EXPERIENCES OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN GUIDED BY DIVINERS

by

NICOLE SCHLUEP

submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the subject

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF F J A SNYDERS

MARCH 2009

I declare that **EXPERIENCES OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN GUIDED BY DIVINERS**

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and

acknowledged by means of complete references.

_____   _____

SIGNATURE   **DATE**

(Ms) N. Schluep

SUMMARY

In this qualitative study the researcher explores the experiences and locus of control orientation of five individuals who have been guided by diviners. It also determines whether any traits or demographic variables characterise individuals consulting with diviners. This study is underpinned by three assumptions, namely, that multiple accounts of reality exist (postmodern philosophy), that knowledge cannot be void of subjectivity (constructivist epistemology) and that 'meaning' is influenced by dominant discourses (social constructionist paradigm). Individuals' experiences with diviners are documented using thematic network analysis. Comparative analysis of the participants' global themes revealed that 'control' and 'self insight' and 'self expression' were common themes. Levenson's Locus of Control Questionnaire was applied and established that an internal locus of control orientation predominated amongst participants. This finding contradicted existing literature.

Professionals in the field of humanities and lay persons interested in divination would appreciate this study. Focal areas for future research and clinical practice are highlighted.

<u>Key Terms</u>:

Divination; diviners; supernatural; paranormal; superstitiousness; postmodernism; social constructionism; constructivism; qualitative research; hermeneutics; thematic network analysis; locus of control

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My grateful thanks to:

Professor Ricky Snyders, my supervisor: Thank you for your dedication and efficiency as a supervisor. It was your encouragement, sense of humour and patience that helped me complete a study which far exceeded my greatest expectations!

To my mother and father: Thank you for the privilege of many years of study and walking beside me in my endeavours as 'an eternal student'. Mom, our relationship has now become a great source of wisdom in my life. Please know that I appreciate what you do for me, and most importantly, thank you for being 'you'. Dad, you have taught me to believe in myself, pursue that which makes me happy and have always been a source of guidance and encouragement, thank you.

To my brother: 'Son', I am proud to be your sister. Thank you for supporting me during difficult times over the past two years and always being a brother I could rely on. I am inspired by your 'life knowledge' and maturity beyond years!

To my dearest friends: How many times have you heard me say "Sorry I can't, I'm working on my thesis". Thank you for your unwavering support and being the pillars of strength I needed! Despite my lack of attentiveness to our friendships at times, you were 'never above, never below me, but always beside me'.

To my lecturers Stan, Johan, Lesiba and Elmarie: Each of you have contributed meaningfully to my life and training as a clinical psychologist. Stan, in many ways you are the inspiration behind the topic for my thesis because you encouraged me to be 'me'. Johan, thank you for the many 'wow' experiences, for reminding me to listen to my body and for

replenishing my energies when they were depleted. Lesiba, I learnt a lot from your provocative interpersonal style and your enthusiasm and commitment for the African epistemology - thank you for the many 'reframes'. Elmarie, I want to thank you for your accommodating and caring nature. You were the 'voice of reason', looked after my best interests and gently nudged me in 'the right direction'.

To God, my spirit guides and those who have crossed over: I have you to thank for giving me the faith needed to complete this research. Thank you for your silent presence, for watching over me and providing me with the 'soul food' I needed to remain strong, focussed and in harmony with all that surrounds me.

To significant others and my family in Switzerland: You nurtured the 'flame' needed to complete this research. Thank you for your willingness to 'dialogue' with me about my research, for patiently listening to my frustrations and for encouraging me to persevere.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Tables

Figures

Appendix A: Levenson's Locus of Control Questionnaire

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"What is right for one soul may not be right for another. It may mean having to stand on your own and do something strange in the eyes of others. But do not be daunted. Do whatever it is because you know within it is right for you".

Eileen Caddy (cited in Pearls of wisdom, 2007, p.1)

Rationale for research

I, the researcher, have been 'there'. I have experienced the awe, the wonder, the fulfilment and the unity with a force greater than myself. Leaving the clairvoyant's room, I felt one with that which surrounded me. The cosmic forces were calling me, speaking to me through the air, the trees, the birds and the ground below. I was connected, supported, and even though I stood alone, I felt as if I was surrounded with love, care and the now comforting unknown. I felt compelled to close my eyes, take a deep breath and acknowledge the spiritual energies around me, those energies that, unbeknown to me, walk with me through my day and keep an ever watching eye over that which I experience. Suddenly it all made sense. The man in the room had taken me beyond, beyond the familiar, beyond the here and now, beyond, far beyond, using himself and a deck of tarot cards as instruments by which to bring healing into my life. A deck of cards, so small and yet so profound that the impact still lives within me today, a year later. If a man and a deck of cards were able to evoke overwhelming feelings of wholeness, cleansing and comfort within me, then I wonder if another person, with another instrument, could have the same impact on an individual longing for answers, direction, freedom from pain and a sense of clarity.

As a Clinical Psychology Masters student, I am curious about and fascinated by individuals' quests for self knowledge and how these journeys are embroidered with healing. Until recently, I have primarily perceived 'understanding of the self' and healing as being that which occurs in conversation between two people within the context of Western psychotherapy in which the context suggests that 'dialogue' and the skill of manoeuvring the relationship between therapist and client are the primary avenues to facilitate change. However, I now experience within me the need to re-search my own conceptualisation of what constitutes a healing context and, given my own profound experiences, am drawn to the intriguing context of divination. Divination is often approached with disbelief, and those practising within it or daring to consult it, are regarded as eccentric, out of touch with reality and dabbling in the domain of witchcraft. Many sceptics reject the practices of divination and are of the opinion that they are merely attempts by diviners to make money, based on lies, false hope and the gullible nature of people. Yet, despite all the disdain, wherever I go, I seem to be exposed to any one of the many aspects of divination and frequently seem to be conversing with those who have consulted diviners. During conversations with others regarding their experiences with diviners, I began reflecting on the role of psychology, the tendency to ask about certain areas of functioning but not others and the profession's propensity to distinguish 'normal' or 'healthy' from 'abnormal' or 'unhealthy' functioning. More importantly, I began questioning my own consultations with diviners, considered how others perceive me because I consult them and wondered how my consultations could be linked to my choice of profession as a psychologist. At the same time, the Clinical Psychology course was provoking me to reflect on my interpersonal style and external locus of control orientation. The present study was therefore 'conceived' out of the interplay between my observations of society, my own personal journey, my interest in divination and my training as a Clinical Psychologist. It would seem then, that in many ways the universe 'called' me to give divination life within an academic milieu.

The title within its context

The ancient practice of divination has been documented throughout history and is still being used by cultural groups all over the world. Divination seems to be conceptualised, defined and approached differently depending on the geographic location and frame of reference of individuals practicing and consulting in this field.   The most popular synonym for divination appears to be fortune telling (Maroney, 2002), given that many individuals consult with diviners to discover answers pertaining to questions such as "What does the future hold for me" and "How should I handle a specific situation or difficulty" (Gibson & Gibson, 1973). According to the New World Encyclopedia (2009), divination should be distinguished from fortune-telling in that divination has a formal or ritualistic and often social character, usually in religious contexts, while fortune telling is a more everyday practice for personal purposes. The researcher interprets this to mean that fortune telling is associated with questions pertaining primarily to what the future holds, whereas divination is related to fundamental issues related to living with meaning and purpose, and is a way to a more deeper understanding of events and influences surrounding an individual.   Divination therefore includes but is not limited to the practice of fortune telling. Divination's purpose seems to be to help people find out about themselves, the universe and their place in it (Britannica Online Encyclopedia, 2009) and to reveal or uncover hidden truths about individuals and the circumstances surrounding them.

Divination is broadly defined as:

"Methods of communication between two worlds or dimensions which are usually divided from each other" (Loewe & Blacker, 1981, p.63).

Or

"The attempt to elicit from some higher power or supernatural being the answers to questions beyond the range of ordinary human understanding" (Loewe & Blacker, 1981, p.1).

Implicit in these definitions is the assumption that one may need to access invisible forces that exist in reality in attempt to answer questions or obtain 'meaning' and 'understanding' (Winkelman & Peek, 2004). This notion may be inherently unsettling, as it implies that information does not only emanate from the logical or certain or tangible, but also from the illogical, uncertain and concealed.

Divination, as referred to in this study, will refer to:

> The art or technique of gaining knowledge or exploring the unknown in order to elicit answers to questions beyond the range of ordinary human understanding, of future events or distant states, by means of observing and interpreting psychometry (Adapted from Cline, 2009).

The term psychometry does not refer to the administration and interpretation of psychological tests, but rather, to the administration or interpretation of:

- Cosmological occurrences, for example, *planetary alignment*
- Symbols and signs appearing on tarot *cards*
- The lines on the palm of the *hand*
- The configuration of *numbers*
- Messages from spirits.

The abovementioned forms of psychometry, when grouped together, will refer to the 'methods of divination' for purposes of this study. The methods of divination referred to in this study appear to be more commonly used by diviners in Western or Asian contexts and are more strongly equated

with fortune-telling. Divining with 'messages from spirits' is most prevalent within African countries, and tends to be affiliated with religious cultural practices (Masonga & Moleleki, 2004). Individuals demonstrating the art or technique of accessing hidden realms will be referred to as 'diviners' in this study: their role is to act as mediators between the 'known' and 'unknown'. The researcher, during field research for her personal interest, found that some individuals using the methods of divination preferred not to call themselves diviners because they had acquired the skill of divining through years of self study and observation and were not born with a diving 'gift' or 'talent'. Max (1999) taps into this distinction when he differentiates between intuition and sortilege. Sortilege means "using some quasi-random means to derive a pattern, which is then interpreted using a pre-determined set of symbolism" (Max, 1999, p.2) and intuition is a "non-mechanical device with a prescribed set of meanings involved, and the divinatory knowledge comes to the seeker as a 'vision' or a convincing intuition" (Max, 1999, p. 2). Sortilege is then more likely to be associated with an acquired skill and 'intuition' with a natural talent. The researcher, however, is of the opinion that individuals utilising the methods of divination may use a combination of 'intuition' and 'sortilege' and therefore the term 'diviners', as used in this study, will refer to individuals' who practise divining regardless of whether or not they have a 'natural gift' or 'acquired skill' for doing so.

The title of this study not only includes the term 'diviner' but also the phrase 'experiences of individuals'. An experience can be defined as "knowledge of or skill in or observation of some thing or some event gained through involvement in or exposure to that thing or event" (Wikipedia, 2009, p.1) or "direct personal awareness of or contact with a particular thing" (Encarta Online Dictionary, 2009). Experience therefore refers to an individual's subjective cognitive and psychological accounts of interactions with his or her environment, both past and present. In terms of this study, then, the title proposes a broad-spectrum documentation of individuals' opinions about, perceptions of, feelings towards and encounters with diviners.

The Aims of the Study

It is hoped that the study will achieve its intended three aims, namely:

Give voice to the experiences of individuals who have been guided by diviners:

Although detailed information is available about various methods of divination in both academic and non-academic settings, individuals' experiences of these methods have, according to the researcher, not been given due credit or documented extensively. This study therefore aims to provide a context for individuals to share their unique experiences with diviners, without being restricted or limited in terms of the nature of the information they disclose.

Explore the locus of control orientation in individuals who have been guided by diviners:

A preliminary review of the literature proved interesting, because the methods of divination were documented extensively under the umbrella term 'paranormal psychology' and this field appeared to evoke ambivalence, debate, scepticism and dispute amongst researchers. However, the same did not apply when reviewing the locus of control orientation of individuals consulting with diviners, because here, there was less discrepancy and debate, with the greatest consensus amongst researchers.   The most prominent finding within the literature is that an external locus of control orientation characterises individuals consulting with diviners. The reader will, after consulting chapter three, understand that this statement seems to place individuals consulting with diviners in a negative light as this orientation is often associated with dysfunction. The researcher intends therefore to research previous research findings and explore whether or not individuals consulting with diviners indeed exhibit an external locus of control orientation.

Explore whether any traits or demographic variables characterise individuals consulting with diviners

The researcher is of the opinion that an experience is influenced by an individual's demographic variables, for example, age and gender and traits, for example interpersonal style and temperament. An exploration of an individual's experiences with diviners should therefore also investigate demographic variables or personality traits as they pertain to that individual as they have a bearing on the nature and perception of experiences.

By fulfilling these aims, it is hoped that the reader will gain a new perspective on and deeper understanding of the individuals who have dared to immerse themselves in the intriguing world of divination.

The Presentation of the Study

The study will be presented to the reader in the following chapters:

Chapter Two – Literature Review

Chapter Two will begin with a discussion highlighting the difficulty experienced in compiling the literature review as researchers use the terms paranormal, superstition and supernatural when referring to the methods of divination. Thereafter, the reader will be presented with an overview of research conducted on this topic. For practical purposes, the chapter will be divided into two sections. The first section will document research pertaining to the demographic variables of individuals who have consulted with diviners and the second will provide an overview of individuals' experiences with diviners based on thematic analysis conducted on a number of internet sites documenting individuals' experiences with diviners.

Chapter Three – Research Design

Chapter Three will comprise an overview of the research design. In order to allow for personal meaning making and for the participants' experiences to be reflected sensitively, this chapter will describe how the study is guided by a constructivist epistemology, the social constructionist paradigm and postmodern philosophy. The reader will also become familiar with the methodological principles of qualitative research and will be informed as to how purposive sampling, the semi-structured interview, thematic network analysis, hermeneutics and the locus of control questionnaire constitute the methods of information collection and analysis.

Chapter Four to Chapter Eight – Participants' results

Chapter Four is dedicated to Avril, Chapter Five to Elise, Chapter Six to Abel, Chapter Seven to Vanessa and Chapter Eight to Anisa. Each chapter is divided into three sections. The first will document the participant's experiences with diviners in the form of themes which were identified through the process of thematic network analysis. The second section will focus on the participant's results on the locus of control questionnaire while the last section will provide an integrated analysis of the themes and locus of control results.

Chapter Nine – Comparative Analysis

This chapter is aimed at a multi-level comparative analysis in which the participants' themes and locus of control scores will be compared to each other as well as to the literature presented in chapter two. Similarities and differences between participants will be highlighted, as will the way(s) in which this study either verifies or disputes the literature or past research.

Chapter Ten – Summary and Recommendations

Chapter Ten is a condensed summary of the prominent findings of the research as they pertain to the participants' themes which have been extracted and locus of control

orientations. Implications for clinical practice will be presented, as well as recommendations for future research. The strengths as well as the limitations of this study are also addressed in brief and the researcher concludes by presenting a personal reflection in which she describes how the study impacted on her.

Setting the stage…..

This study aims to explore, amongst other matters, the experiences of individuals who have consulted with diviners and hence the focus is not on the diviners themselves or their divinatory methods. However, the reader will only be able to accord meaning to and conceptualise the experiences of the participants if a context for these experiences is provided. In order to familiarise the reader, the section to follow will provide an overview of the methods of divination. Given that our quests for understanding and search for knowledge and information have been present for centuries, one can expect numerous methods of divination to exist, along with the different assumptions pertaining to each.   For the purposes of this study and owing to the limitations thereof, only six methods of divination will be reviewed and it must be borne in mind that it is not the intention to provide the reader with a thorough understanding of all. Truly capturing the intricacies of each method would require an independent study.

Methods of divination

For purposes of clarity, the word *sitter* refers to the individual consulting with a diviner.

Diviners acquire knowledge by observing and interpreting a) Oblavita: natural phenomena, independent of human agency, for example, celestial bodies or b) Impetrativa: psychometry produced through the help of human agency, for example reading tarot cards (Gibson & Gibson, 1973).

Oblavita

Natal Astrology

Astrology consists of four branches but, for purposes of this study, natal astrology will constitute the focus of attention. Central to this form of divination is the calculation of the natal (birth) chart, which is a diagrammatic representation of the apparent positions of celestial or planetary bodies at a given moment in an individual's life (Moisoiu, 2008). The essential data needed for an individual's birth chart include birth place (expressed in degrees and minutes of longitude and latitude), birth date and birth time. This information is most commonly entered into a computer programme, which converts and then assesses the information against the astral configurations (position held by every planet) at the exact time of birth. The result is a diagrammatic representation (birth chart) of the information and usually a report explaining the astrological details. The birth or natal chart is sometimes referred to as the blue-print of an individual's life given to them by the solar system.

Natal astrology is based on the positions and movements of various celestial bodies, which include the sun, planets, stars, lunar nodes and the moon. There are four fundamental components which form the basis for chart interpretation, which will be described briefly (Moisoiu, 2008; Thorndike, 1998).

- The eight planets, the moon and the sun, all of which represent a particular type of energy which manifests in the individual as instinctive drives.
- The twelve sun signs which modify the manner in which a planetary energy manifests itself.
- The thirteen houses, which indicate the main areas of the individual's life where all the activity will find an outlet.
- Four angles, which comprise the ascendant, descendant, mid-heaven and angular planets. The ascendant represents an individual's instinctive self, the

descendant represents the individual's sense of self in relation to others, the mid-heaven the individual's sense of self as he or she would want to impress it on the outside world and the angular planets signify the individual's innermost, least consciously acknowledged sense of self.

A belief commonly held by astrologers is that each of the above four components either influences or correlates with human affairs and can forecast future events. The forecasting is based on two methods, namely astrological progressions and astrological transits (Moisoiu, 2008). In the former, the movements of the planets are interpreted for their significance as they transit through space and the horoscope, while in the latter the horoscope is progressed forward in time according to specific methods. It is important to remember that the natal chart is a snapshot of the solar system, at a given birth time and place. Because the celestial bodies will continue on their journeys in a systematic way (transit), it is possible to take another snapshot of the celestial bodies ahead of time and predict future trends. In essence, the transits of certain planets are said to coincide with phases in our lives when certain problems are more likely to surface (Moisoiu, 2008).

Naturally then, the natal (birth) chart has appeal because it is able to provide an individual with information pertaining to future life phases. However, it is also attractive owing to the information it provides about present life phases and present functioning. For convenience, information from the natal (birth) chart is assembled into key areas, which usually begin with a general impression of an individual's character (personality) and are then expanded to include broader aspects about an individual's life: for example, their career, health and relationships (Thorndike, 1998). It seems then that an astrologer aims to help an individual develop self insight, become aware of their talents or abilities and weaknesses, and to provide guidance on how to cope with future challenges.

Impetrativa

Necromancy

Necromancy is derived from the Greek word *'nekros'* – dead and *'manteia'*- divination, and is a method of divination in which the diviner, hereafter referred to as a medium, seeks to summon spirits through means of channeling (Klimo, 1987). Channeling is "the communication of information to or through a physically embodied human being from a source that is said to exist on some other level or dimension of reality than the physical as we know it" (Klimo, 1987, p 2). Channeling can occur in one of three ways: either the medium retains his or her own identity; goes into a deep trance or alternatively merely enters into a light trance (Moore, 1977). All three ways permit the medium to communicate messages from the spirit world (from a person who has crossed over or passed away) to a sitter (individual consulting with the diviner).

Although the art of necromancy can take on various forms, it comprises basic characteristics, which will be indicated below (Hastings, 1991):

The message must be coherent and intelligible:

Messages that are received have meaning, are not random words or phrases, and are not presented in the form of an unknown language. Messages that are communicated do however take on various forms (symbolic images, letters, feelings, smells, tastes and numbers), and it is merely a matter of the medium decoding or deciphering and placing these messages within their context. To demonstrate, the well known medium, John Edward, when seeing the image of his car (a Ford model), interprets this to mean that either a person has passed away in a car accident or, on a more symbolic level, that he has to say the word Ford as it connotes significant meaning for the sitter (Edward, 2001).

The source must be perceived as coming from outside the conscious self:

Much of the controversy surrounding mediums is whether or not they truly receive messages from an external source, or whether they merely assert their own thoughts and mental images and falsify the origins. Mediums, if they are authentic, are able to differentiate between those messages that they have processed or constructed and those that they cannot identify with or that are not their own.

The origin of the message is perceived or identified as a definite source – that is, it has an existence of its own:

Of importance is the notion that the diviner is able to sense that another entity or presence is communicating with him or her. "The origin may be from God or a celestial being. It may be a strong personality with a name, with writing or speaking mannerisms, emotions and other personality characteristics. There may be minimal nuances, with only a feeling on the part of the human being that the messages come from an entity. Sometimes the source may seem to be a principle such as creativity or limitless love and light or the planetary logos" (Hastings, 1991, p. 5).

There is an audience for the channeled message:

As is with all communication, a message is intended for a recipient and purposefully directed towards someone. Ascertaining the identity of the recipient is easier when the consultation is only with one individual, as the spirits which come through are intended for that individual alone. However, when there is a large audience, determining the recipient is more difficult. This is because numerous spirits will present themselves, each usually having an intended message for a different person. In such cases, the medium usually verbalises the message until a recipient relates to the information being communicated or is assisted by the spirit to direct the message to a particular area of the room, or row of seating (Edward, 2001).

The channeled message has a purpose:

Messages are conveyed for a specific purpose, although the purpose is not always identifiable or understandable at the time the message is given. Purposes vary; they may be sent to acknowledge someone, to evoke feelings, to provide answers, to inspire, to forewarn or to provide healing (Hastings, 1991).

The benefits of mediums and the art of necromancy have been documented over centuries and are still being documented in this present moment. For example, it was one of the first ways in which women were able to circumvent the structural barriers that excluded them from religious leadership. "While men might bar women from church councils or from theological education, human authority could not super see that given to mediums by the spirits who spoke through them. Spirit communication carried its own authority. If one accepted the message, one had little choice but to accept the medium" (Braude, 2001, p.83). The profundity of necromancy is not only visible within religious spheres, but also within an individual's life. It provides answers to questions on practical matters, it serves to motivate, generate insight, provide reassurance and comfort and assist in personal growth (Edward, 2001; Hastings, 1991; Smith, 2004).

Cartomancy

Cartomancy which is a form of divination using a deck of cards and is derived from the Greek word *"carto"* – cards and Latin word *"Mantei or Mantic"* - having to do with divination and having the power of divination (Thorndike, 1998). Originally a standard deck of playing cards was used, but this was replaced by cards designed and intended specifically for the use of divination. It is believed that a deck which is used for cartomancy should not be used for other purposes and should be perceived as a tool and cared for accordingly. The most widely used deck for divination is the tarot deck which consists of seventy eight cards featuring different symbolic pictures. The seventy eight cards can be divided as follows:

Twenty two of the cards are called the major arcana (meaning 'hidden things') or trump cards, while fifty six (four suits of fourteen cards) are called the minor arcana or pip cards (Thorndike, 1998). The minor arcana cards are similar to a regular deck of playing cards, but differ in appearance. Sticks or wands represent clubs; swords represent spades; cups represent hearts; pentacles represent diamonds; a knight is added to each suit and a fool is added to the deck (Thorndike, 1998). The major arcana cards correspond to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and are divided into either the solar way (active, reflective, autonomous, conscious) or lunar way (passive, intuitive, possessed, unconscious), and thus give tarot its mystical reputation (Thorndike, 1998).

When performing a reading, the tarot deck is usually shuffled by the individual having the reading and is then laid out by the diviner in a variety of patterns known as spreads; however, a single card can also constitute a spread. Generally, each position in the spread is assigned a number and the cards are turned over in that sequence. Depending on the method of interpretation, the cards are not only accorded meaning by their position in a spread or their symbolic appearance, but also on whether they appear upright or reversed as a reversed card may denote the opposite of its upright meaning.

Tarot reading is guided by the belief that the cards provide insight into an individual's present and future circumstances. Some believe that the cards are guided by a spiritual force (Gaia); others believe that the cards are a pictorial representation of human development (i.e. the fool symbolising infancy), while many are of the opinion that the cards tap into a collective unconscious (Thorndike, 1998). Interestingly, Carl Jung, a famous Swiss psychologist, was the first to attach importance to tarot symbolism. According to Jung, the various symbolic pictures are representative of archetypes, that is, fundamental types of persons or situations embedded in the subconscious of all human beings (Jung & Kerenyi, 1951). For example, the card denoting the emperor is indicative of the ultimate patriarch or father figure. Despite differences in interpretation, it is apparent that cartomancy involves more than merely

accepting the literal meaning of each card; it requires a combination of intuition, skill and divining ability.

Cartomancy as a form of divination is appealing to individuals in that it has much to offer. In general, spreads usually provide current and future information about the self, money and possessions; communications; home life; pleasure, romance and creativity; health and work; partnerships; sex, money and change; travel; career; friends; and fears, wishes and limitations (Thorndike, 1998). The significance of this information lies not only in its ability to provide healing and self improvement, but also because it assists in decision making and assessing one's life purpose.

Palmistry

In terms of the technique of hand interpretation, a distinction needs to be made between palmistry and chirology. Chirology is derived from the Greek word 'kheri'- hand and 'logos'- reason (Leak, 2008). It was apparent to the researcher, while conducting field research and when reviewing the literature, that there is confusion about the scope of practice and nature of each. Hence there seems to be a pressing need to review how each is similar and different from the other according to the researcher's understanding.

Chirology is characterised by cheirognomy, which is the study of all aspects of the hand's physical anatomical structure and physiology, as well as the identification of the shape, forms and markings of both the left and right hand (Bashir, 1974; Palmistry, 2000). Cheirognomy usually divides hand analysis into the following categories: The size and shape of the hands, the fingers and the mounts, the fingernails and the lines of the hand. The underlying premise of hand reading is that the hand and the whole body are symbolic of the psyche within it, given that the physical body is an outward expression of the soul (Warren-Davis, 1993). During a reading, chirologists examine and analyse each of the above mentioned categories and provide the individual with information about, but not limited to, their character or

temperament, life purpose, emotional functioning, talents, relationships with others and career preferences. Palmistry too, involves hand analysis, but primarily focuses on the markings of the palms alone. The primary distinction between chirology and palmistry is the way in which the markings are interpreted. Chirology interprets the lines on the palm of the hand at 'face value': for example, a long life line would denote a prosperous life. In palmistry, however, the hand is used as an 'instrument' by which to connect to an individual's 'energy field' or 'aura vibrations' and authentic palmists will use the energy fields to elicit information, rather than the lines on the hand. Palmistry therefore utilises the markings of the hand as a spring board for information, whereas chirology seems to perceive the markings of the hand as information.

When conceptualising these methods, it is important to reflect on how chirologists and palmists have entered into their respective fields. Chirologists seem to have acquired the skill of hand analysis through years of study and practice and, in doing so, have also developed their intuition. However, palmists have a natural ability (gift) and 'calling' for what they do, where their intuition and divinatory powers are present from the onset, thus eliminating the need for self study. It seems that chirology is regarded by many as a more valid system of hand analysis (some preferring to call it a science), because each marking is interpreted in terms of research findings of similar markings on the hands of others. The principles of chirology provide a neutral and reliable universal language of hand analysis, therefore making it possible to make generalisations about specific markings, while still respecting that each hand is unique and carries its own history with it (Leak, 2008).

Although both palmistry and chirology are concerned with eliciting information about a person's character and life experiences, they are also fundamentally different in terms of the purpose for which the reading is done. Palmistry tends to be associated with fortune telling and predicting future events, while chirology is not. Palmistry seems to attract individuals who are interested in knowing what their future holds (predictive value) whereas individuals consulting with a chirologist prefer rather to seek self-knowledge.

General practice amongst chirologists seems to take an imprint of the palms of both hands, assessing the imprints by combining traditional hand analysis and psychology, and providing feedback either in the form of a detailed written report or individual consultation. Palmists more often conduct live readings, analysing the hands while simultaneously providing an interpretation as the individual sits in front of them. The time period of a reading is not standardised in palmistry, but rather depends on the availability of information from the various sources.

Numerology

Numerology is the study of the hidden significance of numbers and the manner in which they reflect certain aptitudes and character tendencies, as an integral part of the cosmic plan (Underwood, 1997). Numerologists analyse both one's date of birth and one's name, by using a number system, which reduces both the date of birth and the name to two independent single digit numbers (Neher, 1980; Thorndike, 1998; Underwood, 1997). Again, as is with most divination methods, different systems are used within the same method. Numerology, for example, employs many number systems, but the most accurate is the one used by the Chaldeans and the Hebrews, where each letter of the alphabet is assigned a specific number (Thorndike, 1998). In many respects, numbers accord things their own identity and so, each number is said to have its own character and unique qualities, both positive and negative, which can be extended to the individual. Numerology therefore provides a rich description of an individual, both in the present and in the future. Numerologists are also curious about vibrations which do not at all appear in an individual's cosmic name because they indicate which Karmic lessons still need to be attended to. Karmic lessons may refer to that which an individual still needs to learn or qualities that have not yet been developed, or were developed but then lost by his or her progression through life (Kovan, 2001).

Numerologists are interested in the meaning of an individual's name. The name initially given at birth is called the cosmic name and reflects, in essence, one's soul's purpose or reason for being. It is therefore important that one uses one's name as it appears on the birth certificate (Kovan, 2001). When deciphering what a name means, one first begins by dividing the letters (now numbers) of the name into vibrations of consonants and vowels, thereafter reducing each to a single digit. The single digit for the consonants is called the outward expression number: that is, how an individual tends to behave in relationships with others or the traits others see most readily when engaging with them (Dukelow & Berry, 2007). The single digit for the vowels is called the inward soul urge or heart's desire number and reflects the inner self (Thorndike, 1998). It is thus reflective of that which an individual does not expose overtly to those around them, for example, inner cravings, likes and dislikes — that which is usually kept private. This number further denotes what individuals value most, regardless of their life paths; satisfying the demands of one's soul urge will provide a sense of inner peace and satisfaction (Dukelow & Berry, 2007). The expression number and desire or heart number are combined and again reduced to a single digit to form the destiny number. The destiny number more correctly reads an individual as they can aspire to become. It reflects the tasks that must be achieved in this lifetime, one's life purpose, spiritual mission, and the field of opportunity available to achieve this (Dukelow & Berry, 2007).

An individual's name only represents half of who they are. The remaining half is their date of birth, regardless of the time they were born or where they were born. The most basic calculation of numerology involves adding together the digits of an individual's birth date and reducing it to a single digit (key number), which in this regard is referred to as the "life number" (Underwood, 1997). Each life number carries with it unique attributes and characteristics and best reflects the types of events that can be expected during specific periods of an individual's life (the nature of one's journey through life). Also calculated from the date of birth are shorter periods, cycles and pinnacles, which further provide insight into

what an individual will be confronted with at various times. Seemingly then, the life number helps an individual to prepare for that which still awaits them.

In terms of the above description of numerology, the attractive nature of this method of divination becomes visible, as it provides information pertaining to an individual's character, purpose in life, what motivates them and where their talents may lie (Underwood, 1997). Numbers may also be used to determine the most appropriate time for major life transitions or activities: for example, when to marry, change careers or relocate. Interestingly, numerology can also provide one with useful information with regards to the energy of one's house number (Struthers, 2007a), and is also able to describe or predict the nature of a relationship between two individuals, given the compatibility and absence of numbers (Kovan, 2001).

Clairvoyance

Clairvoyance is a term derived from the French word '*clair'*- clear and '*voyant* - seeing and is the art of seeing beyond the five senses (Thorndike, 1998). It can be defined as a "form of extra-sensory perception wherein a person perceives distant objects, persons, or events and types of energy not normally perceptible to humans" (Wikipedia, 2009, p.1). The art of seeing beyond lies in one's ability to use what is called the third eye or third eye chakra, located between and just above the physical eyes. The physical eyes perceive the material or physical world, while the third eye chakra sees beyond the physical, towards inner realms and spaces of higher consciousness (Struthers, 2007b). The third eye is accessed through various means. Either a person is born with this ability; develops it through, for example, meditation; or discovers it after a certain experience or injury, for example, a near death experience or injury to the cranium. Clairvoyance as a technique therefore involves seeing beyond the five senses: the outcome of this seeing is usually a visual image (s) , but may also be auditory impressions. The visual image (s) can take on various forms, including but not limited to, colours, archetypes, animations or still frames and usually lasts a few seconds

or minutes (Struthers, 2007b). A clairvoyant maintains consciousness and usually keeps his or her eyes open when seeing an image (s).

When consulting with a clairvoyant, the sitter usually presents the clairvoyant with a series of questions pertaining to past, present and future events. The clairvoyant responds by deducing meaning from the visual images or auditory impressions that emerge and placing them within the context of the sitter's questions. Alternatively, the clairvoyant may use a combination of methods to respond to questions asked by the sitter, for example, cartomancy or numerology in combination with auditory impressions or visual images.

Conclusion

In order to appreciate the richness of the participants' stories presented and conceptualise the stories of individuals consulting with diviners, it was necessary to acquaint the reader with a variety of divinatory contexts. One cannot truly grasp the experiences of individuals with diviners unless the setting in which these experiences occur is portrayed. Although different divination trends emerge in various religious or social environments, the reader was only exposed to six, namely, chiromancy, cartomancy, numerology, natal astrology, necromancy and clairvoyance. Each method, although seemingly different, is united with the others in that it provides an individual with information which has the potential to be 'life changing'. The reader, now informed about the context and methods of divination, will be introduced to relevant previous research studies. These are to be found in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

"Knowledge is learning something every day.

Wisdom is letting go of something every day."

Zen Proverb (cited in Gaia, 2009)

Introduction

Before commencing with an overview of previous research conducted on the topic, the researcher feels it necessary to re-orientate the reader. The difficulty in compiling this literature review is for the most part due to the fact that the umbrella terms supernatural, paranormal, superstition and magical thinking and their underlying constructs seem to have been used synonymously and interchangeably by various authors over different decades. This is further compounded by the fact that few authors use the term divination as referred to in this study, and yet, their works on the paranormal (Beck & Miller, 2001; Clarke, 1991; Hines, 1988; Irwin, 1993; Radford, 2000; Rice, 2003); superstitiousness (Dudycha, 1933; Jahoda, 1968; Routledge & Salter, 1971; Tyson, 1979; Watt & Wisemann, 2004) and the supernatural (Scheidt, 1973) all encompass and include, to varying degrees, the different methods of divination referred to in this particular study. Furthermore, it appears that some constructs used by researchers are often 'wrongly' named, therefore making it difficult to access relevant literature or compare research studies (Lawrence, 1995).

The researcher wishes to respect the works of previous researchers and has for this reason, in this specific section, referred to the terms and constructs as they have been used or defined by others.   The reader is encouraged to consult the original works of the authors for a more detailed description of the constructs being measured or referred to.

The researcher therefore assumes that findings from previous research studies, although conducted under the different 'umbrella' terms, can be extended to this specific study given

that they do cover certain constructs embedded in the methods of divination used in this study.   As such, previous research findings provide valuable information about the demographic variables of individuals consulting with diviners.

The 'umbrella' terms used by the various researchers can broadly defined and explained as:

Supernatural

The term supernatural is derived from the Latin words '*super'* - above and *'natura'* – nature (Wikipedia, 2009) and can be defined as:

"An order of existence beyond the scientifically visible universe" (Wikipedia, 2009).

Examples would include extra-terrestrial beings, unidentified flying objects and ghosts.

Paranormal

Paranormal is defined as that:

"Which is above, outside or beyond that which is according to the norm" (Orapello, 2009).

Paranormal is typically used as an umbrella term for psychic phenomena, for example, telepathy, extra-sensory perception, psychokinesis as well as any type of 'haunting' or similar occurrence (Orapello, 2009).

Superstitiousness

Jahoda (1969, p. 1) defines superstitiousness as:

"Unreasoning awe or fear of something unknown, mysterious or imaginary resulting in beliefs that performing or not performing specific actions brings good or bad luck".

An example would be the belief that the number seven is a lucky number.

Extra-ordinary

Extra-ordinary can be defined as "Going beyond what is usual, regular, or customary" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2008, p.1).

Individuals who consult with diviners

An important question focuses on the traits and demographic characteristics of those individuals who consult with diviners. It is evident that others too have asked this question, and as such, there is a well established collection of research findings available which will be shared below. The researcher feels it important to comment on the dates of the publications used for purposes of this literature review. Although it is preferred practice to refer to literature and research studies completed more recently, the researcher was obliged to consult earlier studies given the limited current literature available.

Age

Aarnio (2007), Irwin (1993), Rice (2003) and Vyse (1997) are of the opinion that younger people are more likely than their elders to hold superstitious beliefs. Tyson (1979) however found no correlation between age and superstitious beliefs and Bressan (2002) the same for paranormal beliefs.

Gender

"The clearest finding in the psychology of superstition, is that women show more evidence of superstitiousness" (Plug, cited in Tyson 1979, p.77). Female students are reported to have stronger beliefs in supernatural phenomena because they posses more 'ascientific' attitudes (Dudycha, 1933; Jahoda, 1968; Routledge & Salter, 1971; Tyson, 1979; Watt & Wisemann, 2004). Jahoda (1963) and Routledge & Salter's (1971) findings were contradictory, as they

found that a belief in the supernatural is not affected by innate or environmental differences attributable to sex differentiation. Although discrepancies are apparent, there is a general consensus that females are more likely to hold superstitious (Irwin, 1993) or paranormal beliefs (Messer & Griggs, 1989).

Marital Status

Tyson (1979) established that separated and divorced individuals exhibit a significantly higher belief in astrology, than do married or widowed persons or individuals who have never married. These findings were confirmed by Irwin (1993).

Socio-Economic Status

Irwin (1993) reported studies indicating that unemployed individuals showed relatively low paranormal beliefs while Tyson (1979) reported findings which suggest that superstitious beliefs are stronger in regions of lower socioeconomic status (Tyson, 1979).

Education

There appears to be a lack of consensus regarding the relationship between education and superstitious beliefs, but it seems that superstitiousness tends to decrease with the level of education (Tyson, 1979). Numerous studies have been conducted on the superstitious or paranormal beliefs of college students (Clarke, 1991; Dudycha, 1933; Jahoda, Otis & Alcock, 1982; Rice, 2003; Routledge & Salter, 1971). Out of this pool, Dudycha's (1933) research was the only study to conclude that college students, as a whole, are disbelievers in superstition. Below is an overview of results from various studies which have been conducted:

- Students studying natural science or biological science have a greater belief in supernatural phenomena than do those studying humanities or art (Routledge & Salter, 1971). Jahoda's (1968) findings were somewhat different, given his

findings that students' studying arts believed more strongly in supernatural phenomena than students in social studies. Vyse (1997), on the other hand, concludes that a superstitious individual will more than likely pursue studies in the arts, humanities and education fields.

- Otis & Alcock's (1982) research explored the extent of beliefs in the extraordinary amongst people of different educational backgrounds. Results showed that the students and the general public held stronger beliefs in luck, spirits, fortune telling and psychics than did the academic groups.

- Rice (2003) found that less educated people are more likely to believe in astrology than educated people.

- Pelzer's (2003) study concluded that magical thinking and paranormal beliefs were more prevalent amongst secondary school (high school) students in comparison to university students in South Africa.

One of the few studies investigating beliefs in the extraordinary amongst professors from different academic departments was that conducted by Otis & Alcock (1982). Professors in the English department held consistently stronger beliefs in the extraordinary, as compared to those from other departments, for example Economics, Sociology and History. The researchers attribute this finding to the fact that the discipline of English places less emphasis on the need for objective data when judging the validity of concepts. Interestingly, professors in the Psychology department, as a collective group, held stronger beliefs in psychic phenomena and weaker beliefs in luck.

Intelligence

Research has also been conducted on the relationship between intelligence and superstitiousness. The dominant discourse appears to be that a lower cognitive ability is associated with belief in the paranormal (Musch & Ehrenberg, 2002; Vyse, 1997). Irwin (1993) expands by stating that a large pool of research has found that individuals with such

beliefs are more often illogical, irrational and uncritical. It seems that this generalisation has received support from numerous researchers, who concur that paranormal believers exhibit deficient skills required for critical evaluation of arguments and hence present with poorer reasoning skills (Irwin, 1991). Thalbourne & Nofi (1997) would disagree that the intellectual ability of believers in the paranormal differs from non-believers, arguing rather that no discrepancy exists. The researcher wishes to challenge the methodology of the research yielding findings that individuals with paranormal beliefs have deficits in cognitive reasoning. When assessing cognitive abilities, researchers seem to utilise intelligence tests which do not make allowances for or include variables pertaining to intuition: which is a primary form of intellect in divination, superstitious or paranormal beliefs.

Sensation seeking, creativity and imagination

Researchers have found a positive association between paranormal beliefs and creativity, so that individuals with a creative personality are more inclined to hold paranormal beliefs (Irwin, 1993). Creativity has been closely associated with sensation seeking behaviour, given that both encompass a need for stimulation and variety of experience (Irwin, 1993). It is suggested that such behaviours are more predominant amongst individuals with paranormal beliefs (Groth-Marnat & Pegden, 1998; Tobacyk & Milford, 1983).

World view

For purposes of this discussion, a world view will refer to a 'philosophy' of life. It speaks about what we know and how and with how much certainty we know it. Aarnio and Lindeman (2007) make use of the terms 'paranormal' believers, 'religious' believers, and the 'double' believers, to categorise the different world views. 'Paranormal' believers are individuals who are inclined to believe in the supernatural, superstitiousness and divination, while the 'religious' are those individuals who believe and subscribe to religions, for example, Christianity, whereas 'double believers' are those individuals who hold both 'paranormal' and

'religious' world views. Some studies suggest that individuals with 'religious' beliefs are likely to have 'paranormal' beliefs, and vice versa (Aarnio & Lindeman, 2007). The argument underpinning this finding is that certain 'supernatural' beings and phenomena, for example, angels or ghosts, feature in both 'paranormal' and 'religious' belief systems. Other research suggests that individuals are either 'religious' or 'paranormal' believers and that an individual would not be a 'double' believer, given that one serves as a substitute for the other (Wuthnow, cited in Aarnio & Lindeman, 2007). An opposing argument would contend that for 'double' believers, their 'paranormal' beliefs seem to remain purely intellectual concepts and do therefore not alter or affect their preferred 'religious' practice. Radford (2000) explains that in an attempt to avoid cognitive dissonance (holding two contradictory and mutually exclusive beliefs simultaneously) individuals may divide parts of their lives into two separate spheres, so that they can adopt different mindsets in each.

It would seem then that individuals consulting with diviners:

- hold different or contradictory religious world views from each other
- may record a prior history of believing in and following a world view which was seemingly 'disapproving' of divination
- may simultaneously be 'religious' and 'paranormal' believers
- may be 'religious' believers but support certain principles proposed by divination.

Of interest then would be the factors which influence an individual to abandon a prior 'religious' world view in favour of a system of belief in divination. Because the focus of this study is not placed on the religious world views of individuals consulting with diviners or the conservation or transformation of religious world views, the researcher proposes that this be further investigated in an independent study.

Based on the opinions of Irwin (1993), it would seem that individuals consulting with diviners generally hold an esoteric world view. Defining esotericism is a seemingly difficult task as

researchers and authors alike define the concept differently. From Ludwig & Madison (1966), Searle (2008) and Tart's (2004) research it would appear that the esoteric encompasses the broader themes of a) *Transcendent phenomena*: belief in for example, psychic healing, extra sensory perception and prophecy; b) *Involution*: a process which occurs prior to evolution and gives rise to the cosmos; c) *Planes of existence or higher worlds*: the cosmos is believed to be divided metaphorically into a number of vertical worlds or planes and states of being; d) *Hierarchy of spiritual beings*: belief that various polytheistic deities are the highest order of a continuum of supernatural beings or spirits; e) *Mysticism*: the pursuit of achieving unity, identity with, or conscious awareness of ultimate divinity, spiritual truth or reality, through either direct experience, intuition or insight and f) *Altered states of consciousness*: induced temporary changes in an individual's mental state, which represents a noticeable deviation in subjective experience or psychological functioning.

The research findings referred to in the works of Irwin (1993) and Aarnio & Lindeman (2007) further propose that individuals with an esoteric belief system will:

- perceive themselves as more than mere physical or biological structures

- place emphasis on the mind or body duality of human nature

- believe in life after death

- perceive modern technological society positively

- display liberal political orientations

- believe in the interconnectedness of and interdependency between people and all other things.

'Religious' beliefs

A study conducted by Emmons & Sobal (1981) tested the hypothesis that belief in nonreligious paranormal phenomena is a functional alternative to religion. In this study, examples of nonreligious paranormal phenomena included astrology and clairvoyance

whereas religious paranormal phenomena comprised angels, devils and life after death. The study concluded that individuals with more liberal religious beliefs (for example, Protestants) are more likely to believe in nonreligious paranormal phenomena, as compared to, for example, Baptists, who hold more conservative beliefs. In the same study, individuals from the Lutheran denomination scored unexpectedly higher on the religious indicators. Results suggest that individuals with no religious preference, or for whom religious beliefs are unimportant, are more likely to believe in nonreligious phenomena. Wagner (cited in Tyson, 1979) found that Jewish participants reported being the most superstitious, while Catholics reported being the least. Irwin (1993) makes reference to studies which provide conflicting results, with there either being no correlation or some correlation between religious affiliation and global paranormal beliefs. Thalbourne & Houtkooper's (2002) research tends to support the notion that there is a greater likelihood of some correlation, as their study found that individuals who believed in and reported alleged experiences with the paranormal were more likely to describe themselves as religious.

The researcher agrees with Irwin's (1993) recommendation that there remains a need for further investigation into the religious beliefs of individuals. Tyson (1979) would concur, adding that the relationship between religion and superstition may be largely ignored in research because many associate religious beliefs with superstitiousness.

Involvement in the paranormal

Of interest is whether or not individuals who hold superstitious beliefs engage in superstitious activities. A review of the literature indicates that individuals with superstitious beliefs will (Irwin, 1993):

- seek entertainment that has a paranormal theme
- often read about psychic or paranormal phenomena
- participate in courses on parapsychology or psychic development

- interpret anomalous experiences as paranormal

- claim to have paranormal experiences, findings which are supported by Rattet & Bursik (2001)

- use mind altering drugs or other techniques to induce an altered state of consciousness

- practice as a psychic or medium.

Personality

One of the most prominent personality dimensions linked to superstitious thinking is anxiety (Epstein, cited in Vyse, 1997; Zebb & Moore, 200; Watt & Wiseman, 2004). Individuals who consult with diviners generally display increased negative emotions, neuroticism, depression and a strong need for control (Irwin, 1993). Anger, emotional arousal and introversion or extroversion seem to have no relationship with superstitious thinking (Irwin, 1993). Belief in the paranormal is also stronger in the feeling, perceiving and intuitive personality types, as proposed in Jung's personality theory (Rattet & Bursik, 2001).

Childhood abuse or trauma

Individuals more apt to believe in the paranormal are often described as engaging in fantasy, to the extent that they may be observed as being deeply absorbed in or fully experiencing that which is being fantasised. According to Irwin (1992), this trait is often associated with childhood physical abuse or trauma. Consequently he proposes the notion that childhood abuse or trauma may explain a tendency towards a belief in the paranormal.

It appears that the demographic variables of individuals consulting with diviners have changed over the years. Edward (2001, p.103) states that when he first started "doing group readings and lectures, the audience was almost all female, mostly middle aged and from working class backgrounds". He further explains that this has since changed and that audiences are now more diverse and representative of the general population.

Individuals' experiences with diviners

Any experience may best be understood by listening to and recording the voices of individuals involved in that experience, which suggests that without this documentation, others will struggle to envision what a specific phenomenon entails. It appears that the voices of individuals consulting with diviners have not been given due credit within an academic or university milieu and that as a result, many can only speculate as to how divination has impacted on another's life. Many individuals who have consulted with diviners are most often not afforded the opportunity to articulate their experiences to researchers or authors of books and have thus been obliged to seek alternative communication channels. It seems that individuals who have been guided by diviners all over the world have made use of internet web sites to document, record and explain how divination has impacted on their lives. The researcher acknowledges that there are disadvantages in using the World Wide Web: some sites, for example, may be updated on a daily basis and information changed and altered, which could make it difficult to access original citations. However, there are also advantages in using the World Wide Web, some of which include access to particular target groups and elimination of bias (Gortiz & Schumacher, 2000). Furthermore, "the internet seems to be a promising and powerful research medium, especially for non-representative studies, which are exploratory in nature" (Gortiz & Schumacher, 2000, p. 2). One of the prominent advantages of using the World Wide Web in this study is that it permits the researcher access to individuals' experiences with diviners, which may not otherwise have been possible. The World Wide Web is therefore sourced in this literature review because the advantages of doing so outweigh the disadvantages.

The researcher consulted internet web sites created by diviners and reviewed the testimonials posted. Interestingly, the content of the different testimonies can be grouped together into themes and these are now presented.

Perceptions of the diviner before and after the consultation

It seems that the majority of individuals were sceptical about going to see a diviner for the first time (Meredith, 2008; Justis, 2008). This wariness stems, in part, from the numerous charlatans that claim to exercise the gift of divination, but provide poor and inaccurate readings. Interestingly, the impact of a reading seems to be largely determined not only by what is said, but by the diviner's personality, behaviour and approach during a reading. Diviners are described as generous, kind, welcoming, compassionate, loving and warm; some individuals have even used the term 'rare gems' when referring to diviners (Meredith, 2008). What seems meaningful to individuals is the diviner's ability to be 'in tune with them' or, as a testimonial described, "understood my feelings as though she had known me for years" (Kathleen, cited in Justis, 2008, testimonial section) or, as was said by another, "she was like an old friend" (Sedona, cited in Nirup, 2008, testimonial section). This suggests that individuals may return to diviners in an attempt to find a connection with someone who truly understands them and who can tap into their inner core or essence. Numerous testimonials also acknowledge and appreciate diviner's talkative and friendly nature and tendency towards self disclosure, as is suggested by "it's sharing of experiences at a reading that's an eye opener" (Janton, cited in Brownstone, 2008, testimonial section).

Circumstances before consulting with a diviner

From the testimonials, it appears that few individuals consult with diviners out of curiosity alone. Appointments are almost always preceded by a period of uncertainty, lack of direction or difficulty as reflected below (Goldston, 2008; Judith, 20008; Lightwalker, 2008; Nirup, 2008; Siegar, 2008):

- Most individuals experience problems in and are confused about various areas of their lives, for example business or relationships, and need guidance on how to approach daily struggles or difficulties. In addition, some individuals are faced

- with life-changing decisions (for example, moving overseas) and are not sure which decision would be in their best interests.

- When a loved one has crossed over, the grieving process is difficult because some individuals still have unanswered questions and yearn for contact of any nature, one last time, as is evident in the testimonial "although I think I accepted her death I still find it hard at times to deal with because I miss her so much" (Sue, cited in Nirup, 2008, testimonial section).

- It seems that some individuals enter into a stage of their lives where they begin to 'stagnate' and become frustrated because they are searching for growth, new opportunities or challenges, but are uncertain of how to achieve this, or which direction to follow.

- Others find themselves in what seems to be a state of depression, as was explained in one testimonial: "it was for me a time where everything was getting on top of me, a time where I was close to throwing the towel in and going back to a ridiculous existence" (Lorna, cited in Lori, 2008, testimonial section). During these experiences, individuals perceive their lives to be meaningless and therefore seek contexts which facilitate optimism and foster 'faith'.

- It seems that many individuals for various reasons begin to doubt themselves, question how they are feeling, and scrutinise their opinions or beliefs. In such instances, it is as though individuals need confirmation and validation from an external source, as is evident in the following testimonial: "I was unsure, uncertain if I could feel what I was feeling about people" (Susanna, cited in Justis, 2008, testimonial section).

Feelings both during and after the consultation

The researcher, based on the content of the testimonials, infers that one of the more significant reasons why individuals continually visit and re-visit diviners seems to be a need

to encounter or re-experience how they felt during the previous consultation. In certain instances, diviners are also able to offer individuals emotive experiences which they cannot find or do not allow elsewhere in their lives. Furthermore, given that feelings both during and after a consultation are usually profound and positive in nature; individuals are likely to continue consulting with diviners.   Individuals reported feeling enlightened, peaceful, rejuvenated and 'balanced' after consultations and others excited, inspired, surprised and empowered (Judith, 2008; Lightwalker, 2008; Lori, 2008, Siegar, 2008).   Cleansing and cathartic experiences during consultations allowed individuals to feel relieved, hopeful and optimistic and as one testimony highlighted, experience "a revived sense of joyfulness" (Eric, cited in Nirup, 2008, testimonial section).

Certain feelings appear to be elicited by the setting the diviner provides and many testimonials described this as being a safe and relaxed context. Given the presence of this environment, individuals reported feeling peaceful, rejuvenated and balanced.   Others experience more vibrant feelings, verbalising that the consultation made them feel excited, inspired, empowered and confident.   The cleansing or cathartic experiences during consultations also allow individuals to feel relieved, hopeful and optimistic and even, as one testimony highlighted, experience "a revived sense of joyfulness" (Eric, cited in Nirup, 2008, testimonial section). It seems too that individuals feel enlightened and 'opened up' and as a result, feel the world can be perceived more clearly. Other testimonies have described the consultations as having brought forth feelings of satisfaction, surprise and awe.

Nature of information provided by the diviners

Individuals consulting with diviners either arrive at the consultation with specific questions that they have prepared beforehand or, alternatively, allow the diviner to offer information as it is generated through the divination method. Whatever the origin of the questions or answers, the testimonials suggest that diviners provide information (past, present and future)

and advice pertaining to the following broad categories (Meredith, 2008; Nirup, 2008; Brownstone, 2008): a) relationships, family and romance; b) health and illness, c) career and employment; d) personality, character and temperament; e) wealth, finances and possessions; f) travel and living arrangements and g) life purpose, goals, aspirations. Particularly interesting is the way in which the confirmation of information already known by the sitter influences the internalisation of information not known to the sitter. The researcher is of the opinion, based on a review of the testimonials, that individuals are more likely to accept unknown information as true or valid, if the diviner has previously provided accurate details already known to the sitter.

How the consultation impacted on individuals' lives

The impact of consultations with a diviner can be grouped into three areas; how they impact on the past, the present and the future of individuals' lives.

Information provided during a consultation can validate events from an individual's past. Over and above this validation, individuals may be provided with an opportunity to "heal and let go of the past" (Colin, cited in Nirup, 2008, testimonial section) and make peace with decisions already made. In one testimony, the divination experience allowed for an individual to see the patterns of her life in more extensive detail and, from this, she was "able to break the repetitive cycle" (Emma, cited in Justis, 2008, testimonial section). Certain diviners also explore an individual's past lives (identity prior to this life), and this appears to provide justification regarding the presence of current experiences or situations.

It seems that any one single consultation "continues to affect day to day life and decisions" (Maggie, cited in Judith, 2008, testimonial section) of individuals. Generally, individuals allow that which is said by the diviner to filter into all aspects of their relatedness, usually thinking about and relating present experiences back to what has been said by the diviner. This exerts a major impact in its consequences. Individuals may alter how they respond to

situations: "knowing what vibrations I will be attracting five years into the future gave me hope that the difficult times were over". (Veda, cited in Justis, 2008, testimonial section); what choices they make: "so we acted on your recommendations and moved eighteen months ago" (Morgan, cited in Siegar, 2008, testimonial section); and how they perceive experiences: "nice to see that there is maybe a happy outcome" (Veronica, cited in Lori, 2008, testimonial section). The abilities of divination to adequately reflect present circumstances, also allow it to speak clearly about events in an individual's life that they may not have shared with anyone. This not only impacts on emotional wellbeing, but also frees an individual from their 'secrets' as the covert is made overt. The divination experience also seems to facilitate intrapersonal and interpersonal growth and development, because it provides access to and knowledge about soul wishes, needs and desires. For many, the experience serves as a booster of self-esteem and also allows for a deeper inward focus, as is evident in the testimony: "knowing and honouring how to take care of myself in a more deeper, more soulful, nurturing way" (Janet, cited in Siegar, 2008, testimonial section).

Perhaps the most striking impact of divination is its ability to provide guidance (not to prescribe) for how to proceed into the future. Through dialogue, individuals find for themselves a new path to follow and thereby gain a refreshing new hope and faith for the future, as is suggested by "I could see beyond the muck" (Rachel, cited in Lightwalker, 2008, testimonial section). In some instances, the consultation highlights upcoming struggles or challenges and by being given this knowledge, individuals may be able to prepare for or alter life choices. This has a powerful impact, as individuals feel more in control of their lives given the temporary abolition of uncertainty.

When reviewing all three areas of impact, it becomes evident that consultations encourage insight, enhance depth of knowing and often generate 'a-ha moments' which serve as catalysts for change (Judith, 2008; Nirup, 2008). Of importance too, is their ability to provide direction, encourage relatedness and a different lens for viewing.

Chapter summary and conclusion

The literature review firstly presented research findings pertaining to the demographic variables of individuals with paranormal, supernatural and superstitious beliefs and, secondly, it provided an overview of individuals' experiences with diviners, as documented on the internet.

From the research findings pertaining to the demographic variables which characterise individuals consulting with diviners, it seems fair to conclude that the most prominent finding is that women are most likely to seek for a consultation with a diviner. Previous research studies have yielded disparate results with regards to the age, education, intelligence, ethnicity or culture, socio-economic status and religion of individuals who hold paranormal, supernatural and superstitious beliefs. There is, however, a strong tendency for individuals believing in divination to immerse themselves into a paranormal context, so that they participate in, experience and explore paranormal phenomena. In terms of personality attributes, a positive association has been found between paranormal beliefs and creativity and paranormal beliefs and sensation seeking behaviours. Few research studies have explored the correlation between marital status and beliefs in the superstitious, paranormal and supernatural, but those that have done so, have concluded that separated and divorced individuals have a stronger belief in astrology. Interestingly, childhood abuse or trauma has been explored within the paranormal milieu and findings suggest that individuals exposed to abuse are more likely to have paranormal beliefs.

With regards to individual's experiences with diviners, it appears that initial consultations are initially approached with scepticism and doubt, but, after meeting with the diviner, individuals' perceptions of the divinatory context change significantly. Diviners are commonly described as kind, compassionate and generous and their consultations depicted as eye-openers. Reasons for consultations are multifaceted but are generally preceded by a period of

uncertainty, difficulty and complexities for which individuals seek guidance, answers and reassurance. Individuals apparently visit and re-visit diviners in attempts to again experience the positive and affirmative emotions they felt during consultations. Although reported feelings vary, it appears that most individuals feel relieved, hopeful and optimistic, in such a way that they have more energy to face the adversities and challenges of life. Most consultations have a profound positive effect on the lives of individuals and seem to influence and guide decision making as well as affect perceptions about experiences and daily occurrences. On the whole, it appears that individuals are eager to encourage others to attend a consultation and enjoy commenting on and sharing their experiences with others.

It is the researcher's hope that this literature review will generate a refreshing unfolding of new curiosities, inspiring questions and thought provoking debates amongst academics, the public and students alike; so that new research studies emerge and not only further contribute towards but also extend the body of knowledge already available. The reader, now familiar with the literature pertaining to the study, will be introduced to the design of the study in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."

Confucius (cited in QuoteDB, 2009)

Introduction

In this chapter the research design is presented. Any research project is guided by a basic set of beliefs and assumptions which assist research thinking and practice. Emphasising the research design is important as it allows both the reader and researcher to perceive the study from the same vantage point. The research design of this study will encompass four dimensions, namely the study's philosophy, epistemology, paradigm and methodology. The discussion pertaining to the philosophy will acquaint the reader with the study's underlying assumptions regarding reality. Constructivism as the study's epistemology will thereafter be explored and this will shed light on how the researcher will engage with the research material. The paradigm of this study is social constructionism and its applicability to the research study will be briefly highlighted. The research study will follow the methodological principles of qualitative research and in this section, the reader will be familiarised with the study's sample size, method of information collection and information analysis. Hermeneutics as the theoretical stance for information analysis will also be presented.

Philosophy of study

A philosophy can be defined as "a precept, or set of precepts, beliefs, principles or aims" underlying truth (Encarta Online Dictionary, 2009, p.1). The research philosophy therefore overarches and organises the specific assumptions made about reality in a study.

Postmodernism forms the philosophical framework of this study and, as a lens with which to view the world, challenges the dominant ideology that there is an absolute truth. It is based upon a relativistic theory of knowledge which introduces the notion that multiple accounts of reality exist and that it is impossible to provide a 'uni-voiced' account of what constitutes truth or reality (Hibberd, 2005). There are as many truths, knowledge and realities as there are people. Postmodernism has "emerged as an alternative form of inquiry among theoreticians and scholars across disciplines who are in the midst of questioning the meta-narrative, the certainty, and the methods and practices of modernism in traditional science, literature, history, art and the human sciences and who are exploring alternative conceptions and descriptions" (Anderson, cited in Becvar & Becvar, 2000, p.88). Post modernism therefore rejects the validity of an expert opinion. If there is more than one lens by which to view the world, there can be no expert voice. Each individual's voice should be heard and respected because it reflects what, for that individual, constitutes authentic truth. The danger of postulating universal truths is that this will encourage the marginalisation of other perspectives (Hibberd, 2005), and disrespect difference, gender, ethnicity, race or religion (Doan, 1997). In this regard, postmodernism advocates that every individual's perceptions should be given equal opportunity for articulation and expression.

Applying postmodernism to this study

This study is of such a nature that stories and experiences shared by the participants who have consulted with diviners, are likely to elicit discomfort, scepticism and ambivalence for some readers. Postmodernism, as the ontological stance for this study, cautions against the tendency to disregard information or perceptions which reflect atypical or unusual realities, as these realities, although they oppose dominant discourses, are to be considered valid and authentic in their own right. This study will present the reader with five participants' unique experiences with diviners; by doing so it is not the researcher's intentions to marginalise the experiences others have had with diviners. Furthermore, the researcher also does not

propose that the five participants' experiences are more credible or noteworthy than others. Instead, the researcher wishes to expand the participants' meanings and perceptions and enter into the lived experiences of others.

Epistemological stance of the study

Epistemology refers to "the nature of the relationship between the researcher (knower) and what can be known" (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p.6). The epistemological stance therefore highlights the set of rules pertaining to the nature of knowledge or reality underpinning any research study. Articulating a study's epistemological position is important because this describes how the researcher engages with and approaches that which is being studied. In other words, is the researcher a distant observer detached from what is being studied or is the researcher influencing the research process and what is being studied? This research study was conducted using a constructivist epistemology which postulates that reality is constructed through an individual's active experience of it and that the observer creates reality by according meaning to it (Doan, 1997; Raskin, 2002).

This suggests that the researcher and her participants will engage in a dance of mutual reciprocal influence, during which the unfolding 'reality' will be created and not discovered. Constructivism therefore promotes the notion that reality is created by the observer because it is the observer who gives meaning to what is observed and participates in the very system he or she is observing. Constructivists thus reject the suggestion that 'external' or impartial viewpoints exist or that knowledge is void of bias. All that is known is proposed by a knower, who can only describe from their own frame of reference. Any such frame is imbued with a history, unique narrative and experience and is therefore, by its very nature, subjective. Constructivism is therefore closely associated with postmodernist thought, as it consequently acknowledges that there are no truths, only multiple interpretations which evolve during co-authorship of experiences.

Applying constructivism to the study

Constructivism reminds the researcher that she needs to take cognisance of her own influence and impact on the research process as well as on the interviews with research participants. She needs to keep in mind that the process of interviewing as well as the content obtained mirrors not only the participants' experiences but also those of the researcher herself. According to constructivism, the researcher cannot escape the recursiveness involved in the co-creation of reality. The researcher also does not wish to adopt another epistemology as this research study not only investigates coming to know and understand others, but is also undertaken for the researcher to better know and understand herself. In this light, constructivism will encourage the researcher to reflect on her own interpersonal style, opinions and belief system.

The study's paradigm

A paradigm can be described as a subset of rules regarding the broader epistemology employed and orientates the reader towards the researcher's lens for viewing the world, the participants' experiences and their realities. Social constructionism has been selected as this study's research paradigm. According to this approach, individuals' accounts of their experiences are largely influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which they find themselves. This suggests that an individual's words are not regarded as an outward expression of their internal cognitive process, but are rather an expression of the individual's relationships with others (Lyddon & Weill, 1997). An individual's 'meaning making' is therefore often influenced by the dominant viewpoints, discourses and stories embedded within his or her environment – the most dominant are those that are supported by the number of proponents and tradition, as well as imposed by power structures (Doan, 1997).

Not only do social constructionists take into account the context in which people interact, but also the 'languaging' that takes place between individuals within contexts. 'Languaging' refers to the process whereby two individuals interact with each other in efforts to co-construct their common reality in a mutually reciprocal manner: with the aim of finding a common language (Jankowaski, Clark & Ivey, 2000). It is therefore language itself that provides us with a way of structuring our experience of the world (Burr, 2003) and through which we "are able to enter into a specific ecology and begin to understand an event occurring in that ecology in an effective, contextual way" (Shalev, Yehuda & McFalane, cited in Pera, 2004, p. 25). This suggests that the way in which we language about experiences or phenomena will influence our opinions of them and also how individuals 'encountering' the phenomenon are perceived by others.

Applying social constructionism to this study

Social constructionism acknowledges that dominant voices within society often fail to accommodate alternative perceptions, beliefs or opinions. It seems that individuals are urged to conform to proposed or idealistic ways of relating and are labelled or stereotyped negatively if they do not comply (Owen, cited in Rapmund, 2000). The researcher is of the opinion that the dominant voices within Western society seem to discourage contact with diviners, preferring rather to support consultation with religious ministers and health professionals (for example, psychologists). As a result, many individuals consulting with diviners may experience marginalisation, exclusion and criticism. This study aspires to provide individuals with a safe space in which their experiences with diviners can be given a voice.

A researcher functioning from a social constructionist perspective co-creates that which evolves during the interview process, given that both the researcher and participant enter into dialogue and engage in 'languaging'. This notion challenges the traditional research

paradigm, in which it is thought that the researcher is able to stand back from his or her own humanity and reveal the objective nature of the phenomenon under study without bias and without contaminating the results with leakage from her or his own personal involvement (Burr, 2003). In this study, the researcher and respective participants will learn about each other's constructions of experiences with diviners, while simultaneously negotiating towards a co-constructed reality of experiences.

Section Conclusion

This chapter commenced with a discussion on postmodernism as the preferred philosophical framework for this study. Postmodernism was described as being sensitive towards and accommodating of different realities or perceptions. Seemingly, individuals involved in similar situations will offer different accounts of the same experience and hence also different realities, which are to be considered as equally valid. This recognises that each individual's experiences with diviners are to be appreciated, respected and welcomed, for they represent authenticity. The discussion pertaining to constructivism highlighted the researcher's relationship with the participants and the research material while the influence of co-authorship was given attention. Social constructionism, as the study's paradigm, made overt the notion that dominant voices within society often marginalise the minority into 'voicelessness'. This study, with the support of social constructionism, will accord individuals who have consulted with diviners the much needed opportunity to voice their unique experiences.

Methodological underpinning of the study

The methodology section allows the reader access to the practicalities of the study, more specifically regarding how the researcher carried out her study and what processes were involved. Research is conducted with purpose and intent and each stage thereof is

approached systematically according to a specific methodological stance. The methodological underpinning of this study is the qualitative research approach which seeks to discover and capture the meaning of an individual's experiences, and entails a path of discovery and a journey into the world of another. The said approach will be explained within the contexts of the research topic, postmodernism, constructivism and social constructionism.

The fit between qualitative research and the research topic

The qualitative research paradigm can be regarded as the most suitable research orientation owing to the fact that it and the research topic are both concerned with understanding the internal, experiential world of another (Neuman, 1997). Qualitative research and the current study also both aim to capture and discover the meaning of individuals' experiences and are not concerned with calculating, measuring (quantifying) the number of experiences or generalising experiences to a larger population. The researcher is abandoning tangible, concrete and factual reality and is; rather, open to, flexible about and understanding of individuals' experiences with diviners; all of which are principles of qualitative research. Hearing and listening to these experiences implies that the researcher will be employing an interactive method and a stance of involvement, dependence and commitment, all of which are traits of qualitative research. Qualitative research also allows the researcher to look "at the larger picture, the whole picture, and begins with a search for understanding the whole" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.385). Similarly, individuals' experiences with diviners will be conceptualised within the framework of each person's unique contextual circumstances, in such a manner that the reader is presented with a holistic overview of these experiences.

The fit between qualitative research and post modernism

As hinted above, qualitative research implies that the underlying research method is one of understanding, openness, flexibility and uncertainty: which suggests that the researcher is open to and accepts that a participant's responses reflect truth for that individual. This reflects the underlying principle of postmodernism which is that there is no single truth, but rather that there are many truths and numerous possible interpretations (Rapmund, 2000). Postmodernism also rejects the notion of universal, objective knowledge. Qualitative research concurs, in that the research focus is placed on individuals' subjective accounts of their experiences with diviners. Postmodernism and qualitative research both regard the participant as being an expert in their own lives and reject the notion that there is one expert view or opinion.

The fit between qualitative research, social constructionism and constructivism

A social constructionist perspective locates meaning in an understanding of how ideas and attitudes are developed (Hibberd, 2005). The aforementioned reflects the qualitative approach, in that it too is interested in understanding the meaning of naturally occurring complex events, actions and interactions. The underlying philosophy of social constructionism is that meaning (truth) is seen to be co-created in social and cultural contexts. Qualitative research places significant emphasis on understanding a phenomenon from the participant's perspective – this perspective emerges largely as a result of interactions between the individual and his or her social and cultural context. A researcher upholding a qualitative research stance is perceived as being more personally involved with participants, which fits well with constructivism, as it endorses the notion that reality is always co-created, in this case, between the researcher and participant. Both constructivism and qualitative research place emphasis on interactive dialogue, as it is the avenue through which meanings are constructed and a shared reality created.

Validity and reliability in qualitative research

Qualitative research is often criticised for being 'unscientific' because it does not produce findings which can be measured and quantified. It is argued that if there is not enough statistical proof for an occurrence, then findings cannot be regarded as credible. Nevertheless, qualitative research, although not concerned with computing figures, can be regarded as a valuable means by which to contribute to the pool of knowledge and information, provided that it can "produce findings that are convincing and believable" (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, p. 62). Within the qualitative approach, validity and reliability are the two concepts through which a research study's credibility can be assessed. Ways of establishing the validity and reliability of this study will now receive attention.

Validity

In qualitative research, validity "refers to the trustworthiness of interpretations or conclusions" (Stiles, 1993, p. 601) and the researcher will maintain credibility by demonstrating her use of six specific actions proposed by Stiles (1993). '*Coherence'* implies that the researcher will guard against writing about her study in a linear (cause-effect) manner as this would contradict the underlying philosophy of qualitative research. '*Triangulation*' proposes that the researcher will substantiate her interpretations or conclusions by referring to multiple information sources. This study will thus make reference to various authors and publications as documented in the literature review and in addition, the researcher will compare her own vantage point with that of her supervisor. Stiles (1993) also mentions that the research study should evoke a personal '*sense-making'* in the researcher, so that upon reflecting on the study, the researcher acknowledges that something within him or her has changed (also referred to as '*uncovering'*). The action of "uncovering" will be demonstrated when the researcher, after having completed the research, is able to evaluate how the experiences of others with diviners have generated new meanings, insights and reflections for her.

'Testimonial validity' reminds the researcher that the subjective experiences of the participants may not necessarily be depicted in their entirety by thematic analysis. The entire research process thus only reflects one version of events and may be perceived differently when conducted or explored by another. In order for the proposed research to have '*catalytic validity'*, it needs to invigorate, energise and re-orientate the participants, in such a fashion that they too experience growth, change or insight. Although this cannot be prescribed, the researcher intends to nurture this process by being fully present in the interview, allowing freedom in discussion and presenting as a mirror for that which has been said. The last action is '*reflexive validity*' and refers to a process of introspection, where the researcher will evaluate how her epistemology has been impacted, changed or altered as a result of information collected.

Reliability

In qualitative research, reliability refers to the degree to which the researcher's observations of the information gathered can be trusted (Rapmund, 2000). The following are the guidelines proposed by Stiles (cited in Rapmund, 2000) in terms of which the reliability of this study can be established. *'Internal processes of investigation'* points to the effect of the entire research process on the researcher and what impact the research had on her as an all-experiencing person. The researcher will provide '*disclosure of orientation'*, by furnishing a vivid description of her specific theoretical allegiance, including her preconceptions and expectations for the study. The *'social and cultural context'* of the research study needs to be highlighted and with reference to the study, this will be done by accentuating each participant's social and cultural context in the integration and interpretation phases of the study. How the researcher *'engages with the information'* needs to be explained with specific reference to the nature of the relationship between the researcher and participants. This study follows the premise that both the researcher and participants will mutually influence each others' realities and arrive at a shared reality during the interview process. This does

not suggest that the researcher will impose her own meanings, but rather that the researcher's own meanings, in collaboration with those of the participants, will facilitate insight into the latter's experiences with diviners. It is important that the researcher remain *'grounded'*. The themes presented after the process of thematic analysis are imbued with the researcher's own interpretations and frame of reference. However, in order to ground these interpretations, the themes will be linked to examples of interview text.   This research study, because reliability and validity have been aimed at, should be regarded as dependable and consequently as a source of new insights and understandings in terms of individuals experiences with diviners.

Methodological underpinning in 'action'

The qualitative research approach does not prescribe fixed procedures for how to conduct research and therefore necessitates a discussion in which all the procedures involved in the study are documented. This will also prove meaningful for any other individual wishing to replicate the study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) a study cannot be replicated without highlighting the following essential aspects:

- What the focus of inquiry will be

- How the inquiry will be conducted

- The research methods that will be used for collecting and analysing the information obtained from the inquiry

- How the design will be linked with the chosen theoretical perspective or paradigmatic stance.

In essence, therefore, all the practical procedures, from sampling to information collection and information analysis need to be explained clearly.

The focus of inquiry

The focus of inquiry refers to 'who' and 'what' will comprise the focus of this research study. In answer, this research study is concerned with exploring the experiences of individuals who have consulted with diviners. Of specific interest, too, is how the locus of control orientation amongst these individuals affects their experiences with diviners and influences the patterns and intervals of consultation. Lastly, the research study also aspires to ascertain whether any traits or demographic variables characterise individuals consulting with diviners.

Selection of participants

The procedure for selecting research participants will be based on purposive sampling. When collecting a purposive sample, "researchers use their special knowledge or expertise about some group to select subjects who represent this population" (Berg, 2007, p 44). This means that the process of selecting participants will be strategic and purposeful and geared towards including a specific sample.

Participants will need to fulfil three important criteria in order to be selected for this research study:

- Participants need to have consulted with diviners using any one of the following divination methods; cartomancy, necromancy, numerology, natal astrology or palmistry. The reason for this is that the reader was introduced to these six methods of divination and is therefore in a better position to understand the participants' experiences.
- Participants need to be of Caucasian ethnicity. In selecting participants of different ethnic backgrounds, there is a greater likelihood that the findings will be contaminated by additional intervening variables, for example culture-specific beliefs and practices.

- Participants need to have given both verbal and written consent to participate in this study.

The convenience selection method will be utilised so as to locate and contact the participants. In this respect the researcher intends initiating contact with acquaintances of hers and asking them if they know of any individuals who have been guided by diviners. The prospective participants will then be contacted telephonically and the nature of the intended study explained to them. If they are willing to participate, an interview date will be scheduled.

Sample size

Given that the findings of this study are not intended to be generalised to all individuals who consult with diviners, a sample size of five participants will be selected.

Method of information collection and information analysis procedures

The methods of information collection and nature of information analysis procedures used are aim specific.

Aim One: Give voice to the experiences of individuals who have been guided by diviners

A semi-structured interview has been selected as the most appropriate information collection method for this aim, in that it will not only stimulate, but also facilitate vivid disclosures of individuals' experiences with diviners. A semi-structured interview, according to Sarantakos (2005, p.268), "contains a number of open-ended questions, whose wording and order can be changed at will. The interviewer acts freely in this context, on the basis of certain research points, (re)formulating questions as required and employing neutral probing. The

structure of the interview is flexible and the restrictions minimal, in most cases taking the form of guides rather than rules". Some of the following questions will serve as guides during the interview, "What makes you seek consultations?"; "How did you feel during consultations?" and "How did the consultations impact on your life?" The nature of this data collection method in essence represents an informal conversational approach, which provides the participant with an unthreatening space in which to share their experiences. In order for the researcher to track the dialogue and be fully present in the here-and-now, the interviews will be recorded electronically. Not only will electronic recording eliminate distractions but it will also capture additional information, for example, the participant's tone of voice.

Hermeneutics as theoretical stance for information analysis

Hermeneutics forms the theoretical underpinning which explains the nature of the information the researcher wishes to elicit from the participants and their interviews. According to Sarantakos (2005), the central point of hermeneutics is 'understanding'. It concerns understanding how we understand the world. This implies that the emphasis falls on extracting an individual's intentions and meanings as well as on describing and interpreting feelings. In doing this, hermeneutics goes beyond understanding what experiences are occurring and instead allows entrance into an individual's world itself; that is, how experiences are occurring. Van Manen (1990, p.180) more aptly explains the aforementioned, when he refers to Dilthey's hermeneutic formula, which is "lived experience: the starting point and focus of human science; expression: the text or artefact as objectification of lived experience and understanding: not a cognitive act but the moment when life understands itself". in the light of this formula, hermeneutics can be regarded as a specialised technique for interpreting not only that which an individual says, but also the individual him or herself. Hermeneutics is most suitable for this study, as emphasis is placed

both on individuals' unique, intimate experiences with diviners and on traits or demographic characteristics of the individuals themselves.

In summary, hermeneutics is based on the following assumptions (Rapmund, 2000):

- People give meaning to their lives which is important if others are to understand their behaviour
- Meaning can be expressed in different ways, not only verbally
- The meaning giving process is informed by the immediate context, social context, personal histories, shared practices and language
- The meaning of human action is not a fixed entity; it is constantly being negotiated, and changes evolve over time, in different contexts and for different individuals
- The process of interpretation allows an individual to make sense of his or her own world. However, these ideas are informed by the interpreters' own values and therefore the notion of 'truth', or correspondence with an objective reality, is not an important issue in this approach.

When conducting the interviews the researcher will be guided by hermeneutics, so that she will approach what is said from an empathic stance, manoeuvring for understanding by engaging the participants' internal frame of reference.

In keeping with hermeneutics, it is important that the interviews be analysed in such a manner that intrinsic meanings are captured. Thematic network analysis presents itself as a useful procedure by which to analyse information while simultaneously retaining its essence.

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) propose useful guidelines which the researcher will use to structure her analysis of the participants' interviews. These guidelines, in the form of phases, will now be outlined:

Phase One: Familiarisation and immersion

Familiarisation and immersion constitute the starting phase of the thematic network analysis. The researcher needs to begin by becoming acquainted with the transcribed interviews, obtaining an overall impression of participants' experiences (familiarisation). Thereafter, a more thorough process begins whereby the researcher fully immerses herself into the interview in an attempt to tap into the essence of what is being said. This can only occur if the researcher reads and re-reads the transcribed interviews. If the researcher has embraced this phase attentively, she should be able to "know what kinds of things can be found where, as well as what sorts of interpretations are likely to be supported by the interview text" (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 141).

Phase Two: Inducing Themes

The second phase is characterised by the induction of themes. This phase is marked by the researcher making inferences about the inherent meaning of the text and ascertaining whether or not any principles underlie textual information. This requires the researcher to look beyond 'what is said' (content) to 'how it is said' (process). It is therefore important to consider what the individual is meta-communicating or communicating about the content, as therein lies meaning. Thematic network analyses "seek to unearth the themes salient in a text at different levels, and thematic networks aim to facilitate the structuring and depiction of these themes" (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 387). The outcome of thematic network analysis is a web-like network, in which the relationships between different levels of information are graphically illustrated. There are three different levels of information, namely a) lower-order premises evident in the text; b) categories of basic themes grouped together to summarise more abstract principles and c) super-ordinate themes encapsulating the principal metaphors in the texts as a whole (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

The basic theme is the first level of information extracted. Basic themes are a representation of the core ideas from the text and are a simple depiction of what is being said by the participant. A number of basic themes can be extracted from an interview because numerous ideas are languaged about during an interview. The second level of information obtained is the organising themes. At this level, the basic themes are clustered together according to similar ideas or issues. Organising themes are at a higher level of abstraction, because they depict the principal assumptions of the basic themes as a whole. Global themes represent the third level of information and "group sets of organising themes that together present an argument, or a position or an assertion about a given issue or reality" (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 389). Global themes allow the reader to conceptualise the interview as a whole without necessarily having to read the text. Although global themes are fewer in number they are considered more powerful as they are at the 'highest' level of abstraction and summarise the entire interview in a few short words.

Phase Three: Coding

In order to maintain validity, it is necessary that the themes extracted be substantiated. The need therefore arises that the researcher demonstrate to the reader how she arrived at the themes or what information was used to elicit the specific themes. One way of doing this is through coding: the process whereby the researcher is able to authenticate themes by providing verbatim examples from the text which are suggestive of or relevant to a theme. However, in order to structure this process, the researcher begins by reducing the text into meaningful segments and defining them with a code. Meaningful segments are verbatim statements that the researcher considers to be prominent or statements that reappear more than once, in the same or an alternative form. The codes are then sorted into the themes. Although the phase of coding is structured as the third phase, it often coincides with the second phase during which themes are elicited. This is because the text segments steer

which themes are extracted and as a result, the themes extracted will change and vary according to what emerges from the text.

Phase Four: Elaboration

After the themes have been extracted, the researcher will search the themes again and explore them more closely. During this process, the researcher may reorganise the themes, create additional or sub-themes or revisit the entire interview again. Elaboration can be referred to 'fine tuning' what has already been extracted and assessing whether or not the coding phase and thematic extraction phases capture meaning and adequately reflect the experiences being shared. This phase usually ends when the researcher feels the information has been exhausted and when no new insights emerge.

Phase Five: Interpretation and Checking

The last phase is characterised by the researcher documenting what she has extracted from the interview in written format. The original web-like structure depicting the themes is explained in depth and expanded on by providing excerpts from the text. The researcher making use of thematic content analysis needs to be aware of how her own frame of reference influences the nature of themes extracted and she may comment on this during the last phase. As Alvesson and Skoldberg (cited in Pera, 2004, p. 31) explain, "it is necessary that the researcher thus look at their own perspectives from other perspectives and turn a self-critical eye onto one's own authority as interpreter and author". Reflecting on how another researcher analysing the same interview may extract different themes, and attribute different meanings to the content presented, is valuable.

Aim Two: Explore the locus of control orientation in individuals who have been guided by diviners

Rotter's Internal-External (I-E) Locus of Control scale is the most widely used test to assess individual differences as regards locus of control beliefs. Broadly speaking, locus of control refers to an individual's reactions to and perceptions of an event, based on the ascribed role of reward, gratification and reinforcement.   Locus of control represents two ends of a continuum: it includes "the degree to which the individual perceives that the reward follows from, or is contingent upon, his [her] own behaviour or attributes *versus* the degree to which he feels the reward is controlled by forces outside of himself and may occur independently of his own actions" (Rotter, 1966, p.1). It seems then, that some individuals believe that their lives are under their own control (internal locus of control) whereas others believe that their lives are being controlled by external factors (external locus of control).   Rotter (1966) agrees with the social learning theorists that individuals hold expectations regarding their capabilities to achieve a desired outcome and it is these expectations which influence behaviour and judgment, being based less on the nature of the reinforcements present in a situation and more on the beliefs about what the individual perceives the results of their behaviour to be. An expectation is usually based on past experiences and what was learnt regarding the link between a person's own behaviour and the outcome of a situation. An individual who directly connects their own actions to the outcome of a situation is said to have an internal locus of control while an individual who perceives the outcome of a situation to be independent of their actions, is said to have an external locus of control. Distinctions between both orientations will now follow.

a.   External locus of control

The term external locus of control refers to the situation "when a reinforcement is perceived by the individual as following some action of his own but not being entirely contingent upon his action, typically perceived as the result of luck, chance, fate as under the control of

powerful others, or as unpredictable because of the great complexity of the forces surrounding him" (Rotter, 1966, p. 1). As is evident in this definition, such individuals do not expect that their efforts will have an impact on the outcome of situations, acquisition of knowledge or performance of skills. As a result, individuals with an external locus of control often relinquish personal power and assign control to factors beyond their manageability. Given this, one is able to hypothesise that an external locus of control coincides with heightened feelings of fear and anxiety. Beck & Miller (2001) tested this hypothesis and reported that paranormal or supernatural beliefs among undergraduate students increased as reports of negative affect over the preceding year increased. There appear, however, to be discrepancies regarding the relationship between anxiety and external locus of control, as evident in a study conducted by Joe (1971) and the research findings he cited, which were inconclusive. Phares (1976) is of the opinion that individuals with an external locus of control may better handle immediately threatening stimuli because their externality provides a convenient mode of anxiety reduction. It would seem, according to Phares (1976) that individuals with an external locus of control deny that they are responsible for their actions and consequently experience less apprehension and anxiety when undesired outcomes materialise.

According to several authors (Joe, 1971; Levenson, 1973; Phares, 1976; Rotter, 1966 and Steptoe & Appels, 1989), individuals with an external locus of control orientation:

- Are more suggestible and less likely to resist coercion

- Change beliefs because of reinforcement from others

- Feel they cannot do anything about their problems

- Display lower achievement motivation

- Have a weaker ability to delay gratification

- More commonly report distress, anxiety and symptomatic behaviour

- Make a slower mental health recovery

- Have a high need for social approval

- Are less trustful and more suspicious of others

- Describe highly authoritarian mothers with hostile-rejecting tendencies.

b.   Internal locus of control

Individuals with an internal locus of control can be observed as ascribing the outcome of events to their own behaviour or actions, so much so that they radiate more innate power and control. Given a feeling of being able to control themselves, individuals with an internal locus of control too feel that they can control their environment. An internal locus of control further suggests that individuals will a) elicit information from present situations in order to improve future behaviour in similar situations, b) take the initiative to change and improve their circumstances in life, c) emphasise inner skill and goal achievement and d) be more likely to resist manipulation by others (Rotter, 1966).

It would seem that internals present with the following traits (Joe, 1971; Levenson, 1973; Phares, 1976; Rotter, 1966; Steptoe & Appels, 1989):

- Greater resistance to external pressure

- More independent of external reinforcement

- Feel they can control the outcome of their problems

- Higher achievement motivation

- Increased ability to delay gratification

- Less likely to present with a negative mood or symptomatic behaviour

- Make a better mental health recovery

- Able to learn from their environment.

One needs to caution against the assumption that all individuals with an external locus of control will enact their orientation in all situations. It seems that some individuals with an

external locus of control orientation may behave like 'internals' (referred to as 'defensive externals') when placed in structured performance situations. It furthermore appears that defensive externals will present with an internal locus of control orientation so as to defend themselves against failure or negative reinforcement and reduce the discomfort accompanying a lowered expectancy of success (Phares, 1976).

c.   Locus of control orientation and demographic variables

According to Levenson (cited in Lefcourt, 1981) male adults are more likely than female adults to display externality on the 'powerful others' scale, which suggests that male adults have a stronger perception of being controlled by 'powerful others'. It would seem, however, that these findings are not widely supported by other research studies, as either no gender differences emerged or females were reportedly more likely to believe they were controlled by 'powerful others' (Lefcourt, 1981).

d.   Locus of control orientation and occupation

Ryckman and Malikioski (cited in Lefcourt, 1981) confirmed their prediction that professionals and individuals with higher education would exhibit higher internality scores than for example, college students or blue collar workers.

e.   Locus of control orientation, birth order and familial size

Birth order and familial size have been explored in a sample consisting of high school and college athletes (Frischlag, cited in Lefcourt, 1981). Internality featured most predominantly in individuals who were raised in a small family and were first-borns. The findings are difficult to conceptualise, however, because Lefcourt (1981) did not define the term 'small family'.

f.   Locus of control orientation and perceptions of helplessness

An internal or external locus of control orientation seems to play a role in how an individual approaches and reacts in challenging or trying situations. It appears that individuals with an internal locus of control orientation "who are experiencing failure at a task consider that their ability, their effort, the difficulty of the task, and chance, can all be contributing to their performance, and may alter something within their performance to determine which, if any, of these factors may be influencing the outcome" (Pittman & Pittman, cited in Lefcourt, 1981). Individuals with an external locus of control orientation are therefore more likely to continue making the same 'mistakes' and experience elevated levels of helplessness, because they perceive primarily external factors as influencing their circumstances, experiences or struggles.

g.   Locus of control orientation and life-cycle changes

The relationship between age and scores on the 'powerful others' and 'chance' scales has been explored (Lefcourt, 1981). Lao (cited in Lefcourt, 1981) for example, found that a) individuals in their thirties were more likely to perceive their lives as predictable as compared to older or younger individuals, and b) that individuals fifty years or older are more likely to believe that 'powerful others' are in control. Levenson (cited in Lefcourt, 1981) explains that this may be related to increased fears of diminishing power and decline of abilities associated with aging.

When reviewing the above discussion pertaining to locus of control, it becomes evident that individuals with an internal locus of control are on the whole, better able to adjust, cope with life's demands and persevere in stressful life situations.

h.   Locus of control and belief in the methods of divination

Of specific interest to this study is the interplay between locus of control and the likelihood of consulting with a diviner. Bearing in mind the works of Rotter (1966) and other researchers mentioned above, one is likely to conclude that individuals with an external locus of control are more eager to consult with diviners, given that divination methods propose a worldview where individuals accept the influence of powerful external deterministic forces. An external locus of control has been associated with a higher degree of belief in the paranormal or superstition and divination (Groth-Marnat & Pegden, 1998; Irwin, 1993; Jahoda, 1969; Pelzer, 2002; Scheidt, 1973; Stanke, 2004; Tobacyk, Nagot & Miller, 1988; Tyson, 1979). Individuals with an external locus of control feel that much of what occurs, happens *to* them and not because of them, and are subsequently more apt to assign extraordinary explanations for daily occurrences (Vyse, 1997). Given that these individuals also feel that they are at the mercy of circumstance, they may consult with a diviner, in the hopes that they can experience greater command over their lives. In essence then, consulting with diviners seems to provide an illusion of control, as explained by Irwin (1992, p.205) who states that "paranormal beliefs evidently constitute an appeal to supernatural processes in the search for a means of coping with the perceived threat of uncontrollable, inconsistent social relationships". The need to control is however not only paramount amongst individuals consulting with diviners, but also amongst the general population, where individuals regain control by giving meaning to and providing explanations for their experiences (Keinan, 1994). Controlling the seemingly uncontrollable provides feelings of satisfaction and mastery while reducing the negative consequences of the perception of exercising no control (Langer, 1975; Pervin, 1963). This suggests that individuals, specifically those consulting with a diviner, may do so in an attempt to experience temporary relief from the anxiety, helplessness and passivity which often accompany loss of control.

Levenson's multidimensional locus of control: Internal, powerful others and chance scales

Given the popularity of Rotter's (1966) Internal-External Locus of Control scale, it has been subject to numerous reviews and adaptations (Paulhus, 1983): one such attempt was undertaken by Levenson (1973).

Levenson (1973) accepted Rotter's (1966) internal locus of control scale and the descriptions of each scale as initially proposed, but made improvements and changes to the global external locus of control scale by differentiating it into two separate scales, namely the 'powerful others' scale and 'chance' scale. The rationale for doing this was that "people who believe that the world is unordered (chance) would behave and think differently than people who believe that the world is ordered but that powerful others are in control" (Levenson, 1973, p. 398). Thus, even though an individual may possess a general external locus of control, their behaviour will depend largely on whether they expect to be controlled by forces of 'chance' (fate or luck); or by 'powerful others' (those who are perceived as more powerful, authoritative and controlling).

The researcher is of the opinion that Levenson's (1973) adjustments add value to Rotter's (1966) initial conceptualisation of locus of control and are the most worthwhile improvement to date. For this reason this instrument will be used for data collection in this study.

Levenson's Locus of Control Questionnaire

The reader is encouraged to consult Appendix A for a copy of Levenson's Locus of Control Questionnaire

Background

Levenson first published her Locus of Control Questionnaire and its psychometric properties in 1972 and has since applied the questionnaire to various samples for research purposes.

Owing to difficulty in obtaining Levenson's 1972 article, the researcher will in her study refer to the said author's article published in 1973. The researcher wishes to make clear that she does not suggest that individuals consulting with diviners present with pathological or 'psychiatric' traits; nor does she categorise or associate them with such traits.

Psychometric properties

Levenson's self-report questionnaire for measuring locus of control consists of the 'Internal', 'Powerful others' and 'Chance' scales, each of which is comprised of eight items in Likert format. The 'Powerful others' and 'Chance scales', when combined, form the 'external' scale.

Reliability

Levenson's Locus of Control Questionnaire has been applied to various population samples by different researchers. Kuder Richardson reliabilities yielded the following results (Lefcourt, 1981).

Table 3.1   Kuder Richardson reliability co-efficient's

Sample	Chance scale	Powerful others scale	Internal scale
Adults	0.73	0.72	0.51
College students	0.78	0.77	0.64
Psychiatric	0.79	0.82	0.67

According to Levenson (1973), the test-retest reliabilities obtained for the normal adult sample were 0.74 for the 'Powerful others' scale and 0.78 for the 'Chance' scale. Split-half reliabilities (Spearman-Brown) for the normal adult sample were 0.62 for the 'Internal' scale, 0.66 for the 'Powerful others' scale and 0.64 for the 'Chance' scale. These results suggest that the questionnaire is reliable and will produce consistent findings.

Validity

Lefcourt (1982) reports that various studies have found that the 'Powerful others' scale and 'Chance' scale correlate slightly to moderately with each other but differ significantly from the 'Internal' scale. These findings are to be expected, given that both the 'Powerful others' and 'Chance' scales reflect a belief in an external source of control. No overlap of the items on the 'Chance', 'Powerful others' and 'Internal' control factors was reported by Levenson (1973) and this suggests that each factor "is conceptually pure in that only items from the appropriate scale load on that factor" (Levenson, 1973, p. 400).

Scoring procedures

Determining an individual's locus of control orientation is based on the scores he or she obtains on each of the three scales. The reader is referred to Levenson (1973) for an overview of the scoring procedures. An indication of the ranges of possible scores and associated categories as used in this study follows:

- In order for an individual to possess an **'Internal'** locus of control orientation, their scores need to fall within the range of seventy two (72) and one-hundred-and-twenty (120). An individual scoring between twenty four (24) and seventy two (72) is said to exhibit an external locus of control orientation. Therefore, the higher the individual scores the 'stronger' their internal locus of control orientation in this study.

- The average score for the '**Chance'** scale is twenty four (24). Individuals scoring between eight (8) and twenty four (24) believe they are controlled by chance or luck while those scoring between twenty four (24) and forty (40) are more inclined to believe that they are not controlled and influenced by chance or luck.

- The average score for the '**Powerful others'** scale is twenty four (24). Individuals scoring between eight (8) and twenty four (24) believe they are controlled by powerful others whereas scores ranging between twenty four (24) and forty (40) characterise individuals who believe they are not controlled by powerful others.

The researcher will compare the results of the Locus of Control Questionnaire to the nature of the themes extracted during thematic network analysis. Consistencies as well as any discrepancies will be highlighted and briefly discussed.

Aim Three: Determine whether any traits or demographic variables characterise individuals consulting with diviners

Exploring individuals' experiences with diviners raised questions and curiosities about the traits or demographic variables of individuals consulting with diviners. Hence the study also aimed to ascertain whether individuals consulting with diviners can be typecast according to general traits or demographic variables. Participants were given a biographical questionnaire to complete before interviews commenced. This questionnaire elicited information pertaining to a) personal particulars: for example, date of birth, socio economic status, religious views, highest level of education; b) family background: for example, birth order, relationship status of parents, family members who consult diviners and c) nature of contact with diviners and psychologists. The questionnaire was analysed qualitatively and no statistical procedures were used.

Section Conclusion

The 'methodological underpinning in action' section introduced the reader to the focus of inquiry, selection of participants, sample size, means of inquiry, method of information collection and information analysis procedures. Presenting this information was critically important as it has guided the reader through the entire research process and has explained how individuals experiences with diviners as well as these individuals' locus of control orientation will be recorded and documented.

Chapter Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was placed on the research design. The reader was firstly introduced to postmodernism as the study's philosophical stance which proved to be a suitable fit for the study, because it welcomes different assemblies of reality and allows for the researcher to investigate experiences that are regarded by many as being 'out of touch with reality' or void of meaning. The discussion then proceeded to explore constructivist epistemology: the reader was introduced to the notion of mutual reciprocity and its implications for the researcher's relationship with the research process and participants. The social constructionist paradigm was presented by making specific mention of its key ideas, amongst others, the 'languaging' between individuals, co-creation of reality and dominant discourses within society. The researcher emphasised the notion that the 'languaging' surrounding an experience will, to a large extent, influence how it is perceived. The chapter then shifted its focus and explored the research methodology of this study. The qualitative research approach was discussed in detail, as this formed the basis for the method of inquiry. The reader was also introduced to the participants selected, how they were selected and the nature of the information obtained from each of them. Semi-structured interviews were presented as the primary method of data collection, for documenting the participants' experiences with diviners, and the significance of hermeneutics in the

interviewing process was made apparent. Levenson's (1973) Locus of Control Questionnaire was introduced as the method of collecting information for determining the participants' locus of control orientation and its psychometric properties and scoring procedures were highlighted.

To this point the reader has journeyed with the researcher through the literature study and the design and stages of the research process and has become familiar with the study's overall 'blueprint'. Of interest now are the outcomes elicited when this 'blueprint' is applied to five participants who have consulted with diviners; these results will be presented in the following six chapters.

CHAPTER 4

AVRIL'S RESULTS

"Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is

strength; mastering yourself is true power".

Lao Tzu (cited in Wikiquote, 2009)

The researcher has dedicated one chapter to each participant in which their experiences with diviners will be documented. Each participant's chapter will be divided into three sections.

The first section entitled **'Experiences with diviners'** will focus on the themes that emerged after careful thematic content analysis of the transcribed interview with the participant and will depict his or her experiences with diviners.   The themes emerging from Avril's interview (and the other participants) have been organised into thematic content networks on three levels: basic, organising and global themes. The discussion will begin with a presentation of the basic themes, followed by the organising themes and lastly the global themes, which encapsulate the interview as a whole. The rationale for presenting the themes in this manner is that it provides a structured format in which the reader is able to follow the way in which the researcher extracted and grouped the themes. The researcher acknowledges that the themes extracted, as well as how she 'languaged' them, reflect her unique point of viewing at a particular time and should therefore not constitute 'absolute truth'. Another researcher analysing the same interview may highlight different themes or further include and contribute to the themes already presented. The themes are also not described with the intention of their being perceived as mutually exclusive, as many possess similar characteristics and overlap with each other.

In the second section entitled '**Results from the Locus of Control Questionnaire**' a brief discussion explaining the scores on the questionnaire and their associated meanings or interpretations will be provided. The reader is encouraged to consult the table presented at the beginning of each chapter in which each participant's scores and those of others are provided.

The third section entitled '**Integration of thematic network analysis and results on the Locus of Control Questionnaire**' aims to compare and integrate the results of the thematic network analysis with the Locus of Control Questionnaire. Any discrepancies will be highlighted and possible explanations for these provided.

AVRIL'S EXPERIENCES WITH DIVINERS

Introduction

The interview was held with Avril in her home in Benoni. Avril is fifty nine years old and English speaking. She is married and has four children; three daughters aged twenty eight, thirty three and thirty six and one son, thirty years of age. All three of her daughters have consulted with diviners. Avril is the middle born of three children and has two sisters who are fifty three and sixty three years old. As a child Avril was sent to church by her parents, but reports never having experienced strong religious feelings. It seems that none of the members of her family of origin are diviners or practice divination. Avril qualifies her socio-economic status as middle-class and reports Matric as her highest level of education. She is presently employed in her husband's business as a secretary.

Avril first became interested in divination and consulted with a diviner ten years ago. The initial consultation was preceded by a period of severe financial difficulty, which appeared to elicit feelings of helplessness and uncertainty. Avril consults with the same clairvoyant approximately twice a year only and has not experienced other methods of divination. Avril is however tempted to consult with an individual who uses hypnosis by which to regress into past lives and anticipates that she will experience this soon.
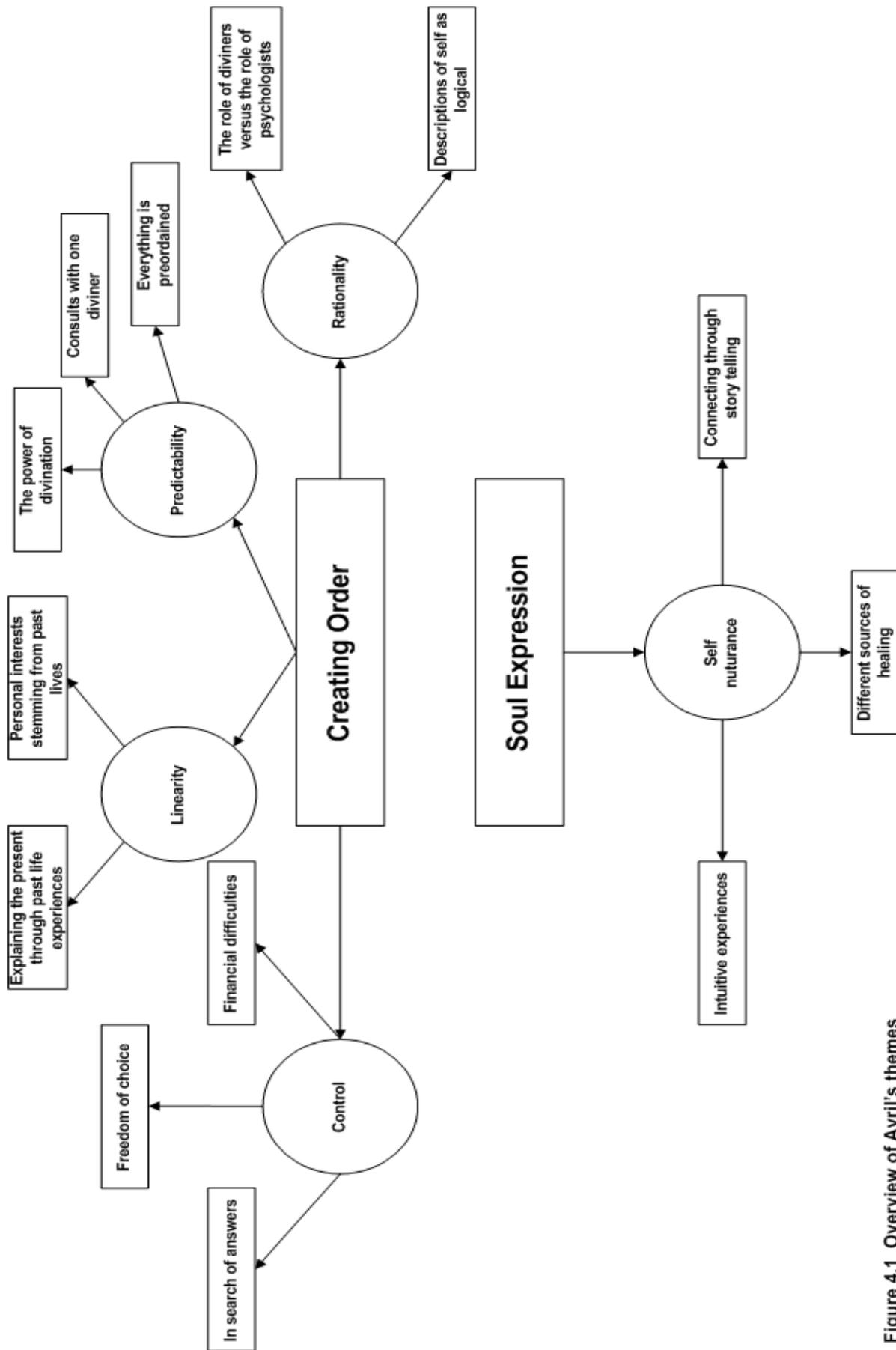
Figure 4.1 Overview of Avril's themes

THEMATIC NETWORK ANALYSIS

Description of terms or concepts used during thematic network analysis

For purposes of Avril's thematic analysis, the term *metaphysical* will refer to that which is or exists beyond the physical world.

Reincarnation is the metaphysical belief that the 'soul' or 'true self' of an individual survives death and is reborn into a new body many times. Reincarnation proposes that a new personality is developed during each life in the physical world, but some part of the self remains constant throughout the successive lives (Wikipedia, 2009). The term *past life* therefore refers to an individuals physical presence and personality in a life preceding the present one.

Basic theme: In search of answers

This theme suggests the notion that Avril depends on and relies on her diviner to give her answers to questions that she cannot ascertain through ordinary means (for example consulting with family members). It seems that she struggles to cope with the spontaneity of life and the unpredictability of what awaits her. In this regard, it seems that Avril does not have sufficient inner resources to address the 'here-and-now' and becomes impatient when having to wait for an experience to unfold. She said:

> You need someone to tell you why this is happening in your life and what you are going to do about it.

It seems that Avril's urgency to have questions answered stems from uncertainty created by her environment. She explained:

> Well just look at the society we live in. We all need answers. The divorce rate is up, death rate is up and we live, especially in South African in a very volatile environment. So people want answers. Am I going to be hijacked tomorrow? Am I going to live tomorrow?

It seems then, that the questions Avril proposes to her diviner are related to immediate fears and concerns and appear to be shadowed by negativity as a result of a dangerous and challenging environment. It is very seldom that Avril consults with her diviner to receive answers to questions which may have positive implications.

Should Avril not be able to consult her diviner for answers, it appears that she seeks answers in the form of signs from the metaphysical realm without a diviner's assistance. Avril achieves this by communicating directly with her 'spirit guides' and requesting that they send her a sign to help her resolve a problem. She said:

> You say to them, yes, listen, I need some signs to know what I've got to do, help me sort out this problem and invariably it gets solved

Avril may have had prior unsuccessful attempts to resolve her own problems and has, for this reason, started relying on her diviner or the metaphysical realm to resolve her problems for her. If a problem is resolved, Avril attributes credit to the metaphysical realm or influence of divination and not to her own problem solving abilities.

Basic theme: Freedom of choice

The theme of 'freedom of choice' reoccurs throughout Avril's interview. Avril apparently appreciates that she has the freedom and option to make decisions or choices as she deems fit.

The context of divination appears to provide her with various opportunities to exercise choice. During a reading, Avril explained that:

> But you have the choice when you go to them, to know the good or the bad.

Avril does not experience consulting with diviners as a process of relinquishing personal power but, rather, as an opportunity to communicate and demonstrate her power over her own life.

Another example of 'the freedom to choose' emerged when Avril discussed her own divination ability. Various healers have commented on Avril's ability to access the spiritual realm through her psychic abilities. Avril made it clear during the interview that:

> I have no intentions of developing my psychic powers

and this preference highlights that she has made a choice not to pursue her psychic gift.

The theme 'freedom to choose' seems to be inconsistent with a later theme, 'everything is preordained'. In the latter theme Avril verbalises that her life, the people within it and events are all purposefully predetermined or preordained. However, prior to this and in keeping with the present theme 'freedom to choose', she said:

> You must understand in the spiritual world, nothing is written in concrete. You actually have the ability to change it, it's not written in stone.

Avril did not further elaborate on this statement or provide an explanation for her two seemingly contradictory beliefs. However, from a general impression of the interview with

Avril it seems her beliefs regarding choice or the lack thereof may in fact not contradict but complement each other. Although Avril believes in destiny or fate, she too believes that she has been given the power to make decisions, but that the decisions she makes ('freedom to choose'), will ultimately lead her to her predetermined destiny ('everything is preordained').

Basic theme: Financial difficulties

During the interview, Avril provided a selective account of personal problems she has experienced or is currently experiencing. Seemingly she tended to avoid divulging information pertaining to problems that evoked strong emotional responses, which appears appropriate given her impersonal relationship with the researcher. Avril, however, provided access into her lived emotional experiences when making mention of the financial difficulties she and her husband were facing. She said:

> At that stage we had just been sequestrated.

> We had lost all our insurance policies, we had no medical aid, we had squat.

It seems that Avril and her husband have encountered the theme of 'financial difficulties' on more than one occasion, although the severity seems to differ each time.

> A year ago our business was taking a bit of a downer and having been there before, there was no way it was going to happen again.

Although Avril omitted the emotional impact of the financial difficulties on her and her family, the fact that she was adamant in not co-creating the same pattern again suggests that the experience was emotionally very traumatic.

Avril's confidence in being able to terminate a previous financial redundancy stems from her consultations with diviners. When Avril experiences or anticipates that her life is becoming un-manageable she seeks advice, guidance and direction from her diviner. After the consultation, Avril feels better equipped to cope with and resolve the challenges she is facing and this appears to alter the course of events towards a positive outcome. In this regard, Avril may have learnt not to worry excessively about a problem, given that intervention from her diviner will provide the assistance she needs.

Organising theme: Control

Avril seems to be well acquainted with the feeling of not being in control. It would appear that she continually experiences and re-experiences contact with the 'wall of loss of control' which evokes feelings of helplessness, apprehension and ambivalence. Avril's solution to her crisis is to build as many 'walls' of control as possible and divination seems to be the place where she can do this. The theme 'financial difficulties', for example, fittingly described how Avril could not control her financial resources in order to create security for her and her family. It was only through consultations with her diviner that she felt empowered enough to redefine her financial situation and experience a sense of control. The loss of control is not only pertinent within the context of finances, but also within the context of being a South African. Avril describes how frightened she is of the fact that society is threatened by serious crime and violence and that she has no control over whether or not she or significant others will be living tomorrow. Avril perceives herself to be a victim in society, robbed of her free will and right to decision making. The theme 'freedom to choose' highlights how Avril, within the context of divination, is able to exercise choice and experience greater personal freedom than she is ordinarily able to. By being able to make decisions and choices, Avril is reinstated with a feeling of being in control of her own life. In the theme 'in search of answers', Avril restores control in her life by optimising the information provided to her by her diviner and others in the metaphysical realm. By having questions answered, being advised

on what to do and knowing what the future holds, Avril regains control over her life and is for the first time able to experience security.

Basic theme: Explaining the present through past life experiences

A predominant theme throughout Avril's interview is her tendency to attribute explanations for her present experiences to occurrences in past lives. That which takes place in the physical realm is said to be related to or caused by the metaphysical or spiritual realm. Languaging about her experiences in this way seems functional for Avril, given that it is a means by which she can justify her experiences and render them more valid. Apparently Avril often questions the reason why things are both personally and interpersonally, and being able to make connections and associations with what she knows about her past lives seems to reduce uncertainty.

Avril seems interested in the impact of her personality traits on interpersonal experiences both in her present and her past life.   Although certain of her personality traits and interpersonal style may create distance and disconnection, it appears that Avril is hesitant to make changes in this regard. It is as though she needs to embrace these traits or qualities as they provide justification for her firm belief in past life experiences. Avril said:

> I say what I want to say. I may not sometimes be the most diplomatic person, but if it's the truth, you need to hear it…that's probably why I got burnt at the stake in my previous life.

This statement also suggests that Avril tends towards introspection and has a need to orchestrate segments of present experiences into the structured organisation or whole of past lives. It seems that Avril struggles to accept the presence of unusual or extraordinary experiences at 'face value' and has a need, rather, to place them within a context of past

lives, where they have significant meaning. Avril referred to three different areas within her life where this process is evident.

The first area is related to her personal functioning.   She said:

> My biggest two fears, being burnt to death and of drowning…..and it was picked up that in my past lives, I was either burnt at the stake or drowned.

The second pertains to interpersonal functioning and relationship dynamics. She asserted:

> I looked at Mark's little boy and I took one look at him, and I know, we have definitely, no doubt in my mind, this little boy and I have travelled many lives together

The last area, although not directly related to her life, pertains to the presence of physical or biological abnormalities or irregularities. As she averred:

> So, if you have a birth mark on your head that could have been a gun shot, could have been what ever. It has to do with a violent death in the past life.

All three statements highlight Avril's need to want to validate her experiences and find causal explanations for how or why things are as they are. Should she not be able to do so, it seems that she may experience doubt and uncertainty, both of which she is attempting to reduce and minimise.

The theme 'explaining the present through past life experiences' encompasses within it the concept of 'history'. Avril seems to attach significant importance to her own history as she feels this will dictate her future endeavours and provide clues for what is to come. While explaining her reasons for starting a 'family tree' (genogram), she said:

I believe you need to know where you have come from in order to know where you are going.

Avril also spoke about the dangers of not addressing problems stemming from the past. Here she was not referring to the past in terms of the physical realm, but the past in the metaphysical realm. She explained:

> You find that people have deep rooted problems or issues and they haven't dealt with it, they are going to carry that through to another life.

It seems that Avril's need to explore her physical and metaphysical history provides her with the insight and direction she seeks. It would appear that she is concerned about repeating mistakes and is focussed on 'getting it right' and maximising opportunities and experiences.

Basic theme: Personal interests stemming from past lives

Avril seems to connect her interests to her past lives, finding similarities between who she is now and who she has been told she was then. The intriguing process of finding connections appears to be meaningful for Avril, as it allows her to better understand why she has specific interests and an affiliation for certain things.   Avril has made the following connections for herself:

> It's been picked up that we were both teachers and healers in our previous lives and this is I think, our love for homeopathy.

> So, as a child I was very drawn to history, as a child I was very drawn to archaeology, mystery and the love of nature. Now I know why, because obviously that is what I have done all this time.

I'm particularly drawn to old England and I have no doubt that my previous lives were probably there.

It appears that by making the connections that she does, Avril takes the 'ordinary' and moulds it into the 'extraordinary'. This may be an attempt to make her life and experiences more exciting and interesting for herself.

Organising theme: Linearity

In both of the basic themes 'personal interests stemming from past lives' and 'explaining the present through past life experiences' Avril appears to follow a distinct way of thinking and reasoning. It would appear that she conceptualises her experiences in a unidirectional manner, in which a dualism of cause and effect is emphasised. This is a characteristic of linearity, in which 'A' is believed to cause 'B'. In the basic theme 'personal interests stemming from past lives', Avril believes that her present interests are related to, and result from, what she experienced in her past lives. She seems to assign a causal explanation for the presence of her current interests, making a direct connection and association with what took place in the past. The presence of linearity in Avril's thinking is also highlighted in the basic theme 'explaining the present through past life experiences'. This basic theme appears to be more striking in nature, given that Avril attributes not only her personal interests, but most of what she experiences and encounters in her present life, to past life experiences. It seems that Avril tends to place emphasis on finding the 'root causes' for why things are the way they are at present and in this regard she may be 'reacting to her reality' and not necessarily 'creating her reality'.

Basic theme: The power of divination

Divination appears to have exerted a powerful positive impact on Avril's life. It seems that she has her diviner to thank for her privileged experiences with family members and current financial situation. Divination is given power within Avril's life, given that it provides direction and is perceived as a 'preventative measure'.

Divination as a preventative measure

Avril has been provided with information pertaining to the future of her and her family, which gives her the advantage of knowing what will happen before it happens. Possessing this knowledge is apparently invaluable. By knowing what the future holds Avril is able to prevent negative occurrences from taking place by changing and manipulating the decisions, responses and choices she makes.

The predictions foretold by the diviner Avril consults have allowed for her to alter what, it seems, would have been a traumatic destiny. She was told that her husband would suffer a heart attack and pass away. By being informed of this, Avril was more attentive towards her husband and she increased her awareness of her husband's physical functioning. Avril later interpreted what could have been perceived as mild physical symptoms presented to her by her husband, as indicative of a heart attack, and hurried him to hospital. She said:

> He's been given extra years. The fact that attention was given so quickly.

It seems Avril was able to postpone her husband's death by virtue of knowing that he would experience a heart attack. Another example of 'divination as a preventative measure' is highlighted in the following statement provided by Avril. She said:

I would be widowed. I'd not have been living the lifestyle I'm living today. I'd probably be at a fish and chips shop, raising four children.

In this example, divination empowered Avril as she was provided with information by her diviner, which allowed her to alter her family's financial future. By being told of her future financial difficulties and struggles, Avril was inspired to make more informed and educated financial decisions which now benefit her family's security and stability.

Divination provides direction

Even if a consultation does not provide Avril with content specific examples of what her future holds, it still offers her direction and guidance. It appears that simple non verbal gestures, for example a head nod or minimal verbal encouragers from a diviner, provide Avril with the support and reassurance she seeks. She remarked:

Very often they give you pointers.

It seems that Avril struggles to make decisions without first consulting with her diviner. When confronted with taxing situations, Avril seems to instinctively doubt her own judgements and solicits the advice of her diviner. It appears that a consultation with her diviner provides clarity and allows for Avril to obtain a different perspective on her lived experiences, as highlighted in her statement:

So you start saying, okay, maybe I need some direction. Maybe I'm not seeing the wood from the trees.

The content of messages provided by her diviner has a profound, often, life changing impact on Avril. By knowing what is in store in the future, Avril is protected from feeling uncertain and ambivalent.

Basic theme: Consultations with one diviner

Avril has only ever had contact with two diviners. She first consulted with a diviner ten years ago, after a friend recommended this and motivated her to go. The second time Avril consulted with a diviner was shortly after she and her husband were financially sequestrated. The profoundness of this experience, and the positive impact of the reading, encouraged Avril to continue consulting with the same diviner for years thereafter and she presently still does. Although Avril is now eager to consult with another diviner using a different method of divination, it seems she is reluctant to disconnect from her 'primary' diviner. Interesting about Avril's contact with the one diviner is the way in which she languages about and defines their relationship.   Avril seems to have co-created a more intimate, personal relationship that extends 'professional' boundaries. When speaking about her diviner, Avril does so in such a manner suggesting a friendship and deeper connection even though they do not engage outside the 'divination context'. As she said:

> So, now we have sort of got to know each other.

Throughout the interview, Avril referred to the diviner by her first name Robin, which suggests that she may perceive the diviner as a 'significant other' and attach significance to the relationship.   This may also indicate that Avril has the impression of possessing 'ownership' over her diviner. This would allow Avril to feel important and special, given that the relationship with her diviner is then one of exclusivity.

During the interview, Avril commented:

> Whereas before my pre-Robin days

This statement further highlights how Avril has illuminated her relationship with her diviner and given it significant meaning. It also suggests that the commencement of Avril's relationship with her diviner seems to be an important milestone in her life.

Basic theme: Everything is preordained

Avril does not believe in events occurring at random or by chance. Most events or the sequence thereof form part of a predetermined path which she is destined to follow:

> It's preordained, no doubt about it. And I always believe in fate.

Avril appears to conceptualise her experiences in terms of a life journey that has been created for her, where she is a 'vessel' being guided by 'others'. It seems that those guiding her are within the metaphysical realm or those who were once living but have now crossed over.

> And that time for me to bump into that friend of mine, that I had not seen in a couple of years, uum, for her to tell me about this, was at the time, where I probably needed to be directed that way. Be it someone showing her or someone pushing me from the other side.

Avril seems to welcome the notion that everything is preordained and, according to the statement directly above, feels that 'others' may know what is in her best interests. This statement also proposes that Avril is a believer in 'meaningful coincidences' (synchronicity),

where two events, although seemingly unrelated, are perceived to have significance given the similar time period in which they occur.

Organising theme: Predictability

For Avril, life seems to be characteristically disorganised, unpredictable and volatile. It is as though Avril does not have the energy and resources to respond spontaneously to the challenges and demands of life. She therefore seems to prepare for and influence contexts in such a manner so as to make them more predictable. In the theme 'power of divination', it was demonstrated that Avril uses divination to provide her with direction, which in itself suggests predictability. There is predictability in the fact that her diviner will always provide her with direction and guidance. In addition, by being advised on how to proceed forward, Avril makes her own behaviour seemingly more predictable as she merely follows the 'recipe' suggested to her by her diviner and knows in advance how she will react.   By creating more predictable experiences, Avril is able to take a 'one up position' over life, ensuring that she is always one step ahead. The theme 'power of divination' captures what seems to be Avril's race with life.   In this theme, Avril uses divination as a preventative measure, which implies that although life is ahead in the race given that situations will unfold as predetermined, Avril will usually 'defeat' life as she is able to 'derail' the outcome of situations just before they happen. Even if Avril experiences 'defeat', for example, a loved one passing away, she may be forewarned of this by a diviner and as such even death becomes predictable. Avril appears also to have experienced unpredictability in relationships with significant others and it seems that this has created within her the need to find and nurture at least one predictable relationship in her life. Apparently she has done so within the context of divination by consulting with only one diviner. Consultations with the same diviner offer predictability, stability and certainty as Avril and the diviner have a well established history together and consultations will always be of a similar nature and follow the same process. It seems that Avril has also experienced unpredictability in relationships with significant others, and by

consulting with one diviner, she is at least able to experience one predictable relationship in her life. The theme 'everything is preordained' also imbues within it the concept of predictability. By perceiving her life as following a preordained 'master plan', of which she becomes aware only through consultations with her diviner, Avril allows little room for the unpredictable to unfold.

Global theme: Creating order

The organising themes 'control', 'linearity', 'predictability' and 'rationality' all have in common Avril's need to create order. Order suggests structure and arrangement, where the options of variability, deviance and inconsistency are limited and controlled.

Avril apparently perceives life as chaotic and disorderly and the resulting bewilderment evokes feelings of helplessness and vulnerability. In an attempt to escape the 'suffocating' effect of life, Avril has found comfort in her goal directed task of creating order. The question of how she does this is answered primarily within the context of divination. By consulting with diviners, Avril is able to reach her definition of order as the consultations reduce the presence of uncertainty and create for her a cushion of security and stability. Avril seems to function optimally within the environment of divination which she perceives as creating order and focus.   This indicates that Avril functions effectively in environments in which there is an emphasis on rules, set patterns and rigid systems. Furthermore, it seems that Avril may present with stereotypic, repetitive behaviours or engage in formalised procedures which emphasise direction. For Avril, then, divination is a ritual, a ritual in which to celebrate order and structure.

Basic theme: The role of diviners versus the role of psychologists

Avril has a history of consulting with diviners when she is confronted with problems, uncertainty and needs guidance and direction. She was asked whether or not she had consulted with a psychologist during similar periods of struggle. Avril stated that she has herself not needed to go for psychotherapy but is a firm believer that individuals should do so if they experience the need. It would appear that Avril has not consulted with a psychologist as her diviner provides her with the necessary 'therapy' she needs. Avril provided interesting insights with regards to how she perceives the role of a psychologist in comparison to the role of a diviner, which appear to shed light on her reasons for consulting with a diviner and not a psychologist. She said:

> But if I have a personal problem, so it's not a situation. This is an individual thing, where I'm going through emotional problems, an emotional problem, as opposed to a situation problem; I would then consult with a psychologist. I don't think a clairvoyant is qualified enough to deal with my emotions.

This statement suggests that she consults with a diviner for guidance pertaining to the practicalities of situations she is confronted with. This is seemingly less threatening as it allows for her to maintain emotional distance.

Despite a prior theme in which Avril found healing in messages given to her by loved ones who have crossed over, she too is aware of and acknowledges that the healing power of these messages is limited. She explained:

> A psychologist can tell her how to deal with her grief, how to move forward, how to work through it. Whereas a clairvoyant can say, I've been in touch with your dead husband; he is

happy for you and wants you to move on. But it's all very well getting that message when you don't know what to do and that's when a psychologist comes in.

She may pick up that I am emotionally hurting because I have lost a child......she can then help me by crossing over and saying I've got a message from your mother....That still hasn't taught me how to deal with the anger, the sorrow, the hurt, the betrayal.

Avril has illustrated her perceptions of the boundaries and limitations of healing provided by diviners and it seems that for her a healing process can usually only be completed with the assistance of a psychologist. For Avril then, diviners and psychologists

should work hand in hand

and recognise each other's similar but also dissimilar healing abilities. Given that Avril respects the role of both a diviner and psychologist, she advocates that individuals should, during times of need, consult with both simultaneously. For Avril the most meaningful approach would be to consult with a psychologist who also has divination abilities. By consulting both, there is less room for the omission of information and this almost guarantees that she will be assisted meaningfully. It will also afford her the opportunity to maximise the benefits of what both the physical and metaphysical realms can offer her in terms of direction, guidance and advice.

Basic theme: Descriptions of the self as logical

Avril seems to pride herself on the fact that she is able to engage with information and experiences in what she perceives to be a reasonable and sensible manner. Being able to approach stimuli from a rational vantage point allows for Avril to protect herself from potentially misleading and misguiding information provided by her diviner. This indicates that

Avril does not 'blindly' trust and accept everything her diviner says or predicts. She remarked:

> If I wasn't a logical person and she had said to me you are going to meet a tall dark stranger in a silver car….someone stop every dark stranger in a silver car.

In this statement, Avril was explaining how her 'sensible' nature minimises naivety within the context of divination and prevents her from pursuing unrealistic, seemingly improbable, directives.

Avril's description of herself as being a logical person also seems to give her the confidence needed to solve her own problems. In this regard, being logical and rational allows Avril to compartmentalise problems in such a manner that they are perceived as being more manageable and controllable. As she put this:

> But I think I've been able to logically work through major problems.

> Look at it objectively. I've got problems, yes, we all have. Let's find the solution.

By engaging with problems in a rational manner, Avril temporarily suspends the emotional effect a problem may have on her. Disconnecting from emotions seems to make problems less complex and allows for the necessary distance needed to find a solution.

Organising theme: Rationality

Rationality can be described as the willingness to accept or display only that which is in accordance with reason and logic. Rationality is strongly associated with the scientific, as science assumes that truth can only be ascertained through the use of reason or rational

thought. That which is considered rational or for that matter, scientific, is therefore usually perceived to be void of subjectivity or emotionality. That which Avril presents or communicates overtly, can to a large extent be described as rational or encompassing elements of rationality, as she seems to disconnect herself from her emotions. In both the themes 'descriptions of the self as logical' and 'the role of diviners versus the role of psychologists' it was demonstrated that Avril makes her lived experiences and problems more manageable by isolating her emotions from the experience. By approaching problems in a 'robotic' manner, Avril is able to reduce the stimulus field, thereby making it easier for her to make the 'right' decision. Avril's strong conviction of 'right' and 'wrong' further highlights the theme rationality. Rationality suggests that the supreme authority in matters of opinion is reason and that if one functions according to the premises of reason, one is able to ascertain the 'correct' way. In the theme 'the role of diviners versus the role of psychologists', the dichotomy in Avril's functioning and perceptions is further visible. Here she made a clear distinction between the rational and the emotive, suggesting that psychologists address the emotive and diviners the rational. The fact that Avril has only consulted with diviners and not psychologists further indicates that she primarily functions, approaches and seeks that which takes place within the boundaries of rationality. It appears, then, that Avril creates distance in relationships by deploying an intellectualisation strategy, of which rationality forms the foundation.

Basic theme: Intuitive experiences

Intuition can be described as a way of directly and immediately 'knowing', without conscious thought or judgement. Intuition is therefore a means by which to obtain knowledge using only the act of sensing. Although everyone's intuition speaks to them, it would appear as though Avril's speaks louder to her; or alternatively, that Avril listens more attentively to what her intuition is saying. Avril defined intuition as:

Just like a gut feeling you get, intuition is what I call it.

Upon further elaboration, she explained that:

Very often you get like a feeling of something imminent going to happen. I'd be thinking about you and suddenly the phone will ring and it will be you. That sort of thing, or, just things you seem to know are going to happen. But I have never put it down to psychic ability. I just thought it was that ability to be tuned into that.

and reiterated this point by saying:

It's just a feeling that you get. Like, you might wake up one morning and have this feeling of apprehension, just like this dread feeling, that I'm in trouble, or will say to my kids please be careful on the roads. That type of thing.

Avril's active intuition seems to accord her a 'foreseeing power' which appears to give her the ability to alter her future or the future of others. Although Avril does not language her intuition as a gift of divination, the effects and their impact are similar to other methods of divination. It could be hypothesised that Avril is interested in divination and is strongly connected to its principles, given that she herself seems to have a talent for and skills in divination.

Basic theme: Connecting through story telling

Avril eagerly seized opportunities during the interview, to share stories about remarkable experiences with her diviner. Story telling seemed to increase the connection between Avril and the researcher as emotions were amplified and a more active level of engagement was co-created. The stories evoked feelings of anticipation and surprise and were 'languaged' in such a way that the researcher was tracking each word. Within each story, Avril seemed to

communicate the message that diviners are trustworthy and that their abilities are 'genuine' and authentic. Apparently, then Avril uses her captivating experiences with diviners to entice others into adopting similar beliefs and perspectives. Furthermore, by sharing fascinating stories with others, Avril makes divination seem more appealing and this need could stem from the fact that divination is usually approached with scepticism, doubt and disbelief. Avril may also have an unfilled longing to be heard and listened to by others and story telling seems to be the 'vessel' by which she can achieve this.

Basic theme: Different healing sources

The divinatory context provides Avril with access to various sources of healing.

The first source of healing is the consultation with a diviner itself. Avril describes the consultation environment as eliciting feelings of calmness, inner peace and serenity. She said:

> I feel very relaxed. I feel tranquil. It's almost like you lose all this in the world and just go there and you…very serene

Often Avril will consult with her diviner not with the intention of obtaining answers and direction, but to experience and embrace the positive atmosphere. She commented:

> I often go to her and I say, I'm here to just chill.

This statement suggests that Avril uses consultations as a means of obtaining 'time-out' from a busy and demanding schedule.

The second source of healing is accessed through the divination abilities of the diviner. Avril consults with a medium who possesses the ability and gift to communicate with those who have crossed over. Avril explained that she experienced regret as a result of not saying what she had wanted to say to significant others before they passed away. With the assistance of her diviner, Avril was afforded the opportunity to receive messages from those who have crossed over. These messages were healing in nature, as they allowed Avril to put to rest many years of feeling guilty. She said:

> I felt so responsible at the time when I wasn't there for her. And she [diviner] said, this blonde friend of yours who crossed over by her own hand, says to tell you that there's nothing you could have done about it.

Avril's third source of healing seems to come from a 'knowing' that she is protected and watched over by those who have crossed over. This 'knowing' is made possible through the interventions of her diviner, as it is the diviner who communicates messages to and from the physical to the metaphysical realm. Avril may have a supposition that those who have crossed over are protecting her, but this supposition is generally only confirmed once corroborated by her diviner.

> And there are people on the other side that are watching out for you that still love you, that are at your side.

It seems that support from 'the other side' is important and meaningful for Avril, as it allows for her to experience belonging and nurturance in the metaphysical realm, which often compensates for the lack thereof in the physical realm.

Organising theme: Self nurturance

Self nurturance can be described as the act of supplying oneself with or allowing oneself access to contexts, people or objects whose primary focus falls on fulfilling one's needs, wishes and desires. For Avril, it seems that self nurturance encompasses three facets: emotional expression, connection with others and listening to intuition. In the theme 'different healing contexts' all three facets are visible. It was demonstrated in the earlier organising theme 'rationality' that Avril tends towards the rational and logical and copes with demanding situations or difficulty in relationships by disengaging from her emotions. Although Avril disconnects from her emotions when interacting within her family and peer subsystem, she connects with her emotions during consultations with diviners. When consulting with her diviner, she is able to achieve self nurturance through being given the opportunity to rest and relax, free herself from pervasive negative emotions, experience a tranquil atmosphere and be reminded of her support system in the metaphysical.   In the theme 'connecting through storytelling' the most visible facets of self nurturance are emotional expression and connection with others.   By telling stories of her experiences with diviners, Avril is able to express her emotions and stimulate emotional expression in others; this increased interactional intensity seems to facilitate deeper connections and more intimate relationships. Self nurturance also features in the theme 'intuitive experiences'. Intuition was described as a way of directly and immediately 'knowing', without conscious thought or judgement.

This suggests that when Avril taps into her intuition, she is actually listening to and giving expression to her 'emotional self'. This theme also includes the facet of connection with others, as Avril is inclined to tell others about her intuitive experiences and this seems to facilitate 'rich' discussions and active connection.

Global theme: Soul expression

Soul, for purposes of this theme, will refer to the 'core' of one's being or the essence of the 'matters of the heart'. Soul expression therefore refers to the process of connecting with and giving expression to one's subjective emotions and sentiments. The organising themes 'intuitive experiences', 'connecting through storytelling' and 'different sources of healing' when extracted and placed on a higher logical level, all highlight Avril's longing and need to give expression to her soul. In the organising theme 'intuitive experiences', Avril's intuition can essentially be described as an expression of her soul, because she defines intuition as a 'gut feeling' which indicates that her intuition comes from deep within her 'core'. This suggests that Avril's harmony with her soul is greatest when she listens to and gives voice to her intuition. 'Connecting with other's' is also an essential expression of the soul. When in relationship to another, Avril is able to emit and exude her emotions and also able to fulfil and nurture her soul's need for affiliation. The basic theme 'different sources of healing' describes how the context of divination allows Avril to give expression to her soul's needs, wishes and desires. For example, by consulting with diviners, she is able to revitalise and energise her depleted soul. It seems that Avril seldom experiences the freedom or safety to give expression to or nurture her soul's needs within the context of daily living but manages to do so within the context of divination.

Personal reflection

The researcher found her dialogue with Avril fascinating. For the most part, this is because of the way in which Avril juxtaposes her present experiences with her past life experiences. The researcher admired Avril's self confidence and the ability by which she was able to defend her position, belief system and understanding of the world. The way in which Avril shared her stories and her eagerness to describe the miracles she has encountered through divination, has reinforced the researcher's belief that divination provides a context of healing

and should be given voice within the context of psychology. The researcher was able to identify with many of the themes extracted from Avril's interview and the mere knowing that another person experiences similar struggles was in itself a therapeutic experience.

AVRIL'S RESULTS ON THE LOCUS OF CONTROL QUESTIONNAIRE

Table 4.2 Avril's results on the Locus of Control Questionnaire

Participant	Avril	Elise	Abel	Vanessa	Anisa
'Chance' Scale	**35**	29	17	21	19
'Powerful Others' Scale	**36**	33	25	30	36
'Total External' Orientation	**71**	62	42	51	55
'Internal' Scale	**36**	37	31	24	38
'Total Locus of Control'	**107**	99	73	75	93

Legend:

- **'Chance' and 'powerful others' scale:**

Scores ranging between 8 – 24	=	Controlled by chance or powerful others
A score of 24	=	Midpoint
Scores ranging between 24 – 40	=	Not controlled by chance or powerful others

- **'Internal' scale:**

Scores ranging between 8 – 24	=	External locus of control orientation
A score of 24	=	Midpoint
Scores ranging between 24 – 40	=	Internal locus of control orientation

- **'Total external' orientation:**

Scores ranging between 16 - 48	=	External locus of control orientation
A score of 48	=	Midpoint
Scores ranging between 48 – 80	=	Internal locus of control orientation

- **'Total locus of control':**

Scores ranging between 24– 72	=	External locus of control orientation
Score of 72	=	Midpoint
Scores ranging between 72 – 120	=	Internal locus of control orientation

Avril's results on the Locus of Control Questionnaire suggest that she displays a strong internal locus of control orientation. Avril's total 'external orientation' score and total 'locus of control' score clearly indicate that she feels she can control her environment, has the belief that everyday events are self-determined and feels that her behaviour will have an impact on her environment. Avril, with an internal locus of control, is more likely to take the initiative to manage and improve her situation and is generally more proactive in decision making and long term planning (Rotter, 1966). Avril's results on the questionnaire also suggest that she is better able to resist external influence, has a higher tolerance for ambiguous situations and places greater value on her own inner skill. Avril's result on the 'powerful others' scale suggests that she does not perceive herself to be under the control of others and is able to function autonomously. This does however not mean that Avril disregards the feedback received from powerful others. She will keep in mind feedback from others and seek out other situations in which this feedback can be 'tested'. This introspective process suggests that Avril regulates which information from her environment she wishes to assimilate. According to Avril's score on the 'chance' scale it seems that she is unlikely to attribute experiences and situations to chance or luck but rather to her own influence. Avril therefore does not regard her future as being controlled by a complexity of external forces beyond her control, which suggests that she will generally experience her life as more predictable and manageable.

INTEGRATION OF THEMATIC NETWORK ANALYSIS AND RESULTS ON THE LOCUS OF CONTROL QUESTIONNAIRE

Avril's result on the 'Internal scale' of the Locus of Control Questionnaire indicates that she exhibits a clearly established internal locus of control orientation and this reverberates throughout the themes extracted in the thematic network analysis. Both the global themes 'creating order' and 'soul expression' suggest that Avril is proactive in nature, manages her own life and generates her own experiences. In the global theme 'creating order' it is evident that Avril regulates her behaviour according to her own standards, perceptions and frame of reference and is not inclined to let others order and structure her lived experiences. She is, however, open to feedback from her environment, for example, diviners and psychologists, and may use this information for personal growth and development but does not depend on or employ it to define her own behaviour or nature of functioning. In the global theme 'soul expression' Avril displays internality, given that she is accountable for her own emotional and physical nurturance and listens to what her body communicates to her, and in doing so, enhances and takes responsibility for her own health and well-being.

The themes extracted from the thematic network analysis concur with Avril's results on the Locus of Control Questionnaire which demonstrate that that she does not perceive herself to be controlled by 'chance' happenings as she also displays an internal locus of control orientation on the 'chance' scale. The organising themes 'control', 'linearity', 'predictability' and 'rationality' all demonstrate how Avril strives to set contexts for herself in which she can reduce the influence and interference of 'chance' happenings in her life. When reviewing the organising theme 'control' it becomes apparent that Avril regards 'chance' happenings in her life as connoting emotional pain, systemic disruption and a loss of control. In addition, the volatile South African context seems to increase her probability and likelihood of again becoming a statistic of chance's negative effects, which further increases her motivation and need to create a sense of her own 'control' over her life. Similarly, when revisiting the

organising theme 'predictability', it becomes apparent that Avril focuses on making the unpredictable ('chance') predictable, thereby reducing or even derailing the unpredictable from featuring in her life.   The divinatory context appears to be Avril's crutch in regaining 'control' and 'predictability' as it assists her in either predicting 'chance' happenings or providing her with the knowledge and skills to prevent them from occurring. Avril appears to have the ability to reframe and perceive for herself what would have been a 'chance' happening as a predetermined and prearranged experience, as evident in the organising themes 'linearity' and 'rationality'.   In the organising theme 'linearity' it was highlighted that Avril is of the opinion that who and what she is, is not the result of 'chance' but of a predestined path owing to her experiences of past lives.   A similar process unfolds in the organising theme 'rationality', where it was demonstrated that Avril is likely to convert a 'chance' occurrence as rational, logical structured experience, thus explaining it.

Avril's internal orientation score on the 'powerful others' scale of the Locus of Control Questionnaire suggests that she does not perceive herself to be controlled by 'powerful others' and this is congruent with the themes extracted from her interview.   The most prominent 'powerful others' in Avril's life seem to be diviners and perpetrators of crime; and although she perceives them to exert significant influence in her life, the organising themes 'control', 'rationality' and 'linearity' and 'self nurturance' all suggest that it is she who remains in control and exercises decision making in her own life.   Even though she welcomes information given to her by diviners, the organising theme 'rationality' demonstrates that Avril for herself decides which information to accept or reject or which to believe or disbelieve and therefore demonstrates internality during readings.   It was previously mentioned in the organising theme 'control' that Avril is of the opinion that her life is restricted by high levels of crime and violence.   However so, by consulting with diviners, she maintains a one-up position over 'crime' as she has the foresight of knowing when such experiences will take place and is better equipped to address, cope with and prevent the negative consequences thereof. One could argue that Avril, in the organising theme 'linearity', feels that she is at the

'mercy' of her past life experiences and therefore relinquishes her own personal power. However, nowhere did she indicate that her identity is based on or is a result of, for example, family upbringing or her marriage. By communicating that her identity is based on past life experiences, Avril is indirectly assigning power and control to herself, as they are her *own* past life experiences. One would have expected Avril to present with externality on the powerful others scale had she suggested her identity was sculpted during interaction with her family of origin or her husband. It seems appropriate to say, then, when keeping in mind the organising themes 'control', 'rationality' and 'linearity', that Avril does perceive herself to be controlled by significant others. The organising theme 'self nurturance' also speaks about Avril's internality on the 'powerful others' scale. In this organising theme reference is made to Avril's tendency to listen to, believe in and follow her intuition. Intuition can be described as one's inner voice or third ear and suggests that Avril prefers rather to follow and be led by her own 'gut feeling' instead of what is imposed by others. Furthermore, it is evident in this theme that Avril takes responsibility for her own 'self nurturance' by creating her own contexts for emotional expression, connecting with others as she deems appropriate and exploring different sources of healing resonating with her own needs. It consequently appears that Avril does not depend on 'powerful others' to direct her and advise her on how to achieve healing and 'self nurturance' in her life, which further reiterates her internality concerning 'powerful others'.

Conclusion

The impression that Avril gives of herself from her thematic network analysis and results on the Locus of Control Questionnaire is that she is self assured and focussed and holds a well established sense of herself, her environment and others. From the thematic network analysis, Avril appears to negotiate a healthy balance between maintaining control, order and predictability in her life and nurturing the self or her emotional needs. Avril's internal locus of control orientation suggests that she has considerable resistance to external pressure, is

able to learn from experiences and feels competent to manage and control her own life. Hence it seems that Avril approaches her consultations with diviners from the vantage point that the readings will contribute towards and enhance effective communication, self actualisation and meaningful interactions with various subsystems. In this light it can be said that divination makes a significant contribution to Avril's life and provides her with different experiences – divination is the difference which makes the difference.

CHAPTER FIVE 5

ELISE'S RESULTS

ELISE'S EXPERIENCES WITH DIVINERS

Introduction

The interview with Elise was conducted in her home in North Riding. Elise is fifty one years old and English speaking. She is employed as a rental agent and is of middle socio-economic status. She completed her matric. Elise is divorced and has two children, a daughter who is twenty seven years old and a son who is twenty four years old. Both Elise's children have consulted with diviners and she has an aunt who possesses the gift of channelling. Elise is the second oldest of four children. She has three brothers, aged fifty one, forty eight and forty two. Elise's parents are still married. As a child, Elise was raised in the Jewish faith and followed Jewish traditions; one of which she remembers is 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you'. Her hobbies include decoupage and designing mosaics. She likes her 'creature comforts' and therefore prefers not to go camping or caravanning.

Elise has consulted with channelers, pin code readers, chirologists, astrologers, sangomas and intuitives. She has also experienced crystal healing. Elise explained that she is reluctant to consult with psychics as she is wary of the trustworthiness of their readings. Elise first became interested in divination when she was in high school and although she cannot attribute her interest to a specific event, she believes it was in part influenced by the publicity it received. Elise consults with diviners when she feels there is a need to do so. Hence she may not consult for months at time and then go through periods of consulting regularly. Elise is of the opinion that divination does not influence her day to day living to a large extent but does serve as validation for certain areas of her life.
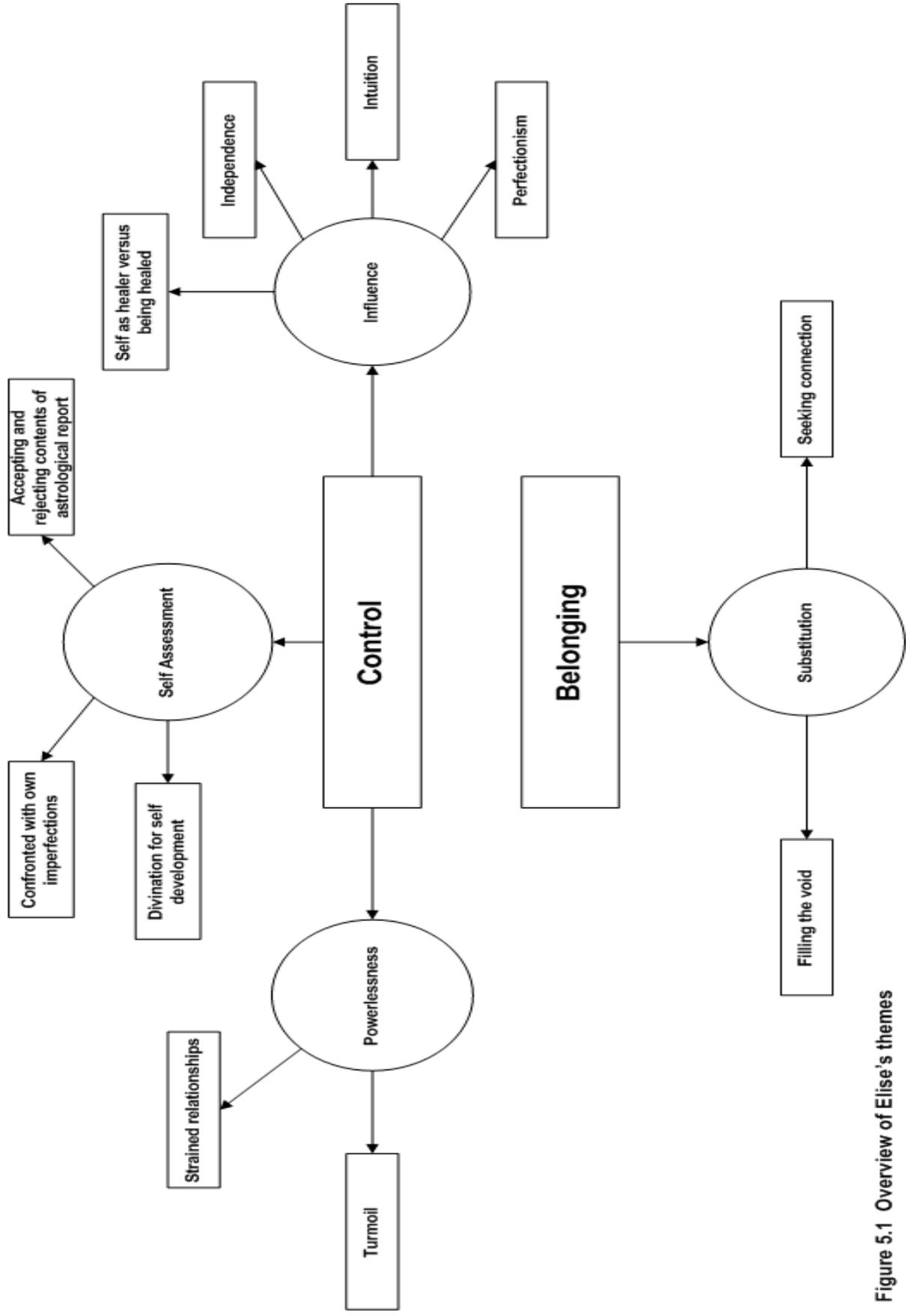
Figure 5.1 Overview of Elise's themes

THEMATIC NETWORK ANALYSIS

Description of terms or concepts used during thematic network analysis

For purposes of Elise's thematic content analysis, the term *synchronicity* will refer to the tendency to perceive two seemingly unrelated events as similar (Encarta Online Dictionary, 2009).

Basic theme: Strained Relationships

A theme that reverberates throughout Elise's interview is one of strained relationships. It seems that she has struggled to connect meaningfully with significant others throughout her life and has experienced feelings of rejection on different levels in relationship with her mother, father, ex-husband and ex mother-in-law.

From what Elise described, it seems her mother placed her in an inferior position by making her feel guilty for her actions. She said:

> I'm Jewish and I have a Jewish mother that could get her Doctorate in guilt.

The way in which Elise perceives guilt, suggests that she may have experienced trauma when this emotion was co-created in relationship with her mother. The impact of guilt on Elise's life seems to have been so profound that she now forewarns others not to internalise this emotion. She explained:

> I've always said to everybody don't do guilt because it's a destructive emotion. Don't do it.
> So, I must say, I don't do guilt, I don't feel guilty about, you know if something happens that
> I've done, I must take responsibility for it. I mustn't feel guilty about it.

It seems that Elise's relationship with her father could also constitute a strained relationship. From what Elise verbalised, it appears that there are rigid boundaries in terms of the nature of the information permitted into the father-daughter dyad. Elise's father is a doctor and according to Elise, is not receptive towards or accommodating of alternative therapy. Elise, on the other hand, is welcoming of the healing properties of alternative therapies and often engages in these practices. She said:

> I did reflexology and my father is a doctor and I could never go near my father with
>
> reflexology. Homeopathy is just something you don't even mention.

In order to conserve the relationship with her father, Elise does not include her beliefs or make mention of the spiritual principles she follows. Elise therefore seems to exclude her 'self' when conversing with her father and this co-creates disconnection and estrangement.

Another 'strained' relationship in Elise's life is the one which she had with her ex-husband. The dynamics of interaction between Elise and her ex-husband were of such a nature that she seemed to have no option but to file for a divorce. The redundancies prominent in this relationship suggest that Elise did not experience her ex-husband as capable of fulfilling her emotional needs. It seems that she also perceived her ex-husband as being too dependent on her, as evident in her comment:

> Now in my marriage I did everything. I did absolutely everything…and it was obviously
>
> because I didn't trust him enough to do it.

The difficulties experienced in relating to her ex-husband seem to have extended into Elise's relationship with her mother-in-law. From what Elise described, it seems that her relationship

with her mother-in-law was characterised by one-upmanship and tension. She explained the impact of her mother-in-law on her in the following statement:

> I never ever got on well with my mother in law. I mean she just pushed buttons all the time and when I walked in, I just expected it.

Elise seems grateful to her consultation with her sangoma for restoring the relationship with her mother-in-law and reframing her experiences in this relationship. This is not the first time that Elise has solicited the guidance of another to assist meaningful communication and interaction with others. It seems that she often requires advice and input from an external source before she is able to set in motion a positive feedback loop which will shift a relationship.

It therefore appears that Elise consults with diviners in order to fulfil two interpersonal needs. The first is a need to find an interpersonal space in which she can be herself and give expression to her beliefs, value system and spirituality. The second is an interpersonal space in which she can develop insight and learn more about the reasons for relationships being as they are.

Basic theme: Turmoil

From what Elise explained, it seems she has experienced extreme periods of turmoil in her life. She made specific mention of consecutive incidents that took place during the period of a single year.

> Huge turmoil. Huge turmoil. I was very ill in the August of 2006, I'd had an op and nearly died and three weeks later we had a fire at home.

Elise's trauma was further compounded by the fact that her cousin living overseas suffered a series of multiple strokes during the same period and, shortly thereafter, Elise filed for a divorce from her husband. As Elise said:

So I mean it was hell of a traumatic.

It seems then that Elise experienced overwhelming trauma related to physical and emotional loss within a short time period.

Directly after this traumatic year, Elise consulted with the astrologer who recommended that she have an astrological report drawn up. Elise's urgent need to consult with a diviner after a period of turmoil highlights that she is likely to seek a consultation and increase the number of these during emotionally demanding and taxing situations.

Organising theme: Powerlessness

Elise seems to have a well established history and relationship with the feeling of powerlessness. It appears that she underwent encounters with various experiences in which she perceived her personal power to be taken by 'force'.   In the theme 'strained relationships', it was highlighted that Elise experiences powerlessness by engaging in a dance of dominance and submission, in which she usually maintains the submissive role. Elise associates being in the subordinate position with helplessness and defencelessness as she is unable to voice her opinion, given that others perceive their voice to be more powerful. Furthermore, Elise seems to have no option but to accept other's definitions of her relationship with them and as a result, functions within the parameters of behaviours stipulated by others. Often this results in Elise having to deny certain aspects of her 'self' which also resonates strongly with the theme of powerlessness.   The feeling of powerlessness also emerges when reviewing Elise's lived experiences in situations. In the

theme 'turmoil' it became evident that Elise perceives herself to be a victim, forced into this role both by life itself (for example, the fire within the family home) and others (for example, her husband's inability to fulfil her needs). In both these areas, Elise did not recognise that she had any power over or control of what was happening to her or what she was obligated to experience. Elise was rescued by the diviner she consulted shortly after the turmoil in her life and through the experiences with her diviner, was able to re-discover her personal power and reclaim control over her life.

Basic theme: Intuition

Intuition can be described as a power of knowing without reason or being taught. It seems that Elise not only defines herself in terms of her intuitive abilities, but also uses her intuition as a guide when interacting with others.

Elise appears to rely on her own intuition as a reference for what to say when engaging with others. From what she explained, it seems that she employs her intuition as an 'internal supervisor' through which she is able to regulate and accord meaning to her own experiences in relationship to others. Elise made specific mention of her experiences as a part time counsellor, where she is eager to abandon prescribed techniques or methods in order to follow her own intuition. She said:

> I'm a trauma counsellor as well and, you know, they train you and you are supposed to handle it like this and like this. If they ever had to see me handle it they would probably kick me out of the unit, because I can't, I can't, for me, it's got to be what comes, is what needs to be said at a particular time. Very much intuitively.

> You know, it's like a feeling…..I'll just know exactly what I need to say to that person. It's just a knowing what needs to be said.

She also mentioned her present employment as an estate agent, where she does not sell a house for the mere purpose of making money, but rather, to ensure synchronicity between the potential buyer and the house itself.   She said:

> I think on an intuitive basis, you can match people with houses very well.

It appears that Elise may be trying to escape the rational, logical and prescribed in order to connect with the emotional, intuitive and spontaneous.

Elise's descriptions of herself suggest that she is connecting with and searching for different experiences that provide access to and expression of the intuitive and spiritual and thereby facilitate enlightenment. It appears that Elise does not feel she can meaningfully encounter or nurture these experiences through daily life, as daily life is characterised by a focus on rules, the mind (head space) and the logical. Elise therefore seems to be searching for people or places which facilitate connection with the emotional and intuitive (heart space), and consulting with diviners seems to fulfil this need:

> Diviners look at things, also to a large degree from a different aspect to a lot of people…less academically. Less like the textbook says, it's got to be like this. You know. More intuitive, the diviners.

In addition, it seems that Elise becomes familiar with and immerses herself into the cultures and traditions of people who seem to radiate 'emotionality'. Elise described herself as being fascinated by the history of Aborigines and having an attachment to Ireland. As she said:

> There's something that just draws me to them. They are a very intuitive, soulful nation and very in touch with themselves.

It seems then that Elise resonates with diviners, specific cultures, her employment and counselling because all these facilitate and encourage the expression of her intuitive nature.

Basic theme: Independence

The theme of independence, although documented separately, is also visible in the themes of 'intuition' and 'strained relationships'. In both these themes and throughout the interview as a whole, Elise presented with independent thinking and a tendency to follow her own needs or desires.   In essence, Elise can be described as a 'free spirit', who enjoys feeling liberated. She observed:

> I don't like to be tied down and answerable to people and that's one thing that is quite
>
> frustrating for me.

Although Elise attempts to resist manoeuvres by others to shift her into a role of dependence, it seems she struggles to achieve this independence. Elise, for example, regrets having allowed herself to become dependent on her ex-husband, as became evident when she explained:

> I've always needed that, you know, that, not to always be dependent on people. I think it, that
>
> is probably one of my biggest mistakes is because I worked with my husband and was always
>
> dependent on him.

Of interest is the fact that Elise 'languages' about her dependence differently in terms of whom she is in a relationship with. When experiencing herself as dependent on diviners, it seems that Elise is comfortable doing so and frames this dependence as a coping mechanism instead of as a weakness in character.

Underlying the desire for independence seems to be the freedom for Elise to exercise choice and free will. Elise seems to have experienced restriction in terms of her power to make decisions or choices in her daily life. The same however does not seem to apply during consultation with diviners. In the context of divination, Elise is able to choose which diviners she consults with, the method of divination she uses and what information she accepts or rejects.

Basic theme: Perfectionism

According to Elise's astrological report, she has a tendency to strive for perfection. She commented:

> Ja and when I do things, it's got to be perfect.

The attention she places on flawlessness and excellence is most apparent in the tasks and activities that she embraces. She explained:

> My daughter and I used to do a lot of mosaics together and for me, I would take five times longer to do it than she would, because every piece had to fit like a puzzle.

When she must complete a task, it seems that Elise may take longer than others to complete it, given that she is not satisfied until she achieves her own definition and standards of perfection. Interestingly, the same process does not apply to other aspects of her life. Feedback provided by Elise during the interview indicates that she does not always master one activity before engaging in the next. Two prominent statements highlighting this are:

I often call myself a jack of all trades and master of none. Uum, I want to know bits of everything.

You know I flitted from one thing to another and that's why, I mean, I went to varsity and I lasted a term in Social Work and then I dropped out. And then I did radiography and then. You know its bits and pieces of everything all the time.

Elise's need to become acquainted with a diversity of knowledge systems may suggest that she is journeying towards finding her niche but could also reiterate the theme of perfection. It seems Elise defines perfection as 'knowing a lot about everything' and not 'knowing a lot about one thing'. By developing a versatile knowledge base, Elise may perceive herself as nearing the attainment of her perfection.

Basic theme: Self as healer versus being healed

Elise seems to have discovered early on in her life that she is able to offer others the support, guidance and direction they require in their lives. She explained that:

I've always been able to listen to people and I've always been able to help people. You know, to give advice and to help people through crisis or whatever.

Elise appears to have received feedback from others in her environment that she has a talent for and an innate gift of healing. The positive reinforcement received in this regard appears to have encouraged Elise to co-create experiences for herself in which she can further define herself as a healer in relationship to others. Elise made specific mention of her definition of self as a healer when interacting with her daughter's friends:

My daughter's friends used to say we could always tell you anything. All the friends would come to me for whatever issue or problem.

It seems that Elise perceives herself as able to 'heal' with words and that her approachable nature allows for others to establish a meaningful connection with her. Elise also appears to have extended the context in which she defines herself as healer. Elise presently volunteers as a trauma counsellor and it seems that her early lived experiences and conceptualisations of self as a healer have encouraged and influenced her to provide healing in a more structured context.

Although Elise is a healer, she herself is also in search of and in need of healing within her own life. Consulting with diviners provides Elise with what seems to be a much needed healing space.

> You know and that, you are completely comfortable, you drop your guard and boy, the gates just open. And it's great because you feel so much better afterwards…everywhere else you get your control mechanism.

From this statement various inferences can be made about Elise's emotional an interpersonal functioning. It seems that Elise tends to inhibit emotional expression in relationships for prolonged periods of time. Although she makes a concerted effort to 'mask' her feelings, it seems that when in the company of a diviner whom she trusts, she is unable to contain these emotions any further. This statement also highlights the disconnection Elise may experience in relationships. The notion that she must conceal and control her tears suggests that Elise does either not want to present as unstable in the presence of others or has not found a safe enough space in a relationship to give expression to her emotions.

Organising theme: Influence

A universal thread in the basic themes 'intuition', 'self as healer versus being healed', 'independence' and 'perfectionism' is Elise's attempt to satisfy an unfulfilled ability to influence others, her environment and her own lived experiences. Another thread is that all these themes emerge within the context of divination. When the two threads are interwoven, it becomes evident that Elise has the power to 'influence' primarily during consultations with a diviner. It seems that divination provides Elise with the essential components necessary to nurture and 'cultivate' personal influence. It was demonstrated in the earlier theme of 'powerlessness' that Elise uses numerous narratives concerning voicelessness, immobility and helplessness, all of which suggest an inability to 'influence'. The one place however, where Elise is able to influence and regulate her own behaviour is during consultations with a diviner. In the basic theme of 'independence' it is evident that not only is the ability to 'influence' a primary component of her preferred interactional style, but also that she struggles to manoeuvre for this in relationships. In consultations with a diviner however, Elise is able to influence her own decision making and behaviour and is able to make independent choices. The ability to 'influence' is also highlighted in the theme of 'perfectionism'. It could be said that Elise's perfectionism is a metaphor for her ecology of relatedness. Elise perceives herself as unable to exercise influence over others or their reactions towards her, so she over-compensates by exaggerating the influence she is able to exercise, namely the quality and end product of the tasks and projects she undertakes. The theme 'self as healer versus being healed', more specifically 'self as healer', further reiterates the theme 'the ability to influence'. It is not by chance that Elise chose to volunteer as a counsellor. Elise seems to have co-created a context in which the definition of the relationship permits her to be in a position of authority, power and influence. So although she does not perceive herself to possess the ability to influence in other relationships, she is successfully able to do so within the context of counselling.

Basic theme: Divination for self development

Throughout the interview with Elise, she provided clues about the impact of divination on her life. For Elise, the principle impact of divination seems to be its ability to stimulate and enhance self development.   Diviners contribute towards Elise's self development by providing her with additional insight about herself and highlighting personal areas of growth. Because diviners have also explained to Elise why she experiences relationships as they are, divination also provides insight into interpersonal dynamics.   Elise uses this understanding to improve her relationships with others and thereby displays self development and improvement. It seems that Elise is able to experience self development during and after consultation with diviners, because she is willing to:

> Take from it and learn from what has been said.

Elise also values the input of diviners because they provide her with the tools she may need to address upcoming problems or difficulties. In this regard, it appears that Elise is able to depend on diviners and the information provided by them as a safety net.

Basic theme: Confronted with own imperfections

Elise seems to have a need to make an impression on others by striving towards her definition of perfection. Consulting with diviners provides an extension of this, as information provided allows for Elise to feel confident, self assured and positive about herself.

> You know, also in a lot of ways, it's out of a sense of vanity as well. I like to hear about myself.

It seems that readings are at times particularly powerful because they may challenge Elise's construction of her identity.

> You know, because you do create an idea of who you are and what you are and you don't want somebody coming along and crushing that.

When this occurs it seems Elise feels insecure, disillusioned and despondent about herself. It is for this reason that Elise provided the comment

> You've got to be quite brave to go and have a reading because they tell you things you didn't know about, that you don't like to hear, ready to hear.

Readings often force Elise to confront her own imperfections and weaknesses in character and this seems to be exceptionally challenging. Elise however, does not respond with a defensive interpersonal style, but rather makes an effort to take ownership of what is said. She said:

> This was beneficial because there were areas here which I had to sort of swallow, I had to sort of swallow some of these areas.

Interestingly then, it appears that although Elise is confronted with her own imperfections during a reading, she will continue seeking a consultation with a diviner because the positive impact of a reading outweighs the negative.

Basic theme: Accepting and rejecting contents of astrological report

The interview with Elise was co-created around the contents of the astrological report completed by the diviner (astrologer) she regularly consults. Elise approached the content of the report with ambivalence, welcoming but also simultaneously questioning what was

written. The astrological report seemed to mirror Elise's functioning accurately in certain areas, as she explained:

> Spending on a grand scale seldom bothers you, it's the little things you fret over and often pass up. Which is particularly right.

> Strong constitution but a tendency to laziness, which is me on the button.

Of interest too, is how Elise responds to information provided by diviners which she feels is inaccurate. Three different processes emerged. The first is that Elise directly challenges what the diviner said during the consultation

> Even though you are astute in money matters, inertia can be your downfall.

> I said to her, look that's actually not me and she said maybe it's where you are going to.

> I listen to what they are saying to me and obviously if something comes up that you don't agree with, then you challenge it.

Secondly, if Elise perceives the information to be incongruent with her functioning, then she may disengage from it completely.

> It's got to sit right. If it doesn't sit right, just discard it.

The third process involves an interesting dynamic. If Elise is provided with information that she disagrees with, she neither accepts, challenges nor discards it. Instead, she enters into a process whereby she debates and grapples with the information, until it inevitably has applicability in her life. Two statements make reference to this:

You sort of work it out and rationalise it.

And there were areas that didn't gel, because I thought no, that's not me. But then, sort of rationalizing it out and I see now, when I look back on it, that a lot of what was in the report is actually what I am now.

Given Elise's responses to the contents of the astrological report, it seems that she is critical of information provided by diviners and is hesitant to believe and accept all that is proposed.

Organising theme: Self assessment

Self assessment refers to the process of reviewing and evaluating aspects of the 'self' and specific areas of functioning. From the theme 'accepting and rejecting contents of the astrological report' it becomes evident that Elise uses the astrological report as her point of reference when entering into the process of self assessment and uses the contents of the report as a 'gauge' by which she measures and judges aspects of her behaviour and functioning. Elise seems to approach the astrological report with ambivalence, because she simultaneously experiences contrasting or mixed feelings about its contents. The same ambivalence, however, does not seem to apply to the process of self assessment itself. It appears that Elise has a seemingly well established sense of self and it is for this reason that she is able to accept, reject or question the contents of the astrological report with conviction. In the theme 'confronted with own imperfections' it was highlighted how the process of self assessment was difficult for Elise, as she was required to give attention to her weaknesses and areas of functioning that needed improvement. Although Elise was initially sceptical of the contents of the report, she appeared to engage openly with the process of self assessment and seemed to use negative and positive feedback constructively.

Global theme: Control

The organising themes of 'powerlessness', 'the ability to influence' and 'substitution' all encompass to varying degrees the element of control. It needs to be pointed out that if there is too much control in one area, there is a lack of control in another and it is for this reason that both continuums of all three organising themes will be highlighted in the discussion of the global theme of control.

In the organising theme 'substitution', Elise does not seem to possess the necessary control or power in relationships to satisfy her needs, so she depends on substitution to provide her with the illusion of being in control. She is able to control when, how and with what she substitutes and the result of substitution allows her to feel that she has regained control over her life. Conversely, however, when Elise engages in substitution she is inclined to act impulsively, which highlights not being in control. In the organising theme 'powerlessness', it was demonstrated how Elise feels helpless when being dominated by others because she does not perceive herself to have the skills to control the actions of others towards her. It could however be argued that Elise does indeed exercise control in her relationships, namely controlling from the 'one down', subordinate position. When Elise is in this position, she controls and regulates another into the dominant position and vice-versa. The organising theme 'the ability to influence' also highlights the interplay between control or lack of control. In this theme, Elise experiences an inability to control others and the outcome of situations, owing to her perception that she is unable to influence her environment. Although this suggests a lack of control, it can be demonstrated that Elise exercises more control than she is aware of by adopting a 'meta-complementary' position in relationships. For example, by telling another person that she cannot control herself, she is indirectly saying 'I am allowing you to control me' which suggests that she is controlling her being controlled by another.

Extending the global theme 'control' to the context of consultations with diviners, it seems that Elise's long standing perception of not being in control has pushed her into divination as it is here that she perceives herself to exercise the most control in her life.

Basic theme: Filling the void

Elise's strained relationships with significant others have created emptiness and an emotional void. Given that she could not depend on relationships for emotional and psychological happiness, she replaced this void with tangible items. She made specific mention of her relationship with her ex-husband, where she attempted to substitute material objects for love and fulfilment.

> It was part of the relationship that material things were very important but that was because there was obviously a lack in the relationship.

When reading her astrological report, Elise eagerly agreed with the statement that she should not shop when she is feeling low, which further confirms that Elise has a tendency to find comfort in material objects. It appears that she struggles to work through the process of unhappiness and impulsively searches for an instant relief of this feeling.

Elise also acknowledges that she uses food as a means by which to satisfy a hunger for interpersonal affection and intimacy.

> I also know that my eating is emotional.

Although Elise finds fulfilment through external substitution it seems the benefits thereof are short-lived. One of the penalties for substitution seems to be that she initiates a cycle

comprising feelings she was initially trying to avoid. For example, Elise gains weight after eating when feeling low and then feels ashamed with herself for putting on too much weight.

Basic theme: Seeking connection

The themes of 'strained relationships' and 'filling the void' suggest that Elise experiences poverty in her relationships with significant others. A place where this poverty is temporarily alleviated is during a consultation with a diviner. It seems that when engaging with one specific diviner, Elise is provided with an interpersonal experience that she is unable to ascertain elsewhere. Although Elise has consulted with numerous diviners, it seems that she has a special bond with her astrologer who provided her with the security and support she needed during a period of crisis. Elise has come to depend on this astrologer because their relationship facilitates and accommodates the expression of Elise's emotions. She said:

> I mean, I find when I'm completely comfortable with someone, when I'm at my most comfortable with somebody, that's when I'm going to let down my guard and that's. If there's emotion building up, that's when they are going to come out...It happened with Viv, the astrologer.

Elise's motivation for consulting with diviners extends a need to obtain information, advice and answers. It seems she aspires to co-construct relationships with diviners in such a manner that the relationship is defined as personal and not only professional. If Elise is unable to manoeuvre to achieve her own definition of the relationship with a diviner, it appears she is reluctant to consult with him or her again. She explained:

> You know, the channeler I used to go to, would uum, I didn't gel with her on a personal level, I didn't.

Conversely, Elise may also be motivated to establish a deeper connection with diviners in order to ascertain the trustworthiness of their readings. She commented:

With psychics, unless you know them well, you are not sure as to how genuine they are.

Despite the rationale for seeking a connection with diviners, it would appear that Elise engages with diviners to encounter an attachment and affiliation which she struggles to experience elsewhere.

Organising theme: Substitution

Substitution can be described as the act of replacing one thing for another and this seems to feature predominantly within Elise's life. Elise is inclined to use substitution as a first order attempt to solve her problems and address that which is lacking in her relationships. In the basic theme of 'filling the void', it was demonstrated how Elise uses material objects and food as a substitution for love and emotional fulfilment. The basic theme of 'seeking connection' also illustrates the process of substitution. In this theme, Elise replaces meaningful interpersonal connection with significant others by meaningful interpersonal connection with diviners. It seems that Elise may not be as affected by the lack of meaningful connection with significant others, as she has her relationships with diviners to depend and rely on. It appears that Elise is only now learning that substituting the 'tangible' for the 'intangible' is a self defeating behaviour which is unlikely to shift unhealthy patterns in relationships.

Global theme: Belonging

The organising theme of 'substitution', when extracted to a higher logical level, speaks about Elise's inability to experience belonging in relationships with significant others. It seems that Elise struggles to co-create relationships in which who she is, and what she believes in, are

accepted into the definition of the relationship. From what Elise explained, it appears that only certain aspects of the 'self' give her the 'right of admission' into relationships and provide her with the 'ticket' she needs to belong. This belonging is unfulfilling as it is conditional and thereby, per definition, does not constitute belonging at all. The severity of Elise's inability to experience belonging in interpersonal relationships is illustrated in the basic theme 'seeking connection', where it becomes evident that she focuses all her energies on creating experiences and contexts for herself, in which she can experience some form of meaningful connection. What is interesting is that Elise has to create these experiences 'outside' and 'apart from' everyday life, suggesting that belonging is something which can only be attained in a separate domain. In the basic theme 'substitution', Elise's struggle to experience belonging is further highlighted.   Elise's inability to experience belonging in interpersonal relationships sets in motion a cycle of substitution, where she attempts to replace feelings of belonging with physical objects. Interestingly, Elise has found unconditional belonging primarily within the context of divination and it is hypothesised that she will continue engaging in this context, until such time that another context is able to act as a substitution.

Personal reflection

The interview between the researcher and Elise was co-created in such a manner that it evoked feelings of confusion in the researcher. Unlike the other interviews, the interview with Elise seemed disjointed as it was difficult to attain a 'rhythmic dialogue', in which there was a flow in the conversation. Upon reflection, it appears that the process of interviewing mirrored another process in which both the researcher and Elise were involved, apart from the interview itself, namely the process of grappling with what 'is' in order to understand and create meaning. Elise's attempts to 'make sense of' and 'work through' the astrological report mirrors what she is doing in her life at present, namely, giving meaning to both past and present experiences. The researcher is on a similar journey because she too is trying to

understand the 'world of divination', learning from, questioning and appreciating all it has to offer. It seems understandable, then, that the interview was co-created in the manner it was, as both Elise and the researcher are still busy 'processing' and have not yet 'processed'.

ELISE'S RESULTS ON THE LOCUS OF CONTROL QUESTIONNAIRE

Table 5.2 Elise's results on the Locus of Control Questionnaire

Participant	Avril	**Elise**	Abel	Vanessa	Anisa
'Chance' Scale	35	**29**	17	21	19
'Powerful Others' Scale	36	**33**	25	30	36
'Total External' Orientation'	71	**62**	42	51	55
'Internal' Scale	36	**37**	31	24	38
'Total Locus of Control'	107	**99**	73	75	93

Legend:

- **'Chance' and powerful others' scale:**

Scores ranging between 8 – 24   =   Controlled by chance or powerful others

A score of 24   =   Midpoint

Scores ranging between 24 – 40   =   Not controlled by chance or powerful others

- **'Internal' scale:**

Scores ranging between 8 – 24   =   External locus of control orientation

A score of 24   =   Midpoint

Scores ranging between 24 – 40   =   Internal locus of control orientation

- **'Total external' orientation:**

Scores ranging between 16 - 48   =   External locus of control orientation

A score of 48   =   Midpoint

Scores ranging between 48 – 80   =   Internal locus of control orientation

- **'Total Locus of Control':**

Scores ranging between 24– 72   =   External locus of control orientation

Score of 72   =   Midpoint

Scores ranging between 72 – 120   =   Internal locus of control orientation

When reviewing Elise's results on the total 'external orientation' score and total 'locus of control' score it becomes apparent that she exhibits a clear internal locus of control orientation. This suggests that she feels her life is under her control and that she attributes success to her own efforts and abilities. With an internal locus of control orientation, it seems that Elise will be more inclined to gain information from situations in her life in order to improve future behaviour in those situations or in similar ones (Hock, 1999). When faced with adverse or challenging situations it appears that Elise will approach them proactively, seeking solutions and in doing so will minimise the stressful impact thereof on her global functioning. Elise's score suggests that although she displays predominant internality on the 'chance' scale, this orientation is not very strong and may not be visible within all contexts. Elise, then, is not likely to perceive her life to be under the control of luck or chance and will review how she contributed to or influenced the nature of her experiences; seldom shifting responsibility or denying the co-creation thereof. From Elise's results on the 'powerful others' scale, it seems that she does not believe that powerful others control her life. When in the company of others whom she perceives to have more power and influence, it appears that Elise will assert herself and present her viewpoints and opinions confidently. In this regard, it seems that she is inclined to take control and power over her own life wherever possible and can be described as having a proactive nature.

INTEGRATION OF THEMATIC NETWORK ANALYSIS AND RESULTS ON THE LOCUS OF CONTROL QUESTIONNAIRE

The organising theme most congruent with Elise's tendency towards an internal locus of control orientation is 'self assessment'. An internal locus of control orientation is associated with an ability to learn from the environment or regulate feedback and this is clearly evident in the theme 'self assessment'. In this theme it was demonstrated how Elise does not blindly accept the contents of the astrological report but instead questions and grapples with its contents, takes what is meaningful and discards the rest. Elise's awareness of and tendency to acknowledge what she needs to change in her life suggests that she strives towards and will attain personal development and interpersonal growth: these traits are strongly associated with an internal locus of control orientation. In the descriptions of the organising theme 'powerlessness' and the global theme 'control', it was demonstrated how Elise most often perceives herself to have a lack of control over her environment and interpersonal relationships. Of concern, however, is not whether or not she perceives herself to have control over her life or destiny, but rather her actions and behaviours in this regard as it is these that she most likely referenced when completing the Locus of Control Questionnaire. In the organising theme 'influence' it was explained how Elise attempts to create contexts for herself in which she can experience a greater potential for power in her life; this indicates that she proactively attempts to change the nature of her experiences and deploys efficient problem-solving strategies. Similar attempts are also visible in the global theme 'belonging'. These attitudes and behaviour are characteristic of individuals with an internal locus of control orientation. When reviewing this locus of control orientation it should be remembered that the control experienced by internals is either actual, perceived or potential in nature (Rotter, 1966). This statement cautions against the interpretation that Elise, given her behaviour of 'substitution', presents with an external locus of control orientation. In the organising theme 'substitution' it was explained that Elise substitutes material objects for love and emotional fulfilment and that substitution is a first order attempt at change and control. It

could therefore be argued that Elise's substitution creates for her a perceived sense of control and as such, suggests an internal locus of control orientation.

Elise's score on the 'chance' scale of the Locus of Control Questionnaire suggests that she tends towards disbelief that the variables of chance or luck have an influence and impact on her life. An overview of the themes extracted during thematic network analysis does not directly refer to or provide extensive information which can be used to either confirm or disconfirm Elise's result on the 'chance' scale. It can however be hypothesised, given the organising theme 'influence' and more specifically the basic themes 'perfectionism' and 'intuition', that Elise is more inclined to attribute her experiences to her own actions, efforts and influence rather than to external intervening variables.

Elise's score on the 'powerful others' scale of the Locus of Control Questionnaire indicates that she does not perceive herself to be under the control of others and is inclined to act autonomously. On one's first impression of the themes extracted during thematic network analysis, it would appear that the organising theme 'powerlessness' contradicts Elise's score on the 'powerful others' scale as the theme makes reference to domination and control by others. It would seem, as explained in the theme, that Elise co-created submission in relationships and found it difficult to assert herself and her opinions convincingly. However, what is striking in this theme is that her interpersonal style has changed since consulting more regularly with diviners. This suggests that Elise experienced a need to make changes to her interpersonal style but required the encouragement and support of a significant other (her diviner).   Had the questionnaire been given to Elise to complete prior to her consultations with diviners, one would have expected her to have displayed an external locus of control orientation on the 'powerful others' scale. Her current internality on the 'powerful others' scale accurately reflects her current behaviour and functioning, because consultations have provided her with the tools to change relationship dynamics so that she is less inclined to please others and will not let others determine what happens in her life. It

was also demonstrated in the organising theme 'powerlessness' that Elise controls and manoeuvres from the subordinate position and this statement concurs with her internality score on the 'powerful others' scale. The organising theme of 'influence' is also a meaningful reference point for ascertaining whether or not Elise's score on the 'powerful others' scale is congruent with the themes extracted during thematic network analysis. In this theme it was explained that Elise is most likely to claim power, control and influence within the contexts of divination and counselling; this suggests that her perceptions of whether or not she feels controlled by powerful others are context specific. It further indicates that Elise is able to control her own life and exercise influence over others and this would be congruent with her internality on the 'powerful others' scale. Systems theory postulates that a change in one aspect of a system has the ability to change the system as a whole. One can therefore hypothesise that continued consultations with diviners may facilitate and encourage Elise towards exhibiting the attitudes of control and power in other relationships or contexts.

Conclusion

It would appear, from the themes extracted from Elise's interview, that she has experienced numerous traumas and challenges in her life and has struggled to find approval and support in relationships with significant others. With the assistance and guidance of her diviners Elise is able to persevere through hardships and, by constructively using the feedback provided by diviners, is able to grow and develop within the spiritual, interpersonal and emotional domains. Elise's scores on the Locus of Control questionnaire suggest that she perceives herself to be the 'master of her own destiny' and is unlikely to attribute her success and happiness or the lack thereof to forces beyond her control. This highlights Elise's responsible nature and her openness and willingness to acknowledge how she has co-created her own experiences.

CHAPTER 6

ABEL'S RESULTS

ABEL'S EXPERIENCES WITH DIVINERS

Introduction

Abel's interview was conducted at a quiet restaurant in Pretoria. He is thirty eight years old and Afrikaans speaking. His highest level of education is a PhD in Philosophy. He works actively in the helping professions as a psychologist and a pastor. Abel is divorced and does not have any children. He grew up as an only child and his parents are presently still married. When younger, he followed what he describes as a conformist Christian faith and attended the services of a Protestant denomination. He currently resides in Eastern Pretoria and is of middle class socio-economic status.

Abel is the only member in his family who has consulted with a diviner and he attributes this to his conservative upbringing. During his ministry in the 'said church', he preached against any divinatory or alternative belief systems and opposed diviners. Three years ago his life changed as he started questioning the fundamental principles of his religious beliefs. He was inspired to consult with diviners after hearing about their 'healing powers' from others. Abel attributes the nature and number of the diviners he has consulted with, to his curious nature and need to experience the unfamiliar. Abel has consulted with chirologists, mediums, astrologers, psychics and numerologists.
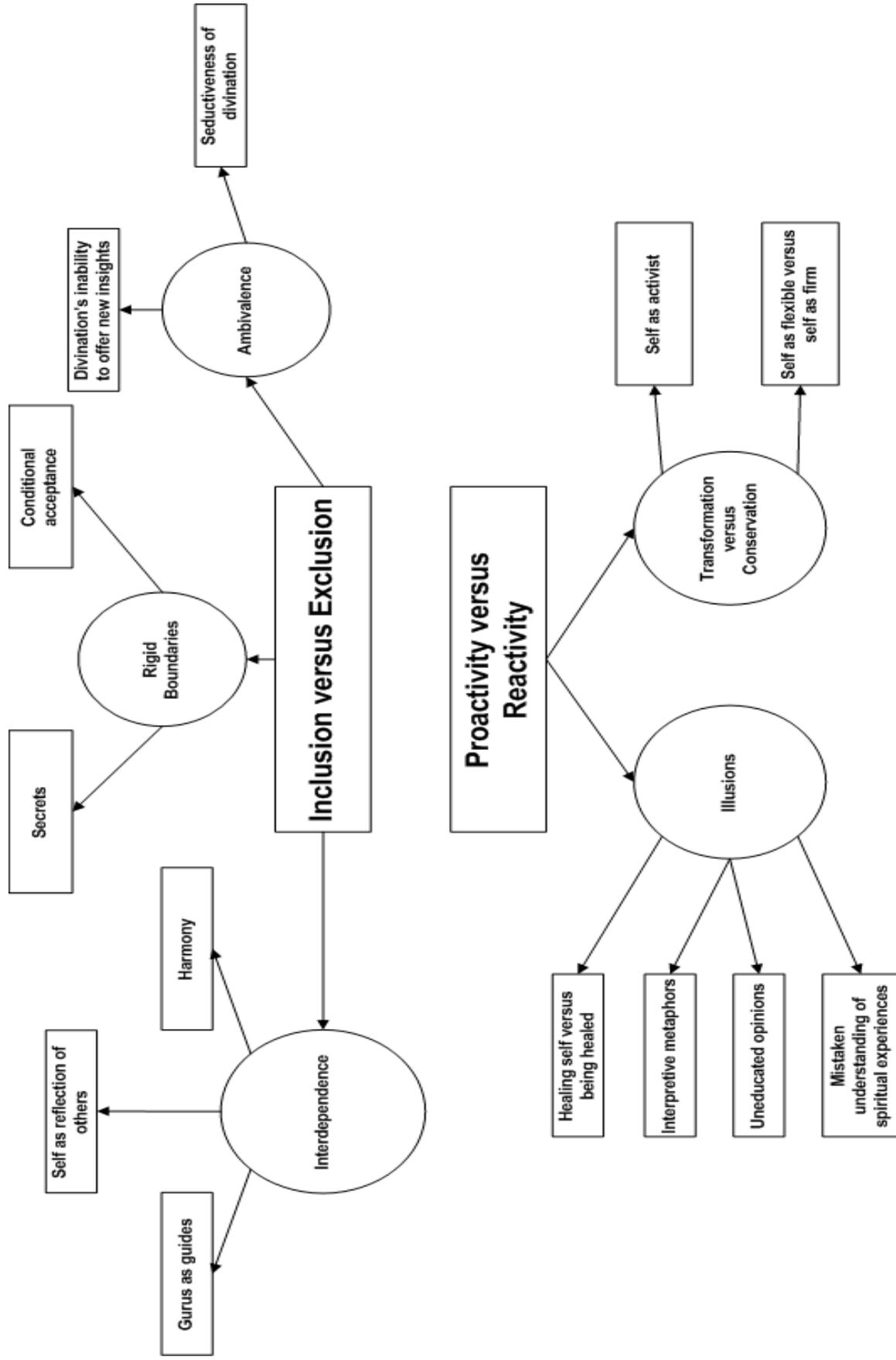
Figure 6.1 Overview of Abel's themes

THEMATIC NETWORK ANALYSIS

Description of terms or concepts used during thematic network analysis

During Abel's interview, he made reference to the works of others and used terminology specific to his world view and frame of reference. In order for the reader to appreciate his story, a brief description will be provided of some of the key words, authors and concepts to which he referred.

The term *Spiritual* refers to the personal, subjective perception of a connection with a reality greater than oneself. It may also include an emotional or transcendent experience or relationship with one or more deities (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1997).

The Course in miracles is a book written by Dr. Helen Schucman and Dr. William Thetford, in which they explain a new age approach to spirituality based primarily on Judeo-Christian teachings. It proposes that knowledge is truth under one law, the law of love or God (Foundation for Inner Peace, 2007).

Neale Donald Walsch is a spiritual messenger who advocates the belief that we are all one with the deity and one with life. Although he has written numerous books, his 'With God' series is the most popular and has received international recognition. Walsch's vision is an expansion and unification of all present theologies to render them more relevant to present day society (Wikipedia, 2009).

Paulo Coelho is well renowned for his book 'The Alchemist' and is also a theatre director, lyricist and journalist. He is perceived by many to be a 'guru' within the context of spirituality (Wikipedia, 2009).

Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk, poet, author, teacher and peace activist. His teachings and practices appeal to those of different religious, spiritual and political backgrounds as they reflect various traditional Zen teachings combined with methods from Buddhism and ideas from Western psychology (Wikipedia, 2009).

The term *Metaphysical,* for purposes of explaining statements in Abel's interview, will refer to that which is or exists beyond the physical world (Encarta Online Dictionary, 2009).

Consciousness can be described as the totality of attributes of the individual mind. It can refer to, amongst others, thoughts, sensations, emotions, perceptions and the awareness of self (Louw & Edwards, 1997).

If a system is too open or too closed it is likely to be dysfunctional. "At either extreme, the system may be said to be in a state of *entropy*, or is tending toward maximum disorder and disintegration" (Becvar & Becvar, 2000, p. 68). When there is an appropriate balance between openness and closedness, the system can be described as being in a state of *negentropy* as it tends towards maximum order (Becvar & Becvar, 2000).

Basic theme: Secrets

The theme of secrets pertains to Abel's own life, as well as to those of others who have confided in him over the years.

Within Abel's own life, it appears that he has had to keep many secrets from others in order to pursue his own needs and beliefs. Withholding information from others seems to be the only way in which Abel was able to avoid being subjected to severe criticism and rejection. The first secret Abel communicated was his involvement with and awakened curiosity in the

esoteric, which he could not disclose to others because he was a minister in the Christian church at the time. He said:

> I went undercover.

When exploring alternative belief systems, Abel had to temporarily suspend his identity, and camouflage who he was and what he believed in. In this regard, it seems that he lived a 'double-life' for a period of time, juggling what others believed to be 'truth' with what he believed to be 'truth'.

The second secret was co-created between Abel and the researcher. During the interview, Abel said:

> I've got this ability, but I am only telling you.

Here Abel was speaking about what he perceives to be his own divining ability. By introducing this information into the interview, Abel seems to have placed the researcher in a paradox. The researcher is now compelled to keep quiet and silent within a context in which the precise opposite is encouraged. On the one hand the researcher needs to respect Abel's right to confidentiality, but on the other, has entered into the interview for research purposes which implies that there will be dissemination of information. The researcher has attempted to address the paradox by meta-communicating about its impact and the dilemma it imposed.

Abel seems to further co-create a context of secrets with distant others. He explained:

> I can't explain to you how many people do come to me, that are still very afraid to admit they are more open to the new spirituality. I get about twenty e-mails a week, from people living in

Zeerust or living in 'Gat sonder water', saying that I am a lady of fifty and my husband doesn't know, but I think Eckhard Tolle is one of the most amazing people.

It seems that others too are caught in the web of keeping quiet in order to respect dominant voices within the various contexts in which they find themselves. They however seem to break the pattern of silence by confiding in Abel and although this reflects positive change, it is inherently negative change, given that it further perpetuates silence within the systems with which the individuals interact.

Basic theme: Conditional acceptance

The theme 'conditional acceptance' appears to have featured predominantly in Abel's life. Conditional acceptance can be described as covert communication in a relationship, in which one individual judges and measures the worthiness of another based on his or her ability or inability to follow sets of prescribed behaviours or values and beliefs. Abel seems to have encountered conditional acceptance in various areas of his life.

Abel was most deeply affected by experiences of 'conditional acceptance' in his ministry in a Christian Church. Abel came to the realisation, after many years of ministry, that he was indirectly promoting and supporting a belief system which professed unconditional acceptance but was practising conditional acceptance. He explained:

> I became very uneasy in the church as a minister, with the theology. I think when I studied, I already had this thing, that I couldn't believe that a God of love will create a creation and then seventy percent of that creation will say you are bad, evil and whatever and I'm going to choose a few that you know and they are going to be mine and if they really worship me, I'll maybe be gracious enough to.....I couldn't believe that.

Abel's experience of what he perceived to be hypocrisy in the Christian church is what motivated him towards abandoning his duties as a minister in pursuit of another belief system more congruent with his thinking or opinions. That which Abel initially tried to escape by leaving the church is what he seemed to experience and encounter for years thereafter, and even experiences at present. By leaving the church, Abel was subject to criticism and negative judgement by his followers, but it seems that he was more accepting of their attitudes, given the circumstances surrounding his leaving the ministry. He said:

> So, now people are scared of me because they feel cheated. They feel like I misled them and they bought into it. You know, they feel very hurt. Now, if I walk into a shopping mall, it looks like the red sea opening, people dive (laughs) because they don't know what to do with me.

Although Abel laughed when he made this statement, it seems that the rejection he experienced, as a result of changing his belief system, evoked feelings of solitude and seclusion. Not only was Abel ostracised by his 'religious community' but also by his 'cultural community' and this seems to have further compounded his feelings. He said:

> I mean my church were a big church. About four thousand and more and I was very popular…..I was known as this upcoming star in the church…one of the younger generation that's really going to rock the boat and suddenly I got out and I believed all this new, weird stuff. And in the Afrikaans community you don't do that, I'm very alone in that sense.

By deciding to leave the church in pursuit of his own happiness, growth and development, he had to sacrifice the security of belonging to both the Christian and Afrikaans communities.

Abel seems to have experienced leaving the ministry as traumatic, although he minimised these feelings during the interview. As a result, it appears that Abel is somewhat reluctant to take a similar risk again. During the interview, Abel admitted that he himself possesses a

gift of divination, but is hesitant to let others know of this for fear of the consequences, namely being ostracised and negatively stereotyped. He said:

> And again I thought, I don't want to become known as a person who does this, because then I'm gonna get that type of people and then my whole practice is gonna fall apart because people are going to say, aah, he's a medium or psychic, whatever and I don't want that.

Abel has already sacrificed his belonging to the Christian and Afrikaans communities by pursuing his spiritual beliefs and it seems that he is reluctant to reveal his divining abilities, for fear of loosing his professional reputation as well.

Organising theme: Rigid boundaries

Within systems thinking, a boundary defines the amount and nature of contact allowable within and between individuals and subsystems. A rigid boundary implies that individuals and subsystems are disengaged and segregated from each other, given that only restricted access is permissible. Rigid boundaries seem to serve, amongst others, two functions. Firstly, a rigid boundary may protect a specific system from outside influence and, secondly, it serves the function of maintaining distance between two or more systems. However, it could also be argued that both these functions are created by and create the conditions necessary for a rigid boundary. Both the basic themes 'secrets' and 'conditional acceptance' are dependent upon the presence of rigid boundaries and provide an indication that rigid boundaries are present. A secret by definition can only be a secret if there is a rigid boundary between two or more individuals, such that an exchange of information cannot take place for varying reasons (entropy). Conditional acceptance can only prevail if there is a rigid boundary between what is perceived to be appropriate and what is not. In both these themes Abel co-creates the presence of rigid boundaries, given that he too promotes entropy. In the basic theme of 'secrets' Abel encourages others to continuing creating rigid boundaries

between themselves and their significant others, as his empathetic listening perpetuates the notion that he understands and others do not. A similar process is visible in the basic theme of 'conditional acceptance'. Abel's tendency to 'go against the grain', whether for the purposes of growth or not, has a distancing effect as others are inclined to impose rigid boundaries in relationship to him.

Basic theme: Self as reflection of others

During the interview with Abel, he seemed to endorse most of his statements or belief systems by referring to others who hold similar opinions to his. Abel appears to have a plethora of knowledge and information about individuals who are regarded as experts within the context of divination, the esoteric or the spiritual. He also seems to be well versed in the various information sources in which these experts are given a voice, for example, books and independent presentations. For example, Abel remarked:

> Let me tell you what I am really open to. The lady who wrote 'The course in miracles' and Neale Donald Walsch.

It seems that Abel not only enjoys intellectual stimulation, but consults numerous information sources in an attempt to diversify and increase available options for his belief system. It appears that Abel depends and relies on the contributions of others when formulating that which he believes in. His own belief system therefore seems to be a reflection of those of others. Two examples highlighting how the principles of Abel's belief system have been taken from others are:

> I believe that saying of Henry David Sorrow, we are spiritual beings having a human experience, not human beings having a spiritual experience.

> I like Paulo Coelho's thing of looking at the signs, God is the whole time communicating, we just not listening, that stuff.

Abel did not just mention his own belief system or its principles, but rather did so by stating who is associated with or had 'coined' the specific belief.

Abel also seems to possess a sound knowledge and understanding of various religious sects or religions. He observed, when explaining another of the principles of his belief system:

> In the Vedas, the Hindu scripture, they've got this saying of, in about every page, God is great, God is amazing, Lord is almighty, God is omnipresent and they always end with….and you are that.

From Abel's communication style and tendency to 'name-drop', various inferences can be drawn. Firstly, Abel possibly refers to others when speaking of himself, given previous learnt experiences as a minister, where he was required to support any statements made by quoting examples from the Bible. Secondly, Abel may hold the perception that his own statements or beliefs will only be accepted as valid and trustworthy if he is able to substantiate where they come from. It seems he may almost be forced to do so, given prior radical changes in his belief systems. For many years, Abel preached one belief system to others as a minister and then changed his point of view completely. The only way he may now be able to re-establish credibility, and elicit support from his followers, would be to ensure that his 'alternative beliefs' are well-grounded and corroborated. The last inference is related to the impact name-dropping may have on interpersonal relationships, which appears to be two-fold. On the one hand, name-dropping increases connection and closeness with Abel, as others may find themselves becoming more curious and interested in his belief system, given their incidental learning. On the other hand, name-dropping increases disconnection and distance, as others may not be able to engage in active discussion with

Abel about his belief system, given their own limited knowledge and understanding of the underlying principles of the belief system itself.

When reviewing the theme 'self as reflection of others' it becomes apparent that Abel selectively decides which information from others to incorporate into his own belief system. This suggests a negentropic process, as he chooses to assimilate certain information, while screening out the rest which allows change to permit as appropriate for him.

Basic theme: Gurus as guides

Abel appears to search 'near and far' in order to gain access to the wisdom of others, especially those who have established themselves as gurus within their respective fields. He averred:

> I had the privilege of meeting the Dalai Lama, I went to France and I met my Guru, Thich Nhat Hanh, Zen Buddhist.

> I've got a very good friend that is a Swami from New Delhi.

Abel's privileged contact with both the above-mentioned persons seems to be the result of his own determination and perseverance. It would appear that he expects these gurus to provide him with enlightening experiences or tell him something profound and life-changing. In this regard, it seems that Abel may not experience fulfilment in his life and anticipates that others will be able to help him through their contributions, words of wisdom and special insight. What is interesting about Abel's perception of his gurus is that even when he experiences disappointment in what they say to him, he languages about and assigns meaning to his experiences in such a way that these may not be perceived as disappointing by others. For example, he first remarked:

> I had about four experiences with him [Thich Nhat Hanh]. You can't really get close to him. The guru, you know, half God, according to them.

He later said:

> I hoped I could become his [Thich Nhat Hanh] side guru in a sense and he just told me I can't. Because your mind is too busy and you still have to work out a few things and he said, remember, when you eat the orange, eat the orange. I was quite disgusted because I didn't fly half the world to hear, eat the orange, eat the orange.

Although individuals will respond differently to the story shared by Abel, it seems probable that most will begin immediately by finding meaning in the statement 'eat the orange, eat the orange', given that it was verbalised by a well known Guru without even paying attention to the fact that Abel perceives it to be inappropriate. By communicating his experiences with gurus, he is therefore not only able to establish a more interactive dialogue with others, but also ensures that others will remain interested in him and his belief system.

Basic theme: Harmony

Another core principle of Abel's belief system is that of 'harmony'. This basic theme is also partially illustrated in the other basic theme 'self as reflection of others', where Abel seems to synchronise his own voice with that of others. Abel perceives himself not only to be in harmony with others, but also in harmony with the universe and all the energies embodied within. For him:

> I don't believe that we are God. We are the wave in the ocean. God is the ocean and we are that wave, so we are God. And our whole adventure is created for us to realise that.

Abel's belief system seems to be based on the principles of unity, 'collectivity' and wholeness. He does not support dualism between the physical and metaphysical and instead believes that all animate and inanimate objects are intrinsically connected as one.

Organising theme: Interdependence

Interdependence can be referred to as an enmeshment between two or more individuals, objects or concepts, in which there is mutual inclusion and dependence. Interdependence is highlighted in the basic themes 'self as reflection of others', 'harmony' and 'gurus as guides'. In the basic theme 'self as reflection of others' it was demonstrated how Abel is inclined to refer to others when communicating his own beliefs. This is an example of interdependence, as Abel seems to depend on the viewpoints of others to enrich that which he is sharing. Similarly, it could be argued that others benefit from Abel's dependence on them, as he ensures the survival and continued transmission of their beliefs or opinions. In the theme 'gurus as guides' a different aspect of interdependence is illuminated. In this theme, the nature of Abel's functioning or presenting behaviour seems to be dictated by his gurus. In this regard, it seems that Abel regulates his functioning according to his experiences with his gurus; this suggests that there is interdependence between Abel's functioning and the functioning of his gurus. This statement is based on the systemic principle of recursion, in which the observed (gurus) and observer (Abel) are said to mutually influence and are mutually influenced by each other. The basic theme 'harmony' too embodies interdependence, as here it was demonstrated that Abel does not distinguish or separate himself from the universe, but rather perceives himself to be interdependent on, and in unity with, all that surrounds him.

Basic theme: Divination's inability to offer new insights

Most of Abel's statements about diviners appeared to be tainted with a negative hue. Although he has consulted with various diviners, it seems that he did not experience the consultations as meaningful given their inability to offer new insights. Abel's perception of diviners is that they will provide him with experiences, knowledge and information about himself that is unknown to him. Up to the present, he has not experienced a diviner capable of doing this and it for this reason that he presents as sceptical.   As he expressed this,

> He didn't say anything I couldn't figure out by myself. My expectation, I expected, or I wanted, something like someone has to tell me something I don't know. I still feel like that. If someone can tell me something that is totally unknown to me and on the mark, then I will think okay. But everything, I can do it. I can figure it out.

Even in consultations where Abel was provided with previously unknown information, he doubts that this information is 'unknown' at all. According to Abel, the diviners propose information based on their astute ability to interpret both the verbal and non-verbal communication of a sitter and not because they have access to another realm or higher powers. Abel said that:

> They [diviners] couldn't tell me anything I didn't volunteer myself.

From this statement, it seems that Abel is of the opinion that diviners are merely able to 'read people well' and will inevitably make an accurate prediction based on trial-and-error guessing.

It appears that Abel will alter his perceptions of diviners, and bestow more credibility on their work, if he is able to find a diviner who can mirror to him something that only he would know. He said:

> If she could have told me something like, something I only knew, she couldn't in any sense pick it up….then I would have been mesmerised.

What is interesting about this statement, is that it insinuates that Abel experiences disconnection from significant others. The phrase 'Something I only knew' indicates that Abel is, for various reasons, reluctant to include others in certain of his 'lived experiences' and may consequently co-create feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Basic theme: Seductiveness of divination

During the interview, Abel most often appeared to question the validity of diviners. The researcher was therefore interested in exploring Abel's reasoning for going to further consultations, given his scepticism and disbelief. Although Abel is weary of the trustworthiness of diviners, he seems to find himself lured into consultations, owing to the seductive nature of divination. He explained:

> It's the promise of someone that knows more, is still very seductive. It's been with as a human race all our lives. We want to know more. And if you can get someone to tell you more, I mean wow.

It seems then that even Abel is tempted to believe that another individual may be 'all knowing' and it is likely that he will continue his search until he has exhausted all sources.

Abel also explained that diviners, through their consultations, contribute meaningfully towards building the self-esteem and confidence of the sitter. In addition, diviners seem to instil an energy which is inspiring and increases productivity. As he said:

> But what I experience through her, because she told me some stuff like, I see you are very positive, I see the positive energy, you were once some prince in your previous life and you were a warrior and you are going to do great things still, that empowered me. I felt energised.

> I walked out and I felt better.

Abel seems to highlight a process whereby individuals continually seek and re-seek consultations with a diviner, having received positive reinforcement. It seems then that for Abel, the healing power of a diviner lies not only in what a diviner says, but more so in the nurturing and inspiring atmosphere they provide.

Organising theme: Ambivalence

Ambivalence can be viewed as the tendency to support or believe in both polarities of a concept simultaneously. Abel appears to experience ambivalent feelings when communicating about his perception and experiences with diviners. The ambivalence is most noticeable when juxtaposing the basic themes 'seductiveness of divination' and 'divination's inability to offer new insights'. In the former, Abel highlights what he perceives to be the attractive features of divination and includes the benefits as well as the positive aspects of consulting with diviners.   However, in the latter, Abel is of the opinion that divination has little to contribute to in his life and he seems to language about divination negatively. Abel's ambivalence when languaging about divination seems to be functional. By concurrently supporting and negating divination, Abel is able to 'play it safe' and in doing so minimises his chances of being judged and stereotyped.

Global theme: Inclusion versus exclusion

The organising themes 'rigid boundaries', 'ambivalence' and 'interdependence' are embodied in the global theme 'inclusion versus exclusion'. All three of these organising themes refer to or highlight Abel's struggle with seeking and experiencing belonging. It seems however, that when Abel experiences exclusion in one context, he experiences inclusion in another and vice-versa. In the organising theme 'rigid boundaries' for example, Abel simultaneously experiences inclusion and exclusion. By challenging the religious 'dominant voices' which he initially supported, Abel was subjected to exclusion because his unconventional viewpoints were not welcomed. However, he needed to be ostracised from the religious context in order to be welcomed and included in the spiritual context. The organising theme 'interdependence' also illuminates the global theme 'inclusion versus exclusion'. By perceiving himself and the universe and all the energies therein to be interdependent on each other, Abel demonstrates inclusive thinking. However, this could also be evidence of exclusive thinking, as Abel is excluding the possibility or notion that everything is not interdependent or interconnected. The organising theme 'ambivalence' seems to describe the paradox in which Abel finds himself. Within the context of therapy or psychology it is claimed that the beliefs, values and viewpoints of another should not be judged as right or wrong. However, Abel's perception of psychology seems to place him in a paradox, as a result of the possibility that if he does pursue his beliefs in divination, he will be judged, stereotyped and possibly excluded by professionals within the psychology profession and if he does not, he will still be judged by certain individuals within the profession as he is imposing judgement on those who do practice divination or consult with diviners. By 'doing what is needed' to experience inclusion within the profession of psychology, Abel will also have to sacrifice the inclusion he experiences by those who support divination. It appears, then, that Abel is constantly negotiating and renegotiating his behaviour in an effort to 'please' himself and other individuals in different contexts.

Basic theme: Healing self versus being healed

Abel is of the opinion that an individual consulting with diviners attributes gratitude for their healing to the incorrect person.   Abel seems to reject the notion that it is the diviner who heals an individual through the information they provide and the methods of divination they use. Instead, he believes that it is an individual him or herself who brings healing into their own lives. According to Abel, a diviner can only exercise influence over an individual, if the individual agrees to a mutually agreed upon definition of the relationship and believes that the consultation will provide healing. He commented:

> I think it's a very new experience and you are healing yourself. Because you are believing the guy, laying on hands, is really helping, so you are actually healing yourself……..because they really believe it, they heal you.

If the individual were not open to or accepting of the diviner's powers, there would be no healing. From this statement, it also becomes apparent that the diviners too have their own illusion of healing. Abel questions the validity of their specific methods of divination and does not believe that diviners possess most of the powers they claim to have. He does however acknowledge that they have the power to heal others, but explains that this healing stems not from what they do, but what they believe in. By believing so strongly in their own divination abilities, diviners are able to bring healing into the lives of others. It seems then, that Abel accords more weight to the power of suggestion than he does to the power of the divination methods.

Basic theme: Interpretive metaphors

Another distinct quality in Abel's communication is his use of metaphors. Abel's speech is laden with vivid descriptions and appealing images, which aptly illustrate his viewpoints and the message he is communicating. For instance:

> I see this metaphor as God is like an elephant, all people and all religions and all spiritualities or whatever, is standing around this elephant and they are blindfolded. And if any, if you ask them what is an elephant to any one of them, they will answer you what they can touch….but one day we are going to lift off that blind and see we are actually busy with the same elephant.

Using a metaphor to depict the content of his communication seems to follow a similar process as to what was described in the theme 'self as a reflection of others', where Abel substantiated his statements with those of others. In this theme it appears as though he may use metaphors to further enhance the intensity and impact of his statements, thereby increasing the persuasiveness of what he is saying. Abel however, seems to experience a different reality of and explanation for his tendency to communicate metaphorically. He is of the opinion that:

> People understand with their own metaphor

and conceptualise their world through pictures or symbols. Metaphors, according to Abel, therefore serve the purpose of grounding meaning or anchoring experiences and are not 'the' meaning or 'the' experience. He explains that metaphors are:

> A good way of explaining things and understanding.

He provided one example of how he perceives the function of metaphors:

I mean the chakra system is a beautiful way of understanding that you've got energy points that has to heal, the higher you go the more enlightened you get, but it's also just a system. There is not a chakra.

Similarly, Abel is of the opinion that divination is the result of a 'collectivity' of metaphors, which individuals have used over the years to interpret and explain their experiences. The terms psychic or medium for example, have been coined by individuals not because a psychic or medium 'truly' exists, but because the metaphor most fittingly explains their reality. Abel extended this to include the term holy spirit, where he too feels that the holy spirit does not really exist but rather that the metaphor does.

Abel's reasoning suggests that he perceives experiences to be similar in nature, but that because they are languaged about differently, the illusion of them being different is created. For example, Abel makes no distinction between a psychic in divination and a prophet in Christianity. For him, the nature of the experience is the same, but the metaphor differs depending on the context.

Basic theme: Uneducated opinions

The theme 'uneducated opinions' overlaps with the themes 'mistaken understanding of spiritual experiences', 'illusions of being healed' and 'interpretive metaphors'. In all four of these themes, Abel illustrates how individuals often make mistakes or hold incorrect perceptions given their uneducated opinions. Abel seems to foresee a reduction of stereotypes, labels and typecasts, if individuals were to make concerted efforts to educate themselves and access a diversity of knowledge systems.   He provided the following example:

> And I get angry with Christians that send sms's with don't watch this movie [Golden Compass], it's about children wanting to kill God and I don't know whatever, the whole campaign and I said ninety percent of those people didn't even read the book or see the movie and now they've got this opinion based on hearsay.

It seems that Abel uses 'uneducated opinions' as leverage for individuals who criticise him for what he believes in or advocates for at present. Abel's statement also suggests that he feels the status quo of 'uneducated opinions' is most often maintained and preserved through the influence of 'hearsay'.

Basic theme: Mistaken understanding of spiritual experiences

Abel is of the opinion that individuals experience the illusion that their spiritual, esoteric or divinatory experiences are as a result of access to the 'external' or internalisation of the 'external'. Abel deeply questions the belief that there exists an external body, power, spirit or source (external entity) that is able to facilitate meaningful experiences. Instead, he believes that what is perceived to be an experience with an external entity, is in fact, an experience with an internal entity, namely one's self. He provided various statements which highlighted the theme 'mistaken understanding of spiritual experiences', such as:

> To know thy self is to know God. To me that is what makes sense. The journey is inside. People just don't know it, so think its outside. I mean, an Indian that goes into this trance, he thinks he's experiencing an outside world, but he's experiencing an inside world.

> You know, but I think it opens the gateway to what, to God or another spirit world? No to yourself. Your inner self.

For Abel then, an experience with the spiritual is precisely that: an experience with the spirit, but not, as most would think, an 'external' spirit, but rather with the spirit within each person.

This statement has profound implications, as it suggests that people are looking for spiritual experiences in the incorrect places, outside of themselves instead of inside themselves.

Abel refers to the same principle when explaining the gifts of diviners. According to Abel, diviners, especially mediums and psychics, do not possess the ability to establish contact with external spirits or entities but rather, to read and access another's unconscious. He explained:

> But I don't believe they are picking other stuff up from angels or mediums or people from out of this world or whatever. I think it's in you, it's your consciousness they are picking up or whatever.

This statement concurs with the epistemology of divination which is that diviners, through their methods, are able to access information not obtained through ordinary means. For example, accessing another person's unconscious is ordinarily unattainable.

Abel does correct others who arrive at a mistaken understanding of their spiritual experiences within the context of his counselling. Although it seems he would ordinarily do so, the context of counselling postulates working from the client's frame of reference, thereby encouraging the therapist not to impose their own value and belief systems. He remarked:

> So I will counsel them in the language they understand. Talking about the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is guiding you, even though I'm meaning the true self.

Abel's seemingly radical statement's about people's misunderstanding of their spiritual experiences appears to reflect his general style of interaction, in which he postulates the extreme and challenges norms.

Organising theme: Illusions

This organising theme is composed of the basic themes 'healing self versus being healed', 'interpretive metaphors', 'mistaken understanding of spiritual experiences' and 'uneducated opinions'. In all these themes, Abel expresses the opinion that many individuals hold mistaken perceptions which are not really correct or miss the point. That is, according to Abel, individuals live not by what is but what is perceived to be; therefore, by an illusion. In the basic theme 'healing self versus being healed', Abel believes that individuals have the illusion of being healed by others when they are in fact being healed by themselves. When reviewing the basic theme 'interpretive metaphors', Abel suggests that people use and depend on illusions (for example the holy spirit) as a reference point when attempting to describe and explain their religious or spiritual experiences. The basic theme 'uneducated opinions' also embraces the notion of illusions. Abel seems to hold the opinion that if an individual is educated, they will hold more accurate perceptions and will make statements which are well thought through and have substance. In other words, if individuals are educated, they will not make the mistake of believing in an illusion or claim that an illusion represents reality.   The basic theme 'mistaken understanding of spiritual experiences' in itself makes reference to an illusion, given the term 'mistaken', which suggests that what is, is actually not. Here Abel believes that many have the illusion of an external experience when it is in fact an internal experience. In all four basic themes, it appears that Abel prefers to reframe what others perceive to be reality as, rather, being an illusion.

Basic theme: Self as activist

Abel's history seems to be one of being able to exert significant influence over others. He himself acknowledges his ability to 'hypnotise' others:

> So, I was popular. Because I was an entertainer. I can make people laugh, I can make people cry, I've got this ability.

Abel's ability to maintain a one-up, superior position over others affords him the opportunity to exercise significant power, persuasion and influence. In this regard, it seems that he uses the strategies of intellectualisation and name-dropping when manoeuvring for dominance and control. Abel's interpersonal style seems to fit with the roles often assigned to him by others, namely, those of leader and expert. It appears that he is able to 'read his audience well' and can adapt himself and what he says accordingly. Others may therefore feel that he possesses an astute ability to understand their 'lived experiences' and will consequently regard him as wise, knowledgeable and worthy of following.

Abel seems to possess immense faith and belief in his ability to 'make a difference' and begin something new. He explained that:

> My whole aim is to create a spiritual community where we don't have dogmas or you know rules.

Abel's skill and talent to lead masses seems to have been present for most of his life. He preached to a congregation comprising hundreds in a Christian Church and at present, again, preaches to a large group of people in a church supporting more liberal, spiritual beliefs.

Abel's interpersonal style combined with his divinatory, spiritual and esoteric experiences allows him to create a context in which others feel they can confide in him. It seems this is due to flexibility in his values, beliefs and open-mindedness. He said:

> I take away a lot of guilt feelings for people, because I'm now open and open to everything. My whole view on sex has changed, you know. And I can read people in that sense, because people will come to me with a lot of guilt and I will say, no man, that's not a problem, let's look at this and this and I can see how people heal.

Abel can be described as an activist, given that he is able to penetrate seemingly impermeable boundaries of individuals, groups and communities.

Basic theme: Self as flexible versus self as firm

Attempting to describe the characteristic features of Abel 'as a system' is seemingly difficult as two polarities exist. On the one hand Abel presents as flexible, accommodating and open minded but at the opposite extreme, he seems to be rigid and firm. In this regard, Abel seems to find comfort in functioning within an either / or dichotomy, shying away from 'grey areas' where he may experience uncertainty.

The 'self as flexible' is highlighted in the following two statements:

> I tried everything.

> If you tell me this person is amazing, I want to experience it.

It seems that Abel does not want to create a context of exclusion for himself as a result of not experiencing what others have. He therefore ensures that he experiences as much as he

can of everything so as to present himself as well-informed and educated. When conversing with others, Abel then enjoys the advantage of variability in his responses and can comment on most topics.

During certain periods, he seems to invest significant energy in only one modality or belief system to the exclusion of others (self as rigid). For example, as a minister in the Christian church, he rigidly upheld only Christian beliefs or values.   The 'self' as rigid however only seems to last temporarily, as it elicits feelings of exclusion and immobility with which he is uncomfortable. In order to minimise these feelings, Abel reverts towards a definition of 'self as flexible'. This can be graphically illustrated as follows:

Self as firm

⇕
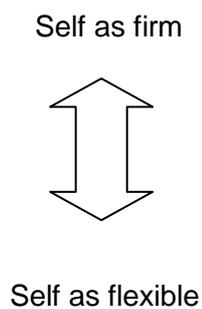
Self as flexible

The more firm the definition of the self, the more exclusion Abel experiences by others. The more he feels excluded, the greater his need becomes to define the 'self as flexible'. However, the 'self as flexible' for too long a period seems to elicit feelings of uncertainty, given a lack of structure and predictability. The greater the uncertainty, the more the need to define the 'self as firm'. And so the process continues.

Organising theme: Transformation versus conservation

Conservation can be described as an individual's inclination to maintain the status quo or tendency to preserve homeostasis. Transformation is a dynamic process whereby an individual progresses beyond a previous state of functioning which suggests that there has

been a shift or change. It seems that Abel has been alternating between periods of transformation and conservation for most of his life. The theme 'self as activist' highlights the transformational journey Abel embarked on when abandoning his belief in Christianity and pursing more spiritual beliefs. The basic theme 'self as flexible' and 'self as firm' embraces the transformation versus conservation dualism. The 'self as flexible' suggests transformation, because Abel is open to experiences imbued with difference, uncertainty and variation. For example, Abel was previously opposed to divination, but now consults with diviners on a regular basis out of curiosity. The 'self as firm' is inherently conservational as Abel is reluctant to change or alter his behaviour or belief system, thereby ensuring that 'sameness' is maintained.

Global theme: Proactivity versus reactivity

The organising theme 'transformation versus conservation', when elevated to a higher logical level, speaks about Abel's fluctuating proactive and reactive behaviour. Abel seems to be familiar with both polarities and has given expression to both the struggle and reward of shifting from a reactive stance to a proactive stance. Conservation is closely associated with reactivity, as it depicts how Abel responded, almost unwillingly, to the religious contexts in which he found himself. Transformation is in essence a proactive process, as it describes how Abel later actively created and structured contexts for himself in which spiritual development, change and growth were fostered. In the organising theme 'illusions', the polarity of 'reactivity' is most visible. It would appear that Abel perceives individuals merely to be reacting to the illusions created by others. Abel seems to hold the opinion that individuals are not proactive enough in religious and spiritual contexts and adopt the belief systems proposed by 'dominant' others instead of creating their own. Abel's attempted solution to this problem is education. He apparently believes that it is an individual's lack of education and knowledge that keeps them trapped in the process of reactivity and suggests that there should be exposure to 'other ways of being'. In this regard, it appears that Abel

believes education will give individuals the power necessary to evolve from reactivity towards proactivity. The interplay between 'illusions' and 'proactivity versus reactivity' also seems to describe a hierarchical process, in which there is a constant struggle and negotiation for power between the dominant, who are seemingly proactive, and the submissive, who are seemingly reactive. Interestingly, when Abel has been assigned a one down, inferior position (reactivity), he asserts himself into a one up, superior position (proactivity) by expressing his viewpoints. This allows for him to present with proactive behaviour in contexts where only reactive behaviour is encouraged.

Personal reflection

During the interview with Abel, the researcher experienced what felt like a hypnotic trance. She was 'glued' to his every word as though living with him the experiences he was sharing. Abel took her on a fascinating journey into divination and spirituality as he understands and perceives it and awakened within the researcher the notion that the practice of divination is not an isolated ritual, but forms part of the broader ritual of spirituality for many. The researcher does not feel it was by chance that Abel participated in her study, but rather that it was orchestrated by powers beyond. Abel not only mirrored her own struggle with inclusion versus exclusion but also gave her the inspiration to pursue the whispers of her heart and soul. Abel also awakened within her courage and bravery, the courage to 'do' and the bravery to keep on doing in spite of obstacles.

ABEL'S RESULTS ON THE LOCUS OF CONTROL QUESTIONNAIRE

Table 6.2   Abel's results on the Locus of Control Questionnaire

Participant	Avril	Elise	**Abel**	Vanessa	Anisa
'Chance' Scale	35	29	**17**	21	19
'Powerful others' Scale	36	33	**25**	30	36
'Total External' Orientation	71	62	**42**	51	55
'Internal' Scale	36	37	**31**	24	38
'Total Locus of Control'	107	99	**73**	75	99

Legend:

- **'Chance' and Powerful others' scale:**

Scores ranging between 8 – 24   =   Controlled by chance or powerful others

A score of 24   =   Midpoint

Scores ranging between 24 – 40   =   Not controlled by chance or powerful others

- **'Internal' scale:**

Scores ranging between 8 – 24   =   External locus of control orientation

A score of 24   =   Midpoint

Scores ranging between 24 – 40   =   Internal locus of control orientation

- **'Total External' orientation:**

Scores ranging between 16 - 48   =   External locus of control orientation

A score of 48   =   Midpoint

Scores ranging between 48 – 80   =   Internal locus of control orientation

- **'Total Locus of Control':**

Scores ranging between 24– 72   =   External locus of control orientation

Score of 72   =   Midpoint

Scores ranging between 72 – 120   =   Internal locus of control orientation

Explanation of independent scores

Abel's result on the 'internal' scale of the questionnaire indicates that he exhibits an internal locus of control orientation. It seems then that he is inclined to attribute the outcome of events to his own control and that he perceives his achievements, experiences and circumstances to be due to his own decisions, abilities and efforts. Abel is also more inclined to work on self improvement, is more open to experience and tends to perceive a direct relationship to exist between his own actions and the outcome of situations.

Given Abel's internality score on the 'internal' scale, it is expected that he would reject the notion that his life is controlled by external forces beyond his control. However, his result on the 'chance scale' indicates that he does believe his life to be under the control and influence of chance or luck, which suggests that he has a stronger faith in the random distribution of events and is inclined to assign importance to the unexpected, unplanned and unpredictable. Abel's score on the 'powerful others' scale only just falls within the category 'not controlled by powerful others' by one point, which means that whether or not he will allow himself to be controlled by 'powerful others' is more often than not context specific and will depend on his perception and relationship with the 'powerful others' whom he interacts with. Abel's score on the total 'external orientation' scale, which is a combination of both the 'chance' scale and 'powerful others' scale, suggests that he tends towards externality in these contexts. This means that Abel perceives the power and control exerted by 'chance' and 'powerful others' to generally supersede his own influence; thereby rendering him subservient to both these variables in most instances.

The 'total locus of control' scale reflects a combination of all of Abel's scores on the questionnaire and is therefore a more generalised expectancy rather than a specific one. On this scale, Abel's score falls just above the midpoint which means that his locus of control

orientation tends only slightly towards internality and will most often be context dependent and influenced by the nature of intervening variables.

Integration of scores on the Locus of Control Questionnaire

From the proceeding discussion in which each of the scores was independently discussed it becomes apparent that Abel does not possess a distinct or clear locus of control orientation which predominates. It seems that his locus of control orientation is context dependent but tends more towards externality. Generally Abel is more inclined towards externality, especially as regards the context of 'chance', but may profess in particular contexts to have an internal locus of control orientation. In terms of 'powerful others' it appears that his locus of control orientation is dependent on who the 'powerful others' are and his perceptions of himself in the various contexts.

INTEGRATION OF THEMATIC NETWORK ANALYSIS AND RESULTS ON THE LOCUS OF CONTROL QUESTIONNAIRE

The term 'ambivalence' used in an organising theme can be extended to describe the nature of Abel's scores with regards to the Locus of Control Questionnaire. It seems that the absence of a distinct locus of control orientation is reflected in many of the themes extracted from his interview, as there tends to be evidence of both internality and externality. However, given that his results suggest a slightly stronger inclination towards externality, attention will be accorded to the themes depicting an external locus of control orientation. The significant events in Abel's life which all appear to centre around important decision making (for example determining whether or not to leave his Christian ministry), and emotional or spiritual growth, seem to be captured most profoundly in the organising theme 'interdependence'. Of importance is that 'gurus' and significant others seem to contribute significantly towards and influence each of his noteworthy life events. It would seem, consequently, that Abel welcomes the input and advice of 'gurus' and bases his behaviour and thinking on their contributions. Given that this theme depicts externality, it is plausible to argue that Abel exhibits a predominantly external locus of control orientation. What is interesting about the organising theme 'illusions', specifically the basic themes 'interpretive metaphors', 'uneducated opinions' and 'mistaken understanding of spiritual experiences', is the passion with which Abel attempts to educate both the researcher and others about what he considers to be more 'useful' assumptions and deductions about religious and spiritual experiences. If Abel believes in his own ability to influence the perceptions of others, then it is likely that he too believes in the ability of others to influence his own opinions, beliefs and perceptions: this reciprocity of persuasion and mutual influence is indicative of an external locus of control orientation.

Three assumptions have been made about Abel's locus of control orientation thus far: Firstly that he tends towards externality, secondly that he perceives himself to have an internal

locus of control orientation and thirdly, that his locus of control orientation is context specific. The researcher wishes to introduce a fourth assumption. From an overview of the themes extracted from Abel's interview it would appear that although his locus of control orientation is predominantly an external one in that he believes his life to be influenced by external variables, he presents with behaviours characteristic of internality. In the organising theme 'transformation' and 'conservation', for example, it was highlighted that Abel, often engages in activities facilitating self improvement and development (transformation), is self reliant and is inclined to hold unique opinions – all of these are representative of 'internal' behaviour. His professional achievements and PhD emphasise his ambitious nature and tendency to strive for self actualisation, which are also traits and behaviours associated with internality. It would seem then that a distinction needs to be drawn between Abel's perceptions of control and the manner in which he approaches daily tasks in his life.

Although Abel's score on the 'chance' scale of the Locus of Control Questionnaire highlights his perception that his life is controlled by chance or luck, neither the organising nor the global themes extracted from his interview seem to include descriptions which can be used to either confirm or disconfirm this. Deductions can however be made when one takes into consideration Abel's Christian ministry and the strong spiritual beliefs he holds at present. A religious or spiritual belief encompasses faith and conviction in that which exists beyond the physical realm and suggests that he is open to the notion that his life is controlled and influenced by an unseen 'power', 'force' or 'spirit'. Parallels can be drawn with chance or luck as these too can be described as invisible forces which exert significant control and influence. It can therefore be hypothesised that if Abel holds strong religious or spiritual beliefs there is an increased likelihood that he too will believe in being controlled by external forces such as chance or luck. If this reasoning is sound, then one could also hypothesise that Abel would display a belief in divination as it too is centred in and around the invisible or metaphysical world. Interestingly, as documented in the organising theme 'ambivalence', Abel appears sceptical of divinatory powers and does not display the same openness

towards divination as he did, for example, Christianity or now his spirituality. Abel's mid-point score on the 'powerful others' scale of the Locus of Control Questionnaire highlights that the extent to which he perceives himself to be controlled by 'powerful others' is dependent on the context in which he finds himself and the significance he assigns to the context. One could therefore attribute Abel's 'ambivalence' towards divination to the notion that his professional identity, as highlighted in the global theme 'inclusion versus exclusion' as a psychologist, is very important to him and that openly admitting his divinatory powers or belief in readings by diviners may expose him to negative criticism and judgement from 'powerful others' within the context of psychology.

The Locus of Control Questionnaire suggested that Abel's score on the 'powerful others' scale is more inclined to be context specific, given that his score only enters into the range of internality by one point. The researcher wishes to highlight through the global themes 'inclusion versus exclusion' and 'proactivity versus reactivity', the contexts in which Abel is more likely to display internality when interacting with 'powerful others'. It appears in both these global themes that Abel's perceptions of whether or not he is controlled by 'powerful others' are situationally determined and is influenced by the presence or absence of certain variables within given contexts. Within the global theme 'proactivity versus reactivity' the variables '*education*' and '*spirituality*' seem to be significant determinants. It seems that Abel will have the confidence to assert himself over 'powerful others' and adopt proactive behaviours in a certain context, if he perceives his actions to be supported or justified by what has been brought into his awareness as a result of *education*. Interesting about this notion is that information, knowledge and education are very often regulated, proposed or supported by 'powerful others', which suggests that when Abel perceives himself to resist control by 'powerful others' he is in actual fact still being controlled by the latter. When reviewing the global theme 'proactivity versus reactivity' and its associated organising and basic themes, it becomes evident that Abel is himself a 'powerful other' within the context of *spirituality*. This suggests that he is unlikely to perceive others as exercising the power to

control and dominate him within this context. Even though the organising theme 'interdependence' indicated that he uses the opinions of others to justify his viewpoints or beliefs, Abel seems to decide for himself which opinions or vantage points to include or exclude. Within the global theme 'inclusion versus exclusion' the variable '*belonging*' emerges as playing an important role in determining whether or not Abel will allow himself to be controlled by 'powerful others'. It appears that Abel may challenge 'powerful others' in one context if he has the safety of knowing that he will at least still experience 'belonging' to 'powerful others' in another context.

Conclusion

An overview of both the themes extracted from Abel's interview and results on the Locus of Control Questionnaire suggests that he displays strong leadership traits and is able to exercise influence in a number of spiritual and religious subsystems. His tendency to make striking statements and assert his opinions and viewpoints convincingly despite negative feedback received from others, indicates that he is self assured and functions from an internal locus of control orientation. His perceptions of whether or not he permits himself to be controlled by 'powerful others' appear to be context specific and this suggests a flexible and adaptable nature. It seems that Abel is enticed to consult with diviners given his need to enhance his understanding of the world, broaden his knowledge base and appreciate the lived experiences of another. Abel's interpersonal style is such that he will continue disrupting the status quo and by doing so will facilitate the unfolding of new perspectives and disentangle the boundaries between what is acceptable and unacceptable.

CHAPTER 7

VANESSA'S RESULTS

VANESSA'S EXPERIENCES WITH DIVINERS

Introduction

Vanessa's interview was conducted at her own restaurant. She is forty seven years old and English speaking. She resides together with her daughter (sixteen years old) and son (eighteen years old) in Edenvale. Vanessa's husband was murdered eight years ago and there is ambiguity regarding the circumstances surrounding his death. She has since entered into a new relationship and is engaged. Vanessa holds a diploma. Her parents are still married and she is the oldest of three children. She has one brother who is forty three years old and a sister, forty years old. No members of Vanessa's family of origin practise divination or have consulted with diviners. Vanessa grew up following the principles and attitudes of the Methodist religion but is non-practising at present.

She first consulted with diviners when she was nineteen years old and later again two months after the death of her husband. She consults primarily with mediums in hopes that they can communicate with her husband and receive answers from him about the cause and circumstances of his death. Vanessa has also had approximately eight psychotherapy sessions with a psychologist, after encouragement by her children. Consultation with diviners preceded psychotherapy. Vanessa did not experience psychotherapy as meaningful and attributes this to the fact that the sessions could not provide her with the answers she was looking for and raised other worries or concerns which she felt were unnecessary at the time.
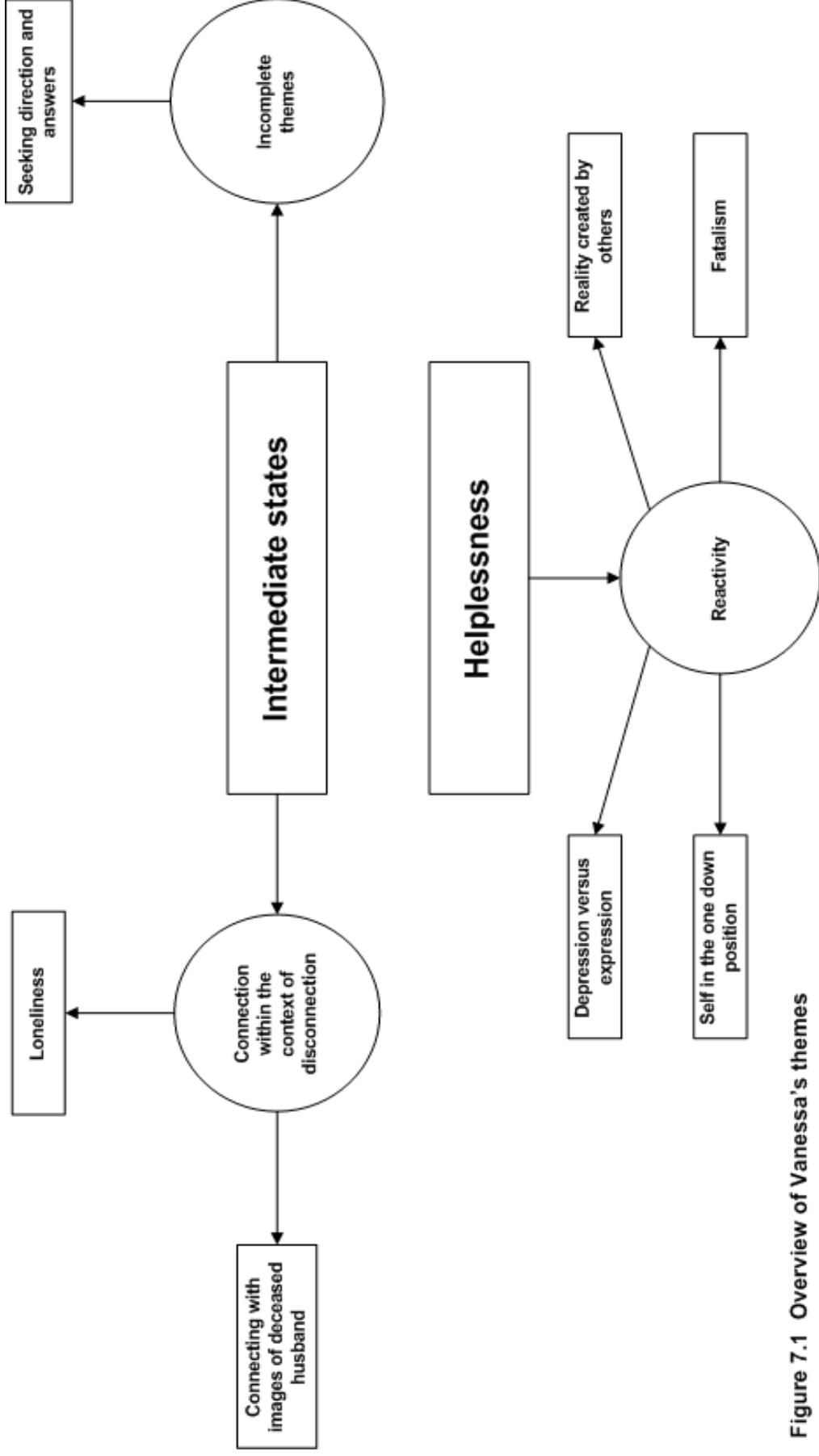
Figure 7.1 Overview of Vanessa's themes

THEMATIC NETWORK ANALYSIS

Basic theme: Depression versus expression

Vanessa seems to be well acquainted with depression, which can be described as a mood state characterised by a sense of despondency, pessimism or sadness and which may present itself in the form of decreased verbal or non-verbal activity. It appears that Vanessa's depression affects her most pertinently within the context of darkness. As she expressed this:

> You know, you can't sleep at night.

Although her relationship with depression seemed to intensify after her husband's death, it seems that Vanessa had already co-created depression in relationships before her husband's tragic death.

Interpersonally, Vanessa appears to be inclined to 'depress' rather than 'express' her emotions and lived experiences in such a fashion that she keeps the covert, covert. She said:

> I've got all this going on inside me.

> And this has taken me right out of my limits, and, but uum, I don't show people.

From these statements, two inferences can be made. The first is that Vanessa may experience feeling overwhelmed by pent up emotions and experiences which she has not yet 'processed'. Secondly, it seems that Vanessa may have 'mastered' the skill of hiding her

emotions from others. This makes it seemingly difficult for others to extend a hand of support and as such, Vanessa further co-creates her depression. This should however not suggest that Vanessa is completely isolated and disengaged from support structures, as she seems to mobilise them when she feels the need to do so. She pointed out:

> And when things get really bad and I have certain people that I can phone.

It appears that Vanessa prolongs the process of engaging others for support and guidance and will only acknowledge that she is struggling when the intensity of her hopelessness and despair becomes unbearable.

Throughout her interview, Vanessa used the nodal phrase 'put in the back of my mind' when referring to different experiences. This suggests that she attempts to depress or displace thoughts and emotions rather than express or integrate them. She said:

> Look when Dita [husband] was around, I didn't go. It was something I sort of put in the back of my mind.

> That lady [diviner] that I saw, she said just remember, you can always change what I have told you, is in the back of my mind.

Vanessa's tendency to 'put things in the back of her mind' appears to be functional. Shortly after her husband's death, Vanessa experienced what seems to be a depressed mood and from what she said, it appears that she found dialoguing with this emotion both draining and immobilising. She commented:

> I just feel that if I have to step back over that edge, I'm not going to get up again.

Although this statement suggests that Vanessa possesses self-awareness because she is sufficiently attentive to distinguish between her own 'healthy' versus 'unhealthy' emotional functioning, it may also indicate that her solution for 'depression' is to detach emotionally from experiences in an attempt to reduce their intensity. It could be argued that it is this solution which now appears to be the problem. For example, shortly after beginning to consult with a psychologist, Vanessa terminated the therapeutic sessions as she was uncomfortable with the process of having to 'express' rather than 'depress'. She said:

> She was just digging into too many things, opening too many boxes and drawers that I had closed.

She further added that:

> Crying won't solve your problems.

> Stop beating myself up about it. I can't fix it. It happened, just get over it.

This indicates that she reframed any 'expression' which did occur as a negative experience and by doing so, presented as 'faithful' to her attempted solution. It seems that Vanessa also manoeuvred for distance in therapy by defining the relationship in such a manner so as to 'discredit' the potential for any healing to take place. She explained:

> And I had a lot of anger in me and I thought, maybe by going to see somebody and talking about it, I could deal with it. So I mean it didn't really do anything. You know what, it didn't explain why.

> Tell me why and I can deal with it.

A re-visit of both these statements suggests that Vanessa evades the process of 'expressing' by choreographing the session in such a manner that the psychologist has to 'express' (explain what happened to her husband) and Vanessa can continue 'depressing' by shifting attention away from herself.

Basic theme: Self in the 'one down' position

Throughout the interview with Vanessa, she seemed to indicate that her relationships with significant others have been emotionally taxing. It appears that this is because of Vanessa's unsuccessful attempts to assert herself in positions of power and dominance. Vanessa seems to co-create relationships in such a manner that she finds herself in the familiar role of being in the 'one down', inferior position. Although the one-down, inferior position can be healthy in complementary relationships, it becomes unhealthy if an individual is unable to alternate between being in a 'one down', inferior position and a 'one up', superior position. Vanessa seemed to have an unhealthy relationship with her husband because she was always manoeuvred into and accepted the definition of the relationship, where it was implicitly 'agreed' that she would always adopt the 'one down', inferior position. As she said:

> During our marriage, he used to put me down, he used to do that at every opportunity.
> He used to mentally abuse me. Insults you know, those kill you. You know confidence, the whole lot.

Vanessa's relationship with her husband seems to have profoundly impacted on her emotional and psychological functioning. It appears that she now associates being in the 'one down', inferior position with trauma and feelings of helplessness and powerlessness. These feelings may be triggered, or present themselves, in the form of 'flash backs' in situations or experiences where she perceives herself to be under the 'hypnotic' control and influence of another.

It would appear that Vanessa experiences being in the 'one down', inferior position more often than she would like to or is willing to acknowledge. Her perceptions of being in this position seem to vary and depend on the relationship in which she negotiates for this position. It seems that she 'resents' those whom she perceives to have forced her into this position but is more accommodating and accepting of this position if she herself has manoeuvred for it. Within the context of her relationship with her children, Vanessa also appears to be in a 'one down', inferior position but it appears she is content in this position given that she decided it would be in her children's best interests. Vanessa explained that her primary focus falls on satisfying her children's needs and meeting their demands. According to her:

Then I'm quite happy to deal with myself after that.

It seems that Vanessa's self-sacrificing style and tendency to place others' needs before her own are the catalysts by which she co-creates her 'one down', inferior position. Another aspect of Vanessa's personality which seems to incubate this position is her self doubt and high level of self criticism. These two traits seem to set the context needed for Vanessa to perceive herself as a victim. The role of victim is congruent with the 'one down', inferior position. She observed:

I went through a bad patch after Dita died, I just thought, why me, you know, what did I do that was so bad?

From what Vanessa explained, it seems that the diviners with which she has consulted have also made reference to and commented on her inclination to adopt a 'one down', inferior position. One diviner for example, said to her:

Don't you feel like people are always walking on you and standing on you, using you?

This diviner reframed Vanessa's experiences of being in the 'one down', inferior position by suggesting that this position is not unique to her present life, but was already co-created in one of her past lives as a slave. The metaphor of a slave seems to have profoundly impacted on Vanessa, as she was compelled to perceive her present tendency towards adopting a 'one down', inferior position as an action of self-victimisation. The reframing provided to her by the diviner seems to have been what has shifted Vanessa's perceptions of both herself and her relationships.

Basic theme: Reality created by others

Vanessa seems to relinquish personal power by allowing others to create her reality for her. This means that the nature of her thoughts, feelings and perceptions are dependent on, and result from information which others bring into the relationship with her. It is interesting that Vanessa seldom negotiates for her own idea of what constitutes 'truth' or 'reality' and is inclined rather to adopt another's perception of 'truth' or 'reality' as her own. In this regard, it seems then that Vanessa regulates her own functioning according to what is prescribed by others, and hence, reality is created for her.

The extent to which Vanessa manoeuvres others to create reality for her, is evident in her statement:

Sometimes I just sit and think, I wish somebody else would tell me what to do. But the day doesn't work like that.

It seems that Vanessa experiences significant distress when having to determine by herself how she should proceed or what actions she should take next. For Vanessa, the process of

problem solving or decision making is exceptionally difficult and it is for this reason that she wants others to create reality for her. Even though she acknowledges the unlikelihood of others assuming this responsibility, it seems she still attempts to manoeuvre others into creating reality for her.

It appears that Vanessa more readily seeks interaction with others who are likely to create reality for her, for example, by telling her what to do and how to do it. By being led by others, Vanessa is provided with structure, certainty and clarity of direction. Reality is most often created for Vanessa when she engages with her minister. She said:

> You know what my minister said to me, I don't have to do it, I'm not God. So I have no intentions of doing that.

> You know if my minister says I don't have to forgive him, I just don't. I don't have to.

Vanessa's minister seems to have given her permission to continue 'feeling what she is feeling' and as such, has removed the pressure imposed by others to feel, think and behave differently.

It seems that Vanessa is inclined to accept the reality created for her by others as 'truth', only for as long as it is able to fulfil its function or until the point where another 'truth' resonates more strongly with her. So, although Vanessa expects that others will create a reality for her, she internalises only those realities which are most congruent with hers. A statement provided by Vanessa indicating this is:

> The police think it was a robbery and I don't. I think it was somebody that knew him. Because I knew what he would have done as a person. And for him to, when they shot him, this is what

the toxicologist said to me, uum, he was shot once that went straight through his heart, that his whole face was peaceful, and from experience, she felt he knew who had shot him.

It seems that Vanessa may have accepted the police's reality up until the time she consulted with the toxicologist. An interesting process emerges when reviewing the statement directly above. Vanessa is struggling to come to terms with her husband's death and his absence in the family and it appears that she is not yet ready to say 'goodbye'. By accepting the toxicologist's reality as her own, Vanessa implicitly postpones the 'acceptance' stage of mourning and she rescues herself from having to say 'goodbye'. This is because the toxicologist's opinion suggests that a 'familiar' person shot her husband and Vanessa may now have an even stronger need to ascertain the circumstances surrounding his death. If she were to accept the police's opinion that her husband had been shot as a result of a robbery, it would imply having to finally say 'goodbye' to her husband and put to rest her 'search', owing to the impossible task of finding out which 'stranger' may have shot him.

Interestingly Vanessa not only relies on individuals within the physical realm to create reality for her, but also entities within the metaphysical realm. She said:

I wake up in the morning and say, hopefully this is the right decision I made. I can't go back. So, I always ask, I ask for guidance.

It seems then that even if Vanessa is unable to have others create reality for her in the physical realm she can rely on the metaphysical realm to do so for her and this seems to provide her with the comfort and reassurance she seeks.

Basic theme: Fatalism

Fatalism, for purposes of this theme, will refer to a characteristic in individuals who are inclined to submit to what happens or have the belief that everything is inevitable and that there is little one can do to change it. Vanessa seems to succumb to fatalism and this suggests that she may defend the behaviours of others because she does not perceive others to be responsible for what they are doing. Instead, she inclined to 'blame' the environment for the presenting negative behaviours of others and this seems to makes her more accommodating of that which she experiences in relationships.

It appears that Vanessa has a tendency to conceptualise her experiences linearly, such that there is always a direct association between one event or behaviour and another. Furthermore, she perceives one event or behaviour to be the direct cause of another. The linearity of Vanessa's thinking is most apparent when reviewing how she has attempted to process her husband's behaviour and assign 'meaning' to his actions. Vanessa seems to attribute her husband's derogatory behaviour towards her to his home environment and upbringing. As she put this:

> I think very much it's his family upbringing.

> I think his dad did it very much to his mom. So it happened in the home. It was just there, he didn't know any different.

These two statements suggest that although Vanessa harbours anger towards her husband for treating her as he did, she is 'forgiving' of his behaviour as she is of the opinion he did not 'know any different'. This highlights 'fatalism' in Vanessa's thinking as she feels her husband had no option but to submit to and be influenced by that which was happening within the home.

The theme of fatalism is also evident in Vanessa's consultations with diviners. When consulting diviners, she is given access to what seems to be 'privileged' information about what will happen to her in the future. According to Vanessa:

> And I was told about him [husband] and I was told about my two children.

From this statement, it seems that she was 'destined' to marry her husband and have the children she has, without being given any option to decide otherwise. This highlights the 'fatalism' in Vanessa's thinking as she does not perceive herself to have any other choice but to submit to that which the diviner predicts, as it will happen anyway.

Organising theme: Reactivity

The basic themes 'depression', 'self in the one down position', 'reality created by others' and 'fatalism', when combined, all seem to have in common a broader theme of reactivity. 'Reactivity' can be defined as an action that is not internally motivated but rather occurs as a response to a particular stimulus or action of another. Inherent to 'reactivity' is the notion then that an individual responds to what has been created for them and not to that which has been created by them. It was explained in the basic theme 'depression' that Vanessa to a large extent co-creates her depression. However, it could also be argued that her depression is a symptom of her perceived inability to create the lived experiences she desires and is therefore the 'product' of her reactive nature. Vanessa, when in the 'one down', inferior position in relationships, also seems to be demonstrating reactive behaviour. When in such a position, Vanessa does not perceive herself to command the power to manoeuvre for her definition of the relationship ('one up', superior position) and as such, seems merely to be reacting to and responding to the strategies deployed by others. Vanessa seems to depend on others to create reality for her, as was explained in the basic theme 'reality created by

others'. This indicates that Vanessa does not always create her own reality or regulate her own life, but often answers to others and reacts to what they create for her.   It was however also explained in this theme that Vanessa only incorporates those realities most consistent with her own, which indicates that she at times, also creates her own reality. 'Fatalism' as was emphasised earlier described Vanessa's perceptions of herself and significant others as a 'victim of circumstance'. This seems to encapsulate the theme 'reactivity', where it is argued that an individual responds to their environment and does not necessarily create it.

The basic theme 'self in the one down position' reminds that Vanessa has however experienced significant shifts in her submissive style, such that she is now more proactive instead of reactive.

Global theme: Helplessness

The organising theme 'reactivity' when extracted to a higher logical level speaks about Vanessa's perceived helplessness in relationship with herself, others and her immediate environment. If Vanessa was described as merely 'reacting' to that which is created by others, then it is appropriate to state that she has been manoeuvred into and created her role of helplessness. Reactivity, as with helplessness, is associated with powerlessness and vulnerability and both these feelings feature predominantly throughout Vanessa's life. Helplessness also suggests that Vanessa may perceive herself as being incapable of escaping or avoiding certain experiences, situations or contexts. The knowing that she is 'trapped' despite her efforts to 'escape' seems to further reinforce Vanessa's perception of herself as helpless.

Basic theme: Loneliness

One of the most prominent themes throughout Vanessa's interview is that of 'loneliness'. Vanessa seems to experience 'emotional loneliness' and although she desires meaningful companionship with others, she seems to experience solitude and isolation.

Vanessa's 'loneliness' appears related to two co-created experiences. The first is that she struggles to find others who are able to resonate with her lived experiences and consequently perceives others as having little empathy towards her. As she said:

> People, you know what, people have this favourite thing, if I was in your shoes, I would do. And I say you know what, you are not in my shoes, if you want to swop and you have a much easier life than mine and if you want to take my life for a month, please do.

This statement suggests that Vanessa experiences feelings of having to 'face the world alone' and that she does not receive the necessary support or understanding from others for which she manoeuvres. The second process of 'loneliness' is co-created, given what seems to be Vanessa's tendency to focus primarily on fulfilling obligations, duties and responsibilities, so that she does not accord attention to her own needs, wishes or desires. She said:

> I don't have any hobbies, my kids are my hobby and I've always worked.

By not having any hobbies or leisure time, Vanessa seems to restrict access and connection with others, which further perpetuates her feelings of 'loneliness'.

From what Vanessa explained it appears that her feelings of 'loneliness' were already visible in early childhood. Vanessa seemed to be sensitive to the 'implicit' rules in her family of

origin and would therefore refrain from making certain covert experiences overt. By keeping specific experiences a secret from her parents, Vanessa seemed to delve further into 'loneliness' as she was unable to give voice to her experiences within the context of relationships. She said:

> I used to feel that I used to float. Never told my parents because I thought it was a bit of, quite a strange thing.

From this statement, it seems apparent that Vanessa is also reluctant to share 'extraordinary' experiences with her parents for fear that she will be judged and labelled as abnormal. This indicates that Vanessa may have experienced 'conditional acceptance' within her family of origin and regulated her behaviour accordingly. It seems that this 'conditional acceptance' still forms part of her ecology of relatedness with her parents, specifically her father, at present. She commented:

> So I talk a lot about things like that [divination] as long as my father's not around.

Although Vanessa experiences 'loneliness' in many of the subsystems with which she interacts, there is one subsystem which seems to provide her with a different experience, namely the one of divination. The ability of a diviner to accurately reflect Vanessa's lived experiences and emotions allows for her to feel understood and supported and, hence, less lonely. For her:

> It just made me feel somebody was with me. Walking the same road with me you know.

Based on this statement, the supposition can be advanced that Vanessa consults with diviners knowing that this context will temporarily alleviate feelings of loneliness and being misunderstood. Furthermore, it seems that Vanessa receives healing in the mere knowing

that diviners, even though they may not share similar experiences, are able to acknowledge and appreciate her struggles.

It seems that when Vanessa finds another who has similar experiences, she is inclined to 'absorb' as much as she can from the relationship, given the scarcity of such advanced empathy. Vanessa for example, consulted with a diviner who shared with her that she too had lost a significant other unexpectedly. She remarked:

> So you know what, when I'm with people like that, I talk, because I can understand and people can understand where I am coming from.

Within the context of this relationship, Vanessa seems to have had a 'therapeutic experience' as it seems she was, for the first time, able to express herself freely because she knew that the diviner too had experienced loneliness and this emotion was therefore co-constructed, given shared experiences, and deconstructed, given that the loneliness experienced by both was temporarily alleviated.

Basic theme: Connecting with images of deceased husband

While explaining this theme, the researcher will not refer to Vanessa's husband as deceased, because Vanessa's frame of reference seems to be that her husband is still 'alive'.

As was explained in an earlier theme, Vanessa's husband was murdered and the circumstances surrounding his death have still not yet been determined. Although Vanessa was subjected to verbal and emotional abuse during her marriage to her husband, it appears that she still experienced his death as traumatic and painful. It seems that Vanessa cannot 'let go' of her husband and is struggling to come to terms with the fact that she can no longer have contact with him in the physical realm. She said:

And you know what, I never, I just can't part with his ashes.

The notion that Vanessa cannot part with her husband's ashes, highlights her difficulty and struggle with having to acknowledge that this relationship has ended. It seems that Vanessa is making every attempt to continue connecting with her husband and because she is unable to do so in the physical realm, she now relies on doing so in the metaphysical realm.

Through the methods of divination, Vanessa is most actively able to 'connect with images of her deceased husband'. It appears that Vanessa finds solace and reassurance in the notion that her husband, although not physically present in her life, is still very much an active part of her life in the metaphysical realm. This 'knowing' is not based on speculation, but rather on the nature of the information provided to her by the diviners she consults. It seems that diviners divulge information that only Vanessa herself would know of and this confirms to her that it is only her husband who could have informed them of this owing to what he 'sees' in the metaphysical realm. As she expressed this:

> One of the other spiritualists that I went to, she said to me, that your husband says you walk through the house too fast. He can't keep up with you.

Not only is Vanessa reassured of her husband's 'living' in the metaphysical realm by having her 'private behaviour' mirrored back to her, but she is also struck by the accuracy with which diviners are able to communicate about her husband's personality or interpersonal style. She explained:

> I remember going to see someone the one day, and she just said Dita wasn't there. He was doing something else, helping out at an accident or something like that and she just said to me, he's not coming to me now, he's busy and I just thought, that's just like him.

By consulting with diviners, Vanessa seems to be reminded of her memories of her husband or those that she has forgotten about, and this in itself allows her to keep her connection to him.

Although Vanessa uses consultations with diviners to discover what information her husband has to communicate to her, it seems she is most profoundly influenced by experiences in which others are able to directly connect with or see his 'image'. She averred:

> My mom saw him in the laundry.

> And she [diviner] said, Dita was sitting outside and she said he walked in front of me into the room. Later she told me, he was standing behind me and he was doing this and he was doing that.

Vanessa seems to experience significant healing in the ability of others to connect with the image of her deceased husband. Although she herself has not had such an experience, the mere knowing that others can validate that her husband is connecting with the physical realm, is both gratifying and comforting.

Vanessa and her husband seem to have co-created a ritual unique to their relationship. Through this ritual, her husband is able to make his presence known without using others as a 'vehicle' to do so. She reported:

> I get into the car and I find all of a sudden my radio goes to classical. I don't listen to classical. I hate classical music. Dita, he loved classical music.

It seems then, that although Vanessa is unable to connect directly with the image of her deceased husband, she is able to connect with him spiritually through an 'inversion of meaning'. That is, attributing what others may perceive as a faulty radio, to an entity in the metaphysical realm communicating with her.

The extent to which Vanessa will continue connecting to the images of her deceased husband is highlighted in her following statement:

I think Dita will always be alive with us.

which suggests that her husband will always continue remaining one of the 'living dead'.

Organising theme: Connection within the context of disconnection

In the basic theme 'connecting with images of deceased husband', it was explained how Vanessa has struggled to accept the death of her husband and his consequent disconnection from her life. Given the profound impact of this on her life, Vanessa seems to have compensated by co-creating contexts through which she is still able to connect with the image of her deceased husband. One such context is her consultations with diviners. By so doing, Vanessa is able to establish connection with the disconnected aspect of her life, namely her deceased husband.

Basic theme: Seeking direction and answers

Although it was demonstrated in the previous theme that Vanessa consults primarily with diviners to connect with the images of her deceased husband, it seems that she also seeks consultations for direction and answers, and presumes that others who consult do so for the same reasons. She said:

> You know, I just think, something happened that made them want to go. So, it's either a business failure or a marriage that has not worked right or a relationship that has not worked right. They are looking for guidance, somebody to say, look that happened, there's better things coming.

Although Vanessa is referring to the reasons why others consult with diviners, it can be hypothesised that she is 'projecting' her own reasons for seeking consultation. Assuming that this hypothesis is useful, two inferences can be made about Vanessa's reasons for seeking consultation. Firstly, it seems that her consultations are always preceded by a period characterised with problems, difficulties or challenges. This suggests that she consults to receive guidance and direction in terms of how to resolve or cope with problems. Secondly, it seems that Vanessa anticipates that the consultations will provide her with hope and optimism for the future. In this regard, it appears that Vanessa possesses more energy, motivation and 'sustenance' to endure a difficult time period when she knows the duration thereof and can anticipate 'easier' times.

It seems that Vanessa not only consults with diviners in hopes that they will 'tell her what to do', but also for them to 'approve' or 'disapprove' a decision she has made on her own. She explained:

> It's normally an uncertainty that happens in somebody's life and they don't know how to deal with and they, um, they want to make a decision but they are not too sure if it's the right decision or not. They are looking for guidance.

Vanessa also seems to consult and re-consult with diviners in anticipation that they will be able to provide her with answers pertaining to her husband's death. It appears that Vanessa perceives diviners to have disappointed her in this regard. She explained:

No and that's something that really bugs me, nobody can actually tell me why it happened or nobody can tell me why he can't tell me why it happened.

I mean and it's always going to bug me is, who shot him and uum and he just never he doesn't seem to be interested in giving me the answers...not any type of leads that I can go to the police with.

Vanessa does not seem to hold diviners solely responsible for an inability to provide her with the 'facts' pertaining to her husband's death. To a large extent, she also holds her husband responsible, given his reluctance and hesitance to co-operate with the requests made by the diviners and herself.   It would appear that Vanessa not only consults with diviners in hopes that they will give her direction and answers, but also that entities in the metaphysical, for example her deceased husband, will do so.

Organising theme: Incomplete themes

The basic theme 'seeking direction and answers' when extracted to a higher logical level speaks about the incomplete themes in Vanessa's life. Her presenting confusion, and what seems to be a difficulty in achieving clarity, may result from being unable to piece together the 'puzzle' of her life thus far. At this point it seems that the missing piece she is desperately in search of is that explaining the circumstances surrounding her husband's murder. It is as though Vanessa cannot see the whole puzzle or appreciate its meaning, until such time that she knows for certain the events that unfolded on the tragic day of her husband's death.

Global theme: Intermediate states

The term intermediate is used to describe the process of being in 'limbo' or being between two different places, stages or for purposes of this theme, states. Both the organising themes 'connection through disconnection' and 'incomplete themes' suggest that Vanessa experiences herself to be in-between states. In the organising theme 'connection through disconnection' it can be said that Vanessa is in an intermediate state given that she simultaneously experiences connection and disconnection and can never embrace either of these polarities fully. It would seemingly be difficult for Vanessa to experience only connection as she cannot escape the reality of her husband's death (disconnection). If Vanessa chooses to focus only on disconnection, it seems this too will be improbable given that she will always have with her the memories of her husband (connection). The organising theme 'incomplete themes' also highlights Vanessa's experience of being in an intermediate state.   It would appear that Vanessa cannot plan her future without having completed her past and as such feels she has no option but to 'hang in limbo' during the present.

Personal reflection

The researcher experienced her interview with Vanessa as simultaneously enlightening and disheartening. It was enlightening given that the researcher learned about Vanessa's lived experiences and how she has managed to cope despite the 'hurdles life has thrown at her'. The researcher also found the interview disheartening because she too experienced a sense of helplessness when listening to the incomplete themes in Vanessa's life. The researcher was tempted to climb into the role of 'rescuer' in an attempt to ease Vanessa's pain and provide her with the reassurance she desperately seeks. At one stage during the interview, the researcher found herself becoming more aware of and 'in tune' with the metaphysical realm. Although this may have been co-created, given intense discussions pertaining to the

murder of Vanessa's husband, another possibility exists, namely that the metaphysical realm

is present and is accessible if one is more open to the experience.

VANESSA'S RESULTS ON THE LOCUS OF CONTROL QUESTIONNAIRE

Table 7.2 Vanessa's results on the Locus of Control Questionnaire

Participant	Avril	Elise	Abel	**Vanessa**	Anisa
'Chance' Scale	35	29	17	**21**	19
'Powerful others' Scale	36	33	25	**30**	36
'Total External' Orientation	71	62	42	**51**	55
'Internal' Scale	36	37	31	**24**	38
'Total Locus of Control'	107	99	73	**75**	93

Legend:

- **'Chance' and Powerful others' scale:**

Scores ranging between 8 – 24　　=　　Controlled by chance or powerful others

A score of 24　　=　　Midpoint

Scores ranging between 24 – 40　　=　　Not controlled by chance or powerful others

- **'Internal' scale:**

Scores ranging between 8 – 24　　=　　External locus of control orientation

A score of 24　　=　　Midpoint

Scores ranging between 24 – 40　　=　　Internal locus of control orientation

- **'Total External' orientation:**

Scores ranging between 16 - 48　　=　　External locus of control orientation

A score of 48　　=　　Midpoint

Scores ranging between 48 – 80　　=　　Internal locus of control orientation

- **'Total Locus of Control':**

Scores ranging between 24– 72　　=　　External locus of control orientation

Score of 72　　=　　Midpoint

Scores ranging between 72 – 120　　=　　Internal locus of control orientation

Vanessa's results on the 'total locus of control' scale and the 'internal' scale of the Locus of Control Questionnaire indicate that she tends towards internality, but given that the scores cluster around the midpoint range, it seems this orientation is not well defined.

This means that Vanessa may generally hold a greater belief in personal control and power within certain contexts but not others and that her opinions of whether or not personal decisions will influence situations will vary. Within a context where both the intervening variables 'powerful others' and 'chance' have an influence (total score on the 'external orientation' scale), Vanessa is likely to present with an internal locus of control orientation. Of more specific importance, however, is whether or not Vanessa is likely to believe that the world is unordered or unpredictable ('chance' scale) as opposed to believing that there is a potential for control ('powerful others' scale). Vanessa's result on the 'chance' scale suggests that she perceives her life to be erratic because she experiences the variables of 'luck' or 'chance' to exert a significant influence over her life. There is therefore a high probability that Vanessa will attribute success or situations to the presence of random, unpredictable occurrences which are only momentarily in her favour. Although Vanessa believes in the influence and power of 'chance' or 'luck', the same does not apply to 'powerful others'. It seems that Vanessa does perceive her life to be dominated by 'powerful others' and is less likely to conform to their judgment or submit to their influence, given that she feels she is in control of her own life. Vanessa would therefore, for example, accredit any leadership positions she achieves or the acquisition of what she wants, to her own skill and influence and not to the presence of external persuasion or authority.

INTEGRATION OF THEMATIC NETWORK ANALYSIS AND RESULTS ON THE LOCUS OF CONTROL QUESTIONNAIRE

Vanessa's internality is visible in both the organising themes 'incomplete themes' and 'connection within the context of disconnection'. In the organising theme 'incomplete themes' it seems that although Vanessa is finding the quest to ascertain what happened to her deceased husband frustrating, owing to the lack of feasible answers from both the physical and metaphysical worlds, there are strong indications that she still controls the current experiences and situations pertaining to her husband's death. Vanessa, for example, remains in control of when to consult with which diviners and which 'leads' she wishes to investigate further. A similar process unfolds when reviewing how Vanessa 'filters' information given to her by significant others and professionals. It was demonstrated that Vanessa is more likely to pursue the advice and suggestions of the toxicologist and her minister, rather than the police. This behaviour highlights an internal locus of control orientation as Vanessa does not 'blindly' pursue and accept any feedback from the environment, but selects feedback consistent with her own belief system. This suggests that she is more resistant to external persuasion, is inclined to act independently and regulates her behaviour according to the standards and norms she has set for herself. The death of a husband and the negative impact thereof on global family functioning has the potential to create the dynamics needed for the presentation of 'symptomatic behaviour' and a pervasive negative mood. It appears, however, that this was not the case with Vanessa. In the organising theme of 'connection within the context of disconnection', it was described how Vanessa has over many years connected with the image of her deceased husband and this seems to have provided healing and reassurance and to have facilitated more 'healthy' intra and interpersonal functioning. This 'proactivity' is characteristic of an internal locus of control orientation as it suggests that Vanessa took responsibility for her own health and well being.

The Locus of Control Questionnaire indicated that Vanessa is unlikely to perceive her life to be controlled by 'powerful others', which suggests that she will manoeuvre for a 'one up', superior position when interacting with powerful authority figures. If the organising theme of 'reactivity' and the global theme of 'helplessness' were to be interpreted using the Locus of Control Questionnaire, Vanessa would display externality on the 'powerful others' scale, as both these themes suggest that others create reality for her. This would mean that both these themes do not concur with the results on the questionnaire. The researcher, in an attempt to ascertain an explanation for this, reviewed the items loading on the 'powerful others' scale. Significant about these is that they pertain to contexts in which there is an absence of a close attachment or meaningful interpersonal relationship: examples of this would include the contexts of driving a car and employment. Secondly, the terms 'pressure groups', 'powerful people' and 'those in authority' used in the items can be interpreted as inquiring about the perceptions pertaining to influential figures in, for example, organisations and government structures. Again, the items measure Vanessa's perceptions regarding relationships which can be described as detached, distant and disconnected. If one again reviews the organising theme of 'reactivity' and the global theme of 'helplessness' it becomes apparent that they refer to Vanessa's experiences in relationships with her children, diviners and husband and therefore represent close, significant relationships which impact more directly on her lived experiences. It could then be hypothesised that Vanessa is likely to display externality in close interpersonal relationships and internality in distant interpersonal relationships. If this hypothesis were true, then both the Locus of Control Questionnaire and thematic network analysis are accurate within different contexts.

An integrative synthesis of all of Vanessa's results on the Locus of Control Questionnaire suggests that she presents with a predominant internal locus of control orientation in most situations, excepting those in which the variables of 'chance' and 'luck' have increased likelihood of having an influence. Of concern should not be determining the nature of conditions for when 'luck' or 'chance' will have a stronger influence, but rather, whether or not

the themes extracted from Vanessa's interview confirm or disconfirm her externality on the 'chance' scale. The global theme 'intermediate states' speaks about Vanessa's difficulty in ascertaining unambiguous definitions within her life, and her struggle with obtaining certainty and clarity. This would imply that Vanessa experiences her life to be unordered and unpredictable given that she continues to 'hang in limbo'. Vanessa's perceptions of her life correspond with the underlying premise of the 'chance' scale that an individual who perceives his or her life to be controlled by 'chance' or 'luck' will perceive the world to be unpredictable, volatile and erratic. In the basic theme of 'fatalism' it was explained that Vanessa is of the opinion that her husband's behaviour towards her was inevitable and unfolded in a predestined manner, owing to the influence of his family upbringing. 'Fatalism' as a theme could be interpreted as depicting Vanessa's consequent belief in predictability and order but the researcher wishes to challenge this interpretation. The researcher would like to propose the notion that the variables of 'chance' or 'luck' may need to interrupt an individual's life so as to allow that life to continue on its predetermined path or destined future. In terms of Vanessa this would mean that she could simultaneously hold a fatalistic outlook and believe in 'chance' or 'luck'. It appears then, that the themes extracted from Vanessa's interview concur with her externality score on the 'chance' scale of the Locus of Control Questionnaire.

Conclusion

From the thematic network analysis it seems that the mystery surrounding the death of Vanessa's husband still impacts on her profoundly and consumes significant energy. Vanessa, in an attempt to keep her husband's 'memory alive' and seek her own healing, has consulted with diviners who appear to have given her some hope, eased her pain and have authentically embraced the journey of 'recovery' with her. Despite the incomplete themes and helplessness she experiences, Vanessa has managed to reframe many experiences positively for herself and has found meaning in a seemingly 'meaningless' situation. Many of

the themes extracted from Vanessa's interview support the results on the Locus of Control Questionnaire. According to the questionnaire, Vanessa is fittingly described as exhibiting an internal locus of control orientation and is unlikely to change her behaviours to suit pressure groups or powerful others in positions of authority. In her personal life, however, it would appear that Vanessa struggles to assert herself and her opinions and often experiences powerlessness and vulnerability in relationships with significant others. Divination seems to have featured centrally in Vanessa's life and her consultations seem to have been a therapeutic experience, despite not always providing her with the answers she desired or had wished for. It appears that Vanessa will continue her long standing relationship with diviners because they offer her endless 'possibilities' which keep her 'alive' and hopeful.

CHAPTER 8

ANISA'S RESULTS

ANISA'S EXPERIENCES WITH DIVINERS

Introduction

The interview with Anisa took place at a coffee shop in Pretoria. She is thirty nine years old, has Afrikaans as a home language and resides together with her husband in Pretoria. The couple do not have any children. Anisa is self employed and owns her own business selling home décor but aspires to start her own 'mind-body emporium' company which focuses on spiritual growth and development. She is currently studying the various divination systems through a correspondence course offered by an international metaphysical society. Anisa was raised in a Catholic home by her mother and father whom she describes as very religious. According to Anisa, she stopped attending church from a very young age but again attended services in support of her husband who is an active member of the NG Church. Anisa has a younger brother who passed away. Anisa is of middle-class socio-economic status and has matric as her highest standard of education.

Anisa first became curious about divination at the age of eighteen, but recalls her participation in a three year personal development course offered by her previous employers when she was twenty six years of age, as truly sparking her interest and facilitating her initial spiritual journey. Anisa has consulted with tea leaf readers, numerologists, chirologists, mediums and has experienced reiki, reflexology and aura reading. Anisa is strongly drawn to Buddhist practices and has travelled to the Far East to further explore its principles and practices. Although tea leaf reading and palmistry by diviners on the road side do not resonate with Anisa, she is careful not to slander these or any other divinatory practices as

she feels it each individual's right to consult with diviners whom they perceive to be significantly meaningful. Anisa herself does not exercise any divination abilities and neither do any members of her family of origin. Anisa feels that divination and diviners have contributed significantly towards her life. She emphasised that she now experiences a deeper love and positivity towards humankind, is more trusting of herself and her decisions, is more attentive in relationships given that she is more in 'tune' with the suffering of others and has experienced significant personal growth and development.
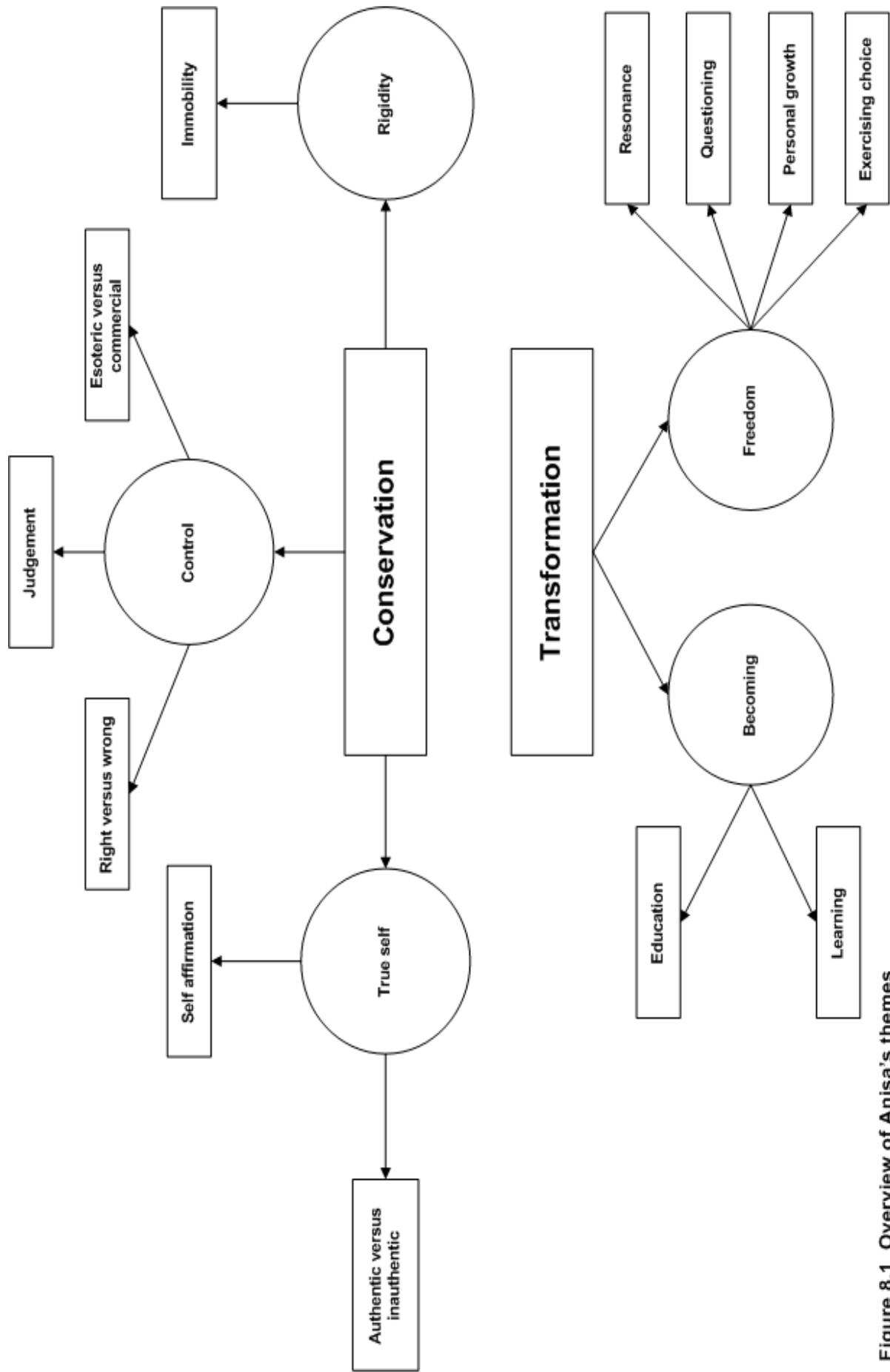
Figure 8.1 Overview of Anisa's themes

THEMATIC NETWORK ANALYSIS

Basic theme: Judgment

The most pertinent theme throughout the interview with Anisa was that of 'judgement'. Anisa communicates in such a manner as to suggest that she has assumed the task of advocating for the minority, the oppressed and the marginalised, which in this context are individuals believing in divination or the esoteric.

The intensity and conviction with which Avril campaigns against judging others, gives the impression that she has been at the receiving end of judgement and found this experience demoralising. Whatever the case, Anisa herself was caught in the web of imposing judgment on others whose belief systems did not concur with her own. She recalled:

> I wouldn't even pick up a book on witchcraft, cos I'd think, ooh no, evil. But when I went and read on, through my studies, through what is the rationale for it, where it came from, how it originated, what they actually do when they practice their séances or what ever they do, it is totally totally totally innocent and it's all about divine nature and people have gone and demonised it.

From this statement, it seems that Anisa was susceptible to judging others given her lack of education and knowledge about the 'target' of her judgement. Anisa appears to uphold the belief that majority groups often coerce their believers into imposing judgement on those who do not support similar values. Anisa seems particularly affected by what she perceives to be the 'uneducated' opinions of the congregation and ministers of the Christian church. She said:

If you are part of the Diaken group, if you are not part of the prayer group, uum, and you know, you've lost it in life.

Anisa seems to find it difficult to conceptualise the notion that individuals like herself are judged as being inferior by Christians, when some Christians themselves engage in unorthodox behaviours. She provided the following example:

Two ministers in a period of six months had affairs with everybody they possibly could. They are human, that's fine. But you are going to stand on the pulpit and judge every other religion?

Anisa became noticeably irritated when highlighting what she perceives to be the hypocritical attitudes of Christians:

Everything else is wrong. I mean how can you judge someone, that's one of the fundamental principles that religion is based on. How do you judge another religion and tell them that it's wrong and yours is right. Who says, who said, who said?

What I am saying is, don't slate other people because you don't know it. Don't do that. Don't say your religion is best and you don't know what the other person stands for, believes in.

Anisa questions the grounds on which certain religions manoeuvre for one-upmanship over others. She seems to support equality amongst all religions, in such a way that neither dominates and holds unequivocal power.

It seems that even though believing in divination makes Anisa more susceptible to rejection and exclusion, her belief is strong enough to increase her resiliency.

Basic theme: Right versus wrong

The theme 'right versus wrong' is closely associated with the theme 'judgement'. Anisa seems to be rebelling against society's standards and classification of what constitutes right or wrong. She remarked:

> There is no right or wrong because my right is not your right, your wrong.

This statement suggests that Anisa exercises a postmodern form of thinking in which she is respectful of different realities and perspectives.

It seems that Anisa is of the opinion that the Christian religion rigidly adheres to its own definition of what is right and that she regards this definition as unfounded and unjust. She explained:

> Every religion, cult has rituals. I mean one of the rituals of Christianity is going to church on Sunday's, now the ritual of a Wicca is to do a dance on full moon. But yet, that is seen as evil, demonic. Why? Why?

Anisa appears to challenge the dominant voices in society and to advocate for equality, mutual respect and tolerance for difference.

Anisa believes that individuals find it difficult to formulate their own standards of what is right and what is wrong because

> It's like you are being steam rolled by the masses

and non-conforming therefore carries heavy penalties. The masses are able to advocate for their own definitions of right and wrong because of the fear they instil in others. In referring to the Christian church, she argued:

> I think the church is built around fear, built on fear, if you sin, you will go to hell.

Making the decision to relinquish the norms of the Christian church appears to have been difficult for Anisa, given that she was forewarned of the consequences for doing so. It is precisely this dogmatic attitude from which Anisa attempted to escape. It appears that she found solace in the accommodating nature of esoteric and divinatory contexts, as in these situations she does not experience damnation.

Basic theme: Esoteric versus commercial

As demonstrated in the themes of 'right versus wrong' and 'judging others', Anisa seemed to focus on drawing distinctions between religious Christian beliefs and divinatory beliefs. She also draws distinctions within the category of divinatory beliefs itself, however, asserting that two polarities predominate; namely the esoteric versus the commercial. To explain, she said:

> Fortune telling for me, is a commercial thing that is, uum, I don't think its fundamental root is about esotericism or personal growth. I think it is more sensationalised. I don't think it is authentic.

I think we block the true meaning of it and essence of it. And what we've gone and done is package it, commercialised it

Various inferences can be drawn from these two statements. Firstly, it highlights that Anisa perceives divination as being capable of facilitating personal growth and development and is able to offer more than merely forecasts and predictions. Secondly, according to Anisa, diviners may either practise for commercial purposes, for example financial gain or drawing attention, or for the purposes of contributing meaningfully towards the life of another, for example esoteric and personal development. Anisa consults only with those diviners who have sincere intentions and have her best interests at heart. It seems then that Anisa has created categories of divination for herself, which seem functional given that she can substantiate her beliefs in divination. Hence, categorisation almost gives Anisa further permission to consult with diviners, as she has demonstrated that their work can enhance the quality of her life.

Organising theme: Control

The basic themes 'right versus wrong' and 'judgement' describe Anisa's struggle in breaking free from the chains of control imposed by others. Anisa appears to be immensely frustrated and angered by the fact that 'dominant others' maintain control and subsequent power, by moulding others into meek individuals who are scared and frightened to voice their own opinions. In both the basic themes 'right versus wrong' and 'judgement', Anisa suggests that the Christian Church and the religious leaders within are occupied with controlling the 'masses' and do not respect the voices of difference. In the basic theme of 'judgement', Anisa proposes that individuals and groups impose control over others, by making an individual feel guilty about not conforming to the norm and forewarning them of the extreme 'punishment' and consequences they would experience, should they become a 'traitor'. Within the basic theme 'esoteric versus commercial' a different aspect of control is

emphasised. Anisa describes her reluctance to consult with diviners who practise divination for commercial instead of esoteric purposes. It seems that Anisa associates commercialised divination with control, given that these diviners are motivated and subsequently controlled by money, status and affluence. What appears nevertheless to attract Anisa to the systems of divination, and the esoteric context, is that she experiences less control and greater freedom of movement in this context. She also seems to appreciate and value the fact that these contexts are freed from the chains of authoritarianism.

Basic theme: Immobility

Anisa reiterated, through different statements, the theme of immobility. She is of the opinion that belief in divination is often disallowed given that certain individuals or groups are unable to adapt to contemporary times.   Anisa perceives many to be trapped in the past, so that immobility predominates. When ascertaining the degree of mobility of the Christian church, she said:

> Life is different today, we've moved on. I don't think the Bible has adapted itself to that change I also don't think people, well not the Bible, people who teach the Bible, have really not shifted. That's the problem.

> The bible is being translated and interpreted hundreds and hundreds of times by people. People make mistakes, it's interpreted in an era, to suit that era.

Anisa is specifically critical of the Christian church, because its own immobility has created many of the negative stereotypes pertaining to divination that are prevalent today.

Anisa prefers to experience divination and its associated methods because she is able to experience less pressure to perform certain rituals and enjoys far greater freedom of movement (mobility). She again used Christianity as an example:

> So it's [divination] not, it's not uh, a Bible, where they expect you to read every verse and memorise it and understand it and discuss the beginning and the end.

Anisa seems to experience divination as an opportunity to exercise her free will without being penalised for doing so.

Interestingly, Anisa seems to bracket together Christians and psychologists as both displaying similar levels of immobility. Like Christians, Anisa experiences psychologists as disconfirming of divination and seemingly closed-minded. According to her:

> Psychologists are missing out a lot in life because your traditional psychologist, uum, works according to set rules. They don't believe in the esoteric, most of them don't believe in the esoteric, they don't want to mix it, especially the academics, those that are true academics, they don't see space for this

> I just think, they are a little bit closed book. I think they are still living in the past.

> I think they are threatened, threatened by these things

Anisa may therefore be reluctant to seek healing from a psychologist given that she describes them as inflexible and rigid in their perceptions.

Organising theme: Rigidity

The basic theme 'immobility' describes an overarching process of rigidity. The term rigidity can be defined as the tendency towards inflexible behaviour, in which movement or a shift from the status quo is not permitted. 'Immobility' is in essence, then, an indication of rigidity. In the basic theme 'immobility' Anisa described psychologists and the Christian church as a whole, as being unable to accommodate to 'changing times' and she seems to be of the opinion that both are rigidly clinging to what was in the past and not embracing and welcoming what is in the present, namely spirituality, divination and esotericism.

Basic theme: Authentic versus inauthentic

Although Anisa trusts the authenticity of diviners, she acknowledges that this context is infiltrated with inauthentic individuals; namely those who assert to be diviners but possess no divination abilities. Anisa is of the opinion that:

> And I also don't think there many authentic people out there and I think you've got to go until you find someone that is truly authentic.

Anisa seems to equate authenticity in this context, with being born with or acquiring the gift of divination naturally. She is sceptical of individuals labelling themselves as diviners, if they have only mastered a divination method as a result of self-study. She said:

> The question though, to that is, which diviners have a real gift and which are teaching themselves the skill so that they can get money for it quite easy and there is a lot of those out there.

> If I had a divination system I want it to be a skill, I want it to be innately inherently to me. It mustn't be a learned thing. I don't want to go and learn to do tarot cards, it must be a natural skill, not a learned skill.

Anisa is intuitively able to differentiate authentic from inauthentic diviners.

> You pick them up, you can see it in the way they dress, you can see it in the way they talk, you can see it in what they say. You can pick it up. You pick up when someone is doing it merely because they think they can.

Despite the divination context being stereotyped as nonsense, Anisa's ability to identify 'fly by nights' ensures that she consults only with diviners who exercise 'genuine' divination abilities. As such, Anisa is only exposed to diviners whose readings keep her interested in and provide affirmation of her beliefs in the divinatory context.

It was demonstrated earlier on in this theme that Anisa does not classify a diviner as authentic if they have learnt or taught themselves their respective method of divination. Anisa mentioned that she has had contact with a chirologist who is regarded as an expert in his field, even though he has acquired the skill of reading the palm after years of self study. She commented:

> He's not coming from uum, some people call it a hoodley doodley environment, he's coming from a very rational space. So, what you get from him is truly insightful but you know he's not giving you the run around.

Interestingly, Anisa seems to alter her definition of authenticity should she perceive an individual as a 'guru' in his or her method of divination. This suggests that the standards and value systems Anisa imposes are flexible and permeable.

Basic theme: Self affirmation

One of the reasons why Anisa continually visits and re-visits diviners seems to be a need to receive affirmation and confirmation of who she is. Although Anisa knows herself best, it appears that she seeks consultation with a diviner to reiterate that which she already knows about herself. She explained her reasoning by providing the following example:

> It's nice to get confirmation. You get married and your husband tells you on the day you get married, I love you, he could either say that once and you should know that for ever, or you want him to tell you everyday that he loves you, but you know.

Providing Anisa with an experience of affirming her 'self', suggests that a diviner needs to demonstrate a well formulated understanding of Anisa's functioning 'as a system' (intrapsychic) and 'within a system' (interpersonal). If a diviner is accurately able to mirror Anisa's functioning as she experiences it, then it is likely that Anisa will feel completely understood. It seems that Anisa may perceive diviners as the only few who care enough to be interested in and focussed on her functioning alone for an extended time period. Having a diviner focus their attention on her, allows Anisa to feel important and special.

Anisa seems to doubt the honesty and integrity of feedback provided to her by significant others or friends. She may feel that others are inclined to tell her what they think she wants to hear and not necessarily how they perceive her. As she remarked:

> Confirmation, everyone needs it, it builds confidence, through life you need a little bit of confirmation. It's also nice, you are not hearing it from someone you know, you want a totally independent view, that's what you get.

This statement suggests that Anisa experiences seemingly more 'objective' and sincere communication between herself and a diviner as opposed to herself and significant others.

Organising theme: True self

The organising theme 'true self' is inherently incongruous. The term self refers to an individual's personality, nature and character which then ultimately describes who the individual really is or who they truly are. However, according to Anisa, individuals seem to have a 'true self' and a 'false self'. The true self seems to be when an individual acts authentically, in other words, acts congruently with how they feel, what they perceive and the content of their thoughts. An individual with a 'false self' seems to present with incongruent behaviour and conceals who they truly are. Anisa uses her intuition as a guide when determining who presents with a 'true self' and who not. Once she has ascertained this, it seems that she is hesitant to engage with individuals who present with a 'false self', as she perceives them to harbour deceptive intentions. In the basic theme 'authentic versus inauthentic', the polarity 'authentic' mirrors the 'true self'. Anisa only seems to consult with diviners who live and behave in accordance with their 'true self' and do not present with inauthentic behaviour, for example, asserting that they possess the gift of divination when they do not. It seems, however, that Anisa experiences only isolated instances of individuals presenting with a 'false self' within the context of divination or the esoteric, as she is quick to describe individuals practising and believing in these contexts as authentic and genuine. It would appear that Anisa is attracted to the context of divination, as it is here that she experiences an increased likelihood of engaging and forming relationships with others who too are congruent with their 'true selves'.   The basic theme 'self affirmation' highlights Anisa's own need to have her 'true self' validated and mirrored back to her by a diviner and it seems that she ascertains a diviner's authenticity by their ability to project her 'true self' accurately.

Global theme: Conservation

Conservation can be described as the process of conserving homeostasis or the status quo, in such a way that stability is maintained. Conservation is an attempt to preserve what is, so that change or growth is stifled. Anisa is of the opinion that 'dominant voices' in society, specifically the Christian Church, conserve their belief system by maintaining control and rigidity. In the organising theme 'control' it was demonstrated how imposing control serves the function of keeping the members of the congregation loyal and faithful to the principles of Christianity. From the organising theme 'rigidity' it seems that Anisa perceives psychologists and the Christian church as conserving their beliefs and perceptions by adopting an inflexible, obstinate attitude so that any new or different information is deflected or disregarded completely. Interestingly, Anisa too has a need to conserve aspects of her personality and interpersonal style as was demonstrated in the organising theme 'true self'. Anisa may be using 'self-conservational' strategies, for example, consulting with a diviner to receive self affirmation, as this prevents her from having to enter into what may be a crisis, should she feel the need to change any innate personality traits or qualities. From what was described in the organising theme 'true self', it can be said that Anisa supports the notion that every individual should present authentically and live in accordance with who they are and what they believe in and not in terms of what is superimposed on them by others; in other words to conserve who they are.

Basic theme: Resonance

One of the nodal words Anisa used throughout her interview was 'resonate (s)'. This suggests that Anisa is searching for that which 'echoes' her beliefs, value system and perceptions. It seems she can only find that which resonates with her, within the contexts of divination and esotericism. Both these contexts can be described by the metaphor of 'home' as it is here that Anisa has found her niche and is most comfortable.

Anisa however respects the fact that others may not find anything or anyone who resonates with them in either the divination or esoteric contexts. As she said:

> It's who resonates and what technique resonates.

Therefore, although Anisa believes in the 'therapeutic' properties of divination, she respects the point that others may disagree and prefer a different modality or entirely different belief system.

Anisa has not only resonated with the principles of divination or esotericism, but also with the people who live by these principles. For her:

> Everybody that I have met, truly, well let's say ninety five percent of the people I have met, are honest people, they are nice people, they are people I would like to socialise with. I think their core value structure is intact. I like those kind of people.

One is usually only able to resonate with another, if they represent an extension of or mirror one's own qualities. With regards to the statement provided directly above, it can then be argued that she has described her own personality qualities, namely that she communicates frankly and has a well established value system.

Anisa is further of the opinion that people who have truly found that which resonates with them, are less likely to parade and 'show off'. Instead, they are more inclined, just as she is, to keep it private and yet still let it radiate through her actions and style of communication.

She remarked that she was:

> Very nervous of people who walk around with a Bible under their arm. It's personal, why do you need to demonstrate it, show it in how you live.

Anisa resonates with the divination and esoteric contexts because these contexts are void of rigidity, structure and rules. She therefore avoids giving the impression that diviners and divination form the foundation of her lifestyle and existence, because then she too will become inflexible. In her view:

> One mustn't make it out like a religion again. Where it becomes the cornerstone of everything that you do. It's got to flow and integrate with your life.

Basic theme: Questioning

During Anisa's interview, she explained the process of her journey away from Christianity towards the esoteric, of which various divination systems form the foundation. According to Anisa, she embarked on this journey after realising that the experiences she was co-creating, and her perceptions of what constituted happiness, were no longer meaningful. She explained that:

> So you must be a little bit, I wouldn't say unhappy, but unsettled about how your life is now. You must ask yourself the question, there is more to life, what is it. I'm feeling restless. Things don't make me happy anymore. Things don't make me happy. What is it that does?

It appears that Anisa's esoteric and divinatory journey was inspired by a process of questioning both the purpose of life and her need to depend on material items for internal happiness. Anisa seems to have established parallels between her own process of differentiation from Christianity and that of others.

As she expressed this:

> People are starting to ask questions.

This statement suggests that Anisa attributes an increase in the movement away from Christianity, to the fact that people are beginning, for the first time, to question their belief systems. This questioning makes it possible for people to consider more satisfying alternatives, without feeling guilty for not conforming to the 'norm'. Anisa seems to describe a process in which she experiences movement away from religious dependence to esoteric independence.

Questioning as a theme is not only prevalent within a religious or esoteric context, but also in a divinatory context. Anisa explained that her consultations with diviners are preceded by periods of 'questioning her questioning', which often create ambivalence. Anisa then consults with her diviner in an attempt to ascertain whether or not her questioning and meta-questioning is justified. She explained:

> It's confirmed for me that I'm on the right track with asking the questions that I ask. It's also made me feel a lot more comfortable with myself. You know, you tend to think, am I strange am I weird why do I question everything. People always say, don't just question, accept and I'm not one who must just accept.

It seems that Anisa perceives her tendency to query things as being atypical and nonconforming within 'conventional society'. She therefore seeks contexts in which the trait of 'questioning' is encouraged and recommended and it appears that the divinatory context is most fitting.

Basic theme: Personal growth

Anisa communicates about diviners in a manner suggesting that she is indebted to them for enhancing and nurturing her personal growth and development. It would appear that diviners provide Anisa with a stable and secure basis on which she can build self knowledge and work towards self improvement.   She explained:

> It's like a big puzzle, it's like a DNA If one cell is not there, there's a defect in the end. I believe the whole esoteric teaching, learning, experiences, divination system, whatever you want to call it, is a DNA, part of a DNA that makes me, a part of me, you know, each one, the more I study, the more I get to know or deal with it, the healthier that part of my DNA becomes.

It appears from this descriptive statement that for Anisa her consultations with diviners and involvement in the esoteric significantly contribute towards healthier global functioning.

Anisa spoke about two areas of her functioning which diviners have most assisted her to develop. The first is her intuition:

> One thing I've definitely realised that I need to do a lot more, and it's come to the fore and I practise it, is to follow my intuition because a lot of what they tell you is intuitive.

By encouraging Anisa to listen to her intuition, the message is being communicated that she should have faith in her perceptions and believe in herself.   Anisa may need this encouragement in order for her to actualise her potential and pursue personal growth.

The second area of functioning she refers to is her empathy and compassion for others. Before consulting with diviners, it seems that Anisa was more 'self conscious' and less 'other

conscious'. She may previously have disconnected from others by focussing on her own needs and expressing selective warmth and nurturance. She explained:

> What I think it has awakened in me, is a love, greater positivity towards human kind, towards the man on the street, anybody out there….I'm more in tune with the suffering of other people.

Associating diviners with the ability to facilitate personal growth and healing does not appear to be unfounded, given these statements provided by Anisa. For her, divination is equated with personal development and improvement.

Basic theme: Exercising choice

Anisa expressed the need to explain that she does not typically believe, follow or depend on information given to her during a reading. She decides what information is relevant or meaningful to her and discards the rest. This process highlights that Anisa experiences consultations with diviners as uplifting because her right to exercise choice is respected. Diviners do not seem to force or persuade Anisa to 'live by' their readings.   By being able to choose and make her own decisions during a consultation, Anisa frees herself from dependency on a diviner. She observed:

> I don't want to run my life dependent on what someone else tells me the future holds.

This statement seems to challenge the dominant belief that individuals who consult with diviners are naive, closed-minded and susceptible to influence.

According to Anisa, information provided during a reading is not infallible and can be changed and altered by the sitter.   She is of the opinion that:

You are the master of your own destiny. Okay ja, they talk about the blue print out there and what you put out in the universe you get back. I agree there, but you could always enhance and change and redirect the blue print.

If you ask the right questions, you do the right things, you explore enough, I think you can definitely change your destiny.

One could assume that Anisa consults with diviners in an attempt to experience more control over her life. Any deviations from what was initially predicted by a diviner will prove to Anisa that it was she who has controlled the outcome as a result of changing her behaviour and making different choices.

Anisa also explained that:

The idea at the end of the day is to have an open mind. Don't be gullible all its doing is opening your mind, opening up a different world, giving you a different perspective. It's up to you to make your educated decision.

By being open-minded, Anisa provides herself with the space needed to exercise a choice should she wish to do so. It seems that Anisa would limit her ability to make an educated decision or choice, should she enter 'blindly' into a consultation as this reduces vision and limits options.

Organising theme: Freedom

Anisa can be described as a 'free spirit' journeying towards opportunities and experiences in which she enjoys freedom of movement, thought and emotion. In all four basic themes of 'resonance', 'questioning', 'personal growth' and 'exercising choice' Anisa's emphasis and focus on her pursuit of freedom are highlighted. In the basic theme 'resonance', Anisa

encourages other individuals, including herself, to pursue that which resonates with who they are, what they believe in and how they understand the world, in other words, to live an autonomous life. It appears that when Anisa was a member of the Christian Church, she was living a life characterised by immobility, restrictions and dependence, given that she was not encouraged to pursue 'difference' or 'otherness'. It seems that she is now rebelling against years of control and dominance and is for the first time, pursuing that which makes her happy and gives voice to her opinions, beliefs and values; and that it is within the context of divination and spirituality that Anisa experiences the necessary freedom to achieve this. In the basic theme 'questioning', Anisa explains that she was not allowed the freedom to question, because religious 'dominant others' were aware that this process might have encouraged her to pursue other beliefs, thereby increasing the likelihood that their belief systems would no longer receive support. In the basic theme 'personal growth', Anisa seems to perceive divination as the context most accommodating of her pursuits of freedom and the most encouraging of her process towards self-actualisation. Within the context of divination, Anisa is also able to experience the freedom and flexibility to 'exercise choice' and it would appear that this act alone highlights Anisa's connection with personal freedom, as she is acting in accordance with her inherent needs, wishes and desires.

Basic theme: Education

Anisa's experience is that divination, diviners and supporters thereof, like herself, are often incorrectly labelled, categorised and stereotyped because of the uneducated opinions of others. Anisa firmly believes that people should be informed of what diviners do, what their belief systems are and which principles they support. As she said:

> I just think people should be educated, people should talk about these things more…there should be a lot more exposure.

Anisa seems to be of the opinion that dialoguing with sceptics about various divination systems, will change perceptions and increase reception thereof.

It appears that Anisa feels cheated by Christianity, given that it did not educate her about other belief systems so that she could rightfully decide for herself which path to follow. She explained:

> People don't talk about it and that's where the world religions, the heads of churches, uum, are selfish, they should educate the people and don't.

Anisa seems almost to have been pushed, by Christianity, into adopting esoteric beliefs. Anisa's interpersonal style is such that she manoeuvres for interaction and collaborative discussions and disengages when she experiences one-upmanship and 'voicelessness'. Her experiences in the Christian church were of exactly this nature, as she found that ministers preached to her and did not dialogue with her. The context of divination is seemingly different for Anisa. As she reported:

> What I like about these individuals as well, because I belong to a group that meets monthly, is that they talk, we talk about things, we address issues, we ask questions, and we address it head on.

Anisa seems to appreciate being able to co-create her own beliefs and contribute meaningfully towards her belief system. She also values the fact that the esoteric context nurtures an atmosphere of education and insight.

Basic theme: Learning

Anisa seems to have a need to stimulate her curious, inquisitive nature and quests for learning. It appears that she is drawn to those who are able to provide her with knowledge and information that was previously unknown to her, as this keeps her intrigued and fascinated. She also chooses to engage with individuals who provide her with enriching experiences and model new ways of relating. It seems that individuals pursuing a journey in the esoteric offer Anisa that which she seeks for herself, needs to develop or should learn. She explained:

> It's just learning, you learn from the individuals. They've got a lot of insight and a lot of them have gone and stayed in India and travelled, they've got a lot of human insight. They work on relationships. To them, they also, the other thing is they are not materialistic. Interestingly enough, not one of these people are materialistic. They are all about relationships.

The theme of learning is also prevalent when Anisa describes her beliefs in past lives. Anisa is of the opinion that individuals transgress through various lives in order to learn valuable life lessons and in doing so, are closer to maximising their potential. She said:

> Your lesson is to learn that lesson. Your purpose is to learn that lesson. Until you've learnt that lesson, you are gong to continually make the same mistake, create that same situation or whatever the case may be.

It seems that Anisa may wish to consult with a diviner to learn about her past lives, in hopes that she will be able to make her present life less challenging. By knowing in advance what lessons she needs to learn, she may avoid having to struggle through trial-and-error learning.

Organising theme: Becoming

'Becoming', for purposes of explaining this organising theme, refers to the process of moving from an earlier state of understanding, being and conceptualising. Becoming is therefore essentially an act denoting a movement or shift from what was the case previously and by definition thus describes an evolving process. Both the basic themes 'education' and 'learning' serve as catalysts for 'becoming', as they permit the incorporation of new information into a system which is needed for a shift to take place. From the basic theme 'learning', it can be said that Anisa credits divination systems or the esoteric with enabling her to enter into the process of 'becoming', as through these contexts she has come to learn the most about herself and the world around her. The more Anisa learns about her environment and her own functioning, the more opportunity she enjoys for self development, growth and change; in other words, the more dynamic her process of 'becoming'. In the basic theme 'education', Anisa proposes that education has the power to change the negative perceptions and stereotypes pertaining to divination and the methods used therein. Anisa seems to be of the opinion that those who are wary about divination are caught in a process of stagnation and will benefit from education's ability to facilitate a more rewarding process of 'becoming' in which they can experience change and development.

Global theme: Transformation

The global theme 'transformation' is the polar opposite of the earlier global theme 'conservation'. 'Transformation' can be described as a significant or noteworthy change in functioning or character. In both the organising themes 'freedom' and 'becoming' it seems evident that Anisa is journeying towards transformation and personal development. From the organising theme 'freedom', it is most apparent that divination or the esoteric has provided Anisa with the context needed to transform herself on a spiritual, personal and emotional level. On a spiritual level, she seems to have discovered a kaleidoscope of practices and

beliefs with which she resonates and this appears to have paved the way for self actualisation. On a personal level, she appears to have developed self confidence and more empathy for others while on an emotional level she seems to have been given the tools needed to better cope with complex emotional stimuli. The organising theme 'becoming' is also indicative of 'transformation', because 'becoming' is similar in process to 'transformation'. Both suggest an evolutionary progression, in which there is difference, change and development from what was or occurred before.

Personal reflection

Anisa presented as a confident, focussed and determined businesswoman, who knows what she wants from life and how she will achieve this. The researcher was specifically impressed by Anisa's conceptualisations of divination or the esoteric and the manner in which she 'languaged' about her belief system. Both her implicit and explicit behaviour gave the impression that divination is 'close to her heart' and that she will defend it and her belief systems regardless of who is in front of her. The researcher has experienced many years of 'voicelessness' and Anisa's determination to 'say what she wants to say' and to do so with conviction was simultaneously daunting and inspiring. Anisa presented as though she has found her place within divination and knows what resonates and what does not. The researcher is still embarking on this journey, but, from the interview with Anisa, is a step closer towards understanding the complexities of divination or the esoteric.

ANISA'S RESULTS ON THE LOCUS OF CONTROL QUESTIONNAIRE

Table 8.2 Anisa's results on the Locus of Control Questionnaire

Participant	Avril	Elise	Abel	Vanessa	Anisa
'Chance' Scale	35	29	17	21	19
'Powerful others' Scale	36	33	25	30	36
'Total External' Orientation'	71	62	42	51	55
'Internal' Scale	36	37	31	24	38
'Total Locus of Control'	107	99	73	75	93

Legend:

- **'Chance' and Powerful others' scale:**

Scores ranging between 8 – 24   =   Controlled by chance or powerful others

A score of 24   =   Midpoint

Scores ranging between 24 – 40   =   Not controlled by chance or powerful others

- **'Internal' scale:**

Scores ranging between 8 – 24   =   External locus of control orientation

A score of 24   =   Midpoint

Scores ranging between 24 – 40   =   Internal locus of control orientation

- **'Total External' orientation:**

Scores ranging between 16 - 48   =   External locus of control orientation

A score of 48   =   Midpoint

Scores ranging between 48 – 80   =   Internal locus of control orientation

- **'Total Locus of Control':**

Scores ranging between 24– 72   =   External locus of control orientation

Score of 72   =   Midpoint

Scores ranging between 72 – 120   =   Internal locus of control orientation

Anisa's results on the total 'external orientation' scale and total 'locus of control' scale clearly indicate that she displays an internal locus of control orientation. Individuals with an internal locus of control orientation are described as believing that they are in control over their own lives and perceive the outcomes of situations to be linked directly to their own actions and behaviours. Anisa's internality suggests that she is more likely to achieve self actualisation, given that she integrates feedback received from the environment with her own definition of 'self' and is not solely dependent on the feedback from others to define her 'self'. Although Anisa's score as regards her 'total external orientation' concurs that she tends towards internality, her score on the 'chance' scale indicates externality in terms of being controlled by chance or fate. This means that Anisa is likely to believe that 'chance' variables can interfere with and avert the control she attempts to maintain over her life. The same however does not seem to apply to 'powerful others'. Anisa's score on the 'powerful others' scale suggests that she does not perceive those in positions of power and authority to exercise control over her life and is unlikely to please 'powerful others' in hopes of achieving her goals. Anisa then, does not foresee success in her life as being dependent on alliances with 'powerful others' but rather on her acting congruently with her own needs, frame of reference and belief system.

INTEGRATION OF THEMATIC NETWORK ANALYSIS AND RESULTS ON THE LOCUS OF CONTROL QUESTIONNAIRE

Anisa's results on the Locus of Control Questionnaire indicate that she has a well defined internal locus of control orientation and that this orientation will predominate in all contexts. The themes extracted from Anisa's interview corroborate her internality highlighted in the questionnaire, as they strongly suggest that Anisa deploys strategies to remain in control of her own life. An internal locus of control orientation is strongly associated with self development, using information from present situations to improve future behaviour and goal achievement (Rotter, 1966). The global theme 'transformation' embodies all these qualities as reference was made to Anisa's determination to experience positive shifts in her life, improve her global functioning and develop within both the spiritual and personal domains. Anisa achieves these goals by exercising choice, following her own intuition and by questioning and challenging that which is presented to her by others. These traits are characteristic of an internal locus of control orientation as they are indicative of an individual who accepts responsibility for their own growth and development and who does not expect others to provide directives in this regard. It is also noteworthy to mention the organising theme 'freedom' because in this theme Anisa advocates for independence, autonomy and pursuit of inner happiness even if it requires opposing the dominant voices within society. This is evidence of Anisa's internality as she relies on herself and not on others to 'gauge' her own behaviour. The global theme of 'conservation' mimics a similar process as it explains how Anisa is able to regulate and control which feedback she wishes to acknowledge and accept, in which contexts, and is not dependent on the contexts for feedback. This is further indicative of an internal locus of control orientation, as Anisa is unlikely to change her beliefs or opinions as a result of reinforcement from others in specific contexts.

The Locus of Control Questionnaire depicted a high internal score on the 'powerful others' scale which indicates that Anisa is not likely to let those in superior positions control and manage her life.   The organising themes 'control' and 'rigidity' pertinently highlighted how Anisa opposes individuals who attempt to remove the decision making powers of others in efforts to control and dominate. It was noticeable in these themes that Anisa advocates for herself and other individuals to have the power and freedom to live their lives without interference and persuasion by those in positions of authority.   This speaks directly about Anisa's internality because it suggests that she will challenge those attempting to control, manage or order her life. The organising theme 'true self' also emphasises Anisa's internal locus of control orientation, given that it centres around Anisa's belief that people should act congruently with their 'inner selves' and not alter who they are to please others, seeing that doing so will only further reinforce the power and control imposed by others.   What Anisa inherently also seems to be saying is that individuals who deny or hide their 'true self' are displaying externality as they are easily persuaded by others to abandon their identity. Anisa, when reviewing all levels of themes extracted from her interview, is attracted to divination systems and the people 'active' within these contexts as she perceives them to be less over-powering and the least likely to turn a beliefs or opinions into a dogmatic life-style. This suggests that she attempts to escape the direct company of 'powerful others' and would rather be her own 'powerful other' in her life.

Anisa's result on the 'chance' scale of the Locus of Control Questionnaire suggests that she is likely to believe that the variables chance or luck are able to influence her life and that this makes her life seemingly less predictable.   None of the themes extracted from Anisa's interview make reference to her perceptions of the role 'chance' or 'luck' have in her life. The researcher therefore re-searched Anisa's interview and during this process came across statements suggesting that she would believe that 'chance' or 'luck' have an influence in her life. The statements were not grouped together into themes or included into the thematic network analysis, given a lack of corroborating support. Anisa's statements 'I suppose it's

just by *chance* and interest' and 'by *chance* you come on that road' clearly indicate that although she believes in standardised, methodological divination systems, she also believes that certain presenting situations may unfold spontaneously, given the influence of 'chance' or 'luck'.

Conclusion

Anisa presents with a dominant interpersonal style and proposes her viewpoints with conviction and determination. She is passionate about the various divination systems and is currently embarking on her own journey of spiritual enlightenment. An overview of the thematic network analysis suggests that although Anisa attempts to conserve her beliefs and opinions, she is open to new and different experiences and is eager to learn about and explore her environment. A prominent thread throughout the themes extracted from Anisa's interview is that she strongly opposes oppression and indoctrination and is weary of individuals who claim to be 'all knowing'. Her scores on the Locus of Control Questionnaire emulate the themes extracted during thematic network analysis and concur that Anisa will not 'submit' to 'powerful others', is likely to attribute certain experiences to chance or luck and perceives only herself to be the master of her own destiny. Anisa's consultations with diviners appear to be inspired by an awakened need for self understanding and insight and provide opportunities for introspection – this often nurtures the space required for interpersonal change. Although Anisa herself is a student learning about the many divinatory practices, she too can be described as a teacher within this context because her opinions permeate boundaries and challenge what 'is'.

CHAPTER 9

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

"When you die and go to heaven, our maker is not going to ask 'Why didn't you discover the cure for such and such?' 'Why didn't you become the Messiah?' The only question we will be asked in that precious moment is 'Why didn't you become you'?"

Elie Wiesel (cited in Stanton, 2005)

Introduction

The reader, in the previous chapter, became immersed in each individual participant's lived experiences with diviners and was given the opportunity to reflect on the relationship between the themes extracted from each participant's interview and his or her locus of control scores.   This chapter is aimed at a multi-level comparative focus in which the participant's demographic variables, interview themes and locus of control orientations will be compared to each other as well as the literature provided. Similarities and differences will be highlighted, as also how this study either verifies or disputes previous research. The researcher wishes to emphasise that it is not her intention to generalise any of the findings from this study, but rather make comparisons so as to contribute to the available body of knowledge on this topic. Furthermore, by comparing the participants' themes and locus of control with one another, the intention is not to minimise any one participant's experiences as every experience is respected in its own right.

Comparison between participant demographic variables and literature pertaining to individuals who consult with diviners

Gender

Abel, the only male participant, presented as least supportive of diviners and their ability to provide guidance and direction in his life. This observation would concur with the literature that men in general are the least likely to hold superstitious or paranormal beliefs (Aarnio, 2007; Clarke, 1991; Irwin, 1993). It appears likely with Abel that this scepticism is linked less to his gender and more to his world view and spiritual beliefs. Abel, unlike other participants, is of the opinion that diviners do not elicit information through their divinatory powers or external sources (for example, angels) but, rather, are able to access and tap into an individual's unconscious. Hence, according to Abel, diviners do not seem to possess extra-ordinary abilities or talents, but are merely more 'in tune with' his inner world and experiences. Interestingly, Abel's reframing of a diviner's ability is documented in the literature where it was reported that diviners were able to tap into an individual's inner core or essence (Janet, cited in Siegar, 2008, testimonial section), and understood an individual's most intimate thoughts and feelings (Kathleen, cited in Justis, 2008, testimonial section).

Martial status

Wuthnow (cited in Irwin, 1993) and Tyson (1979), referred to in the literature study, found that separated and divorced individuals record significantly higher beliefs in astrology. Abel and Vanessa are the only two divorced participants and neither communicated a stronger belief in astrology, which to some extent then, challenges the research findings. This study, rather, presents findings suggesting that individuals who have experienced significant interpersonal loss are more likely to consult with diviners. Interpersonal loss and disconnection appears to be a commonality between most of the participants, whether through divorce, as with Elise and Abel; or death, as with Anisa, Vanessa and Avril; or interpersonal conflict, as most visible in Elise, Vanessa and Abel's themes.

Sensation seeking, creativity and imagination

An overview of the participants' themes also suggests other salient themes which include a need to encounter the un-encountered, explore the unknown and satisfy a curiosity in what lies 'beyond'. It seems that most participants are motivated to consult with diviners, given an inherent dissatisfaction with life 'as is'. Both Anisa ('true self') and Abel ('transformation' and 'conservation') appear to have had an unsettling feeling which prompted philosophical dialogue about the meaning and purpose of life. Divination seems to have enticed the participants because it provides a 'rollercoaster' of captivating and surprising experiences, which would normally have been absent in the participants' lives. This finding is documented in the literature, where sensation seeking behaviour, and a need for stimulation and variety of experience, feature in individuals with paranormal beliefs (Groth-Marnat & Pegden, 1998; Irwin, 1993; Tobacyk & Milford, 1983).

World view

The literature also addressed the world views of individuals consulting with diviners and suggested that individuals are either 'religious', 'paranormal' or 'double' believers (Lindeman, 2007). All of the participants were raised in and held long standing 'religious' beliefs and only later incorporated 'paranormal' beliefs into their world views. Abel and Anisa are now, according to the literature, predominantly 'paranormal' believers and Avril, Elise and Vanessa 'double' believers. It would be interesting to explore the variables influencing the discrepancies between participants' world views in more detail. The literature also suggested that individuals from the Catholic denomination were the least likely to report superstitious beliefs and that Jewish individuals were the most superstitious (Wagner, cited in Tyson, 1979). Although it is not the intention of the researcher to generalise the findings from this study, it is worth mentioning that Anisa is of Catholic background and Elise of Jewish background, which to some extent then challenges the research findings, as both participants are interested in divination and regularly consult with diviners.

The literature proposed that individuals consulting with diviners generally hold an esoteric world view (Irwin, 1993; Ludwig & Madison, 1966; Searle, 2008; Tart, 2004). Abel, Elise and Anisa's interviews in particular, were heavily laden with spiritual and esoteric constructs and significant reference was made to transcendent phenomena and mysticism. This suggests that Abel and Anisa are likely to perceive divination, spirituality and esotericism as interlinked and mutually inclusive.

Involvement in the paranormal

The literature indicated that individuals with superstitious beliefs claim to have paranormal experiences (Rattet & Bursik, 2001) and may practise as a psychic or medium (Irwin, 1993). Abel, Elise and Avril have undergone paranormal experiences and Avril has been informed by diviners that she has psychic abilities. This suggests a confirmation of the research findings.

Personality

The researcher, when embarking on her research topic, expected that the participants would elaborate more on their profound and unusual experiences with diviners. Instead, the topic of divination yielded information pertaining to the participants' interpersonal struggles, challenges and hardships. Interestingly then, if one wishes to explore an individual's vulnerabilities it would be beneficial to inquire about their consultations with diviners. Vanessa, in particular, presented as overly anxious and troubled whereas the other participants presented with more euthymic moods. The literature highlighted that individuals consulting with diviners present with heightened negative emotions (Irwin, 1993) and increased anxiety levels (Rattet & Bursik, 2001; Watt & Wiseman, 2004; Zebb & Moore, 2001). This study would confirm the notion that individuals are likely to consult with diviners during periods of psychological 'distress' but would disconfirm the suggestion that individuals who consult with diviners are generally more anxious and unstable.

Rattet and Bursik (2001) found that belief in the paranormal is stronger in the feeling, perceiving and intuitive personality types as outlined in Jung's personality theory. Anisa, Avril, Elise and Vanessa all seemed to use the nodal term 'intuition' or referred to themselves as intuitive by nature. Two propositions can be advanced based on this commonality. Firstly, that more intuitive individuals consult with diviners or welcome divinatory experiences and secondly, that, 'tapping' into the metaphysical realm may require intuition or a 'sixth sense' as a prerequisite.

Additional traits or demographic variables obtained from the biographical questionnaire

Relationship status of participants' parents: Elise, Vanessa, Abel and Anisa's parents were married and Avril's parents divorced.

Family members who consult with diviners: Abel and Vanessa had no family members who consulted with diviners. Elise and Avril's children, however, consulted with diviners while Anisa's mother consulted with diviners after the death of her son.

Consultations with psychologists: Avril is the only participant who has not consulted with psychologists. Elise and Abel's consultations with a psychologist preceded their consultations with diviners.

Consulting diviners versus psychologists: Elise did not indicate different reasons for consulting either a diviner or psychologist. Avril would only consult with psychologists for what she described as deep rooted problems. Abel would consult a diviner for spiritual matters and Vanessa for business matter and family related problems, more specifically the death of her husband. Anisa in general prefers consulting with a diviner over and above a psychologist.

Comparative analysis of participant interview themes

The researcher, has, for the purposes of comparative analysis, designed a table in which the participants' themes reflecting similar topics or characteristics have been grouped together horizontally. The researcher respects the possibility that another researcher may group the themes differently depending on the lens used for viewing.

Table 9.1 Comparative analysis of interview themes

Thematic level	Avril	Elise	Abel	Vanessa	Anisa
Organising theme	'Control'	'Influence'	'Rigid boundaries'		'Control'
	'Linearity'				'Rigidity'
	'Predictability'				
	'Rationality'				
	'Self nurturance'	'Self assessment'	'Transformation' versus 'Conservation'		'True Self' 'Becoming'
		'Substitution'			
		'Powerlessness'			
			'Interdependence'	'Connection within the context of disconnection'	
			'Ambivalence'	'Incomplete themes'	
			'Illusions'		
				'Reactivity'	
					'Freedom'
Global theme	'Creating order'	'Control'			'Conservation'
	'Soul expression'				''Transformation'
		'Belonging'	'Inclusion versus exclusion'	'Helplessness'	
			'Proactivity versus reactivity'		
				'Intermediate states'	

Legend:

- **Avril's organising themes:**

'Control':   Need to experience control given recurrent feelings of helplessness, apprehension and ambivalence.

'Linearity':   Emphasises cause-effect dualism of life. Assigns causal explanation for current events.

'**Predictability'**:   Elicits information from diviners about her future which makes her life more predictable.

'Rationality':   Describes self as logical and approaches situations from a rational stance.

'Self nurturance':   Divination provides a context for emotional expression, meaningful interpersonal connection and development of her intuition.

- **Avril's global themes:**

'Creating order':   Structures and arranges her life so as to limit and control unpredictability.

'Soul expression':   Divination allows her to express her soul's needs and wishes, more specifically her emotions, sentiments and intuition.

- **Elise's organising themes:**

'Influence':   Consultations with diviners provide information or guidance which permits her to have more influence over her environment.

'Self assessment':   Uses astrological report to review and evaluate aspects of the self' and areas of functioning. Content of report a 'gauge' for what aspect of functioning deserves attention.

'Substitution':   First order attempt to solve problems and address that which is lacking in relationships.

'Powerlessness':   Submissive in interpersonal relationships, perceives self to lack personal power and influence.

- **Elise's global themes:**

'Control':   Creates contexts that increase perceptions of control. Controls from the 'one down', inferior position in relationships. Divination enhances feelings of control.

'Belonging':   Struggles to experience belonging in relationships. Only certain aspects of the 'self' give her 'right of admission' into relationships.

- **Abel's organising themes:**

'Rigid boundaries':   Establishes rigid boundaries between himself and others and covertly encourages others to do the same.

'Transformation versus conservation':	Alternates between periods of conservation('self as rigid') and transformation ('self as flexible').
'Interdependence':	Spiritual 'gurus' influence his thinking. Perceives self to be interdependent on and in unity with all that surrounds him.
'Ambivalence':	Simultaneously believes and disbelieves in divination.
'Illusions':	Of the opinion that individuals have inaccurate perceptions of religious or spiritual experiences.

- **Abel's global themes:**

'Inclusion versus exclusion':	Experienced interpersonal rejection and isolation as well as belonging and acceptance.
'Proactivity versus reactivity':	Experienced helplessness as a result of being overpowered by religious contexts (reactive) and was simultaneously also proactive by educating himself so as to experience spiritual development, interpersonal change and growth.

- **Vanessa's organising themes:**

'Connection within the context of disconnection':	Creates context through which she is able to connect with image of deceased husband. Diviners facilitate connection with the disconnected aspect of her life, namely her deceased husband.
'Incomplete themes':	Struggles to piece together the 'puzzle' of her life. Cannot move forward until she knows the circumstances surrounding her husband's death.
'Reactivity':	Responds to what has been created for her by others and not created by her.

- **Vanessa's global themes:**

'Helplessness':	Perceives self as helpless and a victim of circumstance. Feelings of being 'trapped'.
'Intermediate states':	In a process of being in 'limbo'. Cannot plan future without understanding her past.

- **Anisa's organising themes:**

'Control':	Currently 'rebelling' against the control of others over her. Advocates for freedom of choice. Perceives divination as the only context free of authoritarianism.
'Rigidity':	Perceives the Christian church and psychologists as inflexible and dogmatic.
'True self':	Believes that individuals with spiritual or divinatory beliefs are more authentic as their behaviour is congruent with 'self'.

'Becoming': Uses divinatory context to develop self insight and interpersonal growth. Educates others about divinatory context.

'Freedom': In pursuit of personal freedom. Divination encourages flexibility of choice.

- **Anisa's global themes:**

'Conservation': Believes that the Christian church conserves its belief system by imposing control or rigidity. Inclined to conserves aspects of her 'self' to reduce apprehension.

'Transformation': Uses divinatory context to transform in spiritual, emotional and interpersonal domains.

On comparing the organising themes extracted from each participant's interview, two pertinent trends emerge: the first appears to centre around the elements of control and influence, and the second around self insight and self expression. Irwin (1993), Langer (1975) and Paulhus's (1983) studies suggest that individuals may consult with diviners as a means of coping with the perceived threat of uncontrollable and unpredictable situations or experiences. Both Avril and Elise's themes seem to corroborate these findings. As explained in Avril's theme of 'control' and Elise's organising theme of 'powerlessness', both experienced their lives as 'spiralling out of control', and consulted with diviners in an attempt to exercise some personal influence over their lives and experience 'control' in at least one subsystem. Anisa's interview reflects another aspect of 'control' as regards her themes of 'rigidity' and 'control'. She seems to have experienced oppression and dominance by religious powerful others, regularly consults with diviners, and is attracted to divination because, for her, this is the only domain in which she can manoeuvre for complementary relationships. Divination provides her with the space to exercise choice and control and manage her life as she deems fit. Consulting with diviners and engaging with the world of divination in general therefore seem to constitute attempts for participants to experience more structure, control and manageability over their lives. Abel, although he also encourages others to exercise control over their own lives, is the only participant who seems to be of the opinion that diviners have not influenced his perceptions of personal control ('ambivalence'). Although Abel seems reluctant to communicate that divination has contributed meaningfully towards his life, it would seem that the principles of divination have

assisted his influence over others, as it is his own divining ability which makes him a more effective counsellor. Avril's global theme of 'creating order', Elise's of 'control' and Anisa's of 'conservation' suggest that these participants' persistent attempts to exercise control over their lives are motivated by a need to maintain the status quo. Consulting with diviners in many ways appears to be a morphostatic process, as consultations facilitate constancy and restrict change and this is a comforting notion.

Avril ('self nurturance'), Elise ('self assessment') and Anisa ('true self' or 'becoming') have also used their consultations with diviners to facilitate interpersonal growth, enhance self insight, and nurture personal transformation and development. This suggests that diviners encourage morphogenesis. This is reiterated in the literature, where it was documented that consultations with diviners provided the opportunity for individuals to break dysfunctional interpersonal cycles (Emma, cited in Justis, 2008, testimonial section), reframe past experiences (Colin, cited in Nirup, 2008, testimonial section) and experience more profound inward focus (Janet, cited in Siegar, 2008, testimonial section). Although Abel has not consulted with diviners to facilitate interpersonal growth, he too is nonetheless on the same journey as the other participants ('transformation' or 'conservation'), but would prefer rather to use his 'spirituality' as the vehicle by which to get there

Elise's global theme of 'belonging', Vanessa's of 'helplessness' and Abel's of 'inclusion versus exclusion' suggests that these participants have experienced rejection, had difficulty 'fitting in' and finding belonging because their unconventional viewpoints were not always welcomed by different subsystems. For these participants, being different was not acceptable because it challenged the status quo. Even though no themes extracted from Vanessa's interview refer directly to her experiences of exclusion, there are indications that she too is familiar with interpersonal rejection and has been a recipient of negative judgment and labelling. One could hypothesise that Elise, Abel, Anisa and Vanessa either experienced rejection because of their consultations with diviners or eccentric belief systems,

or that it was their prior rejection which encouraged consultations with diviners, as the context provided unconditional acceptance.

The discussion so far has focussed directly on the themes extracted, but a comparative analysis also necessitates a review of those trends which emerge more saliently in each participant's interview. These will now receive the focus of attention.

Interestingly, all the participants voiced their scepticism of certain diviners and certain divination methods and this suggests that the participants do not perceive diviners as 'all knowing gurus' or 'bearers of truth'. The literature pertaining to individuals' perceptions of a diviner before and after a consultation also confirms that many are wary during consultations, given that certain diviners provide poor and inaccurate readings as a result of falsifying their divinatory abilities (Goldston, 2008; Siegar, 2008).

Although the literature did not address how information given to individuals by diviners impacts on daily lived experiences, the researcher feels it necessary to explore this in terms of the present study, given that she has on numerous occasions encountered the stereotype that individuals who consult with diviners tend to live their lives or 'reshape' their experiences according to the information provided to them by diviners. It was highlighted in the participants' themes that they either entirely discarded information presented to them by diviners, recalled it at a later stage when necessary, or selectively internalised the information. This indicates that the participants in general do not habitually and ritualistically live their lives according to what is said by a diviner, but rather use what is said to complement their lives and enhance meaning.

The literature reported that many consultations with diviners are preceded by a period of uncertainty, confusion and difficulty (Goldston, 2008; Judith, 2008), and this is confirmed in the participants' interviews. Avril, Anisa, Elise and Vanessa experienced problems pertaining

to business, relationships, health and finance. Avril and Vanessa had difficulty accepting the crossing over of a loved one while Anisa and Abel experienced 'stagnation'. Avril and Vanessa also experienced depression whereas Elise and Vanessa experienced interpersonal self doubt.

Although not an inherent characteristic of any of the themes extracted, Vanessa, Avril, Elise and Anisa communicated that consulting with diviners in general seems to 'soothe' interpersonal loss and facilitate healing, because the divinatory context was summarised as creating hope, offering a peaceful and tranquil environment, and a 'therapeutic' experience. Similar findings were reported by Judith (2008) and Lightwalker (2008) who documented testimonials in which individuals felt excited, inspired, empowered and confident after consulting with diviners.

What distinguishes Abel, Elise and Avril from the other two participants is that all three can be described as healers or, as is the case with Avril, have more specifically been healers in their past lives. Abel possesses a gift of divination and, like Elise, is a counsellor and therapist. Avril gives expression to the healer within by using her natural understanding of homeopathy. Given that all three participants have also experienced deep hurt and pain in their lives, it seems that they are also united by the terms 'healing for the healer' or 'wounded healer'. Interestingly, it is Vanessa, one of the participants who did not emerge as a healer in her themes, who is most in need of healing. By consulting with diviners, she seems to experience a comforting and nurturing environment which makes the process of 'ending' and 'beginning' more bearable. The literature consulted did not address the concept of 'healing for the healer' within the context of divination and the researcher is of the opinion that this topic would constitute an interesting study.

An interesting trend emerged on a 'process' level during the interviews with Anisa, Avril and, to some extent, also Abel. The researcher acknowledges that the trend may, in part, have

emerged because of her role as 'researcher' and propensity to ask questions and probe further. All three participants had a need to defend their beliefs and validate their opinions. Given that the researcher-participant relationship mirrors the participants' relationships with others, it can be hypothesised that all three participants have been obliged to continually assert their belief system and because their belief system forms a large part of their identity, also had to substantiate themselves as individuals.

Comparison between participant demographic variables and literature pertaining to locus of control orientation

Gender

Levenson (cited in Lefcourt, 1981) proposed that male adults, as compared to female adults, are more likely to believe that they are controlled by 'powerful others'. This study found that Abel was the only participant to obtain a mid-point score on the 'powerful others' scale as compared to the female participants, who all obtained a score depicting internality on this scale. The researcher, however, does not feel that this warrants the deduction that this study is in agreement with the literature, given that Abel's score does not reflect a clear locus of control orientation on the scale.

Education

Avril, Elise and Anisa have all gained Matric as their highest level of education and obtained scores indicating a 'total' internal locus of control orientation; Vanessa who holds a diploma also displayed internality on the same scale while Abel, who has achieved the highest level of education out of all the participants, obtained a mid-point score which suggests that his locus of control orientation tends to be context specific. This study therefore confirms Ryckman and Malikioski's (cited in Lefcourt, 1981) findings that less educated individuals are more likely to have an external locus of control orientation (Ryckman & Malikioski, cited in Lefcourt, 1981).

Birth order and familial size

In terms of familial size and birth order, an internal locus of control orientation is strongly associated with firstborn status and a small familial size according to Frischlag (cited in Lefcourt, 1981). However, given that 'small familial size' was not defined, no conclusions in terms of this study can be reached. With regards to the relationship between birth order and the participants' locus of control orientation, a) Vanessa and Anisa both have firstborn status

and exhibit a predominant internal locus of control orientation; b) Abel is an only child and was described as presenting with a more external locus of control orientation; c) Elise was the second born of four children and displays a predominant internal locus of control orientation while d) Avril is the middle born of three children and has a clear internal locus of control orientation. This study therefore found no correlation between locus of control orientation and birth order.

Life-cycle changes

The literature suggested that the older an individual is, the more externality he or she will display on the 'powerful others' and 'chance' scales, because ageing is associated with feelings of powerlessness and decline of abilities (Lao, cited in Lefcourt, 1981). Given that Lefcourt (1981) did not indicate which gender population the findings were based on, the researcher wishes to exclude Abel from this discussion. This will allow the researcher to document the findings of this study in terms of a homogenous female population. According to the findings, Avril should present with an external locus of control orientation given that she is the oldest and Anisa, a more predominant internal locus of control given that she is the youngest. However, both Avril and Anisa have a clear internal locus of control orientation despite age discrepancies and this suggests that this study found no correlation between age and locus of control orientation. Levinson (cited in Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 1998) provides a plausible explanation for both Avril and Anisa's internal locus of control orientation, despite the significant age differences. Anisa can be described as being in the culminating phase of early adulthood which is characterised by a period of increased productivity and stabilisation and Avril in the culmination phase of middle adulthood, which is described as a time of calmness and fulfilment (Levinson, cited in Louw, Van Ede & Louw 1998). Anisa's life phase then seems associated with internality because she is preoccupied with making a success of her life and achieving her goals while Avril's internality may be attributed to the fact that she is currently not concerned about external others significantly affecting the 'course of her life' owing to the fact that she has accomplished what she wants to in life.

Comparative analysis of participants' locus of control scores

In order to ground the discussion pertaining to the comparative analysis of the locus of control scores, the reader is provided with a table in which each participant's locus of control orientation as it pertains to differentiating variables is documented.

Table 9.2   Comparative analysis of participants' locus of control scores

	Avril	Elise	Abel	Vanessa	Anisa
'Chance' Scale	Internality	Internality	Externality	Externality	Externality
'Powerful others' Scale	Internality	Internality	Context specific	Internality	Internality
Total 'External Orientation'	Internality	Externality	Externality	Internality	Internality
'Internal' Scale	Internality	Internality	Internality	Context specific	Internality
'Total Locus of Control' Scale	Internality	Internality	Context specific	Internality	Internality

When reviewing and comparing the locus of control scores of all the participants' it appears that the most prominent similarities emerge in the 'internal', 'total locus of control' and 'powerful other' scales.

Avril, Elise, Abel and Anisa all tended towards internality on the 'internal' scale which indicates that all four participants strongly believe that they exercise control over their own lives. Vanessa was the only participant who obtained a mid-point score on this scale and this suggests that her perception of whether or not she controls her own life tends to be context specific. However, when consulting the 'total locus of control' scale, she scored an 'internal' global locus of control orientation, which suggests that she is more often than not in most contexts, inclined towards internality. The 'total locus of control' scale imbues the

second most prominent similarity, which is that the participants perceive their lives and the outcome of situations to be determined by their own actions (internality). Abel's score on this scale clusters around the mid-point and as such, the conclusion can be drawn that his 'total locus of control' orientation tends mostly to be context dependent. It was explained, during the discussion pertaining to Abel's scores on the locus of control questionnaire, that there was some difficulty ascertaining Abel's locus of control orientation given discrepancies in his scores. Interestingly, Phares (1976) offers a sound explanation as to why there was ambivalence in Abel's results, by proposing that some individuals with an external locus of control orientation may behave like 'internals' (referred to as 'defensive externals') when placed in structured performance situations.

From Avril, Elise, Vanessa and Anisa's internal results on the 'powerful others' scale, it becomes clear that all four participants' are less likely to appeal to those in positions of power, do not believe that influential others have authority over them and will not please superiors to get what they want.   It would seem that these four participants are inclined to make decisions and act independently despite the fact that their choices may not be in harmony with their superiors. Abel obtained a mid-point score on this scale and this implies that whether or not he regards 'powerful others' to have a 'hold over him' will depend on who the 'powerful others' are and in which context he encounters them. The researcher is of the opinion that a diviner can be described as the 'powerful other' within the context of divination, as it is the diviner who is in a 'one-up', superior position and has access to information and 'powers' that most sitters do not. This means that Avril, Elise, Vanessa and Anisa are unlikely to abdicate their power to diviners and present with a submissive stance, given that they all presented with internality on the 'powerful others' scale. This finding seems to concur with the literature pertaining to individuals presenting with an internal locus of control orientation, because they are characteristically described as being less dependent on external reinforcement (Joe, 1971; Levenson, 1973; Phares, 1976; Rotter, 1966; Steptoe & Appels, 1989).

Avril, Elise, Vanessa and Anisa all display a predominant internal locus of control orientation. This study therefore disconfirms one of the most pertinent findings in the literature, namely that individuals with an external locus of control orientation are more likely to consult with diviners and hold paranormal and superstitious beliefs (Groth-Marnat & Pegden, 1998; Irwin, 1993; Jahoda, 1969; Pelzer, 2002; Scheidt, 1973; Stanke, 2004; Tobacyk, Nagot & Miller, 1988; Tyson, 1979; Vyse, 1997). All the aforementioned researchers have concluded in their studies and concurred with others that individuals who consult with diviners do not perceive themselves to have control over their own lives and because of their externality, consult with diviners in an attempt to regain some control, power and manageability. It is therefore justifiable to conclude that this study has made a contribution to the available knowledge of the relationship between locus of control and divinatory, paranormal and superstitious beliefs.

The largest discrepancy between the participants appears to be on the 'total external orientation' scale and this would seem appropriate given that this scale reflects the participants' combined scores for the 'powerful others' and 'chance' scales. The researcher wishes to reiterate that "people who believe that the world is *unordered* (*chance*) would behave and think differently than people who believe that the world is *ordered* but that *powerful others* are in control" (Levenson, 1973, p. 398). Abel, Vanessa and Anisa are more inclined to believe that their world is unpredictable because they believe 'chance' and 'luck' is likely to interrupt their lives. Avril and Elise are the only two participants who dispute the notion that their lives are affected by the variables of 'chance' or 'luck' and simultaneously also agree that 'powerful others' do not control them. This means that Avril and Elise in terms of their locus of control orientation are likely to describe their lives as more ordered, structured and predictable.

Vanessa and more specifically Abel were the only two participants to obtain scores falling within the mid-point range. The researcher is hesitant to draw too many conclusions based on this observation but is inclined to consider the notion that Vanessa and Abel may be the most susceptible to external influence and persuasion out of the pool of participants despite the finding that all, excepting Abel, have an internal locus of control orientation.

Integrative analysis between interview and locus of control themes

In order to provide the reader with a refined integrative analysis, the researcher has synthesised the literature pertaining to an *internal* locus of control orientation by dividing it into three primary themes, namely: 'self', 'control' and 'others or environment' (Aarnio, 2007; Groth-Marnat & Pegdon, 1998; Irwin, 1991; Joe, 1971; Lefcourt, 1982; Rotter, 1966, 1973). The internal locus of control orientation will receive more attention given that the majority of participants presented with internality. Externality will however also be discussed where necessary. Although documented independently there is a strong overlap between the themes as one informs the other and should therefore not be viewed as mutually exclusive. The table therefore demonstrates which of the participant's themes correspond with which of the locus of control themes.

Table 9.3   Integrative analysis of themes and locus of control themes

	Locus of control theme: 'self'	Locus of control theme: 'control'	Locus of control theme: 'others or environment'
Avril's themes	'Soul expression'	'Creating order'	'Creating order', 'Soul expression'
Elise's themes	'Self assessment'	'Influence', 'Perfectionism'	'Self assessment', 'Belonging'
Abel's themes	'Interdependence'	'Illusions'	'Interdependence', 'Inclusion versus exclusion', 'Proactivity versus reactivity'
Vanessa's themes	'Helplessness'	'Incomplete themes', 'Connection within the context of disconnection'	'Incomplete themes'
Anisa's themes	'Transformation'	'Conservation', 'Control', 'Rigidity', 'Transformation'	'Transformation'

Legend: Explanation of internal locus of control themes:

1. **'Self':**   Individuals: a) Make quicker mental health recovery, b) display higher achievement motivation, c) are less likely to report distress, anxiety and symptomatic behaviour, and d) focus on personal growth and development.

2. **'Control':** Individuals: a)   Have perceived control over their lives and their environment, b) do not allow powerful others to control them, and c) consider the outcome of situations to be dependent on their actions.

3. **'Others or environment':** Individuals: a) Are more likely to resist coercion, b) have a high need for social approval, c) are less likely to change beliefs because of reinforcement by others, d) learn from their environment, and e) are more independent of external reinforcement.

Locus of control theme: 'Self'

The literature suggests that individuals with an internal locus of control orientation make a better mental health recovery and are less likely to present with a negative mood, given that their actions do not exacerbate their circumstances (Joe, 1971; Levenson, 1973; Phares, 1976; Rotter, 1966; Steptoe & Appels, 1989). Avril, Elise and Anisa all seem to utilise the methods of divination and its' 'teachings' to facilitate healthier and more effective personal and interpersonal functioning. Avril's proactive nature is evident in her theme 'soul expression' where it was demonstrated that she makes a concerted effort to nurture the 'self' and create 'therapeutic' contexts for herself. Although consultations with diviners are challenging for Elise because areas of growth are identified, she meaningfully engages with and reflects on the information given to her and uses it to make positive changes in her life. Anisa appears very similar to Elise in this regard, because she likewise, as suggested in her theme of 'transformation', uses divination systems as the vehicle for introspection, personal development and self actualisation. Abel, as reflected in his theme of 'proactivity versus reactivity', has also encountered a 'metamorphic' process of personal and interpersonal growth but prefers to rather source his 'spirituality' in this regard.

Locus of control theme: 'Control'

Internality is strongly associated with individuals' perceptions that their efforts will have an impact on the outcome of situations and that they possess the power to control and influence their immediate environment (Joe, 1971; Levenson, 1973; Phares, 1976; Rotter, 1966; Steptoe & Appels, 1989). Elise, as evident in her themes of 'influence' and 'perfectionism', attempts to create contexts for herself in which she can experience increased control and manageability over her life. Avril specifically has a strong need to make her life more predictable and controllable and she does this by consulting with diviners who provide her with information pertaining to future situations, which seems to 'create order' and stability. For Vanessa, the themes 'connection within the context of disconnection' and 'incomplete

themes' demonstrate that she perceives herself to have the power to regain control over a seemingly hopeless situation and expects that her efforts will impact on what she knows about her husband's death and facilitate healthier psychological functioning. Although Anisa's themes do not comment directly on her need to instill control in her life, she strongly opposes the 'control' and 'rigidity' imposed on her by others and advocates that others and herself reclaim their power and control over their own lives and be the masters of their own destiny. Abel's interview themes appear related to both the externality and internality poles of the 'control' theme. He, as is visible in the theme 'illusions', seems to engage in a process of reciprocal control where he tries to influence and persuade others while simultaneously allowing 'gurus' to exercise influence and control over him.

An unexpected finding pertains to Avril and Elise's interview and locus of control themes. Both Avril and Elise are the only two participants who have a 'total' internal locus of control orientation and also display internality on the 'chance' or 'powerful others' scales. Yet it is their global interview themes which exhibit the most emphasis on a need to 'create order' and 'control'. According to the literature, the identifying characteristic of an internal locus of control orientation is the belief of being in control of one's own life (Rotter, 1966) and one would therefore have expected Avril and Elise to place less emphasis on creating order and control.

Locus of control theme: 'Others or Environment'

An internal locus of control orientation is, according to Rotter (1966) more commonly identified in individuals who do not conform to what they believe is expected of them from others. This means that internality is associated with an increased ability to appeal against external sources of influence and control and to resist coercion. According to Joe (1971); Levenson (1973); Phares (1976) and Steptoe & Appels (1989) internality is also associated with more effective use of feedback in that individuals are not dependent on, but rather seek feedback from, others in order to improve future behaviour. Vanessa, as visible in her theme

of 'helplessness', reported a history of adopting a 'one down', inferior position in relationships with significant others, questioned her self worth and had a high need for social approval. Since consulting with diviners, her locus of control orientation appears to have shifted towards internality, as evident in her organising theme 'reactivity', because her actions are now less dependent on external reinforcement. Abel, as demonstrated in his themes 'proactivity versus reactivity', 'transformation versus conservation' and 'interdependence', seems still to be negotiating a balance between altering his beliefs because of reinforcement from others (externality) and resisting external influence and pressure (internality). Anisa and Avril are the two participants most likely to resist intimidation and coercion by others. Anisa's theme 'transformation' highlights that she is reluctant to perceive the beliefs set by others as the status quo to which to aspire, and although she prefers to establish her own 'spiritual' norms, she is still respectful of those of others.

It would seem then that the primary difference then between internality and externality is that externality is associated with increased dependence on feedback. In this regard, the researcher wishes to expand more on Abel's theme of 'interdependence'. The content of this theme suggests that Abel displays an external locus of control orientation because he presents as more reliant on the feedback offered to him by others. Of interest, however, is how he languages about his dependence. Abel is of the opinion that the 'self' and others or spiritual entities cannot be separated and that there is mutual interaction and reciprocity between both. This implies that the self can only reach 'optimal' or 'effective' functioning if others or spiritual entities are sourced during this process. It would seem then that Abel uses the insight and feedback of others to broaden his field of understanding and, by doing so, stimulates and enhances his intellectual and psychological functioning. Given that Abel has established himself as an 'expert' in his field and exhibits a higher achievement motivation (his PhD), the researcher proposes that individuals with a predominant external locus of control orientation may not always present with ineffective and 'unhealthy' functioning as

reported by Joe (1971); Levenson (1973); Phares (1976); Rotter (1966) and Steptoe & Appels(1989).

Conclusion

The researcher described and presented this chapter to the reader from her own frame of reference and unique approach to analysis, and wishes to acknowledge that another researcher may 'language' differently about the themes and highlight other facets not documented in this study. The chapter commenced with a comparison between participants' demographic variables and the literature, which was then followed by a comparative analysis of the interview themes of the participants. The two most prominent trends of the interview themes pertained to control and influence, self insight and self expression, which indicates that the participants aspire to make changes to both themselves 'as a system' and a 'system within context'. The reader was then presented with a comparison of the participants' locus of control orientations and the relevant literature. This was followed by an integrated comparative analysis between the participants' locus of control orientations, which challenged one of the primary assertions in the literature, namely that individuals who consult with diviners have a predominant external locus of control orientation. It is hoped that this finding will encourage and inspire others to further pursue in-depth analysis of the relationship between locus of control orientation and divination. The chapter also compared the participants' interview themes with their locus of control orientation and the literature was used as a reference point when doing so. What distinguished this section from the previous two is that the participants' locus of control orientation was discussed in the form of themes, which is unique to this study, and is therefore a 'fresh' avenue for researchers to explore in future.

Given that this chapter exposed the reader to a large quantity of information, pertaining to different themes, the chapter to follow will provide a summary of the most pertinent findings,

draw attention to similarities and discrepancies and emphasise the most important contributions that this study has made.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time"

T.S. Eliot (cited in Monthly Quote, 2009, p.1)

Introduction

This chapter will commence with a brief summary of the study, and will thereafter comprise an overview of the prominent findings, highlight implications for clinical practice, and identify areas of focus for future research. The strengths as well as the limitations of this study will be addressed in brief, and in conclusion, the researcher will describe how the study impacted on her and what areas of personal growth emerged.

Summary of the study

This qualitative study aimed to explore the experiences and locus of control orientation of individuals consulting with diviners. It also determined whether any traits or demographic variables characterised individuals consulting with diviners. The study was underpinned by a postmodern philosophy which encouraged the researcher to respect each participant's multiple accounts of reality and deem all contributions equally valid. The constructivist epistemology adopted in this study dictated the researcher's sensitivity to the mutual reciprocal influence between herself, the participants, and the information obtained, and that reality was created by according meaning to what was observed. Thematic network analysis was used as the primary method of analysis to document experiences, and Levenson's (1973) Locus of Control Questionnaire was used to assess the locus of control orientation of the participants.

Prominent findings from comparative analysis of interview themes:

The following surfaced as the most pertinent findings from the participants' interviews:

- Discussing the participant's consultations with diviner's yielded information pertaining to interpersonal struggles, hardships of daily living and dialogues about the meaning of life.

- Consultations with diviners attended to unfulfilled needs, fulfilled incomplete themes, and provided different experiences seldom encountered elsewhere.

- Participants usually consulted with diviners after a period of uncertainty or interpersonal difficulty.

- Participants are more intuitive in nature, are 'healers' themselves, or work in therapeutic milieus.

- Participants were sceptical of diviners or certain methods of divination, and therefore critical of the information provided to them during consultations.

- Participants generally consulted with diviners for self-development and interpersonal growth. Eliciting answers about what awaited them in the future appeared to be only a secondary gain.

- Consultations provided participants with perceived or actual control over their lives or allowed them to escape the control of others.

- Most of the participants experienced varying degrees of exclusion and rejection from significant others, and had difficulty experiencing belonging.

- Consultations were described as offering a tranquil and healing space in which energies were replenished and new understandings constellated.

Implications for clinical practice and suggestions for future research

Implications for clinical practice:

The prominent findings from the participants' interviews suggest that clinicians should explore the divinatory experiences of individuals and acknowledge the divinatory context as a support system, facilitator of interpersonal growth and soundboard for many who seek direction and reassurance. By inquiring about divinatory experiences, a clinician gains access into an individual's world of struggles and vulnerabilities and comes to know which areas of the psyche have been wounded. For those clinicians who neglect to engage in or are weary of discussions pertaining to divination, it is hoped that this research has stimulated a new appreciation for and understanding of the divinatory world and thereby also challenged some of the negative stereotypes associated with consulting with diviners. Furthermore, it appears that this study taps into the domain of existentialism, given that participants communicated about their spiritual and self transcendent experiences. Therapeutically dialoguing about the existential and transpersonal domains of an individual's functioning is invaluable as it, for example, facilitates "building resilience by helping a person to draw from spiritual resources when confronting life's adversities; and mobilising of relational support during crises" (Griffith, 2005).

Suggestions for future research:

The researcher recommends that:

- The variables influencing the shift from being a predominant 'religious believer' to becoming either a 'paranormal believer' or 'double believer' should be the focus of a study in the future.

- More attention to the differences between males' and females' experiences of diviners should be accorded by another study.

- Future research explore whether individuals who describe themselves as being more intuitive in nature, and as having the ability to 'heal', are more likely to consult with diviners.

- Individuals' experiences with diviners be conceptualised within the context of existential and transpersonal theories.

- A study exploring the role and perceptions of psychologists versus diviners would also be meaningful.

Prominent findings from comparative analysis of locus of control scores:

The following is an overview of the most significant findings pertaining to the locus of control orientations of participants:

- All the female participants presented with a 'total' internal locus of control orientation. The male participant's locus of control orientation tended primarily towards externality and appeared to be context specific.

- In terms of the 'powerful others' scale, all the participants presented with internality on this scale, except for one participant whose perception of whether or not powerful others control her life was context specific.

- No patterns emerged in terms of the 'chance' scale.

Implications for clinical practice and suggestions for future research

Implications for clinical practice:

Levenson's scale (1973) divided the external scale into the 'Chance' and 'Powerful others' scales and this distinction warrants attention from clinicians as it impacts on the therapeutic process. For example, before one can facilitate the establishment of an internal locus of control orientation, it needs to be determined whether the individual perceives his or her life

to be controlled by 'chance' or 'powerful others' because different areas are tapped into and there are different implications regarding whether or not the world is perceived as ordered or unpredictable. Furthermore, the locus of control orientation of an individual will impact on the dynamics and relationship between a therapist and patient or client. For example, it is hypothesised that an individual with an external locus of control orientation would present with a more dependent interpersonal style in therapy and attempt to manoeuvre the clinician into a 'one-up', superior position. This style would therefore need to be attended to when attempting to empower the individual and foster independence.

Suggestions for future research:

This study consisted primarily of a sample of Caucasian, female participants between the ages of thirty nine and fifty nine. A recommendation for future research would therefore be to use a different sample when exploring the locus of control orientation of individuals who consult with diviners. Suggestions include focussing primarily on males and participants younger in age and of different cultural groups.

Of value, too, would be a more detailed study which focuses on the 'chance' and 'powerful others' scales. A suggested hypothesis could be that 'Individuals consulting with diviners believe their lives are controlled by chance'.

A study exploring whether or not consulting with diviners has the ability to alter an individual's 'total' locus of control orientation would be of tremendous value. The researcher recommends that a longitudinal study be conducted in which participants are given Levenson's (1973) Locus of Control Questionnaire to complete before their first consultation, and subsequently a few months after their initial consultation, and that comparisons then be made.

Limitations of the study

The researcher acknowledges that her participation influenced the way in which the interviews were constructed and recognises that her perceptions tainted how she 'dialogued' with the information and documented findings. This research is therefore not intended to, and cannot represent absolute truth. The second shortcoming of this study pertains to the limited availability of past research and literature pertaining to individuals' experiences with diviners. As a result, it was necessary that the researcher document older studies and source and reference internet sites, which impacted on this study's validity and restricted comparative analysis. The third limitation is related to the study's qualitative methodological stance which imposes the restriction that the findings pertaining to experiences with diviners cannot be generalised and that general conclusions cannot be made.

Strengths of the study

Given that this topic has the potential to evoke 'heated' debates, amplify differences of opinions and challenge opinions and belief systems, it was necessary that the design be carefully contemplated. The researcher is of the opinion that the design served the study well and encouraged respect for differences and appreciation of individuality. There was a sound description of credibility in the study, as the researcher continually described and documented how she came to her interpretations and therefore 'grounded' the study. The multi-level comparative analysis is also a strength of this study as it provided 'richer' conceptualisations and more abstract understandings. Additional strengths of this study are that it uniquely documented individuals' experiences with diviners and was one of the few to address the relationship between locus of control orientation and experiences with diviners. Furthermore, the study's strengths lie in its descriptive value, the contribution it has made towards the body of knowledge available on the topic and its potential to perturb academic, professional and personal frames of reference.

Reflections of the researcher

The research and what it constellated within the researcher can best be described as a 'tension of opposites', given that the research process was experienced as both energising and draining; was characterised by periods of clarity and confusion and was simultaneously therapeutic and emotionally taxing. The researcher now understands that a tension of opposites was a gift from the 'universe' as it allowed her to transcend personal boundaries, induced 'crises' needed for her own interpersonal growth and facilitated an appreciation for dualism in feelings and experiences. The researcher's own externality in terms of her need to seek reassurance and 'hide' behind the opinions of others was most visible at the onset of the study, where she experienced significant frustration with respect to selecting a challenging topic, in which there was little consensus and a lack of extensive literature. The researcher is only now however, in a position to fully appreciate and understand the unfolding research process and acknowledges that it became her greatest teacher; given that it pressed her to re-search her own opinions, propose new ideas and defend what she believes in with confidence, despite the perceptions of others. The researcher experienced delving into the world of divination to be both captivating and intriguing. Individuals consulting with diviners seem to have searched for, have found, or are still searching for the meaning of life; and by allowing the researcher access to their fountain of experiences have quenched her 'thirst' for understanding and provided sustenance for self transcendence.

Conclusion

To the reader:

It is hoped that this research study has inspired within you the appreciation that:

> Those involved with diviners understand that the questions, the information and the wisdom needed within their lives, should also be sought from powers that hold and govern our greater whole. They also know that the whole creation surrounding them and the universes living within them are aspects of this great whole. They learn to work with all beings and seek resources within themselves. They recognise themselves as experiencing both the choice and the necessity of actively participating in a journey of seeking, understanding and creating meaning. They aspire to penetrate seemingly hidden realms, consult with these powers, learn from these elemental forces, learn from all beings in the universe and consult with diviners in an attempt to achieve all of this (Adapted from Edgar, 1997).

References

Aarnio, K. (2007). *Paranormal, superstitious, magical and religious beliefs.* Unpublished
 master's dissertation, University of Helsinki, Finland

Aarnio, K., & Lindeman, M. (2007). Religious people and paranormal believers: Alike or
 different? *The Journal of Individual Differences, 28*(1), 1-9

Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research.
 Qualitative Research, 1(1), 385-391

Bashir, M. (1974). *Your past, your present and your future through the art of hand analysis.*
 New York: Doubleday

Beck, R., & Miller, J.P. (2001). Erosion of belief and disbelief: Effects of religiosity and
 negative affect on beliefs in the paranormal and supernatural. *The Journal of Social
 Psychology, 141*(2), 277-287

Becvar, D.S., & Becvar, R.J. (2000). *Family Therapy. A Systemic Integration*
 (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon

Berg, B. L. (2007). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences.* Boston: Pearson
 Education

Braude, A. (2001). *Radical spirits. Spiritualism and women's rights in nineteenth-century
 America.* Indiana: Indiana University Press

Bressan, P. (2002). The connection between random sequences, everyday coincidences and
 belief in the paranormal. *Journal of Applied Cognitive Psychology, 16*(1), 17-34

Britannica Online Encyclopedia. (2009). *Divination.* Retrieved January 11, 2009, from
 http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/166528/divination

Brownstone, D. (2008). *New York Professional Consulting Astrologer.* Testimonial section.
 Retrieved March 16, 2008, from
 http://www.dianabrownstone.com/Testimonials.htm

Burr, V. (2003). *Social Constructionism* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge

Clarke, D. (1991). Belief in the paranormal: A New Zealand survey. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research, 57*(3), 412-425

Cline, A. (2009). *Divination.* Retrieved 13, October 2009

http://atheism.about.com/library/glossary/paranoral/bldef_divination.htm.

Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). New York: Sage Publications

Doan, R.E. (1997). Narrative therapy, postmodernism, social constructionism and constructivism: Discussion and distinctions. *Transactional Analysis Journal, 27*(2), 129-133

Dudycha, G.J. (1933). The superstitious beliefs of college students. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 27*(2), 457-465

Dukelow, M.S., & Berry, S.M. (2008). *Numerology.* Retrieved December 22, 2008, from http://www.spiritlink.com

Edgar, B. (1997).   *Shamanic Potent Visions.* Retrieved December 10, 2008, from http://www.shamanicvisions.com

Edward, J. (2001). *Crossing over: The stories behind the stories.* New York: Princess Books

Emmons, C.F., & Sobal, J. (1981). Paranormal beliefs: Functional alternatives to mainstream religion? *Review of Religious Research, 22*, 301-312

Encarta Online Dictionary. (2009). Experience. Retrieved January 11, 2009, from http://uk.encarta.msn.com/dictionary_1861789788/experience.html

Encarta Online Dictionary. (2009). *Metaphysical.* Retrieved February 20, 2009, from http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/refpages/search.aspx?q=metaphysical

Encarta Online Dictionary. (2009). *Philosophy.* Retrieved February 11, 2009, from http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/refpages/search.aspx?q=philosophy

Encarta Online Dictionary (2009). *Synchronicity.* Retrieved February 20, 2009, from http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/refpages/search.aspx?q=synchronicity

Faivre, A., & Needleman, J. (1992).   *Modern esoteric spirituality.* New York: SCM Press

Thorndike, P. (1998). *Fortune telling.* London: Siena

Foundation for Inner Peace. (2009). *A Course in Miracles.* Retrieved January 22, 2009,
     from http://www.acim.org/welcome.html

Gaia. (2009). *Gaia Community.* Retrieved February 2, 2009, from
     http://www.gaia.com/quotes/zen_proverb

Palmistry. (2000). New Lanark: Geddes & Grosset

Gibson, W.B., & Gibson, L.R. (1973). *The complete illustrated book of divination and
     prophecy.* London: Souvenir Press

Goldston, A. (2008). *Learn Tarot Online.* Testimonial section. Retrieved March 26, 2008,
     from http://learntarotonline.com/testimonials.htm

Goritz, A.S., & Schumacher, J. (2000). The W.W.W. as research medium: An illustrative
     survey on paranormal belief. *Perceptual Motor Skills, 3*(2), 195-206

Griffith, J. (2005). Therapeutic role of spirituality in psychotherapy. *Scottish Journal of
     Healthcare Chaplaincy, 8*(1), 1-6

Groth-Marnat, G., & Pegden, J. (1998). Personality correlates of paranormal belief: Locus of
     control and sensation seeking. *Journal of Social Behaviour and Personality, 26*(3),
     291-296

Hastings, A. (1991). *With the tongues of men and angels. A study of channeling.* Fort
     Worth: Holt, Rinehart and Winston

Hibberd, F.J. (2005). *Unfolding social constructionism.* USA: Springer Science & Business
     Media

Hines, T. (1988). *Pseudoscience and the paranormal. A critical examination of the
     evidence.* New York: Prometheus Books

Hock, R. (1999). Forty studies that changed psychology: Explorations into the history of
     psychological research. New Jersey: Prentice Hall

Irwin, H.J. (1991). Reasoning skills of paranormal believers. *Journal of parapsychology,
     55*(1), 281-291

Irwin, H.J. (1992). Origins and functions of paranormal belief: The role of childhood trauma

and interpersonal control. *The Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research,*

86(2), 199-208

Irwin, H.J. (1993). Belief in the paranormal: A review of empirical literature. *Journal of the*

American Society for Psychical Research, 87(1),1-39

Jahoda, G. (1969). *The psychology of superstition.* London: Penguin

Jankowski, P.J., Clark, W.M., & Ivey, D.C. (2000). Fusing horizons: Exploring qualitative

research and psychotherapeutic applications of social constructionism. *Contemporary*

Family Therapy: An International Journal, 22(2), 241-250

Joe, V.C. (1971). Review of the internal-external control construct as a personality variable.

Psychological reports, 28(1), 619-640

[1]Judith. (2008). *Past life channelling.* Testimonial Section. Retrieved March 30, 2008, from

http://www.pastlifechannel.com/testimonials.html

Jung, C.G., & Kerenyi, C. (1951). *Science of mythology.* New York: Routledge Classics

Justis. (2008). *Chaldean Numerology Charts and Readings since 1984.* Testimonial

section. Retrieved March 27, 2008, from

http://www.numbersru.com/testimonials_for_people.html

Keinan, G. (1994). Effects of stress and tolerance of ambiguity on magical thinking. *Journal*

of Personality and Social Psychology, 67(1), 48-55

Klimo, J. (1987). Channeling: Investigations on receiving information from paranormal

sources. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher

Kovan, D. (2001). *Secrets of numerology.* Johannesburg: Dorling Kindersley

Langer, E.J. (1975). The illusion of control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,*

32(2), 311-328

Lawrence, T.R. (1995). How many factors of paranormal belief are there? A critique of the

paranormal belief scale. *The Journal of Parapsychology, 59*, 3-25

---

[1] Some websites created by diviners do not contain full information as due initials or surname, nor are
sections necessarily titled.

Leak, K. (2008). *Chirology.* Retrieved January 29, 2008, from

    http://www.chirology.co.za/about.html

Lefcourt, H.M. (1981). *Research with the Locus of Control Construct.* New York: Academic

    Press

Lefcourt, H.M. (1982). *Locus of control. Current trends in theory and research.* New Jersey:

    Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

Levenson, H. (1973). Multidimensional locus of control in psychiatric patients. *Journal of*

    Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 41(3), 397-404

Lightwalker, C. (2008). *The family of light: Healing centre.* Testimonial section.   Retrieved

    March 27, 2008, from http://www.thefamilyoflight.net/testimonials.html.

Loewe, M., & Blacker, C. (1981). Oracles and divination. New York: Academic Press

Lori. (2008). *Tarot for life guidance.* Testimonial section. Retrieved March 14, 2008, from

    http://www.tarotforlifeguidance.co.uk/testimonials

Louw, D.A. & Edwards, D.J.A. (1997). *Psychology: An introduction for students in*

    Southern Africa (2nd ed.). Johannesburg: Heinemann

Louw, D.A., Van Ede, D.M., & Louw, A.E. (1998). *Human Development* (2nd ed.). Pretoria:

    Kagiso Tertiary

Ludwig, A. (1966). Altered states of consciousness. *Archives of General Psychiatry,15*,

    225-234

Lyddon, W.J., & Weill, R. (1997). Cognitive psychotherapy and postmodernism: Emerging

    themes and challenges. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy: An International*

    Quarterly, 11(2), 75-90

Maroney, T. (1999). *Theory of divination.* Retrieved January 11, 2009, from

    http://tim.maroney.org/Essays/Theory_of_divination.html

Masonga, M., & Moleleki, M. (2004). African diviner-healers and oral performance: A

    perspective on Sepedi divination. *Acta Academica, 36*(1), 40-53

Max, J. (1999). *Divination.* Retrieved January 11, 2009, from

    http://www.boudicca.de/max14-e.htm

Meredith. (2008). Angelic channeling and rune card readings. Testimonial section.

    Retrieved March 19, 2008, from http://www.myangelsoul.com/TestimonialPage.html

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. (2008). *Extra-ordinary.* Retrieved March 19, 2008,

    from http://www.merriam-webster.com

Messer, W.S., & Griggs, R.A. (1989). Student belief and involvement in the paranormal

    and performance in introductory psychology. *Teaching of psychology, 16*(4), 187-191

Meyer, W.F., Moore, C. & Viljoen, H.G. (1997). *Personology:* From individual to ecosystem.

    Johannesburg: Heinemann

Moisoiu, R. (2008). Astrology.   Retrieved February 10, 2008 from

    http://www.astrologyweekly.com

Monthly Quote. (2009). T.S. Elliot. Retrieved February 10, 2009, from

    http://www.monthlyquote.com/quotelist.asp?strt=26

Moore, E.G. (1977). *Believe it or not: Christianity & psychical research.* London: Mowbray

Musch, J., & Ehrenberg, K. (2002). Probability misjudgement, cognitive ability and belief in

    the paranormal. *British Journal of Psychology, 93*, 169-177

Neher, A. (1980). *The psychology of transcendence.* New York: Prentice Hall

Neuman, W.L. (1997). Social Research Methods. Qualitative and Quantitative approaches.

    Boston: Allyn & Bacon

New World Encyclopedia. (2009). Retrieved January 11, 2009, from

    http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Divination

Nirup. (2008). *Accurate psychic readings.* Testimonial section. Retrieved March 26, 2008,

    from http://www.psychicnirup.com/html/testimonials.html

Orapello, C. (2008). *What is paranormal?* Retrieved January 11, 2009, from

    http://www.midatlanticparanormalresearch.com/articles/whatdoesparanormalmean.html

Otis, P.L., & Alcock, J. E. (1982). Factors affecting extraordinary belief. *The Journal of*

    Social Psychology, 118(1), 77-85

Paulhus, D. (1983).   Sphere-specific measures of perceived control. *Journal of Personality*

    and Social Psychology, 44(6),1253-1265

Pearls of Wisdom. (2007). *Eileen Caddy.* Retrieved February 15, 2009, from

http://www.sapphyr.net/women/women-quotes-eileencaddy.htm

Pelzer, K. (2002). Paranormal beliefs and personality among black South African students.

Journal of Social Behaviour and Personality, 30(2), 391-398

Pera, L.P. (2004). *Ecologies of violence: Implications for theory and practice.* Unpublished

master's dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria

Pervin, L.A. (1963). The need to predict and control under conditions of threat. *Journal of*

Personality, 31, 570-587

Phares, E.J. (1976*). Locus of control in personality.* New Jersey: General Learning Press

QuoteDB. (*2009). Confucius.* Retrieved February 5, 2009, from

http://quotedb.com/authors/c

Radford, B. (2000).   Worlds in collision: Applying reality to the paranormal. *The Sceptical*

Inquirer, 24(6), 37-43

Rapmund, V.J. (2000*). Enhancing students' personal resources through narrative.*

Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria

Raskin, J.D. (2002). Constructivism in Psychology: Personal Construct Psychology, Radical

Constructivism, and Social Constructionism. *American Communication Journal, 5*(3),

433-456

Rattet, S.L., & Bursik, K. (2001). Investigating the personality correlates of paranormal belief

and precognitive experience. *Journal of Personality and Individual Differences, 31*(3),

433-444

Rice, T. W. (2003). Believe it or not: Religious and other paranormal beliefs in the United

States. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 42*(1), 95-106

Rotter, J.B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of

reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied, 80*(1), 1-27

Routledge, L.M., & Salter, C.A. (1971). Supernatural beliefs among graduate students at the

University of Pennsylvania. *Nature, 232*, 278-279

Sarantakos, S. (2005). *Social Research.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Scheidt, R.J. (1973). Belief in supernatural phenomena and locus of control. *Psychological Reports, 32*, 1159-1163

Searle, R. (2008). *A certain ethical problem in esotericism: An esoteric overview of everything.* Retrieved February 15, 2008, from http://www.kheper.net/essays/index.html

Siegar, M. (2008). *Astrology for the soul.* Testimonial section. Retrieved March 19, 2009, from http://www.astrologyforthesoul.com/sessionstestimonials.html

Smith, M.D., Foster, C.L., & Stovin, G. (1998). Intelligence and paranormal belief: Examining the role of context. *The Journal of Parapsychology, 62*(1), 65-77

Smith, G. (2004). *The unbelievable truth. A medium's guide to the spirit world.* Johannesburg: Hay House

Stanke, A. (2004). Religiosity, locus of control and superstitious belief. *Journal of Undergraduate Research, 7*(1),1-5

Stanton, M. (2005). *Life stories of anxious people.* Unpublished master's dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria

Steptoe, A., & Appels, A. (1989). *Stress, personal control and health.* New York: John Wiley

Stiles, W.B. (1993). Quality control in qualitative research. *Clinical Psychology Review, 13*(6), 593-618

Struthers, J. (2007a). *The fortune-tellers bible: The definitive guide to the arts of divination.* Great Britain: Octopus publishing group

Struthers, J. (2007b). *The psychics bible: A definitive guide to developing your psychic skills.* Great Britain: Octopus publishing group

Tart, C.T. (2004). On the scientific foundations of transpersonal psychology: Contributions from parapsychology. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 36*(1), 66-88

Terre Blanche, M., & Durrheim, K. (Eds.). (1999*). Research in practice: Applied methods for social sciences.* Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press

Thalbourne, M.A., & Houtkooper, J.M. (2002). Religiosity/spirituality and belief in the
    paranormal: A German replication. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research,
    66*(867), 113-115

Thalbourne, M.A., & Nofi, O. (1997). Belief in the paranormal, superstitious and intellectual
    ability. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research, 61*, 365-371

Tobacyk, J.J., & Milford, G. (1983). Belief in paranormal phenomena: Assessment
    instrument development and implications for personality functioning. *Journal of
    Personality and Social Psychology, 55*, 1029-1037

Tobacyk, J., Nagot, E., & Miller, M. (1988). Paranormal beliefs and locus of control: A
    multidimensional examination. *Journal of personality assessment, 52*(2), 241–246

Tyson, G. A. (1979). *The social psychology of belief in astrology.* Unpublished master's
    dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Underwood, D. (1997). *Numerology or what Pythagoras wrought.* Washington:
    Mathematical Association of America

Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience.* New York: The state University of
    New York

Vyse, S.A. (1997). *Believing in magic. The psychology of superstition.* New York: Oxford
    University Press

Warren-Davis, D. (1993). *The hand reveals.* Great Britain: Element Books

Watt, C., & Wiseman, R. (2004). Measuring superstitious belief: Why lucky charms matter.
    Journal of Personality and Individual Differences, 37(4), 1533-1541

Wikipedia, The Free Encylcopedia. (2009). *Clairvoyance.* Retrieved February 5, 2009, from
    http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=clairvoyance

Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. (2009). *Experience.* Retrieved January 11, 2009, from
    http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=experience

Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. (2009). *Neale Donald Walsch.* Retrieved January 19,
    2009, from http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Neale_Donald_Walsch

Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. (2009). *Nhat Hanh.* Retrieved January 19, 2009, from

    http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nhat_Hanh

Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, (2009). *Reincarnation..* Retrieved January 19, 2009,

    from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reincarnation

Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. (2009). *Paulo Quelo.* Retrieved January 19, 2009, from

    http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Paulo_Quelo

Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. (2009). *Supernatural.* Retrieved January 12, 2009, from

    http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supernatural

Winkelman, M., & Peek, P.M. (2004). *Divination and healing. Potent vision.*

    Arizona: The University of Arizona Press

Zebb, B.J., & Moore, M.C. (2001). Superstitiousness and perceived anxiety control as

    predictors of psychological distress. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders, 17*(1), 115-130

APPENDIX A: Levenson's Locus of Control Questionnaire

Levenson's Locus of Control Scale

Indicate the extent to which you *agree* or *disagree* with each of the 24 statements by *circling* the most appropriate number.

Question number	Question	Agree Strongly	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
1	Whether or not I get to be a leader depends mostly on my ability	1	2	3	4	5
2	To a great extent my life is controlled by accidental happenings	1	2	3	4	5
3	I feel what happens in my life is mostly determined by powerful people	1	2	3	4	5
4	Whether or not I get into a car accident depends mostly on how good a driver I am	1	2	3	4	5
5	When I make plans, I am almost certain to make them work	1	2	3	4	5
6	Often there is no chance of protecting my personal interest from bad luck happenings	1	2	3	4	5
7	When I get what I want, it is usually because I am lucky	1	2	3	4	5
8	Although I might have good ability, I will not be given leadership responsibility without appealing to those in positions of power	1	2	3	4	5
9	How many friends I have depends on how nice a person I am	1	2	3	4	5
10	I have often found that what is going to happen, will happen	1	2	3	4	5
11	My life is chiefly controlled by powerful people	1	2	3	4	5
12	Whether or not I get into a car accident is mostly a matter of luck	1	2	3	4	5
13	People like myself have very little chance of protecting our personal interest when they conflict with those of strong pressure groups	1	2	3	4	5
14	It is not always wise of me to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune	1	2	3	4	5
15	Getting what I want requires pleasing those above me	1	2	3	4	5

16	Whether or not I get to be a leader depends on whether I am lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time	1	2	3	4	5
17	If important people were to decide they didn't like me, I probably wouldn't make many friends	1	2	3	4	5
18	I can pretty much determine what will happen in my life	1	2	3	4	5
19	I am usually able to determine what will happen in my life	1	2	3	4	5
20	Whether or not I get into a car accident depends mostly on the other driver	1	2	3	4	5
21	When I get what I want, it is usually because I worked hard for it	1	2	3	4	5
22	In order to have my plans work, I make sure they fit in with the desires of people who have power over me	1	2	3	4	5
23	My life is determined by my own actions	1	2	3	4	5
24	It is chiefly a mater of fate whether or not I have a few friends or many friends	1	2	3	4	5