

**A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE CURRENT APPROACHES TO
DREAM WORK: GLOBAL AND LOCAL TRENDS**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF
ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY of RHODES UNIVERSITY**



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ABSTRACT

Dreaming is an inherent and universal aspect of human existence that offers a profound window into the realms of consciousness and cognition. It has captivated the human imagination for centuries, prompting various methods and theories to decipher its significance. Global research underscores the enduring importance of dreams in psychotherapy, expressed through diverse methodologies, techniques, and theoretical models. Curiously, within the South African context, a cultural landscape rich in traditional healing, there exists a noticeable lack of research concerning the utilisation of dreams in therapy. This systematic literature review included 30 articles which remained after applying the systematic literature review strict inclusion and exclusion criteria of the literature searches. From these articles, the review delved into the multifaceted world of dream work, investigated prevailing approaches and themes both on a global scale and within the South African context, and addressed three key research questions: (1) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally? (2) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally? (3) What are the practical implications for working with dreams according to global and local themes? A thematic analysis of the literature identified three overarching themes: (1) Psychological approaches to dream work, (2) Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, and (3) Socio-cultural approaches to dreams. These findings highlight the necessity of recognising cultural nuances and, underscores the importance of developing a flexible, culturally sensitive framework for dream work, and advocates for the adaptation of global dream work methodologies into culturally specific approaches, fostering psychotherapeutic benefits tailored to the South African context. The research serves as a stepping stone to further investigation into the techniques and approaches of dream work in South Africa, ultimately contributing to the broader field of dream analysis.

Keywords: dreams; dream work; approaches; South Africa; indigenous knowledge systems; traditional healing dream work; systematic literature review

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Dreaming constitutes a foundational and universally shared aspect of the human experience, granting us a distinctive gateway into the intricate realms of consciousness and cognition. Its enduring fascination has enraptured individuals from diverse cultures and eras, sparking multifaceted interpretations. Notably, within the context of South African traditional healing, dreams hold profound significance. Nevertheless, the incorporation of dream exploration into therapeutic practices remains a relatively uncharted territory within the local context.

In response, this review embarks on a journey to explore existing global and local literature, with the aim of uncovering overarching trends and insights derived from various approaches to dream analysis. These insights hold the potential to contribute towards and shape the therapeutic landscape within South Africa. The review revolves around the exploration of global and local themes, along with their practical implications. Through meticulous data analysis, three prevailing overarching themes emerge: Psychological approaches to dream analysis, Psychiatric and medical perspectives on dream interpretation, and Socio-cultural considerations of dreams. In essence, this research endeavours to deepen our comprehension of the multifaceted realm of dream analysis, both on a global scale and within the intimate intricacies of the South African context.

Furthermore, this research calls for future exploration, advocating for the adjustment and enhancement of global methodologies for dream analysis to seamlessly align with the

intricate cultural context of South Africa. This alignment holds the potential to yield therapeutic progressions that resonate authentically within the nation's psychotherapeutic framework. Ultimately, this research aspires to contribute towards dream analysis techniques, enriching the vibrant context of South African healing traditions with insights that honour both universal principles and indigenous heritage. This chapter will commence by delving into the background and significance of the study, providing an in-depth exploration of the historical and cultural underpinnings of dream work. The rationale of the research will highlight the motivations behind this study, highlighting the imperative to bridge the gap in the literature surrounding dream work within the South African context.

Next the study aims will shed light on the overarching goals of the research, clarifying the direction and purpose of the investigation. This will be followed by a presentation of the research objectives, delineating the specific objectives that will guide the study's trajectory. Next, the research questions will be outlined, serving as the compass that navigates the exploration of dream work both globally and within the South African cultural context. To ensure a clear understanding of the concepts underpinning this study, key terms central to the research will be defined, establishing a common vocabulary for discourse throughout the thesis. Finally, the structure of the thesis will be outlined, guiding the reader through the organisational framework of the research. This chapter aims to explore various aspects to establish a foundation for the upcoming research with the goal being to enhance our understanding of this universal phenomenon of dream work.

Background and Significance of the Study

This researcher has opted to do a systematic literature review of the current theoretical approaches and methods that have been developed over the years for working with dreams in psychology both globally and locally. There is increasing evidence suggesting a rising interest in the clinical application and administration of dreams (Hill & Knox, 2010; Pesant & Zadra, 2004). Numerous empirical studies now concentrate on the therapeutic utilisation and efficacy of dream work. Currently, there exists a multitude of methods for interpreting dreams, often accompanied by intricate theoretical frameworks.

When it comes to the term “dream work”, the founding fathers of psychology, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, believed that working with dreams in psychology held significant value (Bontempo & Sandström, 2020; Desseilles, Dang-Vu, Sterpenich & Schwartz, 2011). They predominantly worked with dreams as the overarching method or tool of psychotherapy during the 1900s. As psychology developed, however, the value of dream work varied amongst the many schools of thought (Bontempo & Sandström, 2020; Hill & Knox, 2010).

Over the last 100 years, a diversity of approaches to working with dreams have developed (Lewis & Krippner, 2016; Vedfelt, 2017). Globally, the literature indicates that working with dreams is currently still proven to be a helpful and beneficial therapeutic technique (Black et al., 2014; De Koninck, 2012; Hill & Knox, 2010; Hill et al., 2013; Hoss & Gongloff, 2019; Lewis & Krippner, 2016; Resicato et al., 2018). In South Africa, however, there is a lack of literature on this topic. Over recent years, the importance of implementing relevant, cultural-specific psychological techniques within a South African context has been advocated for in literature (Macleod & Howell, 2013; Nwoye, 2015).

Over recent years, Western approaches to psychotherapy have been highly criticised for not being applicable and relevant to the South African context (Johnston, 2015; Nwoye, 2015; Slabbert, 2016). For instance, as one example of such criticism, Western cultural values such as individualism and competition sharply contrast a traditional African cultural worldview of *Ubuntu* which values collectivism and a sense of community (Knight, 2013; Wolff, 2014). In response to this, the healthcare system in South Africa has advocated for the integration of traditional healers and healthcare workers (Vergunst, 2018; Audet, Ngobeni, Graves & Wagner, 2017; Green & Colucci, 2020; Mokgobi, 2013; Bantjes et al., 2018).

The South African government approves of and promotes the coexistence of Western and traditional medicine within the primary healthcare system (Mokgobi, 2013; Sorsdahl et al., 2013). Within the context of traditional healing, value is placed on dreams and dream work, and these are regarded as culturally significant (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016). Based on the fact that dreams are valued within traditional healing in South Africa, dream work could be a viable cultural-specific Africanised approach to South African psychology (Knight, 2013; Nwoye, 2015; Slabbert, 2016).

Rationale of the Research

The founding fathers of psychology valued and focussed on dreams in the development of their theories. These theories remain in use, and since their development, many other schools in psychology have developed their own methods of working with dreams in psychotherapy. This research has broadly categorised the various approaches to dream work into three main overarching categories or themes: (1) Psychological approaches to dream work, (2) Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, and (3) Socio-cultural approaches to

dreams. South Africa sits within a cultural threshold which values dreams and working with dreams within a traditional healing context. There is, however, a lack of South African literature on the current approaches to dream work. Therefore, for this research, it was deemed important to have a clear idea of current global and local approaches to dreams and how this could contribute towards local research.

Study Aims

By conducting a systematic literature review of the current approaches to dream work both globally and locally, this study aims to:

- Broadly examine current and existing literature on dream work approaches.

The aim is to conduct a comprehensive review of the available literature on various approaches used in working with dreams, including both global and local perspectives. This involves identifying and analysing different dream work approaches, techniques, methods and interventions employed in dream work both globally and locally. The goal and purpose of this is to assess what dream work approaches exist and are currently being used.

- To identify global and local trends in dream work approaches. The aim is to identify and analyse patterns, themes, commonalities, and emerging trends in dream work approaches across different regions and cultures worldwide, as well as those pertaining to the specific local South African regions, cultures, and traditions. This involves exploring how dream work is practised, understood, and conceptualised in various global and local contexts, highlighting similarities and differences. Exploring and investigating dream work approaches involves examining how dream work is

shaped by global and local beliefs, practices, and cultural contexts, and identifying unique and common approaches documented across the board.

- To assess the effectiveness and outcomes of different dream work approaches and how these could contribute towards local research on dream work. The aim is to evaluate the effectiveness and reported outcomes of various dream work approaches in order to see how they could possibly be implemented within a South African context. This involves analysing empirical studies, case studies, and qualitative dream reports to assess the impact of different approaches on individuals' dream experiences, personal growth, psychological well-being, and therapeutic outcomes. The overarching purpose and goal of this is to identify gaps and future directions in dream work research within a South African context and areas for further investigation within the field of dream work. This research will be suggesting potential directions for future research and practice in dream work within the South African context.

Research Objectives

By conducting a systematic literature review of the current approaches to dream work both globally and locally, this study aims to:

- Review and categorise existing literature on dream work approaches by systematically gathering and reviewing relevant literature on dream work approaches from various sources, such as academic databases (EBSCO, Google Scholar, PubMed and Sabinet), journal articles, and book chapters. This objective involves creating a

comprehensive database of relevant studies and categorising them based on different approaches employed in dream work. It also involves making use of strict systematic literature review methodologies, such as looking at only the previous 10 years of published research on the topic, and including an inclusion and exclusion criteria while looking at a broad range of studies on dream work both locally and globally.

- Analyse global and local trends in dream work approaches by synthesising information from the literature to identify commonalities, patterns, and themes in how dreams are approached and worked with across different cultures, regions, traditional contexts, and theoretical frameworks. It involves examining literature that focuses on dream work practices specific to certain cultures or traditions, aiming to understand the unique approaches and perspectives that may exist within these contexts. This study would specifically make use of Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2012) thematic analysis technique and methodology.

- Assess the effectiveness and outcomes of different dream work approaches. To evaluate the effectiveness and reported outcomes of various dream work approaches, this research will analyse empirical studies, case studies, and qualitative dream reports to assess the impact of different approaches on individuals' dream experiences, personal growth, psychological well-being, and therapeutic outcomes. The research will be synthesising the findings from the literature review to identify dream work approaches across the board, to identify gaps in the existing literature and to highlight areas that require further investigation within the field of dream work within the South African context. The research also suggests potential directions for future research and practice in dream work.

Research Questions

In order to meet the research objectives of this study, research questions were crafted to guide the systematic literature review study of the current approaches to dream work. This review examined global and local literature on approaches to dream work by answering the following research questions: (1) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally (2) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally? (3) What are the practical implications for working with dreams according to global and local themes?

(1) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally?

This research question aims to identify and analyse the underlying themes that emerge from a comprehensive and systematic review of current approaches to dream work on a global scale. By conducting a systematic literature review and examining a wide range of sources, including academic papers, book chapters, and other relevant publications, the goal was to identify recurring patterns, commonalities, and overarching themes that characterise dream work practices worldwide. This research question allows the researcher to look at things such as what the major theoretical frameworks used in dream work across different cultural contexts are, if there are common methods or techniques employed in dream work practices globally, if certain themes or approaches dominate the literature, and are there any cross-cultural variations in the integration of dream work with other therapeutic modalities or practices. By examining these areas and analysing the literature systematically, this research hopes to identify and categorise the recurring themes and patterns that make up current

approaches to dream work globally. This analysis can provide valuable insights into the diversity and commonalities within the field, enriching our understanding of how dreams are approached and worked with across different cultures and regions on a global scale.

(2) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally?

This research question focuses on exploring and understanding the specific themes that emerge from a review of current approaches to dream work within the local context of South Africa. By conducting a systematic literature review and examining relevant sources such as academic papers, local publications, and indigenous knowledge, the aim is to identify recurring patterns, themes, and unique aspects that characterise dream work practices within the South African context. To further delve into this research question, this research will look at how cultural beliefs, traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems shape dream work approaches in South Africa, whether or not there are specific theoretical frameworks or models of dream work that are prevalent within the South African context, what the unique models, methods, rituals, or practices employed in dream work within South Africa are, how dream work in South Africa integrates with or diverges from global approaches, whether or not dream work practices in South Africa emphasise particular aspects, such as healing, ancestral connection, or community well-being, and how dream work is culturally adapted and tailored to address the specific needs and challenges faced by individuals in South Africa. By exploring these areas and conducting a thorough literature review, this research can identify the unique themes, cultural nuances, and local perspectives that characterise dream work approaches within South Africa. This analysis can contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural diversity and richness of dream work practices locally.

(3) What are the practical implications for working with dreams according to global and local themes?

Conducting a systematic literature review on the current approaches to dream work, both globally and locally, could provide valuable insights into the practical implications of working with dreams. The research sought to highlight the differences between how Western, Eurocentric dream work models and traditional or indigenous dream work models work with dreams practically. Both locally and globally, practical steps and guidelines on how to work with various dream work models, methods and techniques are explored. Another aspect of the practical implications is focusing on how the practical steps of the various global dream work models could possibly be translated into a culturally sensitive cross-cultural dream work model at the local level or not. This would mean seeing how cross-culturally the global dream work methods are adaptable to the local South African context or not, and if not, where the discrepancies lie or what would need to be adjusted accordingly to make it fit within a local context. Another practical implication consideration would be to look at whether or not there is a need for a dream work model based which could be developed based on global models and techniques to adequately suit the local context in terms of dream work. This would possibly mean gleaning from various global dream work models, seeing what works well in psychotherapy globally and adopting various techniques to make it applicable to a local context. It could also possibly mean hypothesising a novel dream work model that is adequately suitable to the local context based on the wealth of knowledge, literature and research of global dream work models over the years. Finally, a third practical implication focus and consideration would be to find out how all of this information can contribute towards local research in terms of the gap in the literature, and what future studies on dream

work locally could potentially look like. This would mean making possible suggestions on what future research should look at in terms of filling the gap in the literature on local literature based on this research findings and the limitations of this research paper. Future scholars could then further the research endeavours in terms of expanding the lack or dearth of knowledge within this very under-researched area of dream work within a South African context. This would indeed fill the gap and expand the knowledge base on dream work in South Africa. This paper could also make suggestions on what would be needed in order to accomplish future goals in expanding the research in this area.

Definition of Key Terms

Regarding the term “***approaches***” to dream work, this is a term used to refer to various theoretical approaches, perspectives and methods that have been developed over the years for working with dreams in psychology. The term broadly refers to the currently available innovative extensive approaches to working with dreams (Lewis & Krippner, 2016).

Regarding the term “***current***”, this research defines it as a term used to describe literature situated within the window of the last 10 years (2011-2021) prescribed by the inclusion criteria methodology of this research (Siddaway, et al., 2019).

The term “***dream work***” is a term coined by Sigmund Freud meaning *Traumarbeit* which translates as “comprising the operations that transform the latent dream-thought into the manifest dream.” (Ventura, 2016, p. 282). The term also loosely describes any interaction by a therapist/clinician with a client’s dreams within a psychotherapeutic setting.

The term “***local***” appearing in this research is a term used to describe the South African context (Hollington et al., 2015), and “***global***” is used to describe research generated outside of the South African context.

The term “**psychotherapy**” appearing in this research, refers to the use of psychological methods, particularly when based on regular personal interaction, to help a person change behaviour, increase happiness, and overcome problems (Karlsson, 2011). According to Karlsson (2011), psychotherapy (also psychological therapy, talk therapy, or talking therapy) aims to improve an individual's well-being and mental health, resolve or mitigate troublesome behaviours, beliefs, compulsions, thoughts, or emotions, and improve relationships and social skills. Numerous types of psychotherapy have been designed either for individual adults, families, or children and adolescents (Karlsson, 2011).

The terms “**clients**”, “**individuals**”, “**patients**”, “**dreamers**” used throughout this research refers to individuals, patients, dreamers, or any person(s) who are the focus of dream work, involving their engagement in seeking assistance or guidance for the interpretation of their dreams.

Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into six main chapters, each addressing a specific aspect of the current approaches to dreams and its relationship to global and local trends, and how that may contribute towards local research. This chapter provides an introduction to the research topic, outlining its background, significance, and research problem and rationale. It also outlines the study aims, research objectives, and introduces and explains the research questions. The chapter ends with defining some of the key terms used throughout this research.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the existing literature, synthesising key findings and identifying gaps in knowledge. It gives the context of the research by illustrating the history of dreams and dream work in psychology primarily focusing on the insights of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. From their theories developed a school of thought in psychology known

as depth psychology or psychoanalytic psychology. After the work of these founding fathers of psychology came various dream work models and approaches such as the behaviourist movement and gestalt psychology. Each of these other schools of thought in psychology have developed techniques for working with dreams within their approaches. The chapter then demonstrates a period of dream research which includes psychiatry, medicine and neuroscience and dreams. This period of dream research involves scientific discoveries and empirical studies of human dreams. The chapter then branches out to expound on the concept of humanity and dreaming beyond psychology. It touches on how dreams have been part of humanity since the Upper Palaeolithic era, about 50 000-40 000 years ago, and that it is a universal experience. From there the chapter then looks at the socio-cultural approach to dreams, namely how dreams are worked with and understood in certain cultural and traditional settings. After which, the chapter then focuses on the South African cultural traditional healing context and dream work. The chapter concludes with the rationale that, given the fact that the founding fathers of psychology valued and focussed on dreams in the development of their theories, and much of their influence and techniques are still used in current dream work approaches including medicine and neuroscience, and taking into consideration the socio-cultural context of South Africa where the majority of individuals value and work with dreams within the indigenous traditional healing context, it was deemed important to have a clear idea of current global and local approaches to dreams and how this could contribute towards local research.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology used for this research, describing the data collection, analysis techniques, and conceptual frameworks employed. The methodology chapter starts off by looking at the research questions, namely, (1) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally? (2) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally? (3) What are the

practical implications for working with dreams according to global and local themes? The chapter outlines the various methodological processes undertaken in order to answer the research questions. The chapter starts with a general overview of systematic reviews and thematic analysis respectively, highlighting how these guided the research. Next, the unit of analysis is outlined in which the final data set utilised for the analysis is mentioned. The procedures for data collection undertaken in accordance with Siddaway et al. (2019) are then discussed in detail. Finally, the chapter outlines the various steps undertaken to conduct a thematic analysis in accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2012) thematic analysis method.

Chapter 4, the findings chapter, reports on the three over-arching themes from the analysis of the data, namely Psychological approaches to dream work, Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, and Socio-cultural approaches to dream work. Within the overarching theme of Psychological approaches to dream work were the sub-themes “dream interpretation”, “emotions and dreams”, “symbolism and imagery in approaching dream work”, “cognitive behavioural approaches to dream work”, “depth psychology and its approaches to dream work”, “gestalt approaches to dream work”, and “integrative approaches to dream work in psychology”. Within the overarching theme Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, sub-themes “psychopathological approaches to dream work”, and “neuroscientific approaches to dream work” were found. Within the overarching theme, Socio-cultural approaches to dream work were the sub-themes “healing and dreams”, “shamanistic approaches to dreams”, and “spiritual approaches to dreams”. Each of these themes and sub-themes reported here are supported by data extracts from the literature.

Chapter 5, the discussion chapter, primarily discusses the results found in Chapter 4. Looking at the results from the three overarching themes Psychological approaches to dream work, Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, and Socio-cultural approaches to

dream work, Chapter 5 attempts to discuss these results in relation to the research questions and the South African context.

Finally, Chapter 6 concludes with the implications of the research, along with recommendations for future research, as well as the limitations of this study.

Conclusion

This chapter commenced by discussing the background and significance of the study, providing an overview of the historical and cultural underpinnings of dream work. The rationale of the research elucidated the motivations behind this study, highlighting the imperative to bridge the gap in the literature surrounding dream work within the South African context. Next, the chapter aimed to shed light on the overarching goals of the research, clarifying the direction and purpose of the review. This was followed by a presentation of the research objectives, delineating the specific objectives that guided the study's trajectory. Next, the research questions were outlined, serving as the compass that navigated the exploration of dream work both globally and within the South African cultural context. To ensure a clear understanding of the concepts underpinning this study, key terms central to the research were defined, establishing a common lexicon for discourse throughout the thesis. Finally, the structure of the thesis was outlined, guiding the reader through the organisational framework of the research. Through this chapter's multifaceted exploration, a foundation was laid for the journey of inquiry that lay ahead, a journey that sought to uncover the essence of dream work, illuminate its significance, and bridge the gap in the literature, ultimately enriching our comprehension of this universal yet deeply personal phenomenon. In conclusion, this chapter set the stage for the next chapters on the topic of dream work, providing the necessary historical, cultural, and theoretical context. The goals, objectives, and

research questions were established, guiding the reader towards a deeper understanding of the subject matter. This chapter laid the groundwork for a thorough exploration focused on contributing to our understanding of the importance of dream work, especially within the South African context. It aims to address gaps in the existing literature.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

In order to fully comprehend the significance and implications of the research presented in this thesis, it is important to first establish the context in which this study is situated. This chapter delves into the broader landscape of the subject matter, offering an overview of the historical, theoretical, and practical backdrop against which this study unfolds. By doing so, this study aims to not only justify the relevance of this research but also to shed light on the various factors and dynamics that have contributed to the research problem at hand. The context section is an integral component of this thesis, as it not only aids in framing the research but also assists in guiding readers who may be less familiar with the intricacies of the subject matter. Through an exploration of the historical evolution, theoretical underpinnings, and contemporary relevance of this topic, this research endeavours to provide a solid foundation upon which the subsequent chapters will build. This chapter traces the historical roots and background of this subject, highlighting key milestones, and demonstrating the progression of knowledge in this area. By the end of this chapter, readers will have gained an understanding of the context in which this research is situated, enabling them to appreciate the significance of this study and its potential contributions to the field. Furthermore, it will underscore the relevance of the research question, the need for its investigation, and the potential implications of the findings.

2.2 Brief Overview of the Research

Dreams have held a significant place in the history of psychology, with the founding fathers of the field recognising their importance as a rich source of insight into the human mind and consciousness (Hackett, 2021; Hill & Knox, 2010). The psychoanalytic theorists, specifically Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, emphasised the exploration of dreams as a means to access the subconscious mind, and to gain a deeper understanding of psychological processes (Desseilles et al., 2011). Over time, their theories have continued to exert influence, forming the foundation upon which various other schools of psychology have built their own approaches to dream analysis within the realm of psychotherapy (Hill & Knox, 2010; Lewis & Krippner, 2016; Schwartz, 2000).

Looking beyond the realm of psychology, dreams have garnered attention in the scientific and medical fields as well (Colace, 2018; Desseilles et al., 2011; Schwartz, 2000). The study of dreams has been linked to the exploration of the human brain, leading to the identification of neurological pathways associated with psychological sleep issues, including disturbances in sleep patterns, and REM (rapid eye movement) sleep (Hobson et al., 2000). Studies on dreams and sleep have thus continued through the ages to the present day with the significance of dreams transcending disciplinary boundaries, and across diverse and various fields of inquiry.

Within a socio-cultural context, globally, the cultural practice of shamanism, often associated with indigenous and traditional societies (though variations of shamanic practices can be found across different cultures around the world), dreams play a central role (DuBois, 2009; Pratt, 2007 as cited in Kets de Vries, 2016). The shaman, who frequently takes on roles as healers, diviners, and guides, serves as an intermediary between the human realm and the spirit world, possessing the perceived capability to converse with spirits, ancestors, and other

supernatural beings (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016; van der Zeijst et al., 2021). Through their practices such as rituals, trance-like states, herbal medicine, chanting, drumming, dream work, and other methods, shamans are able to enter altered states of consciousness, allowing them to access the spiritual realm (van der Zeijst et al., 2021). Shamanism is deeply rooted in the belief that involves seeking healing, guidance, and balance for individuals and the community (Booi, 2004; Bührmann, 1982; as cited in Bakow & Low, 2018; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016).

Within the socio-cultural context of South Africa, dreams also play a significant role. Indigenous healing systems, deeply embedded in the cultural fabric within this context, have long regarded dreams as channels for insights and messages from the gods and ancestors (Booi & Edwards, 2014; Bakow & Low, 2018). The traditional healing practices, predominately performed by traditional healers or *izsangomas*, are rooted in the belief that dreams hold guidance for both individual and communal well-being, underscoring the cultural value that dreams hold within these settings as a source of wisdom and healing (Berg, 2003; Rudnick, 2002; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016).

Despite the rich cultural context and the widespread engagement with dreams within South Africa's healing practices, the literature on current approaches to dream work remains lacking. This gap in the literature highlights the pressing need to investigate and explore the current state of global and local approaches to dream work within the literature. Using a systematic literature review, a comprehensive exploration of existing current approaches, models, methods, and techniques to dream work will be researched in order to speak to the gap between global literature on dream work and that of the local South African context.

2.3 Purpose and Scope of the Chapter

This chapter starts by tracing the historical roots of dream work through the ages, giving a current scope and framework of dream research in order to answer the research questions: (1) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally? (2) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally? (3) What are the practical implications for working with dreams according to global and local themes? Based on those research questions, this chapter will be looking at existing dream research and literature globally, investigating what current dream work approaches are in use and how these are worked with.

In order to answer the second research question, this chapter will discuss what current dream work approaches exist on a local scale, specifically within the South African context. These will be looked at and expounded upon. From an initial search it was clear that there is a lack of literature on this topic within the South African context, even though this context, which includes traditional healing, highly values and regards dreams as significant. This chapter will highlight what literature exists on this topic within this context.

In terms of answering the final research question, this chapter will be touching on how some of these dream work methods and techniques are practically worked with, expounding on their implications for the local context, looking at the aspect of cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural dynamics within dream work, and postulating towards possible novel dream work models for the local context based on global research. In this way, the question on the practical implications for working with dreams according to global and local themes can be

adequately answered, the importance of which also speaks to the gap in the local literature on dream work.

The chapter begins by revisiting the foundational theories of dream work that have been established by some of the pioneers of psychology, highlighting the persistent insights that continue to shape our understanding of dreams today. Next, the chapter navigates the intricate network of psychotherapy schools that have cultivated their distinct methodologies for working with dreams. Venturing beyond the realm of psychology, the chapter delves into the realm of medicine and science, where dreams have played a pivotal role in unlocking the mysteries of sleep disorders and their neurological underpinnings. This exploration highlights the interdisciplinary nature of dream research and its potential to contribute to the broader understanding of human cognition and well-being.

Next, the chapter touches on the socio-cultural contexts of shamanism and then extends to the local context of South Africa, where indigenous healing traditions have long regarded dreams as a source of guidance and insight. Ultimately, this chapter serves as a foundation for the subsequent chapters of this thesis. By tracing dream work research from its historical origins to its present-day expressions, this chapter hopes to pave the way for an understanding of the global and local scopes of dream work, thus beginning to answer the research questions.

2.4 Statement of the Problem

Despite the widespread acknowledgement of the importance of dreams and the various approaches developed to analyse them, a gap exists within the South African context

literature. Specifically, there is a lack of local literature that explores current approaches to dream work, which aligns them with an indigenous healing cultural context and how this could be linked to the current global research on this topic. This gap potentially hinders the ability of local practitioners and researchers to build upon existing knowledge and integrate it into practice within this context.

2.5 Context

2.5.1 The History of Dreams

The historical significance of dreams in human civilization traces its origins to the Upper Palaeolithic era, spanning from approximately 40,000 to 10,000 years ago. During this period, the earliest documented depictions of anxiety emerged in cave paintings (Horwitz, 2013; Winkelman & Baker, 2010, as cited in Laughlin & Rock, 2014). These cave paintings vividly portray sources of fear, typically featuring perilous predators like lions, wolves, and bears, among our ancient ancestors. Historically, dreams were considered part of mythology and were used to foretell events through the dream interpreter (Schneider, 2010).

Following that era, approximately 5,000 years ago, there is evidence of Ancient Egyptian depictions featuring images of the sleeping body (Ka) with the soul (Ba) appearing to hover outside, resembling what is now understood as an out-of-body experience closely associated with lucid dreaming (Asaad, 2015). According to Asaad (2015), ancient Egypt significantly contributed to the field of sleep medicine by being the first to describe the similarities between dreams and awakenings.

According to Klösch and Kraft (2005), one of the earliest recorded interests in dreams dates back to the Greeks, who understood dreams to be encoded messages from the gods. Askitopoulou (2015) asserts that Hippocrates (460 to ca 375 BCE), a pivotal historical figure in ancient Greek medicine, offered systematic information about sleep and dreams within a medical framework. Ancient Greeks believed that dreams contain prophecy and binding instruction. Around 350 BC Aristotle also mentions dreams, where he believes that dreams could be understood through a naturalistic lens, influenced by factors such as bodily conditions, diet, and mental state; that dreams were not random or supernatural but were connected to the individual's physical and mental well-being (Gallop, 1996; Struck, 2016).

2.5.2 Psychoanalytic Approach to Dreams

According to Schwartz (2000), modern dream research officially commenced in 1855 with the first period of dream work considering the introspective dream report as a valid testimony of what had been perceived, felt, or thought by the dreamer (Desseilles et al., 2011). It was during this period that researchers were studying the phenomenological descriptive features of dreams rather than their meaning (Schwartz, 2000), focusing on the objective and detailed characteristics of dreams themselves, rather than interpreting or analysing the symbolic or psychological meanings behind them.

Around 1900, dream research was marked by the publication of Sigmund Freud's publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams* which discredited the manifest content of dreams and allowed a psychoanalytic interpretation approach to take precedence over any neurophysiological dream research (Desseilles et al., 2011). Many believed that Freud's psychoanalytic approach to dreams brought with it a scientific dimension to dream research,

rescuing the study of dreams from mythmakers, seers, neurologists, and purveyors of the daemonic (Schneider, 2010).

Freud used the term 'dreamwork' or 'dream-work' (*Traumarbeit*) which translates as “comprising the operations that transform the latent dream-thought into the manifest dream.” (Ventura, 2016, p. 282). His perspective is that the seemingly nonsensical dream remembered and recounted by the dreamer constitutes the manifest content. This content is the outcome of the dreamwork, a process responsible for distorting dreamlike thoughts and converting them into a puzzle of images. This transformation results in an initial challenge to comprehend the purpose and meaning of dreams upon casual observation (Ventura, 2016).

Freud and his associate Carl Jung, both part of the founding fathers of psychology, believed that working with dreams held significant value (Beebe, Cambray & Kirsch, 2001; Meghnagi, 2011; Pesant & Zadra, 2004). Freud's theories focused on the individual's unconscious experience, and he proposed that by working with dreams, an individual's conscious and unconscious conflicts could be brought to light and dealt with (Hill & Knox, 2010; Schneider, 2010). Freud's dream work model was primarily based on what is known as 'free association' (Fanelli, 1954; Hill & Knox, 2010; Rand & Torok, 1993).

Hill and Knox (2010) explain that free association in the context of dream analysis involves the dreamer expressing whatever thoughts come to mind with utmost honesty. They state that by exploring these associations to dream images, the underlying sources of the dreamer's intrapsychic conflicts become apparent. In the Freudian approach to dream work, the process entails listening to the dream, considering the patient's free associations to specific images, and ultimately providing an interpretation based on an understanding of both

the dreamer and the symbolic meanings associated with dreams. This method of Freudian dream interpretation has since been updated, reworked, and adjusted over the years, yet the core facets of the dream work model remain the same (Angeloch, 2023).

Jung had a lifelong interest in dreams and the meanings of dreams and their relation to the individual's conscious and unconscious mind (Beebe, Cambray & Kirsch, 2001; Pesant & Zadra, 2004). Through their work, Freud and Jung came to understand the conscious mind as the site for repression but also as access to the unconscious through dream material (Beebe, Cambray & Kirsch, 2001; Schneider, 2010). According to Hill and Knox (2010), Jung's main divergence from Freud was his belief that material from the personal and collective unconscious (the source of archetypes) is revealed through dreams.

Jung disagreed with Freud on his over-emphasis of sexual repression, and his understanding of the main purpose of dreams being wish-fulfilment (Beebe, Cambray & Kirsch, 2001). Jung's theory underscores the creative essence of dreams, considering them as a spontaneous and authentic manifestation of the psyche's present condition (Berg, 2003; Pesant & Zadra, 2004). Jung contended that dreams are a natural and creative outlet for the unconscious mind. He proposed that dreams play a compensatory role, reflecting unexpressed concerns from waking life (Pesant & Zadra, 2004).

Jung believed that dreams could play a crucial role in integrating the conscious and unconscious aspects of an individual by bringing hidden feelings to awareness (Hill & Knox, 2010). In practical terms, Jungian psychologists often employ various methods, including associations, artistic expressions to depict dreams, exploration of unconscious collective archetypes, active imagination, and amplification (Hill & Knox, 2010; Shouldice, 2019). Despite dream interpretation being a central aspect of Jungian therapy, Jung did not prescribe

specific procedures for dream work. Instead, he advocated for therapists to engage with dreams in a manner most beneficial for the dreamer (Pesant & Zedra, 2004).

According to Hill and Knox (2010), within the psychoanalytic approach to dream work in psychotherapy, various new models for understanding dreams have emerged over the last century, diverging from the original Freudian tradition. Unlike Freud, who proposed that the manifest content of dreams reflects the dreamer's waking life rather than distortions from the unconscious, modern Jungian authors have maintained much of Jung's original theory while offering more explicit guidelines for working with dreams in therapy (Hill & Knox, 2010).

Alfred Adler, another psychoanalytic theorist, held the belief that an individual's waking personality is mirrored in their dreams (Hill & Knox, 2010). Pesant and Zadra (2004) note that Adler suggested a continuity between the manifest content of dreams and the dreamer's waking concerns and lifestyle. For Adler, dreams serve as an expression of the conscious mind, offering reassurance, security, and protection against damage to self-worth. Hill and Knox (2010) emphasise that, according to Adler, the primary significance of Adlerian dream work lies in the emotions evoked by the dream, allowing the dreamer to find resolutions to problems.

Adler proposed that dreams play a role in preparing for future activities or events, serving a problem-solving function (Hill & Knox, 2010). However, Adler did not provide clear guidelines for working with dreams in therapy. Nonetheless, Adlerian dream work places a strong emphasis on emotions, as Adler observed a similarity between the purpose of emotions in waking life and those experienced during dreams, leaving residual feelings upon awakening (Bird, 2005).

When it comes to how dreams are practically worked with within Adlerian dream work, Bird (2005, as cited in Noronha 2014) stated that during the dream work process with a client, there are two tasks that need to be addressed; understanding the dreamers' current situation as shown in the dream, and address whether the dreamer wishes to consider making changes or not. If the dreamer is willing to make changes after the current situation shown in the dreams has been understood, they then need to consider whether they are ready to do so. If they are ready, they then need to examine all the possible available practical action choices in order to carry these out accordingly (Bird, 2005, as cited in Noronha 2014).

Besides the psychoanalytical approaches developed during this period, other dream work approaches that have been developed include the cognitive therapeutic approaches, gestalt therapist dream work approach, existentialist approach, dream work in groups, and quantitative dream analysis (the Hall and Van de Castle coding system) (Hill & Knox, 2010; Lewis & Krippner, 2016; Pesant & Zadra, 2004).

2.5.3 Cognitive Behaviourism and Dream Work

Initially the theoretical school of cognitive behaviourism would not consider the existence of mental experiences such as dreams (Desseilles et al., 2011; Schwartz, 2000; Skrzypińska, & Szmigielska, 2018). Later, however, with the work of Aaron Beck, cognitive behaviourist dream work was established. Aaron Beck's theory of cognitive patterns in dreams posits that dreams mirror an individual's waking thoughts, and that waking cognitions play a role in influencing the content of dreams (Pesant & Zadra, 2004). As noted by Rosner (2004), Beck

recognises that dreams serve multiple functions, including providing clarity on an individual's problems and reflecting dysfunctional attitudes.

Thus, Beck states that engagement with dreams can serve as a means to identify cognitive distortions, schemas, and maladaptive thought patterns (Rosner, 2004). This perspective has been embraced by several cognitive therapists who view dreams as mirrors reflecting clients' schemas, susceptible to the same cognitive distortions observed in waking states, as noted by Pesant and Zadra (2004). More recently, additional cognitive therapists have formulated models for integrating dreams into therapeutic approaches (Carona & Fonseca, 2022; Hill & Knox, 2010; Skrzypińska, & Szmigielska, 2018).

Montangero (2009) states that only a minority of cognitive-behavioural therapists incorporate dreams into their practice, with a heightened emphasis within the constructivist orientation of CBT (Goncalves & Barbosa, 2004; Mahoney, 1974, as cited in Montangero, 2009). Within this construct, Montangero (2009) asserts that dream work is primarily considered a cognitive function, involving various cognitive processes such as gathering content in autobiographical memory and general knowledge, representing these elements through visual imagery, language, and other modalities, assembling the representations into a dream scene (synchronic organisation), determining a more or less narrative sequence for the dream scene (diachronic organization), and attending to the content of the dream.

Concerning the practical application of working with dreams within this framework, Skrzypińska and Szmigielska (2018) assert that despite the limited interest in dreams within CBT, several methods and guidelines have been developed for integrating dreams into this approach. Noteworthy among these are Clara E. Hill's cognitive-experimental model of

dream interpretation, Jacques Montangero's description, memory sources, and reformulation (DMR) method, Arthur Freeman's guidelines for using dreams, and Jeffrey Young's schema therapy and dreams. Each of these approaches comes with its own set of techniques and functions designed to align with the philosophies and ideologies of CBT (Skrzypińska & Szmigielska, 2018).

According to Skrzypińska and Szmigielska (2018), the therapeutic process in CBT encompasses general goals such as defining the therapy's objective, continuously refining the patient's case formulation and addressing their problems, employing various techniques to alter thinking patterns, mood, and behaviour, and adhering to a set number of sessions. They further propose that incorporating dream work at each step of the CBT process is feasible. For example, if the therapy goal involves changing an unpleasant dream, integrating information from dream content into the patient's case formulation, utilizing standard CBT techniques for working with dreams, and establishing the time devoted to dream work in each session and throughout the therapeutic process can be collaboratively determined by the patient and therapist.

2.5.4 Gestalt Therapy and Dream Work

Another approach to dream work has been developed within gestalt therapy, pioneered by Fritz Perls (1969, 1992), the founder of gestalt therapy. Perls advocated for focusing on the present moment and encouraged dreamers to envision each part or image of the dream as a fragment of themselves. He would then prompt a dialogue among these parts, under the belief that integrating these disparate elements is essential for the individual's wholeness (Elliott,

2013). Within the gestalt approach, Elliott (2013) explains that all dream elements are perceived as projections of the dreamer's unaccepted or unwanted aspects of personality.

In the gestalt perspective, dream work aims to integrate rejected and disowned parts of the self, often considered a somatic approach as dreams are explored through the dreamer's bodily sensations during a session (Elliott, 2013). In practical terms, when working with dreams in gestalt therapy, Cain (2013) outlines several generally accepted stages for addressing dreams as projections. According to her, the dreamer first recounts the dream as a story and then retells it in the present tense, bringing their experience closer to awareness.

According to Cain (2013), the third step is to recreate the experience of the dream which necessitates action, voice and sometimes physical movement by the client. The next step is to encourage the dreamer “to not only direct, but also to become” (Cain, 2013, p. 53). In other words, the dreamer needs to accept the dream's message for themselves about themselves, thus allowing experiencing the dream with awareness in this way which can lead to healing (Greenwald, 1972; Pesant & Zadra, 2004, as cited in Cain, 2013). Ultimately, the gestalt therapist is primarily interested in “...how to make the patient's own words resonate anew, how to bring to the world, in a new integration, his [sic] gestures, movements, breathing” (Sichera, 2003, p. 99, as cited in Cain, 2013).

2.5.5 Dream Work within the Existential-phenomenological Approach

Von Eckartsberg (1998) outlines that the existential phenomenological research approach aims to explore the meanings of human experiences in real-life situations as they naturally unfold in daily life. The focus is on lived experiences, emphasising how individuals interpret, enact, and understand their life engagements (Bugental, 2013; Von Eckartsberg, 1998). Valle,

King, and Halling (1989) note that this philosophical analysis approach has been a subject of interest since the 1950s, gaining prominence in psychology and psychiatry. It has also become integral to empirical and hermeneutical methods in phenomenological research within psychology, as documented by May, Angel, and Ellenberger (1958), and Spiegelberg (1963, as cited in Valle et al., 1989; Balogh et al., 2021).

According to Balogh et al. (2021), existential phenomenological psychotherapy, a cornerstone of meaning-centred counselling, has been evolving for nearly a century. They highlight that this therapeutic approach, rooted in the works of Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Binswanger, Medard Boss, and Viktor Frankl, is dedicated to exploring the existential possibilities and limitations within a person's life. This approach allows for philosophical interpretations and empowers counselling techniques to assist individuals experiencing suffering in finding meaning and purpose in life. Balogh et al. (2021) further assert that this approach has demonstrated effectiveness in the treatment of anxiety and mood disorders.

According to Langdridge (2006), the existential-phenomenological approach to dream work has taken a central place in psychoanalysis within an existing body of literature. The author further states that existential psychotherapy has its practical and theoretical roots in psychoanalysis. According to Langdridge (2006), existential-phenomenological dream work started with Medard Boss (1957, as cited in Langdridge, 2006), and then later further developed with the work of Ashworth (2003a, 2003b, as cited in Langdridge, 2006). This later work better enables dream work analysts to understand the dream work material they are working with (Langdridge, 2006).

Dream work within the existential-phenomenological perspective aims to depict things as they are (Caperton, 2012). In practical terms, engaging with dreams in this approach involves the therapist conceptualising dreams as an authentic mode of existence, seamlessly connected to waking experiences (Caperton, 2012). Essentially, therapists within this framework allow dreams to unfold naturally, suspending any preconceived beliefs or ideas, and refraining from the analysis or interpretation of dream content (Caperton, 2012). Instead of attempting to uncover hidden meanings, existentialists guide clients in identifying the events within the dream and concentrate on what the dream expresses in and of itself (Caperton, 2012; Pesant & Zadra, 2004).

2.5.6 Group Dream Work

Group dream work is another approach to dream work. According to Bontempo e Silva and Sandström (2020), there exists a variety of techniques and theoretical perspectives to working with dreams within group therapy, however, the research on the subject is not very recent. They state that most of the research is based on Jung's analytical psychology and name a few models for working with dreams in groups. These include Lamb and Hollis' (1994, as cited in Bontempo e Silva & Sandström, 2020), Shuttleworth-Jordan and Saayman's (1989, as cited in Bontempo e Silva & Sandström, 2020), and Ullman's (1994, as cited in Bontempo e Silva & Sandström, 2020) models.

Lamb and Hollis' ROIS model consists of four stages: relaxation and presentation of the dream ("re-experience" stage); observation of emotions and thoughts generated by the image ("observe" stage); initiation of a silent interaction with the images ("interact" stage); and then sharing the associations and interactions they had with the dream ("share" stage) (Bontempo

e Silva & Sandström, 2020). Shuttleworth-Jordan and Saayman's (1989, as cited in Bontempo e Silva & Sandström, 2020) work compares the effects of two dream work models in groups.

Bontempo e Silva and Sandström (2020) state that the two models operate similarly: relaxation, dream presentation, amplification, and closure. However, they differ by including a projection stage in one of the models between the presentation of the dream and the amplification stage. It was concluded that both of the models are effective in decreasing the dreamer's defensive attitude, however, the projection stage resulted in frustration for the dreamers and a decreased the involvement of all participants, producing a distancing from the dream content.

Finally, according to Bontempo e Silva and Sandström (2020), with Ullman's (1994, as cited in Bontempo e Silva & Sandström, 2020) experiential approach to the dream work, is the process is the participant's responsibility, from sharing the dream to establishing to what extent to open or allow dream work. There is no form of pressure to share dreams or make associations that the dreamer does not want to make, making this group dream work approach non-threatening (Bontempo e Silva & Sandström, 2020). Ullman showed that this process was a very effective tool in the training of future psychotherapists (Bontempo e Silva & Sandström, 2020).

2.5.7 Hall and Van de Castle Coding System

Regarding the quantitative analysis of dreams using the Hall and Van de Castle coding system, this approach was pioneered by Calvin S. Hall. In his work *The Meaning of Dreams*

(1953/1966, as cited in Schwartz, 2000), Hall undertook an extensive examination of the phenomenological aspects of thousands of dreams reported by subjects. Based on this research, he later developed a detailed coding system for quantifying the manifest content of dreams (e.g., characters, settings, objects, emotions, social interactions) (Schneider & Domhoff, 1999, as cited in Schwartz, 2000).

In essence, the Hall and Van de Castle coding system emerged as a breakthrough in quantitative dream analysis. Hall's initial groundwork in phenomenological exploration, coupled with the collaborative efforts of Van de Castle, resulted in a methodical approach to analysing and interpreting the various components of dreams. This research on dream work continues to influence contemporary studies into the understanding of dreams and the subconscious mind (Domhoff & Schneider, 2015; Hsu & Yu, 2016; Schwartz, 2000).

2.5.8 The Scientific Approach to Dreams

During the same year as the groundbreaking work of Hall and Van de Castle's dream work coding system, Eugene Aserinsky and Nathaniel Kleitman wrote their original article on REM (rapid eye movement) sleep which would revolutionise research on sleep and dreams (Desseilles et al., 2011). Between 1953 and 1957, while working in a laboratory, Nathaniel Kleitman, Eugene Aserinsky, and William Dement observed that dreaming occurred during specific periods of sleep when cortical activity is high and accompanied by rapid eye movements (REM), increased heart rate, and respiratory activity (Desseilles et al., 2011).

These REM periods were also found to be associated with muscle atonia, which prevents the dreams from being acted out. REM sleep was thus considered as a state of high cerebral and low physical activation that would provide a neurophysiological marker of dreaming (Desseilles et al., 2011). According to Schwartz (2000), this period of modern dream research was marked by pioneering scientific discovery and experimentation on dreams and dreaming which renewed an interest in the phenomenological study of dreams during the second half of the 19th century.

Subsequently, the phenomenological content of dreams regained recognition as a valuable description of cognitive processing during sleep. Hobson et al. (2000) note that the correlation between REM sleep and dreaming, initially discovered by Kleitman, Aserinsky, and Dement, sparked a period of intensive research on the relationship between the brain and the mind, extending well into the 1970s. Desseilles et al. (2011) add that empirical studies on dream research reveal activation in the visual occipital and auditory temporal cortices during REM sleep, where vision and audition are the predominant sensory modalities within dreams. They further assert that dream reports are often abundant, featuring complex, emotional, and perceptually vivid experiences following awakenings from rapid eye movement (REM) sleep.

2.5.9 Neurology and Dreams

According to Colace (2018), from the 1990s onwards, dream research was characterised by new techniques on the visualisation of images of brain activity (neuroimaging) by means of PET (position emitting tomography) and NMR (nuclear magnetic resonance).

Neuroimaging techniques allow one to observe the consequences of a trauma to a brain area

on dreaming processes, such as cessation of dreaming, and to draw several conclusions on the role that this area has in normal dreaming processes (Colace, 2018).

This modern era of neurobiology, sleep science and dreams had emerged and interesting correlations between the dreaming brain and mental functioning have been made. For instance, in one study, frontal alpha asymmetry (FAA), considered a marker of affective states and traits as well as affect regulation in the waking state, was looked at in relation to REM sleep (Sikka et al., 2019). Results showed that FAA during REM sleep, and during evening resting wakefulness, predicted ratings of dream anger. This implies that individuals exhibiting higher alpha power (the dominance or strength of alpha brainwave activity) in the right frontal hemisphere of the brain might face challenges in effectively managing intense emotional states, such as anger, during dreams. These findings imply that FAA may serve as a neural correlate of affect regulation not only in the waking but also in the dreaming state (Sikka et al., 2019).

Schredl and Göritz's (2015) longitudinal study indicates that there is an overall decline in dream recall frequency and nightmare frequency. The reasons for this decline are still not fully understood yet, thus they propose that future longitudinal studies should include cognitive measures (visual memory), personality measures (thin boundaries), sleep parameters, stress measures, and attitude toward dreams scales to test whether changes in these measures might explain the changes in the recall measures (Schredl & Göritz, 2015).

Dresler et al. (2015), believe that dreaming can serve as a model for psychosis. They state that recent electroencephalogram (EEG) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) data allow very specific hypotheses about the dream-psychosis relationship in that insight

into the dreaming state and insight into the psychotic state should share similar neural correlates (Dresler et al., 2015). It was found that this seems to be the case whereby cortical areas activated during lucid dreaming show striking overlap with brain regions that are impaired in psychotic patients who lack insight into their pathological state (Dresler et al., 2015). This parallel allows for new therapeutic approaches and ways to test antipsychotic medication (Dresler et al., 2015).

2.5.10 Various Other Dream Work Approaches

Over the years, various other dream work approaches, models and techniques have been developed, many of which have been gleaned from the already existing schools of thought and psychological theories and modalities. For instance, Clara Hill's Cognitive-Experiential Model of Dream Interpretation developed in 1996 by Carla Hill, is the only dream work model with extensive empirical evidence of effectiveness (Caperton, 2012; Kline & Hill, 2014; Sim, et al., 2021). The model was evolved from and informed by several different theoretical orientations, namely psychoanalytic, existential-phenomenological, gestalt, and behavioural approaches (Caperton, 2012; Hill & Knox, 2010).

In terms of how to practically work with this model, the model is based on the assumptions that, “(1) dreams are a continuation of waking thought without immediate input from the external world; (2) dreams' meaning is personal, and thus standard symbols or dream dictionaries are likely not useful; (3) working with dreams requires therapist and client collaboration; (4) dreams are useful for helping people understand themselves more deeply; (5) dreams consist of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components; and (6) therapists

must have sound basic helping skills before they can effectively apply the dream model” (Hill & Knox, 2010, pp. 5-6).

Integrating experiential, psychoanalytic, gestalt, and behavioural approaches to dream work, Hill’s model is made up of three stages, which are exploration, insight, and action stages (Sim et al., 2021). In the exploration stage, the therapist guides the client through descriptions, immersion into emotions, and associations, and making links to waking life. During the insight stage, therapists help clients construct new understandings of the dream as a whole. In the action stage, therapists and clients work collaboratively to explore how the client can make changes in their waking life based on insights generated in the exploration and insight stages (Sim et al., 2021).

In *Working with Dreams and PTSD Nightmares: 14 Approaches for Psychotherapists and Counselors* by Lewis & Krippner (2016), various psychological methods and approaches for working with dreams have been highlighted. Ellis (2019) later does a qualitative analysis synthesis of this text in order to identify common factors in dreamwork techniques across the board. The text mentions a number of dream work techniques and models which include many of the classic theories (Jungian, psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioural, existential, and gestalt, Hill’s Cognitive-Experiential Method dreamwork).

Dreams can give clues as to how an individual may be suffering, and this may allow the therapist to deal with any unresolved issues in assisting the client to come to a solution (Schredl, 2003). When it comes to nightmares and PTSD-related dreams, another more prominent dream work method which was developed and is still currently in use within this

area is the Image Rehearsal Therapy technique (IRT) (Albanese, Liotti, Cornacchia & Mancini, 2022; Haeyen & Staal, 2021; Marks, 1978; Pigeon & Carr, 2015).

According to Krakow and Zadra (2010), IRT has been the object of many controlled studies, and has also received quite a lot empirical support and backing. IRT has shown a lot of promise in terms of dealing with clients who suffer from nightmares and PTSD within psychotherapy (Ellis, 2016; Miller et al., 2017; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016; Wittmann et al., 2007). According to Krakow and Zadra (2010), IRT consists of two components, the first of which deals with the educational/cognitive restructuring element, focusing on helping the nightmare sufferer to consider their disturbing dreams as a learned sleep disorder, similar to psychophysiologic insomnia.

The second component is an imagery/education training element in patients who have had nightmares are taught about the nature of human imagery and how to implement a specific set of imagery steps to decrease nightmares. It should be noted that IRT can be delivered individually or in groups, and for either of these scenarios, the same progression of treatment is followed (Krakow & Zadra, 2010). Discussing the IRT (Imagery Rehearsal Therapy) technique, Miller et al. (2017) provide a summary, explaining that individuals undergoing this therapy select a nightmare, typically of lesser intensity, and then envision a revised, non-distressing dream to replace the chosen nightmare. The IRT protocols exhibit variability in terms of the specific nightmare targeted for treatment, the extent of exposure to the nightmare content, the guidance provided by the therapist to aid in rescripting, and the method of delivery (Miller et al., 2017). Currently, IRT stands out as the most extensively studied nightmare treatment protocol, applicable to both idiopathic and trauma-related dreams (Miller et al., 2017; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016; Wittmann et al., 2007).

Within the global context, another prominent dream work approach and method that emerged around the area of dream work was lucid dreaming. Along with dream work within religious faith-based organisations and belief systems, lucid dreaming has a multitude of published research and literature on the topic. The other dream work approaches, techniques and models mentioned in Ellis (2019) are the Focusing Dreamwork method, Transpersonal Dreamwork, Developmental Life Cycle Method, Dream Interview Method, the Five Star Method, the Integral Dreaming Method, and Dream to Freedom Method™. Each of these modern dream work approaches, techniques and models have specific guidelines in which they practically lay out how to work with dreams, showing that dream work is still prevalent and is still currently being used within the context of psychotherapy. Based on the scope of this research paper, how each of these methods were developed, established, and are currently being worked with practically will not be discussed in any further detail.

2.5.11 Socio-cultural Context

Within a socio-cultural context, shamanism and working with dreams is a global phenomenon that has spanned throughout the ages and still exists today (Pratt, 2007 as cited in Kets de Vries, 2016). Globally, shamanism is recognised as the oldest spiritual healing practice in the world (Pratt, 2007, as cited in Kets de Vries, 2016). DuBois (2009) elaborates that shamans play a crucial role in communal religious traditions, serving as professionals who leverage personal supernatural experiences, particularly trance, as a valuable resource for the broader community's physical and spiritual well-being.

Shamans make use of a variety of techniques cross-culturally, including music, entheogens, material culture and verbal performance. Laughlin and Rock (2014) state that shamanism is a worldwide social phenomenon that is almost always associated with dreaming. They further state that shamans commonly receive their calling in dreams and use dreams to travel to 'spiritual dimensions' to access information and to acquire power. They further state that shamans also apply dreaming to the solution of problems because, in almost all polyphasic societies and traditions, the role of dreaming is paramount and fundamental to the cycle of meaning.

Dreaming in these societies is often integral to the calling, selection, and empowerment of shamans. Shamanic rituals almost always take place overnight presumably to take advantage of the power of ritual to evoke, incubate and influence dream experiences (Laughlin & Rock, 2014). According to Harner (2010), it is assumed that through their own personal shamanic experiences, shamans have concluded that spirits are real; and that they have also come to understand through such experiences the practical application of that knowledge for successful healing and divination.

According to Kets de Vries (2016), shamans hold the belief that certain aspects of the soul can detach from the body, and illnesses arise from parts of the self that become separated and seem to exist in a kind of 'parallel universe.' He goes on to explain that, in psychotherapeutic terms, these separations can occur during dreaming or when individuals safeguard themselves from potentially harmful emotional or physical situations, with trauma possibly hindering these separated aspects from rejoining the body. According to this perspective, individuals may experience feelings of depression, loneliness, boredom, fear, mania, or anxiety as they attempt to reintegrate their souls (Kets de Vries, 2016). Those who adhere to this belief may

seek the assistance of a shaman to restore the essence of the soul (Halifax, 1991; Hultkrantz, 1985; Ingerman, 2004, as cited in Kets de Vries, 2016). The shaman is perceived as a mediator between the separated parts and the primary body of consciousness, ultimately acting as a 'soul retriever' (Kets de Vries, 2016).

2.5.12 The Local South African Context and Dream Work

Locally, within the South African context, current literature on dream work is scarce with only a few studies published on dream work within a traditional healing context. These include (but are not limited to) Bührmann, (1977; 1981); Bührmann and Gqomfa (1981; 1982a; 1982b); Shuttleworth-Jordan (1989; 1995); Schweitzer (1996); van Breda (1999); Hirst (2005); Kwatsha (2007); Nell (2014); Schon (2016); Nwoye (2017) and Cartwright (2019). Many of these studies build upon Bührmann's work within a traditional healing context.

This gap in local literature is one of the motivations for this research. Vera Bührmann noted as early as 1977 that the context of South Africa sits within a cultural threshold that values dreams and an indigenous knowledge system that finds significance in working dreams. Viljoen (2003) asserts that dreams play an essential role in the lives of people from indigenous African cultures. He further states that dreams within this context are understood to be reflections of concrete reality, and not interpreted on a symbolic level as it is in Western psychology.

In the local South African context, shamanism is referred to as traditional healing, and the shaman is identified as a traditional healer or "izangoma/sangoma," as highlighted by Bakow

and Low (2018). Traditional healers, or izangomas, employ various strategies, including bone tossing and dream interpretation, to formulate a course of treatment for individuals who are unwell. The calling to become an izangoma is described by the term "ukuthwasa," meaning "to come out" or "to be reborn" (Booi, 2004; Bührmann, 1982, as cited in Bakow & Low, 2018).

The calling originates from deceased ancestors, typically communicated through dreams or visions (Booi & Edwards, 2014; Bakow & Low, 2018). According to van der Zeijst et al. (2021), ancestors convey information, such as details about traditional medicines, through dreams and voices. The traditional healer's role is to provide a detailed explanation and guidance based on these revelations, including the diagnosis and treatment for their patients.

Traditional healers are also trained in conveying messages from the ancestors to the patients, conducting rituals, and identifying herbal healing plants. The vivid dreams and sensory experiences, including auditory and visual sensations like voices and visions, persist in the lives of traditional healers as they engage with the ancestors as part of their healing profession (van der Zeijst et al., 2021). Berg (2003) adds that within the African worldview, dreams are an integral part of everyday life, and the absence of dreams may be considered a serious problem, potentially warranting the performance of a ritual.

In cultural contexts such as Africa, dreams are seen as messages from the ancestors and are attributed both therapeutic and prognostic value (Berg, 2003; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016). Unlike in Western psychotherapy where the symbolism in dreams is often subjected to detailed analysis, in these cultural perspectives, the emphasis lies on fully experiencing the dream, and the conveyed message is actively acted upon (Berg, 2003; Schubert & Punamäki,

2016). The dreamer would approach a traditional healer who would interpret the dream as a message from the ancestors, resulting in positive outcomes for the individual (Rudnick, 2002; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016).

In the realm of traditional healing, dreams and dream work are highly esteemed and considered culturally significant (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016). In various African cultures, dreams are perceived as a mode of communication with ancestors or deities, carrying guidance or instructions for the dreamer during times of crisis (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016). According to Schubert and Punamäki (2016), in several African cultures, the appearance of ancestors in dreams is associated with concepts such as 'madness,' 'spirit possession,' or death.

Dreams also play a role in curing practices, particularly for trauma victims troubled by nightmares. These individuals may engage in specific rituals and practices to protect themselves or seek assistance from a traditional healer (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016). Traditional healers, diviners, or shamans, either receive healing instructions in their own dreams or interpret the dreams of their clients (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016). As Berg (2003) states, traditional rituals are designed to aid individuals in dreaming, sharing their dreams, and finding meaning in them, with the healer serving as the essential link to the ancestors.

According to Berg (2003), traditional healers should be recognized as skilled psychotherapists. In the healthcare system of South Africa, traditional healers play a vital role, as noted by various studies (Vergunst, 2018; Audet et al., 2017; Green & Colucci, 2020; Mokgobi, 2013; Bantjes et al., 2018). A significant portion of the population, estimated to be up to 60%, seeks the services of traditional healers (Bantjes et al., 2018). Furthermore, a

substantial percentage, ranging from 41% to 61%, of individuals with psychiatric conditions have consulted traditional healers (Sorsdahl et al., 2013).

The South African government supports the integration of Western and traditional medicine, promoting their coexistence within the primary healthcare system (Mokgobi, 2013; Sorsdahl et al., 2013). There has been a move towards officially recognising traditional healers as healthcare providers in South Africa (Sorsdahl et al., 2013), and some mental health practitioners are collaborating with traditional healers (Mokgobi, 2013). This reflects a broader acknowledgment of the valuable role traditional healers play in the healthcare landscape.

South Africa therefore sits within a cultural threshold that not only values dreams and dream work, but also advocates for the employment and empowerment of traditional healers within its health care system. This means that dreams are part of the South African context. It is therefore unfortunate that there exists a gap in the literature on the topic of dream work techniques, methods, models and approaches within this context. Given that dreams are still valued and worked with within global contexts as seen in the diversity and variety of existing literature on various dream work techniques, methods, models and approaches, local literature on dream work is lacking. This research therefore aims to not only explore the existing literature on dream work both globally and locally, but also to highlight the gap in the literature in the hopes that it would provoke an interest in future studies and research on this topic within the South African context.

2.6 Rationale of the Research

Based on the above, South Africa is positioned within a cultural context that not only places value on dreams but also advocates for the involvement and empowerment of traditional healers in the country's healthcare system. This means that dreams are deeply intertwined with South African culture and identity. Unfortunately, there is a gap in the literature regarding the techniques, methods, models, and approaches related to dream work in this context. While there is substantial literature on dreams and dream work throughout the ages on a global scale, South African literature on this subject is lacking. Therefore, the aim of this research is not only to delve into existing global and local literature on dream work but also to highlight the absence of such literature within the South African context. To this end, the hope is that this will spark an interest and encourage further studies and research on this topic of dream work within the South African context.

2.7 Research Questions

In order to meet the research aims and objectives of this study, the research questions which will be followed to guide the systematic literature review study of the current approaches to dream work are: (1) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally (2) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally? (3) What are the practical implications for working with dreams according to global and local themes?

Looking at the themes that emerge from a systematic literature review of current global literature over the last 10 years will allow this research framework to assess in terms of

existing current literature on dream work approaches, methods, models and techniques. This can then allow for a comparison of what exists globally compared to locally, but also speak into a need for more cultural-specific, context-specific psychological dream work methods which could possibly be translated into a local context of dream work. This will also allow the research to explore possible discrepancies or similarities between existing global and local literature on this universal topic of dreams and dream work in order to draw conclusions which could aid future research.

Secondly, to answer the question on what themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally, this research will be focusing on conducting a systematic literature review on the existing current approaches, techniques, methods and models of dream work within the local South African context. From an initial search, it was discovered that there is a gap in the literature on dream work within the South African context which led to the initial interest and motivation of this study. By conducting a systematic literature review and examining relevant sources such as academic papers, local publications, and indigenous knowledge, the hope is to find as much information and literature on dream work within the South African context.

To further delve into and unpack this research question, this research will look at how cultural beliefs, traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems shape dream work approaches in South Africa, whether or not there are specific theoretical frameworks or models of dream work that are prevalent within the South African context, what the unique models, methods, rituals, or practices employed in dream work within South Africa are, and how dream work in South Africa integrates with or diverges from global approaches (what is common/similar, uncommon, translatable).

By exploring these areas and conducting a thorough literature review, this research can identify the unique themes, cultural nuances, and local perspectives that characterise dream work approaches within South Africa. This analysis can contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural diversity and richness of dream work practices locally, and hopefully, spark an interest for further research on this topic which could contribute to local literature on dream work.

Lastly, by conducting a systematic literature review on the current approaches to dream work both globally and locally, the hope is that it would provide valuable insights and understandings into answering the research question on the practical implications of working with dreams. The practical implications include looking at how dreams are practically worked with within a Western, Eurocentric dream work approach compared with that of a traditional or indigenous dream work approach. Both locally and globally, practical steps and guidelines on how to work with various dream work approaches, models, methods and techniques has been a focus and emphasis of this research in order to make an adequate and holistic comparison of current dream work approaches and models, seeing how each framework and methodology practically relates and translates to the other and how it is practically applied within each respective context.

Another aspect of the practical implications is focusing on how the practical steps to working with dreams within the global dream work models and approaches could possibly be translated into a culturally sensitive cross-cultural dream work model at the local level or not. This would mean seeing how cross-culturally the global dream work methods are adaptable to the local South African context or not, and if not, where the discrepancies lie or what

would need to be adjusted/adapted accordingly in order to make it fit within a local context if there was a need for that. Another practical consideration would be to look at whether or not there is a need for a local dream work models which could be based on global models and techniques to adequately suit the local context.

This would possibly mean gleaning from various global dream work models, seeing what works well in psychotherapy globally and adopting various techniques to make it applicable to a local context. It could also possibly mean hypothesising a novel dream work model that would be adequately suitable to the local context based on the existing current literature and research of global dream work models over the years. Finally, a final practical implication and consideration would be to find out how all of this can contribute towards future local research in terms of the gap in the literature, and what future studies on dream work locally could potentially look like.

This final point would mean making possible suggestions, proposals and recommendations on what future research could focus on in terms of satisfying the gap in the literature on local literature. Future scholars and researchers could then conduct further research in order to expand the lack or dearth of knowledge within this under-researched area within a South African context. This would indeed fill the gap and expand the knowledge base on dream work in South Africa. This research could also highlight suggestions on what would be needed in order to accomplish future goals in expanding the research in this area.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter looked at various dream work approaches, techniques, models and methods throughout the ages, through the development of psychology, and beyond into the current scientific research on sleep and dreams. The chapter also explored the local South African perspective on dreams and dreaming in order to highlight the gap that exists within local South African literature on dream work. Overall, this chapter sought to provide context, identify gaps, and give a rationale for the current systematic literature review research study. This chapter also touched on the research questions which would be guiding this research review. In order to further explore this research topic, the subsequent chapters will be looking into the methodological procedures which were applied during the systematic literature review data collection phase, and the main overarching themes that were identified during the thematic analysis phase. Chapter 4 then states the main research findings in order to continue driving this research and answering the research questions, with Chapter 5 conducting a discussion of these results, making inferences that further address the main research questions. Chapter 6 concludes the write up by tying together the various sections of the thesis in terms of answering the three research questions and contributing to our knowledge and understanding of current approaches to dream work both globally and locally. Chapter 6 also raises a number of implications, as well as makes a number of recommendations for future research on this topic. The chapter ends by mentioning the limitations of this study for the sake of fulfilling academic requirements, for quality assurance, contextualising the results, and suggesting how future research could be structured.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The methodology chapter of this thesis plays a vital role in the overall research process. It serves as the guiding framework that outlines how the research questions will be addressed, how the data will be collected, analysed, and interpreted. This chapter is a critical component that bridges the gap between the research objectives and the insights they may provide, providing a clear roadmap for the research endeavour. This chapter will delve into the specific procedures and techniques employed to investigate the research questions. This chapter will also discuss the rationale behind the chosen methodology, its alignment with the research goals, and the various steps undertaken to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. Moreover, this chapter will discuss the ethical considerations that have shaped the research design and data collection process. By the end of this chapter, readers will gain an understanding of the research design and the procedures put in place to achieve the research objectives. The chosen methodology reflects a deliberate, thoughtful approach aimed at obtaining robust and meaningful results that contribute to the existing body of knowledge on dream work approaches globally and locally. Through careful planning and implementation, this research methodology is the foundation upon which the subsequent findings and conclusions will be based. It ensures the integrity and credibility of the study, and the transparency with which the research process unfolds. This chapter is intended to provide a detailed insight into the processes and techniques used in this research, allowing readers to critically evaluate the methods employed and to appreciate the validity of the findings that will be presented in the chapters that follow.

3.2 Research Questions

This review examined global and local literature on approaches to dream work and sought to answer the following research questions: (1) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally (2) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally? (3) What are the practical implications for working with dreams according to global and local themes?

The chapter starts with a general overview of systematic reviews and thematic analysis respectively, highlighting how these guided the research. Next, the unit of analysis is outlined in which the final data set utilised for the analysis is mentioned. The procedures for data collection undertaken in accordance with Siddaway et al. (2019) are then discussed in detail. Finally, the chapter outlines the various steps undertaken to conduct a thematic analysis in accordance with Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012).

3.3 Systematic Literature Review Procedures – General Overview

Systematic literature reviews are generally understood as a method that involves the identification, selection, appraisal, and synthesis of data (Linnenluecke et al., 2020; Mohamed Shaffril et al., 2021; Siddaway et al., 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019). According to Siddaway et al. (2019), these reviews are characterised by a methodical, transparent, and replicable methodology and presentation. The process of conducting a systematic review entails a comprehensive and systematic search to locate all relevant published and unpublished work addressing the research questions. The identified literature is then critically evaluated based on its relevance to the review questions and a set of predetermined

methodological inclusion and exclusion criteria (Linnenluecke et al., 2020; Mohamed Shaffril et al., 2021; Siddaway et al., 2019). Only data meeting both these criteria are included in the final analysis. Siddaway et al. (2019) propose a six-stage process for conducting a systematic review: (1) Scoping; (2) Planning; (3) Identification; (4) Screening; (5) Eligibility; and (6) Study quality. To identify key literature relevant to the research questions, systematic searches were performed using specific keywords, electronic databases, and inclusion and exclusion criteria. This approach ensures a thorough and rigorous examination of the available literature on a given topic.

3.4 Thematic Analysis Procedures – General Overview

Thematic analysis was employed to examine the literature, specifically focusing on identifying themes across both global and local literature. Braun and Clark (2012) define thematic analysis as a method for systematically identifying, organising, and providing insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a qualitative data set. In the context of this review, thematic analysis was utilised to identify, analyse, and report on patterns and themes observed within and across the collected data. This analytical approach facilitated the organisation and description of the data set, aiding in the interpretation of the data in alignment with the key research questions.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012), a theme should capture a significant aspect of the data in relation to the research question(s) while representing some level of patterned meaning within the entire data set. Ideally, themes should be observable across the entire data set, but the prevalence of themes does not necessarily imply their crucial role in the analysis. The importance of a theme is not solely determined by quantifiable measures; instead, its

significance is derived from its relationship to the overall research questions. Themes were identified, coded, and analysed with the goal of providing an accurate reflection of the content of the data set in connection with the research questions. The qualitative data analysis software NVivo, produced by QSR International, was employed to assist with the analysis process.

The identification of themes followed an inductive or data-driven approach, as opposed to a deductive thematic analysis that is theory-driven. In the inductive approach, the themes identified were strongly linked to the data itself, primarily driven by the data rather than pre-existing theories (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012). The coding process focused on specific features of the data, resulting in the emergence of themes related to global and local dream work approaches. Prior to the analysis, the researcher engaged with literature on dream work approaches to familiarise themselves with the data's features, thereby enriching the analysis. Furthermore, the analysis concentrated on the semantic or explicit level of the data, rather than delving into the latent and interpretative level. In other words, the themes were identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data, and the analyst did not seek to uncover anything beyond what was explicitly written (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012). This approach ensures that the themes are grounded in the content of the data and reflect the explicit observations and statements made in the literature on dream work approaches.

3.5 Unit of Analysis

A comprehensive literature search was conducted to retrieve relevant literature between 2011-2021 by using search terms pertaining to the research questions. The search was guided by inclusion and exclusion criteria. An initial search showed that only certain databases

generated sufficient results when using the search terms (EBSCO, Google Scholar, PubMed and Sabinet), the rest (JSTOR, PsycINFO, Scopus, Web of Science, Wiley, and ProQuest) were ruled out of the final searching. Secondly the initial search also revealed a lack of recent South African literature on the topic. This speaks to the initial expected gap in the literature which was part of the motivation for this study.

To answer the research questions and obtain relevant literature, the researcher used three different Boolean terms across all chosen databases. This allowed for uniformity in search terms across databases and time-efficiency during the searching process. The Boolean terms targeted three areas of the literature namely; (a) western psychological literature, (b) global shamanic/traditional healing dream literature, and (c) South African-based literature. After searching across databases using all three Boolean terms, a total of 703 articles were found. After conducting further data collection procedures during the Screening Stage which included removing duplicates, and the Eligibility stage which included reading through the full-text versions of the articles and excluding articles with reasons, a final data set of 30 articles remained (see Appendix A for a list of included articles).

3.6 Procedures for Data Collection

Siddaway et al. (2019) proposes six stages on how to conduct a systematic review, namely, (1) Scoping; (2) Planning; (3) Identification; (4) Screening; (5) Eligibility; and (6) Study quality. These stages are discussed below. For the sake of inter-rater reliability these stages were undertaken in collaboration with a co-reviewer in the form of this researcher's supervisor.

3.6.1 Stage 1: Scoping:

This stage required the reviewer to formulate the research questions and become familiar with the literature after an initial review of the literature. For this review, the research questions were formulated as (1) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally (2) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally? (3) What are the practical implications for working with dreams according to global and local themes? These research questions guided the breadth of an initial review of the literature.

3.6.2 Stage 2: Planning:

The second stage in the process, is the Planning stage. Siddaway et al. (2019) state the need for a balance between *sensitivity* (finding as many articles as possible that may be relevant) and *specificity* (making sure those articles are indeed relevant). At this stage of the review process, it is recommended that the search terms err on the side of sensitivity so that nothing will be missed. The Planning stage involved the formulation of search terms and the selection of electronic databases. This stage also involved the construction of preliminary inclusion and exclusion criteria. For this review, the searching was grouped according to the following terms: ‘dream work’; ‘dream work approaches’; ‘dream work in psychotherapy’; ‘dream interpretation approaches’; ‘dream work in traditional healing’; ‘dream work in indigenous knowledge systems’; ‘dream interpretation in psychology’; ‘dreams in therapy’; ‘dreams in counselling’; ‘dream work in Africa’; and ‘dream work South Africa’. Upon an initial search, it was discovered that making use of Boolean terms allowed for better time-efficiency, replicability, and uniformity. Also, making use of

electronic databases that support Boolean use and filters was necessary. The three Boolean terms used across all databases were as follows:

(a) (dreams OR dreamwork OR “dream work” OR “dreamwork approaches” OR “dream work approaches” OR “dream interpretation” OR “working with dreams”) AND (psychology OR counselling OR psychotherapy OR therapy)

(b) (dreamwork OR “dream work” OR “dream interpretation” OR “working with dreams”) AND (psychology OR psychotherapy OR therapy) AND (shamanism OR “traditional healer” OR “traditional healing” OR “indigenous healing systems”) AND dreams

(c) (dreamwork OR “dream work” OR “working with dreams”) AND (therapy OR counselling OR psychotherapy OR psychology) AND “South Africa”

The first Boolean term targeted all global “Western” psychological literature pertaining to dream work approaches and was related to the first research question on what themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally? The second Boolean term targeted all literature related to indigenous healing systems, including any shamanistic and traditional healing practices when working with dreams. This second Boolean term was based on the fact that upon an initial search of the literature, it was noted that across the world and within various cultures and societies, dreams were valued and worked with in a cultural or traditional approach. Thus, considering literature pertaining to this area of research would be necessary. The last Boolean term was specifically targeted at finding South African literature pertaining to dream work

approaches only. This Boolean term was related to the second research question. As mentioned earlier, there was a scarcity of literature in South African. Only once the date inclusion criterion was modified by removing all date filters, were there a relative amount of articles found pertaining to the research questions. These included, but not limited to, Bührmann, (1977; 1981); Bührmann and Gqomfa (1981; 1982a; 1982b); Shuttleworth-Jordan (1989; 1995); Schweitzer (1996); Breda (1999); Hirst (2005); Kwatsha (2007).

After searching on several databases, EBSCO, Google Scholar, PubMed and Sabinet were the ones that (a) supported the Boolean system of searching, (b) allowed for more filters in the search window, and (c) generated enough South African literature to include in the review. The other databases (JSTOR, PsycINFO, Scopus, Web of Science, Wiley, and ProQuest) either did not support the Boolean system of searching or the literature found was insufficient and/or irrelevant. The inclusion and exclusion criteria for this review are as follows:

Inclusion criteria:

- Literature that has been published between 2011 and 2021.
- Literature that is directly and specifically linked to the research questions.
- Literature written in English.
- Academic book chapters and peer reviewed journal articles only.

Exclusion criteria:

- All published and unpublished literature that is older than 10 years. This is to ensure that the information acquired from the literature deals with current dream work approaches only.

- All journal articles that are not peer-reviewed. This is to minimise bias.
- All academic literature that is not related to ‘dream work approaches’ so as to gather relevant literature that is related to the research questions only.
- All research literature that is inaccessible, as well as missing adequate information pertaining to the research questions.

3.6.3 Stage 3: Identification (searching):

During this stage of the review, the researcher made use of the search terms, databases, and inclusion/exclusion criteria to carefully search for relevant literature pertaining to the research questions (Ahn & Kang, 2018; Siddaway et al., 2019). The search results were then carefully inspected before additional searches were conducted to ensure that all potentially relevant published work had been located. At the start of this stage, the researcher decided to use a Boolean system (Appendix B) across the databases. This was to aid with efficiency and replicability.

This stage also incorporated an inter-rater reliability component. Established guidelines for conducting systematic reviews recommend that the literature searching and sifting process involve two separate reviewers who must reach a consensus on the inclusion of literature (Linnenluecke et al., 2020; Mohamed Shaffril et al., 2021; Siddaway et al., 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019). However, in practice, this may not always be feasible, especially if the systematic reviewer is a student. Siddaway et al. (2019) acknowledge the need for flexibility in such cases. In this review, the supervisor of the research assisted in sifting through the collected literature to ensure rigor and reliability. Appendix C provides an overview of this and other stages with their corresponding results.

3.6.4 Stage 4: Screening

This stage of the review process involved exporting the references of the literature to a citation manager to collate the search results. The advantages of adhering to this stage during the reviewing process included time efficiency, storing of literature (which cannot be lost), and prevention of duplicate versions of the same work (Siddaway et al., 2019). For this review, this step was modified, in that the researcher downloaded the full-text articles and stored these in folders with appropriate names for the various stages. Siddaway et al. (2019) state that the researcher should continue to err on the side of sensitivity during this stage by reading the titles and abstracts of all literature identified by the searches.

3.6.5 Stage 5: Eligibility:

In the subsequent step, if the titles and/or abstracts indicated that the literature potentially met the inclusion criteria, the full-text versions were obtained and carefully reviewed. During this stage, the full-text versions of 103 articles were assessed to determine if each was indeed relevant and suitable for inclusion. After this thorough examination, 73 articles were excluded. Exclusion decisions were based on adherence to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, addressing whether an article could effectively address the research questions. Some articles were excluded due to lacking quality and academic rigor. Additionally, while certain articles seemed promising based on titles and abstracts, further review during the Eligibility stage revealed that these were book reviews. For more detailed information on the included and excluded articles, refer to Appendix D. Throughout this process, eligibility was

consistently determined by the established inclusion/exclusion criteria (Linnenluecke et al., 2020; Mohamed Shaffril et al., 2021; Siddaway et al., 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019).

3.6.6 Stage 6: Study quality:

The inclusion and exclusion criteria are established to ensure that only relevant work is included in the systematic review, maintaining a rigorous and focused approach (Linnenluecke et al., 2020; Mohamed Shaffril et al., 2021; Siddaway et al., 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019). The final stage of the systematic review process involves the appraisal of the quality of the relevant literature (Siddaway et al., 2019). Various tools have been proposed for assessing study quality (Siddaway et al., 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019). In this review, the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist was utilised. The CASP Checklist comprises 10 questions designed to assess the quality of qualitative literature studies (CASP, 2018). When appraising a qualitative study, three broad issues are considered: (i) the validity of the study results, (ii) the nature of the results, and (iii) the potential local applicability of the results (CASP, 2018). The 10 questions are intended to guide a systematic consideration of these issues. The CASP checklist form is provided in Appendix E.

For each article, the researcher would answer all 10 questions using the *CASP* checklist form by selecting “yes”, “no” or “can’t tell”. CASP (2018), do not suggest a scoring system and it was decided that any study scoring less than four yeses was considered to be of low quality. None of the studies included in this research scored less than 8 yeses. For this review, literature was weighted qualitatively in terms of their relevance to the research questions. Rigour for this review was maintained by following the explicit methodology of the systematic review process. This entailed adhering to the inclusion and exclusion criteria

throughout the Identification and Eligibility stages. The set criteria were applied to all prospective literature to minimise the possibility of selection bias.

3.7 Procedures for Thematic Analysis

For data analysis of the selected literature, the researcher made use of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis for this review was undertaken according to the six phases of analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012). These include (1) familiarising yourself with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming, and (6) producing the report. Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012) state that analysis is not a linear process of simply moving from one phase to the next, but instead, it is a recursive process, where movement is back and forth as needed, throughout the phases.

Before beginning the analysis, there are a number of decisions the researcher needs to make (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Lawless & Chen, 2019; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell, et al., 2017). As a start the researcher needs to decide on a rich description of the data set, or a detailed account of just one particular aspect. For this review a rich description of the entire data set was decided on as it allows the reader to get a sense of the predominant or important themes). Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012) further state that this might be a particularly useful method if one is researching an under-researched area, as is the case with dream work approaches in South Africa.

Another decision the researcher needs to make is deciding whether or not to conduct an inductive or a “theoretical” deductive thematic analysis. For this review an inductive thematic analysis approach was used. In this approach to analysis, unlike with a deductive

approach, the themes identified would not be driven by the researcher's theoretical interest in the area or topic, but instead deriving general conclusions or theories from specific observations or data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Bryman, 2016). It follows a "bottom-up" approach, where the researcher starts with specific observations, identifies patterns or trends in the data, and then formulates a general theory or hypothesis based on those patterns. The researcher may employ coding or categorisation techniques to identify common themes or concepts emerging from the data. Inductive research focuses on generating new theories or hypotheses, expanding the understanding of a phenomenon or exploring new areas.

Another decision to be made relates to the semantic or latent nature of themes. This consideration, according to Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012), involves the 'level' at which themes are to be identified: at a semantic or explicit level, or at a latent or interpretative level. For this review, analysis focused on the semantic or explicit level, rather than the latent and interpretative level. With a semantic approach, the themes are identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data, and the researcher is not looking for anything beyond what has been written.

A final consideration that needed to be taken before analysis was to decide on the epistemological assumptions of the research, and between an essentialist/realist thematic analysis or a constructionist thematic analysis. This review took an essentialist/realist approach to thematic analysis given the semantic or explicit level of the nature of the themes as discussed above.

3.7.1 Phase 1: Familiarisation with the data

The analysis commenced with an immersive exploration of the data. The primary emphasis at this stage was on repeated readings of the data, aiming to establish the researcher's familiarity with the depth and breadth of the content. The reading process was guided by broader considerations related to the nature of the analysis (i.e., providing a rich description of the entire data set), a focus on semantic themes rather than latent ones, and an understanding that the analysis would be data-driven and inductive. Additionally, the reading was conducted with the intention of identifying initial patterns and trends within the data. Throughout this process, the researcher made notes regarding potential codes that could be utilised during the subsequent coding phases of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Lawless & Chen, 2019; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017). This immersion in the data was a crucial step to lay the foundation for the subsequent stages of analysis.

3.7.2 Phase 2: Generating initial codes

The second phase of analysis focused on the production of initial codes across the entire data set and collating data relevant to each code (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Lawless & Chen, 2019; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell, et al., 2017). Codes identify a feature of the data that appears interesting to the analyst, and refers to the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell, et al., 2017). Since coding was depended on themes being more 'data-driven' (inductive approach to analysis), analysis was therefore a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a preexisting coding frame, or the researcher's analytic preconceptions. In this sense, this form of thematic analysis was data-driven. Coding was also aimed at the content of the entire data set.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012), coding can be performed either manually or through a software programme. For this review, the researcher made use of the software programme *NVivo* to code the data. The programme allowed the researcher to import the data (in this case the articles) onto its interface whereby the coding could begin. The researcher worked systematically through the entire data set, giving full and equal attention to each data item, and identified interesting aspects in the data items that would form the basis of repeated patterns (themes) across the data set. Each article was carefully analysed and data extracts were collated together within codes.

According to Braun and Clarke (2012), it is important in this phase to ensure that all actual data extracts are coded and then collated together within each code. When using computer software, one should code by tagging and naming selections of text within each data item. Key advice for this phase is to (a) code for as many potential themes/patterns as possible), (b) code extracts of data inclusively (keep a little of the surrounding data if relevant; do not lose the context, and (c) remember that one can code individual extracts of data in as many different ‘themes’ as they fit into. The researcher applied this advice during this phase of analysis while making use of NVivo software. By the end of this phase, a list of more than 150 codes had been identified.

3.7.3 Phase 3: Searching for themes

Phase 3 began once all the data had been coded and collated, resulting in a comprehensive list of various codes identified across the data set. This phase, which shifts the focus of analysis to the broader level of themes rather than individual codes, involves sorting the

different codes into potential themes and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Lawless & Chen, 2019; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017). The analysis at this stage delves into understanding how different codes may combine to form overarching themes. During this phase, the researcher contemplated the relationship between codes, between themes, and between different levels of themes (main overarching themes and sub-themes within them). This systematic process of sorting and organising codes facilitates the emergence of meaningful and coherent themes that capture the essence of the data set.

3.7.4 Phase 4: Reviewing themes

Phase 4 commenced when a set of candidate themes had been identified, initiating the refinement of these themes. This phase involved two levels of reviewing and refining of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Lawless & Chen, 2019; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017). At level one, the review occurred at the level of the coded data extracts. This required reading and considering all the collated extracts for each theme to assess whether they formed a coherent pattern. Once candidate themes displayed a coherent pattern, the researcher proceeded to the second level of this phase. At level two, a similar process was applied but at the level of the entire data set. The researcher considered the validity of individual themes in relation to the entire data set by rereading the entire data set. This served two purposes: first, to determine whether the themes worked cohesively with the data set, and second, to code any additional data within the themes that may have been overlooked in earlier coding stages. The possibility of re-coding from the data set was expected, as coding is an ongoing and dynamic process (Braun & Clark, 2006, 2012).

By the end of this phase, the researcher had gained a comprehensive understanding of the different themes, how they interrelated, and the overarching narrative they conveyed about the data. This rigorous review process ensured the coherence and validity of the identified themes in relation to the entire data set.

3.7.5 Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

Phase 5 commenced with the definition and further refinement of the themes intended for analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012, p. 92), "define and refine" involves identifying the "essence" of each theme (as well as the themes overall) and determining the specific aspect of the data each theme captures. It is emphasised not to burden a theme with too much complexity or diversity. In addition to discerning the story conveyed by each theme, the researcher considered how it contributes to the broader narrative about the data in relation to the research questions, ensuring there is not excessive overlap between themes. The researcher evaluated the themes individually and in relation to each other.

As part of the refinement process, the researcher identified whether a theme contains any sub-themes, which can be beneficial for structuring a particularly large and complex theme and illustrating the hierarchy of meaning within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Lawless & Chen, 2019; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017). Braun and Clarke (2006, 2012) stress the importance, by the end of this phase, of clearly defining what the themes are and what they are not. Finally, the researcher deliberated on the names to be given to the themes for the final analysis, aiming for names that are concise, descriptive, and provide readers with a sense of the theme's essence (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012).

For this research, three overarching themes, each containing sub-themes, were identified. These were, Psychological approaches to dream work, Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, and Socio-cultural approaches to dream work. Within the overarching theme of Psychological approaches to dream work were the sub-themes “dream interpretation”, “emotions and dreams”, “symbolism and imagery in approaching dream work”, “cognitive behavioural approaches to dream work”, “depth psychology and its approaches to dream work”, “gestalt approaches to dream work”, and “integrative approaches to dream work in psychology”. Within the overarching theme Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, sub-themes “psychopathological approaches to dream work”, and “neuroscientific approaches to dream work” were identified. Within the overarching theme, Socio-cultural approaches to dream work were the sub-themes “healing and dreams”, “shamanistic approaches to dreams”, and “spiritual approaches to dreams”. At this stage of the analysis, the significance of identified themes began to appear.

3.7.6 Phase 6: Producing the report

During the final stage of analysis, the researcher aimed to deliver a comprehensive report of the data to showcase the merit and validity of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Lawless & Chen, 2019; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017). To generate a thorough write-up of the key themes, the researcher selected several extracts that could offer sufficient evidence of each identified theme within the data set. For each theme, the researcher initially chose extracts to capture the essence of the theme without unnecessary complexity. These extracts were then reviewed to determine the most compelling ones—those that served as the most identifiable examples of the issues explored within each theme. The NVivo software played a predominant role in aiding this

process. Extracts that did not meet these criteria were discarded. Once the selection of extracts was finalised, the write-up process began. The final analysis aimed to provide a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the data, offering a rich description of the patterns and trends within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Lawless & Chen, 2019; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017). This phase is crucial in presenting the findings in a compelling manner that aligns with the research questions and contributes meaningfully to the overall understanding of the topic.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of the methodology employed in this study, which aimed to answer the research questions related to approaches to dream work. The systematic review process was detailed, encompassing the stages of scoping, planning, identification, screening, eligibility, and study quality assessment. Thematic analysis procedures were also elaborated on, including phases of familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. The methodology applied in this research followed a rigorous and systematic approach to ensure the quality and reliability of the findings. The themes identified were presented and the procedures undertaken have laid the foundation for the subsequent chapters, where the analysis and discussion of these themes will further contribute to the understanding of dream work approaches on both a global and local scale.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter delves into the heart of the research endeavour, presenting the findings that emerged from the systematic investigation outlined in Chapter 3. The primary aim of this study was to conduct a systematic literature review over the last 10 years (2011-2021) on dream work literature both globally and locally and to uncover insights from the analysis of identified themes and trends pertaining to dream work. The three overarching themes identified from the literature searches were Psychological approaches to dream work, Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, and Socio-cultural approaches to dreams. Through a careful process of data collection and analysis, this chapter presents the findings and trends that have surfaced in an attempt to contribute to a deeper understanding of dream work approaches globally and locally. The findings are presented in a structured manner, aligning with the research questions and objectives. The subsequent sections of this chapter explore each theme and sub-theme, and their respective focus areas in detail, providing a comprehensive account of the data. Ultimately, the findings presented in this chapter not only contribute to the existing body of knowledge on dream work, but also have practical implications for future studies. The synthesis of these results will pave the way for the subsequent chapter, where the implications, recommendations, and avenues for future research will be explored in greater detail. In this introductory section of this chapter, a recap of the research questions, methodology, the scope of the review, significance of the findings, and an overview of how the chapter is outlined will be laid out before the presentation of the overarching themes and sub-themes will commence.

4.2 Research Questions Recap

The following research questions were formulated to explore the current approaches to dream work both globally and locally in order to contribute towards local research efforts. This chapter presents the findings of the study, which aims to address the following research questions:

- (1) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally?
- (2) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally?
- (3) What are the practical implications for working with dreams according to global and local themes?

This chapter will demonstrate how findings from the analysis has contributed towards answering these questions, providing a comprehensive understanding of the state of current research and literature on dream work both globally and locally.

4.3 Methodological Recap

This systematic literature review was conducted following a rigorous and transparent methodology. This included:

- Development of a comprehensive search strategy, encompassing EBSCO, Google Scholar, PubMed and Sabinet
- Inclusion and exclusion criteria designed to ensure the relevance and quality of the studies included.
- Independent screening and selection of studies by two reviewers to minimise bias.

- Data extraction and analysis, which involved a keywords Boolean system to encapsulate all relevant data, NVivo data coding software, quality assessment in the form of the CASP tool, and thematic analysis methodology based on Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2012) qualitative thematic analysis methodology.

We reviewed a total of 703 articles and settled on 30 articles encompassing a diverse range of research designs, geographical locations, and publication years. This diverse selection allowed for a more comprehensive exploration of the research topic.

4.4 The Scope of the Review

The scope of this review encompassed literature published between 2011 and 2021, with a focus on studies conducted globally and locally. The criteria for inclusion considered a variety of study designs, book chapters, and peer-reviewed published articles readily available. Moreover, this research explored various approaches, techniques, methods, and models of dream work both globally and locally.

4.5 Significance of the Findings

The findings presented in this chapter hold importance for the study of dream work approaches globally and locally. They offer valuable insights into the current state of research on this topic, shedding light on emerging trends, existing gaps, and the quality and quantity of evidence available. It is hoped that these insights will not only contribute to the current and available existing academic literature but will also have practical implications for aiding and assisting towards future research and decision-making in this area.

4.6 Chapter Outline

The chapter lays out the overarching themes and sub-themes. The chapter then proceeds to present the findings in depth in the form of the themes and sub themes together with data extracts as support. The chapter then concludes as the thesis transitions to the subsequent discussion chapter, Chapter 5. In summary, the findings presented in this chapter are the result an analysis of a systematic and comprehensive exploration of the literature on dream work approaches globally and locally, providing a solid foundation for the ensuing discussion and conclusion chapters.

4.7 Overview of the Themes

This chapter reports on the three over-arching themes from the analysis of the data, namely Psychological approaches to dream work, Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, and Socio-cultural approaches to dream work. Within the overarching theme of Psychological approaches to dream work the following the sub-themes were identified:

- dream interpretation
- emotions and dreams
- symbolism and imagery in approaching dream work
- cognitive behavioural approaches to dream work
- depth psychology and its approaches to dream work
- gestalt approaches to dream work
- integrative approaches to dream work in psychology

Within the overarching theme Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work the following sub-themes were identified:

- psychopathological approaches to dream work
- neuroscientific approaches to dream work

Within the overarching theme Socio-cultural approaches to dream work the following sub-themes were identified:

- healing and dreams
- shamanistic approaches to dreams
- spiritual approaches to dreams

Each of these themes and sub-themes reported on here are supported by data extracts from the literature. The identified themes answered the research questions on what the current approaches to dream work are globally and locally, and what the practical implications for working with dreams according to global and local themes would be. The themes identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally were predominantly the psychological approaches to dream work and the psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work.

In terms of themes identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally were predominantly the socio-cultural approaches to dreams, specifically focusing on the South African context within the framework of traditional healing and dreams. There were, however, some themes identified within the Socio-cultural approaches to dreams theme which relate to the current approaches to dreams on a global scale. These predominantly had

to do with socio-cultural dream work experiences among shamanistic practices and practitioners outside of the local South African context.

In terms of what the practical implications for working with dreams according to global and local themes, each area of focus pertaining to dream work has clearly outlined some practical steps on how to work with dreams within each approach, technique, method, and model. For instance, looking at the theme Psychological approaches to dream work theme, within this overarching theme was the sub-theme Cognitive behavioural approaches to dream work. Within this approach to dream work were a number of techniques, methods and models which explicitly laid out some practical steps and guidelines on how to work with dreams within each individual approach. The same can be seen for the sub-theme depth psychology and its approaches to dream work which included some Jungian approaches to dreams as well as Adlerian dream work.

For the other sub-themes such as gestalt approaches to dream work and integrative, they all comprise of different dream work approaches, techniques and models which each lay out practical steps and guidelines on how to work with dreams within each of its respective frameworks. For the overarching theme Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, this theme comprises of the sub-themes psychopathological approaches to dream work and neuroscientific approaches to dream work. For the area of psychopathological approaches to dream work, this research sought to answer the question on practical implications by seeing how dreams are practically worked with when dealing with certain psychopathologies such as anxiety, depression, or PTSD in psychotherapy.

Secondly, looking at the sub-theme of neuroscientific approaches to dream work, it was found that dreams were also practically engaged with on a scientific basis within the field of neuroscience and sleep science research. This area highlighted how dreams can be engaged with practically from a scientifically empirical standpoint. Finally, within the overarching theme of socio-cultural approaches to dream work, this research looks at the practical implications of working with dreams within socio-cultural contexts, how dreams are seen as a form of communication with ancestors, leading to healing, and how, through spiritual engagement with dreams, shamans and traditional healers alike engage with dreams practically.

4.8 Theme 1: Psychological Approaches to Dream Work

Throughout the literature, and from the data analysis, psychological approaches to dream work was a clear theme that emerged. From the data analysis, and the coding, each of the sub-themes consisted of numerous codes from the literature which accumulated to create these sub-themes. These sub-themes were then collated to create the overarching themes. It was clear from the codes and the creation of these sub-themes that these sub-themes could be categorised into the overarching theme, Psychological approaches to dream work. This overarching theme, along with all its respective sub-themes will now be reported on below, accompanied by extracts of support.

4.8.1 Dream Interpretation

Across the literature, this sub-theme was common, possibly because the end goal of working with dreams in therapy is to interpret the dream's meaning and discover what the

dream is telling the dreamer. According to Lack (2023), dream interpretation is when people attempt to make sense of their dreams and has a long history of accounts throughout human existence. Dream interpretation, also referred to as dream analysis, is rooted in the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud. This approach suggests that delving into the unconscious forces shaping dream content can unveil the genuine origins of mental health issues (Lack, 2023). Dream interpretation takes on various forms, approaches and models. According to Kelland (2010), dream interpretation, also known as dream analysis is the act of analysing dream symbols and their meanings.

Dream interpretation, in the sense of foretelling the future or discerning the will of gods or ancestors, is as old as human history (Barrett, 2013; Frazer & Poe, 2021). The first recorded instances of dream interpretation date back to the Summerian civilisation, which was the first to develop writing in the third millennium BC; the earliest texts exist consisting of recorded dreams (Barrett, 2013; Frazer & Poe, 2021). Today, there are still cultures that hold this belief that dreams hold significant meaning and are messages from the gods (DuBois, 2009; Pratt, 2007 as cited in Kets de Vries, 2016; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016; Tursunay & Rustem, 2021).

At the start of modern dream interpretation, the Greek philosopher Heraclitus is believed to be the first writer to maintain that dreams were not of supernatural origin but instead dreams signified an individual's withdrawal into a distinct realm of personal communication, functioning differently from their interactions in the waking world, yet still intertwined with the individual's psyche (Barrett, 2013). According to Frazer and Poe (2021), with the increasing secularisation of the world in the 19th century, psychologists shifted their focus towards comprehending the functioning of the sleeping brain. Early research delved into the

connection between waking experiences and dream content, analysing the abstract qualities of dream symbols. Dream studies during this time began applying statistical principles to quantify data gathered in dream journals (Frazer & Poe, 2021).

It was around this time that Sigmund Freud popularised the notion of dream work and interpreting dreams within psychotherapy (Frazer & Poe, 2021). Dream interpretation, also known as dream analysis, was thus born. During the Victorian era, physicians developed an interest in utilising dreams to gain insights into hysteria and other neuroses prevalent in their consulting rooms. Sigmund Freud, during this period, refined the notion of dreams as unconscious products, proposing more specifically that dreams occur when an ungratified instinct is activated during sleep (Barrett, 2013). Sigmund Freud along with Carl Jung and many other psychoanalytic psychologists of that time believed that dreams hold significance and working with dreams in psychology allowed one to access the unconscious mind (Beebe, Cambray & Kirsch, 2001; Hill & Knox, 2010; Pesant & Zadra, 2004).

This was the main thrust and importance of psychology during that era and working with dreams was a vital part of the psychotherapeutic process. Psychoanalysts believed that finding meaning from the dreams was vital to finding out what the dreamer was going through and in so doing guiding and aiding the psychoanalyst to the problems the dreamer may be facing (Wyatt et al., 2011). Barrett (2013) states that in the quest to unveil the symbolic meaning of dreams, Freud employed a technique where he instructed patients to freely associate with elements of the dream. Patients were encouraged to express everything that came to mind, even if it seemed 'silly,' irrelevant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable.

According to some researchers (Zhu, 2013; as cited in Pendaroski, 2021), Carl Jung made numerous original contributions to the interpretation of dreams, including compensation theory, symbolism, direct image association, the archetypal unconscious, individuation, two-mind confrontation, and the analysis of dreams on both subject and object levels. According to Kelland (2010), dream interpretation can take various approaches, and Jung had a distinct perspective on how to conduct dream analysis. Jung believed that dreams were a means of communicating information to individuals and that they could provide guidance for future behaviour.

Kelland further explains that Jung emphasised the profound connection of dreams to the past and their significant influence on conscious mental life. In his interactions with patients, Jung would explore multiple dreams, aiding individuals in comprehending the symbols and, more broadly, believed that dreams aimed to teach individuals to embrace their entirety and gain a deeper understanding of their personality (Kelland, 2010). Today, modern-day psychology still makes use of these methods or variations of them in psychoanalysis and other dream interpretation modalities, but with many adjustments and adaptations.

There is an overall consensus that the dreamer is the only one who can interpret dreams accurately (Yu, 2019). This is because modern dream interpretation techniques, models and approaches believe that the *dreamer* is the only one who has the authority to know what the dream means (Barret, 2013). According to Barret (2013), it was discovered that incorporating dream interpretation into psychotherapy enhances its effectiveness compared to general therapy that does not involve the analysis of dreams. Much of this work has been done using Clara Hill's Dream Model which is a highly systematic version that has been standardised to be replicable for research purposes (Barret, 2013; Hill & Knox, 2010). Over 25 studies using

this model have found, that patients rate dream sessions highly in terms of session quality, working alliance, gains from dream interpretation, and mastery-insight (Barret, 2013; Hill & Knox, 2010).

Research indicates positive outcomes from dream work, including gains in insight into specific dreams, clarification, and implementation of action ideas for particular dreams, changes in target problems identified in dreams, and improved attitudes toward dreams (Barrett, 2013; Hill & Knox, 2010). Barret (2013) states that patients who actively engage in the dream work process tend to benefit the most. In one study, patients highlighted the helpful aspects of dream interpretation, including associations, connections to waking life, catharsis, adopting an objective perspective, and collaborative work on their dreams with a therapist. The common thread across the literature in this sub-theme emphasises that, regardless of the dream work model, technique, or approach employed, the ultimate goal is typically to interpret the meaning of the dream. The following extracts from the data set highlight this point:

“The interpretation of dreams from that time has had an important place in psychoanalysis and all individual and group psychotherapies based on psychoanalytical theory. The reason for this, according to the psychoanalytical interpretation, is in the accessibility of the content of dreams for the conscious part of the personality.” (Restek-Petrović et al., 2013)

“It was my experience during the course on dreamwork that dreams may be interpreted in different ways and with different considerations as to diagnostic information based on one’s knowledge of symbols.” (Brewster, 2019)

As mentioned, the other prevalent aspect across the literature in regard to dream interpretation was that it is not the therapist's or dreamworker's role to interpret dreams, but instead, the client or dreamer is the one with the authority to do so. This is because the dreamer will always know best what the dream means and what message the dream is trying to convey. The therapist or dreamworker thus acts as a guide in the process of helping the dreamer discover the meaning of the dream. The following extracts highlight this point:

“The pioneers of dreamwork were valued for their special knowledge and ability to take the dream and the dreamer's associations, apply their theory, and offer the dreamer a valuable interpretation of their dream. Modern methods suggest we exercise ‘constant vigilance’ over the tendency to interpret our clients’ dreams, even when those hunches, projections, and experienced knowings turn out to be somewhat correct.” (Brewster, 2019)

“Aside from these exceptions, there is a strong agreement that even the most brilliant thoughts that may occur to the dreamworker are best kept to oneself, or at most offered tentatively, because it has more impact and better timing when the dreamer discovers the dream's message for themselves... There is a near consensus in this category against offering of any kind of definitive interpretation that does not come directly from the dreamer.” (Ellis, 2019)

“We strongly believe that it is better for dreamers to come to the meaning of dreams by using the emotions, thoughts, and memories related to the images explored in the previous stage, rather than having an interpretation “fed” to them by a dreamworker,

because then the meaning has personal salience and is something that they can integrate into their lives.” (Ellis, 2019)

“The dreamer must discover the meaning of the dream; therefore the gestalt therapist merely facilitates the process and aids in heightening awareness of the unique meanings of the dream images, and does not interpret the dream.” (Elliott, 2013)

“...waking self of the client, the therapist should also suspend all his thoughts, theories, beliefs about dreams, and never attempt to interpret the dream.” (Kara, & Özcan, 2019)

“Every interpretation by the therapist remains nothing more than a cognitive-intellectual game if the dreamer does not play an active role.” (Holzinger et al., 2021)

For this research, under this sub-theme of dream interpretation, were a number of focus areas which emerged from the data coding analysis process. The focus areas are “accuracy of dream interpretation”, “personality in dream interpretation”, and “consciousness and unconsciousness in dreams”. These are unpacked and expounded upon below.

4.8.1.1 Accuracy of Dream Interpretation. What was prevalent from the literature was that there was an emphasis placed on making sure that the interpretations of dreams are accurate (Hackett, 2021). In the context of evaluating the accuracy of dreams, modern approaches have embraced the idea of empowering the dreamer to be the primary interpreter of their own dreams (Yu, 2019). This allows the dreamer to be the one who comes to the conclusions of what the dream may mean, whether the interpretation resonates in accuracy with them or not since they would understand best what it could

mean. Hackett (2021, p. 261) states that an accurate interpretation of a dream is distinguished by its ability to produce a noticeable impact on the client and evoke an unmistakable "aha" response. This reaction is often the measure of accurate insight (an accurate interpretation) for the dreamer. The following extract consists of an example of the need for accuracy of dream work interpretations:

“Further, therapists felt that the only accurate interpretation was one in which the impact on the client was evident. Termed an aha response, this reaction was often the measure of accurate insight (an accurate interpretation) for the dreamer.” (Hackett, 2021)

4.8.1.2 Personality in Dream Interpretation. Another focus area under this sub-theme is that of “personality” when it comes to dream interpretation. The link between personality and dream work was prominent within the literature, and it was found across the literature that some dream work models believe that objects in dreams represent parts of the personality that need to be reconnected to the “whole self”. This theory is predominantly upheld by the psychoanalytic theorists (Holzinger et al., 2021; Kelland, 2010; Nwoye, 2017; Pendaroski, 2021; Roesler, 2020).

According to Kelland (2010), Jung believed that dreams were an important part of the development of the personality – a process he called individuation. Kelland further states that Jung believed dreams are trying to teach us to be more whole and to more fully understand parts of our personality. Jung saw dreams as the psyche’s attempt to communicate important things to the individual and contribute towards the individual of what was really going on (Kelland, 2010).

According to Nwoye (2017), Freud's position is that dreams constitute one dependable source of information regarding the dreamer's subjective reality, unconscious, and personality. According to Holzinger et al. (2021), in Gestalt therapy dreams hold existential messages for the dreamer to learn to understand. They further state that according to this approach, dreams are fragmented the same way personality is and many parts of the personality are neither interconnected nor do they work together. These parts are there but still need to come together to become functional wholes, to become a complete Gestalt in order for an individual to work effectively (Holzinger et al., 2021).

According to Roesler (2020), a specific contribution Jung made to the theory of dreaming is that, in dreams, parts of the personality which are not yet integrated or even being manifest through conflict (in the sense of complexes), can appear personified. Roesler (2020) states that Hall and Van de Castle (1966), who developed a coding system for the content of dreams, argued that it is possible to draw a personality profile based only on a person's dreams.

Moreover, there exists significant continuity in the themes within an individual's dreams over an extended period, indicating the influential role of personality in dreaming (Roesler, 2020). In a study examining the dreams of individuals with multiple personality disorder, Barrett (1996, as cited in Roesler, 2020) illustrated that the fragmented aspects of their personalities manifested in personified forms within their dreams. Dream content and recurrent patterns in dream series exhibit a robust correlation with the dreamer's personality structure and psychological challenges (Roesler, 2020). The following extracts from the data set include examples of dreams and personality:

“A specific contribution which Jung made to the theory of dreaming is that, in dreams, parts of the personality which are not yet integrated or even being manifest through conflict (in the sense of complexes), can appear personified.”
(Pendaroski, 2021)

“Indeed, Freud’s position is that dreams, at best, constitute one dependable source of information regarding the dreamer’s subjective reality, unconscious, and personality.” (Nwoye, 2017)

“As it is according to the Gestalt method in working with dreams, the tendency and goal in the line method of less resistance needs to be achieved with the analysis to bring together the alienated and unconscious parts to the integrity of the person in terms of all 12 essential elements, which means the demystification of symbolism through interpretation and connecting to aspects of the personality through the personal meaning that the dreamer attaches to the elements and thus contributes to the completion of the unfinished business (gestalts) and the change of the fixed ways of behavior, the so-called fixed gestalts.” (Pendaroski, 2021)

4.8.1.3 Consciousness and Unconsciousness in Dreams. Finally, when it comes to dream interpretation, another recurring focus area under this sub-theme was that of “consciousness and the unconscious”. This could be because a strong belief about dream work is that dreams originate within the unconscious mind, and that dreams are a way to access the unconscious.

This focus area under the sub-theme of dream interpretation was a prominent focus area across the literature when it comes to dream work. Within the context of dream work, the main distinction between consciousness and unconsciousness was what is known as waking life. It is believed that waking life is consciousness because the dreamer is awake and fully cognitively aware of all their faculties (Cherry, 2019). When the dreamer goes to sleep, during dreaming they are unconscious which includes a reservoir of feelings, thoughts, urges, and memories that are outside of one's conscious awareness and contain contents that are unacceptable or unpleasant, such as feelings of pain, anxiety, or conflict (Cherry, 2019).

Many articles also alluded to the fact that there is a connection between waking life themes and dreams (Carcione et al., 2021; Hill & Knox, 2010; Holzinger et al., 2021; Pesant & Zadra, 2004; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016; Sim, et al., 2021). Freud labelled dreams as, “the royal road to the unconscious” (Restek-Petrović et al., 2013, p. 300). He believed dreams to be a gateway to accessing the unconscious mind. Within the cognitive behavioural school of thought in psychology, the focus is more on the conscious mind over the unconscious and looks at waking life similarities (Hill & Knox, 2010; Sim, et al., 2021). Cognitive behavioural dream work believes that dreams exhibit what we go through in our waking lives' consciousness states and not within latent, unconscious material. The following extracts evidence this:

“In his well known work from 1900, Interpretation of Dreams, Freud conceptualised the creation of dreams as the process of digestion of excessively stimulating emotions, and he labelled dreams as the ‘royal road to the unconscious’” (Restek-Petrović et al., 2013)

“The dream that follows appeared to be a continuation of her unconscious thinking about her anxieties.” (Cartwright, 2019)

“However, in these approaches, dreams are still tried to be explained partly through the concept of unconscious.” (Kara & Özcan, 2019)

“It is common for dreams to present the opposite of the dreamer’s conscious attitude.” (Ellis, 2019)

“The idea that dreams compensate for a conscious attitude that is too heavily biased in one direction originates with Jung but has been picked up by other dreamwork methods (i.e., Cognitive–Behavioral and Dream to Freedom).” (Ellis, 2019)

“In this context, anticipatory dreams have as their main theme, the attempt to help the dreamer have a kind of symbolic/imaginative realization of what he or she consciously yearns for, and concretely seen fulfilled in other people’s lives...” (Nwoye, 2017)

“Even in classic psychoanalysis, where the unconscious occupies a central place (and dreams are a crucial tool for uncovering unconscious processes), therapists often had to fight for the validity of dream work as a means to support clients and lamented the lack of training available.” (Hackett, 2021)

“Practitioners of the Integral method suggest that entering a dream while awake is a step toward lucid dreaming while asleep: The re-entry allows the dreamer to explore the dream consciously, which creates an experience akin to lucid dreaming, where the dreamer becomes a witness and at the same time a participant in the creative expressions of the dream.” (Elliott, 2013)

“During the insight stage, therapists help clients construct new understandings of the dream as a whole. These new understandings are aimed to be on a deep, emotional level to help clients learn how their dreams relate to events in their waking lives, their past, their existential/spiritual concerns, or their unconscious concerns.” (Sim, et al., 2021)

“Working with dreams in child analysis is an area of potentially profound productivity that deepens the process in the context of working with transference, identifying conflicts and defenses, and helping to permit development to return to its anticipated pathway. Each of these factors is affected by the insight gained as a result of working with fantasies, dreams, and other mental constructs that were previously unconscious....” (Schmukler, 2016)

4.8.2 Emotions and Dreams

The next sub-theme identified under the overarching theme of Psychological approaches to dream work was “emotions and dreams”. When it comes to emotions and dreams, the literature indicates that emotions are an essential part of dream work. Holzinger et al., (2021) state that cognitivism adopted a neuropsychological position that dreams are an epiphenomenon of sleep due to the activation of different brain areas that in turn activate

areas of the cortex generating images or emotions. In other words, one cannot define dreaming without including emotions.

Freud, in his well-known work from 1900, *Interpretation of Dreams*, conceptualised the creation of dreams as the process of digestion of excessively stimulating emotions (Restek-Petrović et al., 2013). According to Ellis (2019), working with dreams can unearth emotions the dreamer was not previously unaware of. She further states that in order for the dreamer to come to the meaning of dreams, they need to use the emotions, thoughts, and memories related to the images explored in the dream. In other words, emotions in dream work can help dream work and the interpretation process. Dreams can be used to access manifest and latent emotional content (Restek-Petrović et al., 2013, as cited in Friedman, 2012).

According to Sim, et al. (2021), Hill's cognitive-experiential dream model includes a stage where the therapist guides the client through descriptions, immersion into emotions, associations, and making links to waking life for several key dream images. This leads to clients constructing deep and emotionally new understandings of the dream as a whole. Emotions in dream work can also alert clients to how their dreams relate to events in their waking lives, their past, or even their unconscious concerns (Sim, et al., 2021). According to Ellis (2019), all dream methods underscore the importance of working with the emotions related to dreams. Ellis (2019) further explains that some methods such as gestalt and the FiveStar dream method, emphasise that emotions are an element not to be overshadowed by the exploration of images.

From the literature, two ways of working with the emotions from dreams emerged which explore the emotions and reactions contained within the dream itself and explore emotions

that arise during the dreamwork psychotherapeutic session (Ellis, 2019). Looking at another example from the literature on dream work and emotions, Ellis (2019) states that the dreamer may have had a dream about a situation that would normally evoke strong feelings in waking life, yet in the dream, there would be a notable lack of emotion to the situation. This dream or situation can then be unpacked in psychotherapy and help the dreamer realise the underlying issues (Ellis, 2019).

Ellis (2019) further states that emotional intensity from dreams can also guide the dream worker's choice of focus during the dream work session, and, as quoted in Hoss and Hoss (2016, p. 266), "The most emotionally charged issue needs focus, because it might be at the core of the symptomatic response". Dream workers can point out feelings and emotions from the dream that surprise the dreamer, or dreams themselves can bring up repressed emotional issues in need of attention (Ellis, 2019). Finally, it is also important to note that negative emotions displayed by clients indicates to therapists that something is going on with the client that may need to be attended to in psychotherapy (Swan & Schottelkorb, 2013). In other words, emotions displayed in dreams are indicators to therapists as to the most pressing issues clients need to deal with.

Schubert and Punamäki (2016) suggest that after experiencing trauma, dreams initially encompass the traumatic event itself, which later transforms into dreams featuring a central image evoking intense emotions of terror or fear. Subsequently, these dreams progress to contextualise feelings of guilt or shame and eventually incorporate grief or sorrow. In the aftermath of trauma, individuals may prefer working with dreams over more direct therapeutic approaches, perceiving dream material as less threatening than revisiting waking life experiences (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016). Berne (1957, as cited in Tangolo, 2015)

proposed that dreams can contribute to the healing of the mind following emotional wounds and distressing experiences. Working with clients' dreams not only serves diagnostic purposes but also provides a means for healing, offering clients an opportunity to observe their inner processes and develop a tool for self-healing (Tangolo, 2015).

Across the literature it was found that emotions play an important role in dreams in that dreaming is an emotional experience which affects clients. Dreams can make a person wake up feeling happy, frightened, joyful or stressed. Emotional responses from dreams are also a focus or indication point for therapists to work with, alerting them to an unconscious issue a dreamer may be struggling with. The following extract demonstrates the important role emotions have in dreams:

“Virtually all dream methods underscore the importance of working with the emotions related to dreams. Some methods, notably Gestalt and FiveStar, emphasize that emotions are an element not to be overshadowed by exploration of images. Two ways of working with dream emotion emerged: exploring the emotions and reactions contained within the dream itself and exploring emotions that arise during the dreamwork. These can differ; for example, in dreams, there can be a curious lack of emotion in a situation that would normally evoke strong feeling. Emotional intensity can also guide the dreamworker’s choice of focus.” (Ellis, 2019)

4.8.3 Symbolism and Imagery in Approaching Dream Work

The sub-theme of symbolism and imagery in approaching dream work appeared frequently throughout the literature analysis stage. This sub-theme predominantly relates to the

psychoanalytic approaches to dreams. Within this approach, it is believed that dreams contain symbols that need to be decoded and deciphered in order to understand the dream's true meaning (Pendaroski, 2021; Restek-Petrović et al., 2013). According to Wyatt et al. (2011), Sigmund Freud believed that images in dreams were symbolic of unconscious underlying issues and every symbol represented something.

In Freudian dream analysis, dreams have both manifest content (what is directly experienced in the dream) and latent content (the hidden, symbolic meaning of the dream) (Ventura, 2016). The manifest content is a disguise for the latent content, which represents unconscious desires, fears, and conflicts (Solms, 2000). Dream symbols, in this view, are representations of these hidden psychological elements. According to Wyatt et al. (2011), dream symbolism is one of the reasons why Jung parted ways with Freud in that Jung felt that there was no reason to believe that the unconscious does not say what it means.

Contrary to Freud's perspective, which considered many dream symbols as veiled representations of unacceptable unconscious impulses, Jung states that some dream symbols are transparent and can be interpreted directly if one is willing to listen to their message (Jung, 1969). Jung introduced the concept of archetypes, suggesting that the human mind harbours universal symbols and metaphors. These archetypes can be consciously expressed, such as in spoken language, but they can also emerge unconsciously and spontaneously (Bradshaw & Storm, 2013).

Jung proposed that dreams often contain archetypal symbols that are universal and deeply rooted in the collective unconscious. These symbols, such as the hero, the mother, or the shadow, carry specific meanings and can help individuals better understand their own

psyches and the challenges they face (Caperton, 2012). Jung (1969) emphasises that all manifestations of the unconscious are symbolic and can be interpreted as guiding messages conveyed through dreams. He states that symbols in dreams refer to names, terms, or images familiar in everyday life but hold additional connotations beyond their conventional meanings. Jung suggests that symbols are instrumental in revealing feelings or preferences of which individuals may be unaware, indicating something vague, partially unknown, or concealed. Furthermore, he states that various symbols can essentially be equivalent, reflecting the same underlying reality, and that dream symbols act as messengers from the unconscious to the rational mind (Jung, 1969).

Dreams can also contain personal symbols that are unique to an individual's experiences and memories (Noronha, 2014; Pendaroski & Nikolovska, 2017; Wyatt et al., 2011). These symbols may be associated with specific events, people, or emotions in the dreamer's life. Interpreting personal symbols can help individuals gain insights into their personal history and emotions and assist in the dream work process (Ellis, 2019). Dreams also often use metaphor and symbolism to represent complex ideas or emotions. For example, being chased in a dream may symbolise feeling pursued or threatened in waking life, or flying in a dream might represent a desire for freedom or escape from constraints (Solms, 2000).

Some people report solving problems or generating creative ideas in their dreams. Symbols and metaphors in dreams can provide new perspectives and insights that lead to innovative solutions or artistic inspiration (Noronha, 2014). In general, symbols or symbolism are an essential part of the dreaming process as people dream in images. Freud and Jung believed that sometimes someone may dream of an object or a particular figure in their dream which may represent something or someone else. It is believed that these symbols

tend to hide the true meaning of dreams and are the keys to interpreting the dreams of the dreamer. The following extracts speak to this:

“This is something we expect since the absurdity, meaninglessness or symbolism are the judgments of waking self not the dream self’s.” (Kara, & Özcan, 2019)

“It is interesting to see that the basic acceptances of TIDA [Traditional Interpretive Dream Approach] scientifically continue in Psychoanalytic Dream Theory (PDT). Just as TIDA, PDT also says that dreams come from the outside of personal consciousness, they have a hidden and implicit meaning which that is covered by symbols.” (Kara, & Özcan, 2019)

“When reviewing questions in light of the dream, I wonder if after separately going deeper into the image or symbol and finding meaning, two different cultures would have the same interpretation.” (Brewster, 2019)

“The dreamer selects images and symbols appropriate to the dreamer’s subjective perception that are not bound by the constraints of the logic of waking thought and common sense.” (Noronha, 2014)

“In order to deepen the interpretation of dreams, there is an indication for inclusion of as many symbols as possible because what may appear meaningful based on one interpretation may actually prove to be limiting because of a lack of knowledge of symbols from a particular culture. Symbols are not always meaningful for everyone in the same way.” (Brewster, 2019)

4.8.4 Cognitive Behavioural Approaches to Dream Work

The next sub-theme under the overarching theme Psychological approaches to dream work is cognitive behavioural approaches to dream work. Within the literature, this was a prevalent topic. Unlike some of the psychoanalytic techniques of dream work, this approach focuses on how dreams reflect waking life. Carcione et al. (2021) highlight that within this approach to dream work, a central feature is the abandonment of exploring the latent meaning of dreams. Instead, dreams are considered in continuity with waking life. In other words, dreams are seen as reflecting a client's perspective on self, the world, and the future, and they are subject to the same cognitive biases as the waking state (Carcione et al., 2021).

Aaron Beck, transitioning from psychoanalysis, introduced a departure from traditional psychoanalytic dream work. He developed a cognitive theory of dreams, proposing that dreams mirror an individual's waking thoughts and are influenced by waking cognitions (Pesant & Zadra, 2004). Beck recognised various functions of dreams, including clarifying personal problems and reflecting dysfunctional attitudes. Working with dreams, according to Beck, can help identify cognitive distortions, schemas, and maladaptive thought patterns. In this cognitive therapy perspective, dreams are considered to reflect clients' schemas and are susceptible to the same cognitive distortions present in waking states (Pesant & Zadra, 2004).

More recently, other cognitive therapists have developed models for using dreams in therapy (Carona & Fonseca, 2022; Hill & Knox, 2010; Skrzypińska, & Szmigielska, 2018). One such popular method for working with nightmares and PTSD patients is the Imagery Rehearsal Therapy (IRT) technique intervention. IRT, a brief cognitive-behavioural technique

intervention, was first developed in 1978 by psychiatrist Isaac Marks in relation to treating patients suffering from nightmares (Krakow & Zadra, 2006; Marks, 1978; Simard & Nielsen, 2009). Within sleep medicine, there has been extensive and valuable work on the development and documentation of the efficacy of IRT, making it one of the most studied and empirically supported interventions in psychotherapeutics that specifically targets nightmares and PTSD sleep disorders.

In the cognitive therapy approach, particularly in dealing with persistent nightmares, they are regarded as learned habits. Patients are taught positive imagery techniques and are guided in changing the content of their nightmares. Through practice, individuals work on altering the scenarios within their nightmares, aiming to modify the learned and distressing patterns associated with recurrent nightmares (Eiser, 2007). This approach lets the client recount their nightmare while awake so that they can recreate a 'happier' alternative ending, which is mentally rehearsed using this new ending every day with the idea that the nightmare will eventually change in their sleep. This dream work technique is a good example of how dreams are worked with within a cognitive behavioural approach framework.

From the data collection stage, a most recent example of a cognitive behavioural dream work approach which emerged was the *Description, Memory Sources, and Reformation (DMR) model*. The DMR model is a cognitive dream work model proposed by Montangero (2009) and is based on the patient's insight and interpretative abilities, rather than the therapist's ones (Carcione et al., 2021).

In the cognitive therapy approach described by Carcione et al. (2021), the dream work procedure involves three stages. In the first stage, called the *Description stage*, the therapist

asks the patient to describe the dream. The second stage, termed the *Memory Sources stage*, involves recognising which memories have influenced or spilled over into the dream. Finally, in the third stage, known as the *Reformulation stage*, the patient is asked to present the dream again. However, in this stage, the emphasis is on reconnecting broader and more general meanings identified in the second stage. These meanings can then be applied to the dreamer's aspirations or concerns. Unlike some psychoanalytic techniques, cognitive therapy, in this context, focuses on understanding how dreams reflect waking life (Carcione et al., 2021).

4.8.4.1 Description, Memory Sources, and Reformation Model. Montangero's (2009)

Dream Interpretation Model (DMR) is structured and systematic, relying on the patient's insight and interpretative abilities. The patient's cues become the foundation for dream interpretation. This model aligns with cognitive-behavioural approaches to dream work. This model is also situated under cognitive behavioural approaches to dream work and consists of the following practical steps:

“The procedure includes three steps, after which the patient will be asked for an interpretation: i) Description, in which the therapist asks the patient to describe the dream, dwelling on every detail that appeared in the dream scenario, the sequence of events thought or emotions felt. Techniques of cognitive-behavioural therapy as ABC can also be used... The patient should describe what he/she visualized, felt, or thought during each dream event, detailing the setting, action or state, characters, and objects. The therapist notes each episode in chronological order as reported by the subject, each change of scenario or situation the patient described. ii) Memory Sources. Based on the assumption that the dream partly takes its cue from autobiographical memory, at this stage it is necessary to recognize which memories

have spilled over into the dream.... iii) Reformulation. This is the ultimate stage, in which the dream is asked to be presented again, not as a specific and concrete event, but by reconnecting the broader and more general meanings, found in the second stage, that could later be applied to the dreamer's aspirations or concerns."

(Holzinger et al., 2021)

4.8.5 Depth Psychology and its Approaches to Dream Work

The next sub-theme identified across the literature was that of depth psychology and its approaches to dream work. According to Diamond (2021), depth psychology, also known as psychoanalytic psychology, is a term broadly used to describe approaches to therapy that are open to the exploration of the subtle, unconscious, and transpersonal aspects of human experience. He further states that the key theorists from this approach are Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Alfred Adler.

Sigmund Freud's dream theory, as outlined by Solms (2000), states that dreams are attempts to fulfil unfulfilled wishes that emerge during sleep, often rooted in sexual urges. Freud collected dreamers' associations to individual elements of their dreams and inferred implicit, underlying meanings to reveal latent thoughts. In Freudian dream theory, these latent thoughts were believed to be wishful, enabling Freud to make inferences about how unconscious wishes might be transformed into conscious dreams. The process involved analysing the dreamer's associations to various dream elements and interpreting the symbolic content to unveil hidden desires and conflicts residing in the unconscious mind.

This intervening process was known as dream-work, “which involved mechanisms such as ‘displacement’ (substituting representational elements for one another, e.g. your father is represented as a policeman), ‘condensation’ (combining multiple elements into composite hybrids, e.g. ambition, excitement and anxiety are all represented by a single image of an ascending escalator) and ‘regression’ (converting thoughts into perceptions, e.g. a person’s importance is represented by their size)” (Solms, 2000, p. 618).

According to Hill and Knox (2010), with Freud and Jung’s psychoanalytic approach to working with dreams within psychotherapy, several new psychoanalytic models for understanding dreams have been proposed in the last 30 years. They maintain that there has been a divergence from the earlier Freudian tradition, which proposes that the manifest content of dreams reflects the dreamer’s waking life rather than distortions from the unconscious. Alternatively, modern Jungian authors have maintained much of Jung’s original theory, but provide more explicit guidelines for how to work with dreams in therapy (Hill & Knox, 2010).

Adler accepted the following framework that had been set out by Freud (Shulman, 1973, as cited in Bird, 2005), namely that (a) the emotional attitudes in a dream are more indicative of its meaning than verbal elements, (b) there is an important distinction between what appears on the surface of a dream and all the hidden aspects which may be revealed, at least in part, through interpretative work, such as the thoughts, memories, and emotional attitudes of the dreamer, (c) dreams have similar dynamics to daydreams, and (d) verbal association is relevant because of the closeness of dream interpretation to linguistic expression.

Alfred Adler introduced a unique perspective to dream interpretation, emphasising the importance of understanding dreams within the context of the dreamer's lifestyle. According to Bird (2005), Adler believed that dreams should be analysed in relation to the dreamer's private logic, which dominates their lifestyle and is expressed through the emotions evoked in dreams. Adler proposed that dreamers simplify their problems and choose images and symbols that align with their subjective perceptions. In this view, the fiction created in dreams is not bound by the constraints of waking logic and common sense. Adlerian dream work techniques are considered purposeful elements of the dreamer's life, created independently and providing genuine insight into aspects of their awareness that might otherwise remain undiscovered.

From the literature on current approaches to dream work globally and locally, within the area of depth psychology dream work approaches, the two depth psychology approaches that will be used to demonstrate how dreams are worked with practically will be the Jungian and Adlerian approaches to dreams. The inclusion and exclusion criterion of data collection focusing on the period of 2011-2021 highlighted these two depth psychology approaches. Although Freudian dream work is still prevalent, based on the data set of this research, there were no current (2011-2021) Freudian depth psychology articles found within the data set.

4.8.5.1 Jungian Approaches to Dreams. Carl Jung developed a theory of working with dreams which has undergone further development over the years. Looking at the classical Jungian dream work steps and techniques synthesised by Mattoon (1978, as cited in Caperton, 2012), step one, is for the dreamer to recall their dream, giving details about who is in the dream, where it happened, the development of the plot, and if something happens decisively or a change of some kind occurs. The next step involves establishing

the context of the dream which includes associations, explanations, and amplifications of the dream images, including the personal, cultural, and archetypal (i.e., mythical, religious, literary) levels, and to characterise the images as either objective or subjective, or both.

The final step of this framework involves considering what compensatory meaning or message the dream may be revealing. This is achieved by considering the problem or complex the dream seems to point to, what the conscious situation the dreamer is faced with, and whether the dream seems to require a reductive or constructive characterisation (Hall, 1983; Mattoon, 1978, as cited in Caperton, 2012).

A particular example of a modern Jungian dream work approach which emerged from the data collection stage was found in an article by Wyatt et al. (2011) on “*A Jungian approach to dreams reported by soldiers in a modern combat zone*”. Although this article is based on applying Jungian dream work methods and techniques to working with dreams within the context of dreams reported by soldiers who have faced modern combat and thus experienced PTSD, the steps outlined in this particular article are still very much in line with classical Jungian dream work techniques and steps outlined in (Mattoon, 1978, as cited in Caperton, 2012). Thus, the essence of Jungian’s dream work is not lost within this context of soldiers with PTSD since the goal of Jungian dream work is to explore and interpret the symbols, archetypes, and unconscious elements within dreams to gain insight into one's psyche and promote personal growth and self-awareness, as well as relate the dream symbols to problem areas in the dreamer’s life and resolve these through therapeutic intervention.

Wyatt et al. (2011) outlines the following steps on Jungian dream work within this context: For step one, the interpretation of dream characters should be considered as a blend of subjective symbols and complexes, especially in the context of the dreamer's current circumstances, unless the character is a well-known individual. In the case of familiar figures, it's reasonable to assume that the image is as much about the person as it is an intrapsychic element. Step two involves the evaluation of dream settings. Unfamiliar settings are seen as symbols of the dreamer's current psychological state, while more familiar settings or combinations are considered as indications of specific locations. Step three considers any particularly uncanny and unfamiliar characters or settings significantly removed from personal history or experience, to be archetypal or godlike images. Step 4 looks at dream symbols. These symbols, whether characters or not, should be understood not only in terms of their explicit imagery but also their contextual relevance. Additionally, symbols should be assessed for their metaphorical qualities.

For step five, when interpreting dream images, it is crucial to stick to the specific imagery and avoid prematurely assigning meaning. Categorising images as anima or shadow should be avoided unless it genuinely contributes to the interpretation. When such categorisation is necessary, it should be justified on a case-by-case basis; otherwise, the therapist should maintain a neutral stance on the interpretation of more complex images. For step six, Jung's method, as outlined in his seminars, regards dreams not as prescriptive or teleological but as symbolic expressions of the dreamer's current psychological state within the context of archetypal and timeless patterns rooted in primordial instincts. This perspective applies even when working with soldiers who have experienced modern combat and developed PTSD (Wyatt et al., 2011).

In conclusion, Carl Jung's theory of working with dreams appears to have withstood the test of time and has also evolved to address modern challenges, as exemplified by the application of Jungian dream work in the context of PTSD among soldiers. The steps and techniques synthesised by Mattoon (1978, as cited in Caperton, 2012) and further elaborated upon by Wyatt et al. demonstrate the continued relevance of Jungian dream work.

4.8.5.2 Adlerian Dream Work. Adlerian dream work, another example of a depth psychology approach that was included in the data set will now be presented. In general, classical Adlerian dream work theory as explained by Bird (2005), involves the belief that dreams are a purposeful part of a person's life, serving as a means to continue living with one's existing beliefs and private logic. Adler built upon Freud's framework, emphasising the significance of emotions in dream interpretation and the need to distinguish between surface dream content and hidden aspects related to thoughts, memories, and emotional attitudes (Shulman, 1973, as cited in Bird, 2005).

Dreams, according to Adler, reflect the dreamer's lifestyle and private logic, offering solutions consistent with their worldview. This framework emphasised several key points. Firstly, it underscored that the emotional attitudes embedded within a dream provide more substantial insights into its meaning than its verbal elements. Secondly, it highlighted the significant differentiation between the superficial content of a dream and the concealed layers that can be unravelled, at least partially, through interpretative efforts, such as delving into the dreamer's thoughts, memories, and emotional attitudes. Thirdly, it recognised that dreams share analogous dynamics with daydreams. Lastly, it stressed the

relevance of verbal association in dream interpretation due to the proximity of dream analysis to linguistic expression (Shulman, 1973, as cited in Bird, 2005).

Adler suggested that dreamers simplify their problems and select images and symbols appropriate to their subjective perception, and the fiction they have created is not bound by constraints of the logic of waking thought and common sense (Mosak & Maniacci, 1999, as cited in Bird, 2005). In general, the primary goal of Adlerian dream work is to use dream analysis as a means of gaining insight into an individual's subjective experiences and understanding how their dreams relate to their waking life and psychological well-being.

For this research, the article included in the data set which presents practical steps for conducting Adlerian dream work is the article by Noronha (2014), “*Dream Work in Grief Therapy*”. In this work, the author discusses how working with dreams using the Adlerian dream work approach is useful with clients experience grief and loss. The article consists of a case report demonstrating how Adlerian dream analysis was used with a client. From the literature searches, it was clear that finding Adlerian dream work articles that specifically detail the practical step-by-step breakdown process of Adlerian dream work techniques was difficult and hard to come by. The resources that were found discuss Adlerian therapy more broadly, and while they do touch on the use of dreams in this therapeutic approach, they do not provide a detailed, step-by-step guide to Adlerian dream work. This could be because Adlerian therapy is a complex and nuanced field, and its application can vary widely depending on the individual and the therapist.

So, in general, it would seem that understanding the nuances and theoretical framework of classical Adlerian dream work would allow one to apply this technique across various contexts, settings and situations requiring this dream work approach. Based on this, the article by Noronha (2014) on dream work in grief therapy was the best available source that practically laid out the steps within a case study basis. Although the focus of Noronha's (2014) study is on clients experiencing grief and loss, the nuances, focuses, and techniques of Adlerian dream work approach are still applied within this context.

From the dream work case study, Noronha (2014) explains that the Adlerian focus is on making a connection between an individual's lifestyle and present problems as a first step. In other words, the individual only dreams of solutions that correspond to their lifestyle, and so the dream worker should look out for these. Noronha (2014) further explains that through their dreams, the dreamer seeks guidance and an 'easy' solution for a problem in their life while asleep. Another important aspect to note during Adlerian dream work is that only the dreamer can confidently say what meaning their dream may hold. If both therapist and client do not agree with the interpretation, then the therapist is usually wrong, as the reflections come from the private logic of the dreamer (Noronha, 2014).

According to Bird (2005, as cited in Noronha, 2014), there are two tasks to be addressed when working with dreams: help the dreamer understand their current situation as shown in the dream, and secondly, address the issue of whether the dreamer wishes to consider making changes and whether they are ready to do so, and then examine the choices of practical actions available. Finally, the dreamer would then select images and symbols appropriate to the dreamer's subjective perception that are not bound by the constraints of the logic of waking thought and common sense (Noronha, 2014). Adler

assumed that dreams help the individual prepare their future attitudes with respect to concerns in waking life and that the therapeutic action first starts with the desire to understand the meaning of the dreams and the consequences of behaviour (Noronha, 2014). The following except from the case study expounds more on this:

“Working on her dreams: The dream was broken up into its different components. Each component were taken and discussed with regard to their impact on the clients’ life-style. Every [dream] component in the room — the bed, the color of the room and persons in the room, was talked about and their relation to life-style was discussed. The client was asked to try and make the person move in bed and see what happened to her. The significance of being near the bed and being near the door was discussed.”
(Noronha, 2014)

Through this dream technique, it is believed that the client would be able to, through dream work, make waking-life choices which reflect solutions presented in their dreams. Thus, Adlerian dream work can be applied to help clients who are experiencing problems with plausible solutions provided to them by their dreams.

4.8.6 Gestalt Approach to Working with Dreams

From the literature search and data analysis, another prominent sub-theme under Psychological approaches that emerged was that of Gestalt dream work. Gestalt therapy in general was founded by Frederick “Fritz” Perls in 1940’s as an experiential and humanistic approach to psychotherapy that teaches the importance of self-awareness through feeling, perceiving and being actively present in the environment, by reorganisation of former

attitudes and through the creation of new ones (Elliott, 2013; Yontef & Jacobs, 1989).

According to Elliott (2013), Gestalt therapy is different from many other orientations of psychotherapy in that the primary focus is the client's ability to self-regulate in response to their current environment.

In essence, Gestalt therapists thrive on the assumption that change will happen naturally throughout the therapeutic process (Elliott, 2013). Gestalt therapy focuses on the present and works with the situation that the client is experiencing in the "here and now" of therapy (Corey, 2009, as cited in Elliott, 2013). Like Jung, Perls held a strong respect for the dream itself (Bate & Higgins, 1994; Marcus, 1980, as cited in Cain, 2013). From a Gestalt perspective dreams are regarded as exemplary examples of our natural creativity (Perls, 1972b, as cited in Cain, 2013), which at one extreme can be viewed in terms of their pure aesthetic value, as an image commensurate with other art forms (Sichera, 2003, as cited in Cain, 2013).

In Gestalt dream work, the emphasis is on connecting the verbal and pre-verbal aspects of our existence (Perls et al., 1994, as cited in Cain, 2013). Dreams in Gestalt Therapy are seen as existential messages and a form of creative expression, with each dream representing an idiom of numerous associations, conflicts, and contradictions within an individual. According to Fantz and Roberts (1998, as cited in Elliott, 2013), dreams express gestalts, often encompassing multiple elements simultaneously. Unfinished parts of a gestalt may manifest in a dream as a split, tension, or conflict.

Recurring dreams are particularly meaningful from a gestalt perspective. The repetition signifies that a gestalt has not been closed, and recurring dreams often represent persistent

attempts to grapple with unresolved life problems (Elliott, 2013). The recurring nature of these dreams allows for the stabilisation of avoidances into a recurring story or variation on a particular theme, providing insight into persistent issues in the dreamer's life.

Gestalt therapists aim to assist clients in experiencing repressed, ambivalent, and unpleasant aspects of themselves to accept and integrate them into their whole self (Holzinger et al., 2021). Dream work plays a role in this process, as messages from the unconscious, often stuck in dreams, can be revealed through specific gestalt-therapy methods. The goal is to uncover and integrate these elements for personal growth and self-awareness.

From the literature included in the data set of this thesis, the gestalt dream work method of *DreamSenseMemory* (DSM) technique, which is based on neurological findings on how the senses at play influence memory processing, was identified (Holzinger, et al., 2021).

4.8.6.1 DreamSenseMemory (DSM) Model. Holzinger, et al. (2021) lay out the steps of the DMS model which starts with the therapist asking the dreamer to choose a recent dream, and tell it in the present tense in as much detail as possible. Next, the dreamer is asked to enter the dream again by focusing on sensual impressions of elements, mentioning potential memories that come to mind while doing so the therapist is under the impression that they are able grasp the moving pictures of the dream themselves.

According to Holzinger, et al. (2021), while talking about the elements, the therapist asks the dreamer questions about how it felt to do certain things in the dream, and also asks the dreamer to do so while focusing on bodily sensations they may experience. After

telling the dream several times and working with it according to the DSM procedures, which include making it accessible through the memory of the senses, focusing on it consciously, and putting it in words, there is then a transfer of the change that had started in the dream to waking life.

The DSM technique incorporates many of the gestalt dream work therapy principles particularly in its emphasis on awareness, sensory experiences, and making connections between the dream and waking life. In gestalt therapy, there is a strong emphasis on being in the present moment and becoming fully aware of one's thoughts, feelings, and sensations. The DSM technique asks the dreamer to choose a recent dream and tell it in the present tense, focusing on sensory impressions and memories. This process encourages the dreamer to be present and mindful, which is a key aspect of gestalt therapy.

The DSM technique also involves the dreamer entering the dream again by focusing on sensory impressions and bodily sensations. This aligns with the gestalt therapy principle of paying attention to sensory experiences and how they relate to emotions and thoughts. Gestalt therapy also often incorporates an awareness of bodily sensations as a way to gain insight into one's emotional experiences. The DSM technique includes questions about how it felt to do certain things in the dream and encourages the dreamer to display bodily sensations. This focus on bodily sensations is in line with the gestalt therapy idea of somatic awareness.

Finally, in gestalt therapy, the goal is to help individuals integrate different aspects of themselves and their experiences. The DSM technique aims to transfer changes that

started in the dream to waking life, which is parallel to the gestalt therapy goal of integrating insights from dream experiences into one's conscious awareness and everyday life. In these ways, the DSM technique is a representative example of a gestalt dream work technique.

4.8.7 Integrative Approaches to Dream Work in Psychology

This sub-theme deals with dream work models and approaches which have integrated several theoretical orientations (humanistic/experiential, gestalt, psychoanalytic, cognitive, and behavioural theories), and developed a new model/approach to dream work. When it comes to this sub-theme under psychological approaches to dream work, there are a number of dream work techniques, methods and models which have been gleaned from the classical approaches. These dream work approaches appear to have taken what ‘works well’ when it comes to dream work, what is common across all dream work approaches and models, and what has proven to produce beneficial results and put together various dream work approaches which is categorised as integrative approaches to dream work here.

Lewis & Krippner’s (2016) book has been invaluable in this endeavour of synthesising various integrative dream work approaches. They have taken 14 different approaches and techniques of dream work and synthesised what was common and different and unique across all of them, providing a broad overview of the current dream work approaches across the board. For this research, the three integrative dream work approaches that emerged from the data collection were the *Line of the least resistance method*, *The Hill Cognitive-Experiential Model of Dream Interpretation*, and *Group dream work*. These are discussed in more depth below, with focus on their practical application.

4.8.7.1 The Line of the Least Resistance Dream Work Method. This method arose out of a desire to find common ground between psychoanalytical theory of dreaming and neurocognitive theories of sleep and dreams. According to Pendaroski (2021), the term ‘the line of less resistance’ was coined from a famous proverb, used for people who want to reach a goal easily – in other words, when it comes to dream work, the dream worker would take the line of least resistance.

He further states that this method also contains techniques, elements and concepts from other methods of working with dreams such as Jung’s analytical method, the gestalt method, the Adler method, system-dynamic methods and techniques in working with dreams, as well as elements of spiritual approaches in working with dreams.

As part of this approaches practical steps, the authors (Pendaroski & Nikolovska, 2017; Pendaroski, 2021) have created a worksheet the dream worker and dreamer can go through to help with the process of interpreting the meaning of the dream. The dream worker would go through the worksheet with the dreamer and ask the following questions to the dreamer: 1. What is the storyline of the dream? 2. Which dominant themes appear in the dream? 3. Which physically-organismic aspects are present in the dream, and how is it presented? 4. Emotional context: how is the emotional tone and feelings in the dream? 5. What are the dream meanings from an intellectual perspective? 6. What are the hidden needs, motives and wishes from the dream? 7. Where and when did the dream take place? 8. Who and Whom are in the dream? 9. What are the relations between the characters? 10. Are there archetypal symbols in the narrative? 11. Are there spiritual elements in the dream?

According to Pendaroski & Nikolovska (2017), all of the above-mentioned facts and elaborations, regarding the narration in the dream can be used as an instrument for practical work on dreams, incorporating the *Line of Least Resistance Method*, either in the form of individual work with the dreamer, or as part of a group analysis of dreams. It can also be used as a guide for self-evaluation and interpretation of the personal meanings of the narrative of the dream, from the side of the subject itself.

4.8.7.2 The Hill Cognitive-Experiential Model of Dream Interpretation. This integrative model, developed in 1996 by Carla Hill, is the only dream work model with extensive empirical evidence of effectiveness (Caperton, 2012; Kline & Hill, 2014; Sim, et al., 2021). The model was evolved from and informed by a number of different theoretical orientations, namely psychoanalytic, existential-phenomenological, gestalt, and behavioural approaches (Caperton, 2012; Hill & Knox, 2010).

Her model is based on the following assumptions, “(1) dreams are a continuation of waking thought without immediate input from the external world; (2) dreams’ meaning is personal, and thus standard symbols or dream dictionaries are likely not useful; (3) working with dreams requires therapist and client collaboration; (4) dreams are useful for helping people understand themselves more deeply; (5) dreams consist of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components; and (6) therapists must have sound basic helping skills before they can effectively apply the dream model” (Hill & Knox, 2010, pp. 5-6).

Hill's framework for dream work incorporates a blend of experiential, psychoanalytic, Gestalt, and behavioural approaches, organised into three distinct phases: exploration,

insight, and action (Sim et al., 2021). In the exploration phase, the therapist assists the client in delving into detailed descriptions, immersing in emotions, drawing associations, and establishing connections between key dream images and real-life experiences. Moving to the insight stage, therapists aid clients in constructing fresh perspectives and comprehensive understandings of the entire dream. The final action stage involves collaborative efforts between therapists and clients to explore practical ways for the client to implement changes in their waking life based on the insights gained during the exploration and insight stages (Sim et al., 2021). The following extract unpacks the stages according to Sim et al. (2021):

“This integrative cognitive-experiential model includes exploration, insight, and action stages. In the exploration stage, the therapist guides the client through descriptions, immersion into emotions, associations, and making links to waking life for several key images. During the insight stage, therapists help clients construct new understandings of the dream as a whole. These new understandings are aimed to be on a deep, emotional level to help clients learn how their dreams relate to events in their waking lives, their past, their existential/spiritual concerns, or their unconscious concerns. In the action stage, therapists and clients work collaboratively to explore how the client can make changes in their waking life based on insights generated in the exploration and insight stages.” (Sim, et al., 2021)

4.8.7.3 Group Dream Work. As a final example of an integrative approach to dream work in psychology, group dream work makes use of a number of techniques, methods and principles gleaned from other dream work approaches. Stimson (2013) states that beyond theories centred on individual dream work, there is an increasing fascination with

incorporating dreams into group settings. He asserts that engaging with dreams within a group context serves to invigorate and broaden the dreamer's personal associations and reflections. Various forms of group dream work exist, involving the sharing of dreams within the group, subsequent discussions, returning insights to the dreamer, and fostering interactive discussions (Stimson, 2013).

According to Ezhumalai, Muralidhar, Dhanasekarapandian, and Nikketha (2018), group work in general, within the context of psychotherapy is said to have originated from Joseph Hersey Pratt, known as the father of Group therapy. They state that group therapy is a form of treatment in which emotionally distressed persons are placed in a group, guided by one or more therapists for the purpose of helping individuals to bring a change in them. According to Ezhumalai et al. (2018), they note that Pratt, while working with patients in a group setting, observed the influence of this approach on their emotional well-being. He reported highly positive outcomes from this innovative form of treatment. Pratt's work is recognised as the initial formally organised therapeutic group in literature (Ezhumalai et al., 2018).

Group dream work leads to personal growth and healing as dream content is geared towards problem-solving, together with intrapersonal processes or the interpersonal interactions among groups, characteristic of group therapy more generally (Makris, 2013). Group dream work, therefore, is a practice where individuals come together in a group setting to explore and interpret their dreams collectively. According to Hillman (1990, as cited in Hill & Knox, 2010), there has been a growing interest in groups formed for the purpose of sharing and understanding dreams.

While there are several contemporary approaches to group dream work which has been developed and refined by various individuals and schools of thought over time, Hill and Knox (2010), state that the major model of group dream work was developed by Montague Ullman (1987, Ullman & Zimmerman, 2017), whose approach emphasises safety and discovery in group dream work. From the data searches, this research has included an article expounding on Ullman's group dream work technique from a practical standpoint.

The practical application of this technique involves several sequential steps, as outlined by Blencher (2011). According to Blencher, the dream group initiation begins with a volunteer sharing their dream with the group, and members of the group transcribing the dream on paper. During this initial stage, only the dreamer is allowed to speak, and any comments or questions from group members regarding the dream text are deferred until later stages.

Moving to the second stage, group members can pose questions to the dreamer, seeking clarification on the explicit content of the dream. Subsequently, with the dreamer's consent, the dream is opened up to the entire group. In this phase, group members associate with the dream as if it were their own, prefacing their comments with the phrase 'If it were my dream...'. While expressing their thoughts, participants must adhere to speaking in the first person and avoid direct eye contact with the dreamer.

Blencher (2011) emphasises that any deviations from these rules prompt intervention from the group leader, who reminds members to maintain first-person speech and refrain from looking at the dreamer. Once the group has completed their associations with the

dream, they can progress to the next stage with the dreamer's permission. In this final stage, the dream is returned to the dreamer, who is free to express any thoughts, reactions to others' associations, recollections of dream details, past waking experiences, or any other relevant reflections.

According to Blechner (2011), the subsequent stage permits the dream group to inquire about the dream, aiming to provide context. Following this, a volunteer from the group reads the dream aloud to the dreamer, pausing after each sentence or two. This allows the dreamer to share any thoughts that arise while hearing their own dream. The group then consolidates the initial manifest dream text, the group's associations, and the dreamer's comments, creating a more comprehensive understanding of the dream. This stage, termed *Orchestrating Projections*, involves the group synthesising the various voices—both external and internal—into a coherent whole. Recognising that this synthesis is essentially a projection, the group members preface their comments with 'If it were my dream...' and avoid direct eye contact with the dreamer.

The final stage occurs in the subsequent meeting of the dream group, typically scheduled one week or a month later. During this stage, after having had time to reflect, the dreamer has the opportunity to share any reactions to the dream group's dynamics. The passage of time allows the dreamer to assimilate the feedback received. The vulnerability of the dreamer and the dream-group members is evident, as sharing personal associations exposes their thoughts. For the process to be most effective, Blechner (2011) suggests that all group members should feel free to express their associations openly.

The analysis of the theme of Psychological approaches to dream work explores various sub-themes, emphasising modern trends in empowering dreamers and the importance of accurate interpretations rooted in psychoanalytic ideas. Key considerations include personality, consciousness, and emotions. The chapter will now expound on the second overarching theme, Psychiatric and medical approaches, covering psychopathological and neuroscientific perspectives, demonstrating the efficacy of dream work in relation to anxiety, depression, and PTSD. The final overarching theme, Socio-cultural approaches to dream work theme highlights the impact of cultural beliefs on dream interpretation, including sub-themes like “healing and dreams,” “shamanistic approaches,” and “spiritual approaches.” Across diverse societies, dreams are viewed as messengers, connecting individuals to spirituality and playing a role in cultural and healing practices.

4.9 Theme 2: Psychiatric and Medical Approaches to Dream Work

From the literature, themes related to psychiatry and medicine were identified, highlighting that dream work is also coloured by scientific and medical aspects of knowledge or schools. The two sub-themes identified under this overarching theme were “psychopathological approaches to dream work” and “neuroscientific approaches to dream work”.

4.9.1 Psychopathological Approaches to Dream Work

According to Smoller et al. (2019), for over a century, psychiatric disorders have been defined by expert opinion and clinical observation. They further state that the modern American Psychiatric Association's (2000) Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental

Disorders (DSM-IV-TR) has relied on a consensus of experts to define categorical syndromes based on clusters of symptoms and signs, and, to some extent, external validators, such as longitudinal course and response to treatment.

In the absence of an established aetiology, psychiatry has struggled to validate these descriptive syndromes and define the boundaries between disorders and between normal and pathologic variation (Kilgus et al., 2015; Krueger et al., 2018; Maddux & Winstead, 2015; Smoller et al., 2019). In spite of that, the DSM has remained the main diagnostic tool for psychopathological disorders and syndromes (Krueger et al., 2018; Widiger & Smith, 2008). From the literature, three psychopathological disorders were identified as focus areas under this sub-theme in relation to dream work, namely “anxiety”, “depression” and “PTSD”.

4.9.1.1 Anxiety. According to the American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2022), anxiety is a normal response to stress, and anxiety disorders differ from temporary feelings of anxiousness or nervousness with more intense feelings of fear or anxiety. The DSM-5 specifically describes anxiety as excessive worry and apprehensive expectations, occurring more days than not for at least 6 months, about a number of events or activities, such as work or school performance (APA, 2022).

According to Horwitz (2013), the first known representations of anxiety are found in cave paintings from the Palaeolithic era. He further states that these cave paintings vividly depict sources of fear, usually dangerous predators such as lions, wolves, and bears among the primeval ancestors. Only during the fourth century BCE did sophisticated sources of anxiety emerge in Hippocratic medicine and Aristotelian philosophy (Horwitz, 2013). According to Horwitz (2013), psychiatrist John Nemiah’s 1985 description captures the

common experience of anxiety as mental and bodily functions find in anxiety, a meeting place that is unparalleled in other aspects of human life.

Anxiety is often exhibited through disturbances in cardiovascular, gastrointestinal and/or musculoskeletal systems (Horwitz, 2013). According to Levitt (2015), anxiety is one of the most important concepts in psychoanalytic theory and plays an important role in the development of personality as well as in the dynamics of personality functioning. Moreover, it is of central significance in Freud's theory of the neuroses and psychoses and in the treatment of these pathological conditions (Levitt, 2015). In modern-day society and psychotherapy, the concept of anxiety is prevalent throughout society and spoken of often and commonly (Horwitz, 2013; Levitt, 2015; Spielberger, 2013).

From the data collected in terms of this focus area of "anxiety", the following emerged as takeaways. Firstly, according to some dream theories, when someone dreams a dream which is anxiety-provoking, it could possibly be related to conflict and issues that they are experiencing in waking life (Tangolo, 2015). For instance, in one case (Tangolo, 2015), the client's dreams often referred to a difficulty in communication and mediation that represents a concern relating to real life.

Another aspect of anxiety and dreams from the literature indicated that difficult and trying circumstances in waking life may lead to negative, fear-provoking dreams. In a case from Swan and Schottelkorb's work (2013), it was found that Mary (age 10), whose parents had recently divorced, exhibited increased anxiety around bedtime each night and had difficulty falling asleep because she was afraid of her dreams. According to Wyatt et al. (2011), clinically, negative dream images often combined to result in a picture of

elevated anxiety that usually manifested first as insomnia (by far the most common presenting complaint observed), then irritability and anger deregulation (the second most common complaint observed) and lastly complaints of anxiety followed by depression.

Noronha (2014), in dealing with a patient going through psychosocial issues and emotional turmoil (anxiety, feelings of not being in control of happiness, inability to enjoy life, feelings of guilt, inability to feel pain or happiness), noted that discussing the dreams of the client was important in helping her deal with her unresolved grief. The client was motivated for therapy and was confident that psychotherapy would aid her with her problems (Noronha, 2014). From these examples, the impact and correlation between anxiety and dreams is clear. The following extracts highlight this:

“Here dreams reveal fears relating to the conflict and often to anxiety generated by the aggressiveness of self or others and by the fear of being rejected. These dreams often refer to a difficulty in communication and mediation that represents a concern relating to real life, within the group and outside of it.” (Tangolo, 2015)

“Mary, age 10, was referred to counseling by her mother for concerns related to excessive sadness and anxiety. Through parental consultations, Mary’s mother revealed that she and Mary’s father had divorced when Mary was 5 years of age and since that event, she believed that Mary had exhibited emotional problems. Mary’s mother also indicated that Mary’s exhibition of anxiety increased around bed time each night and that she had difficulty falling asleep because she was afraid of her dreams.” (Swan & Schottelkorb, 2013)

“When asked about types of clients who select dream work from the therapy menu, therapists identified several factors; clients who were open to their experience (waking and dreaming); clients who were troubled by nightmares or who were anxious; and, clients who were grounded and those committed to long term therapy.” (Hackett, 2021)

4.9.1.2 Depression. The next focus area under the sub-theme Psychopathological approaches to dreams was that of “depression”. According to the APA (2022), depression, otherwise known as “major depressive disorder” or “clinical depression”, is a common and serious mood disorder and those who suffer from it experience persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness and lose interest in activities they once enjoyed. Aside from the emotional problems caused by depression, individuals can also present with physical symptoms such as chronic pain or digestive issues.

To be diagnosed with depression, symptoms must be present for at least two weeks. The DSM-5 outlines criteria to diagnose depression such as an individual must be experiencing five or more symptoms during the same 2-week period, and at least one of the symptoms should be either depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure (APA, 2022). When it comes to working with dreams and cases of depression, this research found that there were cases of dream work which mentioned depression explicitly.

Holzinger et al. (2021) state that after conducting controlled studies on depressed patients, it emerged that the recurrent themes during waking life were also characteristic of dream activity, such as, for example, that of failure. In other words, depression leads to dreams with recurrent themes of failure. In another instance, Kara and Özcan (2019)

report on a case where a client who had been diagnosed with depression complained about interruptions of his sleep, thus waking up very tired because of the nightmares he had been having for a long time.

In this case, clinicians concluded that pharmacological treatment with therapeutic work would be the most appropriate option. The client, however, did not want to take medication and thus opted for therapy that included dream work. Through dream work, the therapist was able to find the root cause of the issue resulting in negative dreams. The dream work, in this case, was a practical and effective dream model for clinicians to perform self-consciousness-based dream work in psychotherapy practices (Kara & Özcan, 2019). The following extract supports these notions:

“Clinically, these factors often combined to result in a picture of elevated anxiety that usually manifested typically first as insomnia (by far the most common presenting complaint I personally observed), then irritability and anger deregulation (the second most common observed complaint) and lastly frank complaints of anxiety followed by depression.” (Wyatt et al., 2011)

4.9.1.3 PTSD. The next focus area under the sub-theme of Psychopathological approaches to dream work was that of “PTSD”. The DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for PTSD defines it as an intense or prolonged psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolise or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event or events (APA, 2022). PTSD and dream work is a prominent topic in the literature with countless studies being done on working with PTSD patient’s dreams (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016).

Dream work with PTSD patients has led to positive outcomes for the patients (Ellis, 2016; Miller et al., 2017; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016; Wittmann et al., 2007). According to Ellis (2019), a great deal of research has gone into understanding and treating trauma dreams associated with PTSD. One of the most effective and empirically tested ways of working with PTSD patients and dreams is known as Imagery rehearsal therapy (IRT) (Miller et al., 2017; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016). According to Miller et al. (2017), in IRT, individuals choose a nightmare, typically one of lesser intensity, and imagine a revised, non-distressing dream in the nightmare's place.

IRT protocols vary in the type of nightmare targeted for treatment, the extent of exposure to the nightmare content, guidance given by the therapist to assist in rescripting, and the method of delivery. To date, IRT is the most widely studied nightmare treatment protocol for both idiopathic and trauma-related dreams (Miller et al., 2017; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016; Wittmann et al., 2007). According to Schubert and Punamäki (2016), it was found that negative dreams are a typical feature of PTSD. They further state that because of their universal occurrence and the significance they comprise in numerous cultures and subcultures, dreams may serve as an adaptable means of working through traumatic experiences with culturally diverse clients.

People across cultures experience disturbing dreams and nightmares after trauma exposure and it was found that immediately after trauma, dreams contain the event itself, which during the next phase evolves into a dream containing a central image evoking strong emotions of terror or fear (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016). Trauma victims appear to prefer working with dreams to more direct therapeutic approaches because they perceive

dream material as less threatening than the waking life experiences they might illustrate (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016).

The literature highlighted that trauma leads to negative dreams. For instance, on average, Kurdish children (ages 9-17) who had experienced high levels of war trauma had more dreams characterised by death and destruction, fear, anger, and hostility, as compared to Kurdish children who had been exposed to lower levels of trauma (Swan & Schottelkorb, 2013). There is a clear connection between PTSD and dream work as well as potential for therapeutic intervention in this area. Research highlights that PTSD patients frequently grapple with distressing dreams, but dream work, particularly through techniques like Imagery Rehearsal Therapy (IRT), has demonstrated effectiveness in alleviating their symptoms.

These approaches empower and enrich individuals to reimagine and reshape their nightmares, ultimately reducing the emotional distress associated with trauma-related dreams. Moreover, the universality of negative dreams following trauma suggests that working with dreams can serve as a culturally adaptable method for processing traumatic experiences. Understanding this connection between PTSD and dream work provides valuable insights into how individuals navigate and heal from the impact of trauma.

4.9.2 Neuroscientific Approaches to Dream Work

The second sub-theme under this overarching theme of Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work is that of neuroscientific approaches to dream work. It was found within the literature that there is a scientific interest in dreams and dream studies. The field of

neuroscience and sleep science has researched dreams scientifically and empirically for many years and contributed to modern dream research marked by scientific discovery (Colace, 2018; Desseilles et al., 2011; Dresler et al., 2015; Holzinger et al., 2021; Schredl & Göritz, 2015; Sikka et al., 2019; Skrzypińska & Szmigielska, 2018, as cited in Pendaroski, 2021).

The discovery of REM sleep by Nathaniel Kleitman, Eugene Aserinsky, and William Dement, was considered as a state of high cerebral and low physical activation that would provide a neurophysiological marker of dreaming (Desseilles et al., 2011). This allowed for studies on the correlation of REM and dreaming phenomena. Neuroscience also allowed for the discovery of visualisation techniques of images of brain activity (neuroimaging) by means of PET (position emitting tomography) and NMR (nuclear magnetic resonance).

The neuroimaging techniques lead to in-depth studies on brain activity and dreaming (Colace, 2018). Neurobiology and sleep science and dreams have provided even more dream research correlations between the dreaming brain and mental functioning (Sikka et al., 2019). For instance, frontal alpha asymmetry (FAA) was looked at in relation to REM sleep with results showing that FAA during REM sleep, and during evening resting wakefulness, predicted ratings of dream anger. These findings imply that FAA may serve as a neural correlate of affect regulation not only in the waking but also in the dreaming state (Sikka et al., 2019).

Schredl and Göritz's (2015) longitudinal study indicates that there is an overall decline in dream recall frequency and nightmare frequency. Dresler et al. (2015), state that scientists hold dreaming as a model for psychosis allowing for the discovery of new therapeutic approaches and ways to test antipsychotic medication. Many scientific insights and empirical

contributions to dreams have followed as a result of these scientific endeavours and discoveries.

Within neuroscience, dreams are described without any form of mystification, and as a product of the dreamer (Pendaroski & Nikolovska, 2017). Holzinger et al. (2021) argue that within the framework of cognitivism, there is a commitment to a neuropsychological perspective. This perspective suggests that dreams are essentially an epiphenomenon of sleep—a seemingly purposeless physiological byproduct stemming from the activation of brainstem areas or various regions of the brain. This activation, in its cascade effect, stimulates areas within the cortex, leading to the emergence of images or emotions during the dream state.

Skrzypińska and Szmigielska (2018, as cited in Pendaroski, 2021) state that dreams involve the cognitive processes of accumulation of content in both semantic and autobiographical memory; representation of the elements of the dream in both the visual and the auditory and in all other sensory modalities; combining representations, performances in dream scenes; creating a narrative sequence for the dream scenes and focusing on the content of the dream. It is clear from the literature that neuroscience has a different way of describing and viewing dreams. Yet, because of the empirical scientific developments around dream work, this has led to significant discoveries which revolutionised our understanding of dreams. The following extracts from the literature highlight this:

“Psychoanalysis stated – The dream is a pure and deep psychology! Neuropsychology claimed – The dream is nothing, but a pure neurology and biology. These statements remained vague until the appearance of the modern bridging between these two

polarities. Which one has the primacy of the absolute truth for the reality of the dream?

While some were right for stating that the dream is a product of unconsciousness, others were right saying that the prefrontal cortex, the amygdala and other parts of the brain determine the quality of the dream's scenario.” (Pendaroski & Nikolovska, 2017)

“...the dream is a product of neurological processes during sleep, and consists of images, narration and sensations that remained in the short-term memory; it is a product of the instantaneous, conscious life of the dreamer, and his conscious/ wakeful experience (the day before sleeping).” (Pendaroski & Nikolovska, 2017)

“...activate areas of the cortex generating images or emotions. Therefore, dreams would lack any psychological relevance, would not provide useful information about the dreamer and, consequently, their use in psychotherapy would be useless.” (Holzinger et al., 2021)

“If we look at all these enumerated cognitive processes from the aspect of the line of less resistance method, we can notice that this method does not deal with explaining how these processes occur on a neurophysiological and psychological level, but how they are presented in the narrative structure of the dream.” (Pendaroski, 2021)

Under the overarching theme Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, the psychiatric and medical aspects of working with dreams were unpacked. The sub-themes under this theme were psychopathological approaches to dream work and neuroscientific approaches to dream work. The third and final overarching theme, Socio-cultural approaches to dream work, follows.

4.10 Theme 3: Socio-cultural Approaches to Dreams

The third and final theme identified from the literature was that of the socio-cultural approaches to dreams. Within socio-cultural approaches to dreams, we see a vast difference in how dreams are worked with when compared to a Western or Eurocentric approaches. This third theme provides some answer to the second research question on what themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work within a local context, specifically, the South African context. This theme included the sub-themes “healing and dreams” (which refer to the process of using dreams as a means of psychological and emotional healing), “shamanistic approaches to dreams” (which involves using rituals, symbolism, and ancient practices to access and interpret dreams), and “spiritual approaches to dreams” (exploring the sacred and transcendent aspects of dream experiences in connection with one's spiritual beliefs and connection to a higher power).

In general, within socio-cultural approaches to dreams, dreams are believed to be messages from the ‘gods’ and the traditional healer or shaman is the main dream worker (Bakow & Low, 2018; Elliott, 2013; Laughlin & Rock, 2014; Nwoye, 2017; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016; Tursunay & Rustem, 2021). It is fairly common within these contexts that dreams are believed to be messages from ancestors, or ‘god(s)’ relayed to the dreamer. A shaman or traditional healer is the dreamworker and has the authority to interpret these dreams, giving the dreamer the dream’s meaning, interpretation, and any instructions that need to be followed. The following extracts support this:

“In ancient times, dreams began to be noticed by ancestors, and divination of dreams was the most common activity.” (Tursunay & Rustem, 2021)

“...individuocentric dreams in the African context, as in Western dream traditions refer to personal or intrapsychic dreams.” (Nwoye, 2017)

“Dreams that appeared in the Uyghur folk Dastan is an ancient motif. In the long-term creation, refinement and circulation of Uyghur folk Dastan, dream motif formed a relatively fixed narrative mode and it repeated in different works, thus dream motif gradually becoming stylised. Driven by the cultural exchange of the Silk Road, dream motif has been continuously supplemented and developed, and its narrative model has become perfect.” (Tursunay & Rustem, 2021)

“Dreaming of omen is just like a set of wireless signals for Uyghur folk Dastan, it can give the protagonist some mystic instructions. The protagonist’s action will verify these signs, and Dastan’s ending will prove the accuracy of these signs. In conclusion, the motif of dream is a proof of the direct connection between the psychological activities of human dreams and the human subconscious. Dreams have their own cultural meanings and characteristics.” (Tursunay & Rustem, 2021)

Literature from this theme consisted of both global and local studies. As mentioned, the three sub-themes identified, were *healing and dreams*, *shamanistic approaches to dreams*, and *spiritual approaches to dreams*.

4.10.1 Healing and Dreams

The first sub-theme under the overarching theme of Socio-cultural approaches to dreams is “healing and dreams”. Healing and dreams within a socio-cultural framework refer to the practice of using dream experiences to address psychological, emotional, and spiritual well-being, while recognising the profound influence of cultural and societal factors on the content, interpretation, and therapeutic significance of dreams. This approach acknowledges that dreams are not isolated phenomena but are deeply intertwined with the broader social and cultural context in which individuals live and seek healing (Bulkeley, 2003; Chinkwita, 1993; Edwards, 2011; Krippner & Faith, 2001; Mfusi & Edwards, 1985).

The World Health Organisation views health as not merely the absence of disease but a holistic, energised and vital global state of physical, mental and social well-being (Edwards, 2011; Stuckey & Nobel, 2010). According to Graham (1990, as cited in Edwards, 2011), the origin of the English term, “healing”, is derived from the German terms *heilin* (whole) and *helig* (holy). Healing also typically involves some transformation from illness to health (Edwards, 2011).

With regards to healing and dreams within a Western context, there are ample examples of the benefits of working with dreams which lead to recovery from emotional or psychological distress, trauma, or mental health issues, and can even aid in coping with bereavement (Black, Murkar & Black, 2014). Krippner and Faith (2001), noted that healing dreams are those dreams which contain a statement that the dream content assisted in improving or preventing physical, emotional, or spiritual distress at a point in time following the dream experience.

Unlike traditional and cultural concepts of healing, the Western concept of healing is concerned with the evaluation of psychotherapeutic progress from individualistic values such as free will, individual mastery and agency, separation, individuation, and objective reality (Comas-Díaz, 2006). This does not necessarily translate into healing for collectivistic African or traditional contexts (Comas-Díaz, 2006). Contrasting with the perspective of cognitivism, Buhrmann (1978, 1989, as cited in Edwards, 2011) suggests that dreams hold significant value as messages, either for the individual or the community. The most extensively documented historical use of dreams, particularly in the context of healing illnesses, is found in ancient Africa, Arabia, and India.

According to Edwards (2011), in traditional South African contexts, dreams remain in significant regard as communication from the ancestors with regard to guidance, warnings, and the appointment of someone for divinity as in the process of becoming a diviner. Once the dream message has been made clear in indicating what is required of the individual, family, or clan, it is acted on to prevent serious illness or misfortune (Chinkwita, 1993; Mfusi & Edwards, 1985; Ngubane, 1977; Thwala, Pillay, & Sargent, 2000, as cited in Edwards, 2011).

Bulkeley (2003) states that cultural traditions have incorporated the healing powers of dreams to alleviate crisis, trauma, suffering, and loss. According to Schubert and Punamäki (2016), dreams have provided a source of healing, both in Western psychotherapeutic settings and among indigenous people in other cultures. They maintain that while Western psychotherapists from various theoretical schools use dream work with clients occasionally, dreams exert a strong influence on life in many other cultures. Within African traditional healing contexts, the individual approaches the healer, diviner, or shaman, who then gets

instructions for healing in his own dreams, or he interprets the dreams of his clients (Schubert and Punamäki, 2016).

Within the literature it was found is that in many African contexts, dreams are viewed as a form of communication with ancestors or god(s), and they contain guidance or instructions for the dreamer in times of crisis (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016). Tangolo (2015) states that dreams have another function, to assist in healing the mind after emotional wounds and distressing emotional experiences and that clients' dreams have considerable potential not only for diagnosis, but also for healing.

Working with dreams offers clients an opportunity to observe their own inner processes and to develop a tool for self-healing (Tangolo, 2015). According to Schubert and Punamäki (2016), despite the significance of dreams across cultures in mental healing efforts, little research is available on dreams as a psychotherapeutic tool. In summary, the theme of "healing and dreams" illuminates the profound connection between dream experiences and the overall well-being of individuals, recognising the significant influence of cultural and societal factors on dream content, interpretation, and therapeutic value. In Western contexts, working with dreams has demonstrated its potential to aid in the recovery from emotional distress, trauma, mental health issues, and the coping with bereavement, as exemplified by studies and research. These findings highlight the transformative power of dreams, revealing their capacity to bring about healing and positive change in the lives of those who engage with them.

Moreover, the cultural richness of healing through dreams is evident in traditional African contexts, where dreams are revered as channels of communication with ancestors

and gods, offering guidance and instructions in times of crisis. Dreams serve as a tool for not only diagnosis but also self-healing, promoting a deeper understanding of one's inner processes. While the role of dreams in healing is recognised in both Western psychotherapeutic settings and indigenous cultures, there remains a need for further research and exploration of dreams as a psychotherapeutic tool. The narratives and insights presented in this exploration underscore the diverse ways in which dreams contribute to the holistic well-being of individuals across different cultures and societies, emphasising their relevance and significance in the realm of healing and psychological transformation. The following extracts highlight the above points:

“Dreams have nonetheless provided a source for healing, both in Western psychotherapeutic settings and among indigenous people in other cultures.”

(Schubert & Punamäki, 2016)

“...as an early acolyte to the practice of analysis being developed by Freud, Carl Jung also saw dreams as a source of unconscious information. (And) one of the key rifts which developed between the two theorists revolved around their conceptualisations of the nature of the unconscious and the function of dreams. Jung saw dreams as providing access to the various layers of the unconscious and through this access a means for ascertaining potential messages for psychic equilibrium and healing. (p. 3)” (Nwoye, 2017)

4.10.2 Shamanistic Approaches to Dreams

The second sub-theme identified within the overarching theme of Socio-cultural approaches to dreams is shamanistic approaches to dreams. According to Laughlin and Rock (2014), shamanism is a global social phenomenon intricately connected with dreaming. The authors assert that shamans frequently experience their calling through dreams and utilise dreams as a means to journey to 'spiritual dimensions,' accessing information and acquiring power. Moreover, Laughlin and Rock state that shamans leverage dreaming to solve problems because, in nearly all polyphasic societies and traditions, the role of dreaming holds paramount significance and is fundamental to the cycle of meaning. Dreaming is often an integral component in the calling, selection, and empowerment of shamans (Laughlin & Rock, 2014).

Shamanic rituals are predominantly conducted during the night, presumably to capitalise on the potency of ritual practices in evoking, incubating, and influencing dream experiences (Laughlin & Rock, 2014). Within the context of indigenous healing systems, a shaman acts as a doctor in this role and makes use of a number of curing practices, including dream work (Elliott, 2013). The emphasis within these contexts also lies in the fact that dreams have a divine connotation, where the traditional healer uses these to connect the dreamer to the spiritual realm. Working with dreams has been found to produce positive outcomes for individuals living in these contexts. The following extracts support this:

“Indigenous people view dreaming as a time when the dreamer symbolically processes, synthesizes and resolves the information, questions and experiences that occur each day, with understanding coming from acquired knowledge.” (Elliott, 2013)

“Dream work in gestalt therapy has many aspects that can be considered as being parallel to cultural practices for some Aboriginal groups, and when appropriate, can be a valid method for exploring issues with Aboriginal people especially in regards to their spiritual self.” (Elliott, 2013)

“Psychoanalysis, if not stepped-down or indigenized, is considered foreign to Nigerians. However, most people in the same community easily believe one another and they already know about dream interpretation from traditional healers. Therefore, the use of hypnosis and dream interpretation became promising.” (Onyekwere et al., 2015)

“While Western psychotherapists from various theoretical schools use dream work with clients occasionally, dreams exert a strong influence on life in many other cultures.” (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016)

“As a primitive religion, Shamanism is closely related to various Uyghur cultural phenomena. In the narrative structure of dream motifs appearing in Dastan, such as Oghuz Khagan and Alpalmis, the brand of Shamanism can be seen. The old man with silver hair and white hair beside Oghuz Khagan is a shaman...Shamans have the ability to control the weather, prophecy, dream interpretation, astrology, and travel to heaven or hell.” (Tursunay & Rustem, 2021)

“Shamanism is a worldwide social phenomenon that is almost always associated with dreaming. Shamans commonly receive their calling in dreams and use dreams to travel to spiritual dimensions to access information and to acquire power. They also apply dreaming to the solution of problems... However, in virtually all of these traditions, the

role of dreaming is paramount... Dreaming is fundamental to the cycle of meaning of virtually all polyphasic societies and is often integral to the calling, selection, and empowerment of shamans (Laughlin & Rock, 2014).

“All THPs and two amathwasa who were further in the process, explained that the graphic dreams and auditory and visual experiences in the form of voices, sounds and visions usually persist indefinitely as they intercede with the ancestors as part of their healing profession.” (van der Zeijst et al., 2021)

“Among the Xhosa, the process is called intwaso (which literally means “spiritual emergence”) or ukuthwasa (as a verb meaning “to emerge as a healer”). Intwaso usually presents itself in the form of a mysterious illness, physical or psychological, that does not respond to treatment. This is accompanied by dreams in which ancestors appear or are represented symbolically.” (Booi & Edwards, 2014)

“Another sign of the calling are vivid and prophetic dreams, through which they often receive messages.” (van der Zeijst et al., 2021)

When it comes to practical examples of how dreams are worked with within traditional healing contexts, the following extracts highlight these:

“... one day a dream came. This voice was just talking and talking and I could not see the face, but it was a male. He said you bought a pass from here to E_____... There you'll find a pink house. It's painted with pink on the outside, and there's a roundavel, and you'll see three flags on top of this roundavel. There you are going to

be helped When I asked my sister who used to stay in Empangeni because they met me at the taxi rank, and I said I'm looking for a pink house. They said okay let's go and see if the one that we know of is not the one you are talking about with flags. When we approached there I said that is the house I dreamt about. When I walked in to consult with this sangoma, a female sangoma, ahh, my ancestors came upon me Well I got into a trance, and they tell me that my ancestors said sesfikele [now we've come]; we're bringing our granddaughter.” (Bakow & Low, 2018)

“The ancestors reveal information, for example about traditional medicines, through dreams and voices, and the role of the trainer is to give detailed explanation and guidance. According to the amathwasa and THPs, these are the ways their ancestors tell them the diagnosis and treatment for their patients. During ukuthwasa the apprentices assist their trainer while she is seeing and treating patients and are taught how to convey messages from the ancestors to the patients, how to conduct rituals and where to find imithi.” (van der Zeijst et al., 2021)

In summary, shamanistic approaches to dreams are deeply rooted in various cultures and play a vital role in spiritual and healing practices. Shamans or traditional healers often receive their callings and insights through dreams, utilising them to connect with the spiritual realm, resolve daily experiences, and access information and power. Within indigenous healing systems, dreams hold a divine significance, aiding in the diagnosis and treatment of patients. The use of dreams is not confined to traditional healing but extends to the cultural fabric, where dreamwork is parallel to cultural practices and has a profound impact on life in many societies. Dreams in these contexts serve as a powerful

bridge between the physical and metaphysical worlds, enriching the socio-cultural tapestry.

4.10.3 Spiritual Approaches to Dreams

The third and final sub-theme under the overarching theme Socio-cultural approaches to dreams is spiritual approaches to dreams emphasising the belief that there is a spiritual aspect to dreaming. According to Hill and Knox (2010), dreams have long been regarded as reflections of spirituality, but not much is known about the relationship between spiritually-centred dream work and therapeutic outcomes. When examining the Hill cognitive-experiential model with clients who are spiritually oriented, clients gained more spiritual insight and had greater increases in existential well-being. (Hill & Knox, 2010).

These findings suggest that there may be value in therapists addressing spiritual and existential concerns with clients who are spiritually oriented. According to Tursunay and Rustem (2021), in ancient times, the divination of dreams was the most common activity. They further state that in Uyghur folk culture, dreaming of an omen can give the dreamer some mystic instructions. Elliott (2013) stipulates that many groups share the belief that through dreaming, an individual can have a connection to the spirit world.

This research found that there was ample literature on working with dreams within a religious belief system context. The literature highlights how dreams are worked with spiritually and includes belief systems such as Christianity (Barnett, 2015), Islam (Edgar & Henig, 2010), and Buddhism (Young, 2001). According to Sim, et al. (2021), within the Hill cognitive-experiential model, during the insight stage, therapists help clients construct new

understandings of the dream as a whole on a deep emotional level to help clients learn how their dreams relate to events in their waking lives, their past, their existential or spiritual concerns, or their unconscious concerns. This cognitive approach makes room for clients to reflect on their spiritual concerns (Sim, et al., 2021).

From the literature, the *Line of the least resistance* method also supports a spiritual component in its dream work approach (Pendaroski & Nikolovska, 2017). In step 11 of the worksheet for this dream work approach it states that there is a “Universally-Spiritual context” element which asks the questions, “Were there universal elements or symbols, or transpersonal images of your Ego, or other characters in the dream? Do they remind you of something? Were there any spiritual symbols and meanings that are important to you? Do they remind you of something?” (Pendaroski & Nikolovska, 2017, p. 193). Across the literature, a spiritual dimension and the origin of dreams were noted. The following extracts highlight this:

“Another context contained in the line of less resistance method at one point touches some Jungian concepts and that is the spiritual context that considers the universal and spiritual dimensions, ie. the supernatural or objective elements of the messages through their personal meaning to the dreamer.” (Pendaroski, 2021)

“Uyghurs believe that everything has spirits, because dreams and religious beliefs exist and develop in human ideology. Therefore, Uyghurs believe that human dreams are also divine. Uyghurs’ understanding of dreams can be divided into two stages. One is the period before faith in Islam. The concept of dreams in this period is recorded in the Book of Divination.” (Tursunay & Rustem, 2021)“...many African dream narratives imply that

during sleep the dreamer achieves some communication or engages in dialogue (often in the manner of a conversational monologue, in which the spiritual agent speaks and the dreamer listens) with a spiritual or an ancestral agent... Essentially, there is a connection between the self and community, and between culture, cognition, medicine, and spirituality as revealed in the dream accounts discussed earlier.” (Nwoye, 2017)

Working with dreams within a socio-cultural context approach reveals that there is healing that encapsulates overall individual well-being that can be achieved. A Shamanistic or traditional healing allows healers or dream workers the authority to not only interpret the dreams as messages from the ancestors but also to aid in the healing process, and a spiritual ritualistic side to working with dreams within these contexts which points to a greater innate desire within individuals to connect spiritually and culturally to a higher power or entity beyond the materialistic.

4.11 Conclusion

This research has sought to answer the research questions on (1) what themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally; (2) what themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally; and (3) what the practical implications are for working with dreams according to global and local themes. In the findings, it was noted that in terms of the themes identified from analysis of the reviewed literature were Psychological approaches to dream work, and Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work were predominantly globally orientated research findings.

Globally, within the psychological approaches to dream work, it was identified that the areas of dream interpretation, emotions and dreams, symbolism and imagery in approaching dream work, cognitive behavioural approaches to dream work, depth psychology and its approaches to dream work, gestalt approaches to dream work, and integrative approaches to dream work in psychology were most pertinent when it came to the analysis of the global literature. In terms of the psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, globally it was identified that the areas of psychopathological approaches to dream work, and neuroscientific approaches to dream work were the most pertinent when it came to the analysis of the global literature. Each area highlighted a key aspect of dream work from a global perspective.

The theme of socio-cultural approaches to dreams comprise of both global and local literature. Looking at shamanistic approaches to dreams, the findings indicate that dreams are worked with within this socio-cultural approach both globally and locally. Similarly for the areas of healing and dreams, as well as looking at spiritual approaches to dreams. In order to answer the question of what themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally, there were relatively few articles which could answer this question which reemphasises and highlights the gap in the literature on a local scale. There were, however, some insightful findings on local dream work techniques in terms of the traditional healing context which was able to answer this second question appropriately.

Finally, looking at the third question on what the practical implications are for working with dreams according to the global and local themes, the findings have noted how each area of dream work has practical and insightful implications and guidelines and steps on how to work with dreams respectively within each of its frameworks, approaches, methods and techniques. This chapter, therefore, was able to address the following research questions on

what the current approaches to dream work are both globally and locally, how these themes contribute towards local research, and the practical implications thereof.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters, a comprehensive exploration of the research questions, methodological approaches, data collection, and findings were discussed. This chapter serves as the culmination of the thesis, providing a platform for reflection, interpretation, and discussion of the findings in the broader context of the study's objectives and contributions. The discussions presented here are integral to the thesis, as they not only shed light on the significance of the research but also aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice. This chapter will engage in a critical analysis of the findings, evaluate the research's implications, and provide insights into the way forward. Moreover, this chapter will address the research questions and objectives that were initially set forth, revisiting the overarching purpose of this study and considering how this work could contribute to the field of dream work, especially within a local context. This chapter, therefore, serves as a crucial part of the thesis that consolidates the research and presents it in a way that facilitates the dissemination of knowledge and its practical applications.

5.2 Outline of the Chapter

The chapter starts off by highlighting the structure of the entire thesis up to this point. It then looks at a recap of the thesis by focusing on the study aims, objectives and research questions. Next, the thesis provides a summary of the findings, then proceeds to discuss each theme in depth before concluding the chapter. Chapter 6 will then proceed to discuss further implications of the results as well as the limitations of the study.

5.3 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis was organised into six main chapters, each addressing a specific aspect of the current approaches to dreams and its relationship to global and local trends, and how that may contribute towards local research.

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the research topic, outlining its background, significance, and research problem and rationale. It also outlined the study aims, and the research objectives, and introduced and explained the research questions. The chapter ended with defining some of the key terms used throughout this research.

Chapter 2 presented a review of the existing literature, synthesising key findings and identifying gaps in knowledge. This context section started off by illustrating the history of dreams and dream work in psychology primarily focusing on the insights of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. From their theories developed a school of thought in psychology known as depth psychology or psychoanalytic psychology. After the work of these founding fathers of psychology, many dream work models and approaches such as the behaviourist movement and gestalt psychology were developed. Each of these other schools of thought in psychology have developed techniques for working with dreams within their approaches. The chapter then demonstrated a period of dream research which includes psychiatry, medicine and neuroscience and dreams. This period of dream research involves scientific discoveries and empirical studies of human dreams. The chapter then branched out to expound on the concept of humanity and dreaming beyond psychology. It touched on how dreams have been part of humanity for many years; that it is a universal experience. From here the chapter then looked at the socio-cultural approach to dreams, namely how dreams are worked with and understood in certain cultural and traditional settings. After which, the chapter then focused

on the South African cultural traditional healing context and dream work. The chapter concluded with the rationale that, given the fact that the founding fathers of psychology valued and focussed on dreams in the development of their theories, and much of their influence and techniques are still used in current dream work approaches including medicine and neuroscience, and taking into consideration the socio-cultural context of South Africa where the majority of individuals value and work with dreams within the indigenous traditional healing context, it was deemed important to have a clear idea of current global and local approaches to dreams and how this could speak to local research and highlight the gap in the literature.

Chapter 3 outlined the research methodology, describing the data collection, analysis techniques, and conceptual frameworks employed. The chapter ended by outlining the various steps undertaken to conduct a thematic analysis in accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2012) thematic analysis method.

Chapter 4, the findings chapter, reported on the three over-arching themes from the analysis of the data, namely Psychological approaches to dream work, Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, and Socio-cultural approaches to dream work. Each overarching theme consisted of sub-themes and focus areas within them, and these were reported on in the chapter, supported by data extracts from the literature.

Chapter 5, the discussion chapter will now primarily discuss the results found in Chapter 4, looking at the three overarching themes in depth. Chapter 5 attempts to discuss these results in relation to the research questions and within the South African context.

5.4 Brief Recap of the Research Thesis

The research thesis titled "A Systematic Literature Review of the Current Approaches to Dream Work: Global and Local Trends" aimed to investigate the existing trends in dream work research globally and locally. The study focused on addressing a perceived gap in the literature concerning dream work and techniques in a South African context, despite the cultural significance of dreams in traditional healing. The three main study aims were to examine all available literature on dream work approaches, identify global and local trends, and assess the effectiveness of different approaches for potential implementation in South Africa. The research objectives included reviewing and categorising existing literature on dream work approaches, analysing global and local trends, and exploring the psychotherapeutic effectiveness of these approaches. The study employed a systematic literature review methodology, utilising various sources such as academic databases, journal articles, and book chapters. The thematic analysis technique was applied to identify patterns, commonalities, and emerging trends in dream work practices globally and locally. The research questions guided the study, with a focus on identifying themes from a global perspective, understanding themes specific to the South African context, and exploring the practical implications of working with dreams based on global and local themes. The research questions were, (1) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally (2) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally? (3) What are the practical implications for working with dreams according to global and local themes? The findings aimed to enrich the understanding of how dreams are approached and worked with across different cultures, regions, and traditions. The study's ultimate goal was to contribute valuable insights into the diversity and commonalities within the field of dream work, provide a deeper understanding of cultural nuances and local perspectives in South Africa, and offer practical implications for working with dreams globally and locally. The research aimed to highlight dream work approaches, methods, and

models and explore how these could be practically implemented, ultimately enhancing a client's well-being and promoting intercultural sensitivity in the field of dream work.

Recognising cultural diversity in dream work can enhance intercultural sensitivity, promote cross-cultural collaboration, and foster a more inclusive approach to working with dreams.

5.6 Summary of the Findings

This research explored the literature on the diverse approaches to dream work in the field of psychology, both globally and within the specific context of South Africa over the period of 2011-2021. What was found from the systematic literature review based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria was a number of 30 articles which were included in the data set. These articles had then undergone a thematic analysis which identified three overarching themes, namely Psychological approaches to dream work, Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, and Socio-cultural approaches to dream work. These themes were unpacked in the previous chapter in the findings section. In this chapter, these themes will be further unpacked and discussed in-depth, alluding to their implications for this research as well as that of the South African context.

Within the overarching theme of Psychological approaches to dream work were the sub-themes:

- dream interpretation
- emotions and dreams
- symbolism and imagery in approaching dream work
- cognitive behavioural approaches to dream work
- depth psychology and its approaches to dream work

- gestalt approaches to dream work
- integrative approaches to dream work in psychology

Within the overarching theme Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work were the following sub-themes:

- psychopathological approaches to dream work
- neuroscientific approaches to dream work

Within the overarching theme Socio-cultural approaches to dream work were the following sub-themes:

- healing and dreams
- shamanistic approaches to dreams
- spiritual approaches to dreams

Each of these themes and sub-themes reported on were supported by data extracts from the literature. The identified themes answered the research questions on what the current approaches to dream work are globally and locally, and what the practical implications for working with dreams according to global and local themes would be. The themes identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally were predominantly the psychological approaches to dream work and the psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work.

5.7 Theme 1: Psychological Approaches to Dream Work

The sub-themes within this overarching theme speak to universal psychological aspects that can be applied both locally and globally, as well as dream work approaches. The first of the sub-themes found under this overarching theme of Psychological approaches to dream work is that of “dream interpretation”.

5.7.1 *Dream Interpretation*

Dream interpretation, as one of the sub-themes under the overarching theme of Psychological approaches to dream work, is important in psychoanalysis and all individual and group psychotherapies. Under this sub-theme were the three focus areas of “accuracy of dream interpretation”, “personality in dream interpretation”, and “consciousness and unconsciousness in dreams”. These will now all be discussed in relation to the abovementioned research questions.

Dream interpretation in general allows for the accessibility of the content of dreams for the conscious part of the personality (Restek-Petrović et al., 2013). On this sub-theme of dream interpretation, there were a number of conclusions drawn from the findings. Firstly, dream interpretation is a common sub-theme across and within the literature. Dream interpretation, also referred to as dream analysis, stems from the psychoanalytic concepts of Sigmund Freud. This approach asserts that comprehending the unconscious forces underlying dream content can provide insight into the genuine origins of mental health issues (Lack, 2023).

According to Frazer and Poe (2021), as the world became more secularised in the 19th century, psychologists began to focus on applying their efforts to understanding the sleeping brain with early research exploring the link between experiences in the waking state and the

content of dreams, examining the abstract qualities of dream symbols. Today, modern-day psychology still makes use of dream interpretation methods in psychoanalysis and other dream interpretation modalities (Yu, 2019). The fact that dream interpretation is a common sub-theme across the literature indicates that this practice is not unique to any specific culture or region. This can be seen as a form of common ground between South African traditional healing dream work and broader global approaches. In other words, the commonality of dream interpretation makes it a culturally viable and applicable aspect.

Another important conclusion drawn from the findings is that there is a long history of interpretation of dreams throughout the ages. The first recorded instances of dream interpretation dates back to the Summerian civilisation, which was the first to develop writing in the third millennium BC; the earliest texts exist consisting of recorded dreams (Barrett, 2013; Frazer & Poe, 2021). The long history of dream interpretation throughout the ages suggests that the value of dreams and their interpretation is deeply ingrained in human culture and history. This validates and reinforces the cultural importance of dreamwork, especially within that of a South African traditional healing context.

A third conclusion drawn from the findings is that when dream work started out with the founding fathers such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, it was believed that the role of the therapist was to interpret clients' dreams. Later, however, there was an overall consensus that the dreamer is the only one who can interpret dreams accurately (Yu, 2019). This is because modern dream interpretation techniques, models and approaches believe that the *dreamer* is the only one who has the authority to know what the dream means (Barret, 2013). The shift from the dream worker being the primary interpreter to the dreamer interpreting their own

dreams reflects a global trend. Within a South African traditional healing context, however, this change comes with varied implications.

On the one hand, applying this change to this context could be potentially seen as empowering individuals to engage more actively in their healing process and take ownership of their dreams' meanings. This could potentially provide an opportunity for the traditional healer to teach others how to connect with the meaning of their dream and empower them to be dream workers themselves. On the other hand, however, within a South African context, there has been a long tradition of dream workers as traditional healers serving as the primary interpreters of dreams. This practice is deeply rooted in the cultural fabric and tapestry and held in reverence. The norm is for the traditional healer to seek counsel from the ancestors about the dream interpretation on behalf of the dreamer. The shift towards dreamers interpreting their own dreams could potentially undermine the age-old practice, diminishing the role and credibility of traditional healers and the ritual of seeking counsel from them, thereby disrupting a vital cultural and spiritual tradition.

A final conclusion drawn from the findings on dream interpretation is that studies have shown that incorporating dream interpretation into psychotherapy enhances its effectiveness compared to general therapy that does not involve the analysis of dreams (Barret, 2013; Hill & Knox, 2010). Much of this work has been done using Clara Hill's Dream Model which is a highly systematic version that has been standardised to be replicable for research purposes (Barret, 2013; Hill & Knox, 2010). Over 25 studies using this model have found, among other things, that patients rate dream sessions highly in terms of session quality, working alliance, gains from dream interpretation, and mastery-insight (Barret, 2013; Hill & Knox, 2010).

They demonstrate improvements in insight into specific dreams, clarification, and implementation of action ideas related to specific dreams, changes in target problems identified within dreams, and enhanced attitudes toward dreams (Barret, 2013; Hill & Knox, 2010). In one study, patients highlighted the helpful aspects of dream interpretation, including associations, connections to waking life, catharsis, adopting an objective perspective, and collaborating with a therapist to work on their dreams (Barret, 2013). The finding that dream interpretation produces better outcomes for therapy validates the value and use of dreams within traditional healing and a need for more research within that context. Recognising the validity of dreams within the context of traditional healing opens up avenues for a more nuanced understanding of their therapeutic potential, urging scholars and practitioners to delve deeper into uncovering the intricate connections between dreams and holistic well-being.

In general, a final implication worth exploring on the topic of dream interpretation is that of a dream worker-led dream interpretation. Within the South African context, it is the dream worker or traditional healer who interprets the dream, not the dreamer. The dreamer shares their dream with the traditional healer, who interprets it as a message from the ancestors and conveys the meaning to the dreamer. Subsequently, the dream typically comes with instructions, and the dreamer willingly follows them, considering them to be guidance from the gods or ancestors through the dream. This raises the question of whether the West could potentially gain from a more directive, dream worker-led approach and whether traditional systems might be receptive to a dreamer-led approach. The implications of both of these approaches would be interesting for future studies.

The three focus areas within this sub-theme of dream interpretation, namely, “accuracy of dream interpretation”, “personality in dream interpretation”, and “consciousness and unconsciousness in dreams” will now be discussed, starting with “accuracy of dream interpretation”.

5.7.1.1 Accuracy of Dream Interpretation. The focus area of “accuracy of dream interpretation” was found across the literature, emphasising the importance for accuracy of the interpretation of dreams. What was prevalent from the literature was that there was an emphasis placed on making sure that the interpretations of dreams are accurate (Hackett, 2021). Hackett (2021, p. 261) states that an accurate interpretation of a dream is distinguished by its ability to produce a noticeable impact on the client and evoke an unmistakable "aha" response. This reaction is often the measure of accurate insight (an accurate interpretation) for the dreamer.

It would seem that within global contexts from the literature, accuracy of dream interpretation has become an integral part of dream work. Within local South African traditional healing contexts, however, from the literature, it would seem that the emphasis is not so much on dream interpretation accuracy as it is within the Western context, but rather on hearing from the gods, receiving instructions from them, and applying solutions to problems the dreamer may be encountering. It would seem, from the literature, that although traditional healers may strive for accurately hearing from the gods through the dreams, accuracy to dream interpretation is not the primary focus or feature within these healing contexts.

In terms of dream work in cultural and traditional healing contexts, the shaman or traditional healer is considered the main dream interpreter and they are believed to be the ones who can hear from the ancestors through dreams (Nwoye, 2017; Onyekwere et al., 2015; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016; Tursunay & Rustem, 2021; van der Zeijst et al., 2021). An individual in these contexts would approach a dream worker with their dream, giving full trust and permission to the dream worker to tell them what the dream means as part of a message from the gods or ancestors (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016). The dream would be interpreted by the dream worker, the meaning shared and any instructions coming from the gods or ancestors would have to be obeyed by the dreamer (Rudnick, 2002; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016; van der Zeijst et al., 2021).

In some contexts, not obeying the instructions from dreams could lead to mental illness and other ailments as punishment from the gods or ancestors (Booi & Edwards, 2014; Laher, 2014; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016). Therefore, there is a greater reverence towards, and trust in traditional dream workers to bring an accurate interpretation of the dream which would usually be taken at face value. So, although the shaman or traditional healer may hope that their interpretation of the dream is accurate, it would seem that from this approach, whether or not the dream resonates with the dreamer in terms of accuracy as it is in the Western context, the dreamer will take on face value whatever the traditional healer conveys as a form of communication from the gods through the interpretation of the dream.

In conclusion, the concept of accuracy of dream interpretation is a nuanced and context-dependent phenomenon. In Western perspectives, the emphasis lies in the precision and psychological impact of dream interpretation, often measured by its ability

to evoke a profound "aha" response in the dreamer. This focus is deeply rooted in therapeutic and psychological traditions. In contrast, South African traditional healing places greater importance on dream interpretation as a form of divine communication. Traditional healers and shamans assume the role of interpreters, and dreamers wholeheartedly trust their ability to convey messages from ancestors and gods.

The accuracy of these interpretations is not gauged by psychological insight but is upheld as a matter of spiritual significance and alignment with cultural traditions. Disregarding the guidance received from dreams is believed to incur spiritual punishments, such as mental illness or physical ailments. This contrast highlights the divergence in perspectives on dream interpretation accuracy, highlighting how cultural and contextual factors influence our understanding of the meaning and significance of dreams.

5.7.1.2 Personality in Dream Interpretation. Under this focus area of “personality and dreams”, some dream work approaches believe that objects in dreams are parts of the personality that need to be reconnected to the “whole self” (Holzinger et al., 2021; Kelland, 2010; Nwoye, 2017; Pendaroski, 2021; Roesler, 2020). Specific dream work approaches include gestalt and psychoanalytic. The implications of this belief for the South African traditional healing context are numerous. In the South African traditional healing contexts, the interpretation of dreams differs from the way dreams are understood in Western cultures. For instance, within the South African traditional healing context, dreams are considered a means of communication between the spiritual world and the dreamer.

Personality concepts in traditional healing contexts, such as those found in many indigenous or traditional healing systems, may not align with the psychological frameworks used in Western contexts. The understanding and interpretation of personality in traditional healing are typically rooted in the culture, spirituality, and beliefs of the specific tradition. The interpretation of dreams often focuses on understanding the messages, symbols, and guidance offered by ancestors, spirits, or the divine. Dreams may be seen as a way for individuals to connect with their ancestral spirits or receive guidance related to various aspects of their lives, such as health, relationships, or personal challenges. Traditional healing often takes a more holistic approach to health and well-being; instead of focusing solely on individual personality traits, traditional healers may consider a person's entire spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being. This approach may involve looking at an individual's relationships, connection to their community, and their alignment with cultural norms.

Personality traits as understood in Western psychology are not a central focus in South African traditional dream interpretation. Instead, the emphasis is on the cultural and spiritual context, the individual's life experiences, and their relationship with the spirit world. Traditional healing places a strong emphasis on spirituality and ancestral connections. The interpretation of dreams, for instance, might focus on messages from ancestors or spirits rather than exclusively on individual psychological aspects. In these contexts, dreams are seen as a means of communicating with the spiritual world. Traditional healing practices may also take into account an individual's role within their community and the impact of social and environmental factors on their well-being. This broader perspective may influence the way personality or personal issues are understood and addressed.

Within this context, the philosophy of *Ubuntu* still stands in that the individual, whole and complete, is connected to the community (Knight, 2013). *Ubuntu* is a complex term with origins in Southern African philosophy, and in its essence, it embodies the concept of interconnectedness, communal values, and a sense of shared humanity (Le Grange, 2011; Maqutu, 2018; Van Breda, 2019). *Ubuntu* emphasises the idea that one's well-being is intricately linked to the well-being of others, promoting empathy, cooperation, and a collective responsibility for the welfare of the community (Le Grange, 2011; Maqutu, 2018; Van Breda, 2019).

In this sense, individuals together make a whole in terms of the community. The community at large consists of individual parts (the people) who fit together to create a unified collectivist standpoint emphasising that community is most important. Therefore, the notion of parts of the individual's personality which have not yet been integrated are not applicable to this context. While psychoanalytic and gestalt dream work may involve the integration of different aspects of the personality, South African traditional healing practices focus more on the relationship between the dreamer and the spirit world, and the cultural and spiritual dimensions of dream interpretation.

On the other hand, one way in which the notion of personality could be applied to a traditional healing context would be in the way within traditional healing systems, dreams are often believed to hold significant information about a person's life, including their health, relationships, and overall well-being. This concept aligns with the idea that dreams can reveal important aspects of an individual's personality and psyche. Dreams are considered a way for the ancestors or spirits to communicate, and certain dream elements

may represent disconnected or unresolved aspects of an individual's personality, as discussed within the context of psychoanalytic theory.

Additionally, the idea that dreams can reveal unprocessed emotions or conflicts, as discussed in the context of gestalt therapy, could be relevant within a traditional healing context in that traditional healers may help individuals recognise and address conflicts, offering a holistic approach to healing and personal growth. In another sense, Western dream work mentions how working with dreams could help to create personality profiles and draw connections between dream content and an individual's psychological state. Within the South African traditional healing contexts, the content and recurring themes in an individual's dreams could be carefully analysed to understand their personality, as well as any underlying issues or spiritual imbalances.

In conclusion, the concept of personality in dream interpretation could be applicable in South African traditional healing contexts. Dream analysis plays a vital role in understanding and addressing various aspects of an individual's personality, spirituality, and well-being within the framework of traditional African healing practices. However, overall, while personality may not entirely play the same central role within the South African traditional healing contexts as they do in Western psychology, the interpretation of dreams in South Africa is deeply intertwined with cultural and spiritual beliefs and, personality, may inadvertently be a feature within cultural traditional healing dream work.

5.7.1.3 Consciousness and Unconsciousness in Dreams. Within the focus area of “consciousness and the unconscious” in dreams, it is found that dreams are explained through the concept of the unconscious (Kara, & Özcan, 2019; Lack, 2023). Within the

psychoanalytic approach to dream work, Freud labelled dreams as, “the royal road to the unconscious” (Restek-Petrović et al., 2013, p. 300), and he believed dreams to be a gateway to accessing the unconscious mind. According to Cherry (2019), during dreaming, the dreamer is unconscious, which then produces a reservoir of feelings, thoughts, urges, and memories that are outside of one’s conscious awareness and contain contents that are unacceptable or unpleasant, such as feelings of pain, anxiety, or conflict (Cherry, 2019).

According to Restek-Petrović et al. (2013), we dream to create a contact barrier between the realms of consciousness and the unconscious; and to transform moment to moment flow of our experiences of ourselves and others. Within this global context, dreams are indications of an attempt to help the dreamer have a symbolic and imaginative realisation of what he or she consciously yearns for. When it comes to the traditional healing contexts and consciousness and the unconsciousness, the understanding of dreams in this context may not align with concepts of concepts from psychoanalytic and Western perspectives.

Within traditional healing contexts, dreams are interpreted in a way that is deeply connected to the cultural, spiritual, and religious beliefs of the community. The emphasis is on understanding the message from the ancestors or gods and how it relates to the dreamer's life or community as a whole. The meaning is typically understood within a collective context. However, the unconscious does play a role in traditional healing dream work. For instance, healing dreams work by accessing the unconscious mind and bringing forth repressed emotions, memories, and insights that can aid in the healing process,

and during sleep, the brain sifts through the events and emotions of the day, organising and processing them into memories.

Within this context there may not be a clear line drawn between consciousness and the unconsciousness in the same way that psychoanalysis does. Instead, they often view the dream state as an altered state of consciousness where one can communicate with the spiritual realm. The unconscious mind is believed to facilitate this connection, offering guidance, protection, and wisdom from the ancestral realm. This guidance can be invaluable in the healing process. So, although it may not be explicitly acknowledged as such within these contexts, from a psychological perspective, traditional healers make use of trances and altered states of consciousness in order to perform the dream work rituals and interpret dreams (Ember & Carolus, 2017).

Another aspect of the unconscious within this context is that dreams are often encoded in symbolic language, and the unconscious mind is the primary generator of these symbols (Shukla, 2021). In traditional healing dream work, symbols can provide essential clues about the underlying causes of illness or imbalance. By exploring and deciphering these symbols, healers can gain valuable insights into the patient's condition. In general, traditional healing dream work often seeks to bring about personal transformation, not merely the alleviation of symptoms. The unconscious mind can offer insights into an individual's life purpose, spiritual path, and personal growth by helping individuals identify areas of their lives that need change and transformation to promote overall health and well-being.

The unconscious mind is a vital component of traditional healing dream work, although it may not be explicitly seen or acknowledged as such. It does, however, serve as a wellspring of symbolic language, wisdom, and guidance. Traditional healers unknowingly incorporate the unconscious into healing practices, and address the root causes of ailments, promote holistic healing, and empower individuals on their journey toward health and well-being. Within the traditional healing South African contexts, however, the emphasis in dream work does not revolve around the unconscious mind. Instead, it centres on a spiritual and transcendent approach, where dreams are regarded as messages from the ancestors that demand unwavering obedience and sincere consideration.

A number of articles alluded to the fact that there is a connection between waking life themes and dreams (Carcione et al., 2021; Hill & Knox, 2010; Holzinger et al., 2021; Pesant & Zadra, 2004; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016; Sim, et al., 2021). Within the cognitive behavioural approach, for instance, the focus is on the conscious mind over the unconscious mind and looks at waking life similarities (Hill & Knox, 2010; Sim, et al., 2021). As an example, cognitive behavioural dream work believes that dreams exhibit what we go through in our waking lives' consciousness states and not within latent, unconscious material. These waking life connections and themes are to be made during the dream work process based on dream images.

How the connection between waking life themes and dreams relates to a traditional healing dream work context has several implications. Traditional healing often involves the interpretation of dream symbols and their connection to the dreamer's life. The idea that there is a link between waking life experiences and dream content aligns with the practice of interpreting dream symbols in the context of the individual's daily life and

concerns. The connection between waking life themes and dreams can help traditional healers guide individuals in understanding and resolving their waking life issues through dream analysis. Recognising the connection between dreams and daily life themes allows individuals to address unresolved emotional or spiritual issues, which is a central aspect of traditional healing.

Traditional healing practices have their own cultural and symbolic context for dream interpretation. The connection between waking life themes and dreams can be seen through the lens of the specific cultural beliefs and symbols that underpin the traditional healing system. Traditional healing typically focuses on holistic well-being, which includes the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of a person. Understanding the relationship between waking life and dreams allows individuals to work on achieving balance and well-being in all these dimensions. In summary, the connection between dreams and daily life themes is part of traditional healing dream work practices. In other words, within the traditional healing context, dreams always have a practical implication in that whatever the interpretation of the dream is, the dreamer would then apply that to their life, carrying out waking life functioning based on symbolic dream content.

In conclusion, the sub-theme of Dream interpretation encompasses rich insights, bridging the realms of psychology, culture, and spirituality. The three focus areas of “accuracy of dream interpretation”, “personality in dream interpretation”, and “consciousness and the unconsciousness” in dreams reveal the intricate interplay between Western psychoanalytic perspectives and South African traditional healing practices. While accuracy of dream interpretation varies between precision and spiritual significance, personality interpretations reflect a blend of individual and collective dimensions, and the

concept of consciousness and unconsciousness delves into the link between dreams and waking life themes. These diverse perspectives underscore the universal fascination with dreams and their significance, while also highlighting the profound impact of culture and tradition in shaping our understanding of this mysterious realm of the human psyche.

5.7.2 *Emotions and Dreams*

The next sub-theme discussed is emotions and dreams. From the literature it was clear that emotions play an important role in dreams in that the dreaming process is an emotional experience and affects emotions (Ellis, 2019; Restek-Petrović et al., 2013; Sim, et al., 2021). Within the context of dreaming and emotions, Holzinger et al., (2021) state that dreams can be described as an epiphenomenon of sleep, arising from the activation of various brain regions that subsequently trigger areas within the cortex, leading to the generation of images and emotions. It is thus impossible to characterise dreaming without acknowledging the integral role emotions play in the experience.

Ellis (2019) states that all dream methods underscore the importance of working with the emotions related to dreams. From the literature, there arose a number of key takeaways in dealing with emotions in dreams. Firstly, it was clear from the literature that emotions serve as indicators and guides for therapists (Ellis, 2019; Hoss & Hoss, 2016; Restek-Petrović et al., 2013; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016; Sim, et al., 2021; Swan & Schottelkorb, 2013; Tangolo, 2015). Ellis (2019) highlights the significance of exploring emotions as a way to unlock the meaning of dreams. Emotions in dream work alert clients to how their dreams relate to events in their waking lives, their past, or their unconscious concerns (Sim, et al.,

2021) Negative emotions in dreams and emotionally charged dreams are informative signs for therapists, alerting them to clients' most pressing concerns (Hoss & Hoss, 2016).

Another key takeaway in dealing with emotions in dreams is that three ways were identified on how to work with emotions in dreams. The first is to note and explore the emotions and reactions contained within the dream itself; the second is to explore emotions that arise during the dreamwork psychotherapeutic session; and the third is to note a dream about a situation that would normally evoke strong feelings in waking life, yet in the dream, there would be a notable lack of emotion to the situation. This dream or situation can then be unpacked in psychotherapy and help the dreamer explore underlying issues (Ellis, 2019). The final takeaway from the literature on dreams and emotions is that working with dreams offers clients an opportunity to observe their own inner processes and develop a tool for self-healing, as dreams can assist in healing the mind after emotional wounds and distressing emotional experiences (Tangolo, 2015).

The implications of this for a South African context are numerous. There are principles that can be relevant in traditional healing dream work contexts in South Africa. For instance, emotions do also play a crucial role within traditional healing dream work contexts. In terms of emotions as key indicators, within these contexts, emotions in dreams are often considered as significant indicators. There are instances where individuals approach traditional healers when they have experienced difficult emotions such as anxiety, depression or fear in relation to dreams. The dream worker then finds solutions for the dreamer to alleviate and relieve the dreamer from distressful negative emotions. Emotions are also indications to traditional healers about what treatment the dreamer needs.

Secondly, traditional healers work with emotions in dreams to help individuals navigate their waking lives. Emotions in dreams are explored to understand their connection to real-life events, past experiences, or unresolved issues. Traditional healers may guide clients in interpreting the emotional content of their dreams to provide insights into their concerns and challenges.

Thirdly, as mentioned the literature mentions three ways to work with emotions in dreams, and these methods can be adapted to traditional healing practices. Traditional healers may use various techniques to explore and interpret the emotional content of dreams, including analysing the emotions within the dream, discussing emotions that arise during healing sessions, and addressing situations in dreams where there's a notable lack of emotion, which can indicate underlying issues or emotional blockages.

In terms of self-healing, traditional healing within these contexts often emphasise the importance of self-healing and understanding one's inner processes. Dreams are seen as a way to access the inner self and work through emotional wounds or distressing experiences. Dreams can serve as a tool for self-healing in traditional healing practices, helping individuals to address emotional and psychological challenges.

In conclusion, the exploration of emotions and dreams in the literature underscores their interconnectedness and significance in the realm of dream analysis and psychotherapy. Emotions are not mere byproducts of dreams; they are essential guides for therapists and indicators of the dreamer's inner world. This understanding holds relevance not only in conventional therapeutic settings but also in traditional healing dream work contexts in South Africa. Emotions in dreams play a vital role in identifying and addressing psychological and

spiritual well-being, serving as cues for treatment and self-healing. By delving into emotions within dreams, individuals can unlock the profound meanings hidden in their subconscious, ultimately aiding in their journey toward self-discovery and emotional well-being.

5.7.3 Symbolism and Imagery in Approaching Dream Work

The sub-theme of symbolism and imagery in approaching dream work occurred frequently throughout the literature. It is believed that dreams have hidden and implicit meanings that are presented as symbols (Kara, & Özcan, 2019). The implications of this within traditional healing contexts are many. Many African traditional healing practices involve communication with ancestral spirits. Dreams are seen as a medium through which ancestors may convey messages, guidance, or warnings to the living. Dreams are believed to be a direct connection to the spiritual realm, and their symbolism is crucial in deciphering the ancestral messages.

Secondly, within these contexts, dream symbols often have cultural or regional significance. Traditional healers are trained to understand these symbols and their meanings within the cultural framework. Dreams are thought to provide insights into an individual's physical and emotional health. A dream may contain clues about the cause of an illness or suggest a remedy or treatment. Traditional healers use interpretation of dream symbols as part of the diagnostic process and the healing journey.

Carl Jung theorised that dreams often contain archetypal symbols that are universal and deeply rooted in the human collective unconscious (Caperton, 2012; Jung, 1969). Archetypal dreams are believed to connect individuals to a deeper, transcultural level of human

experience, and often contain imagery and themes that are recognisable to people from various backgrounds. Within traditional healing dream work contexts, dreams are seen as a means of connecting with ancestors, spirits, and the broader spiritual realm. Dreams are interpreted within the cultural and spiritual framework of the community and are used for various purposes, including healing, divination, and resolving social or personal issues.

In this regard, both approaches (Jung archetypal dream theory and traditional healing dream work) recognise the presence of universal symbolism in dreams. Jung's archetypal theory states that these symbols are part of a collective human experience (Pendaroski & Nikolovska, 2017), which links into a traditional healing context, although this context may have its own set of universal symbols within their cultural settings. Jung's concept of the collective unconscious, which contains archetypal material, shares a conceptual parallel with the idea of connecting with ancestral spirits and the broader spiritual realm in traditional South African healing practices (Bührmann, 1977; 1981; Wyatt et al., 2011).

Another parallel between Jungian dream analysis and traditional healing dream work emphasises the potential for healing, personal insight, and transformation through engaging with dreams. In Jungian analysis, dreams aid in personal growth and emotional healing (Roesler, 2020). Traditional healing dream work also utilises dreams for physical and spiritual healing. Jungian dream analysis supports the notion that dreams offer insights into an individual's inner world (Roesler, 2020). Traditional healing dream work supports the notion that dreams provide insights into one's place in the community and guidance from the spiritual realm.

Finally, in both approaches, dreams are interpreted and integrated into the individual's and or community's life. Jungian analysis involves making personal meaning of archetypal symbols, while South African traditional healers interpret dreams within their cultural and spiritual context. It is, however, essential to recognise that while there may be similarities, both these approaches are distinct and deeply embedded in their respective cultural and theoretical backgrounds, and therefore any effort to bridge these concepts should be approached with respect for the specific cultural and spiritual traditions of South African dream work and a nuanced understanding of Jung's theories. That being said, however, Vera Bührmann's work highlighted these connections between Jung's analysis and traditional healing dream work within the South African context (Bührmann, 1977; 1981; Bührmann & Gqomfa (1981; 1982a; 1982b).

Within a traditional healing dream work context, traditional healers recognise the potential for dreams to provide insights and solutions through symbols. Individuals may report receiving guidance or answers to life's challenges through their dream symbols interpreted by traditional healers. Dream symbols can stimulate innovative thinking and offer creative inspiration. Dream-related insights and symbols can be incorporated into traditional healing rituals, problem-solving, or artistic expression, like how they may be used in other cultures. In conclusion, there are instances whereby a symbol may have an interpretation that is universally recognisable, including from a South African traditional healing perspective. However, within a traditional healing context, symbolism, as understood in the psychoanalytic sense, is not completely applicable. The following extract from Berg (2003, p. 201) evidence this:

“Dreams are regarded as being messages from the ancestors. They have both therapeutic and prognostic value. Although the actual symbolism contained in the dream is usually not analysed the way it would be in Western psychotherapy, the dream is fully experienced, and its message is acted upon. The ‘royal road to the unconscious’ is here travelled with a seriousness that is often missing in European culture. It is the role of traditional rituals to help the person to dream, to share the dream and to find meaning in the dream. For this the healer’s knowledge and skills are needed and he/she is the link to the ancestors.”

In conclusion, the exploration of symbolism and imagery in approaching dream work reveals profound connections between diverse cultural and psychological perspectives. While dreams are filled with symbols and meanings within traditional healing practices, their interpretations carry unique cultural and spiritual significance, often rooted in the guidance of ancestral spirits. The recognition of universal and archetypal symbols in dreams, as proposed by Jung, aligns with the idea of connecting with ancestral spirits and the broader spiritual realm in South African healing traditions. Both approaches share the belief in the transformative potential of dreams for personal insight, healing, and growth. However, it is crucial to appreciate the distinctive nature of these practices and their specific cultural contexts. In South African traditional healing dream work, dreams are considered messages from the ancestors, offering therapeutic and prognostic value, although their symbolism is not analysed in the Western psychotherapeutic sense. Instead, dreams are fully experienced, and their messages are acted upon, emphasising the seriousness and cultural significance of this "royal road to the unconscious."

5.7.4 Cognitive Behavioural Approaches to Dream Work

Literature on cognitive behavioural therapeutic approaches to dreams was another prominent sub-theme across the literature. These approaches to working with dreams are in contrast to the psychodynamic and psychoanalytic dream work approaches in that they move away from the manifest, unconscious subjects of dream work and focus on how dreams reflect waking life. According to Carcione et al. (2021), when working with dreams within this approach, the central feature is the abandonment of the exploration of the latent meaning of dreams, which is considered in continuity with waking life. In other words, dreams reflect a client's view of self, world, and future, and are subject to the same cognitive biases as the waking state (Carcione et al., 2021).

In general, literature on how cognitive behavioural therapeutic approaches to dreams are worked with practically are limited. There was one study done with a focus on making cognitive behavioural therapy in general more culturally adaptive to the South African context (Hinton & Patel, 2017). Another study conducted on reducing PTSD symptoms in South African participants concluded that CBT did not make a significant difference in reducing PTSD symptoms in South African participants (Hinsberger et al., 2016). In yet another study, however, using a culturally adapted CBT treatment with a traumatised South African indigenous group, the Sepedi, found significant positive results for its adaptation (Jalal, 2018). The same study, however, noted that there are traditional ritualistic belief systems which participants kept referring to during treatment.

These studies indicate that, in general, there is potential for the CBT approach being a viable and culturally adaptive therapeutic approach in South Africa. However, it would seem that there is still more work to be done in terms of making Western psychotherapeutic approaches more culturally adaptable and, for example, incorporating traditional healing

measures, methods and dream work in order to see improvement with clients, as seen in the study with the Sepedi indigenous group. There have been a number of publications advocating for making Western psychotherapeutic approaches more culturally adaptive, culturally sensitive, and relevant to the South African context (De la Rey & Ipser, 2004; Knight, 2013; Long, 2013; Macleod, 2004; Macleod & Howell, 2013; Pillay, 2011; Slabbert, 2016), a discussion of which is beyond the scope of this study.

In conclusion, the cognitive behavioural approach to dream work marks a departure from traditional psychoanalytic methods, placing a strong emphasis on the link between dreams and the waking life of the dreamer. Dreams, in this framework, are viewed as reflections of oneself, world, and future, and are subject to the same cognitive biases as conscious thought. While literature on the practical application of cognitive behavioural dream work is limited, studies on the cultural adaptability of cognitive behavioural therapy in the South African context indicate the potential for its viability. These studies highlight the need for cultural sensitivity and adaptation to make Western psychotherapeutic approaches more effective in diverse cultural settings, such as South Africa. The successful case of the Sepedi indigenous group demonstrates that incorporating traditional healing practices, methods, and dream work can lead to positive outcomes. It is evident that there is a growing awareness of the importance of making Western psychotherapeutic approaches culturally relevant, an area of study that continues to evolve and expand.

5.7.4.1 Description, Memory Sources, and Reformation Model. As an example of a cognitive behavioural dream work model that was included in the data set was the *Dream Interpretation* and the *Description, Memory Sources, and Reformation model (DMR)*.

Holzinger et al. (2021) state that the DMR model allows for the patient's insights and

interpretative abilities, rather than the therapist's ones. They further state the procedure includes three steps, after which the patient will be asked for an interpretation: (i) Description (in which the therapist asks the patient to describe the dream); (ii) Memory Sources (looking at which memories have spilt over into the dream); (iii) Reformulation (presenting the dream again, reconnecting the broader and more general meanings found in the second stage) (Holzinger et al., 2021).

To make the DMR model more applicable to traditional healing contexts, it would need to be integrated with the belief systems and ideologies of South African traditional healers. This may involve adapting the model to incorporate elements such as ancestral spirits, rituals, and symbols that are central to traditional healing practices. It would also be essential to approach the integration of the DMR model with cultural sensitivity. This means respecting the sacred and culturally significant aspects of traditional healing and ensuring that the model does not contradict or undermine these beliefs. The DMR model should also be reevaluated in terms of assessing whether it provides meaningful benefits and whether the integration with traditional healing practices leads to improved client outcomes.

The integration of the DMR model within South African traditional healing should be an ongoing process if it does go ahead. Research could help refine the model and adapt it further to the unique aspects of this context. Applying this model to a South African traditional healing context is possible but requires careful adaptation, cultural sensitivity, and collaboration with traditional healers. It should be a dynamic and evolving process that respects and aligns with the beliefs and practices of traditional healing while offering

potential benefits in terms of understanding and addressing patients' concerns and dreams within this framework.

For the most part, this method could be applied within a South African context. The practical steps are easy to follow and translatable. Also, with the emphasis on memory, memory being a universal human mental functioning component, it accessible to anyone from any culture. One final advantage of the CBT framework which can be transferable to a traditional South African context is that CBT focuses on how dreams reflect waking life. Within the traditional healing context, the traditional healer, upon interpreting the dream, would then give practical guidance and instruction to the dreamer based on their waking life situations.

On the other hand, where CBT falls short, is that it does not account for the transcendent aspect of traditional healing, and therefore cannot be fully integrated without adaptation. Another drawback to this method being fully integrated into the South African traditional healing context, is the role of the dreamer versus the role of the dream worker. Within the South African context, the dream worker is considered to be the one to interpret the dreams, and has the final say on what the meaning of the dream is. Within the CBT framework, however, this method advocates for the dreamer to be the one to bring forth their insights and interpretative abilities within the dream work space, and come up with the interpretation of the dream.

In conclusion, the Dream Interpretation and the Description, Memory Sources, and Reformation model (DMR) offers a cognitive behavioural approach to dream work that emphasises the patient's insights and interpretative abilities. While it presents a practical

framework for understanding dreams in the South African context, its integration would require careful adaptation, cultural sensitivity, and collaboration with traditional healers. The DMR model's focus on the connection between dreams and waking life aligns with traditional healing practices but falls short in accounting for the transcendent aspects and the traditional roles of dream interpretation within this context. Successful integration would involve a dynamic and evolving process that respects the beliefs and practices of traditional healing while offering potential benefits in understanding and addressing patients' concerns and dreams.

5.7.5 Depth psychology and its Approaches to Dream Work

The next sub-theme identified across the literature was that of depth psychology and its approaches to dream work. Depth psychology is broadly used to describe approaches to therapy that are open to the exploration of the subtle, unconscious, and transpersonal aspects of human experience (Diamond (2021)). The key theorists from this approach are Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Alfred Adler.

According to Solms (2000), Freud claimed that dreams were attempts to fulfil unfulfilled wishes arising during sleep and derived from sexual urges. Solms (2000) further states that Freud would collect dreamers' associations to the individual elements of their dreams and then infer implicit, underlying meanings which would reveal the dreamer's latent thoughts. According to Hill and Knox (2010), Jung's main divergence from Freud was his belief that dreams reveal material from the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious, the source of archetypes. He disagreed with Freud on his over-emphasis of sexual repression, and his knowledge about the main purpose of dreams being wish-fulfilment (Beebe, Cambray &

Kirsch, 2001). Jung's theory emphasised the creative nature of dreams, which are viewed as a direct, natural expression of the psyche's current state (Berg, 2003; Pesant & Zadra, 2004).

Adlerian dream work focuses on the emotional attitudes in a dream that are more indicative of its meaning than verbal elements, that there are important distinctions between what appears on the surface of a dream and all the hidden aspects which may be revealed through interpretative work, that dreams have similar dynamics to daydreams, and that verbal associations are relevant because of the closeness of dream interpretation to linguistic expression (Shulman, 1973, as cited in Bird, 2005). According to Bird (2005), Adlerian dream work techniques are seen as a purposeful part of the dreamer's life and are created by the dreamer alone, providing real insight that they may not otherwise have been aware of.

Depth psychology in South Africa is one of the most well-documented modalities of psychological therapy. According to Hayes (2008), psychoanalysis in South Africa has been around in some form or another for the past 70 years. According to Knight (2013), psychoanalytic psychotherapy is widely practiced by mental health professionals in South Africa. However, she states that the majority of the 'black' population may not choose psychotherapy as an intervention. Nevertheless, those, both black and white, who do engage in psychotherapy are likely to be part of a process rooted in psychoanalytic theory. Knight points out that psychoanalysis was imported from colonial Europe and is largely unfamiliar to various traditional 'black' cultures in South Africa. Nevertheless, since the post-apartheid era, an increasing number of black middle-to-upper-class urban clients have sought psychoanalytic psychotherapy (Knight, 2013).

In a traditional healing dream work context, the principles of depth psychology and its approaches to dream work can be applied to understand and interpret dreams in a therapeutic and spiritually meaningful way. Traditional healing practices involve exploring the deeper, symbolic, and transpersonal aspects of an individual's experience. Depth psychology, on the other hand, as described by Freud, Jung, and Adler, emphasises the exploration of the unconscious mind. In traditional healing, dreams are often seen as a window into the hidden realms of the psyche, allowing healers to uncover repressed emotions, unresolved issues, and the influence of ancestral or spiritual forces.

Another important aspect, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, is that of symbolism and hidden meanings. Freud's approach of collecting dreamers' associations and inferring implicit meanings from dreams can be relevant in traditional healing in that traditional healers may use symbols and metaphors within dreams to uncover deeper spiritual or psychological insights. Again, as mentioned earlier, in terms of archetypes and the collective unconscious, Jung's theory of dreams revealing material from the personal and collective unconscious can be especially significant in traditional healing in that dreams are seen as a means to connect with archetypal forces or ancestral wisdom, offering guidance and insight.

Another aspect from Jung's theory on dreams is that of the creative nature of dreams. Jung's emphasis on the creative nature of dreams aligns with the idea that dreams can provide inspiration and solutions to life's challenges. Traditional healers may encourage individuals to explore the creative and transformative potential of their dreams. It is important to note, however, that ultimately depth psychology principles may need to be adapted to respect and incorporate the cultural beliefs and values of the individuals seeking healing. Traditional

‘black’ cultures may have their own unique ways of interpreting and working with dreams within a healing context that need to be respected.

Traditional healing dream work could possibly blend depth psychology principles with indigenous healing methods and rituals, creating a holistic approach that addresses both the psychological and spiritual dimensions of an individual's well-being. In summary, depth psychology and its approaches to dream work can provide a framework for understanding and interpreting dreams within a traditional healing context, helping individuals access the profound wisdom and guidance that dreams may offer on their spiritual and healing journey. The specific application of this, however, will vary depending on the cultural and spiritual traditions of the healing practice and the needs of the individual.

From the data, the two depth psychology examples that were found are Jungian and Adlerian dream work. Although Freudian dream work is still prevalent today, based on the searching criteria, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria, there were no current (2011-2021) Freudian depth psychology articles found within the data set. This research will now briefly lay out the steps of each dream work approach, after which it intends to draw inferences and state implications from the data and verify how applicable those approaches are to a traditional healing dream work context or not.

5.7.5.1 Jungian Approaches to Dreams. The Jungian dream work model that will be discussed was found in an article by Wyatt et al. (2011) on “*A Jungian approach to dreams reported by soldiers in a modern combat zone*”. Although this article is based on applying Jungian dream work methods and techniques to working with dreams within the context of dreams reported by soldiers who have faced modern combat and were left with

PTSD, the steps outlined in this particular article align with that of classical Jungian dream work techniques and steps (Mattoon, 1978, as cited in Caperton, 2012). Thus, the essence of Jungian's dream work is not lost within this the context of this article applying Jungian dream work techniques with soldiers diagnosed with PTSD.

In this article, Wyatt et al. (2011) outline the following steps on Jungian dream work within this context. The first step, dream characters are interpreted as a mix of personal symbols and complexes, especially in relation to the dreamer's current circumstances. Familiar figures may represent both external individuals and inner aspects. The next step focuses on dream settings, where unfamiliar ones symbolise the dreamer's psychological state, while familiar settings indicate specific locations.

Step three identifies exceptionally uncanny or unfamiliar elements as archetypal or godlike images. Step four emphasises understanding dream symbols in terms of explicit imagery and metaphorical relevance. Step five emphasises avoiding premature categorisation of images as anima or shadow, only doing so when it genuinely contributes to interpretation. Finally, step six follows Jung's perspective, treating dreams as symbolic expressions of the dreamer's current psychological state in the context of archetypal patterns, even in the case of combat-related PTSD.

In traditional healing dream work, the interpretation of dream characters is often approached with an understanding of symbols and archetypes within the dreamer's cultural or spiritual context. Just as in Jungian dream work, familiar figures may represent both external individuals and internal aspects of the dreamer's psyche. Traditional dream work also considers the significance of dream settings. Unfamiliar settings can be seen as

symbolic representations of the dreamer's psychological state or spiritual journey. Familiar settings may hold specific cultural or sacred meanings.

In terms of uncanny or unfamiliar elements being regarded as archetypal material, in many traditional healing contexts, especially those rooted in indigenous or shamanic practices, uncanny or unfamiliar characters and settings may be viewed as encounters with spirits, ancestors, or archetypal entities. These experiences are often seen as significant and may have healing or transformative qualities. When it comes to the interpretation of dream symbols, as stated earlier, dream symbols in traditional healing dream work can carry cultural, mythological, or symbolic significance. As in Jungian dream work, symbols are not merely taken at face value but are considered in their broader cultural and metaphorical context.

The next step related to avoiding premature categorisation, while avoiding premature categorisation, traditional healing dream work may also involve recognising certain dream figures as representatives of anima, animus, shadow, or other archetypal elements based on the cultural and spiritual framework of the dreamer. This categorisation is typically done thoughtfully and contextually. Finally, for the symbolic expressions and archetypal patterns, as stated earlier, traditional healing dream work often views dreams as symbolic expressions of the dreamer's current state within the context of cultural, mythological, or spiritual archetypes. Dreams are seen as a reflection of the individual's connection to timeless patterns and ancestral wisdom.

Thus, in summary, both Jungian dream work, and traditional healing dream work share common principles of symbolism, archetypal interpretation, and the recognition of deeper,

often spiritual dimensions within dreams. These steps synthesised by Mattoon (1978, as cited in Caperton, 2012) are applicable to a South African context, however, some adaptation is always needed. As mentioned earlier, cultural sensitivity with adaptations is essential when applying dream work techniques in diverse cultural and traditional healing contexts.

5.7.5.2 Adlerian Dream Work. Adlerian dream work was another example of a depth psychology approach that was included in the data set. In general, classical Adlerian dream work theory as explained by Bird (2005), involves the belief that dreams are a purposeful part of a person's life, serving as a means to continue living with one's existing beliefs and private logic. Adler built upon Freud's framework, emphasising the significance of emotions in dream interpretation and the need to distinguish between surface dream content and hidden aspects related to thoughts, memories, and emotional attitudes (Shulman, 1973, as cited in Bird, 2005).

For this research, the article included in the data set which presents practical steps for conducting Adlerian dream work is the article by Noronha (2014), *“Dream Work in Grief Therapy”*. In this work, the author discusses how working with dreams using the Adlerian dream work approach is useful with grief and loss clients who present with dreams. The article consists of a case report demonstrating how Adlerian dream analysis was used with a client. Drawing from Noronha's (2014) article on Adlerian dream work in grief therapy, this research will highlight potential implications and inferences that could be made within the context of traditional healing dream work.

According to Noronha (2014), proponents of Adlerian theory states that dreams serve as manifestations of an individual's lifestyle, offering expressions of the dreamer's attitude toward life and their unresolved reality problems. Bird (2005, as cited in Noronha, 2014) outlines two tasks associated with working with dreams: firstly, assisting the dreamer in understanding their current situation as depicted in the dream, and secondly, addressing whether the dreamer is inclined to contemplate making changes and is ready to do so, followed by an examination of the practical actions available for such changes.

Based on the Adlerian dream work process stated above, it is possible to find somewhat of an alignment between the two approaches by focusing on the holistic aspects of both approaches and understanding the potential for personal growth and healing. For one, both traditional healing practices and Adlerian psychology emphasise holistic well-being. In Adlerian dream work, dreams are often seen as a reflection of an individual's current psychological and emotional state. Similarly, within the traditional healing dream work context, dreams are seen as messages from the spirit world or the subconscious, which can be used to address physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Adlerian psychology places a strong emphasis on individual growth and self-improvement, and how the dream can help the dreamer become more self-aware and make positive changes in their life. This aligns with the idea of traditional healing dream work as a means for personal growth and healing within a cultural context. Another aspect is that both traditional healing practices and Adlerian dream work involve the interpretation of symbols and meanings. In Adlerian dream analysis, symbols are often seen as representations of underlying emotions and thoughts. Within the traditional healing

dreaming context, symbols may carry cultural or spiritual significance. Finding common ground in the interpretation of symbols can help align the two approaches.

Adlerian dream work often involves working with a counsellor or therapist to explore the meaning of dreams. Traditional healing practices involve guidance from a traditional healer. In both cases, the role of the guide or counsellor is to help the dreamer understand and integrate the dream's message into their life. Finally, Adlerian psychology places a strong emphasis on understanding an individual's life goals and purpose. In some traditional healing contexts, dreams may be seen as guiding individuals toward their life's purpose or offering insights into their role in the community. Aligning the two approaches can involve exploring how dreams connect with an individual's life goals and purpose within their cultural context.

In order to align these two frameworks effectively, it is important to approach traditional healing dreams with cultural sensitivity, respect, and an openness to understanding the unique context from which they arise. Additionally, individuals interested in this alignment may benefit from working with professionals who are knowledgeable in both Adlerian psychology and the specific traditional healing practices in question in order to ensure a holistic and culturally sensitive approach to dream work.

In conclusion, the sub-theme of Depth psychology and its various approaches to dream work, including Freudian, Jungian, and Adlerian models, provide rich insights for interpreting dreams in the context of traditional healing. These approaches emphasise symbolism, archetypes, and understanding the deeper, often spiritual, dimensions of dreams, aligning with a traditional healing belief system. The adaptation of depth

psychology principles to respect cultural contexts and beliefs is essential. Holistically, these approaches offer a promising framework for understanding and integrating dreams into individuals' well-being journeys, but their successful fusion with traditional healing practices hinges on cultural sensitivity, collaboration with experts in both fields, and a deep appreciation of the uniqueness of each cultural and spiritual context. This alignment may help individuals in a South African context tap into profound wisdom and guidance offered by dreams in their spiritual and healing journey.

5.7.6 Gestalt Approaches to Working with Dreams

The next sub-theme under the overarching theme Psychological approaches to dream work is gestalt approaches to working with dreams. According to Holzinger et al. (2021), Gestalt therapists strive to assist their clients in experiencing repressed, ambivalent, and unpleasant aspects, facilitating acceptance and integration into their complete selves. They emphasise that the implementation of these elements requires their initial revelation, a process often achieved through dream work. Gestalt therapy methods, they assert, can unveil messages from the unconscious that are encapsulated in dreams, allowing for exploration and integration into the therapeutic process.

The core principle of Gestalt therapy is the client's self-regulation in response to the current environment, which sets it apart from other psychotherapy orientations (Elliott, 2013). Gestalt therapy focuses on the present moment and the client's experiences in the "here and now" of therapy (Corey, 2009, as cited in Elliott, 2013). From a Gestalt perspective, dreams are seen as embodiments of pure aesthetic value, akin to other art forms (Sichera, 2003, as

cited in Cain, 2013). In the context of Gestalt dream work, it is vital to integrate both verbal and pre-verbal aspects of existence (Perls, et al., 1994, as cited in Cain, 2013).

Within the South African context, literature indicates that South African psychologists do make use of Gestalt therapy principles. One author wrote that it allowed for her client's sense of self and experience to be affirmed, encouraged, supported, and the opportunity was created to access choice and agency (Wyley, 2022). She further states that in South Africa, the Gestalt perspective has personal and political significance and supports change and transformation at many levels, which, in her opinion, is something that South Africa's apartheid history has denied many (Wyley, 2022).

In conclusion, the gestalt approaches to working with dreams presents a unique and profound perspective on dream analysis and therapy. Rooted in the fundamental principle of self-regulation and a focus on the present moment, Gestalt therapy distinguishes itself among various psychotherapy orientations. Dreams, from this standpoint, are regarded as expressions of aesthetic value, akin to art forms, and are seen as vehicles for integrating both verbal and pre-verbal aspects of existence. In the South African context, the utilisation of gestalt therapy principles has demonstrated the capacity to affirm, empower, and foster transformation at personal and political levels.

In essence, gestalt approaches to dream work offer a powerful tool for uncovering and integrating repressed elements of the self, enabling individuals to accept and embrace the totality of their experiences. Through this, individuals can work towards a more holistic and harmonious sense of self, ultimately contributing to personal growth and self-realisation. From the data searching and literature included in the data set of this thesis, the gestalt dream

work method that was found was the *DreamSenseMemory* (DSM) technique which is based on neurological findings on how the senses at play influence memory processing (Holzinger, et al., 2021). This will now be discussed.

5.7.6.1 DreamSenseMemory (DSM) Model. The DSM model, as described by Holzinger et al. (2021), in summary following the following practical steps. The first step involves dream selection where the therapist asks the dreamer to choose a recent dream and tell it in the present tense, providing as much detail as possible. Second, the dreamer is guided to enter the dream again by focusing on sensory impressions of elements within the dream. They are encouraged to mention potential memories that come to mind during this process.

Next, the therapist actively engages with the dreamer's description, aiming to grasp the moving pictures of the dream themselves. Then while discussing the dream's elements, the therapist asks the dreamer questions about how it felt to perform various actions in the dream, and the dreamer is encouraged to also focus on bodily sensations. Next, the dream is then retold and worked on multiple times, using the DSM procedures to make it accessible through the memory of the senses, conscious focus, and verbalisation. Finally, the DSM technique aims to transfer the changes and insights that originated in the dream to the dreamer's waking life, integrating these experiences into their daily reality.

The following inferences and implications of applying the gestalt dream work method mentioned earlier within the context of traditional healing dream work are discussed here. The DSM dream work model focuses on sensory impressions and emotional exploration within the dream and aims to help individuals gain insight and work through issues by examining their dreams in a structured manner. This technique may not directly align with

South African traditional healing dream work contexts, which have distinct cultural and spiritual frameworks.

Within South African traditional healing dream work contexts, dreams play a significant role, and they are often interpreted within the context of the individual's cultural and spiritual beliefs. The interpretation of dreams in South African traditional healing can vary widely depending on the specific cultural group and the traditional healer's background. Based on this, since the South African traditional healing dream work is deeply rooted in the cultural and spiritual traditions of various indigenous communities, dream interpretation often involves communication with ancestral spirits or other spiritual entities. The DSM model does not incorporate these cultural and spiritual elements.

Secondly, within the DSM model, the therapist actively engages with the dreamer's descriptions, whereas in contrast, South African traditional healing dream work involving a traditional healer or diviner has specific knowledge and roles within the community. The therapist's involvement in DSM may not be congruent with the traditional roles and practices of South African traditional healers contexts. While the DSM model emphasises sensory and emotional exploration of the dream, South African traditional healing dream work focuses on broader contextual factors, such as community, family, and cultural dynamics, as well as ancestral and spiritual connections.

Finally, the goal of transferring insights from dreams to waking life in the DSM model may not align with the goals of South African traditional healing, which involve seeking healing, guidance, or resolution of specific issues in accordance with cultural and spiritual beliefs. However, it may align in that South African traditional healers at times look for

waking life connections in dreams with the goal of directing a message from an ancestral spirit for the sake of waking life guidance and instructional application.

In summary, the DSM model is more rooted in Western psychological traditions, while South African traditional healing practices have their own unique methods and beliefs regarding dream interpretation, closely tied to cultural and spiritual aspects which cannot necessarily be transferable. In general, although gestalt therapy is an ongoing process within the South African context, gestalt dream work, specifically methods such as the DSM model, still needs a more work in order for it to be culturally adaptable and integrated within the South African traditional healing context. There is, however, a possibility to adapt certain gestalt dream work principle to better suit a traditional healing dream work context if there is a need for this.

In conclusion, the sub-theme of gestalt approaches to working with dreams offers valuable insights for interpreting dreams within a therapeutic context. Gestalt therapy emphasises the importance of experiencing repressed, ambivalent, and unpleasant aspects of oneself to achieve self-acceptance, and dream work plays a vital role in uncovering and understanding these hidden elements. In the South African context, the application of gestalt principles has shown the potential to affirm individuals' sense of self and facilitate personal and political transformation, particularly important in a post-apartheid society. A specific gestalt dream work model, the DreamSenseMemory (DSM) technique, focuses on sensory impressions and emotional exploration within dreams, aiming to transfer insights to waking life.

While the DSM model has its strengths, it may not directly align with South African traditional healing dream work, deeply rooted in cultural and spiritual beliefs, the role of traditional healers, and the broader contextual factors of the community, family, and ancestral spirits. Nonetheless, potential exists for adapting certain gestalt principles to better suit traditional healing contexts, emphasising the importance of cultural adaptability and integration in the pursuit of therapeutic effectiveness.

5.7.7 Integrative Approaches to Dream Work in Psychology

Looking at the three practical examples from the data related to the integrative approaches to dream work in psychology namely, *Line of the least resistance method*, *The Hill Cognitive-Experiential Model of Dream Interpretation method*, and *Group Dream Work*, in relation to a South African context, the following will now be discussed.

5.7.7.1 Line of the Least Resistance Method. According to Pendaroski (2021), this method implicitly contains techniques, elements and concepts from other methods in working with dreams such as Jung's analytical method, the gestalt method, the Adler method, system-dynamic methods and techniques in working with dreams as well as elements of spiritual approaches in working with dreams. The author further states that this method has twelve elements to work through during dream work provided in a worksheet which can be followed during the dream work process with a client.

In summary, the worksheet (Pendaroski & Nikolovska, 2017; Pendaroski, 2021) aids in the process of interpreting the meaning of the dream. The dream worker would go through the worksheet with the dreamer and ask the following questions to the dreamer: 1. What is

the storyline of the dream? 2. Which dominant themes appear in the dream? 3. Which physically-organismic aspects are present in the dream, and how is it presented? 4. Emotional context: how is the emotional tone and feelings in the dream? 5. What are the dream meanings from an intellectual perspective? 6. What are the hidden needs, motives and wishes from the dream? 7. Where and when did the dream take place? 8. Who and Whom are in the dream? 9. What are the relations between the characters? 10. Are there archetypal symbols in the narrative? 11. Are there spiritual elements in the dream?

Based on this technique, the following inferences and implications of this technique for traditional healing dream work context are discussed. When applying this approach to South African traditional healing and dream work contexts, it is important firstly to consider the cultural and spiritual aspects specific to South African traditional healing practices. Respect for cultural beliefs and practices is paramount, as traditional healing in South Africa involves the recognition of ancestral spirits and the use of rituals, symbols, and herbal remedies. As a first implication, when applying the Line of the least resistance method within this context, the dream worker should ensure that the dream interpretation process respects and incorporates these cultural elements.

Secondly, the dream worker should encourage the dreamer to share the storyline and dominant themes in the dream, but also be open to the inclusion of elements specific to South African traditional healing folklore and mythology. In addition to discussing physical and emotional aspects of the dream, the dream worker should consider how the dreamer's physical and emotional state might be connected to traditional healing practices or beliefs. For example, certain physical sensations or emotions may have spiritual significance.

Next, the dream worker could then explore the dream's intellectual meanings and any hidden needs, motives, or wishes within the framework of South African traditional healing. These interpretations may involve spiritual or ancestral elements. Next, the dream worker would examine where and when the dream took place within the cultural and spiritual context of South African traditional healing. Understanding the significance of specific locations or times can be crucial.

In terms of considering the character relations and archetypes in the dream, the dream worker should consider the relationships between dream characters and the presence of archetypal symbols within the narrative. In South African traditional healing, specific symbolic and archetypal elements might hold great relevance and importance. For the next step, the dream worker should pay particular attention to the presence of spiritual elements in the dream. In South African traditional healing, dreams are often seen as a means of communication with ancestral spirits. Interpretations may involve identifying the messages or guidance from these spirits.

Traditional healers could incorporate the dream interpretations into their healing rituals or practices, using the insights gained from the dream to guide their work in terms of community and group analysis as South African traditional healing often involves community or group rituals. The Line of the least resistance dream work method could be adapted for group analysis, allowing multiple individuals to share their dreams and gain collective insights. As a final step in empowerment and self-reflection, traditional healing often seeks to empower individuals and promote self-reflection. The dream interpretation

process could encourage dreamers to reflect on their own roles within the traditional healing context and understand how their dreams relate to their personal spiritual journeys.

In summary, there is potential for the Line of the least resistance dream work method to be adapted to fit within a South African traditional healing context by incorporating cultural, spiritual, and traditional elements specific to the region. However, it is essential to approach dream interpretation with respect for the culture and traditions, acknowledging the significance of dreams in the context of traditional healing.

5.7.7.2 The Hill Cognitive-Experiential Model of Dream Interpretation. Hill's three-stage model (Hill, 1996; 2004) has extensive empirical evidence for effectiveness. This integrative model, developed in 1996 by Carla Hill, consists of an integration of the psychoanalytic, existential-phenomenological, gestalt, and behavioural psychology approaches (Caperton, 2012; Hill & Knox, 2010). Her model is based on the assumptions that, "(1) dreams are a continuation of waking thought without immediate input from the external world; (2) dreams' meaning is personal, and thus standard symbols or dream dictionaries are likely not useful; (3) working with dreams requires therapist and client collaboration; (4) dreams are useful for helping people understand themselves more deeply; (5) dreams consist of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components; and (6) therapists must have sound basic helping skills before they can effectively apply the dream model" (Hill & Knox, 2010, pp. 5-6).

According to Sim et al. (2021), their model encompasses three distinct stages: exploration, insight, and action. In the exploration stage, therapists guide clients through detailed descriptions, emotional immersion, associations, and the establishment of

connections to waking life for key dream images. During the insight stage, therapists assist clients in constructing new, profound understandings of the dream as a whole. These understandings are intended to operate on a deep, emotional level, helping clients grasp the relevance of their dreams to events in their waking lives, past experiences, existential/spiritual concerns, or unconscious issues. In the action stage, therapists and clients collaborate to explore how the client can implement changes in their waking life based on insights generated in the exploration and insight stages (Sim et al., 2021).

The possible application and integration of the Hill Cognitive-Experiential Model of Dream Interpretation into a South African traditional healing dream work context is discussed. Noting that this dream work model is a psychological approach to dream analysis that integrates various therapeutic perspectives and is primarily rooted in Western psychology, it can potentially be applied to a South African traditional healing context with certain adaptations and considerations.

Firstly, the language and terminology used in Hill's model may need to be adapted to align with the cultural and linguistic context of South African traditional healing. It is important to ensure that clients and traditional healers can relate to the concepts and terminology used in dream analysis. Secondly, there should be respect for ancestral wisdom in that the South African traditional healing dream work context involves a strong connection to ancestors and their wisdom. Dreams are sometimes seen as a means of communication with ancestors. The therapist should respect and incorporate this aspect into the dream interpretation process.

In terms of training and cultural competency, therapists working in this context should undergo training to understand and respect South African cultural beliefs, practices, and traditional healing systems. Cultural competency is essential to ensure effective and respectful application of any therapeutic model. Finally, ethical considerations are crucial when integrating Western psychological models into traditional healing contexts. Consent and confidentiality should be maintained, and the therapist should work within the ethical boundaries of both traditional healing and psychological practice.

In summary, the Hill Cognitive-Experiential Model of Dream Interpretation can potentially be applied to a South African traditional healing context with sensitivity to cultural beliefs and practices. It would require adaptation, collaboration, and a deep understanding of the cultural and spiritual dimensions of South African traditional healing to be effective and respectful.

5.7.7.3 Group Dream Work. Most dream work techniques within a group context are based on the Ullman (1987; Ullman & Zimmerman, 2017) process of Dream Appreciation technique. South African literature lacks case examples of how dreams have been worked with within a group context. The steps from the Ullman dream group, as relayed by Blencher (2011), and their practical application to a South African context are discussed.

The dream work steps, according to Blencher (2011), state that the dream group starts with a volunteer reciting their dream to the group, and the group members then write it down. In the second stage, the group members are allowed to ask the dreamer questions that clarify the dream, and in the stage after that, the dream is turned over to the group. During this stage, the group members associate to the dream as if it were their own dream

using the phrase, 'If it were my dream....'. When the group is finished associating to the dream, the dreamer may then say anything during this stage such as reactions to other people's associations, recollections about dream details, past waking experiences, or anything else that comes to mind.

In the next stage, the group is allowed to ask the dreamer questions that contextualise the dream, and in the stage after that, someone from the group volunteers to read the dream back out loud to the dreamer. The group members then take everything they have heard and put it all together into a comprehensive view. The final stage (usually a week or month later to metabolise the feedback) allows the dreamer to share with the group any reactions to anything that happened during the dream group. The whole process works best when all the group members are completely free with their associations (Blechner, 2011).

In terms of how these steps could be translated to a traditional healing dream work context in South Africa, the biggest translatable factor is that of group participation in dream work. South Africa sits within a cultural threshold that values community and group participation and interactions. This is collectivist approach is held within African philosophy of *Ubuntu*. According to the literature, the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* has been described as a comprehensive "African worldview based on the values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion, and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative community life in the spirit of family" (Broodryk, 2008, p. 17, as cited in Dolamo, 2013).

Ubuntu emphasises a holistic approach to understanding a person (Dolamo, 2013; Hanks, 2008; Tschaepe, 2013), highlighting the importance of humanity in its universality

and uniqueness (Edwards et al., 2004). *Ubuntu* underscores the significance of acceptable ideas and deeds (Mugumbate et al., 2023) and views individuals in the context of their community. Thus, it would be a possibility for group dream work to be a translatable dream work approach framework within the context of South Africa based on the emphasis of the *Ubuntu* philosophy of community.

Although there are no published articles on group dream work within the context of South Africa, there are, however, multiple publications on group work in clinical and social work practice within the South African context. These publications advocate for how South African group therapy in general could be a viable therapeutic intervention within a South African context (Chigangaidze, 2021; Van Dyk & Nefale, 2005).

According to Toseland and Rivas (2012, p. 11), group work in general in South Africa is defined as a "goal-directed activity with small treatment and task groups aimed at meeting socio-emotional needs and accomplishing tasks. This activity is directed to individual members of a group as a whole within a system of service delivery". Group therapies within South Africa have been found to help stabilise psychiatric symptomatology (Garte-Wolf, 2011). According to Chigangaidze (2021), *Ubuntu* can also be considered an essential philosophy applicable to clinical social work practice in mental health.

Many of these publications draw a link between the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* and group therapy. According to Mupedziswa et al. (2019), within this context, there is a strong emphasis on group dream work and the notion of *Ubuntu*. The author further states that in the context of group work in South Africa, the spirit of *Ubuntu* plays a vital role in binding groups together. The author further states that *Ubuntu* advances principles of sharing and participation, which are essential in clinical social work group therapy in

mental health. This is especially pertinent in groups composed of individuals from diverse backgrounds who may come together to address life challenges, a concept that aligns with African cultural values (Mupedziswa et al., 2019).

Kelly (2017) states that group work in healthcare settings provides a platform for the installation of hope, universality, and altruism, and that the philosophy of *Ubuntu* fosters selflessness (altruism), solidarity, and the installation of hope among fellow human beings. Madu (1997, as cited in Van Dyk & Nefale, 2005) states that for the *Ubuntu* therapist, the focus is on analysing the client's story to determine whether the problem lies on a psychotheological, intrapsychic, or interpersonal level. With the client's consent, the therapist can then decide whether the problem should be addressed at an individual, family, group, or community level (Madu, 1997, as cited in Van Dyk & Nefale, 2005).

On these bases, the literature indicates that the traditional African worldview of *Ubuntu* can be translatable into clinical healthcare settings, especially within the context of group work. On this notion, this research would argue that based on the philosophy of *Ubuntu* and published literature in clinical practice implementing this philosophy within a healthcare group work context, group dream work based on these same notions could be a viable application within the traditional healing dream work context. The philosophy of *Ubuntu* is deeply rooted in many African cultures, and it emphasises interconnectedness, community, and the shared humanity of all individuals, and these notions are closely linked to that of Ullman's group dream work model.

In bridging Ullman's group dream work model with the traditional healing dream work context of South Africa, an interesting connection emerges, rooted in the collectivist

notions of *Ubuntu*. Both approaches emphasise the power of community, shared wisdom, and interconnectedness as essential components of the healing process. Ullman's model, with its structured steps, encourages open dialogue, interpretation, and reflection within a group setting, fostering a sense of unity among participants. When merged with the South African traditional healing context, this framework aligns almost seamlessly with the *Ubuntu* philosophy, which underscores the importance of "I am because we are" (Dowdeswell & Hoobler, 2023).

In this symbiotic relationship, dream work becomes a means of healing and personal growth that respects cultural identity, spirituality, and the community's collective consciousness. The potential of fusing Ullman's dream work model and South African traditional healing not only enhances the effectiveness of dream interpretation but also magnifies the healing potential by embracing the *Ubuntu* worldview. This holistic approach acknowledges that each individual's well-being is intrinsically tied to the well-being of the entire community. Dream work within this context becomes a powerful tool for personal and communal transformation, where the collective wisdom of the group harmoniously melds with cultural and spiritual beliefs, promoting unity, empathy, and shared humanity.

Based on this notion, the dreamer's journey toward healing is not only a personal one but an integral part of the tapestry of culturally interconnected lives, ultimately enriching the tapestry of *Ubuntu* itself. Looking at Ullman's group dream work model, it is clear that this model could be applicable to the South African context. In summary, the convergence of Ullman's structured dream work model and the communal values of *Ubuntu* in the South African context offers a unique and promising approach to dream interpretation and

healing. This harmonious blend of individual insight and collective wisdom fosters unity, empathy, and shared humanity, aligning with the *Ubuntu* philosophy's core principles.

In conclusion, in examining integrative approaches to dream work in the context of South African traditional healing, it becomes evident that methods such as the Line of the least resistance, the Hill Cognitive-Experiential Model of Dream Interpretation, and group dream work offer valuable tools for understanding and interpreting dreams. These approaches can be successfully adapted by acknowledging and respecting the cultural, spiritual, and communal elements unique to the South African setting. The Line of the least resistance method's incorporation of diverse elements necessitates a deep understanding of cultural beliefs and the inclusion of ancestral spirits, while the Hill Cognitive-Experiential Model requires language and terminology adjustments and a recognition of the connection to ancestors.

Group dream work, based on Ullman's model, naturally aligns with the philosophy of *Ubuntu*, emphasising community, interconnectedness, and shared wisdom, making it a potentially seamless fit within the South African traditional healing context. Ultimately, these integrative approaches enhance the dream work process by harmonising Western psychological methods with the rich cultural and spiritual context of South Africa.

5.8 Theme 2: Psychiatric and Medical Approaches to Dream Work

This theme dealt with psychopathological or medical, and neuroscientific approaches to dreams. The two sub-themes that emerged under this overarching theme were

“psychopathological approaches to dream work” and “neuroscientific approaches to dream work”.

5.8.1 Psychopathological approaches to dream work

Within the psychopathological sub-theme, the areas of focus were “anxiety”, “depression”, and “PTSD”. These are discussed in relation to the South African context.

5.8.1.1 Anxiety. Anxiety, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2022), is a normal response to stress, and anxiety disorders differ from temporary feelings of anxiousness or nervousness with more intense feelings of fear or anxiety. The DSM-5 specifically describes anxiety as excessive worry and apprehensive expectations, occurring more days than not for at least 6 months, about a number of events or activities, such as work or school performance (APA, 2022).

According to Tangolo (2015), anxiety-provoking dreams could possibly be related to conflict and issues that the dreamer is experiencing in waking life. Similarly, Swan and Schottelkorb’s (2013) state that difficult and trying circumstances in waking life may lead to negative, fear-provoking dreams. The literature further highlighted that discussing anxiety dreams helps deal with underlying issues (Noronha, 2014).

Based on the above, the following inferences and possible implications are discussed. Since this information is primarily rooted within Western psychological theories and practices, it may not directly relate to a South African traditional healing dreamwork context. In South African traditional healing and dreamwork, the approach is rooted in

indigenous beliefs and practices that differ significantly from Western psychology. South African traditional healing, particularly among various ethnic groups, places a strong emphasis on ancestral communication, symbolism, and cultural beliefs.

Dreams in this context are considered to be a medium through which individuals can receive messages from the spiritual or ancestral realm. Dream interpretation often involves consulting traditional healers or diviners who possess the knowledge and skills to understand the symbolism and messages conveyed in dreams. These messages can provide guidance, offer insights into personal or community issues, and help individuals address concerns related to their spiritual or emotional well-being.

In contrast to the Western psychological perspective outlined above, where anxiety and dreams are analysed in terms of conflicts and psychological issues, South African traditional healing dreamwork typically interprets dreams in a more holistic and culturally-specific manner. Dreamwork in traditional healing involve rituals, consultations with healers, and a deeper connection to the spiritual and ancestral aspects of life. Therefore, while the information above pertains to that of a Western psychology and dream analysis context, it may not be directly applicable to the South African traditional healing dreamwork context, which operates within its unique cultural and spiritual framework. South African traditional healing and dreamwork draw upon a different set of beliefs and practices to understand the significance of dreams and their relation to an individual's life.

However, within a traditional healing dream work context within the South African context, the information from the literature on anxiety and dreams can be used to guide the healer in several ways. Within a traditional healing context, it is possible that a dreamer

may be experiencing waking life challenges that lead to anxiety-provoking dreams. This aligns with the idea that dreams can be a reflection of one's daily experiences and emotions. Traditional healers can indeed help the dreamer explore these dreams to better understand and address the challenges they face in their lives.

Difficulties in waking life leading to negative and fear-provoking dreams are not exclusive to any context either; they can happen anywhere. In a traditional healing context, this insight could possibly be relevant. It emphasises the interconnectedness of dreams and waking life and supports the traditional healer's role in addressing the impact of these external difficulties on the dreamer's overall well-being. Thus, it is also possible that discussing anxiety dreams with a traditional healer can be a powerful means of addressing underlying issues, knowingly or unknowingly.

These insights from the literature reaffirm the effectiveness of traditional healing practices and underscore the importance of dream sharing and analysis as a therapeutic tool which could possibly be applied within a traditional healing context as such. What these insights indicate is that traditional healing practices possibly align with psychological principles and modern research findings regarding dreams and their relation to one's waking life. It reinforces the idea that traditional healers are in a position to provide valuable guidance and support in addressing the psychological and emotional aspects of their patients' lives. In essence, the conclusions drawn from the literature are supportive of the effectiveness of traditional healing practices in addressing anxiety-related issues through dream work.

5.8.1.2 Depression. The next focus area under Psychopathological approaches to dream work was that of “depression”. According to the APA (2022), depression, otherwise known as “major depressive disorder” or “clinical depression”, is a common and serious mood disorder, and those who suffer from it experience persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness and lose interest in activities they once enjoyed. Aside from the emotional problems caused by depression, individuals can also present with physical symptoms such as chronic pain or digestive issues.

It was found that recurrent themes in dreams were characteristic of themes in the waking life of depressed patients, such as feelings of failure (Holzinger et al., 2021). A case where a client diagnosed with depression experienced sleep interruptions and nightmares was also discussed (Kara & Özcan, 2019). This client opted for therapy that included dream work rather than medication, and through dream work, the therapist identified the root cause of the negative dreams and addressed it effectively. The dream work in this case is described as a practical and effective dream model for clinicians within psychotherapy practices (Kara & Özcan, 2019). The example suggests that dream work can be a valuable approach in treating depression and understanding the link between dream content and the emotional state of the individual.

Within the South African context, depression is a prevalent psychopathological condition (Davis, et al., 2017). In the context of South African traditional healing and dream work, the information from the data on depression and its relation to dream work can be somewhat applicable, with some modifications and considerations. Traditional healing and dream work in South Africa have unique cultural and spiritual elements, and

they may not directly align with Western psychological concepts, however, there are some key points to consider in this view.

South African traditional healing often an interconnected approach to physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Depression may be understood differently within these cultural contexts, and its causes and treatments might involve spiritual and community-based interventions. It is important to respect and acknowledge these cultural differences when approaching depression and dream work. In terms of dream interpretation, dreams within the South African traditional healing context are considered a channel through which ancestors or spirits communicate with individuals. In cases of depression, traditional healers may interpret dreams as messages or signs related to the person's emotional and psychological state. Recurrent themes of failure or nightmares in dreams may be seen as significant indicators of underlying issues.

As further mentioned in the literature, there may be cases where individuals with depression may be offered pharmacological treatments in conventional Western medicine. However, traditional healers often work with clients who prefer non-pharmacological options. This might include dream work, ritualistic healing, or other traditional practices to address the root causes of depression as perceived in the local context. Traditional healing in South Africa often emphasises holistic healing, addressing not only the psychological symptoms but also the spiritual and community aspects of an individual's life.

In summary, while the concept of depression as described in Western psychology may not directly translate to South African traditional healing practices, dream work within these contexts can still be a valuable tool for addressing emotional and psychological

issues in a holistic and culturally sensitive manner. The key is to approach this integration with respect for local beliefs and practices to provide the best possible care for individuals experiencing depression within these contexts.

5.8.1.3 PTSD. The next focus area under the sub-theme of Psychopathological approaches to dream work was that of “PTSD”. The DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for PTSD defines it as an intense or prolonged psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolise or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event or events (APA, 2022). PTSD and dream work is a prominent topic in the literature with countless studies being done on working with PTSD patient’s dreams (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016).

From the literature it was found that dream work with PTSD patients has led to positive outcomes for the patients (Ellis, 2016; Miller et al., 2017; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016; Wittmann et al., 2007). Similarly, it was also found that research highlights that PTSD patients frequently grapple with distressing dreams, but dream work, particularly through techniques like Imagery Rehearsal Therapy (IRT), has demonstrated effectiveness in alleviating their symptoms. Another insight from the literature is that nightmares are a typical feature of PTSD, and they can present as an enduring problem after successful PTSD-treatment (Belleville, Guay, & Marchand, 2011).

The inferences and implications of this knowledge for a traditional healing context are discussed. Traditional healers in South Africa often possess deep knowledge of the symbolic and cultural significance of dreams. Collaborative efforts between Western-trained mental health professionals and traditional healers could possibly incorporate dream work techniques used in PTSD treatment as mentioned by Ellis (2016), Miller et al.

(2017), Schubert and Punamäki (2016), and Wittmann et al. (2007). Traditional healers can offer culturally relevant interpretations of dreams and use rituals or ceremonies to help individuals process traumatic experiences.

In terms of the IRT dream work technique and traditional healing, the principles Western therapeutic approach which has been empirically tested as effective in working with PTSD patients and their dreams (Miller et al., Schubert & Punamäki, 2016) could be adapted and integrated into indigenous healing practices. Traditional healers could incorporate imagery, symbolism, and rituals from their cultural traditions to help individuals modify distressing dream content and find healing through a more culturally relevant lens. Schubert and Punamäki (2016) highlight the universal occurrence of negative dreams in PTSD. Traditional healers can leverage their understanding of cultural and subcultural aspects of dream interpretation to assist clients in working through their traumatic experiences. They may offer guidance on how to address distressing dreams and use them as a means of healing and reconciliation.

Traditional healers, informed by cultural wisdom and local knowledge, understand that trauma can lead to negative dreams. They can offer insights into how these dreams may manifest within the cultural context and help individuals contextualise their experiences. Research emphasises the distressing dreams experienced by PTSD patients but also highlights the effectiveness of dream work, such as IRT, in alleviating symptoms (Miller et al., 2017). In a traditional healing context, this research can be used to encourage collaboration between Western and traditional healing practices. Traditional healers can incorporate dream work as a complementary approach, helping clients use culturally relevant techniques to address distressing dreams and related PTSD symptoms.

Integrating Western-based insights on dream work and PTSD treatment with traditional healing practices in South Africa can offer a holistic and culturally sensitive approach to addressing trauma-related symptoms. Collaboration and communication between practitioners from both backgrounds are essential to ensure the best possible care for individuals dealing with PTSD within a traditional healing context. It is possible that, without imposing Western principles upon this framework, traditional healers could gain an understanding of how PTSD can manifest in dreams. In South Africa, where traumatic experiences are common due to a history of apartheid and other factors, it is vital for traditional healers to comprehend the link between PTSD and dream content.

Since dreams are a universal human experience and can be used to work through traumatic experiences with culturally diverse clients, traditional healers can leverage this insight to address the cultural nuances of PTSD and dream work within South Africa. They can adapt their healing approaches to align with the cultural and spiritual beliefs of their clients. Traditional healers could also potentially recognise the potential for therapeutic intervention when working with individuals who suffer from PTSD-related nightmares. They could create a safe and supportive environment for dream sharing and exploration, facilitating the healing process. In summary, the information on dream work and PTSD from the literature could possibly be applied within a South African traditional healing dream work context to enhance the understanding of PTSD and dream work. Traditional healers could possibly utilise this knowledge to adapt their practices to the needs and cultural backgrounds of their clients, providing effective support in healing from trauma-related nightmares.

The importance of cultural sensitivity when applying the insights from Western literature on dream work and PTSD to a South African traditional healing dream work context cannot be stressed enough. Traditional healing practices are deeply rooted in the cultural and spiritual beliefs of the community they serve. The potential dangers lie in imposing Western approaches, which may not align with or respect the indigenous cultural perspectives and practices as they are as a viable dream work method in and of themselves. It is essential not to convey that the traditional healing methods are lacking in any regard, but rather to recognise their richness and efficacy within their cultural context. Cultural sensitivity ensures that traditional healers can adapt and integrate valuable insights from the literature into their existing practices while preserving the integrity and essence of their cultural traditions, ultimately providing more effective and respectful support for individuals healing from trauma-related nightmares.

In conclusion, within the sub-theme of Psychopathological approaches to dream work, the focus areas of “anxiety”, “depression”, and “PTSD” in relation to dream work were discussed. Within this sub-theme, this research delved into these focus areas, with a specific emphasis on cultural sensitivity and relevance to South Africa. Anxiety, as understood within Western psychology, presents itself as excessive worry and apprehension, often associated with conflicts and psychological issues. While this perspective may not directly align with the traditional healing practices in South Africa, it is possible to consider anxiety in a holistic manner, acknowledging the interplay between dreams and waking life challenges and offering a culturally sensitive approach to dream work.

Similarly, the exploration of depression and its connection to dreams highlights the importance of understanding cultural differences and respecting the unique beliefs and practices within South African traditional healing. Traditional healers can adapt elements of Western dream work approaches to address emotional and psychological issues in a holistic and culturally relevant way. The examination of PTSD and dream work highlighted the potential for collaboration between Western and traditional healing practices. Insights from Western research could possibly guide traditional healers in understanding the manifestation of trauma-related nightmares and provide additional tools to support individuals in the healing process.

This collaboration should be approached with cultural sensitivity to ensure that traditional healing practices maintain their integrity while benefiting from Western insights. In all cases, the effective integration of Western-based insights into South African traditional healing dream work requires a deep understanding of cultural beliefs and practices and the preservation of cultural richness and efficacy. It is essential to recognise the value of both approaches and to ensure that individuals seeking healing receive the most respectful and effective support, bridging the gap between modern psychological insights and traditional healing practices in a culturally sensitive manner.

5.8.2 Neuroscientific Approaches to Dream Work

The second sub-theme under the second overarching theme of Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work is that of neuroscientific approaches to dream work. It was found within the data that there is a scientific interest in dreams and dream studies. The field of neuroscience and sleep science has researched dreams scientifically and empirically for many

years and contributed to modern dream research marked by scientific discovery (Colace, 2018; Desseilles et al., 2011; Dresler et al., 2015; Holzinger et al., 2021; Schredl & Göritz, 2015; Sikka et al., 2019; Skrzypińska & Szmigielska, 2018, as cited in Pendaroski, 2021).

Looking beyond the many scientific dream breakthroughs and contributions, the inferences and practical implications on how the concepts from neuroscience and neuroscientific dream research can be related to and integrated into a traditional healing dream work context in South Africa are discussed. Traditional healing dream work practices often involve a deep connection to spirituality and the interpretation of dreams as a means of understanding and addressing various issues, including physical and mental health, relationship problems, and life challenges.

Integrating findings from neuroscience and sleep science could help validate traditional healing practices. With the knowledge that traditional dream work interpretations could be validated by science, it could enhance the credibility and acceptance of dream work within local communities. In terms of psychological well-being, traditional healing dream work could benefit from a psychological perspective informed by neuroscientific research.

Understanding the emotional and cognitive aspects of dreams could assist traditional healers address issues related to mental health and emotional well-being in their clients. When it comes to dream symbolism and interpretation, traditional dream interpretation relies on symbolism and cultural knowledge. Neuroscientific approaches could provide additional insights into the brain's role in dream generation, potentially offering a deeper understanding of why certain symbols or emotions may appear in dreams. This could lead to more nuanced interpretations.

Another aspect of this integration has to do with cultural preservation. Traditional dream work is deeply rooted in cultural and spiritual beliefs, and combining traditional elements with modern scientific knowledge could contribute to the preservation and continuation of cultural practices while enhancing their effectiveness and relevance. The integration of neuroscientific findings with traditional healing dream work could contribute to a more holistic approach to health and well-being.

Collaboration between traditional healers and individuals with expertise in neuroscience and sleep science could lead to a more comprehensive and evidence-based approach to dream work. Traditional healers could continue to offer cultural insights and wisdom while benefiting from the scientific knowledge and research findings. In summary, the integration of neuroscience, sleep science, and neuroscientific dream research into traditional healing dream work in South Africa could enrich and evolve these practices. It could enhance their effectiveness, promote cultural preservation, and provide a more holistic approach to health and well-being within a traditional healing context.

It is, however, important to approach the integration of modern scientific perspectives with traditional healing practices in a way that respects and preserves the cultural and spiritual significance of the latter. Care should be taken not to impose one view as superior to the other or suggest that the traditional view is lacking in any way. Traditional healing practices have a deep historical and cultural context, and they offer valuable insights into the human experience and holistic well-being.

The goal should be to create a dialogue and a space for mutual learning and enrichment. The synthesis of traditional and scientific approaches can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of dream work, acknowledging the strengths of each perspective while fostering respect for cultural heritage and spiritual beliefs. This collaborative approach can create a bridge between the old and the new, enhancing the efficacy and cultural relevance of traditional healing dream work in South Africa.

In conclusion, this second sub-theme within the overarching theme of Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work was neuroscientific approaches. The previous section discusses these neuroscientific insights and approaches to dream work within the context of traditional healing practices within South Africa. It highlights that scientific research in neuroscience and sleep science has contributed to understanding dreams. The integration of neuroscientific findings with traditional dream work can validate traditional practices, offer psychological insights, and provide a more holistic approach to health.

This integration can preserve cultural traditions while enhancing their effectiveness. Collaboration between traditional healers and scientific experts could lead to a comprehensive, evidence-based approach. However, it's crucial to respect the cultural and spiritual significance of traditional practices and create a dialogue for mutual learning, fostering respect for both perspectives. This collaborative approach could enrich traditional healing dream work in South Africa.

5.9 Theme 3: Socio-cultural Approaches to Dreams

The third and final theme identified from the data was that of the socio-cultural approaches to dreams. Within a socio-cultural approach to dreams, we see a vast difference in how dreams are worked with compared to a Western or Eurocentric approach. This third aspect also answers the second research question on what themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work within a local, South African context.

The theme identified of socio-cultural approaches which included the sub-themes “healing and dreams” (which refer to the process of using dreams as a means of psychological and emotional healing), “shamanistic approaches to dreams” (which involves using rituals, symbolism, and ancient practices to access and interpret dreams), and “spiritual approaches to dreams” (exploring the sacred and transcendent aspects of dream experiences in connection with one's spiritual beliefs and connection to a higher power).

In general, within socio-cultural approaches to dreams, dreams are believed to be messages from the gods and the traditional healer or shaman is the main dream worker (Bakow & Low, 2018; Elliott, 2013; Laughlin & Rock, 2014; Nwoye, 2017; Schubert & Punamäki, 2016; Tursunay & Rustem, 2021). It is fairly common within these contexts that dreams are believed to be messages from ancestors or god(s) relayed to the dreamer. A shaman or traditional healer is the dreamworker and has the authority to interpret these dreams, giving the dreamer the dream's meaning, interpretation, and any instructions that need to be followed. The following extracts briefly show this:

“In ancient times, dreams began to be noticed by ancestors, and divination of dreams was the most common activity.” (Tursunay & Rustem, 2021)

“Dreams that appeared in the Uyghur folk Dastan is an ancient motif. In the long-term creation, refinement and circulation of Uyghur folk Dastan, dream motif formed a relatively fixed narrative mode and it repeated in different works, thus dream motif gradually becoming stylized. Driven by the cultural exchange of the Silk Road, dream motif has been continuously supplemented and developed, and its narrative model has become perfect.” (Tursunay & Rustem, 2021)

The implications of socio-cultural approaches to dream work within a South African context are significant and may impact various aspects of individuals' lives, including their understanding of dreams, psychological well-being, and cultural identity. As mentioned before, this theme has predominantly answered the second research question on what themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally. Socio-cultural approaches to dreams highlight the cultural and spiritual significance of dreams in South African communities. They emphasise that dreams are seen as messages from ancestors or deities, reinforcing the importance of traditional beliefs and practices. This perspective has the potential to strengthen cultural identity and spirituality among South Africans. It also has potential to speak into Western approaches, inviting these to include a more holistic approach to dream work within various of their approaches.

Within these approaches, traditional healers or shamans play a central role in dream interpretation. This can have implications for the authority and status of traditional healers within the community. It may also encourage individuals to seek guidance from these healers for both dream-related and broader health and well-being concerns. In terms of healing and well-being within this context, the use of dreams for psychological and emotional healing is a significant and well-documented aspect throughout the literature illustrated in the next

section of this chapter. Dreams are viewed as a tool for addressing mental and emotional challenges. This approach can have positive implications for individuals struggling with psychological issues, as it promotes culturally sensitive healing practices.

Shamanistic approaches to dreams also involve rituals, symbolism, and ancient practices. These practices can serve as a means of connecting with cultural heritage and maintaining cultural traditions. They provide a sense of continuity and cultural preservation. In terms of spiritual exploration, the exploration of the sacred and transcendent aspects of dream experiences in connection with one's spiritual beliefs can lead to a deeper spiritual connection. This may provide individuals with a sense of purpose, meaning, and a connection to a higher power, which can be comforting and empowering. There is also a community and interconnectedness aspect to this context of dream work. The belief that dreams are messages from ancestors or gods emphasises the interconnectedness of individuals with their community and their spiritual beliefs. It fosters a sense of community and shared cultural values.

There is also a cross-cultural understanding within a socio-cultural approach to dreams. Understanding these socio-cultural approaches to dream work can be beneficial for cross-cultural interactions and collaborations, as it allows for a greater appreciation of the diverse beliefs and practices within South African communities. This understanding can foster respect and cultural sensitivity. As a final implication of this area, from a research perspective, exploring these approaches in South African dream work can contribute towards a deeper understanding of the diversity of dream interpretation practices worldwide. Researchers and psychologists in South Africa may need to integrate these cultural approaches into their work when addressing mental health issues within this context.

In summary, socio-cultural approaches to dream work in a South African context highlight the rich ideology and notions of cultural, spiritual, and healing practices related to dreams. They emphasise the importance of tradition, community, and spirituality and can have profound implications for the well-being and cultural identity of individuals in South Africa. Data related to this theme was acquired both on a global and local scale. Under this sub-theme, the three focus areas which emerged were “healing and dreams”, “shamanistic approaches to dreams”, and “spiritual approaches to dreams”.

5.9.1 Healing and Dreams

Dreams are viewed as a means of communication with ancestors and gods, offering guidance and instructions in times of crisis in traditional African contexts (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016). Western contexts have demonstrated the benefits of working with dreams for recovery from emotional distress, trauma, and mental health issues (Black et al., 2014). Dreams are considered a tool for self-healing, providing access to the unconscious layers of the mind (Nwoye, 2017). While recognised in both Western psychotherapeutic settings and indigenous cultures, there is a need for further research on dreams as a psychotherapeutic tool (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016). This theme underscores the profound connection between dreams and well-being, emphasising their transformative power in healing and psychological transformation.

Dreams provide a source of healing, both in Western psychotherapeutic settings and among indigenous people in other cultures (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016). The idea of “healing” in dreams within a cultural context derives from the spiritual and intangible

positive effects working with dreams can have on individuals. Working with dreams lead to emotional, spiritual, and mental healing within cultural contexts. Dreams assist in healing the mind after emotional wounds and distressing emotional experiences. Working with dreams offers clients an opportunity to observe their own inner processes and to develop a tool for self-healing (Tangolo, 2015). Within the South African context, dreams are used in curing practices, and trauma victims experiencing nightmares may perform specific rituals and practices in an effort to protect themselves, or seek help from a cultural healer (Schubert & Punamäki, 2016).

The implications of the above, the relationship between healing and dreams, within a traditional healing context are discussed. This connection is significant and has several important implications. Traditional healing practices are deeply rooted in specific cultural and societal contexts. Understanding and respecting these cultural elements is essential when using dream work as a tool for healing. It means that dream interpretation and therapeutic approaches should be adapted to align with the cultural beliefs and values of the individuals seeking healing. In traditional African contexts, for example, dreams may be seen as a means of communicating with ancestors and gods, which holds particular significance in their healing practices.

Secondly, recognising the connection between dreams and healing underscores the importance of a holistic approach to well-being. Dreams are not isolated phenomena but are integrated into the broader fabric of an individual's life. Traditional healing dream work emphasises the need to address psychological, emotional, and spiritual well-being in conjunction with one another, acknowledging that these aspects are interconnected and influence one another. Another aspect deals with how in many traditional contexts, dreams

are considered as a source of guidance and wisdom. They are seen as a means through which individuals can receive instructions during times of crisis. Understanding this can be crucial in providing appropriate support and interpretation of dreams in a traditional healing context, as it may involve identifying and acting upon the guidance offered by dreams.

Another aspect is the possibility of integrating Western dream work with that of traditional healing dream work. While traditional healing practices have a rich history of using dreams for well-being, there is also recognition of the benefits of dream work in modern Western psychotherapeutic settings. Dreams can be a valuable tool for addressing emotional distress, trauma, and mental health issues. The convergence of traditional and modern approaches to dream work highlights the potential for a more comprehensive and integrative healing process that can draw on the strengths of both traditions.

Another implication is how there is a call for further research in the field of dreams as a psychotherapeutic tool, both in traditional and modern contexts. This suggests that there is an opportunity for cross-cultural collaboration and the development of evidence-based practices that can enhance the effectiveness of dream work as a healing tool, speak to the gap in the literature on this topic, and contribute to future knowledge and research generation and production.

Finally, the profound connection between dreams and well-being emphasises their transformative power. This suggests that working with dreams can lead to not only symptom relief but also profound psychological and spiritual transformation. It highlights the potential for deep, long-lasting changes in individuals seeking healing both within local traditional healing cultures as well as the potential for those within Western dream work contexts.

In conclusion, the implications of dreams within a traditional healing context underscore the importance of cultural sensitivity, a holistic approach, guidance and wisdom, integration with modern approaches, research, and the transformative power of dream work in the healing and psychological transformation of individuals. Recognising the cultural and societal factors that influence dream interpretation and therapeutic significance is essential in ensuring the effectiveness of this practice.

5.9.2 Shamanistic Approaches to Dreams

The second sub-theme under the overarching theme Socio-cultural approaches to dreams is shamanistic approaches to dreams. Laughlin and Rock (2014) state that shamanism is a worldwide social phenomenon that is almost always associated with dreaming. They further state that shamans commonly receive their calling in dreams and use dreams to travel to spiritual dimensions to access information and acquire power. They further state that shamans also apply dreaming to the solution of problems because, in virtually all polyphasic societies and traditions, the role of dreaming is paramount and fundamental to the cycle of meaning and is often integral to the calling, selection, and empowerment of shamans (Laughlin & Rock, 2014).

According to Bührmann (1982), a positive relationship with one's ancestors and consultation with a traditional healer results in a traditional healer apprentice becoming a healer. In contrast, those traditional healer apprentices who ignore or deny the ancestral calling may become ill or possessed (Bakow & Low, 2018; Laher, 2014). Graphic dreams and auditory and visual experiences in the form of voices, sounds and visions usually persist

indefinitely as traditional healers intercede with the ancestors as part of their healing profession (van der Zeijst et al., 2021).

Within a South African traditional healing context, the shamanistic approaches to dreams are highly relevant and integral to the practice of traditional healing and connecting individuals to the spiritual realm. How the information on shamanism could possibly be applied to the context of traditional healing in South Africa is discussed. Firstly, the idea that shamans commonly receive their calling in dreams is applicable to South African traditional healing. In many indigenous healing systems, traditional healers often describe how their vocation or calling is initiated through vivid and significant dreams. These dreams may include encounters with spirits, ancestors, or other supernatural beings that guide them towards their role as healers.

Secondly, the notion that shamans use dreams to travel to spiritual dimensions is relevant. In South African traditional healing, shamans and traditional healers believe that dreams provide a pathway to connect with the spiritual world. They use dreams as a means to access information, seek guidance from ancestors, and acquire spiritual power or knowledge to assist in healing practices. Next, the literature mentions that shamans apply dreaming to the solution of problems, and similarly, traditional healers in South Africa often use dream work as a tool to diagnose and address the physical, emotional, or spiritual issues of their patients. Dreams are considered a source of valuable insight, and they are often consulted to find solutions to various problems, including illnesses.

The literature further highlights that shamanic rituals often take place overnight to evoke and influence dream experiences. Similarly, in South African traditional healing practices,

rituals and ceremonies play a crucial role. These rituals are often conducted during the night to enhance the dream experiences of the participants and facilitate communication with the spirit world. The power of dreams is harnessed within the context of these rituals. Within the South African traditional healing context, dreams are believed to have a divine connotation. Traditional healers use dreams to connect individuals to the spiritual realm, especially through interactions with ancestors. Positive relationships with ancestors, as mentioned in the literature, are highly valued in these healing traditions, and dream work is a means to establish and strengthen this connection.

The literature also suggests that a positive relationship with one's ancestors and consultation with a traditional healer can result in a traditional healer's apprentice becoming a healer. This aligns with the South African traditional healing context, where aspiring healers often undergo a process of training and initiation that includes interpreting dreams and connecting with their ancestral spirits. Graphic dreams and auditory and visual experiences that persist indefinitely for traditional healers, is also applicable. In South African traditional healing, these experiences are seen as a sign of the healer's continued connection with the spirit world and their ability to intercede with the ancestors for healing purposes.

In summary, shamanistic approaches to dreams as described in the literature are highly relevant in the context of South African traditional healing. Dream work, dream interpretation, and dream-related rituals are integral components of traditional healing practices, serving as a means to connect with the spiritual realm, diagnose and address issues, and acquire the knowledge and power needed for healing.

5.9.3 Spiritual Approaches to Dreams

The third and final sub-theme under the overarching theme Socio-cultural approaches to dreams is spiritual approaches to dreams. According to Hill and Knox (2010), in general, across the literature on dream work, there is an aspect of spiritualism and the divine. The implications of this statement for the South African traditional healing context is discussed. The literature outlines the spiritual and cultural aspects of dreams in a general context. To apply these concepts to a South African context, one would need to consider the rich and diverse cultural and spiritual landscape of South Africa.

South Africa is home to a variety of indigenous cultures with their own spiritual belief systems. The literature highlights how some cultures, such as Uyghurs, believe in the divine nature of dreams. One can draw parallels to South African indigenous beliefs, such as the beliefs of the traditional indigenous South African people in ancestral spirits and divination through dreams. Secondly, many African cultures have strong connections with ancestral spirits. The literature mentions communication with spiritual or ancestral agents in dreams. This is relevant in a South African context as many South African indigenous cultures believe in ancestral communication through dreams.

Dreams often hold cultural significance in many African societies. In South Africa, dreams have played a role in traditional healing and divination practices. One could explore how different South African cultures interpret dreams and integrate them into their cultural and spiritual practices. South Africa is a diverse country with a mix of belief systems, including Christianity, Islam, African traditional religions, and others. The literature mentions the importance of working with dreams in a religious belief system context, including

Christianity and Islam. One could explore how different religious groups in South Africa incorporate dreams into their spirituality and therapy.

The literature also suggests that working with dreams in a spiritually oriented-manner can have therapeutic benefits. In the context of South Africa, one could explore how therapists or traditional healers use dreams to address spiritual and existential concerns, particularly in communities where dream interpretation is part of healing and counselling practices. Finally, within South Africa, it is common to see an integration, where elements of different belief systems are blended. One can examine how some individuals and communities in South Africa integrate spiritual and cultural beliefs into their dream interpretation, combining both indigenous and imported belief systems.

Within the South African context, the literature on spiritual approaches to dreams is applicable within the country's rich and diverse cultural tapestry. Indigenous belief systems within this context share similarities with the notion of dreams as divine or channels for communication with ancestral spirits, emphasising their significance in traditional healing and divination practices. Furthermore, South Africa's religious diversity, encompassing Christianity, Islam, and African traditional religions, provides fertile ground for exploring how dreams are integrated into various belief systems and employed for spiritual and therapeutic purposes. The integration observed in South Africa allows for the coexistence of different belief systems and the blending of cultural and spiritual interpretations of dreams, highlighting the multifaceted nature of dream perception and application within this complex socio-cultural landscape.

Finally, implications of how the literature on the spiritual approaches to dreams within a South African context can also extend to Western dream work contexts will now be discussed. Understanding the South African context highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity in dream work in general. Western therapists and dream analysts both within the South African local context, as well as globally, could learn from the diverse approaches to dreams in South Africa and apply similar sensitivity to clients from various cultural backgrounds in Western societies, where cultural diversity is also present.

The South African context demonstrates how dreams are intertwined with spirituality, culture, and therapeutic practices. In Western contexts, there is a growing interest in interdisciplinary approaches to dream work, incorporating elements of psychology, anthropology, and spirituality. Therapists in the West can draw inspiration from this holistic perspective to enhance their therapeutic interventions. The South African literature emphasises the spiritual dimension of dream work. In Western societies, where individuals often explore spirituality and personal growth, therapists can incorporate the spiritual aspects of dream interpretation to provide deeper insights and therapeutic benefits for clients who are spiritually oriented.

Like South Africa, Western societies are diverse and encompass a wide array of belief systems. The literature from South Africa could serve as a reminder that dreams can be interpreted through different belief lenses. Dream work models in the West can incorporate this pluralistic view, respecting and incorporating the beliefs and values of clients into the therapeutic process. Western societies can also have their own cultural and historical interpretations of dreams, and these can be explored further. For instance, Jungian dream

analysis has delved into archetypal symbols and universal themes in dreams, which are in line with some of the concepts discussed within the South African context.

Lastly, therapists in Western contexts can learn from the therapeutic techniques mentioned in the literature, particularly in terms of addressing spiritual and existential concerns. The Hill cognitive-experiential model and the *Line of the least resistance method* could be adapted and integrated into Western therapeutic practices to address clients' spiritual and existential needs. In summary, the South African context offers valuable lessons and insights for dream work in Western societies by emphasising much-needed cultural sensitivity, cultural transferability, interdisciplinary approaches, the inclusion of spiritual dimensions, the integration of diverse belief systems, and the exploration of cultural and historical relevance in dream interpretation and therapy.

Overall, this third overarching theme of Socio-cultural approaches to dreams, particularly within the South African context, noted that these dream work approaches differ significantly from Western or Eurocentric methods. Within this context of socio-cultural approaches to dreams, dreams are often viewed as messages from ancestors or deities. Traditional healers or shamans play a central role in interpreting these dreams and using them for guidance and healing. The implications of these socio-cultural approaches are substantial. They highlight the cultural and spiritual significance of dreams in South African communities, reinforcing traditional beliefs and practices. The authority and status of traditional healers are strengthened, and the use of dreams for psychological and emotional healing is promoted.

These approaches also foster a sense of community and shared cultural values. Additionally, understanding these approaches could facilitate cross-cultural interactions and

collaborations, fostering respect and cultural sensitivity. This research suggests that integrating these cultural approaches into Western psychological practices can enhance holistic dream work and contribute to a deeper understanding of dream interpretation practices worldwide. Overall, the text highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity, holistic well-being, guidance, integration with modern approaches, research, and the transformative power of dream work in the healing and psychological transformation of individuals within the South African context, while also offering insights into dream work in Western societies.

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive exploration of the three overarching themes pertaining to the research questions in this thesis. It has illuminated the diverse landscape of dream work, both globally and within the specific context of South Africa. The identified themes and sub-themes, ranging from Psychological approaches to dream work to Psychiatric and medical approaches, and Socio-cultural approaches, have shed light on the multifaceted nature of dream work practices. These findings not only enhance our understanding of how dreams are approached and worked with across different cultures and regions but also underline the profound impact of culture, tradition, and spirituality in shaping our understanding of the human psyche. Furthermore, this research has highlighted the potential practical implications for working with dreams, emphasising their value as a resource in psychotherapy and counselling. By examining various therapeutic interventions used to explore and interpret dreams, this study offers valuable insights for practitioners seeking to integrate dream work into their therapeutic practices. It highlights the importance of dreams as a window into the unconscious mind, providing individuals with the opportunity to gain

insights into their emotions, thoughts, and unresolved issues. The analysis also opens doors to future research possibilities, particularly in the realm of cross-cultural integrations and the cultural applicability of dream work approaches. Recognising cultural diversity in dream work can enhance intercultural sensitivity, promote cross-cultural collaboration, and foster a more inclusive approach to working with dreams. This ongoing dialogue is vital for advancing the field of dream work and ensuring that it remains relevant and effective in diverse cultural contexts. This chapter served as a foundational resource for those interested in the field of dream work, offering a nuanced understanding of global and local themes and their practical implications. As we move forward, it is essential to recognise the cultural and individual nuances that shape our approach to dreams and to continue the exploration of this captivating realm of human experience. The next chapter will be further expounding on the implications of these findings, as well as laying out the limitations of this study.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, this thesis ends a comprehensive journey of research and exploration, offering a final assessment of the implications and limitations that have emerged from this study. This chapter includes discussion on the ways forward, contemplating the significance of the findings and acknowledging the limitations that have shaped this research.

This research has provided a Systematic Literature Review of the Current Approaches to Dream Work: Global and Local Trends. The insights obtained from this research have not only enhanced comprehension of the phenomenon of dream analysis, but have also extended an invitation to the wider academic and practical discourse, encouraging further deliberation and proactive engagement. This research examined how the findings may contribute to the enhancement of existing knowledge, and offer practical insights into dream work and dream work practices. This endeavour aimed to highlight the tangible and theoretical impacts of the research within the context of dream work approaches globally and locally.

6.2 Outline of the Chapter

The structure of this chapter commences with a thesis overview, highlighting the main parts of the thesis. It then moves on to a reflection section on the broader implications of this research, examining its significance within the realm of dream work approaches locally and globally. The chapter then shifts its focus to an honest examination of the limitations that have bound the work, explaining the boundaries that shape the findings. It is important to

note that these limitations do not necessarily diminish the value of the study. They are areas where the research could be further improved or where readers may have questions about the study's methodology and scope. In this concluding chapter, this research endeavours to bring together the threads of the research journey, weaving a comprehensive thread that not only highlights the contributions of this thesis but also lays bare the boundaries within which it has operated. This research offers a parting invitation to the reader, encouraging further exploration, dialogue, and innovation in the ever-evolving field of dream work approaches locally and globally.

6.3 Thesis Overview

Dreams have long been recognised as a valuable resource in psychotherapy and counselling, and by examining global and local approaches to dream work, this research hoped to identify various therapeutic interventions used to explore and interpret dreams and how those may be practically implemented and worked with within a local South African context. Understanding the different approaches can help practitioners integrate dream work into their therapeutic practice and enhance their clients' overall well-being. Dreams also provide a window into the unconscious mind, allowing individuals to gain insights into their emotions, thoughts, and unresolved issues. There is also an intriguing potential for future research into cross-cultural integrations, the relevance of cross-cultural perspectives, and the cultural applicability of dream work approaches in various contexts. This aspect not only paves the way for further investigation but also ensures an ongoing dialogue on dream work approaches worldwide and in the realm of the literature. Recognising cultural diversity in dream work can enhance intercultural sensitivity, promote cross-cultural collaboration, and foster a more inclusive approach to working with dreams. Through answering those research

questions, this research had hoped to potentially highlight global and local methods that facilitate personal growth and self-exploration through dream work and how these may be applied to a local context. Looking at the overarching themes, their various sub-themes, and focus areas, this research will now proceed to outline the possible implications derived from the conclusions and inferences drawn throughout the chapter during the discussion of these themes. This research, in general, discusses the importance of dreams in the human experience, particularly within the context of South African traditional healing. It notes the lack of literature on dream work in South Africa and the need for culturally relevant approaches to psychology. The research aims to explore global and local approaches to dream analysis, categorising them into three themes: psychological, psychiatric and medical, and socio-cultural. The study seeks to bridge the gap in South African literature and contribute towards future research on dream work in the South African context. It also highlights the historical significance of dream work in psychology and its ongoing relevance. Dreams have long been a subject of scholarly and therapeutic inquiry, transcending cultural and temporal boundaries. In this chapter, we delve into the multifaceted field of dream work, examining contemporary approaches to the analysis and interpretation of dreams on both a global and localised scale, with a particular focus on the distinctive context of South Africa. Dreams, often regarded as enigmatic expressions of the subconscious, have played a significant role in the realms of psychology and psychotherapy. The enduring legacy of influential figures such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung has paved the way for a diverse array of approaches to dream analysis, enriching our understanding of the human psyche. However, the fascination with dreams extends beyond the confines of any particular culture. Throughout history, dreams have been integrated into various belief systems, healing practices, and societal norms. South Africa, with its cultural diversity and rich traditions, offers a unique setting in which to explore the intersection of dream work and indigenous healing practices. This

chapter aims to provide a comprehensive examination of the current global and local approaches to dream work. It seeks to highlight the profound impact of dreams on individuals, communities, and societies, acknowledging both the progress made in understanding the therapeutic potential of dreams and the limitations and challenges inherent in their interpretation. By examining dream work as a universal phenomenon and within the specific context of South Africa, this chapter aims to foster a deeper appreciation of the practical and societal relevance of dream analysis. It underscores the potential of dream work to address mental health issues, facilitate personal growth, and contribute to societal healing and reconciliation. Throughout this chapter, this research will navigate the complexities of dream work, acknowledging its universal appeal and its distinctive demonstrations within the South African cultural context. This chapter also addresses the strengths and areas for further research in the field of dream work, emphasising its persisting significance in shaping our comprehension of the human experience.

6.4 Research Questions Recap

This chapter aimed to answer the three research questions pertaining to this research thesis. The research questions were (1) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally; (2) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally?; and (3) What are the practical implications for working with dreams according to global and local themes? Answering the first two questions of the research, the themes that were identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally and locally were Psychological approaches to dream work, Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, and Socio-cultural approaches to dream work, respectively.

6.5 Themes Recap

Within each of these overarching themes were sub-themes. The sub-themes identified within the overarching theme of Psychological approaches to dream work were “dream interpretation”, “emotions and dreams”, “symbolism and imagery in approaching dream work”, “cognitive behavioural approaches to dream work”, “depth psychology and its approaches to dream work”, “gestalt approaches to dream work”, and “integrative approaches to dream work in psychology”. Within the overarching theme of Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, sub-themes “psychopathological approaches to dream work” and “neuroscientific approaches to dream work” were found. Within the overarching theme of Socio-cultural approaches to dream work were the sub-themes “healing and dreams”, “shamanistic approaches to dreams”, and “spiritual approaches to dreams”.

6.6 Implications

The first research question on what themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally sought to analyse the themes that emerged from the data on a global scale. This research question allowed the researcher to look at things such as what the major theoretical frameworks used in dream work across different cultural contexts are, if there are common methods or techniques employed in dream work practices globally, if certain themes or approaches dominate the literature, and are there any cross-cultural variations in the integration of dream work with other therapeutic modalities or practices.

This research was able to identify and categorise the recurring themes and patterns that make up current approaches to dream work globally. This analysis provided valuable insights into the diversity and commonalities within the field, enriching the understanding of how dreams are approached and worked with across different cultures and regions on a global scale. The themes that emerged, as stated above, were Psychological approaches to dream work, Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, and Socio-cultural approaches to dream work, each with their own respective sub-themes found within.

The second research question on what themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally, specifically focused on themes found within the context of South Africa dream work literature. By conducting a systematic literature review and examining relevant and available published sources such as academic papers, local publications, and indigenous knowledge, this research was able to identify recurring patterns, themes, and unique aspects that characterise dream work practices within the local South African context.

Based on this second question, this research looked at how cultural beliefs, traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems shape dream work approaches within the South African context, whether or not there were specific theoretical frameworks or models of dream work that were prevalent within the South African context, what the unique models, methods, rituals, or practices employed in dream work within South Africa were, how dream work in South Africa integrates with or diverges from global approaches, whether or not dream work practices in South Africa emphasise particular aspects, such as healing, ancestral connection, or community well-being, and how dream work is culturally adapted and tailored to address the specific needs and challenges faced by individuals in South Africa.

By exploring these areas and conducting a thorough literature review, this research was able to identify the unique themes, cultural nuances, and local perspectives that characterise dream work approaches within South Africa. This analysis was able to contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural diversity and richness of dream work practices locally. Specifically looking at the third theme that emerged, namely, Socio-cultural approaches to dream work, the theme was predominantly drawn from South African literature situated within traditional indigenous healing systems and practices.

The third and final research question that this review sought to answer was about what the practical implications are for working with dreams according to the global and local themes. This third question was answered twofold: Firstly, looking at how different dream work approaches, methods, models and techniques are worked with practically, and documenting these practical steps. Secondly, in order to draw some practical implications and implementations within a local context, the previous chapter attempted to further answer this question on practical implications by looking at how these potential practical implications that emerged from the review could possibly be implemented within the local South African context. In order to answer this question, this research discussed possibly practical implications based on the themes that emerged from the review.

Dreams have long been recognised as a valuable resource in psychotherapy and counselling, and by examining global and local approaches to dream work, this research hoped to identify various therapeutic interventions used to explore and interpret dreams and how those may be practically implemented and worked with within a local South African context. Understanding the different approaches can help practitioners integrate dream work

into their therapeutic practice and enhance their clients' overall well-being. Dreams also provide a window into the unconscious mind, allowing individuals to gain insights into their emotions, thoughts, and unresolved issues.

Finally, there is also an intriguing potential for future research into cross-cultural integrations, the relevance of cross-cultural perspectives, and the cultural applicability of dream work approaches in various contexts. This aspect not only paves the way for further investigation but also ensures an ongoing dialogue on dream work approaches worldwide and in the realm of the literature. Recognising cultural diversity in dream work can enhance intercultural sensitivity, promote cross-cultural collaboration, and foster a more inclusive approach to working with dreams. Through answering those research questions, this research had hoped to potentially highlight global and local methods that facilitate personal growth and self-exploration through dream work and how these may be applied to a local context. Looking at the overarching themes, their various sub-themes, and focus areas, this research will now proceed to outline the possible implications derived from the conclusions and inferences drawn throughout the chapter during the discussion of these themes.

6.6.1 Theme 1: Psychological Approaches to Dream Work

The first overarching theme, Psychological approaches to dream work, the first sub-theme found under this overarching theme is that of dream interpretation. Within this sub-theme were three focus areas, namely, “accuracy of dream interpretation”, “personality in dream interpretation”, and “consciousness and unconsciousness in dreams”. On this sub-theme of Dream interpretation, in conclusion, it was found that the sub-theme of Dream interpretation encompasses rich insights, bridging the realms of psychology, culture, and spirituality. The

three focus areas of “accuracy of dream interpretation”, “personality in dream interpretation”, and “consciousness and unconsciousness in dreams” reveal the intricate interplay between Western psychoanalytic perspectives and South African traditional healing practices. While accuracy of dream interpretation varies between precision and spiritual significance, personality interpretations reflect a blend of individual and collective dimensions, and the concept of consciousness and unconsciousness delves into the link between dreams and waking life themes. These diverse perspectives highlight the global interest in dreams and their significance while also highlighting the profound impact of culture and tradition in shaping our understanding of this mysterious realm of the human psyche.

The next sub-theme under the overarching theme of Psychological approaches to dream work was that of emotions and dreams. From the literature it was clear that emotions play an important role in dreams in that the dreaming process is an emotional experience and affects emotions. In conclusion, the exploration of emotions and dreams in the literature highlights their interconnectedness and significance in the realm of dream analysis and psychotherapy. Emotions are not mere byproducts of dreams; they are essential guides for therapists and indicators of the dreamer's inner world. This understanding holds relevance not only in conventional therapeutic settings but also in the traditional healing dream work context in South Africa. Emotions in dreams play a vital role in identifying and addressing psychological and spiritual well-being, serving as cues for treatment and self-healing. By delving into emotions within dreams, individuals can unlock the profound meanings hidden in their subconscious, ultimately aiding in their journey toward self-discovery and emotional well-being.

For the next sub-theme, symbolism and imagery in approaching dream work, under the overarching theme of Psychological approaches to dream work, it is believed that dreams have hidden and implicit meanings that are covered by symbols. In conclusion, the exploration of symbolism and imagery in approaching dream work reveals profound connections between diverse cultural and psychological perspectives. While dreams are filled with symbols and meanings within traditional healing practices, their interpretations carry unique cultural and spiritual significance, often rooted in the guidance of ancestral spirits. The recognition of universal and archetypal symbols in dreams, as proposed by Jung, aligns with the idea of connecting with ancestral spirits and the broader spiritual realm in South African healing traditions. Both approaches share the belief in the transformative potential of dreams for personal insight, healing, and growth. However, it is crucial to appreciate the distinctive nature of these practices and their specific cultural contexts. In South African traditional healing dream work, dreams are considered messages from the ancestors, offering therapeutic and prognostic value, although their symbolism is not analysed in the Western psychotherapeutic sense. Instead, dreams are fully experienced and their messages are acted upon.

For the next sub-theme under this overarching theme, literature on cognitive behavioural therapeutic approaches to dreams was another prominent sub-theme across the literature. This approaches to working with dreams sharply contrasts the psychodynamic and psychoanalytic dream work approaches in that it moves away from the manifest, unconscious subjects of dream work and focuses on how dreams reflect waking life. In conclusion, the cognitive behavioural approach to dream work marks a departure from traditional psychoanalytic methods, placing a strong emphasis on the link between dreams and the waking life of the dreamer. Dreams, in this framework, are viewed as reflections of oneself, the world, and the

future and are subject to the same cognitive biases as conscious thought. While the literature on the practical application of cognitive behavioural dream work is limited within a South African context, studies on the cultural adaptability of cognitive behavioural therapy in the South African context indicate the potential for its viability. These studies highlight the need for cultural sensitivity and adaptation to make Western psychotherapeutic approaches more effective in diverse cultural settings, such as South Africa. The successful case of the Sepedi indigenous group demonstrates that incorporating traditional healing practices, methods, and dream work can lead to positive outcomes. It is evident that there is a growing awareness of the importance of making Western psychotherapeutic approaches culturally relevant, an area of study that continues to evolve and expand.

Based on the scope of this research, however, as an example of a cognitive behavioural dream work model that was included in the data set was the *Dream Interpretation and the Description, Memory Sources, and Reformation model (DMR)*. Holzinger et al. (2021) state that the DMR model allows for the patient's insights and interpretative abilities, rather than the therapist's ones. They further state the procedure includes three steps, after which the patient will be asked for an interpretation: (i) Description (in which the therapist asks the patient to describe the dream); (ii) Memory Sources (looking at which memories have spilt over into the dream); (iii) Reformulation (presenting the dream again, reconnecting the broader and more general meanings found in the second stage) (Holzinger et al., 2021).

In conclusion, the DMR offers an example of a cognitive behavioural approach to dream work with practical steps that emphasise the patient's insights and interpretative abilities. While it presents a practical framework for understanding dreams in the South African context, its integration would require careful adaptation, cultural sensitivity, and

collaboration with traditional healers. The DMR model's focus on the connection between dreams and waking life aligns with traditional healing practices but falls short in the area of transcendent aspects and the traditional roles of dream interpretation within this context. Successful integration would involve a dynamic and evolving process that respects the beliefs and practices of traditional healing while offering potential benefits in understanding and addressing patients' concerns and dreams.

The next sub-theme identified across the literature was that of depth psychology and its approaches to dream work. Depth psychology is broadly used to describe approaches to therapy that are open to the exploration of the subtle, unconscious, and transpersonal aspects of human experience. In conclusion, this sub-theme its various approaches to dream work, including Freudian, Jungian, and Adlerian models, provide rich insights for interpreting dreams in the context of traditional healing. These approaches emphasise symbolism, archetypes, and understanding the deeper, often spiritual, dimensions of dreams, aligning with a traditional healing belief system. The adaptation of depth psychology principles to respect cultural contexts and beliefs is essential. Holistically, these approaches offer a promising framework for understanding and integrating dreams into individuals' well-being journeys, but their successful integration with traditional healing practices hinges on cultural sensitivity, collaboration with experts in both fields, and a deep appreciation of the uniqueness of each cultural and spiritual context. This alignment may help individuals in a South African context tap into profound wisdom and guidance offered by dreams in their spiritual and healing journey.

The next sub-theme under the overarching theme Psychological approaches to dream work is gestalt approaches to working with dreams. Gestalt therapists' aim is to help their clients to

experience repressed, ambivalent, and unpleasant things in order to accept and implement them in their whole self, and in order to implement those elements of the self, it needs to be uncovered first, which is a process that is often achieved by dream work, as messages from the unconscious that are stuck in our dreams can be revealed by certain gestalt-therapy methods. In conclusion, the sub-theme of gestalt approaches to working with dreams offers valuable insights for interpreting dreams within a therapeutic context. Within the South African context, the application of gestalt principles has shown the potential to affirm individuals' sense of self and facilitate personal and political transformation, particularly important in a post-apartheid society. A specific gestalt dream work model, the *DreamSenseMemory* (DSM) technique, focuses on sensory impressions and emotional exploration within dreams, aiming to transfer insights to waking life. While the DSM model has its strengths, it may not directly align with South African traditional healing dream work, deeply rooted in cultural and spiritual beliefs, the role of traditional healers, and the broader contextual factors of the community, family, and ancestral spirits. Nonetheless, the potential exists for adapting certain gestalt principles to better suit traditional healing contexts, emphasising the importance of cultural adaptability and integration in the pursuit of therapeutic effectiveness.

Finally, the last sub-theme under the overarching theme of Psychological approaches to dream work is that of integrative approaches to dream work in psychology. Looking at the three practical dream work models examples from the analysis of integrative approaches to dream work in psychology namely, *Line of the least resistance method*, *The Hill Cognitive-Experiential Model of Dream Interpretation method*, and *Group Dream Work*, in relation to a South African context, the following will now be concluded upon. With the Line of the least resistance method, according to Pendaroski (2021), this method implicitly contains

techniques, elements and concepts from other methods in working with dreams such as Jung's analytical method, the gestalt method, the Adler method, system-dynamic methods and techniques in working with dreams as well as elements of spiritual approaches in working with dreams. The author further states that this method has twelve elements to work through during dream work provided in a worksheet which can be followed during the dream work process with a client. In summary, it is possible for the Line of the least resistance dream work method to be adapted to fit within a South African traditional healing context by incorporating cultural, spiritual, and traditional elements specific to the region. However, it is ultimately essential to approach dream interpretation with respect for the culture and traditions, acknowledging the significance of dreams in the context of traditional healing.

The next integrative dream work model is the Hill Cognitive-Experiential Model of Dream Interpretation. What was found from the analysis is that the Hill Cognitive-Experiential Model of Dream Interpretation can potentially be applied to a South African traditional healing context with sensitivity to cultural beliefs and practices. It would require adaptation, collaboration, and a deep understanding of the cultural and spiritual dimensions of South African traditional healing to be effective and respectful. The last integrative model was Ullman's group dream work model. Most dream work techniques within a group context are based on the Ullman (1987; Ullman & Zimmerman, 2017) process of Dream Appreciation technique. In this symbiotic relationship, dream work serves as a vehicle for healing and personal growth, honouring cultural identity, spirituality, and the communal collective consciousness. The integration of Ullman's dream work model with South African traditional healing expands the efficacy of dream interpretation, incorporated with the *Ubuntu* worldview, which recognises the intrinsic connection between individual and community well-being. This holistic approach transforms dream work into a potent tool for personal and

communal metamorphosis, where group wisdom harmoniously blends with cultural and spiritual beliefs, cultivating unity, empathy, and a shared human experience. Within this framework, the dreamer's path to healing weaves into the interconnected tapestry of culturally enriched lives, ultimately enhancing the fabric of *Ubuntu* itself. Ullman's structured dream work model adapts seamlessly to the South African context, presenting a promising approach to dream interpretation and healing. This harmonious integration of individual insight and collective wisdom fosters unity, empathy, and shared humanity, aligning with *Ubuntu's* core principles. Consequently, the healing journey unfolds within a context where personal growth and community well-being are intrinsically intertwined, reinforcing the cultural essence of South Africa and emphasising that individual well-being and the collective are inseparable. Moreover, this transformative integration of dream work models showcases the potential for the *Ubuntu* philosophy to extend its healing influence to a broader range of contexts, encompassing the realms of psychology and spirituality. Ullman's model provides a structured and effective platform for dream interpretation, while the *Ubuntu* philosophy enriches it with the diverse tapestry of African cultural beliefs and values, empowering individuals to embark on a healing journey that resonates not only with themselves but also with the broader community's interconnected lives and collective consciousness, fostering a profound sense of shared humanity and holistic well-being.

In conclusion, in examining integrative approaches to dream work in the context of South African traditional healing, it becomes evident that methods such as the Line of the least resistance, the Hill Cognitive-Experiential Model of Dream Interpretation, and group dream work offer valuable tools for understanding and interpreting dreams. These approaches can be successfully adapted by acknowledging and respecting the cultural, spiritual, and communal elements unique to the South African setting. The Line of the least resistance

method's incorporation of diverse elements necessitates a deep understanding of cultural beliefs and the inclusion of ancestral spirits, while the Hill Cognitive-Experiential Model requires language and terminology adjustments and a recognition of the connection to ancestors. Group dream work, based on Ullman's model, naturally aligns with the philosophy of *Ubuntu*, emphasising community, interconnectedness, and shared wisdom, making it a potentially seamless fit within the South African traditional healing context. Ultimately, these integrative approaches enhance the dream work process by harmonising Western psychological methods with the rich cultural and spiritual context of South Africa.

6.6.2 Theme 2: *Psychiatric and Medical Approaches to Dream Work*

The second overarching theme, Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work, deals with the sub-themes psychopathological approaches to dreams, and neuroscientific approaches to dreams. These two sub-themes that emerged under this overarching theme will now be concluded upon. Under the psychopathological sub-theme, the three focus areas found in the literature were “anxiety”, “depression”, and “PTSD”. Anxiety, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2022), is a normal response to stress, and anxiety disorders differ from temporary feelings of anxiousness or nervousness with more intense feelings of fear or anxiety. The DSM-5 specifically describes anxiety as excessive worry and apprehensive expectations, occurring more days than not for at least 6 months, about a number of events or activities, such as work or school performance (APA, 2022). Depression, as defined by the APA (2022), also known as "major depressive disorder" or "clinical depression," is a prevalent and significant mood disorder. Individuals affected by depression endure persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness, accompanied by a diminished interest in activities they once found enjoyable. In addition to the emotional challenges associated

with depression, individuals may also manifest physical symptoms such as chronic pain or digestive issues. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as outlined in the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria, is characterised by intense or prolonged psychological distress triggered by exposure to internal or external cues reminiscent of traumatic events (APA, 2022). PTSD and dream work is a prominent topic in the literature with countless studies being done on working with PTSD patient's dreams. In conclusion, within the sub-theme of Psychopathological approaches to dream work, the focus areas of "anxiety", "depression", and "PTSD" in relation to dream work were discussed. Within this sub-theme, this research delved into these focus areas, with a specific emphasis on cultural sensitivity and relevance to South Africa. In terms of anxiety, while this perspective may not directly align with the traditional healing practices in South Africa, it is possible to consider anxiety in a holistic manner, acknowledging the interplay between dreams and waking life challenges and offering a culturally sensitive approach to dream work.

Similarly, the exploration of depression and its connection to dreams highlights the importance of understanding cultural differences and respecting the unique beliefs and practices within South African traditional healing. Traditional healers can adapt elements of Western dream work approaches to address emotional and psychological issues in a holistic and culturally relevant way. The examination of PTSD and dream work highlighted the potential for collaboration between Western and traditional healing practices. Insights from Western research could possibly guide traditional healers in understanding the manifestation of trauma-related nightmares and provide additional tools to support individuals in the healing process. This collaboration should be approached with cultural sensitivity to ensure that traditional healing practices maintain their integrity while benefiting from Western insights. In all cases, the effective integration of Western-based insights into South African

traditional healing dream work requires a deep understanding of cultural beliefs and practices and the preservation of cultural richness and efficacy. It is essential to recognise the value of both approaches and to ensure that individuals seeking healing receive the most respectful and effective support, bridging the gap between modern psychological insights and traditional healing practices in a culturally sensitive manner.

The final sub-theme under the second overarching theme of Psychiatric and medical approaches to dream work is that of neuroscientific approaches to dream work. The field of neuroscience and sleep science has researched dreams scientifically and empirically for many years and contributed to modern dream research marked by scientific discovery (Colace, 2018; Desseilles et al., 2011; Dresler et al., 2015; Holzinger et al., 2021; Schredl & Göritz, 2015; Sikka et al., 2019; Skrzypińska & Szmigielska, 2018, as cited in Pendaroski, 2021). In concluding, the neuroscientific insights and approaches to dream work within the context of traditional healing practices within South Africa highlights that scientific research in neuroscience and sleep science has contributed to understanding dreams. The integration of neuroscientific findings with traditional dream work can validate traditional practices, offer psychological insights, and provide a more holistic approach to health. This integration can preserve cultural traditions while enhancing their effectiveness. Collaboration between traditional healers and scientific experts can lead to a comprehensive, evidence-based, empirical approach to dream work. However, it is crucial to respect the cultural and spiritual significance of traditional practices and create a dialogue for mutual learning, fostering respect for both perspectives. This collaborative approach can enrich traditional healing dream work in South Africa.

6.6.3 Theme 3: Socio-cultural Approaches to Dreams

The third and final theme derived from the literature was that of the socio-cultural approaches to dreams. Within a socio-cultural approach to dreams, we see a vast difference in how dreams are worked with compared to a Western or Eurocentric approach. This third theme also had an aspect of answering the second research question on what themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work within a local, South African context. The theme that was found was that of socio-cultural approaches, which included the sub-themes “healing and dreams” (which refer to the process of using dreams as a means of psychological and emotional healing), “shamanistic approaches to dreams” (which involves using rituals, symbolism, and ancient practices to access and interpret dreams), and “spiritual approaches to dreams” (exploring the sacred and transcendent aspects of dream experiences in connection with one's spiritual beliefs and connection to a higher power). In summary, socio-cultural approaches to dream work in a South African context highlight the rich ideology and notions of cultural, spiritual, and healing practices related to dreams. They emphasise the importance of tradition, community, and spirituality and can have profound implications for the well-being and cultural identity of individuals in South Africa. In conclusion, this third overarching theme of Socio-cultural approaches to dreams, particularly within the South African context, noted that these dream work approaches differ significantly from Western or Eurocentric methods. Within this context of socio-cultural approaches to dreams, dreams are often viewed as messages from ancestors or deities. Traditional healers or shamans play a central role in interpreting these dreams and using them for guidance and healing. The implications of these socio-cultural approaches are substantial. They highlight the cultural and spiritual significance of dreams in South African communities, reinforcing traditional beliefs and practices. The authority and status of traditional healers are strengthened, and the use of dreams for psychological and emotional healing is promoted.

These approaches also foster a sense of community and shared cultural values. Additionally, understanding these approaches can facilitate cross-cultural interactions and collaborations, fostering respect and cultural sensitivity. This research suggests that integrating these cultural approaches into Western psychological practices can enhance holistic dream work and contribute to a deeper understanding of dream interpretation practices worldwide. Overall, the text highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity, holistic well-being, guidance, integration with modern approaches, research, and the transformative power of dream work in the healing and psychological transformation of individuals within the South African context, while also offering insights into dream work in Western societies.

The identified themes and sub-themes, ranging from Psychological approaches to dream work to Psychiatric and medical approaches, and Socio-cultural approaches, have shed light on the multifaceted nature of dream work practices. These findings not only enhance an understanding of how dreams are approached and worked with across different cultures and regions but also underline the profound impact of culture, tradition, and spirituality in shaping our understanding of the human psyche. Furthermore, this research has highlighted the potential practical implications for working with dreams, emphasising their value as a resource in psychotherapy and counselling. By examining various therapeutic interventions used to explore and interpret dreams, this study offers valuable insights for practitioners seeking to integrate dream work into their therapeutic practices. It highlights the importance of dreams as a window into the unconscious mind, providing individuals with the opportunity to gain insights into their emotions, thoughts, and unresolved issues.

The analysis also highlights future research possibilities, particularly in the realm of cross-cultural integrations and the cultural applicability of dream work approaches. Recognising

cultural diversity in dream work can enhance intercultural sensitivity, promote cross-cultural collaboration, and foster a more inclusive approach to working with dreams. This ongoing dialogue is vital for advancing the field of dream work and ensuring that it remains relevant and effective in diverse cultural contexts. This chapter serves as a foundational resource for those interested in the field of dream work, offering a nuanced understanding of global and local themes and their practical implications. As we move forward, it is essential to recognise the cultural and individual nuances that shape our approach to dreams and to continue the exploration of this captivating realm of human experience.

6.7 Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of this study has to do with the scope and depth. The research study acknowledges that it has a limited scope due to space and time constraints based upon a Master's level research study. This limitation means that the depth of the analysis may be insufficient to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Readers might wonder what insights were missed due to these constraints. To address the limitation of scope and depth in this study, future research should aim for a broader and more in-depth investigation of the subject matter, through collaborating with other researchers to explore the missed insights, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

As a second limitation to this study, the study deliberately omitted the exploration of dream work approaches associated with religious practices such as Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and others, even though throughout the literature such studies emerged. This exclusion is based on scope and necessary focus of the study. Future research could address the omission of religious practices by conducting comprehensive, interdisciplinary

studies that explore the interplay between dreams and diverse faith traditions. This research could possibly encompass case studies, comparative analyses, and longitudinal studies while ensuring ethical engagement with religious communities. By employing these approaches, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the influence of religious beliefs and practices on dream interpretation in general, and within the traditional healing context in South Africa.

The next limitation to this study has to do with traditional cultural specificity. While the research discusses South African traditional healing practices, it does not extensively explore other global traditional cultural contexts. The study primarily focuses on South Africa, and its findings may not be universally applicable. It might lack a comparative analysis with dream work in other cultural contexts, limiting the generalisability of the findings. Future studies should conduct comparative cross-cultural research, collaborating with experts from various regions and cultures, and using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a more comprehensive and universally applicable understanding of dream work practices. Additionally, researchers should ensure cultural competence, publish their comparative findings, and engage in interdisciplinary approaches to maximise the impact of their studies.

A fourth limitation has to do with the theoretical framework. The study did not make use of such a framework. A theoretical framework could provide a structured lens through which to analyse and interpret the data. The absence of such a framework may affect the coherence and depth of the study's analysis. Future studies could incorporate a well-defined theoretical framework, which could serve as a structured lens for data analysis, enhancing the study's coherence and depth, and providing a robust foundation for interpretation and understanding of the research findings.

Either a Cultural Psychology Framework or an Ecological Systems Theory framework could have been applied to this research. The cultural psychology framework allows one to analyse dream work practices in different cultures through the lens of cultural psychology. One can explore how cultural beliefs, values, and norms influence the interpretation and utilisation of dreams. This framework helps one to understand the interplay between cultural factors and psychological processes in dream work. The ecological systems theory allows one to investigate how various systems (micro, meso, exo, macro, and chrono) interact to shape dream work practices. Both these frameworks provide a structured basis for analysing and interpreting dream work approaches in a systematic literature review, and allow one to delve into the cultural, psychological, and environmental factors that shape dream work practices, both globally and locally.

Another limitation of this study has to do with the omission of the lucid dreaming approach to dreaming. The decision to exclude lucid dreaming due to the scope of the research is mentioned. However, this omission may be seen as a limitation, especially since lucid dreaming is a significant subfield of dream research, especially within the context of traditional healing. The exclusion of lucid dreaming may lead to incomplete insights into the subject. To address the limitation of omitting lucid dreaming, future research could consider including a dedicated analysis of lucid dreaming within traditional healing practices or offer specific recommendations for separate studies on this important subfield, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of its role and significance.

The final limitation of this study has to do with the interdisciplinary collaborations mentioned throughout the discussion chapter. While the study acknowledges the potential for

collaboration between traditional healers and scientific experts, it does discuss the practical challenges of such collaborations. Future research could conduct in-depth investigations or case studies that examine the real-world obstacles, issues, and potential solutions related to collaboration between traditional healers and scientific experts, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the practical aspects of such partnerships.

6.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of current approaches to dream work, both on a global scale and within the unique context of South Africa, reveals the profound impact of dream analysis on individuals, communities, and society as a whole. The implications of these approaches are far-reaching and can shape the way we understand and address various psychological, social, and cultural challenges. However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations and areas for improvement in our current understanding and practice of dream work. Globally, dream work has proven to be a valuable tool for therapists, researchers, and individuals seeking personal growth and insight. It has expanded our understanding of the human psyche and its connection to various mental health issues. The exploration of dreams has led to new therapeutic approaches, contributing to the well-being of many. Furthermore, cross-cultural dream analysis has highlighted the universal nature of certain dream symbols and archetypes, bringing people from different backgrounds closer in their shared human experience.

In the South African context, dream work has taken on a unique dimension, incorporating traditional beliefs and healing practices. The integration of ancestral knowledge and Western psychological approaches has fostered a more holistic understanding of mental health and well-being. It has empowered individuals and communities to address historical trauma,

providing a pathway for healing and reconciliation. However, it is important to recognise the limitations of current dream work approaches. Research in this field is still evolving, and some methodologies may lack empirical rigor. Additionally, the cultural diversity within South Africa presents both opportunities and challenges in applying dream analysis effectively. The potential for misinterpretation of symbols and the need for cultural sensitivity cannot be understated. Finally, the gap in the literature needs to be filled with future endeavours of research on this topic in South Africa. To advance dream work, we must continue to bridge the gap between traditional and contemporary approaches, fostering greater inclusivity and cross-cultural dialogue. Further research is needed to refine existing methods and develop new ones, which are sensitive to cultural nuances. Additionally, we should work to destigmatise the practice of dream analysis, making it more accessible to those who can benefit from it.

The implications of current dream work approaches are vast and profound, both globally and within the South African context. While we celebrate the progress made in understanding dreams and their therapeutic potential, we must also remain humble in the face of ongoing challenges and limitations. Dream work offers a remarkable avenue for personal growth, healing, and cross-cultural understanding. As we continue to explore this realm, let us remain committed to refining our methods, embracing diversity, and expanding our horizons to unlock the full potential of dreams in our lives and communities. In conclusion, the founding fathers of psychology valued and focussed on dreams in the development of their theories. These theories remain in use, and since their development, many other schools in psychology have developed their own method of working with dreams in psychotherapy.

The field of medicine is also interested in dreams and their contribution to how studying certain parts of the brain lead to the discovery for solutions to psychological sleep issues such as sleep disturbances. The socio-cultural context of South Africa consists of the majority of individuals using indigenous healing systems within a traditional healing context that values dreams. therefore, for this research, it was deemed important to have a clear idea of current global and local approaches to dreams and how this could contribute towards local research. This research also sought to answer (1) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work globally? (2) What themes can be identified from a review of current approaches to dream work locally? (3) In what way can these themes guide local research on dream work?

What was found was that dream work is currently still being used with a number of modalities, methods and techniques to working with dreams. Locally it was found that there is a lack of literature on this topic. Within a local context, however, dreams are valued and worked with specifically within a traditional healing perspective. The traditional healer is the dream interpreter, and the dreams are believed to be messages from the ancestors. There may be a way to integrate Western psychological approaches to dream work with local traditional healing methods. Generally dreams and their meanings are still valued. Globally dreams are being worked with within psychotherapy. Locally, there is a gap in the literature on how dreams are being worked with. Future studies are needed to find out how dreams are worked with within a therapeutic context in South Africa.

This research provides a perspective into the importance of incorporating a holistic approach to understanding and applying dream work. By considering both global and local perspectives, it provides a comprehensive view of the implications of dream analysis. This

holistic approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of how dream work can be integrated into various cultural and psychological contexts, thereby increasing its relevance and effectiveness. The practical and societal relevance of this research is also to be noted. The research highlights the practical implications of dream work by emphasising its potential to address mental health issues, promote personal growth, and contribute to societal healing and reconciliation. This practical relevance highlights the significance of the research, as it demonstrates the real-world applications and benefits of dream analysis. This makes the research meaningful and valuable for both individuals seeking personal development and therapists, as well as for broader societal well-being.

These strengths collectively contribute to a well-rounded and insightful exploration of dream work, making it relevant not only in academic and therapeutic contexts but also in the broader context of cultural and societal well-being. The study also provides a comprehensive exploration of the topic of dream work, encompassing various themes and sub-themes. This breadth of coverage allows for a holistic understanding of how dreams are approached and worked with across different contexts. Secondly, the research also demonstrates a strong emphasis on cultural sensitivity, particularly within the South African context. It acknowledges the importance of understanding and respecting cultural beliefs and practices, which is crucial when integrating Western and traditional dream work approaches.

The study also has an interdisciplinary focus which integrates insights from multiple disciplines, including psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience, and cultural studies. This interdisciplinary approach enriches the understanding of dream work and its diverse applications across cultures and disciplines. The research discusses practical applications of dream work in psychotherapy which emphasises the value of dreams as a resource for

understanding individuals' emotions, thoughts, and unresolved issues, making it relevant for practitioners seeking to integrate dream work into their therapeutic practices. The research also suggests, offers, and expounds upon future research possibilities. The research hints at future research possibilities, especially in the realm of cross-cultural integrations and the cultural applicability of dream work approaches. This indicates a forward-looking approach to the topic. The research recognises the potential for collaboration between different approaches to dream work, such as integrating Western and traditional methods.

Collaboration can lead to a more holistic and effective approach to dream interpretation and healing, leading to more collaborative and insightful insights within literature publications. It also leads to a possibility for cross-cultural collaborative knowledge generation.

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive exploration of dream work, highlighting its significance both on a global scale and within the unique context of South Africa. While it acknowledges its limitations, such as scope, cultural specificity, and the absence of a theoretical framework, these do not diminish the value of the research. Instead, they serve as opportunities for future research to expand our understanding of dream work and address its practical challenges and cultural nuances. Dream work, with its potential to promote personal growth, address mental health issues, and foster societal healing, remains a valuable tool. It bridges the gap between traditional and contemporary approaches, encouraging inclusivity and cross-cultural dialogue. As we continue to refine our methods and embrace diversity, we can unlock the full potential of dreams in our lives and communities, ultimately contributing to our collective well-being. This research, with its interdisciplinary focus and forward-looking approach, sets the stage for further exploration and collaboration in the field of dream work, promoting a more holistic and culturally sensitive understanding of this fascinating subject.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

All included articles and databases:

EBSCOHost	Google Scholar	PubMed	Sabinet
Aspects of Insight in Working with Children's Dreams	A New Approach to Dreams in Psychotherapy: Phenomenological Dream-Self Model	<i>DreamSenseMemory</i> : A Gestalt-based dream-work approach embracing all our senses	Becoming A Xhosa Healer: Nomzi's Story
Common Factors Leading to a Universal Approach to Dreamwork: A Qualitative Analysis	Dreams and Fantasies in Psychodynamic Group Psychotherapy of Psychotic Patients		
Incongruence as a Doorway to Deeper Self-Awareness Using Experiential Focusing-Oriented Dreamwork	Group Dream Interpretation		
Interpreting Children's Dreams Through Humanistic Sandtray Therapy	A Jungian Approach to Dreams Reported by Soldiers in a Modern Combat Zone		
Posttraumatic Night-	Processing Trauma in Psychoanalysis in		

mares of Traumatized Refugees: Dream Work Integrating Cultural Values	‘Real’ Time and in Dreams: The Convergence of Past, Present and Future During COVID-19		
‘Terrible Twos’: Developing the Capacity to Think and Feel in the Analytic Field	Esoteric Power, Useless, Useful: Considerations About Dreams In Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy		
	Working on Dreams to Facilitate Asian International University Students’ Transition to the United States		
	Dream Work in Grief Therapy		
	Group Imago and Dreamwork in Group Therapy		
	The Line of the Least Resistance Method in Working with Dreams		
	The Place of the <i>Method of Less Resistance</i> Among		

	Other Psychotherapeutic Methods in Working with Dreams: Analysis of Dream Report Using the <i>Method Of Less Resistance</i> - A Case Study		
	What is it Like to be Midwife to a Dream? Irish Therapist's Experience of Working With Dreams in Contemporary Psychotherapy		
	Interpretive Reflections on Nomzi's Story		
	Catching Dreams: Applying Gestalt Dream Work to Canadian Aboriginal Peoples		
	Brief Analysis on Dream Motif in Uyghur Folk Dastan		
	A South African Experience: Cultural Determinants of		

	Ukuthwasa		
	The Psychology and Content of Dreaming in Africa		
	Ancestral Calling, Traditional Health Practitioner Training and Mental Illness: An Ethnographic Study From Rural Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa		
	Cultural Interpretations of Dreams: The Case of Native Amharic Language Speakers in Amhara Region, Ethiopia		
	Binding Legacies: Ancestor, Archetype and Other		
	Impact of Psychoanalysis in Nigeria: A Case Study		
	What Can We Learn From Shamans' Dreaming? A Cross-Cultural Exploration		

APPENDIX B

Boolean Terms System:

Boolean 1

(dreams OR dreamwork OR “dream work” OR “dreamwork approaches” OR “dream work approaches” OR “dream interpretation” OR “working with dreams”) AND (psychology OR counselling OR psychotherapy OR therapy)

Boolean 2

(dreamwork OR “dream work” OR “dream interpretation” OR “working with dreams”) AND (psychology OR psychotherapy OR therapy) AND (shamanism OR “traditional healer” OR “traditional healing” OR “indigenous healing systems”) AND dreams

Boolean 3

(dreamwork OR "dream work" OR "working with dreams") AND (therapy OR counseling OR psychotherapy OR psychology) AND “South Africa”

APPENDIX C

All stages:

Identification Stage			Screening Stage			Eligibility Stage		Final Included
Boolean key-words search	Database used	Records identified	Records after duplicates removed	Records screened	Records excluded	Full-text articles assessed for eligibility	Full-text articles excluded with reasons	Studies included in review
Boolean 1*	EBSCO-Host	149	118	118	89	29	24	5
Boolean 2**	EBSCO-Host	6	4	4	3	1	1	0
Boolean 3***	EBSCO-Host	5	4	4	3	1	0	1
Boolean 1	Google Scholar	235	224	224	192	32	20	12
Boolean 2	Google Scholar	85	78	78	54	24	14	10
Boolean 3	Google Scholar	44	35	35	28	7	7	0
Boolean 1	PubMed	148	140	140	136	4	3	1
Boolean 2	PubMed	2	1	1	1	0	0	0
Boolean 3	PubMed	3	2	2	2	0	0	0
Boolean 1	Sabinet	8	6	6	4	2	2	0
Boolean 2	Sabinet	8	6	6	4	2	2	0

Boolean 3	Sabinet	10	2	2	1	1	0	1
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Total included = 30

*(dreams OR dreamwork OR “dream work” OR “dreamwork approaches” OR “dream work approaches” OR “dream interpretation” OR “working with dreams”) AND (psychology OR counselling OR psychotherapy OR therapy)

**(dreamwork OR “dream work” OR “dream interpretation” OR “working with dreams”) AND (psychology OR psychotherapy OR therapy) AND (shamanism OR “traditional healer” OR “traditional healing” OR “indigenous healing systems”) AND dreams

***(dreamwork OR "dream work" OR "working with dreams") AND (therapy OR counseling OR psychotherapy OR psychology) AND “South Africa”

APPENDIX D

Eligibility Spreadsheet:

EBSCOHost:

Boolean 1: (dreams OR dreamwork OR “dream work” OR “dreamwork approaches” OR “dream work approaches” OR “dream interpretation” OR “working with dreams”) AND (psychology OR counselling OR psychotherapy OR therapy)				
Article Title	Author(s)	In-cluded	Ex-cluded	Reasons if excluded
A Quantitative Text Analysis Approach to Describing Posttrauma Nightmares in a Treatment-Seeking Population	Caitlin Paquet, Chelsea M. Cogan, and Joanne L. Davis		✓	This paper had more of a scientific approach to finding results pertaining to working with nightmares and its considerations
Aspects of Insight in Working with Children’s Dreams	Anita G. Schmukler	✓		
Avoiding Premature Conclusions: The Use of Dreams to Inform the Analyst’s Unfolding Understanding	Sydney Anderson		✓	The article focuses only on a very small part of therapy and dream work – specifically on how not to come to premature conclusions

Between Image and Voice: Dream Work in Gestalt Therapy	Emma Cain		✓	Does not specifically pertain to the research questions – also is a review of its own
Common Factors Leading to a Universal Approach to Dreamwork: A Qualitative Analysis	Leslie A. Ellis	✓		
Dream Weaver/Dream Catcher: The Older Child and Analyst at Work	Denia G. Barrett		✓	Already had enough data on working with children's dreams – based on the limited scope of this review
Dreams and COVID-19	Magda Di Renzo and Bruno Tagliacozzi		✓	Based on the limited scope of this review, this review has enough literature pertaining to the psychoanalytic nature of dream work
Dreams and Nightmares in Personality Disorders	Michael Schredl		✓	Does not pertain to the research questions
Elucidating the Transference Using the Child's Dream	Ruth K. Karush		✓	Already had enough data on working with children's dreams – based on the limited scope of this review

Ethnobotany of Dreams and Dream Interpretations: A study among the Karbis of India	Reena Terangpi, Urmika Phangchopi, and Robin-dra Teron		✓	A huge focus of this article is on botany and not so much pertaining to dream work
Fighting Back: Addressing a Nightmare in Counseling	Margaret Bowater		✓	The article focused specifically on nightmares and not working with dreams in general
Group Dream Work Incorporating a Psychophysical Embodied Approach	Luiza Bontempo e Silva and Karoliina Sandström		✓	This article looked at movement and acting as a way to work with dreams – the hypothesis has not been clinically tested for benefits and implications yet
Incongruence as a Doorway to Deeper Self-Awareness Using Experiential Focusing-Oriented Dreamwork	Leslie Ellis	✓		
Interpreting Children's Dreams Through Humanistic Sandtray Therapy	Karrie L. Swan and April A. Schottelkorb	✓		

Jungian Theory of dreaming and Contemporary Dream Research – Findings from the Research Project ‘Structural Dream Analysis’	Christian Roesler		✓	This article was very theoretically based and did not pertain to the research questions
Language, Politics and Dreams: the Challenges of Building Resilience in Refugees	Ali Zarbafi		✓	Although the paper does mention dreams, the primary focus of this paper is on language and not so much on dream work
Media Exposure to COVID-19 Epidemic and Threatening Dream Frequency: A Moderated Mediation Model of Anxiety and Coping Efficacy	Huan Guo and Heyong Shen		✓	This paper has an experimental focus on does not highlight how dreams are worked with
Montague Ullman’s Dream Appreciation	William R. Stimson		✓	There are already enough literature on group dream work included in this review
Peter, the Child Who Could Not Dream	Christine Anzieu-Premmureur		✓	This paper had a focus on theory quite a bit and tried to justify something

				known as ‘maternal containment’ – did not align with research questions
Posttraumatic Nightmares of Traumatized Refugees: Dream Work Integrating Cultural Values	Carla C. Schubert and Raija-Leena Punamäki	✓		
The Dream as a Picture of the Psychoanalytic Process	Marc Hebbrecht		✓	The paper lacks quality, is very theoretical and uses a first-person experience tone
The Dream in the Therapeutic Encounter: A Theoretical Formulation and Single Case Study	Liam Bang		✓	The paper is quite theoretical in nature and seeks to better understand the underlying mechanisms and phenomenology of dreaming and dream telling in the psychotherapeutic encounter. Does not pertain to the research questions
The Function of Dreams in Syl Cheney-Coker’s Fiction	Nina H. B. Jorgensen		✓	The paper focuses on a dream from a fictional work and does not pertain to the research questions
Therapeutic Progress in Repetitive	Maria Fernanda and Clavijo López		✓	This paper focused primarily on repetitive

Dreams: A Diachronic Study of a Clinical Case				dreams and the outcomes of working with them – does not pertain to the research questions
Towards a New Model of Dream Interpretation?	Marc Hebbrecht		✓	Due to the limited scope of this review, this review has already included literature on Bion's work
Using Control-Mastery and Jungian Theories to Treat Nightmare Disorder: A Case from Thailand	Tinakon Wongpakaran, Kelly J. Elsegood, Nahathai Wongpakaran, Kamonporn Wannarit and Pimporn Promkumtan		✓	This paper specifically focused on nightmares
When the Dreamer Gets the Dream Wrong: The Hidden Value of What Is Not Understood	William Stimson		✓	This paper specifically focused on one case where the author felt the dreamer's dream was interpreted incorrectly in a group dream setting – does not pertain to the research question
Working Together with a Patient Dreams, Working on the Analyst Oneiric Text	Daniela Luca		✓	This paper was not academic-based but focused more on discussing a text of someone else on dream work

Working With Remembered Childhood Nightmares in Adult Psychotherapy	Toby Ingham		✓	This paper focuses on nightmares, childhood nightmares to be exact
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TOTAL INCLUDED: 5**TOTAL EXCLUDED: 24****Boolean 2:**

(dreamwork OR "dream work" OR "dream interpretation" OR "working with dreams") AND (psychology OR psychotherapy OR therapy) AND (shamanism OR "traditional healer" OR "traditional healing" OR "indigenous healing systems") AND dreams

Article Title	Author(s)	Included	Excluded	Reasons if excluded
Divination and Dreaming	Gilda Frantz		✓	This paper has a narrative first-person writing style instead of an academic style commenting on dream work

TOTAL INCLUDED: 0**TOTAL EXCLUDED: 1****Boolean 3:**

(dreamwork OR "dream work" OR "working with dreams") AND (therapy OR counseling OR psychotherapy OR psychology) AND "South Africa"

Article Title	Author(s)	Included	Excluded	Reasons if excluded
'Terrible Twos': Developing the Capacity to Think and Feel in the Analytic Field	Duncan Cartwright	✓		

TOTAL INCLUDED: 1**TOTAL EXCLUDED: 0**Google Scholar:

Boolean 1: (dreams OR dreamwork OR “dream work” OR “dreamwork approaches” OR “dream work approaches” OR “dream interpretation” OR “working with dreams”) AND (psychology OR counselling OR psychotherapy OR therapy)				
Article Title	Author(s)	Included	Ex-cluded	Reasons if excluded
A Couple's Unconscious Communication: Dreams	Massimiliano Sommantico		✓	Based on the scope of this review, there were enough literature on psychoanalytic psychology and dreams
A Jungian Approach to Dreams Reported by Soldiers in a Modern Combat Zone	Rob Wyatt, Erik Goodwyn and Michael Ignatowski	✓		
A New Approach to Dreams in Psychotherapy: Phenomenological Dream-Self Model	Hayrettin Kara and Gökhan Özcan	✓		
A Phenomenological Study of Dreams and their Meaning at the Final Developmental	Alair A. Altiero		✓	This paper is a dissertation

Stage of Life				
A Self-Based Phenomenological Approach to Gilgamesh's Dreams	Gökhan Özcan, Handan Arıkan, and Hayrettin Kara		✓	Does not pertain to the research question
A Systematic Review of Therapist Experience of Dream Working in Contemporary Psychotherapy	Mike Hackett		✓	This is a systematic literature review of therapists' experiences of working with dreams; quite similar to the current research but not applicable
An Overview of the Dreaming Process and the Selective Affective Theory of Sleep and Dreams	Milton Kramer		✓	This paper does not indicate how dreams are worked with in therapy
'Clemency on the Way to the Gallows': Death, Dreams and Dissociation	Kenneth Kimmel		✓	This paper focused on a single case of trauma but did not specify how dreams are worked with
Data, Dreams, and Drives: Interpersonal and Relational Innovations in Perspective	Mark J. Blechner		✓	This theoretical-based work does not pertain to the research question
Dream Interpretation and Understanding	Mudita Raj		✓	Does not pertain to the research questions

the Unconscious				
Dream Work in Grief Therapy	Konrad J. Noronha	✓		
Dreams and Fantasies in Psychodynamic Group Psychotherapy of Psychotic Patients	Branka Restek-Petrović, Nataša Orešković-Krezler, Majda Grah, Nina Mayer, Anamarija Bogović and Mate Mihanović	✓		
Dreams, Memory, and the Ancestors: Creativity, Culture, and the Science of Sleep	Katie Glaskin		✓	This paper does not outline exactly how dreams are worked with in therapy
Dreaming During the Covid-19 Pandemic: Computational Assessment of Dream Reports Reveals Mental Suffering Related to Fear of Contagion	Natalia B. Mota, Janaina Weissheimer, Marina Ribeiro, Mizziara de Paiva, Juliana Avilla-Souza, Gabriela Simabucuru, Monica F. Chaves, Lucas Cecchi, Jaime Cirne, Guillermo Cecchi, Cilene Rodrigues, Mauro Copelli and		✓	This scientific paper does not pertain to the research questions in that it does not highlight how dreams are worked with or which approaches to dreams are being used

	Sidarta Ribeiro			
Esoteric Power, Useless, Useful: Considerations About Dreams In Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy	Antonino Carcione, Marta Santonastaso, Francesca Sferruzza, and Ilaria Riccardi	✓		
Exploring the Dreams of Hospice Workers	Shirley A. Hess, Sarah Knox, Clara E. Hill, Tara Byers, and Patricia Spangler		✓	Does not pertain to the research questions
Factors Influencing the Frequency of Erotic Dreams: An Online Study	Michael Schredl, Caspar Geißler and Anja S. Göritz		✓	This scientifically-based paper looks at factors which influence the frequency of erotic dreams and not necessarily how dreams are worked with – it does not pertain to the research questions
Finding Your Dreams	Christian J. Haverkamp		✓	Does not pertain to the research questions
Frequency and Motives of Sharing Dreams: Personality Correlates	Daniel Graf, Michael Schredl, Anja S. Göritz		✓	This paper looks at the empirical motivations and personality structures behind dream-sharing

Group Dream Interpretation	Mark J. Blechner	✓		
Group Imago and Dreamwork in Group Therapy	Anna Emanuela Tangolo	✓		
How Dreams Help Us To Accept Death: A Case Study	Moslem Akbari		✓	Based on the limited scope of this research, there are already enough papers on existential psychology dream work
I Hear You in My Dreams	Gayle Skawen		✓	This paper is quite theoretical
Insight from Dream and Event Discussions Using the Schredl Method of Dreamwork in Experienced and Inexperienced Dreamworkers	Josie E. Malinowski and Alexandra Pinto		✓	This empirical paper aims to find out about the insight-generating potential of dream work, and does not pertain to the research questions
Listening to the Rhythms of the Unconscious in Dreams	Tanja Auf der Heyde		✓	This paper focused on music therapy more than dream work
Narrative Dream Analysis? Towards a Narrative Therapy Response to Acknowledging People's Responses in	Ron Findlay		✓	This paper does not pertain fully to the research questions

Dreams				
Processing Trauma in Psychoanalysis in 'Real' Time and in Dreams: The Convergence of Past, Present and Future During COVID-19	Deborah Bryon	✓		
The Line of the Least Resistance Method in Working with Dreams	Miroslav Pendaroski and Katerina Nikolovska	✓		
The Place of the <i>Method of Less Resistance</i> Among Other Psychotherapeutic Methods in Working with Dreams: Analysis of Dream Report Using the <i>Method Of Less Resistance</i> - A Case Study	Miroslav Pendaroski	✓		
The Structural Approach to the Empirical Investigation of the Meaning of Dreams: Findings From the Research Project "Structural	Christian Roesler		✓	This paper has a theoretical focus and does not pertain to the research questions

Dream Analysis				
What is it Like to be Midwife to a Dream? Irish Therapist's Experience of Working With Dreams in Contemporary Psychotherapy	Mike Hackett	✓		
Working on Dreams to Facilitate Asian International University Students' Transition to the United States	Wonjin Sim, Clara E. Hill, Changming Duan, Mira An, Shudarshana Gupta, and Megan Prass	✓		

TOTAL INCLUDED: 12

TOTAL EXCLUDED: 20

Boolean 2:

(dreamwork OR "dream work" OR "dream interpretation" OR "working with dreams") AND (psychology OR psychotherapy OR therapy) AND (shamanism OR "traditional healer" OR "traditional healing" OR "indigenous healing systems") AND dreams

Article Title	Author(s)	In-cluded	Ex-cluded	Reasons if excluded
A South African Experience: Cultural Determinants of Ukuthwasa	Brianna Rose Bakow and Kathy Low	✓		

Ancestral Calling, Traditional Health Practitioner Training and Mental Illness: An Ethnographic Study From Rural Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa	Martine Van Der Zeijst, Wim Veling, Elliot Mqansa Makhathini, Ezra Susser, Jonathan K. Burns, Hans W. Hoek and Ida Susser	✓		
Binding Legacies: Ancestor, Archetype and Other	Fanny Brewster	✓		
Brief Analysis on Dream Motif in Uyghur Folk Dastan	Tursunay Eli and Abdurehim Rustem	✓		
Catching Dreams: Applying Gestalt Dream Work to Canadian Aboriginal Peoples	Nicole Elliott	✓		
Cultural Interpretations of Dreams: The Case of Native Amharic Language Speakers in Amhara Region, Ethiopia	Hilawe Kinfemichael and M.V.R. Raju	✓		
Dreamwork, Art Worlds and Miracles in Malaysia	D.S. Farrer		✓	Does not pertain to the research questions
Erich Fromm and	Alzo David-		✓	This paper has more of a

North Korea: Social Psychology and the Political Regime	West			political focus and does not address the research questions of this review
Impact of Psychoanalysis in Nigeria: A Case Study	Ebigbo P. Onyekwere, Elekwachi C. Lekwas, Nweze F. Chukwunenyem, Nwogwugwu A. Onyinye and Okeke Nneka	✓		
Interpretive Reflections on Nomzi's Story	David J.A. Edwards, Manton Hirst and Beauty N. Booi	✓		
Jaguar Medicine: A Qualitative Study of Healing and Transformation	Vera Lucia Moura and Donald Moss		✓	Does not pertain to the research questions
Nonshamanic Native American Healing	Jerome S. Bernstein		✓	Does not pertain to the research question
Psychotherapy in Nigeria	Alfred Awaritefe		✓	This paper does not explicitly highlight how dreams are worked with
Psychoanalysis and Shamanism: Parallels and Differences	Christian Montegut		✓	Does not pertain to the research questions

Religion, Health, and Healing in the Traditional Shona Culture of Zimbabwe	Mazvita Machinga		✓	This paper has a religious aspect to it and does not pertain to the research questions
Shamanism, Dreaming, Healing: Some Case Illustrations	Roseann Tan-Mansukhani		✓	Does not pertain to the research questions
Taking Dreams Seriously: An Ontological-Phenomenological Approach to Tzotzil Maya Dream Culture	Kevin P. Groark		✓	Does not pertain to the research questions
The Coming Era of Time-Free Transparency	Nicholas Brink		✓	This paper focuses more on trans states instead of actual dream work
The Psychology and Content of Dreaming in Africa	Augustine Nwoye	✓		
The Role of Dreams and Visionary Narratives in Mayan Cultural Survival	Barbara Tedlock		✓	This is a book review
The Shaman, the Therapist, and the Coach	Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries		✓	Does not pertain to the research question
Visions And Stones: Spirit Matters and the Charm of Small Things in South Korean Shamanic Rock Divination	David J. Kim		✓	This paper does not pertain to the research questions

What Can We Learn From Shamans' Dreaming? A Cross-Cultural Exploration	Charles D. Laughlin	✓		
Wheel of Fire: The African American Dreamer and Cultural Consciousness	Fanny Brewster		✓	Does not pertain to the research question

TOTAL INCLUDED: 10**TOTAL EXCLUDED: 14****Boolean 3:**

(dreamwork OR "dream work" OR "working with dreams") AND (therapy OR counseling OR psychotherapy OR psychology) AND "South Africa"

Article Title	Author(s)	In-cluded	Excluded	Reasons if excluded
Contemporary Dream Beliefs and Practices: A Qualitative, Sociological Study	Werner Nell		✓	Does not pertain to the research question
Dream Interpretation in Theory: Drawing On the Contributions of Freud, Jung, and the Kleinians	Joan Schön		✓	This theoretical paper does not outline how dreams are worked with in therapy
Exploring A Jungian-Oriented Approach to the Dream in Psychotherapy	Darina Shouldice		✓	Based on the limited scope of this research, there are already enough literature on a Jungian approach to

				dream work
Gestalt Interventions Benefitting Children and Adolescents: A Literature Review	Theodore Stripling		✓	Based on the limited scope of this research, there are already enough literature on the Gestalt approach and dream work
Lioness Dreaming: A Somatic Approach to the Animal Ally	Elizabeth E. Nelson		✓	Does not pertain to the research question
The Ubuntu Paradigm: Psychology's Next <i>Force?</i>	Tammy L. Hanks		✓	Does not pertain to the research question
What Happens in the Forest? Memory, Trauma, Repression and Resilience amongst Congolese Refugees Living in Durban, South Africa	Alain Tschudin		✓	Does not pertain to the research question

TOTAL INCLUDED: 0

TOTAL EXCLUDED: 7

PubMed:**Boolean 1:**

(dreams OR dreamwork OR "dream work" OR "dreamwork approaches" OR "dream work approaches" OR "dream interpretation" OR "working with dreams") AND (psychology OR counselling OR psychotherapy OR therapy)

Article Title	Author(s)	In- cluded	Ex- cluded	Reasons if excluded
A Clinical Case Presentation: Understanding and Interpreting Dreams While Working Through Developmental Trauma	Joshua Levy and Paul Finnegan		✓	Does not pertain to the research question
<i>DreamSenseMemory: A Gestalt-based dreamwork approach embracing all our senses</i>	Brigitte Holzinger, Franziska Nierwetberg, Larissa Cosentino and Lucille Mayer	✓		
The Dream: A Psychodynamically Informative Instrument	Myron L. Glucksmann		✓	Does not pertain to the research questions
Working On Dreams, From Neuroscience To Psychotherapy	Giorgio Caviglia		✓	Does not pertain to the research questions

TOTAL INCLUDED: 1

TOTAL EXCLUDED: 3

Boolean 2:

(dreamwork OR “dream work” OR “dream interpretation” OR “working with dreams”)
 AND (psychology OR psychotherapy OR therapy) AND (shamanism OR “traditional healer” OR “traditional healing” OR “indigenous healing systems”) AND dreams

None of the identified records were eligible for the Eligibility screening phase

TOTAL INCLUDED: 0

TOTAL EXCLUDED: 0

Boolean 3:

(dreamwork OR "dream work" OR "working with dreams") AND (therapy OR counseling OR psychotherapy OR psychology) AND "South Africa"

None of the identified records were eligible for the Eligibility screening phase

TOTAL INCLUDED: 0

TOTAL EXCLUDED: 0

Sabinet:

Boolean 1:

(dreams OR dreamwork OR "dream work" OR "dreamwork approaches" OR "dream work approaches" OR "dream interpretation" OR "working with dreams") AND (psychology OR counselling OR psychotherapy OR therapy)

Article Title	Author(s)	In-cluded	Ex-cluded	Reasons if ex-cluded
Conversation with Other": Style and Pathology in Selected African Novels	Andrew Nyongesa		✓	Does not pertain to the research questions
Trauma and Dramatherapy: Dreams, Play and the Social Construction of Culture	Phil Jones		✓	Does not pertain to the research questions

TOTAL INCLUDED: 9**TOTAL EXCLUDED: 20**

Boolean 2: (dreamwork OR “dream work” OR “dream interpretation” OR “working with dreams”) AND (psychology OR psychotherapy OR therapy) AND (shamanism OR “traditional healer” OR “traditional healing” OR “indigenous healing systems”) AND dreams				
Article Title	Author(s)	In- cluded	Ex- cluded	Reasons if excluded
A Psychoanalytical Interpretation of the Characters in A.C. Jordan’s Novel <i>Ingqumbo Yeminyanya</i>	L.L. Kwatsha		✓	Does not pertain to the research questions
An Exploratory Study of Trainee and Registered Psychologists’ Perceptions About Indigenous Healing Systems	Sarajini Ramgoon, Ndileka Q. Dalasile, Zubeda Paruk, Cynthia J. Patel		✓	Does not pertain to the research questions

TOTAL INCLUDED: 0**TOTAL EXCLUDED: 2**

Boolean 3: (dreamwork OR “dream work” OR “working with dreams”) AND (therapy OR counseling OR psychotherapy OR psychology) AND “South Africa”				
Article Title	Author(s)	In- cluded	Ex- cluded	Reasons if excluded

Becoming A Xhosa Healer: Nomzi's Story	Beauty N. Booie and David J. A. Edwards	✓		
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CASP Checklist: 10 questions to help you make sense of a **Qualitative** research

How to use this appraisal tool: Three broad issues need to be considered when appraising a qualitative study:

- ▶ Are the results of the study valid? (Section A)
- ▶ What are the results? (Section B)
- ▶ Will the results help locally? (Section C)

The 10 questions on the following pages are designed to help you think about these issues systematically. The first two questions are screening questions and can be answered quickly. If the answer to both is “yes”, it is worth proceeding with the remaining questions. There is some degree of overlap between the questions, you are asked to record a “yes”, “no” or “can’t tell” to most of the questions. A number of italicised prompts are given after each question. These are designed to remind you why the question is important. Record your reasons for your answers in the spaces provided.

About: These checklists were designed to be used as educational pedagogic tools, as part of a workshop setting, therefore we do not suggest a scoring system. The core CASP checklists (randomised controlled trial & systematic review) were based on JAMA ‘Users’ guides to the medical literature 1994 (adapted from Guyatt GH, Sackett DL, and Cook DJ), and piloted with health care practitioners.

For each new checklist, a group of experts were assembled to develop and pilot the checklist and the workshop format with which it would be used. Over the years overall adjustments have been made to the format, but a recent survey of checklist users reiterated that the basic format continues to be useful and appropriate.

Referencing: we recommend using the Harvard style citation, i.e.: *Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (2018). CASP (insert name of checklist i.e. Qualitative) Checklist. [online] Available at: URL. Accessed: Date Accessed.*

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Paper for appraisal and reference:

Section A: Are the results valid?

1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?

Yes	☐
Can't Tell	☐
No	☐

- HINT: Consider
- what was the goal of the research
 - why it was thought important
 - its relevance

Comments:

2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?

Yes	☐
Can't Tell	☐
No	☐

- HINT: Consider
- If the research seeks to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants
 - Is qualitative research the right methodology for addressing the research goal

Comments:

Is it worth continuing?

3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?

Yes	☐
Can't Tell	☐
No	☐

- HINT: Consider
- if the researcher has justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided which method to use)

Comments:

4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?

Yes	☐
Can't Tell	☐
No	☐

HINT: Consider

- If the researcher has explained how the participants were selected
- If they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study
- If there are any discussions around recruitment (e.g. why some people chose not to take part)

Comments:

5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?

Yes	☐
Can't Tell	☐
No	☐

HINT: Consider

- If the setting for the data collection was justified
- If it is clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi-structured interview etc.)
- If the researcher has justified the methods chosen
 - If the researcher has made the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interviews are conducted, or did they use a topic guide)
 - If methods were modified during the study. If so, has the researcher explained how and why
 - If the form of data is clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes etc.)
 - If the researcher has discussed saturation of data

Comments:

6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?

Yes	☐
Can't Tell	☐
No	☐

HINT: Consider

- If the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location
- How the researcher responded to events during the study and whether they considered the implications of any changes in the research design

Comments:

Section B: What are the results?

7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?

Yes	☐
Can't Tell	☐
No	☐

HINT: Consider

- If there are sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained
- If the researcher has discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study)
- If approval has been sought from the ethics committee

Comments:

8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?

Yes	☐
Can't Tell	☐
No	☐

HINT: Consider

- If there is an in-depth description of the analysis process
- If thematic analysis is used. If so, is it clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data
- Whether the researcher explains how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process
- If sufficient data are presented to support the findings
 - To what extent contradictory data are taken into account
- Whether the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation

Comments:

9. Is there a clear statement of findings?

Yes	☐
Can't Tell	☐
No	☐

HINT: Consider whether

- If the findings are explicit
- If there is adequate discussion of the evidence both for and against the researcher's arguments
- If the researcher has discussed the credibility of their findings (e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst)
- If the findings are discussed in relation to the original research question

Comments:

Section C: Will the results help locally?

10. How valuable is the research?

HINT: Consider

- If the researcher discusses the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding (e.g. do they consider the findings in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research-based literature
- If they identify new areas where research is necessary
- If the researchers have discussed whether or how the findings can be transferred to other populations or considered other ways the research may be used

Comments: