intergroup inequality into Pettigrew & Tropp's (2006) analyses, continue to find a positive effect. The Kende et al. (2018) study re-examined the relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice by incorporating cultural-level measures, using the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS) and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) to account for the cultural variables of egalitarianism and hierarchical values. A significant negative correlation between contact and prejudice remained, but with some variation in the strength of the contact-prejudice associations across cultures.

Locally, research on intergroup contact and racial prejudice in formerly segregated schools showed intergroup contact to be the single most important predictor of attitudes for all groups in the study (Holtman et al., 2005). The major criticisms of Allport's theory and related interventions, despite their proven effectiveness, are the lack of consideration of group inequalities (Kende et al., 2018), their location in real world settings (Lemmer &

Wagner, 2015), implicit prejudice and ideologies such as unexamined liberal, Eurocentric, and individualist assumptions (Whitley & Webster, 2019): these all speak to phenomena of other, othering and otherness within psychology itself, and of are particular relevance given the context of South Africa.

Critical Perspectives on Contact Theory: Dixon and Durrheim's Contribution. Despite the demonstrated effectiveness of contact interventions, Dixon & Durrheim (2003) have developed a substantial critique of Allport's contact hypothesis, highlighting important theoretical and methodological limitations. Their work, conducted primarily in post-apartheid South Africa, reveals how contact theory overlooks crucial dimensions of intergroup relations, particularly the role of spatial segregation, power asymmetries, and the political consequences of contact.

Spatial Segregation and the Ecology of Contact. Dixon and Durrheim (2003) challenge the fundamental assumption that contact opportunities are readily available to be leveraged by interventions. Through observational studies of public spaces in post-apartheid South Africa, they demonstrated that informal segregation persists even in ostensibly "open" settings, severely limiting opportunities for meaningful intergroup contact. Using behavioural mapping and ecological indices such as dissimilarity (D) and exposure (P) measures, they documented how spatial patterns on beaches and other public spaces produce segregation through routine practices and shared assumptions about "proper" social organization. This ecological approach reveals that contact theory's emphasis on facilitating optimal interaction conditions overlooks how spatial arrangements themselves may constitute barriers to achieving such conditions.

The Reality Check: Beyond Optimal Contact Conditions. In their influential article "Beyond the Optimal Contact Strategy," Dixon et al. (2005) argue that contact research has

prioritised studying interactions under idealised or "optimal" laboratory conditions, thereby obscuring how contact operates in real-world segregated contexts. They contend that this narrow focus on rarefied encounters and prejudice reduction as the primary outcome neglects negative contacts, everyday segregation patterns, and the broader political and structural consequences of intergroup interaction. Their "reality check" calls for research that attends to ordinary settings, the ecology of segregation, the valence of contact (including negative encounters), and outcomes beyond personal attitudes, such as political beliefs and support for social change.

Power Relations and Differential Effects. Dixon and Durrheim's (2003) research reveals that contact effects are not politically neutral and vary systematically by group status. In a large-scale survey study, Dixon et al. (2007) found that intergroup contact had differential—and somewhat paradoxical—effects on the attitudes of White and Black South Africans toward racial equality. While contact was associated with reduced prejudice among Whites and greater support for the principle of racial equality, it did not necessarily translate into support for policies designed to rectify apartheid's injustices. More troublingly, among some Black respondents, increased contact was associated with a reduction in support for transformation policies. This suggests that contact can have a "sedative" effect on disadvantaged groups, potentially reducing their recognition of group injustice and dampening motivation for collective action and structural change.

Implications for Collective Action and Social Justice. Building on these insights, Dixon et al. (2015) explored how contact affects political solidarity between historically disadvantaged groups. Their field survey in KwaZulu-Natal demonstrated that while positive contact between Indian and Black residents was associated with increased support for policies and collective action to improve conditions in informal settlements, this relationship

was mediated by perceptions of collective discrimination. This work suggests that the effects of contact on social change depend critically on whether interactions foster recognition of shared grievances and structural inequalities, or whether they individualise intergroup relations in ways that obscure systemic injustice.

Synthesis of Critiques. The major criticisms of Allport's theory and related interventions, despite their proven effectiveness in research studies at reducing interpersonal prejudice, centre on the lack of consideration of group inequalities (Dixon et al., 2007; Kende et al., 2018), their location in research rather than real world settings (Dixon et al., 2005; Lemmer & Wagner, 2015), as well as implicit prejudice and ideologies such as unexamined liberal, Eurocentric, and individualist assumptions (Whitley & Webster, 2019). Dixon and Durrheim's body of work demonstrates that these concerns speak to phenomena of other, othering and otherness within psychology itself, and are of particular relevance given the context of South Africa, where formal desegregation has not eliminated the spatial, economic, and political structures that continue to organize intergroup relations along racial lines (Dixon & Durrheim, 2003; Dixon et al., 2005).

Reflexive Note. Reading about psychology's limited engagement with phenomena of othering raised questions about my own discipline. I had to confront the ways in which psychology— including analytical psychology—has been complicit in othering through its historical pathologisation of non-Western knowledge systems and its ongoing privileging of Western epistemologies. This confrontation was important for approaching Traditional Healers with appropriate humility rather than assuming that psychology has frameworks adequate for understanding their experiences.

The Possible Emancipation of Psychology in Africa

Mainstream psychology has increasingly come under criticism for serving the ideological interests of elite classes, often pathologising political resistance and presenting itself as universal while ignoring cultural contexts (Malherbe, 2022). There is a strong argument against the idea of a universal, culture-free knowledge originating in the "North" and being applied in the "South" (Mkhize, 2021). Colonisation has led to the loss of interdisciplinary knowledge traditions. Mkhize (2004, pp. 42) argues that a critical emancipatory psychology "...should take into account indigenous people's languages, philosophies and **worldviews** [emphasis in original text]".

Such calls also extend beyond psychology. Mekoa (2018) argues for the "essentializing" of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems. He cites the value of indigenous knowledge, linked to its continuous development and adaptation to environmental changes and cultural values, as it is passed down from one generation to the next. He calls on universities in Africa to engage with this task and echoes Akin Aina (2010, p. 21) calls for a "true transformation" in Africa of higher education, "…which will involve practical and epistemological ruptures with previous ways of doing things and a reconstruction of structures, relations, cultures, and institutions." Central to this epistemological reconstruction is understanding the foundational principles that distinguish Indigenous Knowledge Systems from Western paradigms.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and African Worldviews

A central theme of IKS and African Worldviews is the interconnectedness of being (Bomoyi & Mkhize, 2016). This relational view extends to the living, the unborn, and ancestors. It is encapsulated in sayings like "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu,*" which translates to "a human being is a human being because of other human beings." Health and well-

being are viewed holistically, encompassing the mind, body, spirit, social, and cultural dimensions. Illness is often located at the system level (family and community) rather than solely with the individual.

IKS are primarily passed down orally, making them vulnerable to loss, especially as older generations pass away (Mekoa, 2018). Rapid economic, cultural, and development changes due to globalisation also threaten IKS. IKS are considered crucial for sustainable development. They represent the skills, experience, and insights of people in maintaining and improving their livelihoods.

With the collective argument for recognising and valuing African knowledge systems and perspectives (Akin Aina, 2010b; Bomoyi & Mkhize, 2016; Mekoa, 2018; N. Mkhize, 2004), there is acknowledgement of the associated challenges. The history of colonialism in destabilising indigenous technology and knowledge is acknowledged, together with the current globalisation trends and their continued Western dominance in terms of economics, military, and ideological influence (Akin Aina, 2010). Yet calls are made for transformative change and a commitment to social justice and equity, the decolonising of various fields, the promotion of cultural identity and agency, and the integration of IKS with “modern” practices (Bomoyi & Mkhize, 2016; Mekoa, 2018).

Engagement between depth psychology and indigenous healing

While it can be argued that there has been and continues to be an increase of engagement by psychology with IKS and African worldviews (Campbell-Hall et al., 2010; Holdstock, 2003; Ivey, 2013; Kruger et al., 2007; Mkhize, 2009; Mkhize, 2004), there appears to be little published exploratory work of engagements between depth psychology and indigenous healing (Ivey, 2013), with the latter author citing knowledge of only Burhman (1984) and Maiello (1999, in Ivey, 2013).

It is within this initial context: an increased prevalence of phenomena of other, othering and otherness, internationally and locally; theoretical debates and some practice success related to interventions to counter these phenomena; a call for the integration of indigenous knowledge and indigenous healer systems, historically othered from the discipline of psychology; that we turn to depth psychology, particularly analytical psychology, in order to shape the context further.

Chapter 3: Context and Literature Review Part 2

Introduction

This chapter forms the second of the two chapters on context and literature review. It begins with a discussion of IKS, specifically focusing on traditional healing. International and national research trends in relation to traditional knowledge, traditional healing, Western medicine, and psychology are then reviewed. The first engagements of depth psychology with traditional healing in South Africa are followed by particular attention to the historical work of Vera Bührmann. Recent endeavours in analytical psychology, including an international conference in Africa organised by the International Association of Analytical Psychology, and subsequent national dialogue symposia between South African Jungian Analysts and Traditional Healers, are subsequently deliberated on.

The second half of the chapter focuses on analytical psychology in relation to other, othering, and otherness through their personal and theoretical relevance to Jung's original work. The centrality of individuation and other receives particular attention. After a critique of Jung and his ideas on individuation, current post-Jungian efforts and their value in relation to Jung and other and othering processes are considered. An examination of the problematic of the other is then given, and the chapter ends with the rationale for the research study.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Traditional Knowledge and Healing

Internationally

Past research on the collaboration and integration of IKS and medical systems, such as Pedersen & Baruffati (1989) in Latin America and the Andean region, has revealed distinctly different results. In Latin America, researchers found that despite attempts at

integrating traditional and “official” medicine, there was some “success” at a local level but little national impact. This is most likely because relationships between the medical systems of Latin American and indigenous groups were revealed to be characterised by an asymmetrical distribution of power, with a dominant medical system and other systems as subordinate systems. In contrast, in the Andean region, medical systems were characterised as pluralist, blending indigenous traditions with European colonial influences and modern medicine. The recommendation was to strengthen pluralist medical systems through participation, rather than simply integrating traditional medicine practitioners into an existing medical system. The distinction emphasised that participation would allow traditional practitioners to maintain autonomy within a pluralist system, whereas integration risked reproducing the power asymmetries observed in Latin America.

Other research has focused on specific aspects of traditional knowledge systems and medicine. For example, Reyes-García (2010) reviewed the theoretical and methodological contributions of traditional knowledge systems to the field of ethnopharmacology. They found that ethnopharmacology has been biased toward chemical, biological, and pharmacological sciences, with less attention to social sciences. Their study highlighted that the efficacy of medicinal plants should be measured in a culturally appropriate way and take into consideration the cultural context. Further, the importance of understanding how ethnopharmacological knowledge is distributed in a society was emphasised. Their view was too, that considerations should include the healthcare of the original holders of ethnopharmacological knowledge.

International research on IKS and healing practices further highlights the diversity of indigenous cultures, traditions, and beliefs within countries, across regions within countries, and across countries (Corso et al., 2022; Robbins & Dewar, 2011). There is an

acknowledgement that community values, priorities, and strategies should not be treated homogenously. However, there is some consensus that traditional knowledge encompasses the knowledge, innovations, and practices of indigenous and local communities worldwide (Williams et al., 2011), including traditional ecological knowledge, intangible cultural heritage, traditional medicine, and traditional cultural expressions.

International research trends on IKS and healing practices focus on integrating traditional healing practices and collaborative care, while also identifying the challenges and barriers to these endeavours. The Corso et al. (2022) review of strategies for integrating Indigenous healing practices within Canadian community-based primary healthcare highlighted persistent discrimination against Indigenous Peoples, which impacts healthcare access and outcomes. Although most strategies were aimed at improving Indigenous People's access to health services, it was found that collaborative and Indigenous-led strategies are more likely to facilitate actual integration. The review recommended that authentic engagement in such efforts can only come about when strategies employ collaboration across intervention design, delivery, and evaluation.

These examples of international research trends collectively emphasise the importance of integrating traditional practices with mainstream health systems. This needs to be done, though, with sensitivity to the cultural contexts and knowledge systems of Indigenous communities. There remains a need to address historical and ongoing discrimination and asymmetrical power dynamics between these systems. Lastly, the value of collaborative and Indigenous-led strategies was emphasised, with a call for further research to establish an evidence base for traditional healing practices.

Nationally

The IKS and the "psychology" of these systems in South Africa is generally referred to as traditional healing, which is done by Traditional Healers. While there is acknowledgement that traditional healing related to Muslim, Hindu, and Chinese systems takes place within South Africa (Ross, 2007), it is Black Africans, *sangomas,* who are generally considered traditional healers linked to the IKS of Africa. The *sangoma* tradition has multiple roots that extend across time, cultures, and languages (Thornton, 2009), and traditional healers in South Africa are present in numerous indigenous communities.

Thornton's (2009) review of the transmission of knowledge in South African Traditional Healing identifies three forms of healing practices by African traditional healers and their clients. First are the practices of those who have "graduated" from a period of tuition and self-healing, known as *sangomas*. Secondly, there is the practice of those who use and sell herbal remedies, called *inyangas*. And, thirdly, the practice of faith healing takes on one or another form of African Christianity, which combines different religious and cultural ideas. While the focus here, and on the research trends of South Africa, is on *sangomas*, it is important to note that none of these practice categories are exclusive. *Sangomas* often belong to Christian churches and, at times, practise faith healing with some faith healers occasionally dispersing herbs as medicine (Peltzer, 2009).

Many Traditional Healers feel "called" in various ways to seek training (further details of which are discussed later). It is the ritual "training" into a specific profession, with its associated practices and beliefs, that is unique to *sangomas* (Kale, 1995; Thornton, 2009). They then undergo a period of apprenticeship, called *ukuthwasana*, that is characterised as rigorous and exhausting. They undergo a "graduation ceremony", called *intwaso*, on completion of their training, which can last several days and nights. A *sangoma*

in South Africa is generally a practitioner of the art and philosophy of *ngoma*, a practice pervasive in Bantu-speaking areas of Africa south of the equator (van Wyk, 2005).

Within the system of training mentioned above, six disciplines or divisions can be identified (Bakow & Low, 2018; Thornton, 2009). Individuals become experts in one or several of these disciplines, as they are taught separately during the apprenticeship. Firstly, there is the relationship between the teacher and the student in the training school, together with systems of knowledge transfer. Secondly, divination, also called "using the bones", is characterised by the healer and client jointly "reading" a collection of natural objects that are thrown onto a mat. Thirdly, there is an environmental ideology of the source of the power of medicinal herbs and animal products. Fourthly, there is knowledge of the Nguni ancestors and the methods used to communicate with them. Fifthly, there is knowledge of spirits (distinguished as "foreign" and water spirits) and the ritual used to heal through their agency. Lastly, there is experience and knowledge of "deep" embodied knowledge, expressed through dancing, singing, drumming, and trance states of the dances.

Initial research trends in South Africa "pitted" traditional healers against Western medicine. Kale's (1995) commentary on research on traditional healing and Western Medicine cited no studies on the efficacy of traditional remedies. Though there was acknowledgement of anecdotal success with the treatment of psychological problems, the review focused on the dangers of unknown pharmacopoeia, the sometimes exorbitant fees charged by some practitioners, and concluded by quoting the othering remarks by Daniel Ncayiyana, then editor of the *South African Medical Journal*, "…Let them regulate themselves; let them create a system of registration. There are many charlatans among them. We need to know what training is required, how they actually certify themselves, then we just have to recognise them…" (Kale, 1995, pp. 1185)

Since then, there has been a greater acknowledgement of the important role traditional practitioners play in healthcare delivery in South Africa, encompassing a wide range of conditions, from complex supernatural or psychosocial problems to mental disorders, chronic diseases, and acute conditions (Peltzer, 2009). Patients in this review saw no conflict in seeking both allopathic and traditional healing for the same conditions, and conditions, particularly mental health conditions, were interpreted in terms of a combination of indigenous, psychosocial, and other causes.

More recently, there have been research efforts from the specialisations of medicine in relation to traditional healing, the most relevant being that of psychiatry. For example, the Nortje et al. (2016) systematic review of the effectiveness of traditional healers in treating mental disorders identified some evidence suggesting that traditional healers can provide an effective psychosocial intervention. Although there was some evidence that traditional healers' interventions could provide relief for mild symptoms in common mental disorders such as depression and anxiety, there was little evidence to suggest that they could change the course of severe mental disorders, such as bipolar mood disorders and psychosis.

A review of psychological research related to traditional healing in South Africa (Ntombela, 2023) found that, firstly, studies focused on the distinguishing features of traditional healing across South African societies, mostly in terms of the diagnostic apparatus used by traditional healers, the treatment models utilised, and the differing referral systems that existed. The second major theme across studies was the importance of the calling, as inherent in traditional healing, with some studies focused solely on this experience. Lastly, although collaborative efforts featured in many studies, it was found that

the field of traditional healing is consistently conceptualised from within Western and traditional psychological understandings of the practice.

The process of becoming a Traditional Healer —particularly for *isangoma*—has received renewed research attention. Van der Watt et al. (2021) conducted ethnographic research in rural KwaZulu-Natal, documenting that ancestral calling (*ukuthwasa*) often presents with symptoms that Western psychiatry would classify as psychotic: hearing voices, experiencing visions, feeling presences, and exhibiting unusual behaviours. However, within Traditional Healing epistemologies, these experiences are understood not as pathology but as communication from ancestors indicating a calling to healing work. Successful completion of initiation training (*ukuthwasa*) can transform these experiences from distressing symptoms into sources of healing power and social legitimacy.

Bakow and Low (2018) provide a cross-cultural psychological analysis of *ukuthwasa*, identifying cultural determinants and symptom patterns. Their research, conducted around the Durban metropolitan area, documents that communities construct meaning around these experiences through cultural narratives of ancestral connection, spiritual calling, and healing vocation. This meaning-making process is crucial for understanding how Traditional Healers navigate experiences that might be labelled as "other" or pathological in Western contexts but are valued as sacred and powerful within indigenous frameworks.

Audet et al. (2017) document the clinical scope of Traditional Healers' work in rural northeastern South Africa, reporting that healers treat a broad range of mental, neurological, and substance-related disorders. Treatment patterns vary by healer type and context, with *isangoma* more likely to address spiritual and relational concerns, *inyanga* focusing on physical symptoms through herbal medicines, and *umthandazi* integrating

prayer and counselling. This diversity of practice challenges monolithic representations of Traditional Healing and suggests the importance of attending to intra-group variation.

Recent research (2015-2025), however, provides updated empirical evidence of the continued marginalisation of Traditional Healers, despite legislative recognition. Maluleka (2020) documents that practitioners in Limpopo province remain under-resourced and variably integrated into public health systems, with calls for formal incorporation to address status inequities. Zingela et al. (2019) provide a quantitative context, reporting that 31% of psychiatric patients in urban South Africa, specifically in the Nelson Mandela Metropole, consult traditional healers, with consultation being associated with ethnicity and lower formal education—documenting behavioural manifestations of othering and plural help-seeking patterns.

The marginalisation of Traditional Healers thus operates at multiple levels. At the institutional level, Mendu and Ross (2019) document unilateral referral patterns in HIV/AIDS management: Traditional Healers refer patients to hospitals, but hospitals rarely reciprocate, reflecting asymmetrical power dynamics and mutual distrust. At the social level, Mnyadi (2020) reveals compounded stigma for non-heterosexual healers who face both homophobia and denigration of ancestral practices, illustrating intersecting othering dynamics.

Empirical studies of collaboration between Traditional Healers and biomedical providers reveal structural barriers to optimal contact conditions. Mendu and Ross (2019) document that referral patterns are unilateral rather than reciprocal, violating the equal-status condition central to contact theory. Van der Watt et al. (2020) report that while AmaXhosa Traditional Healers express willingness to collaborate, they identify epistemic asymmetries and a lack of institutional support as obstacles. Recent pilot studies of

Traditional Health Practitioner-initiated HIV testing (Hove et al., 2025) suggest that structured, institutionally supported contact may improve mutual recognition, although concerns about training and integration persist.

All of the above findings suggest that contact alone is insufficient without addressing structural power imbalances and epistemic hierarchies that position traditional healing as subordinate to biomedicine, even though it may be preferred by patients who may often first consult Traditional Healers (Zingela et al., 2019).

Analytical Psychology and Indigenous Healing

As previously noted, and at the conceptualisation of this thesis, it appeared that there was little published exploratory work on engagements between depth psychology and indigenous healing. Ivey, the previous editor of the *Journal of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy in South Africa* and a current fellow of the College of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, cited knowledge of only Bührmann (1984) and Maiello (1999, in Ivey, 2013).

In 1999, Maiello spent time during her three-month stay in South Africa with a *sangoma*, Western-trained psychotherapists, and individuals rooted in African traditions. She reflected on the similarities and differences between traditional healer methods and Western psychotherapy (Maiello, 1999/2008). A difference was noted in the reliance in psychoanalytic practice on verbal communication and interpretation over the non-verbal, ritualistic communication of traditional practices. Despite these differences, it was noted that both approaches share a common therapeutic function: the restoration of connections – whether with the external world (in Western terms) or with the ancestors (in African tradition). A parallel was drawn between the role of ancestors and the concept of internal objects in psychoanalysis. While internal objects are metaphorical constructs in Western theory, ancestors are seen as concrete, external entities in African tradition. Both

approaches, however, emphasise the maintenance and restoration of connections – whether with ancestors or internalised parental figures – for mental health.

The above endeavour highlighted the possibilities of cross-cultural psychotherapy and the enrichment of psychoanalytic practice in South Africa. However, it was Vera Bürhmann, 15 years prior, who published her seminal work, "*Living in Two Worlds: Communication between a White Healer and Her Black Counterparts*." The book was based on her decade-long cross-cultural psychiatry research project in the former Ciskei, now part of the Eastern Cape of South Africa. Her pioneering work is seen as the first theoretical bridge between previously thought disparate systems of healing.

Vera Bührmann

Vera Bührman was one of the first women to become a psychiatrist in South Africa (Raad, 2007) and was acknowledged as the doyen of child psychiatry in the country. She was also the first and only Jungian analyst in South Africa for 40 years, and an internationally recognised researcher in African cultural psychology. She was one of a small group of people in the country brought together with a determination to start Jungian Training in Africa. The birth of The Cape of Good Hope Centre for Jungian Studies in 1987 followed the meeting of this group (which included Graham Saayman, Gloria Gearing, Ian McCallum, and Ian Player) in Burnera in the Drakensberg. This centre is today the South African Association of Jungian Analysts (SAAJA) and trains Jungian Analysts under the auspices of the International Association of Analytical Psychology (IAAP).

Bürhmann introduced the central theme of her book, *Living in Two Worlds: Communication between a White Healer and Her Black Counterparts*, as the intersection of Western psychology and traditional amaXhosa healing practices (Bührmann, 1984). She outlines her journey into the world of amaXhosa healers and her background as a white

South African psychiatrist. She sets the stage, at the start of the book, for the exploration of cultural differences, mutual learning, and the challenges of trying to bridge two healing systems, generally perceived as distinct.

The contrast between the individualistic focus of Western medicine and the collective, spiritual focus of traditional healing is highlighted throughout the book. The central role of ancestral spirits in healing is examined. These spirits are seen as intermediaries between the living and the divine (Bührmann, 1984) and healers communicate with ancestors to diagnose and treat illnesses. This spiritual framework is discussed as a challenge for Western practitioners, who often dismiss or misunderstand it within scientific contexts.

The specific rituals and practices by amaXhosa healers are described. The use of herbs, animal sacrifices, and divination is deeply rooted in the belief system of the amaXhosa people (Bührmann, 1984), and these practices are designed to restore balance and harmony. These spiritual and symbolic dimensions are largely absent in Western approaches.

The concept of *ukuthwasa*, the process of being called to become a healer, was explored. *Ukuthwasa* often involves spiritual experiences, dreams, and physical or psychological symptoms that signal a person's destiny to heal (Bührmann, 1984). The transformative nature of the process and its centrality to amaXhosa identity and community life were illustrated through the material shared by healers and their journeys.

The challenges and criticism faced by both Western and amaXhosa healers are addressed. Bührmann noted that scepticism and mistrust can arise from cultural differences and historical inequalities on both sides. There is also the possibility of ethical dilemmas of cross-cultural collaboration, but a need for mutual respect and understanding.

The book concludes by advocating for a more integrated approach to healing that respects and incorporates the strengths of both Western and traditional systems. There is a call for greater dialogue, collaboration, and the recognition of the value of indigenous knowledge (Bührmann, 1984), and for the decolonising of health practices to create a more inclusive and equitable healthcare system.

While this pioneering work remains of value today, at least in Jungian circles, the work and its author have been subject to continued, albeit sporadic, criticism, as described below.

Tacey (1997), in his more general review and criticism of Jung's influence on academic institutions and intellectual culture, focuses on Buhrmann's approach to integrating Jungian psychology with African traditional healing practices. He argues that Buhrmann tends to idealise these healing methods and overly aligns them with Jungian theory and concepts, such as archetypes. Such a reductionist approach may oversimplify or distort the spiritual and cultural dimensions of these traditions, failing to honour their unique worldview. Brooke (1997), in response to Tacey's more general criticism levelled at Jung, supported his criticism of Buhrmann. He agrees that Burhman has reduced the "richness and uniqueness" (Brooke, 1997, p. 289) of African cultural practices to fit within a Jungian psychological framework. Scholarly objectivity was also added to the criticisms, along with a caution against Bührmann's enthusiasm for Jungian theory, which might have led her to overstate parallels between Jung's work and African traditions.

More recently, Bührmann, the person, has come under scrutiny and criticism, with the re-examination of her life and legacy. Landman (2021) argues that Bürhmann's ideological convictions, rooted in Afrikaner nationalism and racial prejudice, persisted throughout her life, even as she gained acclaim for her cross-cultural psychiatric work. The

popular narrative of a bridge-builder, who embraced racial tolerance and respect for other, is overshadowed by reports of her involvement with radical right organisations. The myth of her transformation in her racial ideology through her work with traditional healers has been overshadowed by her writings and private reflections, which reveal persistent racial prejudices and essentialist views of African culture. The article concludes with the recommendation that the contradictions in her self-presentation and persistence of her racial ideology should form part of any future assessment of her legacy.

Even in the face of such criticisms, some noteworthy scholars have continued to build on and reshape Bührmann's work. Astrid Berg, a Jungian analyst and psychiatrist in South Africa, explored the significance of ancestor reverence in amaXhosa traditional healing (Berg, 2003) and found Bührmann's initial findings to be increasingly relevant in contemporary South Africa. Her work positions ancestors as archetypal figures from the collective unconscious, serving as intermediaries between what Jung termed the ego and the Self. Her work illuminates how analytical psychology's notion of the collective unconscious can contribute to cross-cultural understanding and bridge the gap between Western psychological theory and African worldviews.

This work was followed by a book addressing the deep divisions in South Africa along racial, cultural, and socioeconomic lines. Cultural misunderstandings often arise due to differing worldviews and communication styles (Berg, 2012); therefore, there is a need for empathy, openness, and cultural sensitivity to overcome these barriers and create meaningful connections. The book advocates for learning from indigenous healing practices and holistic health, relationships, and communal life. It also advocates for the expansion of Western psychology and the frameworks of psychoanalysis by incorporating African perspectives.

Reflexive Note. Engaging with Vera Bührmann's pioneering work evoked both admiration and critical reflection. I admired her courage in taking traditional healing seriously at a time when it was deeply stigmatised. Yet I also noticed that her work, like mine, was shaped by her positionality as a white South African psychoanalyst. I wondered what might have been different if Black South African psychologists had led this work, or if Traditional Healers themselves had been positioned as co-researchers rather than research subjects. This reflection informed my commitment to foregrounding the voices of Traditional Healers in my own research.

'The Spectre of the Other' Conference

A historically important event for South African Jungian analysts and in alignment with the focus of this study was the hosting of the International Association for Jungian Studies (IAJS) annual conference in Cape Town in 2017, titled "*The Spectre of the Other: A Jungian Exploration*." The conference's location provided a powerful backdrop for exploring the theme of the other (Carter & Farah, 2018). Cape Town was the location of the first public speech made by Nelson Mandela after his release from imprisonment, which ignited the beginning of democratic elections and a new era for South Africa. The venue itself, *Centre for the Book*, is a space steeped in notable cultural memory. Originally opened in 1913 as the headquarters of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, it now operates as an independent organisation dedicated to promoting literacy, reading, publishing, and conferences.

The African Baobab tree served as a central metaphor for the conference theme (Carter & Farah, 2018). Its unique inverted appearance and hollow trunk symbolise duality. The roots, according to the conference organisers, were said to be the development of consciousness, while the hollowness embodies the connection between the conscious and

unconscious, necessary for transcendence. The image of the tree became a symbol of humanity's evolutionary nature through its encounter with duality and the Jungian conceptualisation of the process of individuation.

The conference explored the multifaceted concept of the other through the lens of Jungian psychology, encompassing cultural, political, postcolonial, and personal dimensions (Carter & Farah, 2018). Many presentations addressed the idea that the other often serves as a repository for disowned aspects of the self (shadow projection) and collective anxieties. Confronting and integrating the shadow was presented as crucial for individual and collective growth. Several presentations emphasised the importance of understanding the other within specific contexts (Program proceedings, 2017). Postcolonial perspectives were particularly prominent, with examination of the impact of colonialism on identity, intergroup relations, and cultural complexes.

Africa was a recurring focus throughout the conference, as a continent that has historically been subjected to othering, and as a source of indigenous healing practices and wisdom that can enrich Jungian psychology (Program proceedings, 2017). The conference included a theme on somatic experience, exploring the role of the body in shaping identity, encountering other, and facilitating individuation. The impact of technology on the experience of otherness, touching upon themes of digital biopolitics and psychic epidemics related to social media, was also engaged with. The conference concluded by affirming the continued relevance of Jungian psychology for understanding contemporary psychological and social challenges, while acknowledging the theoretical limitations and biases of analytical psychology and the need for continued critical engagement.

Jungian Analysts in Dialogue with Traditional Healers

A year before this conference, the first symposium was held between a group of South African Jungian Analysts and Traditional Healers. The symposium aimed to explore common ground, foster mutual understanding, and identify potential avenues for collaboration between two distinct, yet potentially complementary healing traditions (Symposium Report, 2016). The importance of dreams from both sides was discussed. The symposium incorporated real-life case studies and dream-sharing sessions to illustrate the application of both Jungian and traditional healing principles. The concept of the unconscious, particularly the collective unconscious in Jungian psychology, resonated with the Traditional Healers' understanding of ancestors. The vital role of ancestors in the lives of traditional healers and their communication with them through dreams was discussed.

The symposium was considered a success in fostering dialogue and identifying areas for future collaboration (Symposium Report, 2016). Plans were made to draft a memorandum of understanding, create a record of the symposium, establish referral networks among symposium attendees, and explore funding options for future symposia. In 2018, a second symposium was held in Cape Town, and four of the members of this group published their experiences of these two events (Ammann, 2020).

The historical foundation for the dialogue between Jungian analysts and African traditional healers was traced back to Jung's own travels in Africa and the work of Bührman. Ammann (2020) argued that Jung's 1925-1926 travels in Africa played a significant role in the development of his psychological theories. Although he showed a genuine interest in African spirituality, his colonial-era attitudes reflected Eurocentric biases. Despite his willingness to be transformed by his encounters, his writing often exoticised African traditions.

Bührmann’s extensive research on amaXhosa healing practices revealed a lack of reciprocal interest in Jungian psychology (Ammann, 2020). There was, however, a shift towards dialogue and a turning point when Ammann met Mlisa in 2007, a clinical psychologist and traditional healer with an active interest in Jungian thought. This encounter laid the foundation for authentic dialogue between Jungian analysts and African healers, as other Traditional Healers and Jungian analysts within their networks started connecting with each other. The culmination of these engagements was the first symposium, mentioned above, in 2016.

The context of the symposiums (2016 & 2018), set against the backdrop of colonial history and social activism, was addressed by Borchardt (2020). He draws attention to the historical marginalisation of indigenous healing systems due to the introduction of Western medicine and culture, despite the large portion of the Black South African population that still relies on traditional medicine (Borchardt, 2020). He further raised questions about the role of apologies in addressing historical injustices and the importance of listening, understanding, and recognising shared spiritual roots.

Mlisa (2020), a Traditional Healer, gave their perspective on the symposiums and underscored the importance of intercultural exchange in the healing process for all. The common ground of traditional healing and Jungian psychology was presented as their shared emphasis on the unconscious, dreams, and symbols (Mlisa, 2020). Both traditional healing and Jungian psychology also recognised the importance of ancestral and spiritual guidance, and that healing is not just about an individual, but also about the collective and the cultural.

The outcomes that emerged from the dialogues and their implications for healing were reflected on by those who attended. The first symposium was initially formed by a

small group of practitioners from both disciplines, and over time, trust developed, allowing for more authentic exchanges (Ramsden, 2020). The second symposium adopted a more narrative approach, where healers and analysts shared their personal journeys, and both groups were able to recognise the profound similarities in their calling to be healers. Besides the common ground found, the process of listening and learning from each other was reported to lead to mutual healing, demonstrating that respectful dialogue can be transformative.

Analytical Psychology and Other, Othering and Otherness

Jung and Other

"Somewhere deep in the background I always knew that I was two persons" (Jung, 1998, p. 44). Jung's theoretical conceptualisations of other were from the outset linked to the personal. Jung made explicit references to the other in his autobiography, referring to his "Number 2" personality as his "other" (Papadopoulos, 2022). This position of Jung evolved from external objects to the internal Number 2 personality, and then moved to his concepts of complexes, symbols, and finally archetypes. The Other-as-Archetype represents the integration of internal and external, individual and collective dimensions.

Huskinson (2002) similarly traces Jung's use of "other" through his work, though they approach it from a different angle. Jung's concept of Self is throughout his work defined through other. The Self is posited as the other to the ego, representing the unconscious and an experience of infinity. This otherness is crucial for the ego's development and individuation.

In Jung's semi-autobiographical final work, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections,* it is argued that the text re-storying a life is told from the perspectives of both old age and a mature psychological understanding (Bidwell, 2000a). Jung's ideas, often fuelled by

confusing and chaotic events throughout his life, are reinterpreted through the lens of his overarching psychological theory. It is thus this source that guides a summary of his work in relation to the constructs of other, othering, and otherness. This theoretical framework of Self-as-other, developed throughout Jung's career, finds its most personal expression in Memories, Dreams, Reflections, where Jung reinterprets his life through the mature lens of his psychological theory. It is through this retrospective understanding that we can best trace how his concept of otherness operates in practice, beginning with his foundational notion of the unconscious as the primary other within.

> **The Other as the Unconscious**. …everything of which I know, but of which I am not at the moment thinking; everything of which I was once conscious but have now forgotten; everything perceived by my senses but not noted by my conscious mind; everything which, involuntarily and without paying attention to it, I feel, think, remember, want, and do; all the future things that are taking shape in me and will sometime come to consciousness: all this is the content of the unconsciousness. (Jung, 1931, p. 185)

The other within is often described by Jung as the unconscious, a vast, mysterious realm that is both alien and intimately connected to the conscious mind (Jung, 1998). Unlike Freud, the unconscious was viewed not merely as a repository of repressed memories or forgotten experiences, but as a dynamic and creative force. His own encounters with the contents of the unconscious are often written about as if meeting another being or force. These figures symbolised aspects of the other within him – guides or messengers from the unconscious that helped him navigate his inner world. These encounters he saw as evidence of the autonomy and reality of the unconscious, which he regards as a partner or counterpart to the conscious mind.

The importance of integrating the unconscious into conscious life was emphasised throughout his work. Ignoring or repressing the other leads to psychological imbalance (Jung, 1998), while engaging with dreams, active imagination, or creative expression was believed to foster integration and wholeness. Jung further emphasised that the other, as the unconscious, is not something to be feared or rejected but a vital part of the psyche that holds the "key" to self-understanding and transformation.

The Other as the Shadow. …the shadow [is] that hidden, repressed, for the most part inferior and guilt-laden personality whose ultimate ramifications reach back into the realm of our animal ancestors and so comprise the whole historical aspect of the unconscious…If it has been believed hitherto that the human shadow was the source of all evil, it can now be ascertained on closer investigation that the unconscious man, that is, his shadow, does not consist only of morally reprehensible tendencies, but also displays a number of good qualities, such as normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, creative impulses, etc. (Jung, 1951, p. 266)

The shadow, as a concept within analytical psychology, is a critical aspect of the other within. The shadow represents the hidden, unconscious parts of the self – those qualities, desires, and impulses that the conscious ego rejects, denies, or represses (Jung, 1998). Jung saw the shadow as a fundamental part of the human psyche, embodying everything that we do not wish to acknowledge about ourselves, often because it conflicts with our self-image or societal expectations.

Jung observed through his work that when individuals fail to recognise their own shadow, they often project it onto others. People attribute their own unconscious qualities to people around them (Jung, 1998). This leads to misunderstandings, conflicts, and judgments. It was said to be essential for psychological growth and integration to confront

the shadow. While the shadow or shadow work can be unsettling, it is also a source of vitality and creativity.

The Other as the Persona. The persona…is the individual's system of adaptation to, or manner he assumes in dealing with, the world. Every calling or profession, for example, has its own characteristic persona…Only, the danger is that [people] become identical with their personas – the professor with his text-book, the tenor with his voice...One could say, with a little exaggeration, that the persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is. (Jung, 1954, p. 122)

Jung saw the persona as a form of the other, as it was a constructed identity shaped by external influences rather than by the authentic self. The persona is the outward-facing aspect of the psyche – the "mask" a person wears in social interactions (Jung, 1998). It is often shaped by the roles a person plays (e.g., friend, parent, professional) and is the part of ourselves that we present to others.

Jung recognised the importance of considering the persona as a tool rather than an identity. The persona allows an individual to adapt to societal expectations while also protecting the inner self (Jung, 1998). However, over-identification with one's persona, social roles, and external achievements carries a risk: the loss of contact with one's authentic self. Jung called this phenomenon inflation, a condition in which individuals become estranged from their deeper, unconscious self.

The Other in Dreams and Symbols. The dream is a little hidden door in the innermost and most secret recesses of the psyche, opening into that cosmic night which was psyche long before there was an ego-consciousness, and which will remain psyche no matter how far our ego-consciousness may extend…All

> consciousness separates; but in dreams we put on the likeness of that more universal, truer, more eternal man dwelling in the darkness of primordial light. There he is still the whole, and the whole is in him, indistinguishable from nature and bare of all egohood. Out of these all-uniting depths arises the dream, be it never so childish, grotesque, and immoral. (Jung, 1959, p. 304)

The concept of other, as it manifests in dreams and symbols, is explored by Jung through his emphasis on its role as a bridge between the conscious and unconscious mind. The figures, images, and symbols that appear in dreams often represent those parts of the psyche that are unknown or unrecognised by the conscious mind (Jung, 1998). Dream content, he further argued, is not purely personal but arises from the collective unconscious – a shared layer of the psyche that contains the universal archetypes. The other, in this context, represents not only the personal unconscious but could also give meaning to the transpersonal, collective dimensions of the psyche.

Jung further emphasised that the other in dreams and symbols is part of a living reality within the psyche, not merely abstract concepts. The figures and images that appear in dreams possess a certain autonomy and intelligence, representing the active and creative aspects of the unconscious (Jung, 1998). Engaging with other in this way was thought to be a deeply experiential and transformative process, not just an intellectual exercise.

The Collective Other: Society, Culture and Relationships. Every man [and vice versa] carries within him the eternal image of woman, not the image of this or that particular woman, but a definitive feminine image. This image is fundamentally unconscious, a hereditary factor of primordial origin engraved in the living organic system of the man, an imprint or archetype of all the ancestral experiences of the female, a deposit, as it were, of all the impressions ever made by women…Since this

> image is unconscious, it is always unconsciously projected upon the person of the beloved, and is one of the chief reasons for passionate attraction or aversion. (Jung, 1946, p.281)

Jung saw relationships as a mirror of the psyche, reflecting both the conscious and unconscious aspects of the self. What a person perceives in others is a projection of their own unconscious material (Jung, 1998). In relationships, other often serves as a screen onto which a person projects qualities, desires, or fears that they have not recognised or integrated within themselves. By paying attention to one's reactions to others, a person can gain insight into their own unconscious dynamics and work toward greater self-awareness.

Jung acknowledged the tensions between the individual and the collective other represented by society, culture, and tradition. The collective other was said to provide a sense of belonging, structure, and meaning, but it can also impose limitations and expectations that may conflict with the individual's unique path (Jung, 1998). Psychological health was thought to require a balance between collective adaptation and individual self-expression. The collective other can become a source of oppression when there is uncritical conformity, leading to a loss of individuality and creativity.

> **On Individuation and the Other.** But again and again I note that the individuation process is confused with the coming of the ego into consciousness and the ego is, in consequence, identified with the self, which naturally produces a hopeless conceptual muddle. Individuation is then nothing but ego-centredness and autoeroticism. But the self comprises infinitely more than a mere ego…It is as much one's self, and all other selves, as the ego. Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to oneself. (Jung, 1943, p. 266)

For Jung, the process of individuation involves a constant dialogue with the other – whether it is the unconscious, the shadow, the persona, dream material, or society and relationships. Jung (1998) provides a deeply personal and philosophical exploration of individuation, a central concept in analytical psychology. It is described as a journey toward psychological wholeness, where an individual moves beyond the persona and confronts the deeper layers of the psyche, including the shadow and the Self. The Self was believed to represent the totality of the psyche, the organising principle that guides individuals toward integration and harmony.

The goal of individuation is achieving self-realisation and wholeness (Jung, 1998). It is not about perfection but about considering and engaging with all aspects of oneself, and becoming who one truly is, rather than conforming to external roles or societal expectations. For this to happen, individuals must engage in dialogue with the unconscious, exploring dreams, fantasies, and symbolic material to uncover hidden aspects of the psyche. By bringing the insights from the unconscious into conscious awareness and incorporating them into daily life, one can move beyond the ego and connect with the Self.

Reflexive Note. As I explored analytical psychology's concepts of shadow, projection, and the other, I found myself increasingly excited about the resonances I anticipated finding with Traditional Healing. I had to guard against confirmation bias—the tendency to see only what I expected to see. I reminded myself repeatedly that the purpose of the research was not to validate analytical psychology but to learn from Traditional Healers. This meant remaining open to ways their knowledge might challenge, complicate, or contradict Jungian frameworks.

Ego-Self Relationship

Given the centrality of individuation in analytical psychology and its links to the constructs of other, othering, and otherness, this part of the discussion considers Edinger's (1992) examination of individuation. Edinger is recognised for offering a comprehensive and insightful exploration of Jungian psychology, with a focus on individuation (Robertson, 1999). His writings draw upon a wide range of sources, including mythology, alchemy, literature, and the Bible. His work is considered a “redemptive power” that helps individuals connect with the eternal psyche through his illumination of the path towards psychological wholeness.

Edinger’s work emphasises an important distinction between the Ego, the centre of conscious awareness, and the Self, the totality of the psyche, including both conscious and unconscious elements. The process of individuation is viewed as essentially the development of the ego in relation to the Self (Edinger, 1992). In childhood, the ego identifies with external figures (parents, authority, religious ideas), but as an individual matures, they are “forced” to recognise their own inner autonomy and establish a personal connection with the Self.

The individuation process follows a recurring archetypal pattern found in myths, dreams, and religious stories. Edinger (1992) outlines this process in four stages. Firstly, there is the Ego-Self Identity stage. This is also referred to as an original oneness at times. In early life, the ego and Self are not distinct from each other but merged in a state of unconscious unity. He likens this state to the mythological idea of paradise, the child’s early sense of wholeness before individuation begins. The Garden of Eden, early mystical unity with God, and the divine child are religious symbols of this phase.

As the child develops, the ego differentiates from the Self but mistakenly identifies itself as the centre of the psyche (Edinger, 1992). This phase is known as Ego Inflation, during which the ego experiences increased power, confidence, and an overestimation of its own abilities. Mythological parallels include the Tower of Babel, Lucifer's fall from heaven, and Icarus flying too close to the sun. If unchecked, this inflation can lead to delusions of grandeur, a sense of omnipotence, or spiritual arrogance.

The inflated ego is forced to confront its limitations eventually (Edinger, 1992). This typically occurs through suffering, psychological breakdown, or failure. The phase known as Ego Alienation leaves the person feeling disconnected from their Self. It is often accompanied by feelings of guilt, despair, or existential emptiness, prompting the need for inner transformation. Religious or metaphorical symbols associated with this phase are the fall of Adam and Eve, Christ's crucifixion, and what is popularly called the "Dark Night of the Soul".

As an individual works through the crisis, they rebuild a mature relationship between the ego and the Self (Edinger, 1992). The ego recognises its place as part of the larger totality of the Self, rather than as the sole ruler of the psyche, and this phase is known as Ego-Self Reconciliation. It is characterised further by "death and rebirth" experiences, where the old ego or parts of the ego "die", allowing a new, more balanced identity to emerge. Religious and metaphorical symbols include the resurrection of Christ, the Philosopher's Stone in alchemy, and the Phoenix rising from the ashes.

The movement through these phases facilitates the development of the relationship between the ego and the Self and is the essence of individuation. Edinger (1992) makes it clear, though, that this is not a one-time event but an ongoing journey, and that every major life transition (adolescence, midlife, old age) involves new challenges to the ego-Self

relationship. He further emphasises that individuation is both a psychological necessity and a spiritual calling. Those who undertake this journey are said to develop a deep sense of purpose beyond material success, a greater tolerance for suffering and ambiguity, and an inner connection to universal wisdom and archetypal forces.

Critique of Jung and Endinger

In 2018, a group of Jungian analysts, clinicians, and academics addressed the racism present in Jung's writings and theories about African and other peoples of the global majority through an open letter published in the British Journal of Psychotherapy (Open Letter, 2018). The context of the letter referenced a 1988 paper by Dr Farhad Dalal, "Jung: A Racist", which critiqued Jung's views on race, but which gained little response from the Jungian community. The latter open letter acknowledged Jung's colonial and racist attitudes, citing the example of him describing Africans as lacking a "layer of mind" that Europeans possessed. They further acknowledged that Jung's views reinforced hierarchical and prejudiced perceptions of different racial groups and contributed to both internal and external harm. There was a call for responsibility and reform, with actionable steps proposed, and an invitation extended by the authors of the open letter for dialogue within Jungian communities and engagement from institutions and individuals willing to contribute to change.

Recent scholarship (2015-2025) has subjected analytical psychology to decolonial critique, particularly regarding Jung's engagement with Africa and indigenous knowledge systems. Brooke (2022) argues that Jung's Africa fantasies—documented in his travel writings and theoretical work—reproduced colonial projections that positioned Africa as the "primitive" unconscious of European civilisation. This critique extends to Jung's

conceptualisation of individuation, which Brooke suggests remains implicitly Eurocentric in its emphasis on individual autonomy over relational and communal models of selfhood. Brooke proposes reimagining individuation through *Ubuntu*—the African philosophical principle that emphasises interconnectedness and communal identity. An *Ubuntu*-informed individuation would prioritise relational wholeness and collective well-being, alongside or even predominate over overly individual self-realisation, offering a more culturally resonant framework for understanding the development processes of Traditional Healers. This reconceptualisation appears to challenge analytical psychology to examine its own shadow—the unacknowledged colonial assumptions embedded in its core concepts.

Marovic & Machinga (2017) connect African shamanic knowledge with transpersonal psychology, framing ancestral trance and spirit-embodiment as legitimate psychological phenomena with therapeutic implications. Their work suggests that analytical psychology's concepts of the collective unconscious and archetypal patterns can be enriched through engagement with indigenous healing practices, provided this engagement is grounded in epistemic humility rather than appropriation.

Rogerson's (2017) autoethnographic study of *isangoma* trance processes offers empirical grounding for these theoretical proposals. Through participant observation and embodied narrative analysis, Rogerson documents how trance states facilitate communication with ancestral presences and enable transformative healing work. Her analysis demonstrates that these experiences cannot be reduced to intrapsychic phenomena (as analytical psychology might be inclined to do) but involve a genuine encounter with otherness—whether understood psychologically, spiritually, or both.

Johnson (2020) offers both a critique and a reflection on what it means to be a "white Jungian" in the context of historical and structural racism. He argues that the notion

of a “non-racial” collective unconscious assumes that race does not affect psychological structures, while ignoring race in Jungian analysis perpetuates structural racism, and white discomfort in discussing race serves to maintain racial hierarchies. A radical revisioning of analytical psychology, integrating anti-racist perspectives, was called for by Johnson (2020), together with Jungians engaging more deeply with race, rather than adopting a colour-blind stance that ignores the ongoing impact of racism in the field.

The critiques of the two core texts used here, namely Jung (1998) and Edinger (1992), provide examples of some of the more general criticisms against the theory of analytical psychology, as well as specific criticisms of the central concept of individuation. Bidwell (2000) critically examined Jung’s autobiography through the lens of postmodernism, arguing that *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* presents Jung’s life as a coherent psychological journey, omits unflattering details, and fabricates certain aspects to construct a specific image of Jung. God is frequently mentioned in the book, but He is framed as an intrapsychic reality rather than a transcendent being.

Bidwell goes on to maintain that the omission of important relationships in the book creates an image of Jung as a solitary thinker, minimising the impact of social and intellectual relationships on his work (Bidwell, 2000). Jung also presents individuation as a deeply personal and solitary process. This lack of emphasis on communal aspects of individuation, in Bidwell’s view, weakens its applicability to religious and spiritual traditions that emphasise collective discernment.

Edinger’s interpretation of Jungian psychology has also been criticised. Firstly, Edinger is accused of over-intellectualising symbols (Winther, 2014). His tendency to reduce religious and alchemical symbols to rational and intellectual explanations was said to strip them of their transformative power. Symbols should be considered as pointing to deeper

mysteries beyond logical comprehension. Secondly, Edinger's ego-Self relationship axis is criticised as a misinterpretation of Jung's concept of individuation (Winther, 2014). Edinger is criticised for elevating the ego to a god-like status, arguing that individuation is about strengthening the ego. Jung's concept of individuation requires the ego to surrender to the Self, the totality of the psyche, and release it from its illusion of control (Jung, 1998).

Post-Jung and Other

Despite past and current criticisms of Jung's original work and the work others have developed from his theories, important current research continues to be conducted, not only within analytical psychology but also more broadly. Samuels (2017), for example, critiques modern political culture for its fragmentation and lack of spiritual depth, suggesting that depth psychology can provide insights into political renewal. He argues that politics and psychology are deeply interconnected, with struggles for identity, power, and meaning playing out on both personal and collective levels.

Then, Hauke (2017) would like to see the traditional Jungian binary of masculine and feminine psychology undergo critique, and gender viewed through a postmodern lens. He argues that cultural constructs of gender shape identity, and essentialist notions that link masculinity and femininity to inherent psychological traits and fixed archetypal opposites should be rejected in favour of a more fluid understanding of gender identity. Feminist and post-Jungian perspectives thus challenge Jung's original concepts in this regard.

Jung's ideas on the collective unconscious and archetypes can also be applied to humanitarian work (Kiehl et al., 2017), emphasising the role of psychology in broader social healing. The application of Jungian psychology to trauma survivors and those affected by collective adversity, such as war, displacement, and natural disasters, shows the importance

of concepts such as resilience and adaptability, and that those who experience trauma can grow through suffering.

Brewster (2017) examines the parallels between Jungian thought and African spiritual traditions and healing practices. They argue Jungian archetypes owe much to indigenous African wisdom and are critical of the erasure of African contributions in Western psychology. They call for African perspectives to be incorporated into, rather than marginalised, in Jungian psychology if it is to be decolonised.

The Problematic of the Other in Post-Jung post-modernist times

Saban (2011) and McMillan (2018) explore the complexities of the other in Jungian psychology in relation to postmodern thinking. Both authors address the limitations of interpretations that emphasise wholeness and integration at the expense of alterity and difference. Saban (2011) takes up the "problematic of the other" (p. 92) in analytical psychology and after examining this in the light of Levina's writings on otherness (Levina & Lingus, 1987 as cited in Saban, 2011), finds a revision through Derrida which "...suggests that the ambiguities and paradoxes which Jung insisted were intrinsic to his intuitions about the self-concept, have the potential to evoke a remarkably subtle vision of Selfhood manifesting within the very tensions generated between Same and Other" (p. 92). In other words, the Self is not achieved through the resolution or integration of opposites into a unified whole, but rather emerges dynamically within the ongoing tension and interplay between sameness and otherness, preserving difference rather than collapsing it into synthesis.

The conceptual intersections between Jung and Deleuze, particularly in relation to ideas of repetition, time, holistic relations and other are explored by McMillan (2018). They argue that Deleuze's concept of encounters that force thought, where the other is not a

fixed identity but an unfolding set of relations that disrupt habitual thinking, aligns with Jung's conceptualisation of the unconscious, synchronicity, and archetypes. These concepts of Jung point to other, not simply as an external presence, but a force that similarly disrupts and transforms thought.

Such examinations advocate for approaches that embrace ambiguity, paradox, and the inherent tensions between identity and difference, between other and same, between within and without.

Research Rationale

In summary Chapters 2 and 3 have presented the following context: an increased prevalence of phenomena of other, othering and otherness, internationally and locally; theoretical debates and some practice success related to these phenomena; a call for the integration of indigenous knowledge and indigenous healer systems, historically othered from the discipline of psychology; and the past and current efforts of analytical psychology in relation to indigenous healing systems and phenomena of other, othering and otherness. It was within this context that the following research focus and questions are located.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology of the study. The three research questions that guided the study, and which were first presented in Chapter 1, are repeated here for ease of reference for readers. These are followed by a discussion of the theoretical considerations that guided methodological decisions. Analytical psychology, and more specifically post-Jungian psychology, is then discussed in relation to the qualitative research approach and the theoretical paradigm of the research. The ontological and epistemological assumptions of the interpretivist approach are then considered, providing context for the decisions made regarding the study design, sampling strategies, data collection methods, and data analysis. The ethical considerations related to the start of the study and the research process follow. The demographic characteristics of the participants are then described, within the limits of privacy and confidentiality, to give some context to the findings presented in Chapters 5 and 6. The process of participant sampling, data collection and analysis is reflected upon. The chapter concludes with a discussion of researcher reflexivity and positionality, as well as the criteria used to establish the trustworthiness and value of the research findings.

Research Questions

Based on the research rationale framing this study, stated at the end of Chapter 3, the following research questions were formulated to guide it.

1. How do traditional healers make meaning of experiences and phenomena located by psychology within the constructs of other, othering and otherness?
2. How do traditional healers approach and work with such phenomena of other, othering and otherness, within themselves and their work with clients?

3. In what ways might such knowledge complement analytical psychological understandings of other, othering and otherness?

Theoretical Paradigm

Qualitative Research

At its broadest level, this is a qualitative research endeavour. Pervin & Mokhtar (2023) argue that the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research are complex, reflecting the diversity of approaches within this tradition, and debates continue around a consensus on a comprehensive definition. Creswell & Creswell (2018) define qualitative research by distinguishing it from quantitative research. They acknowledge that previous distinctions were framed in terms of using words (qualitative) rather than numbers (quantitative) or using open-ended questions and responses rather than closed-ended questions and responses. They then argue for a distinction in definition based on consideration of the basic philosophical assumptions researchers bring to the study, the types of research strategies employed, and the specific methods used in conducting these strategies.

Qualitative research is then defined as an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning groups or individuals ascribe to a human or social problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research process involves exploring questions and procedures that evolve during and through the process rather than adhering to predetermined ideas. The data is typically collected in the setting of the participants, and data analysis is usually inductively built from general and particular themes. The researcher interprets the meaning of the data, often focusing on individual meaning, and emphasises the importance of reporting on the complexity of the situation.

While grappling with the various specialised types or variants of qualitative research, Yin (2015) suggests considering five distinguishing features of qualitative research, rather than attempting to arrive at a simple definition of the approach. Firstly, qualitative research studies the meaning that people construct to make sense of their lives, in their roles, in the real world. Secondly, qualitative research aims to represent the views and perspectives of the people being studied. Thirdly, the approach explicitly attends to and accounts for contextual conditions of the real world. Fourthly, the research adds explanations of social behaviour and thinking, contributing insights from new or existing concepts. Lastly, qualitative research acknowledges the potential relevance of multiple sources of evidence, rather than relying solely on a single source.

Willig (2019) discusses the distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research, further differentiating qualitative research from other meaning-making activities, such as philosophy, literature, and journalism. Like Creswell & Creswell (2018) and Yin (2015), qualitative research is characteristically described for its focus on understanding human experiences, thoughts and behaviours, without relying on numerical data, and generating insights and meaning from people's lived and subjective experiences.

While philosophy, literature and journalism also explore human experiences, qualitative research is distinct due to its systematic methodology and its goal of contributing to a body of knowledge (Willig, 2019). A qualitative approach to research can provide in-depth, context-rich accounts that enhance understanding of psychological concepts or generate and refine theories based on data in relation to existing hypotheses, a characteristic also shared by quantitative research. This approach can further challenge the assumptions and dominant narratives within the field of psychology and other social sciences.

It was the meaning that participants in this study attributed to the phenomenon under question, in their roles as both traditional healers and individuals in the world, that formed the focus of the study. The findings of this study aim to present the views or perspectives of the participants. The context within which participants live and practice, as well as the broader national and international context in which this exploration took place, was also considered. Insights from the findings and literature related to the phenomenon under study form the basis of the discussion and contributions of the study. Besides considering participants' life histories and previous and current contexts, participants were presented with and responded to the findings from the data analysis of the first interviews during a follow-up interview.

Analytical Psychology and Research Paradigms

Given the theoretical context established in earlier chapters, this research is situated within the framework of analytical psychology. Cambray & Sawin (2018) discuss how research in analytical psychology has evolved historically, particularly in relation to Jung's own approach to research. Initially, Jung's research aligned more closely with the conventional research of the time. For example, his word association experiments at the Burghölzli psychiatric hospital provided empirical support for the construct of feeling-toned complexes, a key construct in the theory of analytical psychology (Jung, 1998).

As Jung's theory of analytical psychology developed, his research shifted towards subjective and symbolic material, such as myths, dreams, and alchemical texts (Cambray & Sawin, 2018). His work on *The Red Book* illustrates his turn toward experiential and introspective methods (Stein, 2019).

Analytical Psychology, after Jung, however, did not establish a strong tradition of systematic research, unlike other psychological schools such as behavioural or cognitive

psychology (Cambray & Sawin, 2018). However, recent research trends in analytical psychology are revisiting Jung's research legacy by integrating qualitative methodologies with insights from anthropology, neuroscience, and complexity theory, and are trying to bridge Jung's depth psychology with contemporary scientific inquiry.

To support the epistemological assumptions of the conceptual frameworks discussed in chapters 2 and 3, this research is situated more specifically within a post-Jungian approach.

Navigating Post-Jungian and Postmodernism Tensions. This positioning requires explicit engagement with tensions between analytical psychology and postmodern epistemology. Nelson (2018) explores the intersection of Jungian psychology and postmodern thought, noting that postmodernism's emphasis on pluralism, fluidity, and deconstruction of grand narratives challenges analytical psychology's structural commitments to archetypes, the collective unconscious, and universal psychic patterns.

The Core Tensions. The fundamental tension lies in analytical psychology's commitment to imagined depth structures (the unconscious, archetypes, and the Self) versus postmodernism's scepticism toward essentialist claims and fixed structures. Postmodernism foregrounds language, discourse, and social construction, questioning whether "depth" exists beneath cultural discourse or whether the psyche is entirely discursively produced (Hauke, 2000). Analytical psychology risks appearing as a modernist grand narrative imposing universal categories onto culturally specific experiences.

For this research, this tension is particularly acute, and the following questions might be posed: Are Traditional Healers' experiences of ancestral presences "real" encounters with archetypal figures, or are they culturally constructed performances shaped by

discourse and training? Can analytical psychology concepts illuminate Traditional Healing without colonising it through Western universalist assumptions?

Post-Jungian Resolution Strategies. Post-Jungian scholarship has developed strategies for engaging with postmodernism productively while retaining the core insights of analytical psychology (Hauke, 2000; Nelson, 2018; Samuels, 2004), as described in three ways below.

From Universal to Pluriversal: Rather than claiming archetypes are universal structures, post-Jungian approaches recognise archetypes as patterns of meaning-making (Nelson, 2018) that manifest differently across cultures. Archetypes become heuristic concepts for recognising recurrent patterns, not essentialist claims about fixed psychic structures.

From Fixed to Emergent: Influenced by complexity theory (Cambray, 2009), post-Jungian approaches reconceptualise the psyche as an emergent, self-organising system rather than a fixed structure. Archetypal patterns emerge from the interactions between biology, psychology, culture, and context—neither seen as purely universal nor purely constructed.

From Depth to Depth-and-Discourse: Post-Jungian approaches recognise that depth (unconscious, symbolic) and surface (discourse, social construction) phenomena are mutually constitutive. Language shapes experience, yet experience exceeds the boundaries of language, revealing a both/and relationship rather than an either/or opposition.

This Research's Navigation Strategy. This research navigates the tensions between post-Jungian and postmodernism through "critical analytical psychology" (Nelson, 2018)—retaining core commitments (unconscious processes, symbolic meaning, transformative potential), while embracing postmodern insights (situated knowledge, power relations,

epistemological humility, multiple interpretations). The specific strategies that informed this research are reflected in five key aspects.

Theoretical Humility: Analytical psychology concepts are offered as interpretive possibilities, not definitive truths. Where Traditional Healing knowledge challenges Jungian frameworks, this is acknowledged and explored.

Epistemological Pluralism: Traditional Healing epistemologies are honoured as legitimate alongside analytical psychology. Neither is privileged as the "explanatory" framework.

Reflexive Application: Analytical psychology's own shadows—colonial projections (Brooke, 2008) and Eurocentric assumptions—are examined critically through a decolonial lens.

Pragmatic Integration: Rather than resolving theoretical tensions definitively, the research asks: What interpretive work do analytical psychology concepts enable? What do they obscure? When are they helpful?

Remaining Productive Tensions: Some tensions remain unresolved. For example, are ancestral presences "real" or constructed? Are archetypes universal or Western projections? These are treated as generative rather than problematic, maintaining epistemological openness.

Complexity Theory as Bridge. To mitigate further tensions with postmodernism, the post-Jungian approach is considered within the framework of complexity theory, which is becoming a major focus in analytical psychology research (Cambray, 2018). Main (2018), advocates for detailed comparative and historical studies to assess the extent to which pre-modern, esoteric, and non-Western sources influenced Jung's formulation of synchronicity, the simultaneous occurrence of a certain psychic state with one or more external events

that appear as meaningful parallels. He further incorporates concepts from complexity science in the study of synchronistic phenomena to understand acausality, improbability, and the meanings of simultaneous events.

Hogenson (2018) probes the intersections of Jungian psychology, Tibetan Buddhism, and mathematical structures in the process of individuation. He critiques Jung's tendency to view the Bardo experience (the intermediate state of consciousness between death and rebirth) primarily through a Western, depth-psychological lens from within its original Buddhist framework. Parallels between the transformation of the self in Jungian individuation and the transitional states described in the Bardo are acknowledged. Mathematical and geometric models, such as complex systems theory, are suggested as a more rigorous framework for studying individuation and could lead to a more comprehensive theory of this process that bridges Eastern and Western perspectives on transformation and consciousness.

Lastly, Cambray's (2018) work presents an innovative synthesis of analytical psychology, complexity science, and ecological thought. He applies complexity theory to analytical psychology, showing how emergent patterns and self-organisation in nature can parallel the psychological processes described by Jung. He frames Jungian concepts, such as the collective unconscious and archetypes, as arising from the self-organising principles observed in natural systems, suggesting that the psyche operates as a complex system, dynamically responding to both internal and external influences.

Cambray (2018) believes that a complex systems approach "...requires multiple research vertices to contribute to our understanding of knowledge in ways that transgress traditional academic disciplinary lines" (p. 116). Such an approach highlights the interconnectedness of "...many facets of reality previously treated in isolation."

Paradigmatic Coherence: Integration and Alignment. The preceding discussion establishes this research within multiple nested paradigms. This final subsection demonstrates the coherence and alignment between these paradigms.

In terms of paradigm hierarchy, at the broadest level, qualitative research shapes the choice of words over numbers and meaning over measurement. Within this framework, interpretivism provides philosophical foundations, establishing that multiple realities exist and that knowledge is co-constructed between the researcher and participants (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). Analytical psychology serves as a specific disciplinary lens, providing concrete theoretical concepts (such as archetypes, the collective unconscious, and individuation) and interpretive strategies for understanding symbolic meaning in participants' experiences (Nelson, 2018). Post-Jungian approaches address potential tensions between classical Jungian universalism and postmodern cultural specificity by embracing theoretical humility—treating Jungian concepts as interpretive tools rather than absolute truths—and complexity thinking that honours context-dependent, non-linear understandings (Cambray & Sawin, 2018). Decolonial ethics operates as the ethical framework ensuring respectful engagement with traditional healing epistemologies, recognising them as complete knowledge systems rather than merely data sources, and guarding against extractive or appropriative research practices (Berg, 2012). Each level remains consistent with those above and shapes the implementation of those below.

These paradigms cohere through shared commitments: Multiple realities (interpretivism's social construction, post-Jungian cultural specificity, decolonial epistemological pluralism); Co-construction of knowledge (interpretivism's researcher-participant interaction, analytical psychology's relational knowing, decolonial collaboration); Reflexivity (interpretivism's subjectivity, analytical psychology's countertransference,

decolonial power awareness); Depth and complexity (interpretivism's layered meaning, analytical psychology's unconscious dimensions, decolonial historical consciousness).

Even with the theoretical coherence established above, significant tensions persist among the frameworks employed. Three contradictions are particularly salient: analytical psychology's emphasis on stable psychological structures (archetypes, complexes) stands in tension with postmodernism's understanding of identity and meaning as fluid and discursively constructed; depth psychology's focus on intrapsychic processes and individual development contrasts with Ubuntu philosophy's relational ontology, which locates selfhood in communal bonds rather than individual interiority; and the universalist claims of archetypal theory conflict with anthropological and postcolonial emphases on cultural specificity and the dangers of ethnocentric generalization.

These tensions are not resolved definitively within this study. Rather, they are held in productive relation to one another throughout the research process. Maintaining rather than collapsing these contradictions serves multiple methodological functions: fostering epistemological humility by acknowledging that no single theoretical perspective offers complete understanding; sustaining openness to empirical findings that may challenge or exceed existing frameworks; preventing premature interpretive closure that would reduce complex phenomena to overly simplified explanations; and maintaining ethical accountability by keeping visible the power dynamics, cultural assumptions, and representational limitations embedded in all interpretive acts (Willig, 2019).

Paradigmatic alignment shaped concrete methodological choices: semi-structured interviews (Kvale, 1999; Smith, 1995)(interpretivist flexibility, post-Jungian depth, decolonial participant control); reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021a) (interpretivist researcher-as-instrument, analytical psychology attention to symbols, decolonial respect for

participants' language); extensive quotations and multiple interpretations (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021d) (interpretivist meaning plurality, post-Jungian theoretical humility, decolonial indigenous authority).

The research paradigm is thus philosophically grounded in interpretivism (Goldkuhl, 2012), theoretically informed by post-Jungian analytical psychology, and ethically committed to decolonial principles. It is methodologically coherent across these commitments—plural yet integrated, sophisticated yet practical, and rigorous yet humble.

Within the above context, the exploratory nature of the research questions, along with Yin's (2015) practical, inductive, and non-linear adaptive approach to qualitative research, informed the methodological decisions described in the next section.

An Interpretivist Research Paradigm

An interpretivist research paradigm was employed as the overarching framework, given its emphasis on socially constructed realities and subjective meaning-making in the world (Gichuru, 2017). The adoption of this paradigm necessitates an explicit articulation of its underlying philosophical assumptions, particularly regarding the nature of reality and the generation of knowledge.

Ontological Assumptions of Interpretivism

Reality is Socially Constructed and Context-Dependent. Interpretivism operates within a constructivist ontology, knowledge and reality being actively constructed through human engagement (Goldkuhl, 2012). Interpretivism asserts that reality is created through social interaction and shared meaning (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022), thereby rejecting the idea of a single, objective reality. Hiller (2016) asserts that socially reality is shaped by human experiences and cultural contexts and that this is a continuous process; it is not a given or fixed reality. These authors present a unified core thesis about interpretivism: reality is

constructed rather than discovered, and human activity is central to this construction. However, they offer complementary emphases: Goldkuhl (2012) provides philosophical grounding, Pervin & Mokhtar (2022) stress the social and intersubjective nature, and Hiller (2016) adds a dynamic, processual dimension that highlights ongoing change rather than static construction.

Multiple Realities Exist. Since reality is socially constructed, it is said that there are multiple coexisting realities rather than a single universal truth (Hiller, 2016). This is sometimes referred to as relativism, where each interpretation of reality is subjective and context-specific, shaped by history, culture, and individual perspectives.

Reality is Best Understood from Within. From an interpretivist perspective, subjectivity is inherent in research; thus, reality can only be understood from the perspective of those who experience it (Gichuru, 2017). The idea of the detached, external observation of positivism is consequently rejected. Researchers must immerse themselves in the social worlds of participants (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022) and interpret meaning based on human interactions, cultural backgrounds and experiences.

Epistemological Assumptions of Interpretivism

Knowledge is Subjective and Co-Constructed. Through human social engagement and interpretation, knowledge is constructed, not discovered (Hiller, 2016). Researchers cannot detach themselves from their beliefs and values, and subjectivity is therefore inherent in knowledge production (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2023). Co-constructed knowledge emerges from interaction with participants, rather than from observation.

Understanding is Based on Interpretation. The researcher's awareness of their influence on the research is crucial to ensure transparency and credibility (Goldkuhl, 2012). Knowledge is acquired through interpretation, and researchers engage in interpretive

analysis to understand the potential meanings behind human experiences and actions (Gichuru, 2017). The researcher is an integral part of the knowledge-creation process (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022), which involves dialogue, interactions, and the negotiation of meaning between the researcher and participants (Gichuru, 2017).

Ethical Considerations

An ethics protocol for this study was reviewed and approved by the Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee (RU-HREC), and an approval letter (Review Reference: 2019-0537-649) was issued (Appendix A) before any engagement with potential participants. RU-HREC is an independent standing committee of the university and is accredited by the Department of Health's National Health Research Ethics Council (Hayward & Nkosi, 2024). The policies of RU-HREC are aligned with the Rhodes University Research Ethics Policy, Research Ethics Procedures and Practices, as well as the National Health Act No. 61 of 2003, and the Department of Health's Ethics in Health Research Guidelines of 2015 and 2023.

The ethics protocol outlined the purpose of the research, the method of data collection, and the type of sample. A comprehensive description of the proposed nature of the interactions with potential participants, including their frequency and duration, as well as the procedures involved, was provided. The proposed sampling and recruitment strategy, along with the specific characteristics of the participants, were then discussed, followed by considerations regarding privacy and confidentiality. The potential risks and benefits to participants were clearly outlined, and data management strategies were detailed. The informed consent form, information letter to potential participants, and interview schedules for the initial and follow-up interviews were attached.

Before the commencement of the interviews, participants signed a voluntary consent form to participate in the study and were able to withdraw at any point before the data was analysed. The possibility of both professional insult and emotional activation was discussed with participants. Remedial measures, such as contacting collegial networks for support or the researcher and principal investigator, were discussed. Additionally, the researcher tracked the emotional responses of participants during the interview and explored emotional reactions as part of the process, serving as a validation of the responses. Participants were given the option to pause or stop the interview when particular distressing responses were noted.

The privacy of participants and the confidentiality of the information they shared were discussed. Pseudonyms were used for the participants, and any information about a participant's particular characteristics or work that they wanted to remain protected was disguised so as to be unrecognisable to the general reader. Identifying demographic characteristics and the manner in which they would be presented were negotiated with each participant. During the follow-up interview, the content of the informed consent form was again highlighted, and any potential representational issues related to participant characteristics or shared information were addressed.

The audio recordings of the first interviews and follow-up interviews were uploaded to a cloud storage system that uses end-to-end encryption, and the files were further password-protected. This original data will not be available for re-analysis but will be stored for five years following the completion of the study.

A Case Study Design

A qualitative case study design was chosen as it allowed for "... an in-depth, intensive and sharply focused exploration of such an occurrence (experiences)" (Willig, 2013: p.299, parenthesis added), in this case, participants' perceptions of particular phenomena or experiences. A case study design is particularly sensitive to the context of participants (Bromley, 1986) and enables a detailed description of phenomena within that context (Willig, 2013).

Willig's (2013) categorisation of the different types of case study design was viewed as occurring on a continuum rather than as exclusive choice categories, in line with a more adaptive approach (Yin, 2015). As such, the case study design was used as more instrumental than intrinsic (Stake, 2005). A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure participants could illuminate the phenomenon of interest while preserving the integrity of each case as a unit of analysis worthy of individual attention. It was more a single-case study design, with multiple participants, than a multiple-case study design (Yin, 1994). Comparison of data only occurred during analysis and upon completion of data collection, not during data gathering. Participants' data are presented as more descriptive than explanatory (Bromley, 1986). These include a detailed description of the phenomena explored within context, but explanatory frameworks were also generated. Lastly, a more naturalistic than pragmatic approach was taken to the cases under study (Chamberlain et al., 2004). Each participant was approached with "open-mindedness", and patterns and formulations were identified from the data. At the same time, the approach maintained a focus determined by the research questions and the context of the theoretical frameworks.

Participant Sampling and Recruitment Strategy

Hamel (1993) distinguishes between the object of study as the phenomenon(a) of interest and the case as the person. Verbal data of perceptions (the object of study) sought from traditional healers (the cases), both formed the units of analysis. It was decided to recruit between eight to ten traditional healers for the study. The sample size was deemed consistent with in-depth qualitative research at this level, providing sufficient diversity for data analysis and the presentation of findings (Smith, 1995).

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants. Bryman (2012) characterises purposive sampling as a non-probability sampling technique, where the researcher determines the strategy to recruit participants relevant to the research question, with consideration of maximising variation between participants. Variety was considered in terms of the differing schools of training, additional training, and roles related to healing practices, as well as the rural and urban settings in which these practices were applied. Additionally, snowballing, a further non-probability sampling technique, was employed. This method involves initial participants referring the researcher to other potential participants within their network, creating a chain of referral that expands the sample size (Willig, 2008). Snowballing was deemed especially advantageous as it was identified that some potential participants would be difficult to identify or contact through conventional means.

Participant Sampling and Recruitment Process

An existing collegial network was initially approached for the recruitment of trained and experienced traditional healers. Eight traditional healers from this network were contacted via email. This email explained the focus of the study and provided an idea of the time commitment required for participation. An offer to send an information sheet on the

study and answer any questions during the process of considering whether to participate or not in the study was also extended. Four of the eight initial potential participants agreed to participate in the study without asking for any further clarification on the research. Of the four potential participants who declined, two did not respond to further follow-up emails. The third potential participant cited work commitments and pressures as reasons for being unable to participate in the study. The fourth potential participant who declined did not want to be the "subject" of academic research again; they spoke of negative experiences in the past when they were a participant in other studies.

The four initial participants who agreed to be in the study were sent an information letter on the research (Appendix B) and a copy of the informed consent form (Appendix C). They were also asked at this time for other contacts within their respective networks whom they thought would be suitable and willing to participate in the study. They were asked to forward my details and the information about the study to these traditional healers. This snowballing strategy yielded another eight potential participants. It was from this group that another five participants agreed to participate in the study. The three potential participants, who ultimately did not participate, initially responded to telephonic and SMS text contacts. Interviews were scheduled with two of the potential participants. The first potential participant did not attend the first interview and rescheduled. The rescheduled interview was also not attended, and there was no further response from telephonic or text messaging. The second potential participant attended the scheduled interview but received a telephonic call from their trainer before it started. They requested withdrawal from further participation as their trainer did not support their involvement in the study. The third potential participant did not respond to further telephonic or text messages.

Of the five traditional healers who agreed to participate in this next round of recruitment, two were approached in person and with the assistance of a language translator.

The Participants

The nine participants are presented in the order in which they participated in the study. The demographic details are defined according to the most recent statistical characteristics of a population in a given area at a specified time, as determined by the Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa (www.gov.za, n.d.). Urban, semi-rural, and rural areas are defined in terms of population density, infrastructure level, and available resources within an area. The demographic details to be included and how they would be presented were determined through negotiation with the participants to maintain confidentiality.

Participant 1. Participant 1 identifies as male. He was part of the second sampling strategy and came from a referral from one of the initial traditional healers. He is within the age range of 40-50 years. He stays and works predominantly in a rural part of the Eastern Cape, but also travels to urban areas around South Africa for work. He is connected to a network of traditional healers in his community, as well as to those who practice in urban areas. It is referrals from this latter network that require him to travel to urban areas and work there at times. He is of mixed amaXhosa and amaZulu descent and, as such, trained as a traditional healer at an amaZulu training school. He has a tertiary education, with an undergraduate degree from a Humanities Faculty. He has worked as a traditional healer for over fifteen years. He is fluent in English, isiXhosa, and isiZulu.

Participant 2. Participant 2 identifies as female. She was also part of the second sampling strategy and was referred to the study by another traditional healer. She is within

the age range of 70-80 years. She stays and works within a rural part of the Eastern Cape, where she was born and has always lived. She is well-connected to a network of traditional healers in her area and neighbouring villages. She is of amaXhosa descent and trained at an amaXhosa training school. She has some primary school education. She has worked as a traditional healer for over forty years. She is fluent in isiXhosa.

Participant 3. Participant 3 identifies as female. She was part of the initial group of four traditional healers from a collegial network who agreed to participate in the study. She is within the age range of 60-70 years. She lives predominantly in a rural part of the Eastern Cape, in the village where she was born. She practices within this village, but also works in semi-rural and urban settings. She is connected to traditional healers across the country and has facilitated the networking of traditional healers within her village through the formation of a centre for practice and more general skills training for the area. She is of amaXhosa descent and trained at an amaXhosa training school. She has postgraduate tertiary education and has worked as a traditional healer for over twenty years. She is fluent in English and isiXhosa.

Participant 4. Participant 4 identifies as female. She was referred to the study by another traditional healer who was already participating in the study. She is within the age range of 60-70 years. She lives and practices in a rural part of the Eastern Cape, in a village where she grew up and spent most of her life. She is well known in the village, but is not connected to any network of traditional healers. She is of amaXhosa descent and trained at an amaXhosa training school. She has some secondary school education. She has worked as a traditional healer for over forty years. She is fluent in isiXhosa.

Participant 5. Participant 5 identifies as female. She was one of the initial four participants who agreed to participate in the study. She is within the age range of 70-80

years. She lives in an urban area, in the city where she grew up and has spent most of her life. She has practised within semi-rural and urban settings. She is no longer connected to a network of traditional healers. She is of mixed European descent, third-generation South African, and trained at an amaZulu training school. She completed the majority of secondary school education. She worked as a traditional healer during her training for four years, but is no longer active. She is fluent in English and isiZulu.

Participant 6. Participant 6 identifies as female. She was one of the initial four participants who agreed to participate in the study. She is within the age range of 50-60 years. She lives within an urban area, in a large city. She grew up in another province and has lived in a variety of semi-rural and urban areas. She has practised in semi-rural settings, but now predominantly works as a traditional healer in an urban setting. She is connected to a network of traditional healers within this urban setting, as well as in the semi-rural areas where she has previously stayed. She is of amaXhosa descent and trained at an amaXhosa training school. She has postgraduate tertiary qualifications. She has worked as a traditional healer for over fifteen years. She is fluent in English and isiXhosa.

Participant 7. Participant 7 identifies as female. She was referred to the study by another traditional healer. She is within the age range of 30-40 years. She lives within a semi-rural area of the Eastern Cape in the town where she grew up. She practices within this semi-rural area and has practised in the rural areas where she has attended training. She has some connection to other traditional healers in her area. She is of amaXhosa descent and has attended amaXhosa training schools. She has postgraduate tertiary education. She has worked as a traditional healer, drawing on her training from three different schools, for over five years. She is fluent in English and isiXhosa.

Participant 8. Participant 8 identifies as female. She was one of the initial four participants who agreed to participate in the study. She is within the age range of 60-70 years. She lives within a semi-rural area of the Eastern Cape, in a town. She works within this town and the surrounding semi-rural areas, as well as the rural area from which she originates. She is connected to a network of traditional healers within the province. She is of amaXhosa descent and trained at an amaXhosa training school. She has postgraduate tertiary education. She recently completed her training, and, in addition to her work during training, has practised for over five years. She is fluent in English and isiXhosa.

Participant 9. Participant 9 identifies as male. He was referred to the study by another traditional healer who was already part of the study. He is within the age range of 20-30 years. He currently resides in a semi-rural area and town in the Eastern Cape but is originally from an urban city. He works within the semi-rural area where he lives and occasionally in the rural area of his training school. He is of amaXhosa descent and trained at an amaXhosa training school. He has a tertiary undergraduate education. He has worked as a traditional healer for over five years as part of his training. He is fluent in English and isiXhosa.

As can be seen from the descriptions above, the participants recruited had a large age range, and many had roots in rural areas. They also have diverse formal educational backgrounds, ranging from primary school to postgraduate tertiary levels. The majority identify as amaXhosa, and most were fluent in English, with a translator required in two cases.

Data Collection Strategy

Data collection took place in two phases.

Phase One. Phase one was the primary data collection phase. Semi-structured interviews were used as a means of data collection. An interview schedule was used to guide the focus of the contact (Appendix D). Kvale's (1999) comparison of the psychoanalytic interview and qualitative research guided the depth and breadth of exploration with participants. Participants were asked to participate in an initial interview and a follow-up interview, each possibly lasting between 45 and 90 minutes. Both interviews were face-to-face and took place at a venue of the participants' choosing. Participants were given the option to use a translator.

Phase Two. Phase two was the secondary data collection phase. These follow-up interviews aligned with Smith's (1995) more interactive approach to participants in qualitative research and formed part of the triangulation characteristic of case study design (Yin, 1994, 2015). Follow-up interviews in qualitative research, or member-checking, were first popularized by Lincoln & Guba (1985). Traditionally, participants were given transcripts of the first interview for checking. Mckim & Mckim's (2023) review of this traditional approach found that participants rarely provided substantial feedback, most appeared unmotivated to review long transcripts, and sometimes what was initially disclosed caused further distress on review. In light of these findings, their proposed structured approach for member checking was used to guide this second phase.

Participants were asked for a general reflection on the first interview. They were then shown a draft of the data analysis on a laptop of their own interview and asked for comments on how accurately the findings captured their experiences. They were then asked for comment on ideas mentioned by others, upon which they had not initially

commented. These follow-up interviews were also planned to take place in person, at a venue of their choice, and with a translator if needed.

Data Collection Process

Phase One. All participants received a copy of the informed consent form and an information letter prior to the interviews. At the start of each interview, the informed consent form was discussed and signed. All interviews were conducted by the researcher and audio recorded. Participant 1 was interviewed first at his place of practice in the village where he lives. As it was the first interview and he is fluent in English and isiXhosa, he was asked for additional feedback on the interview process. In particular, he was asked to comment on the appropriateness of the questions asked in relation to the research questions. He was also asked about the accessibility and relevance of the questions to a traditional healer and traditional healing practices. Lastly, he was asked about possible translation issues, for example, whether a translator should be used for future interviews. His responses did not require any alteration to the interview schedule.

The interviews with participants 2 and 4 were conducted with the use of a translator. The same translator was used because both participants spoke isiXhosa and were from a similar area. The translator had a background in traditional healing and tertiary education. The informed consent form was read through and translated before the interviews started. Participant 2 was interviewed at the practice of another traditional healer. Participant 4 was interviewed at their family home.

Participants 3 and 5 were interviewed at their homes. Participant 6 was interviewed at her urban practice. Participant 7 was interviewed at a neutral venue in the closest town to her practice. Participants 8 and 9 were interviewed at a venue within a tertiary institution in the town where they reside.

All the interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, and participants were informed to expect further contact for the follow-up interview. The purpose of this follow-up interview, to discuss the initial understandings shared in the first interview and provide further comments, was reiterated.

Phase Two. After the initial analysis of all the data, face-to-face follow-up interviews were scheduled with participants. Efforts were made to follow the order of the initial interviews by arranging suitable timeframes between travel. At the start of each follow-up interview, participants were asked to share any further reflections on the content discussed in the initial interview. All participants were then shown the initial findings on a laptop computer, which were presented within the NVivo 12 computer software package. This software facilitated easy movement between general and specific findings related to the participant and their direct quotations. It also allowed for an overview of the general findings across participants' data sets. Participants were asked if the findings accurately captured what they had said, and if anything needed to be changed, in terms of additions or removals. They were also asked to reflect on areas that others had mentioned, which were not part of their initial transcripts.

Participants 1, 2, and 4 had face-to-face follow-up interviews. The same translator was used for the follow-up interviews with participants 2 and 4. The further scheduled face-to-face interviews with other participants were placed on hold as South Africa went into its first national lockdown on 27 March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the various levels of lockdown and restrictions on travel that persisted over the next 6 months, and with no clear end in sight, it was decided to conduct the follow-up interviews via online and telephonic platforms.

The other six participants were then contacted to arrange an online platform or a telephonic contact of their choice, and a brief report of their initial findings was emailed. Participants 3, 5, and 8 had follow-up interviews on WhatsApp video call. Participant 6 met for a follow-up on Zoom, and participants 7 and 9 had telephonic follow-up interviews. All interviews were recorded.

Data Analysis Strategy

In line with data collection, the data analysis occurred in two phases.

Phase 1. It was decided that data transcription would take place once all nine initial interviews had been conducted. This was done to minimise the influence of data from participants already interviewed on that from participants still to be interviewed. By delaying transcription until a full set of interviews is concluded, researchers can engage in prolonged listening that captures the full communicative context before committing to a textual representation that may constrain subsequent analysis (Wellard & McKenna, 2001). The data were transcribed in a play-script style and analysed using Thematic Analysis (Yin, 2015).

Thematic Analysis, more specifically Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021a), is deemed to be compatible with the theoretical paradigm and previous methodological decisions outlined above. Given the theoretical flexibility of Thematic Analysis, it allowed the researcher to employ the method because it was coherent with the chosen theoretical positions, and to make a series of decisions before data analysis that were in line with this position (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021a, 2021c). Themes are presented as a detailed and nuanced account of participants' experiences and reflections. Patterns within the data were identified through an inductive approach rather than a deductive one, allowing the themes identified to be strongly linked to the data itself. The themes were

identified more at a latent or interpretative level than at a semantic level. There was consideration of the surface meanings of the data, but primarily the focus was on the underlying ideas, conceptualisations, and assumptions.

Data analysis followed the guidelines for analysis as proposed and summarised in six steps by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87): "familiarising yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report". NVivo12 computer software was used to support the thematic analysis. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software that enables the organisation, analysis, and visualisation of data sets through the use of coding levels for data segments within each participant's data set and across all data sets.

Phase 2. As with Phase 1, transcription of the follow-up interviews occurred only after all nine interviews had been completed. The same data analysis strategy used in Phase 1 was applied to this data set, and patterns in the data were identified independently of the initial analysis, as a period of time had elapsed between the two processes. However, given that the follow-up interviews were largely structured around the initial themes, analysis was also guided by the identified themes, regardless of their relation to the first phase of analysis.

Data Analysis Process

Phase 1. Audio recordings of the initial interviews were sent to an independent third party for transcription. The transcription company offered transcription in all major African languages and had strict security and confidentiality procedures and platforms. Transcriptions of recordings were checked by a second and senior transcriber before being finalised. Any inaudible sections of the recordings were highlighted, and a time stamp was added to the transcript. Participants 2 and 4's transcripts included the translator. These

recordings were transcribed "as is" initially, then the isiXhosa sections were translated and back-translated. Back translation, also known as reverse translation, enables a comparison of the original language with the source text (Behr, 2017).

Since the researcher was not involved in the transcription of the data, initial familiarisation with the data occurred through reading and re-reading each transcript and listening to the audio recordings of the interviews. Initial notes or marking of ideas for coding were made. Transcripts were then uploaded into NVivo12, and the data were coded for initial codes, or any feature of the data that appeared as a basic segment that could be accessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon of interest.

Initial codes related to issues of the early and later identity of participants, the "calling" they had experienced, issues in relation to family, society, and other traditional healers. Other codes related to the participants' work, namely, the use of ritual, confrontation, awareness, and medicine. Lastly, codes were identified that relate to the past and current contexts of South Africa, as well as ideas related to Ubuntu and individualism.

Once all the data had been coded, potential themes were identified. Consideration was given to how the different codes could be combined to form themes, and tables and mind maps were used to visually represent the data. At this stage, care was taken not to discard any possibility but to remain open to any potential themes.

The initial codes related to identity appeared clustered around two broader areas, namely agency over these experiences or a lack thereof. The codes related to family, society, other traditional healers, and the work of traditional healers appeared clustered around external experiences in the world. The codes related to reflections on the

prevalence of othering in South Africa and the world appeared clustered around the history of South Africa and globalisation trends.

These initial themes were reviewed, and all the collated extracts for each theme were considered in terms of the coherence of the pattern across each theme. The entire data set was then reviewed in relation to these initial themes to determine if the themes were consistent with the rest of the data and to code any additional data that may have supported the theme, which had been missed in the initial coding. The themes were then defined and named, reviewed in discussion with the research supervisor, and an initial framework was ready for the follow-up interviews.

The final themes and subthemes form the content of the findings discussion in chapters 5 and 6.

Phase 2. The same process was followed for the transcription of the follow-up interviews. Familiarisation with the second data set occurred again through reading and re-reading of the transcripts and a review of the audio recordings. The analysis of this second data set occurred on two levels. Firstly, it was analysed independently from the initial data set. Codes were generated, and themes and subthemes were identified. However, given that the follow-up interviews were structured in relation to the initial analysis, the codes, themes, and subthemes were then compared to the analysis of the first interviews. No new themes or subthemes were identified within the second data set. However, the analysis of the second dataset helped refine the definitions of the main themes and their subthemes. Excerpts to support the existing thematic framework were coded as part of the second interview in NVivo 12 to facilitate the reporting of the findings.

Shifting from Other, Otherness, and Othering to Alterity and Othering

During the interviews and through the analysis of the data, it became clear that participants often treated the constructs of other and otherness interchangeably. At this point, following the identification of themes and subthemes, a decision was made to implement a conceptual shift. After a consideration of the theoretical and practical advantages other and otherness were thus shifted to the construct of alterity.

While participants' conflation of other and otherness in the data reveals the practical ambiguity of these terms, there are theoretical reasons to support this refinement. Alterity avoids the binary logic inherent in other and otherness. Traditional uses of otherness often reinforce a same and other dichotomy that can reify difference and obscure relationality. In contrast, alterity "does not do away with the other through negation or neutralisation" but instead "engages alterity as a reconfiguring of identities that keeps them open to change" (Weiss, 2015, p. 78). The recognition that "otherness itself is not absolute but is a chiasm of alterity and similitude" (Peeren & Horstkotte, 2007, p. 12) provides an analytical framework where difference and resemblance coexist dynamically. This moves beyond static categorisation toward understanding identity as a processual and relational concept.

Methodologically, alterity guides more reflexive and ethically engaged research practices. The concept supports concrete ethnographic strategies for addressing ontological alterity that acknowledge radically different worldviews (Horstkotte & Peeren, 2007), and it anchors critical qualitative projects that "rehabilitate and give voice to marginalised groups" (Muhammad, 2023, p. 312). By retaining othering (the process of creating difference) while shifting to alterity (the philosophical and relational nature of difference itself), a more analytically sharp and ethically responsive framework was gained.

Researcher Reflexivity and Positionality Considerations

Researcher reflexivity is emphasised as a crucial aspect of any qualitative research, ensuring its integrity, transparency, and depth of findings (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Willig, 2008). It involves acknowledging the researcher's role in shaping the data collected, analysis, and interpretation (Yin, 2015), thereby promoting a deeper understanding of the research findings and their context. Reflexivity aligns further with interpretivist approaches and their emphasis on research as a co-constructed process between the researcher and participants (Bryman, 2012).

Braun & Clarke (2013) and Willig (2013) distinguish two primary forms or types of reflexivity. Personal reflexivity involves considering one's own experiences, values, and identity, as well as how these aspects have influenced the research. Epistemological reflexivity involves considering how the theoretical and methodological choices made in research influence the knowledge produced. Reflexivity, as an ongoing process, is further emphasised, with researchers actively engaging in self-questioning about their possible biases and assumptions. Yin (2015) advises researchers to maintain a reflexive journal to document personal assumptions, biases, and evolving perspectives throughout the research process.

Braun & Clarke (2013) link researcher positionality to the broader concept of researcher reflexivity. The active role of the researcher in influencing the research process is further emphasised. Besides the design and interpretation issues discussed above, the effect of positionality on the power dynamics between researcher and participants is highlighted. Researchers should thus be aware of how their social position might influence the way participants perceive them and the responses they get from participants. The recognition of one's positionality enables researchers to critically reflect on their

interpretations and emphasises that researchers construct themes, rather than themes "emerging" based on their perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2021b).

Positionality considerations were further guided by Milner's (2007) examination of the critical role of race and culture in research. While navigating the complexities of race and culture in research is acknowledged, researchers are called on to move beyond "colour-blind" approaches and to actively consider the role of race and culture in their work. Both the researcher's positionality, in terms of their own racial and cultural identities and its influence on the research, and ongoing reflection on the broader systemic issues of race and racism are emphasised.

Reflexive Note. I am a White male who grew up under apartheid in South Africa. Alterity and othering were part of my experience in relation to the other racial groups within the country. I am a child of an English mother, a possibly fourth-generation British settler with British, Irish, and Scottish ancestry; and an Afrikaans father, possibly connected to the French Huguenots, who settled in SA from 1688, with Dutch, French, and German ancestry.

In the 1970s in SA, a marriage between a White English and a White Afrikaans person was not common; these languages were associated with different social cultures with different traditions. I was brought up English, and attended English schooling. We spent equal social time with both sides of the extended family, and my identity was rooted in both social cultures. My school peers were predominantly associated with the social culture of the White English of SA. I was sometimes seen as an anomaly and experienced a sense of separateness in relation to my peers.

It was only in 1991, when I was in grade 10, that the first Black pupils were admitted to the high school I attended. While I had social contacts with people from various cultures

in SA throughout my childhood, it was the first time I shared the educational and extracurricular activities of the school with people besides my White peers. On leaving high school, I started my studies in psychology and social work. With the practical components of social work, I worked within the lower socio-economic areas of the city I grew up in. As a clinical psychologist, I have worked equally within the private and public sectors throughout my career.

My race, English, and Afrikaans cultural backgrounds are deeply connected to the shadow of SA in terms of colonialism and apartheid. I am not aware of any active role the family generations before me in SA played in this shadow, but they did live within it and benefited from it. My childhood and family's socioeconomic status is connected to the cost others paid.

How Reflexivity Shaped the Research

First, reflexivity influenced my approach to the interviews. My awareness of power dynamics and my commitment to epistemological humility led me to ask open-ended questions, to follow participants' leads rather than imposing my own agenda, and to explicitly invite participants to correct any misunderstandings I may have had. This created space for participants to share knowledge that I had not anticipated and that did not fit neatly into my theoretical frameworks.

Second, reflexivity shaped my data analysis. My awareness of my own biases and assumptions led me to code data using participants' language and concepts rather than imposing analytical psychology categories from the outset. It also led me to actively seek out disconfirming data and to attend to moments when participants' accounts challenged or complicated my interpretations.

Third, reflexivity influenced my writing choices. My awareness of the ethical stakes of representation led me to include extensive direct quotations from participants, to acknowledge the limitations of my interpretations, and to frame analytical psychology concepts as interpretive bridges rather than definitive explanations.

Transformations: How I Was Changed by This Research

Conducting this research changed me in ways I did not anticipate. I entered the research with intellectual curiosity and professional interest. I emerged with a transformed understanding of psychology, knowledge, and the world of others.

Intellectually, the research expanded my understanding of analytical psychology. I came to see Jungian concepts not as universal truths but as culturally situated interpretive frameworks that can be enriched and challenged through dialogue with other knowledge systems. I also developed a more nuanced appreciation for the limits of Western psychology and the value of indigenous knowledge systems.

Professionally, the research deepened my commitment to decolonising psychology in South Africa. I am now more attentive to the ways mainstream psychology marginalises non-Western knowledge, and more committed to practices of epistemic justice and collaborative knowledge production.

Personally, the research humbled me. It confronted me with the limits of my own worldview and the parochialism of Western epistemology. It taught me to sit with uncertainty and to value forms of knowledge that I cannot fully understand or explain. It reminded me that being a researcher is not about mastering a subject but about entering a relationship with people and ideas that exceed my grasp.

The Limits of Reflexivity

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the limitations of reflexivity. Despite extensive reflexive work, I remain a positioned subject with blind spots, biases, and unconscious assumptions. Reflexivity can illuminate some of these, but it cannot eliminate them entirely. The final thesis is inevitably shaped by my interpretive frameworks, my theoretical commitments, and my cultural location.

Moreover, reflexivity itself can become a form of self-indulgence if it centres on the researcher's experience rather than participants' knowledge. I have tried to guard against this by keeping reflexive discussions focused on how my positioning shaped the research, rather than using reflexivity as an opportunity for autobiographical confession.

Ultimately, I offer this reflexive account not as proof of my ethical purity or methodological rigour, but as an invitation to readers to approach the findings with critical awareness. The knowledge presented in this thesis is co-constructed and shaped by participants' generosity in sharing their experiences, by my interpretive frameworks and biases, and by the broader socio-political context of post-apartheid South Africa. Other researchers, with different positionings and different theoretical commitments, might have produced different findings from the same data. This is not a weakness of qualitative research but a feature of it—a recognition that all knowledge is situated, partial, and perspectival.

Reliability and Validity Considerations

Bryman (2012) discusses reliability and validity as key concepts in both quantitative and qualitative research methods, highlighting the overlap and difference in how these concepts are used across these two approaches. There is an acknowledgement that the reliability, consistency, and stability of the measurement tools or instruments over time,

which quantitative approaches can achieve, are problematic for qualitative research. The dynamic and subjective nature of human behaviour and interpretation means that different researchers will interpret the same qualitative data differently. There is further acknowledgement that the validity, or the extent to which a study measures what it intends to measure, is also problematic for quantitative research. Again, the interpretive nature of data collection and analysis is highlighted.

In line with Bryman's (2012) alternative frameworks for the traditional concepts of reliability and validity in qualitative research, Willig (2013) discusses reliability in terms of transparency and dependability, and validity in terms of the level of researcher engagement and the credibility of the research.

The research process needs to be laid out logically and clearly documented so that others can understand how the conclusions were reached (Willig, 2013). This involves detailed documentation of research decisions and procedures to allow for external understanding and scrutiny. Braun & Clarke (2013) further emphasise that reliability can be assessed by considering whether the research findings would be consistent if the study were conducted by someone else using the same methods.

The data from qualitative research need to be engaged with thoroughly (Yin, 2015), and a focus on accurately identifying causal relationships is particularly necessary in case study research. Willig (2013) aligns validity with credibility, focusing on the trustworthiness and accuracy of the findings. This entails authentically representing participants' perspectives and experiences. Lastly, reflexivity and positionality, as discussed above, are crucial components of the validity of qualitative research.

Alternative Quality Criteria for Qualitative Research

Beyond traditional concepts of reliability and validity, this research draws on alternative quality criteria that are more appropriate for qualitative, interpretive, and community-engaged research. These criteria shift focus from generalizability and replicability to transferability, resonance, and ethical integrity.

Transferability Over Generalizability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose transferability as an alternative to generalizability in qualitative research. Rather than claiming that findings apply universally across all contexts, transferability refers to the extent to which findings from one context may be applicable or resonate with other contexts. The researcher's responsibility is to provide a sufficient "thick description" (Willig, 2013) of the research context, participants, and findings, so that readers can assess whether and how the findings might be applicable to their own contexts.

This research provides detailed contextual information about participants (within the constraints of anonymisation), the South African socio-political context, the specific phenomena explored, and the theoretical frameworks employed. Readers—whether other researchers, Traditional Healers, psychologists, or policymakers—can assess for themselves whether and how these findings might be relevant to their own situations. For example, Traditional Healers in other African countries might find resonance with participants' experiences of marginalisation and calling, while psychologists working with other marginalised knowledge communities might find the methodological approaches transferable.

Information Power Over Sample Size. Malterud et al. (2016) introduce the concept of "information power" as an alternative to traditional sample size justifications. Information power refers to the extent to which the data holds information relevant to the

research questions. Studies with high information power can be conducted with smaller samples, whereas studies with low information power require larger samples. Information power is influenced by five factors: (1) study aim (narrow aims require fewer participants than broad aims), (2) sample specificity (participants with highly specific characteristics provide more information power), (3) theoretical background (established theory provides more information power), (4) quality of dialogue (in-depth interviews provide more information power), and (5) analysis strategy (focused analysis requires fewer participants).

This research demonstrates high information power across all five factors. The study aim was relatively narrow (exploring Traditional Healers' experiences of specific phenomena), participants had highly specific characteristics (trained Traditional Healers with diverse backgrounds), the theoretical background was well-established (analytical psychology), the quality of dialogue was high (in-depth, two-stage interviews), and the analysis strategy was focused (reflexive thematic analysis with clear research questions). Nine participants therefore provided sufficient information power for the research aims.

Credibility Through Member Checking and Prolonged Engagement. Credibility in qualitative research is enhanced through member checking (sharing findings with participants for feedback) and prolonged engagement with the research context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This research employed both strategies. Preliminary findings were shared with participants during follow-up interviews, and participants were invited to provide feedback on whether the researcher's interpretations resonated with their experiences. Several participants offered clarifications and additional insights during this process, which enriched the final analysis.

Prolonged engagement was achieved through the two-stage interview process, through attendance at Traditional Healing events before and during data collection, and

through ongoing consultation with community gatekeepers. This extended engagement helped build trust, deepen understanding, and reduce the risk of superficial or distorted interpretations.

Dependability Through Audit Trail. Dependability in qualitative research is established through maintaining a clear audit trail—documentation of research decisions, analytical processes, and interpretive moves that allows others to follow the research logic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This thesis provides extensive documentation of methodological decisions in Chapter 4, includes reflexive accounts of interpretive processes, and preserves participants' own language through extensive direct quotations in Chapters 5 and 6. While other researchers might interpret the data differently, the audit trail allows readers to understand how this interpretation was constructed.

Confirmability Through Reflexivity. Confirmability refers to the extent to which findings are grounded in the data rather than in the researcher's bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While complete objectivity is neither possible nor desirable in interpretive research, confirmability is enhanced through rigorous reflexivity. The extended reflexive accounts in Chapter 4 demonstrate an ongoing attention to how the researcher's positionality, assumptions, and biases shaped the research. By making these influences visible, the research allows readers to assess the confirmability of findings.

Ethical Integrity. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) propose ethical integrity as a quality criterion for qualitative research—the extent to which research upholds ethical principles throughout all phases, not only in formal ethics approval. This research demonstrates ethical integrity through multi-stage consent processes, negotiated anonymisation, ongoing attention to power dynamics, practices of reciprocity, and commitment to respectful

representation. The extended ethics discussion in this chapter provides a detailed account of these practices.

Summary of Quality Considerations

In summary, this research demonstrates quality through multiple criteria appropriate for qualitative, interpretive, community-engaged research: transferability through thick description, information power through focused aims and in-depth engagement, credibility through member checking and prolonged engagement, dependability through audit trail, confirmability through reflexivity, resonance through participant feedback, and ethical integrity through ongoing ethical attention. These criteria, taken together, establish the trustworthiness and value of the research findings.

Having established the methodological rigour and trustworthiness of this study, we now turn to the findings identified through this systematic inquiry. The following two chapters present and discuss the key themes, patterns, and insights that surfaced through participant narratives. These findings, grounded in the methodological framework outlined above, offer both theoretical contributions and practical implications for understanding alterity and othering.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion Part 1

Introduction

This chapter is the first of two chapters that present the findings and discussion from the thematic analysis of the data gathered from the initial interviews and follow-up interviews with participants. Two overarching themes, one of which is covered in this chapter, and the other in Chapter 6, provide the framework for representing the data. A narrative of participants' experiences, along with their reflections on these experiences, is presented in the sequence of the data collection process and is provided under each section, accompanied by excerpts from the data within this narrative. Data from the follow-up interviews are also provided within this structure. Some excerpts are presented in the third person when a language translator was used; this was done to preserve the original transcription of the data. All participants will be referred to as "they" in keeping with contemporary practice, not to assign gender identity.

The first overarching theme, Alterity and Othering Within, is presented here, along with two subthemes that capture an important distinction in the data. The first subtheme, Separateness with Connection and Agency, is followed by a discussion of the importance of alterity and othering experiences in relation to aspects of participants' personal identity development and formation as recounted in their narratives. These experiences and the understandings participants derived from them are linked to the concept of identity formulation within psychology, and subsequently to the individuation process in analytical psychology. The problems with the concept of identity are also discussed.

The second subtheme, Separateness, Unconnected, No Agency, is followed by a discussion of the importance of alterity and othering in the process of becoming a Traditional Healer. While the emphasis within these experiences was related to dream

content for most participants, others reported physical sensations and external events as central to their calling. These later experiences are captured within the second theme as outlined in the next chapter, but all these experiences are related to what is characteristic of traditional healing, as well as to Jung's understanding of the other within the unconscious, dreams, and synchronicity. The table below provides a summary of the chapter's structure.

Table 1

Theme 1: Altering and Othering Within

Subtheme	Discussion
Separateness with Connection and Agency	Alterity and Othering as Core to Identity Formation
Separateness, Unconnected, No Agency	Alterity and Othering as Core to the Process of Becoming a Traditional Healer

Drawing on Kvale's foundational work on qualitative interviewing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 1996) and supporting scholarship from Willig (2013), Burnard et al. (2008), and Roulston (2010), it was decided to present the findings and discussion together across these two chapters. Kvale and Brinkman (1996) explicitly position the research report as part of the analytic process rather than a neutral container for pre-existing findings. They demonstrate that qualitative reporting should weave together verbatim material, condense meanings, and interpretive commentary so that readers can see how claims are both grounded in and constructed from the data.

Willig (2013) emphasises that interpretation is not an optional add-on to qualitative research but the very essence of the analytic process. She argues that qualitative reports should present accurate, concise and integrated versions of participants' meanings rather than offering decontextualised data followed by a separate interpretive layer.

The practical and epistemological problems that arise when qualitative researchers adopt structural conventions designed for quantitative research are addressed by Burnard et al. (2008). They argue that the rigid separation of results and discussion can inadvertently import positivist expectations – especially, the notion that results are objective facts awaiting neutral interpretation.

Lastly, Roulston (2010) focuses on the methodological transparency required in a qualitative report. She emphasises the importance of showing "how" interview data are generated in addition to "what" is discussed, arguing that readers need to understand the interactional and procedural context in which findings are identified.

Therefore, the integration of findings and discussion in qualitative research is not merely a matter of stylistic preference or structural flexibility. Rather, it is a methodologically sound approach that aligns with the epistemological foundations of interpretive inquiry, enhances analytic transparency, preserves contextual integrity, and accurately represents the co-constructed nature of qualitative knowledge production.

Theme 1: Alterity and Othering Within

The first of two overarching themes captures the internal or subjective experiences of other, otherness, and othering processes that participants described. It is divided into two sub-themes that capture an important distinction between internal experiences. The first subtheme captures experiences that participants felt they had agency over, which felt related to their sense of themselves. The second subtheme captures experiences in which participants felt they lacked agency, which felt disconnected from their sense of self, and at times were experienced as foreign and intrusive.

Subtheme 1.1: Separateness with Connection and Agency

Participants shared internal experiences of other, otherness and othering processes that, at the time, were perceived by them as having had control or at least partial control over, or as being able to influence the experience in some way. There was a further sense of connectedness to these experiences in relation to themselves.

Participant 1, during the first interview, spoke of a current sense of separateness from others due to their role as a traditional healer and how this is expressed: "…we call anyone the others, anyone who's not a traditional healer, we call them black people…" This was later qualified as referring to the colour black, as opposed to white, and not related to the pigment of one's skin, but rather a term used to distinguish traditional healers from others.

During the follow-up interview, when asked to comment on early experiences of separateness (a common theme from other participants' first interview) they recalled: "…I do remember distinctly that I had very weird dreams, but I never communicated that with anybody…" They then gave the consequence and reasons for this: "…I basically isolated myself because I don't know whether I understand what was going on or I was too confused, too scared to talk about it."

Participant 1 also reflected here on an understanding of their response to this internal sense of feeling other, both as a child and possibly the reason for not recalling this in the first interview: "…At a conscious level you just don't want to be different. You want to be as normal as your other siblings. So, I could have had elements that made me different, or I seem different, but I ignored them at a young age."

Reflecting on their current understanding of a sense of otherness from an early age that felt connected to themselves and which they had agency over: "…for me it's a it's a very

personal concept in that I have always been regarded as part of the other or have regarded others as the other…" They then spoke of how rejection from family, as a result of the calling, further exacerbated this sense: "…and that's when uh other and otherness becomes very real for you."

Participant 2 did not mention anything of a sense of separateness internally at any stage of their life, but rather reflected on the many painful experiences of alterity and othering: "…Uhm we we have a believe that in order for you to actually pay attention, to yourself. You need to go through some pain." On follow up interview, when asked to reflect on other participants' comments under this sub theme, they did offer some reflection on early childhood: "…So, there was a lot that was happening to her but she never contemplated what was going on, she never gave it a thought, except that, no, she only reacted to the physical experience…" These comments are consistent with the richness of data captured under subthemes 1.2 and 2.2 related to this participant: "…She just reacted to it."

Participant 3's initial response to the terms other, othering, otherness were in relation to their identity: "…No, I just think about another person, other than me.."; and there was positive emotion associated with the response: "...What you think about other is your children and family, it's love, it's warmth hey?" Later in the interview, there was a reflection on early childhood experience: "…I always said to my mother, I always felt as if there's something not complete about, but I didn't know what it is and I couldn't pin point and say this is the thing…" These comments were related to issues of identity, legitimacy and birth.

Reflecting on early and current experiences of othering, she said: "…there so there are so many other me. My, my shadow is another other within me. So, we need to look also

at other within…”; further stating: “…Yes, it’s all projection.” The mention of the term ‘shadow’ here was without prompting, as this participant has a particular interest in analytical psychology.

During the follow-up interview, there was further reflection given on childhood and a strong sense of intuition that led to feelings of disconnect from others: “…my level of intuition separated me from the others … as young as I was, as I said, it started showing up at seven years. Already at seven years, I was, I could see I’m different from my, from some of my family, and the other people and also my peers at school.”

Reflecting on a sense of other within for themselves, she connected this sense to a shared experience: “…I think, from childhood to whatever stage, because children, as a child, you don’t, even the way you do things, you are not the same. So, I may have mentioned it later, but I think, the uniqueness of a person starts from the time you are born.”

Participant 4 did not mention anything directly related to this theme in the first interview. When asked to reflect on what others had said, they did recall (as mentioned under subtheme 1.2 in relation to this participant): “...She wanted to spend a lot more time alone…”; and that she also as a young child had an unusual expectation of others, even elders: “…she would expect people to start kneeling when they talk to her. Or at least sit down, you don’t talk to her standing up.” This indicated a strong sense of early identification with the status of a Traditional Healer.

During the follow-up interview, participant 4 clarified her connection to the calling from the start: “…It would seem to me from the way she’s explaining that from a very young age she actually identified with it. She have never separated herself from it, or even though she, she never actually ever thought about what it meant.” They further reflected on their

perceived sense of separateness from others despite their sense of connection and grounding to other within: “…What she means when she says that is, I might look alone, when you see me you might see me alone, but there are unseen energies around me and I am always fully aware of them. And that’s what I think. So whether you accept me or not, I’m…I know where I belong.”

Participant 4’s reflections here differ from those of other participants: “For her, it was a smooth transition from what she was living to, from the way she was living to what she, the calling was demanding of her…”; perhaps facilitated by their attitude: “…Complete faith and submission to the calling.” This was an attitude that appears to have been shaped by her mother, who personalised the experience in a way other participants didn’t have: “…Yes, that’s why she can easily identify with, her mother is her guide, and she knows the mother. For some people, in some ancient spirit that you’ve never even met, so it doesn’t, it makes very little sense.”

Lastly, participant 4 reflected on the inseparability of these experiences for them: “…basically going on about how she relates to the calling. For her it’s, like I said, it’s very, it’s very real. It’s physically real. It’s got nothing to do with any psychology or any of those unseen. For her, it’s as real as looking at you and me.”

Participant 5’s first response on the interview was: “…Uhm I’ve always felt different, right from the age of five I’ve always always felt different and never known really why…” They then cited an example from childhood reflecting the lack of understanding they were left with from these experiences: “…at school I felt different. I cried from the day I’ve I arrived at school to the day I left. Uh and I never really knew why.”

They then went on to describe a recent therapeutic experience of feeling separate from others as a result of their emotional reactions to others’ stories: “…I took every single

one of their stories on as my mine…I mean I was the only one emotional… Because I'm even things like uhm if I see something absolutely beautiful, uhm I started crying… I don't see anybody else having the same reaction as me." Later in the interview, participant 5 spoke about a sense of separateness from their own culture, particularly in social situations: "…I feel other when more more when I'm with normal normal inverted commas, people. I feel different, uhm wherever I go, I feel different."

Participant 5 reflected on their early and current sense of separateness in the world: "…So, I am very uhm sensitive and intuitive. I mean that that's the thing, it I just uhm, I know that I'm, sounds dreadful I know I'm unique…" They provided further qualification of this sense of uniqueness on the follow-up interview, relating it to a sense of "undiscovered genius"; "…I'm just gonna add there, I am unique. I've always felt that I was genius and that I just haven't been found by the right person. To bring out the genius streak in me and I've just felt, I have felt a genius".

In relation to their sense of separateness from their own ethnic group they understood this as result of early exposure to a variety of ethnic groups within SA and their parental expectations: "…Uhm and I think all that rubbed off on me, I just, I feel more at home with my [other ethnic group] friends, uhm and [other ethnic group] friends, than I do with a lot of my [own ethnic group] friends. And that that my father uhm insisted, well they couldn't speak [home language] that all this the staff on the farm spoke [language]."

Lastly, participant 5 described how they work with or relate to their dream material, evidencing a way of integrating experiences of the internal world: "…I do lie in bed and redream that the last dream. Very very uhm uh what's the word? Uhm in detail. So, and then I carry that dream around with me. If it's been ah a very significant dream for the

whole of the next day, it it affects me. It affects my mood, it affects uhm my creativity it it affects everything."

Participant 6 described themselves from a young age as different due to their behaviour around adults: "…And I liked having conversations with, with elders. And I, I was described as that child who likes to ask deep questions…" They further spoke about the reactions from adults that solidified this difference: "…and sometimes I would ask a question and they would say, no, these are not the things we speak about. Stop asking such question, we don't talk about these things, you know."

During the follow-up interview, participant 6 clarified their perceived difference as a child through an example of their experience of dreaming: "…At first, I thought it was normal for everybody. I thought sensing things in a particular way was just normal. So, I never spoke about my dreams because I thought these were normal dreams that people had…" They later became aware of their mother's reaction to another sibling sharing a dream: "...I think that was the first time that I realised that look, ja, some of the things that I'm experiencing, I'm not really normal."

Participant 6 spoke to "special abilities" they became aware of as a teenager that further distinguished them from others: "…and I knew that I would just sit next to the phone. And I knew that I had an ability to connect with [person] telepathically and I would make [them] call me. Or make [them] come and visit me. And so, I would I'll wait outside, waiting for [them], even though we didn't have an appointment."

They also reflected on their early foundations in integrating internal experiences in relation to exposure to a specific approach related to their religion and traditional healing within the family: "… So, I think it's the, as the values that I have is an understanding that I have of a human being, where there's that comes from a Christian and tradition. And I

wouldn't say it was a western Christianity… my parents belonged to an independent church. A church that taught us that actually the Bible was stolen from Africa." This possibly indicates that through parental modelling of holding two seemingly disparate traditions, it facilitated early integration of these traditions for the participant.

Participant 7 spoke to a sense of special abilities that others seemed not to have that led to their thoughts in early childhood of the calling and a future in traditional healing: "…For me, most, most of the time I, I grew up with uhm, a way of knowing things without being told. So, I think that was one, one, one side that got me to actually consider the fact that I might be called…"

Participant 7 further reflected on their reason for understanding alterity and othering as neutral terms over what is generally understood by them: "… I, I'm generally a very curious person. So, for me, it, it just gets my curiosity of this otherness that, that's there and I like to explore and find out more so that I can have a more informed opinion or insight…" Later in the interview, they reflected further on this point: "…But I believe that there is a sense of connection, everything is connected. Meaning, it's what you're saying that what is outside is a reflection of what is inside. So, for me, when people talk about everything being connected, it means the same thing as that."

During the follow-up interview, participant 7 reflected on what had assisted with the integration of an initial perceived internal separateness: "…Actually, for me, it was quite okay because I remember I grew up very close to my dad. And he made it like it was some kind of superpower or type of power that I had. And being unique and being different."

Later, though, they reflected on a recent struggle with alterity and othering within, feeling an inability to reconcile seemingly disparate traditions: "… It was extremely difficult for me. Because I felt like I was being pulled in two different directions... And I felt like there

was three different, very distinct approaches to life in a way and I couldn't really make proper sense of how to actually within … I believe that the reason why I'm where I am at the moment, because I never really managed to reconcile the three of those areas of my life." At the conclusion of the interview, they reflected on where they currently find themselves in relation to this issue: "… Where I know it, it's organised chaos in a way if I can put it like that. But I haven't really found a place where I could put myself and be comfortable and say this is my stand, this is my stance in the world, and this is how I see it."

Participant 8 also spoke to perceived special abilities in childhood that distinguished them from their family: "…I was that child who would predict things…"; and later spoke to an active internal world of dreams that felt different from what others were experiencing: "…I grew up with this that, I was not aware but I remember my dreams and things that are happening around me."

Later, they spoke about their engagement with tertiary education as a way to integrate experiences of alterity and othering related to the calling: "…I went to [tertiary study] I came to [tertiary institution] just to, okay, all the books I was lecturing, so all these, all the books about mental illness that I read. And then I wanted to prove that I'm not mentally ill." Later, they reflected further on this statement: "…It's because I wanted to prove that psychology, I saw psychology, but that is all about human beings and mental illness and so I wanted to prove that I am not having any psychological problem or a mental illness." This self-initiated exposure to the field of psychology seems to have played a positive role in assisting them in integrating and processing their initial experiences of the calling.

Participant 9, in discussing themselves and a perceived difference from others, mentioned: "…because most of the time I'm always alone, I like my space." During the

follow-up interview when asked to clarify this statement and reflect on what others had said under this sub theme, they spoke further about a clear sense of separation from others through the example given: "…I would say okay, I'm with [x], [x] is this kind of a person, I'm this kind of a person. There is nothing that makes us combined or there is nothing that we share. There is nothing that we're mutual at."

They spoke about their understanding of their ability to integrate alterity and othering within as a result of their home environment and the experiences it offered: "…Because I grew up praying, first of all, I grew up at home where there are a lot of Sangomas. My Father's, my Grandfather on my Mother's side, was a Sangoma. My Mother was a Sangoma, but they used to go to church, yes…" They spoke further about the practical aspects of integration of traditions within the home: "… at home whenever we're performing an African ceremony, we'd pray before every, pray before anything." Indicating that through exposure to practices of integrating the two traditions within the family environment, the participant was able to integrate these two traditions into their practice.

Alterity and Othering as Core to Identity Formation: Discussion. As shown above, seven participants discussed experiences of alterity and othering that were connected to a sense of self, which they implied they had agency over, and that were linked to their developing personal identity in the world. All seven described early childhood experiences of feeling alone or separate from others. Some of these experiences caused distress for some, with feelings of loneliness and isolation. Others described these experiences as being linked to special abilities they became aware of from a young age, such as intuition, the ability to understand others' dreams, and the ability to predict future events. Five of these participants expressed feelings of separateness from others as a means to define themselves in relation to others in the world.

These experiences were understood by most as a personal way to define themselves, as necessary for the development of an individual's uniqueness, and as a means to integrate the different parts of themselves on an intrapsychic level.

These experiences and understandings thereof are, firstly, consistent with how developmental psychology, social psychology and psychodynamic theories apply the constructs of other, othering and otherness in an understanding of identity formation (Bhugra & Ventriglio, 2024). An individual's identity is about knowing who one is and who one is not, and it relates to an individual's sense of uniqueness (Desrochers et al., 2004).

These early experiences were linked by some participants to special abilities in relation to others, supporting not only the dialectical relationship between self and other in identity formation (Riker, 2022) but also self psychology's emphasis on empathy as the primary disposition for engagement with others (Moordian et al., 2011). These special abilities were described positively, and generally received positively by others, demonstrating the engagement with difference by others as facilitating interpersonal connections.

Secondly, these experiences and the understandings derived from them are consistent with the centrality of the concept of agency in identity formation (Jense, 2011; Cavazzoni et al., 2022). All seven participants described these experiences as being connected to a sense of themselves, over which they had influence. The ongoing experiences of five participants reflect a persistent self-other distinction (Paipais, 2011), a boundary they consider necessary for sustaining their sense of personal identity.

Participants' early childhood experiences and their understandings thereof can be further linked to Jung's conceptualisation of the other as the unconscious and as the starting point of the individuation process. These experiences would be the first encounters with

the other within, the unconscious, the vast and mysterious realm described as both alien and intimately connected to the conscious mind (Jung, 1998). That participants from early on integrated these experiences into their relationships with others, engaging actively with dreams, intuition and predictions, demonstrates an enhanced awareness of the unconscious into conscious life.

In terms of the individuation process, these experiences can be understood as the beginning of a dialogue with the other or the Self, which is said to be the totality of the psyche and the organising principle that guides individuals toward integration and harmony (Jung, 1998). Participants' engagement with their descriptions of what seem to be special abilities supports Jung's understanding of the necessary engagement with dreams, fantasies, and symbolic material that facilitates the exploration of the unconscious.

Edinger's (1992) conceptualisation of the individuation process can further assist in understanding these early experiences of participants, with the process of individuation essentially being the development of the ego in relation to the Self. This phase is known as Ego Inflation, during which the ego may experience an overestimation of its own power, confidence, and abilities. Ego Inflation would capture participants' experiences of their "special abilities".

Although these special abilities were generally positively received by family members, outside the home, some participants' extended families reacted more negatively to such abilities, forcing these participants to confront what they perceived at the time to be their limitations. Again, Edinger's (1992) conceptualisation of individuation would place such experiences in a phase of Ego-Self development called Ego Alienation. In this phase, a person is left feeling disconnected from their Self, and these experiences are often

accompanied by feelings of guilt, despair, or emptiness, which participants spoke about in relation to feeling separate from others at times.

The descriptions provided by five participants, who continue to link their current perceptions of identity with alterity and othering, lend support to the process of individuation as a constant dialogue with the other, whether it is the unconscious or society and relationships (Jung, 1998). It is through this continued dialogue with other and the "crises" it can create, that it is proposed that an individual builds a mature relationship between ego and the Self, and this is the essence of individuation (Edinger, 1992).

Two of the participants did not connect their experiences of altering and othering within to a sense of their personal identity in the past or to the present. One of these participants expressed only physical reactions to internal experiences of alterity and other, and they were unable to reflect on these experiences. The other participant felt that their identity was only linked to experiences of alterity and othering that they had no initial connection to and no agency over. These experiences are discussed further in the next section; however, the responses of these two participants lend support to the criticisms of the focus on specifics (Jones & Manda, 2006), such as the concept of identity, which does little to align with the postcolonial critique of binary reasoning or logic. It could be argued that exploring a concept such as identity in relation to alterity and othering stems from a deductive theoretical framework in psychology rather than an inductive conceptual approach (Imenda, 2014). Lastly, the physical sensations related to experiences of alterity and othering that could not be reflected upon by one of the participants here are consistent with traditional healing practices, which emphasise non-verbal and ritualistic communication over verbal and interpretation (Maiello, 2008).

Subtheme 1.2: Separateness, Unconnected, No Agency

Participants shared internal experiences of other, otherness, and othering processes that were experienced, at least initially, as separate and unconnected to a sense of self, and which they had no "control" or influence over. At such times, these experiences were perceived as foreign and intrusive.

<u>Participant 1</u> spoke of their dreams during the calling as: "…every night I would get a visitation, so my initiation happened then…" There was a sense of expectation that eventually accompanied these "visits"; "…and then all of a sudden I was asked to be someone else." On reflecting on these internal experiences, they said this of the calling: "…we call it the death, the the okay what's the what's the correct word to use, the death sickness…which means I am accepting my death. So, that death is a like of your identity and who you are as a person."

During the follow-up interview, they further reflected: "So, I hid from that identity, for a very long time, until it actually forced itself on me..." This highlights the lack of agency experienced at the time. They reflected further on these initial experiences and the process of integration: "…it feels foreign, but it's you, you know. You are thinking that you are feeling that…? And you can't really explain it. It's inexplicable. And, but then, even to yourself, you know, for a while." With time, these experiences became part of their identity: "And then you start accepting that okay, maybe this is just who I am…" This process of integration came with sacrifice, though: "…you know, you think about the life that you could have lived, had you not followed the calling. And your consciousness will always remind you of what you could have become, especially if you are, if you hit the calling at the age that I did."

Participant 2 spoke to a sense of internal demand they had no control over, and that felt unconnected to "themselves" but rather connected to the calling and to working as a Traditional Healer: "…uh she had to leave her church… you cannot look pretty…you have to walk barefoot." These comments align with certain training schools that require traditional healers to walk barefoot and wear clothing that symbolises humility. During the follow-up interview, they further clarified what these internal demands felt in response to: "…there's more emphasis on the outside control that she has very little control over her own life. And, if you do not heed to whatever is being demanded of you, you will basically go crazy."

Reflecting their emphasis on external experiences over internal, they stated: "…So, even if the phenomenon is occurring inside of her, but she can consciously, well, subconsciously separate herself from it. So, she also does the separation from the energy. And when she comes out of it, so she goes into a trance basically…". This seems to imply the necessity to enter trance states to maintain the sense of separateness of the internal as external: "…it's in a trance state for her and when she comes out of that trance state, then she no longer identifies with it, it becomes that separate energy."

During the follow-up interview on reflecting on what the majority of others in the study had said in relation to *the calling*, participant 3 said: "…I can talk about part of what was coming to me, the revelations to the dreams and intuitions were surprising experience of, excuse me, come from, how do I get it…". They were left with questions as a result: "…I'm asking myself, am I myself, am I normal or there's something abnormal going on with me… All I sense was I was losing myself, what's going on?"

However, when thinking a little further on that process, the participant linked those experiences to the calling in relation to their sense of self in the world: "…the calling sort of clarified my identity of who I was and when I was reflecting on that, for me, after the calling,

after the, during the journey…and everything that is coming and you are not aware of it, and you are wondering where is this leading to, what is happening and there's no one, because to me, the issue was, there was no one to sit there with me…" Later this became: "…And my experience is that it that you were not aware, your way of not knowing is being expanded, is being clarified, it's been, your horizon is broadening from who we are."

Participant 4 did not initially mention anything directly in relation to this subtheme of Separateness, Unconnected, No Agency, but during the follow-up interview later also referred to early childhood experiences of dreams: "…Okay, it starts with dreams. You start dreaming from a young age. And then things happen, you are not sure why they are happening, but as a child they happen very different", indicating that these early experiences were perceived as distinct from others by this participant.

Participant 5 reflected on their calling dream as standing out from their other dreams with a specific strength or agency of its own: "…I just had this dream. And absolutely realized it was calling dream…". On follow-up interview, the experience of dreaming more generally from an early age further supported this experience: "…Just yes, I've always had dreams, from the age of five that I can remember. Very strong dreams, not knowing what they were other than they were dreams."

Later, during the follow-up interview, participant 5 also spoke about experiences of their dream's agency in waking life: "… but it almost feels as if it's a vision during the day because my eyes are open. It sounds funny to say that I don't know how to explain it…my eyes are open and yet I'm re-dreaming the dream all the time."

Participant 6, during the follow-up interview, also spoke about experiences in relation to the calling: "…later on in life now. And I was [well in] my thirties. When I would go into a trance, and I started exploring this path and I thought I can't take this

anymore…the dreams continued. So, ja, like I would wake up in the night and they were visions, not only dreams, visions." These experiences highlight the participant's perceived lack of agency over what was happening to them.

Participant 7's experiences under this subtheme were also related to the calling: "…Of a calling, you know. So, the only thing that I had, I also had visions when I was sitting. I would see something. And even those were usually are mostly symbolic. I, I don't know most of the time what they're talking about." They later recounted the sense of agency of a figure within a calling dream: "…And he says don't even look at those beads. You're not going to use those. You will be learning uhm, leather. Ja, and oh, more like animal skin, not leather, animal skin…". The perceived agency of this figure woke them from sleep: "…And then I woke up. I decided then that I'm not going back there (speaking about a trainer and training school at the time)." This highlights the influence such experiences had on the participant's decision-making process in relation to their training as a Traditional Healer.

Participant 8 linked their experiences of illness and the need to be hospitalized: "…So, I was connected to the ancestors. It was the old lady who, like, the old lady in me that was making me sick because she wanted me to be a traditional healer." During the follow-up interview, they spoke further about an awareness of dream images as a child that felt unconnected and with their own agency: "…they were just dreams from a young age… And then I would dream about river, ceremonies and stuff. And I will see traditional healers in dreams…". Later, they also mentioned predictive dreams: "…I noticed that if I dream of you wearing a white shirt, I will see you the first thing in the morning, wearing that type of a shirt."

Later, participant 8 related a specific example of a calling dream, highlighting the sense of agency of a figure, in a similar way to participant 7, within this dream: "…A male

traditional healer in his kits, attire, ja, it's like telling me, asking me, not asking me. Demanding that I take the gift. Otherwise, he's gonna sit upon me." This experience highlights how the "calling" is characteristically experienced as demands from others, which, if not responded to, result in negative consequences.

Participant 9 did not initially provide examples directly related to this second theme during the first interview. However, they soon provided interesting support through an example related to subtheme 2.2, which is discussed in the next chapter.

Alterity and Othering as Core to the Process of Becoming a Traditional Healer: Discussion. All but one participant spoke about experiences of alterity and othering within, which, at least initially, they perceived as separate and unconnected to their sense of self, and over which they had no agency or influence. Three of the participants reported dreams in early childhood that were experienced as intrusive and left them with a sense of confusion. One of these participants, however, initially experienced confusion related to their dreams, but soon began to identify with the content of the dreams and these dream experiences. This participant felt "grounded" by these experiences and felt a sense of connection to the spiritual world. Upon reflecting on their ability to integrate dreams from an early age in this way, they described their mother's response to their dream material as helping to personalise the experiences.

Six of the participants reported specific dreams related to their calling to become traditional healers. These dreams were experienced as having their own agency, with the figures in the dreams giving clear instructions to the dreamer and "demanding" that they respond to the calling. One of the six participants who reported a specific calling dream also had visions with similar content to the dream. Another of the six participants reported visions and trance states in relation to the calling dream.

The centrality of dreams in the initially calling or *ukuthwasa* is consistent with reviews on Traditional Healing in SA (Bührmann, 1984; Ntombela, 2023; Thornton, 2013). The dreams are characteristically believed to be direct messages from ancestors, as a dream figure, who directs the dreamer to heed the call and go for training, *ukuthwasana*, to become a Traditional Healer. Visions and trance states are also characteristic of the calling (Bakow & Low, 2018; Bührman, 1984), and they involve the ancestors as either an extension of the dream or as separate entities from it.

The experiences of the dream as unconnected to a sense of self and with its own agency can be linked to Jung's concept of other as it manifests in dreams. He emphasised that the figures and images that appear in dreams possess a certain autonomy and intelligence, representing the active and creative nature of the unconscious (Jung, 1998). He further emphasised the role of the dream as a bridge between the conscious and unconscious mind, and that through an engagement with other in this way can be a deeply experiential and transformative process. All six participants engaged with the dream material, despite initially experiencing distress associated with the "demands" placed upon them. It was through this engagement that they began their transformative journey to train as traditional healers.

One of the above-mentioned participants described the calling dream and the demand placed on them as a "death" of their identity, but later came to see this "death" as a necessary sacrifice for their work as a Traditional Healer. Two other participants also reported an initial loss of identity, but later were able to integrate the dream and the calling into an expanded and broadened sense of identity.

The understandings and integration reflected upon by the participants above can be linked to Edinger's (1992) conceptualisation of the individuation process and the ego-Self

relationship. The ego here experiences the larger totality of the Self through its initial unconnectedness to the ego, and with its own sense of agency or autonomy. This transformative phase focuses on working through the crisis, here the calling, and rebuilding a relationship between the ego and Self. A process characterised by Edinger (1992) as “death and rebirth” experiences, where the old ego or old parts of the ego “die”, allowing a new, more balanced identity to emerge.

Two participants linked their ability to integrate their calling dream material with their family contexts. Both participants had families with a history of traditional healers within the generations, and at least some family members attended traditional healing at times. The sixth participant here turned to tertiary education and psychology to assist them in integrating their calling dream experience. This participant also had visions related to the calling and dream material.

The other three participants did not report dreams related to the calling. One of these participants instead described a sense of an internal demand to become a traditional healer, that they knew if not responded to would result in them becoming mentally unwell. They reflected on the necessity of these painful experiences and the importance of paying attention to oneself. They integrated these experiences through entering into trance states, which provided them with a level of objectivity in relation to their internal and external world.

This participant’s experience of the calling could be linked to Jung’s (1931) concept of the other within and the unconscious. His own encounters with the contents of the unconscious are often written about as if meeting another being or force. He saw these encounters as evidence of the autonomy and reality of the unconscious and emphasised that by ignoring or repressing the other within leads to psychological imbalance (Jung,

1998). That this participant used trance states to integrate their experience is also in line with Jung's (1998) emphasis on engaging with creative expression to foster integration and wholeness.

Reflexive Note. When participants described experiences of internal alterity and perceiving parts of themselves as other, I noticed that my analytical psychology training immediately interpreted these as intrapsychic phenomena (complexes, unconscious material). Yet participants often described these experiences as communications from ancestors or spirits—ontologically real presences, not merely psychological projections. I had to sit with the tension between my interpretive framework and participants' own understandings, resisting the urge to reduce their spiritual experiences to psychological categories.

Chapter 6 Findings and Discussion Part 2

Introduction

The theme governing this chapter is, Alterity and Othering Without. It is presented here, along with two subthemes, namely, Separateness with Connection and Agency, and Separateness (Unconnected), No Agency. The first subtheme is divided by headings to help capture further important distinctions within the data. The headings of Society, Family, Traditional Healers, and Traditional Healing (the work) are discussed as part of a Traditional Healer's life, with experiences and reflections related to these aspects. The social context within which these experiences occur is considered in conjunction with the psychodynamic concept of projection (Bateman et al., 2010), the shadow from analytical psychology (Jung, 1951), and Allport's (1954, 1979) theory. These three headings are also accompanied by a discussion of alterity and othering as integral to the human condition. Participants' reflections on the prevalence of these phenomena in the world are related to SA's racialised past and the current prevailing issues in the country. Participants' comments on the global prevalence of these phenomena are related to Jung's (1946) understanding of other as shadow and the collective, together with globalisation trends, including the use of social media.

The fourth heading within this subtheme, Traditional Healing (the work), is followed by a discussion of alterity and othering in relation to *t*he work of a Traditional Healer, and a distinction is made between the importance of these phenomena *within* the work and *to* the work. Discussion is provided on the various ways in which Traditional Healers engage with alterity and othering in their interactions with clients. Besides ritual and medicine, relational work is discussed, and these approaches are related to the concepts of projection in psychodynamic psychology (Bateman et al., 2010), as well as shadow and the collective as

other (Jung, 1946, 1951), in analytical psychology. The relational work is then linked to Allport's(1954) original conditions of effective interpersonal contact, which include equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and authority support. The importance of alterity and othering is then discussed in relation to the work of a Traditional Healer. This discussion includes references to the cultural backgrounds of clients and healers, professional boundaries, the loss of a sense of self within the work, and ancestors as other within this context.

The last heading within this subtheme, As Participant in this Study, is followed by a discussion of alterity and othering with Traditional Healers. The reflections on participants' experiences in this study are related to Chapter 4 and the methodology of the study, as well as the context and literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3. Participants' experiences of alterity and othering are discussed in relation to the constructs under investigation, the researcher's positionality, and with consideration of the theoretical paradigms and methodological decisions made in relation to these.

The second subtheme, Separateness (Unconnected), No Agency, is followed by further discussion of the importance of alterity and othering in the process of becoming a Traditional Healer. While the emphasis within these experiences was related to dream content for most participants, others reported physical sensations and external events as central to their calling. These experiences are related to what is characteristic of traditional healing (Van der Zeijst et al., 2012), as well as to Jung's (1931, 1960) understanding of the other within the unconscious, dreams, and synchronicity. The table below provides a summary of the chapter's structure.

Table 2

Theme 2: Altering and Othering Without

Subtheme	Heading	Discussion
Separateness with Connection and Agency	Society Family Traditional Healers	Alterity and Othering as Part of the Life of a Traditional Healer Alterity and Othering as Part of the Human Condition
	Traditional Healing (the work)	Alterity and Othering as Core Within the Work of a Traditional Healer Alterity and Othering as Core to the Work of a Traditional Healer
	As Participant in this Study	Exploring Alterity and Othering with Traditional Healers
Separateness, (Unconnected), No Agency		Alterity and Othering Within and Without

Theme 2: Alterity and Othering Without

This second overarching theme captures participants' experiences of other, otherness, and othering in the world or outside of themselves. Both experiences from others and those that they themselves are part of are captured here. Most of what was shared here fell under the first subtheme, where these external experiences are perceived as separate yet connected to a sense of self, and in which either the participant or the other person(s) has control or agency over their actions. The first subtheme below is further divided into the distinctive areas or aspects of participants' lives, specifically related to these experiences, and which form the context of these experiences. Subtheme 2.2 captures experiences of other, otherness, or othering in the world that were perceived to be unconnected to a sense of self and over which participants had no control or agency.

Subtheme 2.1: Separateness with Connection and Agency

Society. Participants shared experiences of feeling like other and being othered by society, mostly in relation to their role as a traditional healer.

Participant 1's general experience of society in relation to them as a traditional healer was related to religious connection: "…Because people will claim that if you're a traditional healer you can be, you don't believe in God."

They reflected on their understanding of societies negative responses to Traditional Healers: "…See when when you become a traditional healer, it's either you you you become too powerful for your own good or you become uhm the black sheep of the family…" They then spoke about the negative associations that society holds of traditional healers: "…People will will avoid you because they know that they think that you can read minds…" Later they qualified this statement further: "We see things, that normal people don't see, I can see, we can see the future and its a, it's not a it's not magic, it's not hocus pocus. So, when you start interacting with people on that level, then you know they tend to separate themselves from it."

Participant 1 also commented more generally on the changes in society over time that have fuelled the negative responses from society towards traditional healers: "But in the in this day and age, the the roles have been reversed. We are the more uh people, we we are regarded as being in the dark and they in the light because of religious perspectives because of the religious development…we've had our believe system has been disrupted. And unfortunately, now it has, it it's not relevant anymore. But it is still happening."

Lastly, they reflected on the behaviours and attitudes of Traditional Healers themselves that may be perceived as problematic to others: "…You know uhm we find we we give ourselves the right to talk in any manner to people because we have the calling";

Later they added: "That can give us illusions of power and uh we see ourselves differently from the others…" Lastly, they spoke about and how Traditional Healers identification with the practice also forms part of this othering: "Basically, the reason you identify yourself as separate is because you believe that you are more powerful than the other person."

Participant 2 emphasized experiences of society related to their perceived psychological state: "…people look at you as a mad, as a mad person…So, you are associated with drug mules, you're associated with madness."

During the follow-up interview, when this participant was asked to reflect on issues of alterity and othering in society, their response was in relation to themselves as a traditional healer and society: "…so, the idea here is that traditional healers have, she feels, have lost their place in society. That modern medicine and technology have taken over and we basically cannot compete with that…" They then provided further understanding on the status of society: "…No, she feels that traditional medicine itself is under pressure, and you know, people have basically assumed a different way of looking at things. They rely more on the instant gratification of western medicine, the lifestyle as well…" She concluded this discussion with this statement: "…Okay, for her it's a sort of desperate situation. It's, she feels that there's nothing that we can do."

Participant 3 on follow up interview only alluded to some childhood experience of being othered by peers in relation to their dreams: "…which I didn't know where they come from and what they meant and some were scary and they at school the children were telling me that dreams are just dreams, it's what you think and these were things that I didn't think about…". They did not reflect on experiences of been othered more generally in society as result of their work as a traditional healer but spoke to issues of othering in society as a necessity: "…we all carry different identifies and personalities to different

contexts…” Later they reflected on the history of South Africa in relation to these concepts: “…with the base of colonisation and apartheid and all those things and uh of people from outside being outside and outsider not a bona fide South African. I mean there are so many messy…” They then gave an example of a current experience in relation to their community work of the continued othering within South Africa over citizenship: “… person, this CEO of this company come from? ah this guy is from Zambia. When I’m a bona fide South African”

In reflecting on a general understanding on the increase in prevalence of othering in the world, participant 3 said: “… No, I just think to me it’s just egocentric ah or selfishness uh in people if you’ve got a power and you know uh you’ve got an executive over and above the other person…” They qualified this statement further in terms of their general belief in humankind: “…I think it’s a selfish just a selfish humankind that is just there…” This statement was then linked to the morality of society that is perceived to be lost in our current cultures: “… if I think about the African Ubuntu principle… if people would maintain that… we’d be knowing we are all equal…”

Participant 3 spoke further to broader issues within the world in terms of socialisation of children and the influence of social media: “…the social fibre has broken down man…even our own children and our own children are not socialising and bringing up their gra- uh uh their children like the way we brought them up, the social responsibility is not there…I just think with the too much social media exposure to social media, the TV, what you are talking to a child the child is busy nxi, nxi,nxi…” They concluded these remarks by sharing a childhood memory of sitting around a fire, an experience where values were transmitted from elders to children: “…Some of these fairy tales were were done in such a way that there’s a teaching, there’s some teachings in this, there’s no time for that.”

Lastly, participant 3 reflected on Traditional Healers being othered by society: "…Because because why that's why I'm saying that, most of uh why traditional healing was undermined in a in a in the first place, it's because the way the chief ah ah brought it uh to the fore. The way the the earliest people who wrote about tradition like ah what are this uh people who came with Christianity? Missionaries. The way the chiefs used traditional healers. According to the history, they were used to identify witches."

Participant 4 spoke about a general sense of being othered by society: "…even beyond traditional healing within families if you are you appear to be different or appear to be special in any way. Then people will definitely have negative feelings towards you. People will react negatively towards you because you are special."

Reflecting on their personal belief in the connection in the world and their strong emotional reaction to being othered: "…So, eh basically when when when the othering occurs. She takes it personally. Uh because she believes we are all part of the same community. She gets quite aggressive."

They commented further on their understanding of the prevalence of othering in the world: "…Okay she she she believes that there is a lot of envy in the world…" They also spoke here about an understanding of persons' reactions to Traditional Healers: "Uh people want what you have uh and she believes that the the calling to be a traditional healer, has elements of power."

Later, they spoke of a more general understanding of their experience in communities and related this to Ubuntu and people's current responses: "…Okay, something new is emerging out of this this response that at times, when you helped a person out. They don't wanna feel indebted, so they develop a negative attitude towards you so that they can run away from that responsibility…" They emphasised this point again

later and spoke about a type of defence in persons in these types of situations: "… So, it's not that people are are are ignorant or oblivious to. What they get up to, it's just that they will not take responsibility, especially when they realise that it's not acceptable."

Participant 4 later spoke about the issue of human rights, individuality, and community: "…Okay, very controversial but she blames the human rights culture. Because the human rights culture has emphasized too much on the individual. And as a people, we are communal…" They related this comment to a general and now outdated traditional attitude and sense of hopelessness around the issue: "…The the the concept of it takes a village to raise a child does not work anymore. We've lost that completely…" They then gave a specific example which illustrated these points: "Usually before you know in before this new dispensation. Could go into a neighbour's garden and actually pick ah vegetables…" They took issue with the more formal ownership and the fencing of land: "…Without causing an issue, if your neighbour has not seen a fire going at your place and she's already cooked, she'll come over and offer you food…Because now it's about me and my space. So, the the end the consequence of that focus on the individual is that now, I don't see anything good in you. Now I am envies of anything that you achieve."

Lastly, participant 4 spoke of an understanding of these issues in relation to the influence of non-indigenous cultures on SA: "…And we've put piled a lot of pressure on on one another because of the influences of Western of the Western culture. We, believe that the only way that is right, is white. So, that also has has influenced us and unfortunately as a traditional healer you you tend to go back to [more traditional ways of being]."

During the follow-up interview, participant 4 emphasised the issue of human rights again and its effect on culture, an issue they had brought up before: "…she's reemphasising

the fact that the human rights, she struggles with the human rights culture because she's a very direct person and unfortunately there are situations when you can't be that."

Participant 5 spoke about the general negative reaction from others in relation to their training as a Traditional Healer and the dreams associated with it: "…uhm I co- well I couldn't tell many people that I was doing this the the wa- it wasn't 20 years ago that I was doing the Sangoma training, but I couldn't tell many people about my dreams…" These negative responses were particularly related to friends from the same ethnic group: "…Uhm of the the uh jealousy amongst my [redacted] friends that found out about what I was doing."

They spoke of the reasons Traditional Healers tend to be othered by society: "…Uhm or uhm or the traditional healer people. Yes, they're they have this sense of th- of being other. So, any anybody else that's that's other."

In speaking about a more general sense of othering and separation in society, they said: "…I mean that's really whe- do they really really think about that. Everyone's so busy on their cell phones and Instagramming and Facebooking and and uhm minding their own business. And that sort of thing and minding other people's business. That they don't really stop to think deeply about xenophobia and uhm all that. Don't know, I'm having trouble here."

During the follow-up interview, when asked to reflect on what others had said about power, ego, and these issues in the world, they had a different understanding of these to others: "…, I know I think differently from most, but I don't think there's anything wrong in having ego, because narcissism is another thing altogether, absolutely altogether."

Lastly, participant 5 spoke about the breakdown of Ubuntu within African cultures: "…How on earth is this ever going to work cause you jealous of each other, you don't want

to help each other. If I give you something, what are you gonna give me in return. You just get so frustrated, so I just said I don't know whether this is a correct quote from Jung, but [redacted] used to say it often…" They ended this reflection with the following statement, which appeared to capture a sense of hopelessness around the possibility of integration in the future: "…something about east will never meet west. Is that a quote from Jung?"

<u>Participant 6</u> did not have personal experience of been othered by society but commented on the only form of othering and otherness they believed does exist in society in relation to crime: "…if you rape someone in the township or if you constantly steal from people, one day, the mob will, will rise and fight you, or fight the group of people. So, if that is otherness, so, it is."

They reflected on their experience of xenophobia within the townships of South Africa that they believe to be misportrayed in the media: "…But in those environments, there's an intact dependence, there's some mutual relationship that has been formed in the townships. So much that uhm, foreign nationals own these Spaza shops. And when people talk about them, they call them, my friend, you know…" They reflected further on connectedness in communities: "…on a practical level, most of the time we carry ourselves as the, we are separate from others. But when we sit and we reflect, when you talk about certain things, that's when you realise that people actually do not see themselves as separate from others…" Later this reflected was qualified through an example: "…Uhm, like if someone dies in a family or in my neighborhood, and a person would say, I dreamt about this in my neighborhood. And today it is happening, you know. So, that is a clear indication that we are interconnected…". Later they spoke to a more fundamental level of oneness: "…it's a human phenomenon that there's a certain level of separateness, but underlying

that separateness there's oneness, ja…For me, it's another person, there's a little bit of me in another person."

During the follow-up interview, participant 6 shared their understanding of their withdrawal from others after being othered by peers during their calling: "…I think it was fear. Fear of people, fear of me coming to terms with the fact that I'm different, you know. And more like a sense of being exposed as different."

When asked to comment on what others had said about Ubuntu, they concurred: "…There is a collapse of Ubuntu because of individualism. Even the relevance of Ubuntu that are there, people are questioning that. Or for example, the practice of Lobola, how people interpret it, you know. So, and the way it is interpreted, then it makes it an undesirable practice. Even assisting one another within a family system, it's now called black tax. So, it has been ripped of its main purpose."

Lastly, participant 6 spoke about the socialization of children, parental responsibilities, and their effect on educational exposure: "…I think that we need to educate our children. Because then they go to university without being educated and then they learn about feminism and they analyze whatever they see**…** as the oppression of women, as the oppression of, you know. Because they do not have another frame of reference."

On the first interview, participant 7 did not share experiences of othering from society, but during the follow-up interview gave a recent experience via social media in relation to them as a traditional healer: "…Where one of my Facebook friends was like, I don't want anything to do with traditional people which dark sense and stuff like that." Later in the follow-up interview, they further related a sense of othering in relation to peers at a tertiary institution at the time of their calling: "…my peers I would say were open and

welcoming but at the same time, there were times where I felt like, almost like they were not taking me seriously when I spoke about things."

They shared an understanding of the negative associations with alterity and othering in the world: "…Uh, discrimination and fear of the unknown and that type of thing." They then spoke about their understanding of the prevalence of such phenomena: "…probably just the increase of the materialism that's growing in the world and in people tend to more self-seeking …More selfish in a way. And, and, people are becoming more and more individualist type in the sense that…" They illustrated their point with an example: "… for instance, I'll be sitting here with you having coffee, not in this setting but we both have our cell phones on and, so, I'm here with you but I'm not here with you. So, it, it just seems to me like as much as I'm sharing now my individuality and myself with you, present with you now, I'm not really here fully. I'm, I'm partially here. So, it's, it's, it's just, maybe a sense of not being present, fully present, I think…" This example ended with reference to a loss in communities "…people are, are losing sense of ubuntu, basically."

<u>Participant 8</u> spoke about experiences of being othered by society due to their practice of integrating religion and traditional healing: "…So now, if you are that person who believes in religion, you are looked at as somebody who lacks something. Why are you combining them?" They also shared an experience of being othered by a colleague within a tertiary environment: "…My student went to defend her thesis, her proposal on traditional healing…So, this lady, a professor, she was like thinking as if traditional healing is all about herbal education."

<u>Participant 8</u> spoke initially of a general and more neutral understanding of alterity and othering in the world: "…we think differently… Different values, it can be anybod… as people who are unique, we've got our way of seeing things, so, I'm thinking of a person with

a different background and different, who is not of the same background as me, neh?" Later, they linked this understanding to the necessity of alterity and othering in the world in the formation of self-identity: "…It may not be from a negative perspective, neh? But you always, there's this that the self neh, is determined by the way you see yourself and the way others see you. So, we always compare ourselves with people around us and we always take into cognisance the way people see us." During the follow-up interview, they added: "…In our societies, once you're a traditional healer, they label you as a witch."

They reflected on the increase of othering in the world: "…I was looking at, at like, we are so much into equality, that this tends to divide us…it means that much as they are raising awareness about gender issues, about political issues and so on, but there's a, it's like, to me it's like fighting the inevitable because this tends to divide us, it's, it's like, it's, much as it is meant to raise people's awareness in order to unite them, but instead of uniting them, it's dividing them." These comments were concluded by an example: "… there's so much into awareness of the manner in which disabled people are treated. So that they tend to isolate themselves. They tend to read more into their disabilities.… tendency, also, amongst these people, that are not like others. There's a tendency to take advantage of their positions."

During the follow-up interview, participant 8 again referred to the above example and the issues with "woke" culture and stated: "…We become so focused on our differences, such that we are, the gap, we're widening the gap…."Later they referred to the current approaches in health care in relation to this issue: "…It further separates us. And I don't know, even the issue of cultures specific approaches. It's like if we're going to right, we want culture specific approaches for quality care. But at the same time, if that also for me it also contributes toward individualism."

Also, during the follow-up interview, they reflected on society's negative responses to Traditional Healers: "…Because you're always, it's like having these dreams about people, seeing things about people. And you are using herbal mixtures that they don't understand. You see? So, most often than not you're labelled as a witch…" Later they added: "... because you see things that are not seen by others. You hear voices, that they cannot hear. So, everything that happens around you, is mysterious."

Lastly, participant 8 reflected on the broader issues of alterity and othering in society and the decay of Ubuntu: "…Trauma that happened as a result of colonialism. The inter-generational trauma…I'm sure we are so focused in that and the impact it had on our behaviours, so now we trust that, we are trying to reclaim our identity as Africans but at the expense of other things."

Participant 9 reflected on their position as a student at a tertiary institution: "…In the first year, they tried to be or let me rather say to, to exclude us .." This was qualified by an example related to a comment from a lecturer: "… he confronted the traditional healers in the class saying, no, we are Christians, where we cannot deal with people who are dead."

During the follow-up interview, when this example was again discussed, they mentioned the more general comments made by fellow students: "…They would say this thing its satanic, demonic, all that stuff."

They spoke about their general understanding of alterity and other in the world: "…One, the way we do things. Because one of my culture of one of my African religion, we do things differently with the other or let me say a tribe, with other tribes…" This statement was qualified by an example: "… Let's say I'm a Dlamini tribe and you are a Tigua tribe, we do things differently. Whatever we perform as we are a Dlamini tribe, is different for what you do at home on the way you grow up at home…" This example was linked to values and

morals: “…What I like, it might happen you don’t like…my values won’t be the same as your values. My morals will not be the same as your morals, yes,”

Despite the above statements, participant 9 later reflected on integration using the concept of Ubuntu: “…Ubuntu means that I value you, I value your morals. Whatever you do, I respect. As long as not going to be a problem to me. I have to respect what you're doing. Two, whatever I do or whatever I eat, I share with you. Whatever I have in my home, you have it. That's the concept of Ubuntu. And it also applies to this sameness or oneness in one household, yes.”

Reflecting on the increase of alterity and othering in the world, participant 9 initially stated: “…For me, I do not believe in Xenophobia. Whilst I believe there’s a scripture in the Bible that says, I would make you greater in the foreign world…” They qualified this statement further: “… But, there’s a problem where, and I have to state it, at some point, it would sound as radical but I’m going to say it anyway. At some point, there’s a problem when we as a black person would not have a book or something that it’s written about our religion as Africans…” They spoke further about this issue, comparing the literature related to traditional cultural practice and religion: “… Hence, I’m saying, Africans do not read about their religion or traditions. They practice, but when it comes to Christianity, we only read about it, then practice. As African people, we do not read about it, we practice it. Following Christianity will read and practice.”

Later, they reflected further on the prevalence of alterity and othering in the world and religion: “…That I think, and you think, a Hindu thinks that his or her religion is greater than the other religions, and that is not going to help us anywhere. There’s no greater religion than other religions…” They then spoke of the importance of integration, how this could be practically implemented, and concluded the interview with an image: “…By

embracing other person or other people, that would mean that we are living in a country of Ubuntu, in a country of peace as one…One other thing that would help us is that, that interreligious dialogue, whereas an African, a Hindu, a Buddhist would sit around and try to compare…For me, it's …a mountain…And we all clime from different parts, but to reach one goal."

During the follow-up interview, participant 9 reflected on the issues of individualism in society: "…First of all, I don't encourage individualism. I really do not encourage that, remember I'm an African and an African person is person of ubuntu… Yes, everyone now is struggling to be individual but, I don't go along with individualism, because when you create a crack, where I cannot conduct whenever I have a problem, I cannot come to you. I think people wanting to be more individual because every person now is looking upon him or herself, it doesn't care with other people. There's no value of ubuntu…" They concluded these remarks with reference to the influence of colonialism: "…Now, we have lost our identity as a black person or as a black child. We have lost our identity that whatever I need, if it's there, but I have to talk to … What I have at some point I do not have. What you have, I do not have."

Family. Participants shared experiences of rejection and othering within their families, again mostly in relation to their role as Traditional Healers.

Participant 1's family rejected them because of the calling: "…Uhm I became a leper so to speak… when I got the calling, I was told to go and find my own place." They spoke to family members' perception of the power of a traditional healer within the family, which leads to rejection, relating this specifically to the family's response to their parents' death, for which they were held accountable: "… that's what makes me dangerous in the family…. Because I understand things like that."

They commented on what they believed would be helpful when Traditional Healers experienced rejection within the family system: "…To bring those families together and to actually in show them demonstrate to them that they are there actually is no separation…"; They also made mention of the use of *muti* in these situations: "…We even use medicines to alleviate some some of the tension." Lastly they reflected on why some traditional healers do not experience the kind of rejection from the family that they, and others, often do: "…there are also some families where it is accepted…other people have been before in generations and it's accept, and it's understood."

Participant 2 also spoke of a very painful journey in relation to their family and the calling: "…she has been treated like the other, by her family, and her children… they try to hide that, from the rest of society. So, having her within the family is a shameful thing…". They also spoke of their scapegoating by the family at times of unexplainable injury and death within the family: "…it's it's a backlash on her."

They spoke about the current status of Traditional Healers within society, and more broadly, as a reason for their family's rejection of them as a Traditional Healer: "…The status of traditional healers. So, it becomes a shameful thing for certain families to have a traditional healer in their midst…are not interested in any if if you come from a religious family, it's just a sin and we don't wanna hear anything about it. All we interested in is curing you."

Participant 2 spoke further of non-relational and external events as the only way they were able to elicit a response from their family: "…Uhm talking makes no difference, as far as she's concerned…"; and then spoke to experiences that happened in relation to their brother's death: "…Things happen that force people to actually listen."

Lastly, they reflected on an underlying connectedness between family members that is not appreciated by others: "…And for a traditional healer, we we yearn for unity. Because it is the very same people that have brought us together that are separating us."

Participant 3 initially spoke about a general sense of being othered within the family through stricter punishment from elders on them in comparison to other children within the family, this was related to legitimacy issues: "…Children are supposed to be named after their biological fathers, simple. They shouldn't be punished that no, you are you're born of a out of wedlock, what is that?" Later, they spoke of the difficulty caused by the family's reaction to their calling and their decision to enter training: "…It was a painful uh, experience." They also cited specific examples of their mother's and grandmother's reactions: "…she said because I like I thought ugh traditional healing is for illiterate people…and my and my grandmother here would be full people coming with different types of, we're writing I'm writing medication."

During the follow-up interview, participant 3 spoke about othering experiences during childhood within the family, this was in relation to their early dreams: "…my mother, my grandmother would say I don't want to hear dreams, forget about dreams, go to school, get your education. I don't want to hear about that."

They discussed experiences of othering within families as a result of issues related to cultural values and clan names, relating a personal example: "…And brother, but in what sense, because the surnames are totally different. The clans, I have taken my mother's clan; they've taken their father's clan."

They also shared the rejection they had experienced within the family as a result of the calling and the family's reaction: "…she would say, you are too much for me, because even when you talk you come to something before we are all there, and that is what is

causing tensions between us and your siblings, because when you talk, you are further, you're already where we are not yet there."

Participant 4, like others, spoke about the rejection from family members when responding to the calling: "…When her when she ah headed the calling. Her family ostracized her…". They described further, though their own subsequent othering of the family in response to their treatment: "…But she also developed an attitude…it's a never-ending story and you know it, it's gotten to a point where anything she says is taken with that pinch of salt…". They qualified the current dynamic within the family further: "…So, there's a lot of othering going on from both sides. She's decided to give up on on them and go her own way. They've decided that she doesn't exist anymore."

Participant 4 reflected on their reasons for developing an attitude of othering towards their family in response to their rejection: "…"..Where she told herself oh boetie, she doesn't care. They know nothing anyway. So, they are in the dark, I'm in the light…" They later spoke further about this: "…But she believes she's been given that mandate. So, it's they are refusing to understand and accept."

There was a reflection on an understanding of their family's reaction in relation to birth order and not traditional healing per se, as cause of some of the issues: "…Uhm, I think from what she's saying it's the fear of the unknown. Uh they don't understand it and therefore they won't accept it...Uhm I think it also has to do with the fact that she's the last born. Uh and therefore anything she says, cannot be taken seriously. Okay, there's an element of envy as well. Uh because she was chosen. They rejected her but now they are getting the calling but it's not going right because it needs a starting point. And she is the starting point."

The family system was also referred to later in speaking about an understanding of alterity and othering more generally in the world and its foundations within the family system: "…Okay she she's hitting a what I believe to be a very good point, that this thing what you are concerned about starts within the family. Where if you have multiple children. Like no, I have four siblings, so if you have multiple children, you will have favourites. And your children will be aware of that. And they will definitely prejudice one another. It starts there and then it grows."

This discussion ended with a sense of hopelessness as to a way forward on these issues both within their family and within the world more generally: "…Uhm it's too well entrenched in families; it will it she believes that it will take something phenomenal uh to get rid of it? It it's been going on for a very long time. And she doesn't know what could be done."

Participant 5 related their mother's reaction to their calling dreams: "…and my mother would say uhm when [redacted] came to stay with her, with us, she'd say that's all your talking about is is absolute rubbish." They later related the breakdown of their marriage to the attitude of their partner towards dream content and work: "…Mmm and also in my marriage, I think that that was partly uhm it was part and parcel of my divorce…the moment the sun hit the curtain and [they'd] want to talk to me and that's not the time I want to talk". Later they gave an example of a reaction from their closest friend in relation to their training: "…in the moment she heard that I was a Sangoma, she uhm alienated me completely because she said that she didn't want spells uh cast on her, she didn't want any trouble in her life and."

Lastly, participant 5, because of originating from a family that does not subscribe to traditional healing, shared the negative response from her closest colleague in relation to

their calling: "…she was my uhm rock, she was, she was everything. Uhm she was absolutely dead against me going into Twasa and…she said because you weren't ill…And she said you were perfectly healthy, you had money, you had a successful business, you had."

Participant 6 felt their family's initial response to their calling othered them by their not disclosing to them that traditional healing was part of previous generations of the family: "…only discovered [later] then that my grandparents, grandmother was also initiated, but they ended up not training. So, this was part of themselves, they had, they had distanced them…hidden, you know."

During the follow-up interview, participant 6 spoke further about this initial and later parental reaction to their calling: "…I started hearing my father in his prayers. Praying for the Spirits to allow the children to go to school." With their mother's response later: "…And she said, look, you can choose not to become a Traditional Healer, you have a choice. Ja, you can pray about it, it's up to you, you don't have to."

They reflected on their family's negative response to their calling and training initially as protective of them: "…Remember it was illegal to become a traditional healer here in South Africa, ja. So, I think they wanted to protect us from that and being ostracized by, by religious people as well."

Participant 7, during the follow-up interview, shared experiences of being othered by family in relation to their initial choice to be part of a religion over traditional healing, something valued by the family: "…I could sense and I could see that they did not like the fact that I'm separating myself…". They also reflected here on the sense of this othering and the value the family places on independence: "…I was fortunate in that sense to be given that option and it was never anything that was imposed on me. So, I always made my own choices."

Participant 8 related largely positive experiences from family in relation to their calling but when asked to reflect on follow up interview on what others had said, recalled: "…people were kind of tired of me waking up with dreams and demanding or asking them to perform a ritual for me, time and again. So, I wasn't their favourite person…". They also spoke about the subsequent rejection or withdrawal: "…I needed them to be with me, to help me do the rituals."

Participant 9 related the experience of being othered by their mother because of their not taking up the calling and because of the type of Christian church they were attending: "…at the beginning, this is not my thing, okay. It's one who're others. Maybe I would say, yes, I'm uh, Sangoma, I'd like to go to church, and my mom doesn't go church at all, ja. We are other…" They later gave an example of how this was communicated: "…she would say, when you are here at home, we are one person, and we are living by one rule."

The other participants' comments on understanding alterity and othering were more closely related to the broader societal reactions and were included in the previous section.

Traditional Healers. Participant 1, after completion of their training, entered the community of traditional healers, hopeful for a sense of belonging but did not have that experience, at least initially: "…And when I got, I went into that community, then that's when I I experienced uhm, I wouldn't say prejudice but being treated differently."

In an understanding of the othering that takes place within groups of traditional healers, he reflected on the dynamics between the different training schools: "…And within those four different types of training, there is perceptions of superiority." He cited a personal example in relation to this, and an experience of a trainer who encouraged othering: "…And sometimes they see me as not a traditional healer because I don't wear a

lot of beads…And we uh Umdawa, we tend to believe that we more powerful than they are."

Participant 2 reflected on the othering that occurs in the trainer-trainee relationship of traditional healing: "…if you have a a an initiate. You're not going to give them their full, the full service. So, you do things half-heartedly. Even another initiator…". They cited fears of a change in the power dynamic between a trainer and a trainee: "…Because they may supersede you." During the follow-up interview, they added their personal experience of this dynamic: "Her training has taken all this all this time, what 44 years now."

They spoke about their own sense of envy towards other traditional healers that received the type of support they longed for from their family: "…and that's that's it becomes envious for some of us, because some of us have not had that that luxury in our families and she she's also complaining about that." Later, they reflected on their experiences during training in relation to other trainees: "…Because they may supersede you. Because you want to maintain that power."

During the follow-up interview, participant 2 reflected further on this point: "…Amongst traditional healers, your calling is tailor-made for you. And at times you, the others journey become inferior to mine. So, depending on what you've experienced as a traditional healer, I could be a little bit more powerful than you, and that's basically what she's experienced, that at times energies don't mix."

Participant 3 spoke about a separateness they experience from most traditional healers due to a difference in educational levels: "…And let's talk about traditional healers, most of those people are not even educated. And they're entrenched in the cultural tradition where witchcraft is very important…". They then reflected on their own othering of themselves from traditional healers: "…And uh and they have their own ways of dealing

with witches. And you don't want to be part of that. Well I don't want to be part of that. I think differently."

During the follow-up interview participant 3 reflected further on the difference in their practice from others: "…and he's doing the bad things and he has been given bad medicine, we know bad medicine, but whether you use it, when you are the traditional, it's your decision but them…and which makes people not to believe in traditional healers, because now something, know which ones are keeping to their line and which ones are crossing the lines to the herbalist side."

When asked to reflect on this theme in relation to what others had said, they spoke not only to the variety of focus of different training school, but also to the length of time for training, that differs, and is a cause for perceived separation and superiority: "…Because that, it's like the university, because that different training schools, with different strategies and what, there are those who thing that they, like I said to you, we are trained in other schools, you cannot be a traditional healer before at least the minimum is five years…people from these training schools that are six weeks and six months are happening…" Later, they reflected on the emotions at play between traditional healers: "…And, and jealousy. It's another thing that make the separate, of other…So, there, like other people, traditional healers are like all other people."

During the first interview Participant 4 reflected on the separateness between traditional healers and the society for traditional healers: "…what is the impact of that traditional healer's organisation because it's located in Pretoria and we never hear anything about it in the Eastern Cape…". The practicalities of memberships were raised as part of the issue "…You have to travel all the way to Pretoria to register."

During the follow-up interview, when asked about more direct experiences of othering from traditional healers, participant 4 gave an example of their own othering of a traditional healer: "…So, there's a lady whose cow did not cry, so she feels that she is not a healer. But she operates amongst healers, but she feels she's not a healer. And she feels that she could call her out any time, that's the way, that's just the way she is…" They further alluded to being othered: "…They don't invite her because they think there might be conflict."

During the follow-up interview, they reflected on why they are othered by traditional healers: "…She's very judgmental about the way things should be done. She's very strict. And that's her demeanour really, and if things don't go the right way, she walks away." Later, they spoke to a general sense of: "…fear from others…"; due to the conflict that often surrounds them as a result of the aforementioned attitude.

<u>Participant 5,</u> coming from a different ethnic group from the ethnic group of their training school, experienced multiple incidences of othering by Traditional Healers: "…and jealousy amongst the black people who think that uhm it's only to be a Sangoma is only for the blacks…" With some Traditional Healers not questioning the calling per se, but were critical of their response to it: "… Of the fact that you know, why why was I [race] and why did I accept the calling?" Later, they cited a specific example of a negative reaction from a colleague: "… And one [sangoma] was sitting uhm on our side doing the beadwork. So, I knelt down to her and I said, uhm [redacted] I'm going to be a Sangoma like you. So, she just carried on doing her beadwork and didn't even look up."

During the training itself, participant 5 experienced othering at the hands of the trainers: "…I had the feeling in a way that uhm and this sounds really tr- terrible. Uhm I had a feeling in a way that they were manipulating me a little bit for financial gain…". They then

gave an example of the different requirements of them to the others in the group when it came to gifts that are required to be given to the trainers: "…So, uhm it was absolutely enormous. And I felt then that I felt that somehow that I'd I'd been used."

Their understanding of the othering they experienced in relation to other traditional healers was as a result of them coming from a different ethnic group to that of the training school: "…and jealousy amongst the black people who think that uhm it's only to be a Sangoma is only for the blacks…why why was I [race] and why did I accept the calling?" This ethnic difference was also seen as the reason for their trainers' othering them

Participant 6 during the follow-up interview spoke about a sense of being other in relation to other trainees in their group: "… So, even with a dance, you would be taught certain choreography for example. So, even if I did not know the choreography and when other Healers are dancing, I knew that if I could just I would dance exactly the way that they're dancing…" They also spoke about the othering comments: "…My trainer, how she labelled it, she said I have an Ancestor that is a chameleon. I just blend in…" They then stated further what such a comment left them with: "…So, that also scared me. So, it raised questions like who am I. Because I am losing that as well."

When asked to reflect on this subtheme in relation to what they and others had said, they spoke to their sense of a fundamental connectedness: "…My understanding is that we are, we all have one mind. We're all interconnected, that's my understanding. We are all interconnected. But it makes others, to this day, it makes other people very uncomfortable."

Participant 7 spoke to othering themselves from the practice of traditional healing as a teenager: "…Completely. Ja, so, I completely turned my back on anything traditional. But my parents continued doing ceremonies and I would just leave and find something else."

When they did attend training, they experienced negativity at the hands of their trainers: "…They're using magic and uhm, they are basically chasing money…" They then reflected on the othering that took place due to the assumptions made by the trainers: "…people tend to assume that I have a lot of money, rich person…makes people to think. So, when they see me, they say So, they tend to, to assume that they can get a lot of money from me."

Their understanding of their own othering of traditional healing as a teenager was related to a type of rebellion against their culture: "…, so, I completely turned my back on anything traditional."

Participant 8 spoke to the inevitable differences between traditional healers: "… Even if we are traditional healers, we will never be the same, because we are not of the same background…we're not, we may not be of the same educational background…". They later added a specific example, evidencing their own othering of other traditional healers: "…And the, the skills, counselling skills, the manner in which they deal with people, it's, with educated people it's more advanced than lay people, so, there's always, there will always be differences."

Participant 8 also spoke directly about the othering they experienced during training, and the difference in the experiences of trainees within the same group: "…But now, when one is staying with the traditional healer, there's a lot of othering. Like, you are to wake up at 3 am, others you go to have a bath, a cold bath, others you relate your dreams to the master healer, and with others you don't sleep until seven, six, as an initiate."

Their understanding of the divisions between traditional healers was related to the differing levels of educational exposure: "…So, it's dividing us as traditional healers, issues of education. Neh? When we consider people, traditional healers that are more educated

than others, neh, that divides them. Because they've got better ways of seeing things. Neh? There's more logic in their practice than people who are not educated."

They reflected on the reasons Traditional Healers separate themselves from society and others: "… Of course, for a traditional healer, that is difficult to mix freely with other people. Because you'll pick up the vibes, but other than that, if you are disabled, you cannot mix freely with other people. It's like we are separating us, ourselves from this other group."

Participant 9 highlighted the difference in practice between Traditional Healers: "…We are totally different." This was said largely in relation to Traditional Healers who pray and integrate religion, and those who don't. Later, this statement was qualified further: "…Yet, we are Sangomas. In that, there's nothing wrong. There are those Sangomas who do not even believe in prayers. There's nothing wrong with that."

Their understanding of the othering between Traditional Healers was related to the integration or not of religion and religious practice: "…We are totally different…There are those Sangoma who do not even believe in prayers."

Alterity and Othering as Part of the Life of a Traditional Healer: Discussion. All participants spoke of experiences of alterity and othering by society due to their role as traditional healers. One participant spoke about early childhood experiences related to their dream content, which would later be connected to their calling and their role as a traditional healer, resulting in experiences of alterity and othering by their peers.

Five participants reflected on these experiences, which were influenced by society's fear of Traditional Healers, the fear of the unknown in their work, and the fear of the perceived power of the healer. Connected to these understandings were reflections on society's envy of traditional healers at times.

Two participants reflected on these experiences as a result of society's inability to integrate religion and traditional healer practices. One participant spoke about the loss of status of traditional healing due to the dominance of medicine and technology. Two participants, who are part of tertiary institutions, reflected on their peers' inability to integrate and understand traditional healing with the paradigms of tertiary education.

These experiences and the understandings derived from them can be linked to the psychodynamic concepts of projection (Bateman et al., 2010) and projective identification (Sandler, 1983), already discussed in previous sections, in two ways. Firstly, participants' descriptions and understandings of these experiences as external to themselves or coming from the outside towards them, would be understood as others' projections onto them. Others, in this case members of society and peers, would be externalising unacceptable feelings and perhaps important aspects of themselves (Bateman et al. 2010) that they see in relation to a traditional healer onto the healer; the unknown, feared aspects of oneself that, if consciously experienced, might give rise to psychic pain or unbearable anxiety. The healer may, through a process of projective identification, capture the shared unconscious dynamic of the person(s) projecting unacceptable qualities onto them, and internalize these projections (Sandler, 1983).

Secondly, the participants' perceptions of others could be seen as a projection from their side. There may still be aspects of themselves and feelings, particularly related to their role as a traditional healer, that are unacceptable and externalised onto others, and that, if consciously experienced, might give rise to psychic pain.

These experiences and understandings thereof can be linked to Jung's (1931, 1951) concepts of other in the unconscious and the shadow. Other, society here, and their reactions could be understood in relation to their encounter with the unknown and

mysterious, which is the other within or the unconscious, and which is often feared or rejected (Jung, 1998). Traditional Healers could further represent the shadow for society, the hidden unconscious parts of self – those qualities, desires, and impulses that the conscious ego rejects, denies, or represses. Likewise, Jung's concepts of other in the unconscious and the shadow could be understood as participants' perceptions of the other in society and aspects of themselves that are still feared or rejected.

The societal context within which these experiences occur also requires consideration. Given SAs' historical past, the country has been subjected to the othering of indigenous healing practices and wisdom (Program proceedings, 2017), with the other often serving as a repository for disowned aspects of the self and collective anxieties (Carter & Farah, 2018).

All participants discussed their experiences of alterity and othering by family members, which were linked to their role as Traditional Healers and to their early childhood experiences that led to this role.

Five participants spoke of being rejected by their family members due to their role as a Traditional Healer. One of these participants reported initial support from family when taking on the role of Traditional Healer, but later faced rejection from these same members when seeking further support. These rejections were understood to be related to the fear of the power of Traditional Healers and a lack of understanding of the practice, particularly when there was no history of traditional healing in previous generations.

One participant spoke about an initial rejection by their family in relation to their calling, and then about the support they received after the family disclosed a history with a Traditional Healer within the family. This was understood to be a way to protect the participant due to societal attitudes and the country's laws at the time.

Two participants spoke of being rejected by family members early on due to sharing dream content that would, over time, become an integral part of their calling and role as Traditional Healers. Both spoke to an understanding of these negative reactions of family members as related to the family perceiving them as knowing too much. One participant was rejected by their mother as they wanted to integrate Christianity into their traditional healing practice.

As with the previous section, projection and projective identification could be linked to these experiences in two ways. The family's projections onto the young child, who would eventually become a healer, and the family's projections onto the healer of aspects of themselves that were unacceptable or difficult to bear at the time. Likewise, these could be linked to the healers' projections onto the family members of the aspects of themselves that were and remain unacceptable or difficult to bear.

As with the previous section, Jung's (1931, 1951) concepts of the unconscious and shadow can also be applied here in two ways. Firstly, as the family's unconscious and shadow are seen or projected onto the Traditional Healer, and secondly, as the Traditional Healer's unconscious and shadow as projected onto family members.

Lastly, the societal context, mentioned above, particularly in relation to the previous laws, under colonial authorities, dating as far back as the 1860s, that repressed indigenous cultural practices in general and traditional healing in particular (Thornton, 2013) and some denominations of Christianity that actively reject traditional healing (Mnyadi, 2019), should be considered.

All participants spoke of experiences of alterity and othering by other Traditional Healers. Some of these experiences were from the past, while others were more recent and ongoing. Four participants also shared their own experiences of being marginalised by

Traditional Healers. Two participants spoke to the different training schools for traditional healers in SA and the perceived superiority of each school, which, at times, is actively encouraged by the trainers. Three participants discussed the power dynamic between trainers and trainees, as well as the experiences in which some trainees are favoured by their trainers. Three participants discussed the varying statuses resulting from different educational backgrounds and perceived financial statuses, as well as the difficulties this creates. One participant, who came from a different ethnic group background than the training school, understood their experiences as related to innate cultural differences and prejudices. One participant spoke to the integration or non-integration of religion into Traditional Healing as the reason for the alterity and othering between traditional healers.

While such experiences can again be understood within the constructs of projection, projective identification from other (Bateman et al., 2010; Sandler, 1983); and the Jungian understanding of the unconscious and shadow as other (Jung, 1931, 1951);, a consideration of Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory offers further understanding of the dynamics that may be present within the groups of the Traditional Healers. Allport's original conditions or moderating factors for the effectiveness of contact included conditions of equal status, something three participants spoke to as becoming increasingly pronounced, with more differences in educational and financial status between the person's training to be a traditional healer. Secondly, while the groups share a common goal of training or healing, the third condition of cooperation appears to be influenced by the issues associated with projection, the unconscious, and the shadow. Participants discussed the perceived superiority of different schools, innate cultural differences and prejudices, and the integration or lack thereof of religion into traditional healing. By their own admission, four participants acknowledged their tendency to (do what?) other Traditional Healers, whom

they perceived as coming from a different and “lesser” training school and educational background. Lastly, the condition or moderating factor of authority support does not appear to be met in some of these experiences. Three participants discussed the power dynamics between trainers and trainees, noting that trainers sometimes favoured certain trainees and actively encouraged a sense of superiority for the training school over others.

Alterity and Othering as Part of the Human Condition: Discussion. Being familiar with the data by this point, readers will know that “alterity and othering in the world” constituted another important part of the interviews. The majority of the participants spoke of alterity and othering within SA, and the loss or decay of Ubuntu as a result of SA’s past of apartheid and colonisation. There was reflection on the dominance of individualisation associated with Western culture, how a human rights culture can divide people rather than unite them. One participant also discussed the role of some chiefs within cultural groups and their relationship to missionaries in SA, as well as the “selling out” of cultural traditions to Christianity.

SA’s history of institutionalised racial segregation, apartheid, a system of racial segregation enforced through legislation when the Nationalist Party came into power in SA in 1948, was not the start of systematised racial discrimination in the country; this dates to the days of colonial rule (SAHRC, n.d.). The Worden (1994) review of the history of SA and racial segregation, attributes racism to the expansion of European colonialism. Participants’ comments here, therefore, spoke to both xenopapartheid and colonialism.

Although participants did not speak to the prevalence of Xenophobia in SA, their perceptions of the decay of Ubuntu within SA could explain the lack of connectedness and communalism that cultural groups within the country have toward ethnic groups from other African countries

Less documented and researched is the comment by one of the participants on the role some chiefs played, through a mutual exchange with Christian missionaries, in supporting the growth of Christianity within traditional cultural groups (Thornton, 2013). Some chiefs saw missionaries as allies who could provide education, trade, and protection against colonial aggression. However, traditional cultural customs and governance were often undermined by missionaries.

Two participants reflected on alterity and othering in the world, attributing these phenomena to people's increasing need for instant gratification and the rise of materialism. One participant spoke about the struggle people face in taking responsibility and feeling indebted to others as the reason for the increase in alterity and othering. One participant described humanity as being innately egocentric and power-hungry.

These understandings align with Jung's understanding of other as the shadow and as connected to the collective other. Jung acknowledged the tension between the individual and the collective other, which is represented by society, culture, and tradition (Jung, 1998). Although the collective other provides a sense of belonging, structure, and meaning, it can also impose limitations and expectations on an individual that may cause conflicts within. Psychological health, in this conceptualisation, requires a balance between collective adaptation and individual self-expression that may seem at odds with others' expectations or perceptions of the other.

Four participants discussed parental responsibility in relation to the socialisation of children and the impact of social media on families in general. Such parental concerns mirror wider patterns observed in the digital age. Globalisation trends suggest that the advent of social media and the growth of the internet have facilitated an increased awareness of global issues (Keun & Miller, 2018). However, it can also be argued that social

media has provided a platform of anonymity for users to express and cultivate othering, without consequence or direct responsibility. There is also an inclination for users on online platforms to seek out like-minded people who share similar prejudicial beliefs.

Lastly, three participants reflected on the future of alterity and othering in the world and SA. Two participants here believed integration could take place, one speaking to the illusion that people have that humans are not fundamentally connected to each other, the other spoke to the revival of Ubuntu in SA as a way forward. The third participant did not think it possible to integrate alterity and othering in the world.

The first two participants echo the collective argument (e.g., Akin Aina, 2010; Bomoyi & Mkhize, 2016; Mekoa, 2018; Mkhize, 2004) for recognising African knowledge systems and perspectives, and for transformative change and a commitment to promoting cultural identity and agency. The third participant’s comment here is perhaps more aligned with the challenges that must be acknowledged for such change to occur, given the history of colonialism in destabilising indigenous technology and knowledge, as well as the current globalisation and continued Western dominance in terms of economics, military, and ideological influence.

Reflexive Note. Hearing participants' accounts of marginalisation, discrimination, and epistemic violence was emotionally difficult. I felt anger at the systems that have devalued traditional healing, and concern about my own position within those systems as a White, university-affiliated psychologist. I also felt inadequacy—what right did I have to represent these experiences? Through reflexive journaling and supervision, I worked to transform these emotions into an ethical commitment to the research process, rather than letting them paralyse me or prioritise my own feelings over participants' knowledge.

Traditional Healing (the work). Participants shared experiences of other and othering in relation to their work with clients. These experiences were related both to their role as a Traditional Healer, and within the practice of healing with clients.

In reflecting on the work of a Traditional Healer faced with issues of othering in or by a client participant 1 mentioned: "…I'm not gonna lie to you, at times we can encourage it." They also reflected on an experience of being othered by clients from another ethnic group who wished to make use of their services, and who used language to describe their difficulty that was not commonly associated with traditional healing: "…. Strangely enough, they called me because they thought they had a 'ghost' in the house…". The work itself was also cited as reason for feeling other to oneself when entering the world of a client: "…. And I actually became part of her, I could actually understand the the pain that she was going through physically and emotionally." Lastly, participant 1, while reflecting on the possible symbolism of ancestors, spoke to the othering approach taken in this relationship: "…why I'm saying that is because yes, we separate ourselves from the spirits".

In commenting further on the work with clients who experience othering or who are othered, participant 1 continued with: "We will use medicine to influence perception…" Later they qualified the importance of encouraging othering within the work at times: "…Unwittingly we can encourage that because when you come and complain about the ah neighbour, my reaction is to protect you…" Later, however, they also spoke of a more symbolic and exploratory approach in their way of work: "…But when I got there, I realised that the ghost is actually their own conflict. That that is where the problem lies and now their home had been separated into two sections…You know it becomes you you see we're trying to; you're trying to make sense of the origins of what you see and see."

Participant 1 emphasised the differences between psychology and traditional healing: "…But with traditional healing, how you operate is that you need to embed yourself into that person. You cannot separate yourself and therefore the analytical element in it, disappears, because you conscious, even your consciousness is within that process. So, it does not work the same way as psychology."

Participant 2 spoke about the engagement with othering and otherness in the work with clients in this way: "…Okay, so uh she will basically appease the spirit. Take them through the initiation process, so what that does is it brings the the the conflicting spirits together." They then reflected on this: "…That otherness is being caused by ah ah ah an energy beyond our control. In you know, so that they understand one another [opposing spirits]."

They further reflected on working with conflict between a client and another: "…Okay, so she basically will take the person through a cleanser. As much as she will work with the other person as well. And she can also bring them together and cleanse them…". They went on to emphasise the use of ritual over reflection and talking: "…No, we hardly ever talk about. The actual illness. We analyse the the symptoms. And deal with the symptoms through a ritual."

Participant 2 also reflected on the need to keep clients as other or separate to themselves: "…We, sometimes, we there are certain medicines that we don't administer. Cause we fear that they make the client more powerful than he is. You always wary of the fact that they may someday supersede you…" Later, they reflected on the reasons clients may experience them as othering: "…even with our own clients, sometimes we become harsh. Because I am feeling what you are feeling and I'm I'm experiencing it the way that you are feeling it and doesn't sound nice when I express it."

During the follow-up interview, when asked to reflect on other Traditional Healers using a more interpersonal or relational approach to dealing with conflict, the above was again emphasized: "…You just respond to the physical. So, she, when a client comes in, she will comment on what is affecting them physically…And that's how most traditional healers work". This explanation was qualified further, emphasising the experience of another state of consciousness in the work: "… you listen to your ancestor spirits, they advise you on what to do, so it's not your knowledge, it is not even you that's doing that…one could argue that it's a permanent state of trance."

Lastly, participant 2 also mentioned that "…They come from outside…" when speaking about the clients that traditional healers tend to see. Many clients tend to consult a Traditional Healer who is not part of their immediate community.

Participant 3 reflected on the otherness between themselves and a client as a result of the professional relationship of the work: "…when a person comes to me, he comes to me as a client. And already, there are boundaries. Between me and the client because I'm a professional." They went on to mention the importance of thinking about the client as an individual: "…There are things you cannot do, if it's a client… it is very important because also people are unique, and you don't take for granted that it's a person."

They also spoke about othering in relation to research they had been involved with in the past: "…I've got a problem with institutions of higher learning because they're othering…" They reflected on this research's disconnect from their work: "…So, I'm used to being on the ground, at the level with the common people at the ground."

They reflected further on the necessity of othering within the work as a way of clients gaining perspective on a situation: "…Because we are part of othering, because part

of other othering that we do positively, is where there are uhm family tensions or uh uh we are there."

They reflected on a dual othering that occurs within the work between themselves and clients at times: "…About people eh then you are witch and at times you can bewitch yourself, that's why I say I always try and, Yes, I always say to my clients, we must be very wary about a projecting ah witchcraft to other people because in the first place…You are a prisoner of yourself."

In commenting further on the work with othering and a client, they emphasised intrapsychic processes: "… Ja, but you have to start with yourself. Because you well with me, my feeling is, if I if if I see people eh in a negative way. Where to where does that come from? Within me. It means I also have. Those negative ah ah habit in me. How do I see you in negative if I'm not negative. "

During the follow-up interview participant 3 reflected on working with alterity and othering in response to the rituals for the protection of clients that other participants had mentioned, and demonstrated an interpersonal focus to their work: "…Somebody came to me for consultation and this person is talking about the neighbours' and the friends' jealousy, and yet, the problem lies within her family, with the mother in law, but according to law, I couldn't say, and I kept on saying, what about your family. What is happening in your own family, before you are looking from outside, have you looked into your family, because I see a problem within your family."

Participant 4 reflected on the work of a Traditional Healer engaging with alterity and othering and spoke to it beyond the interpersonal: "…Uh take away the simplicity of anything in the human factor. But there's also the spiritual factor that where sometimes the conflict is caused by a benevolent spirit." During the follow-up interview they also spoke to

the othering that takes place through the work with a family: "…when you deal with the family, you know, you are going to go in there and tender the whole process, basically separated to genders, separate the two different age groups, woman are not allowed to do that, men, it is only men who can do that."

Their understanding of the work with othering with a client had an external spiritual focus and involved ritual: "… Ah or a dissatisfied spirit whatever the case may be. So, she will advise people to search for that spirit. And apiece it. And hopefully that will normalise things…So, there's a the she uses ritual ceremony. To fix such a such a problem."

Later, participant 4 reflected on the work from an interpersonal perspective and related this to a persons' need to assume responsibility: "…Uhm there's a difference there is the simplistic explanation of just human beings interacting with one another. It it's a common it's a common thing in in our communities. You know people refuse to take responsibility…" Together with this explanation, they spoke to the directness of their approach in their work: "…Direct confrontation deal with the situation as it occurs and get rid of it. So, that's how she's been dealing with all of this conflicts when…Confront the situation. Don't let it lie."

<u>Participant 5</u> spoke about the work and the expectations of a Traditional Healer, particularly during the training, as othering: "…You do, you don't ask any of these questions, you just do it…". They then reflected on the kind of engagement they would have with a client who is experiencing othering: "…Yes have a ritual definitely uhm uh have a chicken uhm slaughtered for them and and that sort of thing…" They concluded this discussion with a sceptical remark to the utility of the practice: "…but that's really not gonna take away anything." Later they reflected on clients' experiences of traditional healing as othering at times due to the types of rituals used in practice: "…And sometimes the clients

might even think that they are working against them and for that word, I don't like the word bewitching them."

During the follow-up interview, participant 5 spoke further about issues of training and being from another ethnic group to that of the training school and how it influenced the othering by clients: "…would experience clients as sceptical…they thinking I can't possibly be a sangoma."

Their understanding of being othered by clients was related to the perceived differences of ethnic groups: "…Yes, they would come to me more as I think intrigued. Intrigued, sceptically thinking I can't possibly be a sangoma... They were intrigued because they hadn't come across a [race] sangoma as such."

They reflected on a possible reason a client might experience othering within the work with a traditional healer due to a mismatch: "…so I think it depends that the client has obviously gone to the wrong person, cause there's a right and a wrong person for everybody. They've obviously chosen the wrong person and got into confrontation with them and then had thoughts about the traditional healer as being a witch doctor as such and casting spells instead of cleansing, that's a way I think of it."

<u>Participant 6,</u> on describing how they would engage with issues of alterity and othering within the work, said: "…Uh, might give you medicine to protect yourself…if I see that this person is being harmed, what is it that I can do to protect this person."

Participant 6 also spoke about an initial struggle of othering while studying traditional healing and within the social sciences: "I was struggling to separate the two. That I'll be in a room with a patient and feeling more than what I'm supposed to feel and hearing more than what I'm supposed to hear…, ja. Because in the other practice, I'm

supposed to hear more than what I can hear with this ear…" They then reflected on this as a more decisive action on their part: "…So, it was a conscious decision, ja. To separate it."

They reflected on alterity and othering work and their approach: "…we are forever looking for likeness rather than difference. And when we see that likeness, we celebrate it…It's a relationship-based kind of healing, it's a, it's a system which seeks to integrate."

Later, they reflected further on this intrapsychic and relational understanding: "…To the person who is being othered, but also equally so, to the person who's othering another person. You cannot hurt another person without be, being hurt in the process…" This reflection was expanded: "…my understanding would be, this person is resorting to make this person go away, because they are wounded, or they think they are wounded by this person. How do I heal this relationship? Can I or can I not? If I can't heal the relationship, how can I heal this person who is wounded?"

Participant 7 spoke about the engagement with othering with a client: "…the person who come consulting you because you are a seer. You can see beyond. So, you would approach it based on what you see spiritually…". They later reflected on the "bad luck" or "energy" around such a client and spoke to the use of ritual: "…things to get the person cleansed and see what happens from there...". This was clarified during the follow-up interview: "…Well, I kind of feel like it's kind of standard according to my understanding…the first thing you do is, the kind of cleaning and then protection. For me it's standard, it goes without saying…". Later, they also spoke about integrating rituals with more relational aspects: "…, but they'll also talk to you, talk to you about how you relate to yourself and how you relate to other people."

Later, they spoke about being othered by their ancestors during various unsuccessful training attempts: "…I was telling him I'm considering stopping because this training…I'm

tired, I feel like I'm being humiliated by my guide and ancestors, in the sense that they expect me to do this, but then…". They further remarked on how the training experience started to feel other and disconnected to their sense of self and they left as a result: "…And I started questioning If I'm supposed to be here…the most important thing as much as you want to heal people and treat them, but you want to be able to be okay**,** So, if I'm here… I'm not going to."

They reflected on the how the approach of traditional healers in itself facilitates the integration of issues related to alterity and othering: "… as traditional healers we have a sense of, say for instance, when I muti you now, I know I'm not just looking at [name], not just you, but I'm also seeing a presentation of your forefathers and foremothers. So, I, I, I, I give respect to them, more than just you, as a person in front of you. So, even if I see you as the other, but I also have that respect for the elders that you." Later they reflected on a client coming to a traditional healer with issues of othering: "…they're bad luck. Some bad energy around them."

During the follow-up interview, participant 7 reflected on the personal and its integration into the work: "…I think it has more to do with a kind of person that you are, your own personality outside of the practice…cause you bring yourself as well most when you're practising."

<u>Participant 8</u> spoke about the way a trainer engages with issues of othering within trainees: "…you sit down with both the offender and the offended. And then you straighten things amongst them and then tell them that we are all here as initiates…". There was also the possibility of an extended relational and behavioural aspect at times: "…You even bring, in serious cases you even call the families…And you are even punished, you are, you may be asked to buy a bottle of brandy or to do whatever, but you must be punished, neh?"

Participant 8 also spoke about the engagement by a Traditional Healer of a family rejecting a person who is called: "… So, in that case a family is called, by the traditional healer that this is the situation. Your child is being called to be a traditional healer, and the consequences of you rejecting him, are these. So, it's up to you [explaining to members the consequences of] …members of the family, bad luck, unexplained accidents, illnesses, deaths, uhm".

Like others, they spoke about the engagement with a client experiencing othering "…You give *umuti*, neh, to the per-, to your client, neh, a *umuti* to protect your client, neh, not to use against this person, but to protect, neh, to cleanse and protect…" They later also spoke about a relational aspect: "…And not to shout and be rude to the neighbor, just because we know that she's or he's bewitching you. But still, you should try and level things".

They reflected on a client othering or being othered: "…At times you'll behave like these because of what is eating you inside…" This reflection was further qualified through their practice of exploring the issue over symptom treatment only: "…an educated, or a wise traditional healer would try and find out what the real problem emanates from."

<u>Participant 9</u> in speaking about how a Traditional Healer would work with othering mentioned: "…healing, that African healing process, where I would give you some *umuti*, those medicines, okay, to give you some instructions, okay, on this one, this is how you use it for the couple of days. Then, after, come back and give you another *umuti*." Later, they also spoke about an integration of religion into the work for such issues: "…Above is created by God. I would try to talk to you about that scripture before I go to *umuti*, ja. That knowing that is created by God. Whatever we use. That plant is created by God…" They then emphasised the need for integration within the practice of traditional healing and religion,

together with a more relational approach: "…I won't say that traditional healing must be together, but we can evolve in the Christianity, ja. Where there's a scripture that says, I see it, love your neighbor as you love yourself."

They further spoke about issues of working with othering in their practice through the integration of religion within traditional healing: "…it's not that I'm praying my ancestors. I acknowledge my ancestor. Not that I'm worshiping them, I only acknowledge them."

Alterity and Othering as Core Within the Work of a Traditional Healer: Discussion. All the participants shared experiences of their clients who came for healing with issues related to alterity and othering, such as conflicts within the client's family or between the client and a neighbour. All healers engaged with ritual and medicinal herbs to address the issues. Ritual and medicine were used separately or in conjunction with each other. They were used to cleanse a client, alter the client's perceptions, offer protection to a client, and appease the spirits. They were used in one or more ways, or in all ways. When ritual and medicine were employed, issues related to alterity and othering were understood as resulting from dissatisfied spirits, bad luck, or negative energy; sometimes in general, and sometimes in relation to another person or persons.

Use of ritual and medicinal herbs in the healing of any issue that a client brings to a Traditional Healer is characteristic of the profession (Bakow & Low, 2018; Thornton, 2009). There is an environmental ideology within traditional healing of the source of the power of medicinal herbs and animal products. Ritual is understood as an experience of "deep" embodied knowledge, expressed through dancing, singing, drumming and trance states of the dances.

Research within Western medicine on traditional healing has undergone a paradigm shift. Early studies (Kale, 1995) emphasised conflicts between traditional and Western medicine, particularly regarding pharmaceutical safety. Current research instead acknowledges traditional healers' valuable contributions to mental health care, especially for supernatural, psychosocial, and chronic conditions (Peltzer, 2009). Recent psychiatric evidence (Nortj et al., 2016) clarifies this role: while traditional healing cannot modify severe mental disorders like bipolar disorder or psychosis, traditional healers effectively provide psychosocial support and symptom relief for common conditions such as depression and anxiety. This evidence validates their engagement with alterity (experiences of otherness) and social marginalisation through ritual and medicine—issues that often manifest as or exacerbate depressive and anxiety symptoms requiring psychosocial intervention.

The use of ritual and medicinal herbs, rather than verbal communication with the client and interpretation of the issues, is consistent with Maiello’s (1999/2008) research on the similarities and differences between Traditional Healer methods and Western psychotherapy. Despite such differences, though, it was noted by Maiello, that both approaches share a common therapeutic function: the restoration of connection – whether with the external world (in Western terms) or with the ancestors (in African tradition). Both approaches emphasise the maintenance and restoration of connections – whether with ancestors, other individuals, or the client's internal world.

As established, several of the participants, in addition to ritual and medicine, engaged in relational work with the clients who came with issues related to alterity and othering. This relational work involved encouraging alterity and othering in the client, in the hope that they would gain objectivity about the situation. The encouragement of alterity and othering appeared to be facilitated in two ways. Firstly, by encouraging or validating

the othering by the client. For example, participants would sometimes support clients' perceptions of another person as other, and as someone to be feared or disliked. This approach could be understood within the concept of projection and the function of defence mechanisms. Through projection, a person externalises unacceptable feelings and sometimes important aspects of themselves, attributing them to others (Bateman et al., 2010).

Jung's concept of the shadow, a critical aspect of the other within, represents the hidden, unconscious parts of the self – those qualities, desires, and impulses that the conscious ego rejects, denies, or represses (Jung, 1998). He observed through his work that when individuals fail to recognise their own shadow, they project it onto others. While he acknowledged that it is essential for psychological growth and integration to confront the shadow, he also emphasised the difficulties and lifelong process of shadow work (Jung, 1951). The support of Traditional Healers for the projection onto others, or the shadow of clients as located in the other, could be part of the initial process of working with these aspects of self, as they would be addressed in psychodynamic psychotherapy.

The second way in which alterity and othering were encouraged in the client involved encouraging the client to separate from the other with whom they had the issue. For example, some Traditional Healers would validate clients' sense of separateness from the person with whom they had the issue and encourage them to further protect themselves from the other. This approach can be seen as linked to the facilitation of identity formation in the client, where one comes to know who they are by identifying who they are not (Bhugra & Ventriglio). A person needs to be recognised in the consciousness of another for there to be a sense of "myself" and "you" (Riker, 2022).

Jung's ideas on the collective other in society, culture, and relationships acknowledge that while a person's perceptions of others are a projection of their own unconscious material (Jung, 1998), the collective other can also impose limitations and expectations that may conflict with an individual's path. Psychological health requires a balance between collective adaptation and individual self-expression. Linked to this approach of Traditional Healers is the necessity of separation from others at times to facilitate individuality in the client, as well as alterity and othering as necessary.

A further relational approach used by Traditional Healers in addressing issues of alterity and othering with a client was through discussing family dynamics with the client and encouraging them to take more responsibility for the situation in which they found themselves. Furthermore, one participant encouraged the client to search for similarities between themselves and others, rather than focusing on differences.

This approach parallels, to some extent at least, Allport's (1954) original conditions or moderating factors for the effectiveness of interpersonal contact, which included common goals, intergroup cooperation, and authority support. Traditional Healers here would at times include family members in the healing session and, as the "authority" in the space, encourage contact between those present. They would also discuss future ways in which family members could sustain this contact.

Two participants explored alterity and othering in their interactions with clients, recognising that any perceived external event was a reflection of the client's internal world. One of the participants here also spoke to the importance of seeing what "lay behind" the symptoms or the issues the client came with.

Such approaches are more directly aligned with Jung's understanding of the collective other in relationships (Jung, 1998). The other person in a relationship can serve as

a screen onto which a person projects qualities, desires, or fears that they have not recognized or integrated within themselves. If a person pays attention to their reactions to others, they can gain insight into their own unconscious dynamics and work toward greater self-awareness.

Lastly, one participant spoke to relational work with alterity and othering through their connection to ancestors, and the facilitation of this connection to the client. This approach is characteristic of IKS and African Worldviews with their emphasis on the interconnectedness of being (Bomoyi & Mkhize, 2016). This relational view extends to the living, the unborn, and ancestors. Health and well-being are seen holistically, encompassing mind, body, spirit, and social/cultural dimensions. Illness is often located at the system level (family and community) rather than solely with the individual.

Alterity and Othering as Core to the Work of a Traditional Healer: Discussion. Five participants spoke about their experiences of alterity and othering within the relationship between a Traditional Healer and a client. Two participants spoke about feeling othered by clients who were from a different ethnic background than themselves. While there is an increase in individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds training to be Traditional Healers or attending traditional healing practices (Ntombela, 2023), it is perhaps this unconscious prejudice that is still sensed or experienced by the healers at times.

Three participants here spoke to the importance of clients experiencing a Traditional Healer as other as a means to maintain the professional boundary between them. This boundary was described in terms of serving to protect the Traditional Healer, with one participant mentioning the need for this boundary so that the client would not supersede them in their "powers." Another healer believed this boundary would protect them from becoming infected by the client's issues. Two participants here mentioned maintaining their

boundaries with clients through a harsh and confrontational interpersonal approach at times.

The importance of negotiating boundaries in any therapeutic or healing relationship is well-documented (Bateman et al., 2010). A healing relationship differs from a friendship or family relationship in this regard. There is no mutual sharing or support between a healer and client to the extent of a personal relationship. The alterity and othering within any client-healer relationship could be related to this impersonal level of the relationship. While the harsh confrontational approach is not characteristic of psychotherapeutic relationships, there are times when firm boundaries do need to be negotiated with clients. These firm boundaries also serve to protect the therapist from what Bowlby called secondary or pathological defences related to rejecting or unreliable attachment figures (Holmes, 1993). A professional boundary negotiated through a professional identity can be linked to Jung's understanding of persona as other. The persona allows an individual to adapt to societal expectations while also protecting the inner self (Jung, 1998).

Six participants spoke to alterity and othering in relation to themselves through the work. They spoke to the inevitable loss of a sense of self, becoming other to oneself, due to the intensity of connection to the client, as well as in relation to one's own personality and history of past interpersonal difficulties. A loss of self-awareness through the work, sometimes in the form of a trance state, is characteristic of traditional healing (Bührmann, 1984; Maiello, 1999). Traditional healers' intuitive sense of client issues is often experienced as though they are "taken over" by the client (Bürhmann, 1984). Such experiences are also consistent with the general interconnectedness of being in IKS and African Worldviews (Bomoyi & Mkhize, 2016; Mekoa, 2018).

These experiences can also be understood, to an extent, within the concept of projection, but more specifically through the concepts of transference and countertransference (Bateman et al., 2010). Through countertransferential dynamics, client and therapist can sometimes feel like they are other to themselves (Solano, 2015). It is through working with or within the transference that integration can occur and a sense of self can be restored.

Jung linked transference and countertransference phenomena within a therapeutic relationship to the shared collective unconscious between client and therapist (Jung, 1998). Models of the psychoanalytic encounter depict a relationship or connection between the client's unconscious and the therapist’s, and vice versa (Edinger, 1992), with each able to receive communication or messages from this level, which may sometimes be experienced as foreign to the receiver.

Lastly, four participants spoke to the alterity and othering in relation to the ancestors through their work, and the importance of experiencing ancestors as other to oneself. One participant stressed the importance of understanding the opposing spirits of the ancestors. Another participant here stressed the importance of experiencing the answers from the ancestors as coming from outside of oneself. One participant emphasised the importance of communicating with the spirits in the same way as you would with another person.

Connection and communication with ancestors align with the relational view of IKS and African worldviews, which extend to the living, unborn, and ancestors. In addition, knowledge of the Nguni ancestors and the methods used to communicate with them is part of the training of a Traditional Healer (Bakow & Low, 2018; Thornton, 2009), together with knowledge of spirits (distinguished as “foreign” and water spirits) and the ritual used to heal through their agency.

Berg's (2003) work, which continued to build on the work of Bührman (1984) through exploring the significance of ancestor reverence in amaXhosa traditional healing, appears increasingly relevant in contemporary SA. Her work positions ancestors as archetypal figures from the collective unconscious, serving as intermediaries between what Jung termed the ego and the Self, illuminating how analytical psychology's notion of the collective unconscious might contribute to cross-cultural understanding.

Reflexive Note. As participants described their strategies for working with alterity and othering —rituals, symbolic practices, cultivation of ancestral relationships—I was struck by both the sophistication of these approaches and the limits of my ability to fully understand them. Some practices involved dimensions of experience (direct spiritual communication, healing at a distance) that my Western scientific worldview struggles to accommodate. Rather than resolving this epistemological tension, I tried to hold it as a generative space for learning

As Participant in this Study. Participants shared how, through participation in this research study, was in itself an experience of othering. The submersion over time in the research project meant that participants' perceptions and experiences of it and their role in it inevitably changed.

In conclusion of the first interview, participant 1 asked: "…Mmm, but my my interest is in what value really if any do you people do or put in?" They were concerned about how their responses to questions would be represented: "…How does that work? Do I do I consent on that you know?" During the follow-up interview they reflected further on the focus of the study, i.e exploring constructs, and how that in itself is problematic: "…Ja, like I was saying, as traditional healers, you see, the starting point of that concept can be a little bit problematic for traditional healers, in the sense that when you deal with a client, you

sort of integrate yourself into their psyche…. It's a very problematic concept that you came up with, it digs deep into the psyche of us as traditional healers. I don't think we've actually contemplated the way that you've structured this."

They reflected on their participation in this study and being asked to comment on experiences of other, othering and otherness: "...And what you've experienced, so it that's where it becomes chaotic..." This was qualified further: "...Integration for me is a bit of problem".

At the conclusion of the first interview when asked if they wanted to clarify or ask about anything we had discussed, participant 2 commented: "…We experience different things now we; we're sitting here talking to you, white person and you're talking about our tradition, and we have to try and make sense of…" They reflected further on some of the questions they were left with from the interview and thinking about their place in the world: "...Who we are and what we are?"

During the follow-up interview, when asked for reflection on the study and what other participants had said about participating in the study, she simply said: "So, she cannot, she's not bothered with broader aspects of her ...".

Participant 3 did not speak directly to any issues with participation in the study but did comment on issues of language in the follow-up interview: "… because we are Xhosa speaking, you know what I mean and when we talk to like you in English speaking person, at times, a lot of meaning, that's lost in the translation." On conclusion of the follow-up interview, there was a positive comment on the study and the opportunity to participate in it: "… I think this was a very good, as I said to you from the beginning, this was very, this study is very good and I hope we will use the study after we have…"

Reflecting further on the value they saw in the study: "… we are doing this in integration and can bring really change… a study like this on people who we are."

Participant 4 at the conclusion of the first interview, asked about the study in relation to the integration of Traditional Healers into general health services: "…Okay, I don't know if you'll have answers for this but uh, she wants to know why what is the process of us as traditional healers actually being integrated into…"

During the follow-up interview, when asked to reflect on their experience of being part of the study, they reflected on where they thought the study should be focused: "…Where you study, this is her concern, where she thinks you should focus your study, is how families have already broken down. Especially where there's a traditional healer in the midst…" Later they reflected on the possible implications of the study: "…. And if a study like this could help heal those wounds, it would go a long way. Where people who start understanding the psyche of traditional healers. It should make things fairly easier for people to relate to one another."

Participant 5 during the first interview spoke about their personal reaction to what was being discussed and explored in the study: "…It's a very difficult word(s) for me. Why did you choose these words? Mean it's a very difficult word for me. Because cause of what just, what I've told you that."

At the conclusion of the first interview, participant 5 was concerned about their perceived difference from other participants in the study: "… Mmm, no no do do you do you think that that uhm because no- with me not being cerebral or or intellectual that you you've managed to get what you want uhm in the in a more simplistic way?" They drew a comparison between themselves to other participants: "…I don't didn't want it to be a waste of your time."

During the follow-up interview, participant 5 reflected on their anxiety of being part of the study: "…I was afraid that you'll start using intellectual words that I wouldn't understand. Because I think with my heart, not with my head, very often…" Later they reflected on their involvement in the study with positive associations: "…So, I felt very honoured that you had chosen me, because I do feel that I have got something to contribute."

Participant 6 from the start of the first interview took issue with the constructs of the study itself: "…Too much separate, yes. And it's something that I'm not familiar with." When asked for comment on what others had said about participation in the study, they stated: "……ja, you feel othered and you're being studied, and it raises ethical questions as well and I think that is why as well, we spoke about, you know. And because I've been studied quite a few times and I said, this is the last time I'm doing this."

During the follow-up interview, they reflected on their negative associations with being part of this study and research more generally: "…and I think that is why**…** as well, we spoke about, you know. And because I've been studied quite a few times and I said, this is the last time I'm doing this."

Participant 7, when discussing images that were arising from a discussion of the constructs of the study, stopped themselves and reflected: "…And it's quite a lot, I know I actually…And I wonder if I should be saying things, I don't know." They further reflected: "…And I wonder if I should be saying things, I don't know...".

During the follow-up interview, participant 8 felt different from most of the other participants about their participation in the study: "…No, it's only that, I see it in a positive way that, like, being given an opportunity to say whatever. To share your experiences with the outside world…" They related an example of their own research on traditional healing

and it being othered: "… No, there was, in fact, whenever there is a presentation about traditional healers, about traditional healing, no, people do not turn up."

Participant 9, during the follow-up interview, when asked to comment on this theme in relation to what others had said, remarked: "…A white person has written a lot about black persons without consulting the black person. They have misled a black person, the wrong information…" Later, they reflected on the member checking process of the research and the follow-up interviews by stating: "Right now, what you're doing, you're quite correct, you're quite right. Before you publish, you talk to this, a kind of consultation to this kind of person who is involved in this thing."

Exploring Alterity and Othering with Traditional Healers: Discussion. Participants were asked to reflect on their experience of being part of this study. Five participants spoke of feeling othered by the use of the constructs of other, othering, and otherness under investigation. These constructs were perceived as being too intellectual and evoked memories in the participants of previous experiences with academic research projects on traditional healers. One participant was concerned that some of the questions in the study implied a type of integration of the constructs within the work of traditional healing that doesn't exist. Another participant felt that the study required a level of reflection on the constructs in relation to their work and life that wasn't present, and which they didn't find personally meaningful.

This study from the outset defined the constructs of other, othering, and otherness within the broadest and most generally accepted current definitions. These definitions served as parameters for the study's exploration. It was hoped that such a breadth of initial definition would allow for the exploration of the conceptual frameworks and interrelatedness between these constructs and other constructs and concepts to which they

are most commonly associated, such as discrimination and prejudice (and all the general and specific forms of intrapsychic and external phenomena related to these).

It was further hoped that such a breadth of definition would allow for a critical view of the bias, which is intrinsic in the construction of any conceptual knowledge (McCray, 2006), and the assumptions of causality inherent in conceptual frameworks (Epstein, 2016). Lastly, it was hoped that such breadth of initial definition would allow for conditions of epistemic interrogation and expansion, as recommended by Lee et al. (2016), when exploring necessary conceptual change.

Participants received the definitions of the constructs in an information letter about the study, and the first interviews began with the reading of these definitions to the participants. The interviews with participants 2 and 4 were conducted with the use of a translator.

Despite the above efforts and the richness of data yielded by the data collection process, participants' experience of being othered by the very constructs under investigation is of concern. In retrospect, one way to have mitigated some of the concerns may have been to focus on defining one construct at a time, which would have been in line with the structure of the interview schedule. So, rather than providing all the definitions upfront, we could have presented, for example, the definitions of Other first, and then explored this construct through that section of the interview schedule.

Perhaps another way to mitigate some of the concerns would be to expand on the given definitions and provide specific examples related to each definition in the dictionary. For example, after providing the definition of 'other' as an adjective and pronoun that refers to something not the same or different (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2019a), an expansion would have been to discuss what individuals or groups often perceive as different

(sometimes fundamentally) from themselves or their own group. An example might be to focus on what people sometimes think are fundamental differences between the sexes, such as the stereotype of the nurturing female and the protective male.

However, it could be argued that such an approach would have pre-empted responses (Kvale, 1999), would not have been in keeping with the exploratory nature of the study (Willig, 2019). It may also have limited the exploration of the conceptual frameworks and interrelatedness between these constructs and other constructs and concepts to which they are most commonly associated, as well as all the general and specific forms of intrapsychic and external phenomena related to these. The findings of this study demonstrate the richness of data in relation to both intrapsychic and external phenomena, providing an example of alterity and othering across participants' personal and professional lives.

Finally, the data analysis process gradually "collapsed" other and otherness into the construct of alterity (see page 115 for reasons for this decision), as a clear distinction could not be made between the terms other and otherness within the data. Alterity was used to capture the experiences of other and otherness, in self or from others; and othering was kept as the process behind alterity, in self or from others. In retrospect, alterity and othering could have been used as two distinct constructs alongside the three constructs with participants, and a more explicit distinction could have been made between the experience of and the processing behind the constructs within the interview schedule. For example, participants could first have been asked to reflect on experiences of other and otherness (alterity) within themselves and then within the world. Following this section, participants could have been asked to reflect on what processes they think are behind other and

otherness (alterity) within themselves and then within the world. However, these insights were a result of working with the data and were only available in hindsight.

As can be seen from the participants' responses above, several were discomforted by the researcher's positionality as a White male. One participant was concerned about what may be "lost in translation". Two participants expressed concerns about being misrepresented by the researcher, although both mentioned that the follow-up interview alleviated these concerns. Another participant felt it was inappropriate to discuss their traditions with someone from another culture, and another participant felt that they may have "overshared" about the work of traditional healing, which should be viewed as sacred. The fifth participant here expressed a general concern about "white people" doing research on "black people, implying positionality issues that could affect the data collection and analysis.

Braun & Clarke (2013) link researcher positionality to the broader concept of researcher reflexivity. The active role of the researcher in influencing the research process is emphasised as a crucial aspect of any qualitative research, ensuring its integrity, transparency, and depth of findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Willig, 2008). Reflexivity further aligns with the interpretivist approach adopted in this research, emphasising the co-constructed nature of research as a process between the researcher and participants (Bryman, 2012). The follow-up interviews further support the co-constructed nature of the findings. Positionality considerations were further guided by Milner's (2007) examination of the critical role of race and culture in research. While navigating the complexities of race and culture in research is acknowledged, researchers are called on to move beyond "colour-blind" approaches and to actively consider the role of race and culture in their work.

Reflexive Note: For me, fluency or lack of fluency in language has always felt like a major contributing factor to the past and current divides between cultural groups within SA. While I am fluent in English and Afrikaans, I am not fluent in isiXhosa, and I certainly am not able to conduct exploratory research interviews with participants who only speak isiXhosa or are from an isiXhosa cultural background. The use of a translator in this study could have certainly reinforced associations related to my perceived positionality.

The consideration of the theoretical and methodological choices may have mitigated some of the concerns about positionality mentioned by participants. While the study was situated broadly within the theoretical paradigm of analytical psychology, it was acknowledged that after Jung, analytical psychology did not establish a strong tradition of systematic research, unlike other psychological schools such as behavioural or cognitive psychology (Cambray & Sawin, 2018). The fluid and multifaceted nature of postmodernism, with its emphasis on pluralism and the deconstruction of grand narratives, is acknowledged. An interpretivist research paradigm was thus employed as the overarching framework, given its emphasis on socially constructed realities and subjective meaning-making in the world.

The data collected were understood to be socially constructed and context-dependent. Interpretivism operates within a constructivist ontology, knowledge and reality being actively constructed through human engagement (Goldkuhl, 2012). Subjectivity was inherent in the research, and reality was understood from the participants' perspective.

Thematic Analysis, specifically Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021a), was deemed a suitable approach for accommodating the theoretical paradigm and previous methodological decisions outlined in Chapter 4. Given the theoretical flexibility of Thematic Analysis, it allowed the researcher to employ the method because it was coherent with the chosen theoretical positions, and to make a series of decisions before data analysis that

were in line with this position (Braun & Clarke, 2006b, 2021c, 2021e). Themes were presented as a detailed and nuanced account of participants' experiences and reflections. Patterns within the data were identified through an inductive approach rather than a deductive one, allowing the themes identified to be strongly linked to the data itself. The themes were identified more at a latent or interpretative level than at a semantic level. There was consideration of the surface meanings of the data, but primarily the focus was on the underlying ideas, conceptualisations, and assumptions. Lastly, reflexivity, as an ongoing process, is further emphasised, with researchers actively engaging in self-questioning about their potential biases and assumptions.

Given that this research study is also a requirement for a degree, it was supervised by an experienced researcher. This supervision process allowed for a level of objectivity and facilitated active engagement in discussions on possible bias and positionality issues throughout the process.

Two participants expressed concern after the first interview that they might be misrepresented by the researcher. Both said the follow-up interview process mitigated this. One participant was unclear about how the study would assist with the integration of traditional healing into mainstream healthcare. This same participant also felt the study should have focused on the family issues that traditional healers have and offered support and healing. While the follow-up interviews went some way to mitigating the concerns of misrepresentation for the two participants here, the concern of the third participant highlights the need for more collaboration from the start of the research process, rather than relying on collaboration efforts, such as member-checking, within the process. International research trends on the integration of traditional practices with mainstream health systems (for example, Corso et al., 2022; Reyes-Garcia, 2010; Robbins & Dewar,

2011) emphasize the value of collaborative and Indigenous-led strategies for further research and to build on an evidence base for traditional healing practices.

Again, given that this study is also in fulfilment of degree requirements, this level of collaboration from the start may not have been feasible, as research conducted for degree purposes requires the researcher to demonstrate a level of independence at all stages of the research process. However, it does emphasize the need for collaboration on future research efforts and the importance of such endeavours, as exemplified by the dialogues between Jungian Analysts and Traditional Healers that began with a symposium in 2016. Besides the common ground found, the process of listening and learning from each other was reported to have led to mutual healing, demonstrating that respectful dialogue can be transformative.

Two participants expressed positive views about their participation in the study, reflecting on how comfortable they felt sharing their experiences. They believed the study would contribute to the integration of traditional healing into society and ethnic groups. It was the meaning that participants in this study attributed to the phenomenon under question, in their roles as both traditional healers and individuals in the world, that formed the focus of the study. The findings of this study aim to present the views or perspectives of the participants. The context within which participants live and practice, as well as the broader national and international context in which this exploration took place, was considered. Insights from the findings and literature related to the phenomenon under study informed the discussion and consideration of the study's contributions.

This chapter closes with the second subtheme under Alterity and Othering Without. Having explored the multifaceted ways in which participants experienced external alterity and othering through connection and agency, we now turn to a contrasting dimension of

alterity—one where both connection and agency were absent. While participants shared fewer accounts of this experience, the nature of this separateness without connection or agency offers important insights, particularly when considered alongside the related subtheme of internal alterity and othering explored in Chapter 5, where similar absences of connection and agency were more extensively documented.

Subtheme 2.2: Separateness, (Unconnected), No Agency

Participants shared experiences of other, otherness, and othering in the external world that were perceived as unconnected to a sense of self and over which they or others had no control.

Participant 1 spoke of the work with a particular client and an "unusual" experience with the concept of love: "… A voice came to me and said, the only way you'll help this person, is if you love her."

They also shared their experiences of dream images and their correspondence in the external world: "…you see you dream of something you've never seen before and you go to where you saw it and it's there." Lastly, participant 1 spoke to their abilities in the work and identity as a traditional as: "…It's it's I don't force myself, I I comes from outside from myself to be able to that."

They reflected on physical symptoms and how the language of their culture captures a separateness from the self that Western understandings and languages don't: "…In [language of culture] you say, I am being, I am suffering from a headache. So, I don't have a headache, I don't own the headache."

As mentioned under theme 1 and subtheme 1.2, participant 2 emphasised external experiences of separateness outside of their control: "…she's just mentioned that uh she lost 11 children, Uh she's left with four now. And it it's because of the calling…" These

statements were later clarified as miscarriages that only stopped once they responded to the "demand" not to attend church.

They reflected on unexplained physical events occurring in the world in general but also in relation to the example given from their own family as indications of a resistance to respond in a particular way: "…And the idea was that she needed to do something for her and, but you know he didn't respond to that, he broke his both his legs, he had a dream and he didn't respond."

During the follow-up interview, their identification with the calling and lack of agency in the external world was further highlighted: "…Okay. For her, it seems like it has always been out of her control. It has never been anything that she has ever controlled. When she first had the experience, she was struck by lightning… the reason she left school was because she lost, her eyesight became poor…". The lack of internal conscious response or reflection in relation to these experiences was further highlighted: "…With her it was never, there wasn't that internal struggle, that internal enlightenment, so to speak, or experience, but she was more physically afflicted and that is what prompted her to go into the healing."

They reflected on their sense of separateness from traditional healing itself: "…her experience with traditional healing has always been through a trance and because she cannot personally identify with it."

Participant 3 did not share any experience directly related to this theme.

Participant 4, during the follow-up interview, reflected on their experience of the influence of the external within the work: "…the moment the client walks in, something different happens to her. She can physically feel that something is different, and it is not…" This statement was clarified in relation to the communication with spirits: "… it does not

emanate from within her. Okay, so then, what happens is the spirit then communicates that with you, that this is not your affliction, but someone else's, and this is how you deal with it…" They qualified the concreteness or embodiment of spirits further: "…So, she was just further explaining how she relates to the phenomenon of ancestor, of spiritual guides. She, for her, it's as real as the three of us talking."

Participant 4 also spoke about their reliance on external events in the world with their own agency to shape issues within their family: "…but at the end of the day something will happen that will force them back to her…" They cited an example of their brother's burial, and the family only responded to her initial advice once a premonition they had, came true: "…. And when she told them about it, they rejected her, they just would not listen to her. But a week later, they had to go and dig up the the corpse and re-bury. Because what she had mentioned. Actually happened."

They gave their understanding of events in the external world with their own apparent agency, also in relation to the experiences of their family: "…So, that's the clash that occurs. She will have a premonition. They will not believe her; they will reject her, and then something bad happens."

Just prior to the first interview participant 5 was out shopping and was unexpectedly approached by a person: "…And she said, uhm I was uh told by my ancestors that I had to come to [shop] uh now and I'm looking for blue and white beads and uhm, so I immediately took of one of my bracelets and gave it to her."

Participant 5 later shared an experience which connected a calling dream and events in the external world: "…then saw the person that I'd dreams about uh the very next day…and he turned out to be my trainer. And I saw him in my dream the night before. Dressed exactly almost exactly the way he was when I saw him the next day."

Lastly, participant 5 also shared an unexpected experience while on a field trip that further solidified their connection with traditional healing: "…Pedi people and uhm, this person saw me and came and called me. I was doing, taking some photographs and uhm held my hand and took me to her little village.…there were only about 12 or 13 people and one male and the rest were female and they were uhm all uhm in Ithwasa [in training as traditional healers]."

During the follow-up interview, participant 6 spoke about the connection of the internal calling embodied in the external world: "…I think second or third year at [tertiary institution]. Then I would feel a sensation here on my shoulders and my back…I can feel blood, my blood moving in my veins…".

They reflected on alterity and othering within and without, both personally and as a Traditional Healer: "…in our, in our understanding of life, I am you, you are, you are me, you know. So, whatever is, I am not separate from the world. I am part of it, you know? In here, or out here? As the body isn't me, you know."

Participant 7 described unexplained illnesses and symptoms which were later understood as a result of their initially rejecting the calling: "…An unexplainable so…I had issues with my thyroid and, and had issues with my, my vitamin D intake and a whole lot of funny things, not really know illnesses. And then, I got this flue and when my ears completely plugged up. I, I had terrible headaches…" They further described the change in symptoms as they changed context: "…I drove from class to come back home and this time the ear was totally deaf… when I'm approaching home my ears go, and I can hear….when I'm supposed to go back on the Monday, I'm sick again…".

Later, participant 7 recalled the unexplained shift in their abilities, and the start of physical symptoms more generally, when they joined a tertiary institution: "…I even

struggled in English. I couldn't I, I, I've always been better on writing, expressing myself in English, better in writing…the talking was not coming, the writing was not coming. And I was as, I was so forgetful. I had this terrible headache all the time."

They shared an unexpected experience at a family event when they were approached by an unknown Traditional Healer: "…Then she describes how stupid I am at school and how I forget things, and everything. She basically described what is going on…" This Traditional Healer also had access to their dreams: "…you also dream of the ocean. And I was like, mmh, nobody has ever known that known what I dream."

Lastly, they reflected on what one of their trainers explained as the reason for their physical symptoms in relation to their response to dream material: "…During my dream started getting vivid. But now… He basically…the whole thing. So, things were not done properly." Later, they echoed what other participants shared in relation to a lack of response to dream material and events in the external world: "…And people kept telling me that it's because of that, that you're having these accidents."

Participant 8 shared an experience during a hospitalization where nursing staff repeatedly saw an elderly lady that they believed was connected to them, later understood to be related to the calling: "…they said they saw an old lady. I remember...The nursing, the nurse who saw me who was the first one to see me in the hospital. On the corridor."

Later, participant 8 shared further unexplainable events they experienced, which they related to the calling and or the resistance to responding to the calling: "…it started in class, in class I was wearing a golden necklace and then it miraculously went off, without me, you know, unlocking it. And then the next day a lintel from the garage then a lintel broke the windscreen. Ja, the following week my black skirt was ripped off,

miraculously…then, I saw a man, a gentleman wear a neat, wearing a, this thing, a grey suit and a white shirt, waving with a white handkerchief, like saying, I got you…".

They reflected on the unexplained events in relation to their initial response to the calling: "… I resisted going to training and then I was robbed in [redacted]. I knew that this is the reason, the reason is that I didn't go to the initiation. I got the message. Then I made the decision. (to train)."

Participant 9 also shared unexplained somatic symptoms that were later understood to be a result of a resistance to the calling: "… At some point, I had this problem. I'm not sure how to call it **…** is something that always, I feel like pain on this side."

During the follow-up interview, this experience was clarified further and the relation to the specific context in which it occurred: "…When we have the surgery or see the doctor, I'm okay, I'm extremely okay, I don't feel any pain. But when I'm at home, it starts again."

Lastly, participant 9 related a specific unexplainable event when they sought employment while they had resistance to the calling: "…When I got there on Monday morning, the same lady who interviewed me last Thursday, she said, no I don't even recognise you."

Alterity and Othering Within and Without: Discussion. Participants here spoke to external events that they experienced as separate and unconnected to their sense of self, and over which they had no agency or influence. One of these participants reported experiencing external events, such as unexplained physical symptoms, which had been lost to memory by an interviewer, and related these events to the calling. They were able to make sense of these experiences through the assistance of family members and a home environment that integrates religion with traditional healing practices. Two of the participants who had dreams related to the calling also reported sensations in their bodies

related to the calling and unexplained and worsening physical symptoms as they initially rejected the calling.

Unexplained physical symptoms that worsen when a person called does not respond or rejects the calling are also characteristic of the calling (Bürhman, 1984; Thornton, 2009) and can occur together with dreams and visions. For the participant without a calling dream, it occurred together with an unexplained event in the external world of a potential employee who had lost memory of a previous interaction with them. The other participant here, as well as two of the other participants who had calling dreams, also reported unexplained experiences. One reported a history of miscarriages, being struck by lightning, and the loss of eyesight; another was approached by a stranger for beads and then dreamt of their future trainer; and lastly, another reported losing a necklace, their skirt ripping, and an elderly man waving.

The participants' accounts of internal and external alterity align closely with recent ethnographic research on *ukuthwasa*. Van der Watt et al. (2021) document that ancestral calling often presents with psychotic-like symptoms that are reinterpreted through initiation as communications from ancestors. This revaluation process—from pathological "other" to sacred calling—parallels participants' narratives in this study and suggests that Traditional Healing epistemologies provide frameworks for integrating experiences of internal and external alterity that Western psychology might pathologise.

Bakow and Low (2018) emphasise the cultural determinants of this meaning-making process, noting that community validation and cultural narratives of ancestral connection are crucial for transforming distressing experiences into sources of healing power. Participants in the current study similarly emphasised the importance of community recognition and elder guidance in navigating their calling experiences, suggesting that

alterity is not only an individual psychological phenomenon but a socially mediated process of identity formation.

The phenomenology of the *sangoma* calling exhibits precisely the characteristics Jung associated with synchronistic events (Kleinhempel, 2018): meaningful connections between inner psychic states and external occurrences during periods of psychological crisis and transformation (Buhrmann, 1984). The calling typically involves a constellation of symptoms, dreams, and external confirmations that together create an overwhelming sense of destiny and purpose (Thornton, 2009).

These synchronistic events function as what Jung called "numinous" experiences—encounters with the sacred or transcendent that carry self-validating authority (Jung, 1931; Main, 2007), and underscore the importance of Main's (2018) recent research focuses on understanding acausality, improbability, and the meanings of simultaneous events, and the importance of further research in this area in relation to the experiences of Traditional Healers.

Reflexive note. Writing the discussion sections of these two chapters required constant vigilance about the interpretive moves I was making. I noticed my tendency to privilege analytical psychology concepts as the "explanatory" framework, with Traditional Healing knowledge positioned as the "data" to be explained. I worked to resist this hierarchy by presenting Traditional Healing frameworks as legitimate knowledge systems in their own right, with analytical psychology offering interpretive bridges rather than definitive explanations. This required humility about the limits of my own theoretical frameworks

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter starts with a reflection on the main aims and research questions of this study. The first two research questions were reformulated to guide the concluding remarks and provide answers to the questions. The limitations of the study are then discussed. This is followed by the practical implications of this study to the practice of psychotherapy. The future directions for research in this area are then discussed. The thesis ends with a closing statement and the contribution it makes to multiple, connected fields of knowledge.

Reflection on Research Questions

As the reader has come to understand, this study aimed to explore the constructs of other, othering, and otherness with Traditional Healers. It sought to explore how Traditional Healers make meaning of experiences and phenomena that psychodynamic psychology locates within these constructs. This became the first research question. The second research question sought to understand how Traditional Healers approach and work with such phenomena within themselves and their work with clients. The third research question sought to understand how such knowledge complements the analytical psychological understanding of these constructs. The three research questions were formulated as:

1. How do traditional healers make meaning of experiences and phenomena located by psychology within the constructs of other, othering and otherness?
2. How do traditional healers approach and work with such phenomena of other, othering and otherness, within themselves and their work with clients?
3. In what ways might such knowledge compliment analytical psychological understandings of other, othering and otherness?

What became clear from the findings and the associated discussions was, firstly, the overlap between the first two research questions. Participants' "meaning making" of experiences of other, othering and otherness were located within how they worked with such phenomena within themselves and their work with clients. A clear separation between the personal and professional aspects of these constructs also became apparent. While the personal "meaning making" was at times intimately connected to their work, these constructs also had personal relevance separate from the work. The findings and the discussion thereof, also highlighted that phenomena of other, othering and otherness were not only experienced from within the traditional healer or the clients, and therefore the second research question did not account for the external experiences or the "without". With consideration of the above the first two research questions are reformulated below to guide the concluding remarks. The third question remains unchanged.

1. How do traditional healers make meaning, approach and work with experiences and phenomena related to themselves that are located by psychology within the constructs of other, othering and otherness?
2. How do traditional healers make meaning, approach and work with experiences and phenomena of other, othering and otherness, related to their client work?

Experiences of other, othering, and otherness emerged as a pervasive theme threading through Traditional Healers' narratives across multiple life domains. These phenomena shaped not only their personal identity formation and vocational calling, but also their ongoing practice and engagement with Western research paradigms. The section below traces how these experiences manifested across four interconnected contexts, revealing both continuities and distinctions in how participants understood and related to these constructs.

Other, Othering and Otherness and Traditional Healers

Experiences and phenomena of other, othering, and otherness were reported to be core to the personal identity formation of most of the Traditional Healers in this study. These experiences included both early childhood and current experiences of separateness from others. These experiences were connected to a sense of self and over which they appeared to have agency or influence.

Experiences and phenomena of other, othering and otherness were core to the calling to become a Traditional Healer for all participants in this study. Six of the Traditional Healers' experiences here were related to dream material. The other three Traditional Healers' experiences were reportedly physical sensations and external phenomena. All these phenomena were experienced as unconnected to a sense of self and over which they seemed to have no agency or influence.

Experiences and phenomena of other, othering and otherness were reported to be part of the life of a Traditional Healer for all the participants in the study. These phenomena were experienced as external and related to the fears and prejudices from society, family members and other Traditional Healers at times. All participants reflected on the state of the world and the prevalence of such phenomena. Most connected such phenomena in SA to its historical past. Others reflected on the influences of social media and the dominance of individualistic culture.

Experiences and phenomena of other, othering and otherness were part of participants' experience in relation to this study for most of the Traditional Healers. Some experienced the constructs under investigation as overly intellectual; others felt the focus of the study assumed a separateness of understanding that was incongruent with the paradigm of traditional healing.

Other, Othering and Otherness and Traditional Healing

The constructs of other, othering, and otherness appear to be central to the practice of Traditional Healers. Clients seek traditional healing specifically to address issues related to these phenomena. The healing process itself engages with these concepts through rituals, medicines, and ancestral connections. Additionally, even in therapeutic relationships that emphasise connection, Traditional Healers sometimes deliberately encourage separation and boundaries between themselves and their clients.

The experiences of other, othering, and otherness were reported as fundamental to Traditional Healers' work, operating from multiple perspectives. Clients may perceive Traditional Healers as other due to cultural differences, but more commonly because of the healers' perceived spiritual power and the clients' fear of the unknown forces associated with it. Traditional Healers themselves experience otherness in several ways: through the intensity of their connections with clients, through the intentional boundaries they maintain to preserve professional distance, and through their unique relationship with ancestral spirits that requires a degree of separation from the ordinary world.

Other, Othering and Otherness: Traditional Healers, Traditional Healing and Analytical Psychology.

The alterity and othering experiences and phenomena related to the identity formation of the Traditional Healers can be connected to psychodynamic psychology through the theory of identity formation (Amos, 2022). However, analytical psychology offers concrete frameworks for understanding these early experiences. Jung's individuation process (1943) and Edinger's concept of the ego-Self relationship (1992) demonstrate that childhood experiences of separateness and perceived "special abilities" represent the initial stages of dialogue between consciousness and the unconscious. Rather than isolated

phenomena, these early experiences mark the foundational development of the psyche's internal relationship—where the ego begins its lifelong negotiation with the deeper Self.

The alterity and othering experiences and phenomena related to the calling are characteristic of traditional healing (Bakow & Low, 2018). However, the individuation process (Jung, 1943) and the ego-Self relationship (Edinger, 1992) in analytical psychology, as discussed in Chapter 3, demonstrate the importance of the ego experiencing the Self as other and with its own autonomy or sense of agency. It is through these experiences that the ego comes into the necessary "tension" or relationship with the Self.

The external experiences and phenomena related to the calling described by participants do not appear to relate to the theories espoused by psychodynamic psychology. It is through the concept of synchronicity, as understood in analytical psychology (Main, 2018), that the acausality of such experiences can be meaningfully connected to internal psychic states.

The external experiences and phenomena of alterity and othering that Traditional Healers encounter in relation to society, family members, and other Traditional Healers can be related to psychodynamic psychology's concepts of projection (Bateman et al., 2010) and projective identification (Sandler, 1983). Analytical psychology's concepts of the unconscious as other, and the shadow as other, align with ideas of projection and projective identification (Jung,1931,1951). Although psychodynamic and analytical psychology partially explain these experiences, Allport's (1954) contact theory—particularly its conditions for effective interpersonal contact—provides more comprehensive insight. Applying this framework to Traditional Healers reveals a challenge: while they share common goals, the significant status diversity among healers and the occasional absence of clear authority figures complicate the moderating dynamics essential for optimal contact.

Traditional Healers' reflections on the status of alterity and othering in the world, and in particular in SA, can be related to psychodynamic psychology's concept of projection (Bateman et al., 2010). Shadow as other, and other in the collective, as understood in analytical psychology (Jung, 1946, 1951) also illustrate the tension between the individual and the collective as a necessary condition for psychological balance.

The alterity and othering experiences and phenomena within the work of Traditional healers are therefore seen to be characteristic of traditional healing. These experiences can also be related to analytical psychology's understanding of the collective other in relationships (Jung, 1946), where the other can serve as a "screen" and reflect those aspects of the internal world that are yet to be integrated.

Finally, the alterity and othering experiences and phenomena appear to be core to the work of a Traditional Healer. Other aspects, as they relate to the necessary boundary between the client and the healer, can be understood within psychodynamic psychology's conceptualisation of transference and countertransference (Bateman et al., 2010). Analytical psychology would further connect countertransferential experiences to the relationship or connection between the healer and the client's personal and collective unconscious (Jung, 1998), as well as the client's connection to the healer's personal and collective unconscious. It is this collective unconscious that may be related to the relationship Traditional Healers have with their ancestors and the spiritual world.

Practical Implications and Recommendations

The findings from this study highlight the importance of the constructs under investigation to the personal, professional and work life of Traditional Healers. Alterity and othering in relation to the work of Traditional Healers highlights the importance of the

continued engagement and relationship with other, the ancestors and spirits in the work and life of Traditional Healers.

Given that the participants were practising healers and that altering and othering were part of the call to training and practice, the practical implications for the field of psychology are restricted here to psychologists or psychotherapists. The implication for trainee psychologists, who will themselves become future healers, is to engage with early childhood experiences of alterity and othering, both in relation to their personal identity development and how these experiences relate to their “calling” to become a psychologist.

In clinical practice, these findings emphasise that when working with clients on issues of alterity and othering, psychologists and psychotherapists can incorporate experiential, ritual-based, or non-verbal interventions rather than relying exclusively on traditional talk-based interpretation and integration. While the predictable structure of weekly psychotherapy sessions—held at the same time and place each week—creates a ritualistic framework for the therapeutic process, practitioners might consider incorporating more explicit ritual elements through alternative and creative therapeutic modalities. For example, practitioners can incorporate explicit ritual elements through techniques such as opening sessions with improvised music to mark therapeutic boundaries, using art-making or clay work for non-verbal emotional expression, implementing movement-based interventions like dance and movement therapy or psychodrama for embodied processing, and creating closing rituals that symbolically mark therapeutic transitions. These experiential modalities—including somatic approaches that focus on body sensations, and expressive arts techniques combining multiple creative mediums—offer alternatives to traditional talk therapy particularly when working with trauma, identity issues, and experiences of othering.

Lastly, the findings further highlight that therapists can address issues of alterity and othering by encouraging clients to explore these experiences directly. In practice, this may require therapists to temporarily 'hold' or validate client projections rather than immediately interpreting them—at least in the initial stages of therapy. Additionally, this approach suggests that therapists should help clients establish and maintain clear interpersonal boundaries when genuine protection is needed, rather than automatically attributing all difficulties with others to the client's internal projections.

Study Limitations

As with any qualitative research, especially exploratory research, the sample size, number of participants in the study, is generally small (Willig, 2019). Although it was not the goal for the findings to be generalizable, it is necessary to consider what the findings might have looked like with a larger number of participants. More participants may have either further strengthened the themes identified within the data or added additional themes that could have been explored in a follow-up interview with participants. The sample size of nine participants fell within the lower range proposed for the study in the research proposal, which was between eight and twelve participants. Recruiting potential participants proved to be challenging. Although an initial collegial network was used, at least half of those approached were not able to participate in the study. Snowballing sampling went some way to recruit further participants, but there were further challenges related to the nonattendance at scheduled interviews of persons who had agreed to be part of the study.

The initial sample size, ranging from eight to twelve participants, was also based on the scope of this study, which aimed to fulfil the requirements for a degree, aligning with recommendations for phenomenological studies at the master's or doctoral level (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Had this been an independent study or involved a team of researchers, more

time could have possibly been spent on the recruitment process, and the length of data collection phase could have also accommodated more participants.

The diversity of the sample is a further limitation of the study and is related to the issues noted above. While the intention was to ensure diversity across demographic variables, the smaller sample size and recruitment difficulties made this goal challenging to achieve. As a result, only two participants in this study identify as male, and six of the participants have a tertiary education. While there is diversity in terms of places of work, including rural, semi-rural, and urban settings, most participants identify with the amaXhosa ethnic group and attended training schools within that culture. Only two participants were trained within the amaZulu ethic group.

Ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, although ethically necessary, imposed limitations on the depth of contextual analysis possible in this study. While basic demographic variables (such as age, gender, and occupation) were reported alongside the findings, richer contextual details about participants' personal circumstances—such as their specific cultural backgrounds, relationship histories, or life events that shaped their experiences—could not be disclosed without compromising anonymity. Access to and inclusion of these contextual details would have enabled a more nuanced interpretation of how participants' lived experiences influenced their engagement with alterity and othering

Lastly, the researcher's positionality as a white male and the perceived associations with this position proved to be a further limitation to the study, as evidenced by participants' reflections on their involvement in the study. The need for a translator for two of the interviews could have further exacerbated concerns about positionality. Given the richness of the data despite this limitation, there should be consideration of what else

participants may have shared with a researcher of a different positionality who was also fluent in isiXhosa, in relation to the study.

Future Research Directions

Given that this was exploratory research, the findings from this study support the need for further research in this area, using the identified themes and subthemes as a framework for further investigation. These themes could be explored with a greater number and diversity of Traditional Healers. Participants in further research of this may be willing to have the context of their lives disclosed within the findings. This would add depth to the discussion regarding these constructs.

While the experiences and understandings thereof discussed in this study can be related to some of the concepts and theories of psychodynamic psychology, analytical psychology shows a clearer relationship to such experiences through Jung's (1946, 1951, 1998) original ideas of the unconscious and the shadow as other, through the collective other, the collective unconscious and the individuation process. These concepts were applied with specific focus to the constructs being interrogated, but this does point to a potential bridge between traditional healing and analytical psychology, with these constructs being further explored within traditional healing more broadly.

A surprising finding was the relatedness of the Jungian understanding of the concept of synchronicity to the experiences and phenomena described. This supports current research efforts on this concept within Jungian circles, that are connecting acausality to complexity theory (Main, 2018).

Lastly, any future research efforts should consider collaborative work from the start of the research process. Such efforts would include any potential participants in the conceptualisation of research projects through to the analysis and discussion of data. This

would facilitate an increased awareness of the places where theoretical paradigms overlap and where they do not, as well as where shifts and “true transformation” of epistemological frameworks are needed in the generation of knowledge (Akin Aina, 2010, p. 21).

Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis makes contributions to multiple interconnected fields: analytical psychology, the psychology of otherness, South African psychology, Traditional Healing scholarship, and qualitative research methodology. This section articulates these contributions, addressing what has been learned through this research and its potential value for various audiences.

Contributions to Analytical Psychology

This research advances analytical psychology in several important ways. First, it demonstrates the cross-cultural applicability and limitations of core Jungian concepts—shadow, projection, individuation, and the collective unconscious—through engagement with a non-Western knowledge system. While previous work in analytical psychology has engaged with indigenous healing traditions (notably Bührmann’s pioneering work in South Africa), this study provides systematic, insights into how Traditional Healers themselves understand and work with phenomena that analytical psychology conceptualizes as otherness.

The findings reveal that Traditional Healers have constructed sophisticated frameworks for understanding alterity and othering that both parallel and extend Jungian concepts. For example, Traditional Healers’ understanding of ancestral presences as simultaneously internal (psychological) and external (spiritual) challenges analytical psychology’s tendency to reduce spiritual experiences to intrapsychic phenomena. This

challenges analytical psychology to develop more nuanced understandings of the relationship between psyche and spirit, between projection and genuine otherness.

Second, the research contributes to ongoing debates within post-Jungian scholarship about the relationship between analytical psychology and postmodernism. By demonstrating how Traditional Healing knowledge systems share analytical psychology's emphasis on symbolic meaning, archetypal patterns, and the reality of the unconscious, while also maintaining commitments that postmodernism would question (e.g., the objective reality of ancestral presences), the research offers empirical grounding for theoretical discussions about analytical psychology's epistemological positioning.

Third, the research extends analytical psychology's engagement with synchronicity and acausal connection. Participants' accounts of diagnostic dreams, healing at a distance, and communication with ancestors provide rich phenomenological data that support and complicate Jungian understandings of synchronicity. These findings align with recent analytical psychology research connecting synchronicity to complexity theory (Main, 1028), suggesting productive directions for future theoretical development.

Contributions to the Psychology of Otherness

This research makes several contributions to psychological understandings of alterity and othering. First, it provides empirical data on how othering operates across multiple levels simultaneously—intrapsychic (internal experiences of alterity), interpersonal (relationships with clients and community), social (marginalisation by mainstream healthcare), and spiritual (relationships with ancestral presences). Most psychological research on othering focuses on one or two of these levels; this study demonstrates their evident interconnection and mutual influence.

Second, the research challenges the tendency within Western psychology to treat othering primarily as a problem to be solved through increased contact, empathy, or cognitive restructuring. Traditional Healers' accounts reveal that alterity—the experience of encountering genuine otherness—can be generative, transformative, and necessary for personal and professional development. This suggests that psychology needs more nuanced frameworks that distinguish between harmful othering (marginalisation, dehumanisation) and productive engagement with alterity (recognition of difference, cognitive openness, flexibility, and epistemic humility).

Third, the research contributes to an understanding of how individuals who are systematically othered by dominant social structures navigate and make meaning of these experiences. Traditional Healers' strategies for maintaining professional identity and epistemic authority in contexts of marginalisation offer insights relevant to other marginalised knowledge communities and professional groups.

Contributions to South African Psychology and Decolonization

This research also makes important contributions to ongoing efforts to decolonise psychology in South Africa. First, it demonstrates a methodology for engaging with indigenous knowledge systems that honours their epistemological autonomy while also exploring points of connection with Western psychological frameworks. The research models ways of conducting cross-epistemological dialogue without collapsing indigenous knowledge into Western categories or treating it as merely "cultural variation" on universal psychological principles.

Second, the research documents the historical and ongoing marginalisation of Traditional Healing within South African psychology and healthcare, providing empirical evidence for critiques of psychology's complicity in colonial and apartheid-era epistemic

violence. This documentation is important for accountability and for motivating institutional change.

Third, the research offers analytical psychology as a particularly promising framework for bridging Western psychology and Traditional Healing in the South African context. Unlike more reductionist psychological approaches, analytical psychology's emphasis on the unconscious, symbolic meaning, and archetypal patterns provides conceptual resources that resonate with Traditional Healing worldviews. This suggests that depth psychology approaches may have unique value in decolonisation efforts.

Fourth, the research contributes to broader conversations about knowledge production in post-apartheid South Africa. The research challenges the ongoing privileging of Western knowledge systems in South African universities and healthcare institutions. It provides ammunition for policy arguments about integrating traditional healing into mainstream healthcare and training.

Contributions to Traditional Healing Scholarship

While this research is primarily situated within psychology, it also makes contributions to scholarship on traditional healing. First, it provides detailed, respectful documentation of Traditional Healers' own understandings of their experiences and practices, centering their voices and epistemologies rather than interpreting them solely through Western frameworks. This documentation has value for traditional healing communities themselves, particularly for training and intergenerational knowledge transmission.

Second, the research explores dimensions of traditional healing practice—particularly experiences of alterity and othering—that have received limited attention in existing scholarship. While much research on traditional healing focuses on diagnostic

practices, herbal medicines, or cultural rituals, this study explores the phenomenology of calling, experiences of ancestral communication, and the psychological and spiritual dimensions of healing work.

Third, the research demonstrates points of connection between traditional healing and analytical psychology that may be useful for Traditional Healers who are interested in engaging with Western psychological frameworks. Several participants expressed interest in learning more about analytical psychology after hearing about Jungian concepts during the interviews, suggesting that this bridging work may have practical value for Traditional Healers themselves.

Contributions to Qualitative Research Methodology

This research makes several methodological contributions that extend beyond its specific content. First, it demonstrates an approach to reflexivity that extends beyond procedural compliance to substantive, ongoing engagement with the researcher's positionality, power dynamics, and epistemological assumptions. The reflexive account in Chapter 4 models how researchers might grapple with the challenges of cross-cultural, cross-epistemological research.

Second, the research demonstrates how reflexive thematic analysis can be applied in ways that honour IKS. By using participants’ own language and concepts as the foundation for thematic codes, and by including extensive direct quotations, the research shows how qualitative analysis can avoid imposing Western categories while still meeting academic standards for systematic analysis.

Summary of Key Findings

To contextualize these contributions, a summary of the key findings that ground them is provided:

1. **Alterity and othering are central to the personal identity formation, professional calling, clinical work, and daily lives of Traditional Healers.** These are not peripheral or occasional experiences but appear fundamental to what it means to be a Traditional Healer.

2. **Traditional Healers distinguish between alterity with connection and agency (productive engagement with difference) and alterity without connection and agency (harmful marginalization).** This distinction has important implications for psychological theories of othering. Specifically, it suggests that psychological frameworks should move beyond viewing all encounters with difference as potentially problematic and instead recognize that some forms of alterity can be generative and empowering when they preserve relation connection and individual agency.

3. **Ancestral presences are experienced as simultaneously internal and external, psychological and spiritual.** This challenges Western psychology's tendency towards atomism and to reduce spiritual experiences to intrapsychic phenomena.

4. **Traditional Healers use sophisticated strategies for working with alterity and othering in their healing practice**, including ritual, symbolic communication, and cultivation of relationship with ancestors and spirits. These strategies parallel and extend concepts from analytical psychology.

5. **Traditional Healers experience systematic marginalisation from mainstream South African healthcare and psychology,** yet maintain strong professional identities and epistemic authority within their own communities.

6. **Analytical psychology appears to provide a more resonant framework for understanding traditional healing than other Western psychological approaches**, due to its emphasis on the unconscious, symbolic meaning, and archetypal patterns.

Relevance by Audience

Different audiences will find different aspects of this research relevant:

For Examiners and Academic Psychologists: The research hopes to demonstrate rigorous qualitative methodology, sophisticated theoretical engagement, and original contribution to analytical psychology and the psychology of otherness. It makes contributions to scholarly conversations about decolonisation, epistemology, and cross-cultural psychology.

For Traditional Healers: The research offers respectful documentation of their knowledge and experiences, demonstrates the sophistication and expressed value of their frameworks, and makes connections with analytical psychology that some may find useful for their own practice and professional identity.

For Analytical Psychology Scholars and Practitioners: The research provides empirical data that both supports and challenges core Jungian concepts, suggests new directions for theory development (particularly regarding synchronicity and the relationship between psyche and spirit), and demonstrates the potential relevance of analytical psychology for South African contexts.

For Psychology Training Programs: The research provides a model for engaging with IKS (for some clients) in culturally responsive ways, offers content for courses on South African psychology or decolonization, and challenges programs to examine their own possible complicity in marginalizing non-Western knowledge.

For Healthcare Policymakers: The research provides evidence of the sophistication and clinical value of Traditional Healing, supporting arguments for better integration of Traditional Healers into mainstream healthcare and for policy changes that reduce marginalization.

For Researchers: The research provides methodological strategies for cross-cultural and cross-epistemological research, demonstrates substantial reflections, and models ethical engagement with marginalized knowledge communities.

Cautionary Reflections

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of these contributions. The research is inevitably shaped by my own positionality as a white, Western-trained researcher. Despite extensive reflective work, my interpretations are filtered through the frameworks of analytical psychology and Western epistemological assumptions. Other researchers—particularly Black South African researchers or Traditional Healers who are also academics—might produce different interpretations from these data.

The research focuses specifically on experiences of alterity and othering. While these are important dimensions of Traditional Healing, they do not capture the full complexity of Traditional Healing knowledge and practice. The research should not be taken as a comprehensive account of Traditional Healing.

The research was conducted in English, which was a second or third language for most participants. Despite efforts to mitigate language barriers, some nuances and complexities may have been lost in translation.

Lastly, the ethical commitments to anonymising and respecting participants' boundaries regarding sacred knowledge mean that some data could not be included in the thesis. The contributions are therefore based on what participants were willing and able to share within the constraints of academic research, not on the full depth and breadth of their knowledge.

Closing Statement

It has been a privilege to have spent time with the Traditional Healers who were part of this study. Through this experience, I have confronted the challenges of research in general, and more specifically, the challenges of researching IKS from a psychological perspective. While the data and findings are richly layered, I am left with a sense of what could not be accessed, perhaps what should not be accessed through psychological or any research approach. This may be the sacredness of traditional healing that should remain unknown and unconscious to mainstream psychology and to healers.

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Appendix A

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Human Ethics subcommittee
Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee
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www.ru.ac.za/research/research/ethics
NHREC Registration no. REC-241114-045

1 July 2019

MR Alan Fourie

Review Reference: 2019-0537-649

Email: A.Fourie@ru.ac.za

Dear MR Alan Fourie

Re: Other, othering, otherness: traditional healers **,**

Principal Investigator: Professor Jacqueline Akhurst

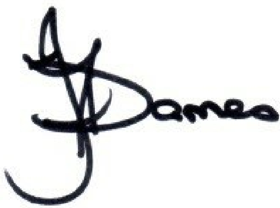
Collaborators: Mr Alan Fourie ,

This letter confirms that the above research proposal has been reviewed and **APPROVED** by the Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee (RUESC) – Human Ethics (HE) sub-committee.

Approval has been granted for 1 year. An annual progress report will be required in order to renew approval for an additional period. You will receive an email notifying when the annual report is due.

Please ensure that the ethical standards committee is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators. Please also ensure that a brief report is submitted to the ethics committee on completion of the research. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether the research was conducted successfully, if any aspects could not be completed, or if any problems arose that the ethical standards committee should be aware of. If a thesis or dissertation arising from this research is submitted to the library's electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) repository, please notify the committee of the date of submission and/or any reference or cataloguing number allocated.

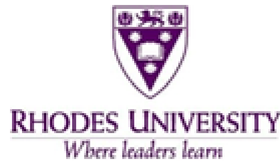
Sincerely



Prof Joanna Dames

Chair: Human Ethics sub-committee, RUESC- HE

Appendix B



INFORMATION LETTER TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANT

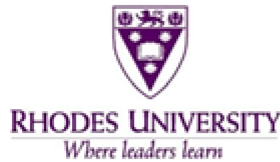
INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY / INFORMATION SHEET ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Dear [Participant's name]

My name is Alan Fourie, I am a Phd student at Rhodes University (RU). The research I wish to conduct for my Phd thesis involves exploring with traditional healers phenomena of other, othering and otherness. In sharing your subjective experiences and understandings of other, othering and otherness within your role as a traditional healer, and personally, you will assist in broadening and deepening current understandings of these phenomena, which will aid theory development and intervention. This project will be conducted under the supervision of Professor Jacqueline Akhurst (Department of Psychology, RU).

The constructs of other, othering and otherness are from the outset of this proposed research understood within the broadest and most generally accepted current definitions. Other as an adjective and pronoun referring to not the same or different; as a verb, othering, referring to the act of treating or considering (a person or group of people) as alien to oneself or one's group ("Other," 2019); and otherness as 'the quality or state of being other or different; or something that is other or different ("Otherness," 2019). It is hoped that such breadth of initial definition will allow for the exploration of the conceptual frameworks and interrelatedness between these constructs and other constructs and concepts to which they are most commonly associated, such as discrimination and prejudice (and all the general and specific forms of intrapsychic and external phenomena of).

I am here by contacting you to see whether you will be willing to be involved in this research study. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in two sessions. The first session, which should last between 45 and 90 minutes will explore you experiences and understandings of phenomena of other, othering and otherness. The second session, which should also last between 45 and 90 minutes, will be a follow up session, and you will be asked to review the initial results of an analysis of your interview and give feedback. Care will be taken to not interfere with your work commitments.



The two interviews will be guided by the following interview schedules:

Interview Schedule for Semi-structured Individual Interviews

1. Please tell me what occurs to you when you think of other?
2. Please tell me what occurs to you when you think of othering?
3. Please tell me what occurs to you when you think of otherness?

Interview Schedule for Follow-up Individual Interviews

1. Since we last met is there anything else that has occurred to you in relation to the research that you would like to share now?
2. I have taken everything you shared with me last we met and have grouped it into themes or patterns of understanding. I am going to share them with you now, please let me know if there is anything you would like to clarify or add to what I share as I go through them. It is important that you are satisfied with the way these themes represent what you have shared.

2.1 These are some of the general themes, is there anything you would like to clarify or add?

2.2 These are some of the more specific themes, is there anything you would like to clarify or add?

3. Before we end is there anything else you would like to add or clarify?

I will be able to conduct these sessions in a South African language of your choosing as a language translator can be appointed.

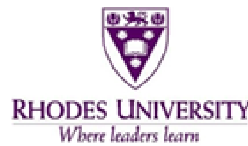
I have provided you with a copy of the ethics approval letter from the Rhodes University Ethics Standards Committee (RUESC). Everything you say will remain confidential and anonymous. The confidentiality of your client and work will also at all times be respected.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me through the following:
Cellular: 083 683 1333, Email: alan4ie@gmail.com

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Fourie
(Under supervision from Professor J Ackhurst)



INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Participant)

Project Title: **Other, othering, otherness: an exploratory analytical psychology study with traditional healers.**

Alan Fourie from the Department of psychology at Rhodes University has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned Phd research project. The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to explore the ways in which traditional healers subjectively experience and understand phenomenona of other, othering and otherness, both personally and in their work.

2. Rhodes University has given ethical clearance to this research project and I have seen the clearance certificate.

3. By participating in this research project, I will be contributing towards understandings of phenomena related to the constructs of other, othering and otherness. This will inform theory development and possible integrative psychological interventions. Publication of results will facilitate the integration of indigenous knowledge systems into academic scholarship.

4. I will participate in the project by participating in two interview sessions. The first interview should last between 45-90 minutes. This session, the initial exploration will be guided by an interview schedule. A second follow up session will take place, again of a 45-90-minute duration after an initial analysis of the data for member checking.

5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.

6. Everything I say will remain confidential and anonymity will be ensured. The confidentiality of my clients and my work will also at all times be respected

7. I will not be compensated for participating in the research.

8. There may be risks associated with my participation in the project. I am aware that
   a. the following risks are associated with my participation: The research has the potential of professional offence and given the focus of the study could evoke strong emotional reactions.

b. the following steps have been taken to prevent the risks: The researcher will monitor my emotional responses to questioning and will explore these reactions as part of the process.

9. The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of peer reviewed journal articles; however, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.

10. I will receive initial feedback of the analysis of my first interview session as part of the second contact session. This feedback will take the form of a discussion of the initial themes identified within the data. I will be given an opportunity to explore and clarify these themes further and will also be provided with opportunity to add any new additional thoughts. On completion of the study I will receive a summary report of all the results.

11. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation will be answered by the project supervision Professor Jacqui Akhurst (046 603 7084, j.akhurst@ru.ac.za) and/or the university's ethics coordinator Mr Siyanda Manqele (046 603 7727, s.manqele@ru.ac.za)

12. By signing this informed consent declaration I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

13. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

14. Both the sessions I participate in will be audio recorded.

I, ………………………………………………………………………….. have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

………………………………… ………………………… …………………………
Participants signature **Witness** **Date**

Appendix D

Other, othering, otherness: an exploratory analytical psychology study with traditional healers.

Interview Schedule for Semi-structured Individual Interviews[1]

1. Please tell me what occurs to you when you think of other?

    a. Explore professional experiences and understandings
        i. Explore how participant works with 'other' in their work
    b. Explore personal experiences and understandings
        i. Explore how participant engages with 'other' personally
    c. Explore understandings of local and global trends around 'other'

2. Please tell me what occurs to you when you think of othering?

    a. Explore professional experiences and understandings
        i. Explore how participant works with 'othering' in their work
    b. Explore personal experiences and understandings
        i. Explore how participant engages with 'othering' personally
    c. Explore understandings of local and global trends around 'othering'

3. Please tell me what occurs to you when you think of otherness?

    a. Explore professional experiences and understandings

[1] Bilingual participants will also be asked for feedback on the interview schedule to assist with adaptation based on language and cultural understandings of the constructs under exploration.

i. Explore how participant works with ‘otherness’ in their work

b. Explore personal experiences and understandings

i. Explore how participant engages with ‘otherness’ personally

c. Explore understandings of local and global trends around ‘otherness’

Interview Schedule for Follow-up Individual Interviews

1. Since we last met is there anything else that has occurred to you in relation to the research that you would like to share now?

2. I have taken everything you shared with me last we met and have grouped it into themes or patterns of understanding. I am going to share them with you now, please let me know if there is anything you would like to clarify or add to what I share as I go through them. It is important that you are satisfied with the way these themes represent what you have shared.

2.1 These are some of the general themes:
-is there anything you would like to clarify or add?
2.2 These are some of the more specific themes:
-is there anything you would like to clarify or add?

3. Before we end is there anything else you would like to add or clarify?