A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF SHAMANIC TRANCE STATES
IN SOUTH AFRICAN SHAMANISM

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Submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand,
Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Philosophy of Arts in Psychology.

Johannesburg 1998

ABSTRACT

This thesis involved a psychological study of the shamanic trance states of South African shamans. Literature on shamanism has marginalised or neglected Africa. The aim of this study was to establish the main elements unique to South African shamanic trance states, as well as to establish common factors with other traditions of shamanism. The developmental aspect of the South African trance states was investigated in order to highlight and explore possible pathological or transcendental aspects of such trance states.

In this study a qualitative research design was implemented. Considering that qualitative research is self-reflective in nature, it was necessary to carefully outline the methodology used in this study. A phenomenological method was applied, albeit with a full awareness of its limitations. The interviews of ten shamans were analysed and presented in terms of themes.

From the data a model of South African shamanic trance states as well as the inductive techniques used to facilitate these states were outlined. The inductive techniques of the South African shamanic trance states were presented and interpreted within the context of other shamanic inductive techniques. The model of the South African shamanic trance states was based on the fundamental relationship between the South African shaman and her/his ancestors. Four main shamanic trance states were extrapolated from the data.

These four major shamanic trance states represent open-ended categories rather than fixed limits of experiences. The four shamanic trance states were described in terms of how they were experienced by African shamans, the context within which they took place, their relationship to other shamanic traditions and to other dimensions of importance in shamanic trance states. The South African shamanic trance states and induction techniques were further analysed in order to highlight certain power

and knowledge relations within the South African shamanic discourse. One specific aspect of the power-knowledge relations of the trance states which was explored was the psi effects associated with the four major shamanic trance states. The investigation was contextualised within the discourse of shamanism, thereby emphasising the importance of considering South African shamans as part of the world-wide shamanic traditions.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Philosophy of Arts in Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

_I. ⏤_

(Ingo Lambrecht)

31st day of May, 1998.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to
my grandfather for his
healing and explorative
spirit.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

This study aims at analysing and describing the shamanic trance states of the South African shaman. The traditional healers of South Africa have been neglected within the shamanic literature, both because of a lack of information around shamanic practices in Africa, as well as the fact that the trance states that these healers enter into are usually construed as being mediumistic or as being related to possession trance states. Such possession trance states are usually conceptualised as not being shamanic in nature. In this study the dichotomy between possession trance states and shamanic trance states will be questioned. The main aim of this study then is to establish the shamanic characteristics of the South African traditional healers or shamans by focusing on that which is central to shamanism, namely shamanic trance states. Beyond setting out the shamanic characteristics of the South African shamans, a model of South African shamanic trance states will be presented.

The thesis begins with a literature review. This literature review highlights the network of writings available on the topics relevant to this study. The first chapter begins with a definition of shamanism, which is followed by a brief contextualisation of the South African shaman. It is important to note that in this study the aim is not to investigate South African shamanism in terms of cultural, religious or medical factors, but rather to explore the trance states experienced by the South African shamans. Cultural and religious factors will be highlighted in as much as they are relevant to the focus of this study.

The second chapter presents a review of various models of trance states. Besides defining trance states or altered states of consciousness, psychological and neurobiological models of trance states will be critiqued. This provides an important foundation to understanding the shamanic trance states, which are outlined in the fourth chapter. In this chapter both the distinguishing aspects of shamanic trance states as well as the central dimensions of these trance states are presented. These

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dimensions are later applied to the South African shamanic trance states as narrated by the South African shamaṇs. A developmental outline of shamanism in general and South African shamanism in particular is also presented form a psychological perspectivᴏ, and within this developmental framework the notions of the pathology and transformation of shamanic trance states are explored. This concludes the literature review, which is then followed by an outline of the research method applied in this study.

In this thesis a qualitative research design was chosen, the aim of the study being to understand the experience and meaning of trance states, and such states of mind are experienced in a subjective manner. It was therefore essential to listen to the narrative of the South African shaman in order to collect the data for this study. Physiolo₃ical or other medical measurements would have given relevant information as to the brain or bodily states of the shaman whilst in a trance state rather than generating data concerning the subjective experiences and meanings of such trance states. Qualitative research is self-reflective in nature, and various methods of inquiry into trance states are delineated in chapter four. The phenomenological method is argued for as the method of choice given the circumstances, aims and limitations of this study. In chapter five, this argument is followed by a description of the strategy of inquiry used in this study, including issues such as the feasibility of the study, sampling, data collection and data analysis. Chapter six presents an example of an interview with the concomitant data analysis. The data analyses of the other interviews are to be found in the appendix. This is followed by the results chapter which summarises the data analysis and presents in a structured manner, all the data of the shamans interviewed.

Chapter eight begins with a discussion of the results. In the first part of this chapter the various techniques used to induce shamanic trance states are presented and compared to inductive techniques of other shamanic traditions. The second part of this chapter presents a model of South African shamanic trance states. The four

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major shamanic trance states that are postulated are analysed in terms of their specific inductive techniques, the experience of the trance state, and their context and relation to other shamanic trances. The four major trance states are compared with one another according to the major dimensions of shamanic trance states as outlined in chapter three.

The implications of such findings are presented in the last chapter, which focuses on the power and knowledge relations of the South African shamanic trance states. Foucault's analysis of power-knowledge relations is used to reveal the discipline and technology used in producing a subject within the discourse of the South African shamans. The power and knowledge effects of the four major trance states are presented in terms of their psi effects. The conclusion chapter of the thesis presents the findings and suggest further possible areas of future research.

CHAPTER ONE
THE CONTEXT OF SOUTH AFRICAN SHAMANISM

The South African shaman is a central and important figure in South Africa. According to Simon (1997), research from the Pietermaritzburg Institute of Natural Resources found that 84% of the South African population consult a traditional healer more than three times a year, after or in place of going to a Western medical doctor or clinic. An estimate of 200 000 indigenous traditional healers in South Africa has been given (Van Wyk *et al*, 1997), but membership numbers of the numerous associations tend to be exaggerated, and a figure of 30 000 to 40 000 properly qualified healers seems to be more realistic (Simon, 1997).

The South African shaman is the central link between the community and the ancestors, mediating between the material and spiritual worlds. In traditional societies throughout the world, a specialist with gifts of mediation and healing has commonly been referred to as a 'shaman'. Anthropologists focusing on Africa have, however, been reluctant to use the term 'shaman', preferring terms such as 'spirit mediators' (Beattie & Middleton, 1969), 'traditional healers' (Hammond-Tooke, 1989) or 'diviners' (Peek, 1991). While these terms identify important facets of this specialisation, they do not encompass all the various roles. A general definition of shamanism will therefore be presented in this chapter.

The core focus of shamanism within this study will be on shamanic trance states. It is important to note that for the South African shaman trance states are understood primarily in terms of ancestor contact. For this reason the theme of ancestors and the related river people will be explored in depth. Similarly, the themes of witchcraft and ritual impurity will also be explored in that trance states are often used to heal the effects of witchcraft and ritual impurity. The dress code and the associated androgyny reflect the South African shaman's mediation between the physical and supernatural world. These two issues will also be explored in this chapter. Following

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on from this, the final section of this chapter will consider the developmental aspect of South African shamanism in relation to trance states.

1. Towards a Definition of Shamanism

Literature on shamanism has recently expanded due to increased interest within both professional and lay circles. This appears to reflect a growing curiosity in non-western cultures (Walsh, 1990), especially concerning the shamanic techniques of inducing altered states of consciousness (ASCs) (Drury, 1988; Harner, 1980). The origin of the term 'shamanism' is often related to these techniques. One possible sou. *of the* term 'shamanism' is the word *saman* of the Tungus people of Siberia, which refers either to someone "who is excited, moved, raised", or to someone who "knows" (Walsh, 1990, p. 8). The term is possibly also derived from the Vedic word *sram*, namely "to heat oneself or to practice austerities" (Halifax, 1979, p. 3). Most modern scholars, however, believe that the term is derived from Indo-European origins. It is understood to have passed through Chinese and Sino-Barbarian versions, and to then having been adapted to cultures in Siberia who spoke Ural-Altaic languages. The term finally spread to Eastern Europe and then was introduced to the expanding Western world system after the fifteenth century (Seaman, 1994, p. 227), as is evident in the later classical literary figure of Goethe's Faust (Flaherty, 1992).

It is generally accepted, however, that an etymological analysis of the term 'shaman' highlights only one aspect of the shaman's role in society. The shaman in her/his function as the experiencer of cosmology and as the mediator of realities is also important, a similar view of cosmology being found in many shamanic traditions. Eliade (1964) in his analysis of the various myths and narratives of shamans from around the world, reveals that the trance states are deeply embedded in the shamanic view of the cosmos. These myths are to be found as far afield as Siberia, Indonesia, the Americas and the Pacific islands. Within these myths the cosmos is usually a three-tiered universe made up of upper, middle and lower worlds, the middle world

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corresponding to our earth. These worlds are connected by an *axis mundi*, which is often presented as a cosmic mountain or a tree of life (Eliade, 1964). The shamanic three-tiered universe is also to be found in Nordic and Mayan mythology (Johnson, 1996), in Ancient Egyptian myths, as well as Graeco-Roman shamanic journeys into the underworld (Drury, 1988). It is also represented in the Kabbalistic Tree of Life (Scholem, 1960), as well as in pagan rituals and witchcraft practised during the European Middle Ages (Johnson, 1996).

While Eliade's (1964) analysis of shamanic myths is extensive, Willis (1986) notes that Africa is to a large extent excluded, even though a similar cosmology is also generally to be found in Africa. For example, the Hereroes of Namibia believe in a netherworld, an upper- and an underworld with ancestors, cattle, fire and the mythical tree. The great fig tree is thought of as housing all the ancestors, and is therefore considered the most holy (Luttig, 1933). ᵀ e Zulu in South Africa hold the *Sivhakava* tree sacred, it being the Zulu equivalent of the universal tree of life (Ulufudu, 1989). Furthermore, in Africa the three cosmic domains are related to the three colours of the near-universal triad of colours, namely white, red, and black (Ngubane, 1977; Willis, 1986). It would thus appear that a common pattern pervades pre-scientific societies' conceptualisation of the universe.

Returning however to the definition of a 'shaman' the term has been utilised by anthropologists to denote a specific group of healers in various cultures, societies and tribes, who have also been labelled as witch-doctors, magicians, sorcerers and seers. However, shamanism is ultimately defined not in terms of healing *per se* but in terms of a special interaction with spirits. While some members of a tribe may be possessed by spirits or able to see them, only a shaman has mastered the spirits, and can introduce these spirits into her/his self in order to heal (Shirokogoff 1935, in Walsh, 1990). Harner (1980), an anthropologist with personal experience of shamanic practices, defines a shaman as "a man or woman who enters an altered state of consciousness - at will - to contact and utilise an ordinarily hidden reality

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in order to acquire knowledge, power, and to help other persons" (Harner, 1980, p. 25).

In a similar vein, Walsh (1990) defines shamanism as "a family of traditions whose practitioners focus on voluntarily entering altered states of consciousness in which they experience themselves or their spirit(s), travelling to other realms at will, and interacting with other entities in order to serve their community" (Walsh, 1990, p. 11). The phrase 'family of traditions' refers to the recognition of importu 'tural variations within shamanic practices. This definition is, however, specific enough to distinguish shamanism from other traditions or practices, as well as from various forms of psychopathologies with which it has in the past been confused. This definition highlights both the practices and experiences of shamanic states of consciousness or trance states rather than beliefs, dogma or cosmologies.

The above would appear to be consistent with Harner's (1987) statement that "shamanism ultimately is only a method, not a religion with a fixed set of dogmas" (Harner, 1987, pp. 4-5). For the purpose of this study then, the shaman is regarded as one who is able to master her/his own states of consciousness either actively or passively during which time spirit communication occurs. Following on from this attention is now turned to a discussion of different states of consciousness.

While altered states of consciousness (ASCs) occur in many religious practices, it appears that shamanism was the first tradition to actively use such states (Riches, 1993). In their experiential analysis of shamanism, Peters and Williams (1980) define a shaman as a specialist who enters into a controlled ASC on behalf of her/his community. However, it is difficult to determine which ASC out of all the various ASCs specifically relates to shamanism. In an anthropological survey of 42 cultures in which shamanism was reported, Peters and Price-Williams (1980) found 18 to have only spirit possession, 10 to have only magical flights, 11 to have both, and 3 in which neither concept was used to explain the trance state. This confirms the

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hypothesis that shamanism is inclusive of many different trance phenomena (Peters, 1987).

One writer who has focused on the phenomenological interior of such altered states is Eliade (1964). He defines shamanism as a "technique of ecstasy" (Eliade, 1964, p. 4). States of ecstasy do not refer only to bliss, but include a sense of being taken out of one's normal state, and entering into a heightened state of intense feelings, "literally *ek-stasis*, a standing outside whatever is defined socially as everyday consensus reality" (Kelly & Locke, 1982, p. 2). Hultkrantz (1988) notes that the terms 'ecstasy' and 'trance' mean the same thing, 'trance' being a medical term and 'ecstasy' a more humanistic term.

The shaman is an "ecstatic specialist" (Sullivan, 1994, p. 29). One of the metaphors for trance amongst the San Bushmen of the Kalahari is "flight" (Lewis-Williams & Dowson, 1989, p. 56). This is similar to the medieval witches and their tales of flight whilst in trance (Dross, 1978, p.26), as well as to the visionary trances of modern Western magic (Drury 1989a). Ecstasy, soul flight and shamanism are often used interchangeably, while the flight and visionary experiences of shamans are thought to be analogous to out-of-body experiences (OBEs) (Drury, 1989b; Kalweit, 1988). For Eliade (1964), the distinctive feature of shamanic ecstasy is the personal experience of soul flight or OBEs. He considers possession trance states, a state in which a spirit enters an individual, as a form of debasement of the true shamanic trance state (Eliade, 1958).

Eliade's (1964) definition of shamanism is, however, a fairly narrow one (Siikala, 1985). Peters (1989b) expands on the concept of shamanism by noting that if spirit mediumship or possession trances are not considered to be part of the definition of shamanism, then "the definition of shamanism *ipso facto* excludes nearly the entire continent of Africa where trance states employed by traditional healers rarely involve soul flight" (Peters, 1989b, p. 3). Peters (1989b), in a more positive manner,

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defines embodiment or possession trance state as a voluntary and controlled trance state. In the present research, a definition of shamanistic trance states which includes both the notions of possession trances and embodiment is accepted. Furthermore, given the importance of both embodiment and possession trances as shamanic trance states, these issues will be discussed in greater detail in the chapter concerned with shamanic trance states (chapter three).

It suffices to say that the aim of this study is not to analyse "the shaman as cosmology-maker" (Riches, 1993, p. 394) nor as a "traditional healer" (Hammond-Tooke, 1989, p. 104), but rather to describe the phenomenological world of the psycho-spiritual disciplines of trance states as found in South African shamanism. Given the relative consensus concerning psycho-spiritual practices within shamanism across the world (Drury, 1988), the research that has already been completed on shamanism elsewhere in the world will be brought to bear on South African shamanism. Consequently, this literature review will now turn to specific issues that are relevant to the trance states of the South African shaman.

2. The Categories of South African Shamanism

Hammond-Tooke (1989) notes that the common term 'witch-doctor' has often been used in African colonial literature, and that it often refers to an image of a sinister figure who rules over dark and primeval forces with barbaric and evil cunning. "In actual fact, however, this image represents a gross distortion of how 'witch-doctors' are regarded in traditional African society, and this is perhaps the place to impose an embargo on the use of the term" (Hammond-Tooke, 1989, p.103). The so-called 'witch-doctor' is actually a highly respected figure, whose contact with the benevolent ancestors helps combat illness, as well as the forces of evil in the shape of witches (Gelfand, 1964).

Various attempts at categorisation of the African traditional healers have been made (Bryant, 1966; Hammond-Tooke, 1989; Ngubane, 1977; Thorpe, 1991).

Anthropologists in general have often made a primary distinction between the ancestrally designated diviner or mediator (*isangoma*, Zulu; *igqira*, Xhosa; *ngaka*, North Sotho; *selaodi*, South Sotho; *mungome*, Venda, Tsonga), and the herbalist or doctor (*inyanga*, Zulu; *ixhwele*, Xhosa; *ngaka*, Sotho; *nganga*, Venda; *nyanga*, Tsonga), who works primarily with herbs and other forms of medication and who has not been called by the ancestors.

Van Wyk *et al* (1997) note that these categorical distinctions have become blurred. Many *izangoma* [plural for *isangoma*] or diviners are herbalists, while many *izinyanga* or doctors practice divination and communicate with their ancestors. An example of this is Sarah Mashele (Simon, 1993), who calls herself an *inyanga*, despite the fact that at an early age she made contact with an ancestor and that she uses divination as a diagnostic tool. Consequently, in this study the term 'South African shaman' is applied to either a diviner, mediator or herbalist (*isangoma*, *isanusi* or *inyanga*, *igqira* or *ixhwele*) who practices and achieves a trance state. The purpose of the trance state is to communicate with the ancestors, to achieve extra-sensory perception or to develop paranormal abilities. Although the role of the South African shaman does include divination, healing, 'smelling out' witches, directing rituals, as well as narrating the history, cosmology and myths of her/his tradition (Edwards, 1987), these functions of the shaman are, however, not the direct focus of this study. While there is a respect for the overlap of these functions in the role of the South African shaman, and a recognition that they cannot be separated artificially, these functions will be incorporated only in so far as they pertain to trance states.

Another category of South African shamans worth mentioning is the *isanusi*. Berglund (1976) notes that amongst the Zulu the *isanusi* is rarely found today. Some even believe they do not exist anymore. One of Berglund's (1976) knowledgeable informants stated that the *isanusi* served the king as a "super *isangoma*" (Powell, 1995, p.35), and that they were to be found in the vicinity of the royal homestead.

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To be accused of witchcraft by an *isanusi* meant certain death, while to be accused of the same by an *isangoma* left room for further investigation. They were also known as *izinyanga zokufa*, the "death specialists", because "when they saw a thing, they saw it clearly" (Berglund, 1976, p. 186). Laubscher (1937) states that the *isanusi* would be sought out by the *igqira* (Xhosa shaman), and were therefore considered to be at the head of her/his profession. The *isanusi* is renowned for her/his talented clairvoyant and clairaudient psychic abilities (Laubscher, 1963; Sullivan, 1995). The *isanusi* also revere the female aspect of god (Mutwa in personal communication, 1992) and are of course supreme masters of trance states in which contact with the ancestors is made.

3. The Ancestors

South African shamans operate within a religious context which has a High God whose name varies according to the particular group. The High God has also been called "the Great Ancestor" (Mbiti, 1975, p.53). Thus the Xhosa have *Dali* or *Qamatha*, the Zulu have *Nkunkulu*, the Venda have *Raluvhima* and the Sotho *Modimo* (Hammond-Tooke, 1989, p. 57). In all of the groups, however, the High God is vaguely defined, and not many myths exist (Zide, 1987). The High God is similar to the nature of the First Cause and the Zulu term *Nkunkulu* means "the First to Emerge" (Hammond-Tooke, 1993, p. 150). God is thus a creator sustaining and ruling over the universe, but at the same time removed from his creation (Mbiti, 1975).

It is the ancestors who are in contact with the people. Linguistic analyses of the root word for 'God' at a proto-Bantu level is related to the concept of an afterworld (de Maret, 1994). Steadman, Palmer, & Tilley (1996) argue that ancestor worship is found in many more cultures than is generally acknowledged, although its manifestations may be relatively covert. For example, totem worship encompasses ancestor worship in that totems are clearly ancestral by virtue of the fact that they identify a person with a line of ancestors. Another example where the role of the

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ancestors is often obscured is in the !Kung religious universe, where or finds a high god, lesser gods and minor animal spirits, but in fact the "main actors in this spirit world are the *gangwasi*, the ghosts of the recently deceased !Kung" (Steadman et al, 1996, p. 64). From a socio-cultural viewpoint, the importance of ancestor worship is thought to strengthen and maintain kinship and social relations. The Lugbara of sub-Saharan Africa state that "the rules of social behaviour are 'the words of the ancestors'" (quoted in Steadman et al, 1996, p. 73).

Within the traditional religions of the South African people, however, the worship of ancestors is much more overt and of central importance. The Zulu people in their mythology call the proto-ancestor *Kolankini* or *Kulukulwana* (Beyers, 1997). He is depicted as a tall white man with a long beard in a long white robe coming out of the sea in a boat made of grass. The story is told that he arrived from the west and landed on the coast of present day Namibia or Angola, and when he left he sailed from the east coast of Africa. Credo Mutwa (in Beyers, 1997) relates *Kulukulwana* to *Viracocha* of the Incas in Peru, a white bearded man who sailed on a boat and civilised the people, similar to *Thunpa* in the Andes with his reed boat and *Osiris* in Ancient Egypt (Hancock, 1995).

The shaman is the essential link between the physical world and the afterworld of the ancestors. A certain healing power flows from the supreme being through the ancestors to the shaman, who is then able to heal the patient (Thorpe, 1991, p. 117). The ancestors become the mediators between the High God and the shaman, for it is believed that the ancestors as spiritual beings have easier access to God than mortals (Mutwa, 1996c; Zide, 1987). Berglund (1976) maintains that for the Zulu there is no worship of the ancestors in the sense of veneration, rather it is the Lord-of-the-Sky *(iNkosi yezulu)* who is venerated. The relationship with the ancestors is based on an honour and respect for the elders. Belief in the ancestors assumes a belief in life after death Death is believed to have come to earth because a chameleon carrying a message of eternal life was overtaken by a lizard carrying the

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message of death in life (Thorpe, 1992).

Despite the awareness of death, those who die naturally of old age are not considered to have died but are rather understood as having simply "gone home" (Bryant, 1966, p.17). For Berglund (1976) the term 'shades' is preferable to 'ancestors' because in the Western sense 'ancestors' implies the dead, while for the Zulu and others, the person is alive but in another form after death. It is also suggested .hat the term 'ancestors' does not only include persons who have died but also those who await being born (Mutwa, 1996c). The term 'ancestor' will, however, be used in this study, primarily because it is a commonly used term in the literature, and there is an understanding that the term refers to a person in another living reality or afterworld.

In Zulu thought, a human being is understood to be made up of the body (*umzimba*) and the spirit or soul (*idlozi* or plural *amadlozi*). Of importance is that it is the unity of the two parts that is emphasised (Berglund, 1976). The ancestors are generally associated with the head. They "are in the head. When I dream they are in the head, causing me to see the dream" (quoted in Berglund, 1976, p. 115). Besides the head, the shoulders and the chest are also closely associated with the ancestors (Berglund, 1976). The life principle that leaves the human body after death is conceived of as *moya* or 'breath' or 'wind' (Hammond-Tooke, 1989, p. 53) and has been translated as 'soul' or 'life f rce' (Mbiti, 1975, p. 124). This translation of *moya* is problematic in that it holds the danger of cross-cultural imposition of categories from other world views, such as the Western concept of 'soul' (Hammond-Tooke, 1993).

While the ancestral spirit has been classified as the ˉoul surviving death (Mbiti, 1975), this is not without difficulties for amongst the Nguni people "not everyone becomes an ancestral spirit, but only those who are created as such after death by their kinsman through the performance of a special ritual". This ritual occurs one year after the person's burial when a beast is slaughtered "to bring back the ancestral

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spirit" (Hammond-Tooke, 1989, p. 63). Importantly, all the dead of the ancestral group are ancestral spirits (Mbiti, 1975), and some old people are even called *idlozi* (ancestor spirit) by the Zulu prior to their deaths (Thorpe, 1991). There are two types of ancestors, the first being the nameless dead of the overarching clan. The second type of ancestors are the communicating ancestors who trouble their descendants with dreams, illness and other misfortunes. These are usually deceased parents and grandparents, and only occasionally great-grandparents (Hammond-Tooke, 1986, p. 159). Of importance is that death is not viewed as a total annihilation but rather it is understood that the person "has gone, has gone home, has been called by his people, i.e. by ancestors" (Zide, 1987, p. 18).

Each group has its own term for the ancestral spirits. The Zulu call them *amadlozi* or *amathongo*, the Xhosa name the spirits *amathongo* or *izi (imi) nyanya;* the Sotho call the ancestors *badimo*, the Venda *midzim*, and the Tsonga *shikwembu* (Hammond-Tooke, 1989, p. 59) The different names of the ancestors refer to different aspects of their functioning (Berglund, 1976). For example, amongst the Zulu, the *amathongo* are ancestors who appear in dreams, while the *idlozi* (plural *amadlozi*) or *amakhosi* are the ancestors who take possession of the shaman. The *abaphansi* are the ancestors who live under the earth, while the *umhlabathi* are the ancestors who cause pain in the shoulder and chest area of a person undergoing an initiation illness (*ukuthwasa*). *Inkhosi* is a term for the ancestors which is often heard at ritual sacrificial killings and indicates a sense of humility towards the seniority of the ancestor (Berglund, 1976, pp. 89-93).

Differences in social organisation and culture are reflected in different ideas around belief and genealogy of the ancestors. Given that the Nguni clans have a paternal lineage, it is not surprising that the ancestors who are recognised in dreams are from the father's side of the family whereas maternal ancestors are an anomaly. In the Sotho system, the descendent groups are called after animal species and are therefore totem groups. Amongst the Sotho, the ancestors are recognised from both

the father and mother sides of the family, which means that the ancestral lineage is bilateral, as is the case with the Tsongas, who consider both the father's and mother's ancestors "with equal dignity" (Hammond-Tooke, 1993, p. 151).

Generally, the ancestors are seen to have a benign effect on people, for they protect individuals and their homesteads (Thorpe, 1991). They are omnipresent and they live in their own societies either under the earth (Nguni people), in the sky (Sotho people) (Hammond-Tooke, 1989), or in desolate areas (Mbiti, 1975). In addition to being concerned with the health and homestead of persons, the ancestors are also greatly focused on the honour or the good name of the homestead. The main reason for the displeasure of the ancestors is the family name being dishonoured or spoiled. The main cause of this happening is neglecting to perform the rituals of the home as well as acting disrespectfully towards the elders. "There is no doubt that respect for seniors is the basic moral principle in those societies" (Hammond-Tooke, 1989, p. 64). Thus ancestor worship is closely related to the upkeep of the social and moral values that govern the normativity of such societies.

While the ancestors are usually considered to be benign, Hammond-Tooke (1993) notes that if the ancestors were merely beneficial, they would hardly have played such a vital role in the Southern Bantu religion. The ancestors can be capricious and jealous and are easily offended, their wrath being a common explanation given for misfortune.

Ancestors can reveal themselves in dreams (Kohler, 1941). They may also declare their presence in the form of snakes or lizards who do not die but shed their skins periodically, thereby symbolising rebirth (Thorpe, 1991). The *isangoma* becomes a "house of dreams", giving the shaman certain healing powers (Kiev, 1972, p. 40). The ancestors are generally associated with the colour white, and hence the significance of the white beads of the shaman and the white clay that s/he might smear herself/himself with during the training. The ancestors are white for they

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cannot be seen during the day, but are able to be seen in dreams. If they were black they would not be identifiable in dreams (Berglund, 1976, p. 90).

Sacrifices are offered in honour of the ancestors in order to avert disaster (e.g., during childbirth) or to secure a blessing (e.g., in building a new kraal or going off to battle), as well as in the form of thanksgiving (e.g., for health, military victory or old age) (Thorpe, 1991). There are no calendral rituals, and the ritualistic approach to ancestors is situational. Rituals are typically performed on three types of occasions, namely at important transition points in the person's life cycle (birth, initiation, marriage and death), when illness strikes or after a successful task or venture such as a battle or a journey (Hammond-Tooke, 1989).

Ancestors do not usually inflict misfortune, but rather withdraw their protection, thus allowing suffering to occur. Ancestors can, however, cause illness but even when this does occur, the illness is less serious and occurs less often than illnesses caused by witches. Ancestor-caused illnesses consequently are a way of reminding the people to perform the rituals of the home, and rituals of this nature will heal the illness and appease the aggrieved ancestors (Hammond-Tooke, 1985). The sacrifices performed in the form of rituals become the sacred gift (Mauss, 1959) to the ancestors. In regard to ancestors, the river people form a particular sub-category.

4. The River People

In the far north amongst the Venda, and in the south amongst the Xhosa, the 'people of the river', the *abantu bomlambo*, are believed to be subaquatic beings that live in rivers and deep pools (Hammond-Tooke, 1993). They are half-fish and half-human and, according to Laubscher's (1937) informants, have long, flowing hair. They are believed to have beautiful homesteads and dark-coloured cattle, and strictly speaking, they are not connected to the ancestors (Hammond-Tooke, 1993). The Venda believe that they are the earliest inhabitants of the Soutpansberg. Kuckertz (1983a) suggests that they might be related to clan ancestors.

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The association of the river people with humans has both positive and negative aspects. The river people can send an illness, characterised by pains in, and swelling of, the body. They can cause people to drown, usually because they love that person (Hammond-Tooke, 1993). Although no longer practised, cattle were ritually slaughtered annually at the river to appease the river people. Circular dances are still performed at a river during the initiation of a shaman (Laubscher, 1937).

On the positive side, the river people are associated with the rain, and are an important element in the initiation of shamans. Shamans have dreams in which they are called by the river people. They meet them at rivers or deep pools. They stay with the river people underwater and emerge a few days later with knowledge of divination and medicines. A shaman trained by the river people is greatly respected (Laubscher, 1937). The messengers of the river people are the crocodile and the otter, both half-land, half-water animals and possibly symbolising the expression of the ambivalent nature of the river people (Hammond-Tooke, 1993).

5. Witchcraft

Central to South African shamanism is its relationship to witchcraft. Witches and sorcerers are widely considered to be evil. In a study in the rural Eastern Cape, 73 % of cases concerning misfortune were divined as having been caused by witchcraft, while in the urban area only 43 % of misfortune cases were attributed to witches (Hammond-Tooke, 1989). Witchcraft is by far the most common diagnosis made by South African shamans for major illnesses and mishaps. The reason for the distinction in terms of rural and urban areas seems to be related to the anonymity of relationships within urban life rather than to simply a greater level of sophistication.

Another related study conducted in a factory in Harare, Zimbabwe found that the acquisition of anti-witchcraft medicines amongst the clerks was higher than that amongst the factory floor workers because the clerks were a closely-knit and competitive group (Hammond-Tooke, 1989). With witchcraft so often providing the

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explanation for misfortune by those seeking help what is asked often is not: "Why is this happening to me?", but rather "Who has done this to me?" Gluckman (1965) notes that the logic of witchcraft is related to the social tensions within a community. "Increasingly we are finding that the charge of witchcraft may in effect be produced by the working out through time of two contradictory social processes within the group. This focus on a particular person, and the charge of witchcraft enables the rupture of the disturbed relationship to be effected with social approval" (Gluckman, 1965, p.87). Amongst the Nguni people, it is the daughter-in-law who is most likely to be accused of witchcraft, for she is the new person or stranger in the homestead. Fears and strife may emerge between her and her parents-in-law or sisters-in-law. Often the new wife may be singled out as a witch by the other co-wives, for jealousy and rivalry, especially concerning childbirth and possible misfortunes (miscarriage or the death of children) make her a suitable scapegoat (Gluckman, 1965).

The witch and the sorcerer are feared and hated figures that lie at the heart of the community and hence must be identified and eradicated. The central role of the South African shaman is to 'smell out' witches. In the past, persons blamed for being witches were put to death by either spearing, clubbing, strangling or being impaled on a stake. Furthermore, their homestead and in some cases the whole family was burnt, for witchcraft is believed to be hereditary. It was "a public execution. Among South African peoples witchcraft and the killing of the chief's messenger were in fact the only capital crimes" (Hammond-Tooke, 1989, p. 81). Since the Witchcraft Act of 1895, the accusation of witchcraft in South Africa is a criminal offence and thus diviners make only oblique references, often in terms of the kind of relationship the afflicted person has with the witch (Hammond-Tooke, 1989).

There have, however, in recent times in South Africa, in the midst of its political turmoil, been a spate of witch killings (Straker. 1992). The Northern Province of South Africa is especially plagued by witch hunts. In 1996, the Ralushai

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Commission was established. Differing from a more Eurocentric view, the commission did not assume that the belief in witchcraft is irrational (Koch, 1996). It suggested that the shamans organise themselves by establishing traditional healer's associations which would implement strict ethical rules in order to eradicate ritual murders for *mutis* or medicines that use human body parts, as well as accusations of witchcraft and sorcery (Beresford, 1996).

Hammond-Tooke (1989) states that an interesting aspect of witchcraft in both Africa and the Europe of the past is that the accused person often confesses to being guilty. A Freudian explanation would consider such statements of guilt as arising out of a neurotic condition in which a severe superego overemphasises negative thoughts, which then become worthy of guilt and therefore of punishment (Freud, [1913] 1983). As one accused Swazi wife called out after resisting the blame of witchcraft for a long time: "Perhaps there was a witch in my heart after all!" (quoted in Hammond-Tooke, 1989, p. 83).

Bührmann (1985), in her case study of 'bewitchment reaction' in South Africa, notes that the witch in a Jungian framework is related to an archetype of the old eccentric woman who is linked with the dangerous and destructive ways of nature. A person suffering from a 'bewitchment reaction' believes that the witches are omnipresent, seeing and hearing everything, and in great fear, the person becomes mute and immobile in an effort at self-preservation. The most common cause of such a bewitchment is either the neglect of ancestor customs or having offended the ancestors greatly (Bührmann, 1982). A terrifying aspect to witchcraft is that anyone can be accused of being a witch.

In South Africa, the Nguni term for witchcraft and sorcery is *ubuthakathi* and the Sotho term is *boloyi*. *'Ubuthakathi* with little animals' amongst the Nguni group refers to witchcraft, while *'Ubuthakathi* with medicines' refers to sorcery. Amongst the Sotho, there is a 'night *boloyi'* (witchcraft) and a 'day *boloyi'* (sorcery). Witches

are usually considered to be women while sorcerers are believed to be men who make use of medicines and poisons to commit evil tasks (Thorpe, 1991, p. 116). Witches are believed to be able to fly through the air and enter houses through the smallest of cracks. They then bewitch their victim into a somnambulist state, and in this state make the victim go to a secret rendezvous in the bush where s/he has to dance and is beaten, such that s/he wakes up in the morning covered in bruises. Xhosa witches fly through the air with a flying machine made out of the ribcage of a dead man. They destroy crops and sap the fertility of both men and livestock. They might meet other witches in secret places, but their jealous natures soon lead to magical battles that end in death. Among the Venda and the Tsonga the witch is understood to be unconscious of her powers. She therefore acts normally during the day, only performing her horrid deeds at night.

The witch makes use of 'familiars' in her work. These are often identified as small nocturnal animals such as owls, snakes and polecats. Baboons and hyenas are also considered to be familiars. When ridden, the witch sits facing backwards. These are ridden backwards. Small animals that are spotted or have long, dark stripes, for example the hyena, are wrongly believed to be hermaphroditic. They highlight ambiguity, which in a well-structured society is always a source of upheaval. Other more mythical familiars exist of which the most common is the *thikoloshe* of the Cape Nguni, a familiar that has spread to other parts of South Africa. It is a small, hairy man about the height of a person's knee. His penis is so long that it needs to be carried over his shoulder, and he has only one buttock (Hammond-Tooke, 1989). He is kept as a sexual partner in a storehouse of witches, and is therefore considered by Laubscher (1937) to represent sexual fantasies. According to Kohler (1941, p. 35) the *thikoloshe* is considered to be relatively harmless. Herdboys report seeing him in the fields invisibly milking the cows, for he loves milk. The *thikoloshe*, however, is also believed to throttle people at night. They are unable to sleep and wake up in the morning with a sore throat.

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Amongst the Xhosa the most feared familiar is the *impundulu* or lightning bird. Thunder and lightning are seen to be analogous with the *impundulu* laying its eggs. Its staple diet is blood (Laubscher, 1937) and it causes miscarriages, blindness and long, wasting illnesses in people and livestock. It is a shape-changer and can become a handsome, young man for the sexual pleasure of a witch (Hammond-Tooke, 1989). It is considered by Laubscher (1937) to symbolise the Freudian phallic symbol. Within the Jungian framework, however, because the *impundulu* is understood to always belong to women, it is interpreted as the devouring aspect of the mother archetype (Bührmann & Gqomfa, 1982a).

The sorcerer, on the other hand, operates with poisons and medicines to create illness and misfortune. He is believed to look innocent, but "in his heart he is a murderer" (Sikhumbana quoted in Kohler, 1941, p. 35) for he kills with his medicines. Amongst the Mpondo it is believed that sorcerers grind chameleons into powder which is mixed with a person's urine. This is then put into the person's food in order to make the person slowly waste away (Hammond-Tooke, 1989, p. 73-77). An Ovambo sorcerer may use the piercing of an image, spells or point to a person with his forefinger in order to cause illness and misfortune and even lightning (Hiltunen, 1986). The sorcerer is therefore a figure upon which murderous feelings are projected (Laubscher, 1937).

In combating the effects of sorcery "only the *isangoma* is in a position to guide the community in determining the necessary restorative measures" (Thorpe, 1991, p. 47). The only other protections against witchcraft or sorcery, besides killing the evil doers, is to use strong protective medicines and charms or to move out of the area, for witchcraft is believed to be effective only over relatively short distances. Medicines that are used to protect the homestead, livestock as well as the person themselves are sprinkled around so that the witch or its familiar cannot enter (Hammond-Tooke, 1989).

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One *sangoma* in Swaziland describes her method in the following way: "If a family comes to me suspecting that an *umtsakatsi* is active at night in their homestead, I take a special spear and go to their home. I pour ashes on two spots near the cattle kraal and make holes on these spots using my spear. I then bring two pieces of wood, *sikhonhwane*, and leave. At dawn the *umtsakatsi* will be found standing naked, in a state of unconsciousness, with eyes protruding" (quoted in Makhuba, 1978, p. 25-26).

6. Ritual Impurity

Ritual impurity is a further important cause of illness that is relevant to South African shamanism. Hammond-Tooke (1989) notes that these illnesses are neither attributed to ancestors nor to witchcraft, but rather to the notion of the individual as being in a dangerous state, not necessarily through any fault of their own. This state is very negative in nature and could be considered to be a state of pollution. It must be removed as soon as possible through medicines or rituals. For example, amongst the Tsonga, the birth of twins can effect the rainfall of a region negatively. Amongst the Nguni or Sotho peoples, the concept of *umlaza* or ritual impurity is related to both the sexual functions of women and to death. The Mpondo woman has *umlaza* while menstruating, after a miscarriage or for a month as a mourner after her husband or child's death. A man has *umlaza* after sex until he has washed himself and for a month after the death of his wife or child. *Umlaza* is dangerous to cattle, women, ill people, shamanic novices and medicines. Traditional healers avoid women the night before they treat an important case (Kuckertz, 1983a).

Within the South African context, religion and healing are closely related. The three major causes of illness and misfortune which a South African shaman needs to divine and heal are the ancestral illnesses, those illnesses caused by witchcraft and those that are due to pollution or ritual impurity. This does not mean that the South African shaman does not heal other medical illnesses, and her/his role as a healer overlaps with the *inyanga* or herbalist.

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Briefly, the healing which a South African shaman applies is mainly symbolic and holistic in nature (Holdstock, 1981). Besides the very real medicinal qualities of the herbs and roots used by South African shamans (Makhubu, 1978), Willis (1986) notes that the healing process is defined mainly in symbolic terms. The shaman weaves a complex web of symbols in order that the patient might transcend her/his illness or condition. The traditional South African explanations for illness and misfortune, be they ancestors, witchcraft or ritual impurity, all place the person in a far more interactive system than many Western approaches (Hadebe, 1986; Straker, 1994).

Colour symbolism within shamanic medicine is central to the South African shamanic practices and reflects a religio-alchemical approach. The important symbolic colours are black (*mnyama*), red (*bomvu*) and white (*mhlophe*) (Ngubane, 1977, p. 113). Ngubane (1977) states that treatment with such coloured medicines are intended to establish a balance between the person and the environment. The colour symbolism is related to the cosmic order of day and night. The colour white is associated with light, day, brightness, positivity and health. The colour black is associated with night, dark, danger, purification, negativity, toxicity and ill health. The colour red is associated with dawn and dusk, with blood and transformation, for it is the 'between' position as twilight lies between night and day. The method of cure is a movement through detoxification with the black medicine to the transformation of the red medicine which is followed by a strengthening with the white medicine (Ngubane, 1977). The South African shamanic meaning of these colours finds its parallel in Western alchemy (Haeffner, 1991), as well as in spagyrics or plant-alchemy (Junius, 1982).

Although beyond the scope of this study, Ngubane's (1977) ethnography of health and disease in Zulu thought, and Bryant's (1966) exhaustive tables of the herbal medicines used by Zulu shamans to cure specific illnesses is worth mentioning. It is important to refer, although very briefly, to the socio-economic aspects of South

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African shamanic healing practices in order to contextualise the social power of the South African shaman. Pietermaritzburg's Institute of Natural Resources has p..blished some important research in this regard (Simon, 1997): In one city alone, namely Durban, there are 1500 healers who cr. ᠁jobs for 3750 assistants and 7500 gatherers of plant material. About 4 300 tons of plant material are traded in KwaZulu Natal province. Not one medicinal plant is cultivated, yet the trade is worth a third of the provincial maize harvest. maize being the staple food diet of the majority of the population. More than 700 different plants are traded as far afield as Mozambique, Namibia, Botswana and even Malaysia.

There is a move at present in South Africa towards integrating the South African shaman as a traditional healer into the new national health care system (Freeman & Motsei, 1990; Karlsson & Moloantoa, 1984). In India folk medicine has a formal place in the health system, and in Zimbabwe the health minister co-operates very closely with the traditional healers association. In South Africa, however, the director of the Medical Schemes, Supplies and Pharmaceutical Services admits that the role of the shaman as a traditional healer in the health system has not been thoroughly thought out (Simon, 1997). At the moment, formal co-operation rather than complete integration between western and traditional healing systems is recommended (Hopa, Simbayi & du 1 oit, 1998). Consequently a study on shamanic practices would seem to be particularly pertinent at this time.

7. The Dress Code of a South African Shaman

The dress code of a South African shaman reflects the close relationship of the shaman with the ancestors as well as her/his meditating role between the community and the spirit world. In South Africa there is no fixed list of equipment or specific dress code for shamans. While there is great variety within the dress code, one uniform characteristic of the dress code of the Nguni shamans is the wearing of a goat's gallbladder that is tied into the hair and pieces of hide which are worn around

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the body (Thorpe, 1993, p. 112).

The importance of the inflated gallbladder worn in the shaman's hair lies in the fact that it is a sign that the shaman "has been honoured by having a goat slaughtered for her, and to make her have similar luck in the future" (Khumbana quoted in Kohler, 1941, p. 44). It is essential that the gallbladder be from an animal slaughtered at a ritual celebration and that the animal be slaughtered for the person wearing it (Berglund, 1976, p. 130). The ancestors are said to be fond of the bitter taste of gall, and the gallbladder 'calls' them. The fixing of the gallbladder to the body invites the ancestors to continue "doing their 'work'" with him/her (Bührmann & Gqomfa, 1982b, p. 169).

Sometimes the shamans body is painted white, and in some cases, bunches of goat horns and grass-woven baskets filled with assortments of herbs and medicines are strung from the neck, shoulders and body. Cow-tails may dangle from the arms, a square leopard skin might be worn, as well as genet-tails to cover the nakedness in front and behind (Bryant, 1966, p. 9). A cow-tail whisk and a stick are two other typical items that form part of the shaman's costume. The shaman's whisk, which signifies dignity, is used during dancing and to sprinkle certain medicines (Berglund, 1976). In Swaziland, the *sangomas* wear strips of goatskin criss-crossing the chest, which is taken from the initiation goat killed by the *thwasa* (Makhubu, 1978, p. 31).

What is of importance in all cases, however, is the association made between the articles and the ancestors. The dress code of an apprentice during the initiation period consists in some cases of short, unbraided skirts of white cloth, and a handkerchief bound low over her/his forehead, like a person in mourning or a young bride. No ornaments are worn except white beads around the wrist, ankle and forehead. The colour white is associated with the ancestors, and is the defining colour of the profession. The apprentice must also shave her/his head and, in the case of a female, must never bare her breasts in public. For the Zulu male shaman,

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the hair and nails are only cut when the brooding of the ancestors is at an end, as cutting the hair is a sign of a new life (Berglund, 1976).

8. The Androgyny of the South African Shaman

The androgyny of the South African shaman relates to a common shamanic process world-wide. Halifax (1979) notes that during the initiation and transformation processes, there is a symbolic and experienced dissolution of opposites, life and death, light and dark, male and female. Ngubane (1977) highlights the importance of these opposites in the colours of South African shamanic medicines. Black medicine is used to represent darkness, night, danger, and difficulties, whilst white medicine refers to health, purity and success. Red is the bridging colour of transformation. That most novices wear red is symbolic of the transformatory process that the apprentice is undergoing. The shaman must be able to access and experience a certain totality, be it in the form of having suffered illnesses so that s/he might know the power of cure and/or the form of sexual totality, for "by assuming the role of the opposite sex gives the shaman the opportunity to recognise the condition of femaleness or maleness and ultimately to become total" (Halifax, 1979, p.23).

Among Siberian people, androgynous shamans seem to be unusually prominent. For example, the shamans wear women's clothes, braid their hair, assume the speech patterns of women, and take on duties usually associated with women. Women shamans, on the other hand, can become warriors, even marrying another woman (Halifax, 1979). Eliade (1964) interprets such androgyny as symbolic of the shaman's position and function as the intermediary between the two cosmological planes for the shaman combines, within the same person, the feminine element (earth, and the masculine element (sky). The androgynous nature of the shaman can also be understood in social anthropological terms in that the shaman is situated in an ambiguous position within her/his society. This androgyny is evident amongst shamans from various tribes across Africa who through their dress code, rituals and

mannerisms present a "symbolic synthesis of both sexes' features in one individual" (Peek, 1991, p. 196). The researcher's own novice dress included what his shamanic teacher called a "skirt", suggesting a symbolic synthesis and overcoming of sexual differences. This highlights the shaman's marginality and the liminality of her/his androgynous state as expressed through cross-gender identification.

Another example would be that of female Zulu shamans who often dream about a spear which needs to be carried or else death may ensure. This act of spear-carrying by a female South African shaman, and the fact that a few male South African shamans from the Nguni group will, during their apprenticeship, wear white skirts (the attire of female African shamans or young brides) again suggests a sexual ambiguity (Hammond-Tooke, 1989). Lee (1969) similarly observes males dressed as women during their initiation. This would explain Hammond-Tooke's (1989) observations of the high pitched voices and the giggling of some of the Zulu male novices. While certainly not true for the Sotho or Venda, Ngubane (1977) asserts that, amongst the Zulu, "divination is a woman's task [paternal ancestor spirits return only through daughters], and therefore if a man gets possessed he becomes a transvestite, as he is playing the role of a daughter rather than that of a son" (Ngubane, 1977, p.57). It would seem then that the androgyny of dress code and behaviour is central to South African shamanism and expresses the liminality of the South African shaman between material and the spirit world. Attention is now turned to the actual process involved in becoming a South African shaman.

9. The Developmental Aspect of South African Shamanism
While the developmental aspect of South African shamanism is not part of the main focus of this study, it is essential in contextualising the South African shaman's journey from neophyte to the shaman. The development or training of the South African shaman has its own phases that are ritualistically contained. The development of the shaman and the various stages through which a neophyte has to move have been described in the literature.

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The training period of the shaman in South Africa usually lasts somewhere between a few months and three years. The length of time can be effected by the economic status of the family of the novice, as the acquisition of beasts for slaughtering during certain festivals is essential. Ngubane (1977) suggests that the developmental aspect of the South African shamanic initiation process can be understood in three phases. The first phase is the calling period which begins with the manifestation and symptomatic presence of the ancestral spirits, the *ukuthwasa*. The ancestors are either seen in dreams, or their voices are heard whispering into the person's ear. The person seeks out solitude, eats little, and neglects her/his appearance. There may also be an urge to plunge her/himself into a river, where s/he might find a huge snake coiled around her/him (while others might not see this), and finally the person runs away to find a shamanic teacher, who has often been selected by the ancestors or even previously seen in a dream (Makhubu, 1978).

The second phase begins with the initiatory period in which the person is trained as a neophyte or *thwasa*. The person now virtually withdraws completely from society, and devotes her/his time mostly to the training as set out by the teacher. The novice becomes not merely physically but also psychologically and socially isolated, and s/he observes various food taboos and needs to avoid ritual impurity *(umlaza)*. S/he may not attend social occasions, and s/he will only shake hands with persons very much older. The apprentice needs to avoid being touched by the shadow of others, and must use only her/his spoon, dish and pot for eating and cooking. All sexual contact is avoided. The *umlaza* can lead to harm and a decrease in her/his healing powers (Hammond-Tooke, 1989).

The third phase is characterised by the initiation graduation, after which the *thwasa* becomes an *isangoma*, the apprentice becomes a shaman accepted by society (Ngubane, 1977). The graduation ceremony provides for the *thwasa* an opportunity to reveal her/his abilities in terms of shamanic trance states. The rich experiential descriptions of the graduation ceremonies of Hall (1994) and Arden (1996) within

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the Southern Africa context will be cited together with the researcher's experiences of his own graduation. It is necessary to note that variations in the graduation ceremony occur across cultures and shamanic schools. The general themes of the graduation are, however, relatively similar.

For the researcher, his graduation began the evening before the main event. He had to find a hidden object, in this case a tiny bone. Having passed this preliminary test, the main shaman of the household where the graduation ceremony was held was satisfied that the researcher had sufficient abilities to graduate and the graduation ceremony itself began. Similar to the researcher's experience, Arden (1996) describes how in the late afternoon at the beginning of the graduation ceremony, her body was treated with 'African injections', i.e., small incisions with a porcupine quill, which were made around her head, arms, torso, legs and feet *Muti* or herbal medicine was then rubbed into these incisions, thereby purifying and strengthening the body.

Different to the researcher's graduation, her body was also covered with red ochre, representing her transformation into full shamanhood. She then had to suck up smouldering embers through a stick of bamboo from a large piece of clay shard. Although she sucked hesitantly at first, for fear of being burnt, she found she wasn't getting burnt, and sucked up the rest. She then returned to the hut, after which she came out to dance. Hall (1994) recounts his graduation as beginning at sunset, and the drumming and dancing continuing until sunrise. He danced all night with the other apprentices, with a two to three minute break after an hour of dancing. The dance to the drums took place in front of the shaman's hut or *indumba*. He repeated his graduation song, given to him by his ancestors, over and over again, thereby creating a hypnotic effect.

For the researcher, the first night of the graduation was a night vigil. The researcher had to sit cross-legged and shake his whole body, while the other shamans sang and

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drummed. Certain songs were a signal to sit up and shake. After roughly thirty to forty five minutes, a change of song would signal that his legs could be stretched out and a small period (ten minutes) of relaxation could commence. Soon the next cycle of songs would begin again, calling for the presence of the ancestors. This cycle of activity repeated itself throughout the night until the first signs of dawn.

The new day brought with it a day of trials and tests. The researcher had to crawl out of the *indumba* (shaman's hut) and suck blood from a goat whose carotid artery had been slashed. In Arden's (1996) case, the goat was stabbed in the heart area. Hall (1994) notes that by the time the blade had emerged from the goat, he had arrived. "My lips touched hot, pungent goat hair. A jet of blood shot out, pumped by the animal's frantic heart, into my mouth and onto my shoulder [...]. I felt light-headed and nauseous, and I knew there would be no difficulty vomiting when Mahlalela told me to move on" (Hall, 1994, p. 235).

Both Arden (1996) and Hall (1994) had to then crawl to a dugout ditch where some bowls of *muti* had to be drunk. The test was whether, in the act of *phalaza* or vomiting, the goat's blood would be vomited out. If this is achieved, then the crowds rejoice, for it means that the ancestors favour the apprentice. The failure to vomit out the goat's blood is viewed as spiritual disfavour. After the act of *phalaza*, the apprentice returns to the *indumba*. The researcher had a different experience in that after the goat sacrifice he was led back to the *indumba* and was asked to lie on his stomach facing east for half an hour. Only then was he led to a dugout ditch, where he *phalazad* to the great excitement of the crowd that had gathered. After that act of purification, he was brought back to the hut.

The researcher then re-emerged on his knees and tried to eat from a basket that was pulled along the ground by a shaman. The use of hands was forbidden. For Hall (1994) as well as for the researcher, the basket was filled with cooked bits of the sacrificed goat's meat. This also had to then be vomited out. The second basket was

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filled with the goat's chyme, which also had to be eaten and vomited out. Arden (1996) only had to eat and vomit out the goat's chyme. After this act of purification, the apprentice is guided back to the hut.

Similar to the researcher's experience, Hall (1994) remembers how by that time he was physically exhausted and mentally dulled. When he then had to dance again, the embodiment of his ancestors occurred relatively easily. The dance was an introduction to the next test, namely the finding of hidden objects. While still in a daze, the researcher intuitively picked out the person in the crowd who had hidden my objects. While in a trance state, firstly the object had to be ascertained, and then where the object had been hidden. The goat's gallbladder was hidden in a calabash to the right of the *indumba's* entrance. The second object was my bundle of beads, also hidden in the *indumba*. The final test, which took place on the following day, was to find a packet of *muti* hidden underground around the *gandelo*, the *gandelo* being a tree, which functions as a shrine to the ancestors. After that test, I had to stay in the hut all day, as I was considered to be 'newly born', and therefore needed to be protected from sunlight.

In Arden's (1996) case, she had to find the sacrificial goats and chicken after her dance. After having found the animals, she went inside the shaman's hut and was then asked to crawl out to drink the blood from the goat. After that event, she had to *phala:a*. At night she sat alone with the pelt of the goat, while the other shamans danced and drummed. In the early morning, two shamans came with their drums and asked her to sit cross-legged and to shake her hands. Then after a drumming and shaking session of fifteen minutes, she stretched her legs and began again. After ten such episodes, her whole body began to shake and finally "body convulsing, I howl out the sound and the sky grows light" (Arden, 1996, p. 225). The researcher had to complete a similar practice on the first night, as described above. Still during the same morning, Arden (1996) left her hut to dance and find the goat's gallbladder that would then be tied to her hair, as well as the beads she would be wearing as a fully

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fledged shaman. After that test, a final dance closed the ceremony, and the people dispersed.

Hall's (1994) graduation included, on the final day, an initiation of the water or *Bandzawe* spirits. This part of the graduation has its own special drum beat which is played on three drums. As the sun rose, the apprentices, clad in red, went to the river and they had "to hop into the water, where they splashed about, mumbling and humming. Though insulated within myself, I was aware of the chilly water, the deep greens and blues around me; and the bright sun above" (Hall, 1994, p. 243). Given that the water spirits cannot walk, the apprentices had to crawl back, for which purpose mats were laid out on the way back to the hut. The second goat was slaughtered, and the bodies of the apprentices were covered in a mixture of goat's blood and *muti*. They then washed it off in the river. Finally, a specially brewed beer mixed with *muti* and chicken blood was given to the apprentices, and 'African injections' were applied to them, in order to attract the water spirits. After the goat's gallbladder had been tied to the hair, a vest made from the goat's skin, as well as bracelets, were put on. A black, feathered head-dress was then placed on the head, after which a final procession of the newly graduated shamans brought the graduation ceremony to an end.

The final day of the researcher's graduation began at five o' clock in the morning with a cleansing ritual in which the other shamans embodied the water spirits. Dressed only in a red cloth, I was accompanied by four other shamans, and after walking in line to a lake, I was submerged into the water three times. Whilst walking to and from the lake, songs were recited. On the return to the *indumba*, I was dressed in full regalia (the red skirt, scarves bound around the body and ostrich plumes tied to the head) and led outside to the *gandelo*. There all my beads, as well as the strips of goat's skin, were applied. The inflated goat's gallbladder was tied to my hair, and then my whole body and hair was covered in a red ochre mixture, made of red ochre powder ground from a stone and motor oil. In this condition, I had to

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once again dance and find the last hidden object. I was led back to the hut whilst the other shamans danced and celebrated their 'new brother'. After the dance and a midday meal, the graduation ceremony came to a close.

Having placed shamanism in South Africa in a broader context, the literature review will now focus more specifically on shamanic trance states, for it is the successful cultivation of these which determines when the graduation can take place as well as how the shaman's power is perceived in her/his subsequent interaction with the community.

CHAPTER TWO
MODELS OF TRANCE STATES

The term 'trance' is derived from the Latin word *transitus* which means passage, and from *transire* which means to pass over. The root meanings of this term are appropriate to this study, for in shamanistic initiations both the concept of death as a passing over to a re-birth as well as the journey as a passage, are equally important. Thus 'trance' could be defined as a passage into another state of consciousness or a passing over into an alternate state of mind (Peters & Price-Williams, 1983, p. 5). It is "a qualitative alteration in the overall pattern of mental functioning, such that the experiencer feels his consciousness is radically different from the way it functions ordinarily" (Tart, 1972, p. 1203).

Importantly, ASCs refer to an overall pattern of psychological functioning, and not merely to the content of consciousness or any physiological correlates. Ordinarily people experience an ASC when they take psychoactive substances, are in a dream state or are in a hypnogogic state between sleep and waking (Tart, 1972). More than 20 different states of consciousness have been identified (Fromm, 1979; Krippner, 1972; Pelletier & Garfield, 1976). It has been suggested that the term 'altered' in ASC be replaced with 'alternate', because "different states of consciousness prevail at different times" (Zinberg, 1977, p. 1). It is, however, not possible as yet to establish finite categories as firstly, the different states of consciousness proliferate into an infinite variety, and secondly, the experiential limits of the various states of mind are not clearly defined.

In order to provide some clarity in this regard, Peters and Price-Williams (1983) have identified two major developmental lines in ASC research. The first is defined by the studies that are structural and cognitive in their approach, seeking to understand the discrete states of consciousness with normal consciousness functioning as a base line. The second is characterised by studies which, although

applying the first approach, focus mainly on the dynamic and experiential aspects of trance. This study falls into the second line of development. This process is metaphorically and psychologically equated with a rite of passage which is determined by cultural beliefs and symbols. The psychiatrist, the shaman, the yogi and the mystic will give this process or rite of passage different names such as brief psychosis, creative illness, *ukuthwasa*, bliss, oneness, enlightenment, all of these terms depicting various stages of a passage which is reflected in the meaning of the word 'trance'. Trance as a passage involves fundamental change in the individual as an experience with either fleeting or lasting effects.

1. The ASC Models of Trance States

Various models of trance have emerged in the literature. The classic definition of an ASC by Ludwig [1969] (1990) describes an ASC as including (1) alteration in thinking, (2) disturbance in time sense, (3) loss of control, (4) change in emotional expression, (5) change in body image, (6) percept distortion, (7) change in meaning and significance, (8) sense of the ineffable, (9) feelings of rejuvenation and (10) hypersuggestibility. Ludwig [1969] (1990) notes that the content of an ASC, which is made up of the outward manifestation as well as the subjective experience, is determined by personal and cultural factors. This model is analogous to Freud's [1911] (1981) dream model, in that the manifest content varies whilst the latent content, i.e., the underlying meaning and dynamics, remains similar across various manifest ASCs.

Such an understanding of trance states has lead to a systemic model of the mind in which Tart (1975) suggests that there are inborn structures (hardware) and encultured structures (software) of the mind. Thus in certain cultures specific trance states are encouraged, whilst in other cultures they are suspect. A good example of this would be in the South African High Anglican church where trancing and communicating with the ancestors is not supported by the community nor is it endorsed by the rituals of that church. The same trance state, however, in certain

Christian Zionist groups would not conflict with their view of Christianity. Which specific aspects of consciousness will be allowed to develop is therefore culturally determined. Each ASC represents a qualitative shift in the individual's mental functioning, and discrete states of consciousness require quantum leaps in order to move from one to the other. Such states include sleep, dreams, hypnogogic states, hypnotic states, effects of psychoactive substances as well as meditation (Tart, 1969, 1975).

Hypnotic t'ance states are often used in the literature as primary examples to highlight the important controversy as to whether trance states are discrete or continuous with ordinary consciousness as there appear to be no physiological parameters that distinguish a hypnotic state from any other (Peters & Price-Williams, 1983). In the last four decades hypnosis has become more acceptable in that psychological research has shown that hypnosis is a repeatable laboratory phenomenon, and has thereby highlighted the somatic, cognitive, social and psychological dynamics of dissociation. Relevant to this study is the long-standing debate as to whether hypnotic phenomena form a distinctive mental state in the form of an ASC or whether, as the social-psychology theorists would argue, they are something else altogether. They suggest that hypnosis is a form of role enactment or believed imaginings, only differing from everyday behaviour in terms of the content of the beliefs. The opposing position, called the 'state' theory, conceptualises hypnotic phenomena such as hypnotic suggestibility, openness to absorbing experiences or distinctive cognitive-imaginal processes as a distinctive personality trait (Kirmayer, 1992, p. 284). Kirmayer (1992) points out convincingly that both positions are reductionistic and that what it is far more likely is that dissociative phenomena are both cognitively and social-psychologically determined.

Czikzsentmihalyi (1992) presents a model of ASCs that emphasises the continuous nature of consciousness in terms of the experience of 'flow'. Play, creativity, dance, meditative states, ecstasy and joy are interpreted as being the result of a holistic

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sensation (flow) which occurs when there is total involvement or immersion in an activity. The experiencing and observing consciousness are not split. There is instead a clear focus and a centering of attention on a single stimulus, thereby forgetting oneself in the process. The observing consciousness or ego, usually self-reflective in nature, is lost in the state of flow. This is similar to the humanistic or transpersonal notion of ego loss and transcendence of individuality, or a fusion with the world (Maslow, 1975, pp. 63-70).

It is important to note, however, that in this state there is not a loss of contact with reality, for there is a heightened awareness of the environment. Consciousness merges with activity, the sense of ego loss generating a strong sense of self and an intense experience of joy and happiness, even ecstasy. This differs from pathological states in which ego loss occurs, for here the ability to focus attention is diminished, there is a loss of control and a greater sense of ego passivity occurs rather than ego receptivity (Fromm, 1979). Within the transpersonal psychological approach ASCs would, in their most transcendental expression, belong to the transpersonal bands within Wilber's (1977) spectrum of consciousness model. Within Ring's (1974, 1976) model, they would be placed within the superconsciousness ring.

2. The Psychological Models of Trance States
Most psychological models of trance states place trance states along a health and pathology continuum. The psychodynamic model of trance interprets the trance state as the ego having suspended its reality testing (Hartmann, 1975). Within this model Fromm (1979) places numerous states of consciousness on a continuum, the one end being waking consciousness and the other being deep sleep states, deep hypnosis and higher states of consciousness as found in the practice of meditation. Furthermore, the various states of consciousness are differentiated from each other in terms of ego receptivity versus ego activity, primary process thinking versus secondary process thinking, fantasy versus reality orientation, imagery versus conceptualisation and free-floating attention versus focused attention. The former

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are related to ASCs while the latter are related to the waking state of consciousness. Ego activity represents the ability to make choices as well as the ability to approach reality from a rational, logical perspective. Ego passivity, on the other hand, is defined as being a lack of autonomy as well as a sense of being overwhelmed by instinctual drives, the superego or external reality. Ego receptivity of ASCs is not so much an ego overwhelmed as an ego that is able to let go, thereby allowing a stream of consciousness to occur in a receptive state. Examples of such ASCs are free-association, hypnosis, day dreaming or even transcendental experiences.

This is similar to the concept bimodal consciousness (Deikman, 1971) in which a distinction is drawn between th receptive and active modes of consciousness. The active mode is volitional, directive and decisive in its organised way of achieving goals or solving problems. The receptive mode, although actively sought after, represents a state of consciousness which is experienced as mystical, aesthetic, meditative and ecstatic. These two modes of consciousness have been likened to the essential differences between the West and the East (Ornstein, 1975).

Ecstatic, mystical and meditative states have been conceptualised within the psychodynamic framework as regressions in the service of the ego (Kris, 1952; Shaaffii, 1973). According to Epstein (1990) one of the major pitfalls of the spiritual path as highlighted by the psychodynamics of meditation, is that attainments on the spiritual path could be the result of narcissistic strivings. An example of this would be the sense of total independence and consequent grandiosity that may potentially arise through the development of an inner space during meditation. In the psychodynamic model this would be explained as being as a result of early object relations being deviated or arrested. Engler (1984), in his representation of the developmental stages of the self in therapy and meditation, notes that for Westerners practising m .itation certain clinical features emerge. Firstly, their progress is relatively slow, possibly due to concentration difficulties.

Secondly, they appear to become fixated on the psychodynamic level of experience in which thei · meditative practice is dominated by primary processes such as increase in f⁺ ιsy, daydreaming and spontaneous recall of the past. This may be ascribed to the Western cultural context as well as to the inability to integrate meditative practices into everyday life (Engler, 1984).

On a psychodynamic level, these problems appear to arise particularly with those individuals who have a vulnerability and disturbance around identity and self-esteem. This would explain the high attraction of such meditative practices to late adolescents and people undergoing a mid-life crisis (Engler, 1984). At the earliest developmental level such difficulties could be explained by the pathologies of the self (Kohut, 1971; 1977), as well as by borderline personality organisation (Kernberg, 1968), with pathologies and arrests at the separation-individuation stage in early object relation development (Mahler, 1975; Masterson & Rinsely, 1980). Thirdly, a strong transference can develop towards the teachers. The dynamics here may be the result of Kohut's mirroring or idealising dynamics, in which there is a need to merge with the source of idealised strength and calmness (Kohut & Wolf, 1978).

Equally, there are two primary ways in which possession trances can be understood psychoanalytically. Firstly, possession trances can be seen as symptomatic or symbolic expressions of unconscious conflict. Secondly, the possession trance state might be considered a therapeutic 'working through' or a mediation of internal part-object in the growth of the self (Lambek, 1989). Thus the internal parental authority ʿigure in the form of the ancestor spirit could be interpreted as being ediated by the shaman. It could be said that the spirit or ancestor of a client ʾ the South African (ʾext makes use of the South African shaman as a me ator or as a psycho· yst (Levi-Strauss, 1963). "In sum, psychoanalysis c ,n help us to understand the process of having a spirit or speaking to spirits rather than simply to exꞎ !ɔin the occurrence of trance or possession." (Lambek, 1989, p. 52).

These trance states are outside the fight or flight responses of stress arousal, and are generally seen as therapeutic in dealing with stress disorders (Tart, 1975; Walsh, 1990). However, the psychodynamic model often questions the function of trance states and suggests that they may operate as defences, which maintain vertical and horizontal splits in the psyche (Kohut, 1977), term dissociation and repression respectively.

The concept of dissociation emerged at the beginning of this century and has been associated with personality disorders, hysteria, hallucinations and hypnosis (Peters & Price-Williams, 1983, p. 21). Dissociation has been defined as the ability to register or respond to information that is not consciously perceived by other parts of the person. There are three types of dissociation, namely abstraction, autonomous multiprocessing and trance (Hilgard, 1992). This is evident in a pathological form in the dissociative disorders (DSM IV, 1994), or as forms of defence in personality disorders, for example, borderline and narcissistic personality disorders (Kernberg, 1968; Kohut, 1971), as well as in hypnosis (Hilgard, 1992). This ability to register without consciously perceiving is evident in, for example, the hypnotised subject who reacts to a cat that is not there, and thus this ability to dissociate is believed to be an essential aspect of "trance logic" (Peters & Price-Williams, 1983, p. 2). Trance logic is a pattern of mental functioning that includes an alteration in language processing, a decrease in critical judgement, as well as an increased tolerance for incongruity (Wier, 1996).

The dissociation state is consequently defined as an ASC in which there is a retention of sensory, motor and ego functions, but there is a semi-amnesia upon returning to ordinary consciousness. Dissociation is different from a REM (rapid eye movement) state, hallucinatory as well as mystical states because in all the latter there are "experiences of one's own ego, whereas in dissociated states another ego can take control" (Prince 1980, quoted in Peters & Price-Williams, 1983, p. 20). For example, some alcoholics are not able to remember information in a normal state,

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but remember the information again during their inebriated state (Peters & Price-Williams, 1983). This 'other ego' could, from within the South African shamanic framework, be attributed to the presence of the ancestors.

The possession trance states have been likened to dissociative states. The presence of the ancestors in the shaking body of a South African shaman, as well as the state of complete amnesia that is often present after the trance state, does seem to suggest another part of the personality has control over the shaman's consciousness. In Western cultures, multiple personality disorder or dissociative identity disorder (DSM IV, 1994) may be akin to possession. What is pertinent to this study regarding such identity disorders is their degree of amnesia. Multiple personalities can be mutually cogniscient (aware of each other), mutually amnesic (unaware of each other), and one-way amnesic (everyday consciousness is amnesic while the dissociative ego is aware of the former) (Peters & Price-Williams, 1983). While at times this type of dissociation occurs without a state of amnesia, it still manifests as a splitting off from the main personality. Similarly, possession-trances can be conceptualised as a differentiated capacity for amnesia and dissociation.

Shamanic possession trance states, however, differ in important ways both from pathological dissociation and from hypnotic trance states. They differ from dissociation in that they are volitional, initiated, ritualised and culturally accepted. Importantly, there seems to be some evidence to suggest that the degree of amnesia or, put differently, the degree of lucidity is determined by individual and cultural expectations. In relation to hypnosis, it would seem that in trance states, "beliefs function somewhat analogously to the assumptions of, and the suggestions given to, hypnotic subjects and there are analogies between hypnotic amnesia and possession-trance amnesia. Numerous possession trances of shamans are shown to be remembered, similarly post-hypnotic amnesia generally does not occur without suggestion and there is no correlation between depth of hypnosis and amnesia" (Peters & Price-Williams, 1983, p. 22). The demand characteristics of the culture

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as well as the individual are what determine the lucidity of the possession trance state. What is clear within the South African shamanic culture is that while amnesia is an important, expected aspect of the trance state, the relationship of amnesia to possession trance is not a necessary one, as is the case with hypnosis.

Halperin (1996) argues that while the terms 'trance' and 'possession' are often used interchangeably, these two terms are not identical. Trance is a psychophysiological transformation which seems to involve changes in brain-body chemistry and functioning, such as increased endorphin levels or EEG changes (Halperin, 1996, p. 36). Possessions, however, involves shared ritual practices which take place within a cultural-religious belief system in which altered states of mind, behaviour, and self are "interpreted by the subject and others as due to the presence of another entity or personality in the subject" (Bourguignon, 1992, p. 341). Bourguignon (1973) distinguishes between possession trance states and trance states. Possession trance states occur in those societies in which a person is in a trance whilst being possessed by spirits. A trance state, on the other hand, typically involves hallucinatory experiences that are generally private and internal, with at times magical flights. It can lead to the person receiving and conveying messages from the spirits, or it may be an isolated experience such as a vision quest amongst the North American Indians.

The notion of 'possession' consequently becomes a cultural construct rather than being necessarily related to an ASC (Boddy, 1988; Bourguignon, 1973). The reasons for this are that, firstly, trance states can be induced without necessarily requiring spirit possession, such as in clinical hypnosis, shamanic use of hallucinogenic substances or non-religious rituals using fire dancing. Secondly, accepted states of possession do not in all cases necessitate an accompanying trance state, as is evident during simulated or 'faked' possession occurrences or when possession is seen as having taken place long before a trance state is reached. For example, an illness might be considered a form of possession, yet the possessed person is not in a

trance. The issue central to possession rites is not the entering into a trance but rather the notion of an outside spirit entering into the person. Thus while "trance states typically occur during ceremonies invoking spirit possession, a culturally defined manifestation of possession does not in and of itself certify an actual trance" (Halperin, 1996, p. 36). However, the practice of possession can in itself induce a trance state. For example, there is evidence that some mediums initially 'fake' a possession, but in the process of pretending become embodied by an alternate identity, and thereby achieve an ASC (Halperin, 1996, p. 37).

Yap (1960) distinguishes between two types of possession, namely positive and negative possession trance states depending on the value assigned by the individual or culture to the possession state. If the trance state is seen as negative and is censored, a dissociation occurs with a marked loss of memory. Peters (1988) investigates the relationship between negative possession trance and borderline personality disorders, and conclude from an ethnopsychiatric perspective that the two conditions correspond closely with one another. Both have similar object relations in that they internalise bad objects, there is a propensity to act out and the defences of splitting and repression are employed, giving rise to multiple identities. The outcome of both of these conditions is, however, largely culturally specific.

It is also important to make a distinction between acceptable and unacceptable possession trance states, a distinction which the traditional societies make themselves. Unacceptable or involuntary possession is usually related to unwelcome spirits requiring exorcism, while the possession of welcome spirits is functional and integrated. Both ecstasy and possession trance states are experienced by the uninitiated as the onset of the spiritual illness and thus are frightening and are initially resisted.

In South Africa, the onset of possession by the ancestors is called the *ukuthwasa*, and is a part of the initiatory crisis illness, while the *amadiki* is a form of possession

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in which the unwelcome spirit is exorcised rather than mastered. Only with acceptance, training and medicines do these trance states become manageable, integrated and mastered.

Positive possession trances could be understood as psychotherapeutic in that it "can help the individual to grasp a profoundly complex life situation as a first towards further action and self-development" (Yap, 1960, pp. 126-127). Possession trance states of shamans can therefore be understood as "a regression in the service of the ego" (Kris, 1952), or as "dissociations in the service of the self" (Bourguignon 1965, quoted in Peters & Price-Williams, 1983, p. 24). Wilber (1980) would, however, possibly argue that such experiences are not "regressions of the ego but evolution and transcendence of the ego" (Wilber, 1980, p. 159), a suggestion that h would not make in regard to borderline personality disorder, which he sees clear as being a manifestation of prepersonal rather than transpersonal mode of consciousness. In terms of positive trance states, Wilber (1980) would clearly consider them to be ego transcending. In South Africa, altered "states of consciousness, therefore, which are interpreted as ancestrally sanctioned and which become controlled and used, are a form of formal, ceremonial trance. This is comparable to ecstasy in shamans" (Thorpe, 1993, p.4).

As positive possession trance states are related to the mastery of spirits or ancestors, another important psychological construct for this study is the notion of self-control or self-mastery. In fact, shamanism may be understood as self-mastery of ASCs. Krippner (1987) notes that shamans have achieved a high degree of concentration beyond that attained by the average person. They are therefore able to sustain exhausting levels of efforts and achieve remarkable feats during healing rituals. "They manifest physical prowess and are able to self-regulate many bodily functions. They have mastered a complex body of knowledge through instruction and direct experience" (Krippner, 1987, p. 131). The ASCs of shamans are therefore closely related to self-regulation and self-mastery. Psychological research on

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meditation and ASCs has been closely associated with self-regulation (Watts & Williams, 1988), self-control (Shapiro, 1990) and psychological health (Gelderloos, 1990), which are all features of self-mastery.

In terms of clinical and health care research, there has been an increase in the number of empirical investigations into the techniques that are understood to be self-control strategies. These include, amongst others, behavioural management (Kanfer, 1977), biofeedback (Basmajian, 1983), cognitive therapies (Beck, 1976), self-hypnosis (Lynn & Rhue, 1991) and meditation (Shapiro & Zifferblatt, 1976). Research seems relatively convincing that these techniques are more effective than that of the placebo control for physical and affective disorders (Shapiro & Giber, 1978).

In psychotherapy these self-control strategies have been utilised successfully in the treatment of a variety of client problems such as obesity, depression, obsessive thoughts, smoking, anxiety, and family conflicts, and in more medical settings in the treatment of hypertension, alcoholism, drug abuse and insomnia, to name but a few (Shapiro & Shapiro, 1983). Research strongly indicates that self-control has a significant effect on the individual's physical, emotional, and mental well-being (Rodin, 1986; Rodin & Langer, 1977)

Meditation has been understood as behavioural and affective self-control as well as self-regulation of perceptual and cognitive processes, particularly attention (Goleman, 1991). Despite initial enthusiasm that meditation might be a unique self-control strategy, empirical research comparing meditation and other self-control strategies such as biofeedback, hypnosis and progressive relaxation indicate that, in terms of physiological and clinical comparisons, meditation appears to be equal to, but not more affective than, other self-control strategies (Holmes, 1984). This has, however, been critiqued by Dillbeck & Orme-Johnson (1987).

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Despite the fact that no significant differences in physiological responses between meditation, hypnosis and relaxation were found in some studies, it has emerged that the subjects' evaluation of the three above-mentioned relaxation states was significantly different (Morse, Martin & Furst, 1977). Shapiro (1982) notes that studies have shown that more subjective positive changes were reported by the meditation groups as compared to the control relaxation groups, even though there were no differences on the physiological measures. It appears that meditation does have a unique effect on the subjective level, and these subjective or phenomenological reports of meditation need to be taken into account in order to assess or interpret the effects of meditation.

Self-mastery in terms of self-control has been conceptualised as a process that is determined by four interrelated components: awareness, intervention, sense of self, and a sense of will (Mikulas, 1986). A person is aware of some less preferred behaviour and seeks to increase the probability of a desired alternative or goal. The person then utilises a specific intervention strategy to alter her- or himself to achieve a desired goal. "And all of this is associated with a subjective sense of self and a will as the agent and action of the awareness and intervention" (Mikulas, 1990, p. 153). Shapiro & Zifferblatt (1976) compared Zen meditation and behavioural self-control, showing how Zen meditation can be broken down into specific steps of self-mastery. Meditation as a self-control technique includes stimulus control, self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reinforcement, and goal-setting, as outlined in behavioural self-management strategies (Kanfer, 1977). As a self-management strategy, meditation involves both environmental planning or induction of ASCs, as well as behavioural planning or self-control in the form of self-reward, self-instructions, self-modelling, and stimulus control (Shapiro & Zifferblatt, 1976).

Despite such successes in the application of self-control strategies, the term 'self-control' is not clearly defined. Shapiro & Shapiro (1983) developed a four-quadrant construct of self-control based on cultural distinctions of Eastern and Western

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psychologies. The Western independent view of self and the Eastern interdependent view of self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) result in different forms of self-control. Western views of self-control include assertiveness, instrumentality, goal-directedness and productivity, while the Eastern view of self-control is conceptualised more in terms of acceptance, nonattachment, letting-go and yielding (Gilgen & Cho, 1979; Walsh, 1980).

In this model of self-control, Quadrant One and Quadrant Two are positive forms of self-control, while Quadrant Three and Quadrant Four represent negative forms of self-control. Quadrant One, stereotypically a Western mode of self-control, is called positive-assertive self-control (goal-orientated, initiating, self-starting mode of self-control). Quadrant Two is characterised by an Eastern view of self-control and is called positive-yielding self-control (accepting, letting-go, yielding, compassionate mode). The two negative quadrants of this model are the following: Quadrant Three is called negative-assertive self-control (aggressive, over-controlling, selfish, rigid mode of self-control) and Quadrant Four represents negative-yielding self-control (passive, timid, blaming, submissive mode) (Shapiro, 1990). There seems to be some suggestion that the quadrants of this model of self-control resonate with the research on male and female sex-role psychology, both in terms of socially desirable and undesirable qualities (Bem, 1974; Lubinski, Tellegen & Butcher, 1981). Furthermore, Q. adrant Three (negative-assertive self-control) relates to the profile of the Type A personality (Shapiro, 1982). Self-mastery or self-control in this study is then defined as the conjunction of an increasing positive-assertive and positive-yielding self-control over a decreasing negative-assertive and negative-yielding self-control.

In terms of the self-mastery of ASCs by shamans, Peters (1989b) states that the "shaman's dreamtime of inner space is a transpersonal visual realm in which the shaman has achieved a high degree of mastery. Memory and mastery of visionary trance seem to be crucial definitional elements. It varies from culture to culture as

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to whether this experience is interpreted as an "in-dwelling" or an "out-going""
(Peters, 1989b, p. 7). The powers might then be conceived as coming from within
the shaman or from without, as is the case with the South African shamans who
consider their deceased ancestors to be the source of power. The sense of control for
South African shamans is believed to come from a "benevolent other", from which
a certain degree of both assertive and yielding forms of self-control are accessed
(Astin & Shapiro, 1997, p. 68). Therefore, possession trance states could be defined
as a form of trance in which the behaviour of a person "is interpreted as evidence of
a control of his behaviour by a spirit normally external to him" (Firth, 1969, p. xvii).
Although phrased in learning theory terms, Mischel and Mischel (1958) in their
analysis of a possession trance observed in Trinidad could be understood as referring
to the possessed woman as expressing assertive and yielding self-control during her
trance. The positive reinforcement or self-control of the possession trance state
permits sanctioned expression of what is usually regarded as socially unacceptable
or unavailable behaviour, such as expressing aggressive or even sexual behaviour.

It is, however, important to note that trance possession or spirit mediumship is
understood by the shamans themselves as a communication between persons and
spirits. In such possession trance states a shaman acts as a mediator, which implies
that such a shaman "must be more controlled than a person simply possessed" (Firth,
1969, p. xi). The high prestige of the medium or shaman is related to the mastery
and mediatory role of the person in the trance (Beattie & Middleton, 1969).
Ancestor spirits are therefore quoted as having stated that "we have long tried to
make your people understand (by illness) that we want you to be our house - to
speak for us" (Lee, 1969, p. 134). The shaman deliberately surrenders part of her/his
psyche in the form of positive yielding self-control during ritual occasions, in return
for knowledge and ecstasy. The shaman allows 'domesticated' spirits, gods, forces
and ancestors through practice and self-mastery to possess the body and heal the
clients (Kelly & Locke, 1982, p. 3).

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In the West, however, the aim of ASCs is seldom to heal others but rather to heal the self. Furthermore, most schools of psychology or psychotherapy, be they psychoanalytica y, behaviourally, or systemically inclined, tend to remain focused on the present or past but not on the future (Mikulas, 1990). Some schools of psychology however, such as the transpersonal school (Washburn, 1994; Wilber, 1980), depth psyche 'ogy (Jung, [1946] 1969), psychology of transcendence (Neher, 1980) or contemplative psychology (De Wit, 1990) seek to understand and guide those on a transpersonal or contemplative path such as found in most of the great spiritual traditions (Kwee, 1990). Tart (1992) notes that spiritual psychologies have sophisticated techniques for altering the content and state of consciousness.

According to Peters (1989b), shamans were the first to explore inner space in a disciplined manner. The shamanic masterful participation in the inner spaces are possibly analogous to the 'transcendent function' of Jung [1916] (1957). The aim or goal of self-mastery are experiences that have been called 'peak experiences' (Maslow, 1964). Carl Jung was the first psychologist to acknowledge the importance of the transcendental experience. In as much as the numinous experience is attained, one is released from the curse of pathology (Walsh, 1980).

Walsh defines the term 'transcendental experience' as an experience of an ASC which is characterised by "(1) ineffability: the experience is of such power and so different from ordinary experience as to give the sense of defying description (2) noesis: a heig. ened sense of clarity and understanding (3) altered perception of space and time (4) apperception of the holistic, unitive, integrated nature and one's unity with it, and (5) intense positive affect" (Walsh, 1980, p. 670). This extreme positive affect, namely ecstasy, is according to Eliade `1964) one of the defining factors of shamanism. Ecstasy and joy are understood to be the result of an achievement of self-mastery (Czikzsentmihalyi, 1992). It has been observed that "the pinnacle of shamanic mastery is explicitly described as a kind of fusion with a transcendent divinity" (Kelly & Locke, 1982, p. 4). The aim of this study is then

to describe within the South African traditions some of the techniques that lead to such shamanic mastery. Whether trance states have transpersonal or pathological dimensions, a psychological understanding requires a neuropsychological and neurobiological component to allow for a more complete and integrated insight into trance states.

3. The Neurobiological Models of Trance States

The close relationship between consciousness and the brain suggests that trance states are also determined by or at least associated with various brain states. The psychological or mental aspect of ASCs seems to be closely related to important changes that take place in the brain. It is therefore essential to review the neuropsychological and neurobiological aspects of trance states. In this section, three major approaches to neurobiological aspects of trance states will be reviewed. The first approach outlines the biocybernetic models which are concerned with the nervous system as a whole in relation to trance states.

The second approach focuses on research on EEG readings of the brain during trance states. The third approach will review studies aimed at the structural and functional aspects of brain activity concerning trance states. In the first neurobiological approach to trans states, one biocybernetic model proposes that conscious experience occurs along a continuum of varying degrees of arousal of the central nervous system (Fisher, 1971). The centre of the continuum, the 'normophrenic' state is related to perceptions involving daily waking consciousness and relaxation. At opposite ends, the 'continuum of meditation' with its hypoarousal states (the quietude of *samadhi*), and the 'continuum of hallucination' with its hyperaroused states (ecstasy, mystical raptures) encapsulates the gamut of ASCs. ASCs can then be characterised by deviations in quantity of central nervous system arousal, leading either to greater arousal than normal, or to a lesser arousal resulting in increased tranquillity.

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Peters and Price-Williams (1983) make the important observation that the high and low states of arousal tend to meet at the extremes in the form of rebound. A physiological system pushed to either extreme will evoke the opposite pole of arousal in order to protect the body from adverse affects. The ecstatic state will therefore yield to a space of peace, while the quietude of meditation could provide the heights of joy. Ecstasy and meditation then have a common physiological basis, namely rebound. The switch of hyper-hypo arousal states is likely to mean that the right hemisphere of the brain achieves a transcollosal communication that achieves connections to other cortical and subcortical layers of the brain (Peters & Price-Williams, 1983, p. 13).

Peters & Price-Williams (1983) review the suggestion that the structure of trance states could be analysed in terms of a 'tuning' of the central nervous system. The three stages of this tuning are determined by oscillation in the ergotropic system (augmentation of sympathetic discharges) and the trophotropic system (augmentation of the parasympathetic discharges). In the first stage, the response to stimulation in one system increases while the other decreases. Under normal conditions, the non-activated system will compensate for many one-sided excitations. The second stage is reached when in a continual excited state a threshold is achieved, in which a reversal or rebound occurs. In the third stage, there is a mixed reaction in which both systems are activated. Examples of this are found in sexual orgasms, yogic meditation and certain neurotic, psychotic, as well as mystical states, in all of which the relaxation of skeletal muscles occurs simultaneously with cortical alertness. States of voodoo or vagus death could therefore be explained as being as a result of mixed discharges of an ergotropically aroused system. The person fearing a voodoo spell suffers acute trophotropic rebound and experiences severe helplessness and hopelessness (Lex, 1974).

Similarly, therapeutic experiences such as abreactions or ecstatic trance states also produce trophotropic rebound through a heightened arousal in the ergotropic system.

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With mastery, these experiences establish new and relatively stable patterns of mental and neurobiological functioning that have long-lasting consequences. These trance states become more easily accessed and enable the person to have deeper experiences (Peters & Price-Williams, 1983, p. 14). These neurobiological tuning phenomena occur within a cultural setting which permits specific forms of the phenomena to appear, e.g. voodoo death or the shaking of the ancestrally embodied South African shaman.

The second neurobiological approach to trance states focuses on the EEG readings received when people have entered into trance states. It becomes possible to differentiate various trance states according to different EEG readings. For example, Hughes and Melville (1990) note that research has shown that certain Yoga meditations, Transcendental Meditation (TM), and Zen meditative states are characterised by increases in alpha rhythms with some theta periods in Zen and TM meditators. Large increases in beta activity are not reported for Zen and yoga states, although some advanced TM meditators in a deep state have shown some beta waves. However, EEGs of trance states in anthropological field settings are fraught with difficulties.

EEG research on trance channeling has established some important results (Hughes & Melville, 1990). The reason for the importance of this research, especially for this study, lies in the fact that trance channeling seems to be a Western version of possession trance. Trance channeling is defined as an ASC or trance state in which an 'other' entity is 'Channeled' through the person's body (Klimo, 1987, p. 5). Huges and Melville (1990) consider channeling to be categorised as a form of possession, following Winkelman's (1986) definition. Equally, Inglis (1989) notes that shamanism of traditional societies have been equated with the mediumism of the West. Channels themselves prefer the term 'blending' to possession, 'blending' being a term connoting mutual co-operation (Hughes, 1989). EEG readings of trance channeling would be an opportunity to access relevant data on possession trances,

for although much research on EEG and meditation exists, meditation as an ASC and possession trance as an ASC cannot necessarily be equated (Hughes & Melville. 1990, p. 176-177).

The findings of this pilot study by Hughes and Melville (1990) of trance channelers indicated large amounts of beta activity throughout the trance periods, coupled with large amounts of high amplitude alpha and theta, relative to the pre-and post-trance states. This result seems to contradict EEG findings that suggest an absence of alpha brain waves during trance states (Krippner, 1972). Nonetheless, "the EEG pattern found in the current study of the trance channeling state seems to differ from the patterns associated with the various meditative states [and in comparison with EEG readings of hypnotic states] it seems clear that the trance channeling is not simply a form of self-hypnosis, but rather a distinctive state unto itself" (Hughes & Melville, 1990, p. 85). Given the results of this pilot study, it is suggested that the trance channeling or possession trances have their own particular EEG profile which differs from other meditative, hypnotic or pathologically altered states This may point to the possession trance state as being a distinct ASC.

EEG readings of trance states may be useful in distinguishing trance states, however, it gives very little insight into the structural and functional aspects of brain activity during trance states. This is the concern of the third neurobiological approach to trance states. In neuropsychology, which has, at times, been oversimplified and thereby creating a neuromythology, ASCs have been related rather simplistically to the right hemisphere of the brain which is responsible for creative, intuitive and holistic thinking, as well as for mystical, meditative and shamanic experiences (Ornstein, 1975). A more differentiated approach to brain activity places emphasis on the functioning of the limbic system. The limbic system appears to be involved in that it is associated with emotions and the formation but not the storage of memory. The neurotransmitter serotonin serves as a built-in insulator against a variety of trance states or transcendental experiences. When the serotonin mediated

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brain activity is temporarily curtailed, brain activity related to the neurotransmitters of dopamine or norepinephrine appear to create certain hallucinatory and other subjective experiences that resemble trance experiences. This brain activity therefore releases "the affectual and cognitive processes characteristic of religious ecstasy and the permanent personality changes associated with religious conversion" (Mandell 1980, quoted in Klimo, 1987, p. 259), be this through psychoactive substances or internally generated neurotransmitters such as endorphins.

One study that has exclusively focused on the psychobiology of trance states has researched the controlled trance states of the devotees of the Thaipusam Festival in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (Simons, Ervin, & Prince, 1988). While the limitations of the study are clearly stated (Ervin, Palmour, Murphy, Prince, & Simons, 1988), the tentative findings are that the trance onset is characterised by increased muscle tone, physiological tremors, and pupil dilation, all of which seem to indicate an adrenal medullary activation. The early training stages of trance are characterised by poorly organised motor activity and the occasional display of intense emotions. With experience, the motor patterns become more coherently organised, and the trances are followed by amnesia.

This is all suggestive of the limbic system dominating the behavioural program. The dramatic demonstrations of imbedded hooks and penetrating spears appear to suggest that the superficial (epicritic) pain pathways are terminated by the interventions which activate the deep (protopathic) pain pathways. With progressive training, there is a dampening of the major physiological signs and the dance patterns became more organised and individually specific, suggesting an increasing cortical involvement in this primary limbic involvement, and the researchers at this point draw an analogy to the development of lucid dream states. This process is similar to that which occurs in the training of South African shamans who also display poor motor activity in the beginning of training, and are able with continued training to withstand pain and exhaustion during a dancing trance state (Laubscher,

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1953; Berglund, 1976; Hall, 1994)

The researchers (Erwin *et al*, 1988) conclude that in trance state, the entire behavioural, autonomic and endocrinological syndrome is consistent with a state of cerebral organisation that is governed by the limbic system, as shown by the euphoria or ecstasy and analgesia typical for the basolateral amygdala activation. The amygdala is the key point of control for cortisol and endorphin levels, both being shown to be raised in trance states. The amnesia after the trance state can be understood to be consistent with the activation of the hipp campus. It is therefore argued that the trance state is a culturally learned technique for narrowing and focusing attention. It is induced, amplified, and reinforced by universal stimuli of repetitive patterns, such as rhythmic drumming, physiological tremors, and proprioceptive patterning, such as dancing.

The trance state is patterned into the limbic system, which then becomes the main locus of control for the somnambulistic or fugue states as is also found in temporal lobe epilepsy. One researcher has further suggested that there may be a link between temporal lobe epilepsy, psi and shamanism. "Shamans are alleged to produce both ESP and PK, to show eploid symptoms but be able to control their seizures" (Robinson, 1984, p. 35). Concomitant neurochemical, neuroendocrine and autonomic changes accompany this process. With repeated experience and practice within a supportive cultural setting, the initial lack of control occurring is supplanted by an increase of neocortical control, which in the end produces a finely-tuned and controllable trance state (Ervin *et al*, 1988, p. 281).

A neurobiological approach to trance states is further expanded by introducing the relationship between the brain, symbols and consciousness. Laughlin, McManus, and d'Aquili (1993) present such a discussion of shamanism within a neurophenomenological or biogenetic structuralist framework. Consciousness within this model is not placed within the Western dualism of mind and body, but

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rather it presents the mind and brain as being aspects of the same reality in that "the mind is how the brain experiences its own functioning, and brain provides the structure of the mind" (Laughlin *et al*, p. 13). In their integrative approach, the authors view human consciousness in terms of structural information (nervous and biological systems), behavioural information (observable activity including ethnological data) and experiential information (direct participation in or observation of transpersonal experiences). None of these perspectives have any predominance over the others. There is an attempt therefore to avoid biological reductionism without losing sight of the phylogenetic structures that lead to a development of consciousness.

Laughlin *et al* (1993) consider consciousness as beginning with the initial organisation of the neural network, which presents the basis for the universal aspects of mind and culture. The developmental socialisation of consciousness unfolds through the entrainment of neurons into networks which in turn construct models of the environment. So consciousness is understood as "the ongoing stream of experience that is mediated by a functional neural complex" (Laughlin *et al*, 1993, p. 90). Symbols then become central to the process of neural organisation of experience, and may evoke any neural network with which they are entrained, triggering off neuro-endocrinological systems, the brain stem, the limbic system, cortical structures, feelings, emotions and thoughts.

This allows for an explanation of the ego and its transcendence. The ego is a neural network entrained by symbolic systems, maintaining and adapting to the environment through its self-organisation. The ego has a tendency to deny structures that lie outside its consciousness, such as automatized structures, repressed or latent material, and "neurognostic archetypes for other structures" (Winkelman, 1996, p. 76). Sensory data tends to focus and support the ego. When the ego begins to inhibit that process and discovers other structures through the process of meditation, then these structures can become conscious and take on symbolic forms. If the ego is

overwhelmed, then a participation mystique can occur in which there is a comp¹ te immersion in the inner world. Transcendence is then the result of shifting the central status of the ego, and developing a different consciousness that moves towards a unity of the self and the world (Laughlin *et al*, 1993).

This may be related to the preliminary discoveries of neuroscientists from the University of California at San Diego who have suggested that their initial results indicate that the phenomenon of religious belief is hard-wired into the brain. Epileptic patients suffering from seizures of the brain's frontal lobe said that they frequently experienced intense mystical episodes and often become obsessed with religious spirituality. The seizure causes an overstimulation of the nerves in a part of the brain that has been dubbed the 'God module' (Connor, 1997).

In regard to the active cultivation of these states, shamans were one of the first to do so in the cultivation of ASCs through ritual processes. The shamans developed a path of transforming consciousness. That shamanic practices are found throughout the world suggests that neurognostic structures and processes are involved. Shamanism has become the first effort to institutionalise the development of consciousness within a symbolic framework. Universal shamanic experiences, such as magical flight, magical heat, ecstatic trance states and the encountering of spirits all suggest a consistent entrainment of such neurognostic structures.

Ritual becomes the path through which symbols and behaviour activate certain entrained neural networks. Shamans manipulate symbols to "e¹ ke alternate phases of consciousness, stimulate inquiry and exploration, engender metaphorical-metonymic understanding and transform ego identity" (Laughlin *et al*, 1993, p. 195). Symbols can then also trigger neurocognitive systems and reorder networks in order to produce a cure, and the myth serving as a means to stabilise and integrate shamanic experiences, giving meaning and understanding within a specific cultural setting of a world transcended by an ego (Winkelman, 1996).

The bedrock of a neurobiological understanding of shamanism and ASC has been conceptualised within a framework of quantum physics. Wolf (1991) as theoretical physicist with personal shamanic experiences has conceptualised the shaman as perceiving reality within an ASC. The observer of a quantum system disturbs the system by observing it. "Perhaps shamans manipulated matter and energy by some form of observational power brought forward when they were in an altered state of awareness" (Wolf, 1991, p. 10).

A further important point is that shamans view the world as being connected in a meaningful manner. All events therefore become universally connected. Wolf (1991) notes that the Anglo-Saxon shamans saw the universe as a gigantic vibrating web, a concept that resonates with David Bohm's (1982) notion of the universe being a hologram. The hologram is the implicate order which is invisible and contains all the possibilities that can be experienced. When an experience occurs it becomes part of the explicate order. What is explicate in this system is observed (Bohm, 1982).

The Numamiut, an Eskimo people, describe this belief in the following way: "The spirit of an object may be thought of as the essential existing force of that object. Without a spirit, an object might still occupy space and have weight, but it would have no meaning and no real existence. When an object is invested with *aninua* [soul], it is part of nature of which we are aware" (Vitebsky, 1995, p. 18). Another hypothesis that Wolf (1991) presents is that shamans enter parallel worlds or non-ordinary realities. In these parallel realities different systems of perception and symbols (language) are accessed by the shaman (Drury, 1985).

Experiences of such parallel realities would be found in OBEs, shape-shifting and travelling along time axes into past or future worlds. It is through these practices of psychological and neurognostic self-mastery in terms of ASCs or trance states that

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shamans have engaged the transpersonal world. In terms of such practices, "the world's great psycho-spiritual disciplines differ greatly in their related cosmologies, beliefs, and religious components, [but] there is a great consensus at the level of practice." (Mikulas, 1990, p. 160). It is this aspect of practice to which this literature review now turns.

CHAPTER THREE
SHAMANIC TRANCE STATES

In this chapter a discussion of shamanic trance states will be presented. For shamans, trance states function mainly to serve the community, especially in healing its members. For this reason, the healing function of shamanic trance states will be outlined. This is followed by a review of the induction techniques that lead to the experiences of shamanic trance states. Given the emphasis of this study on the shamanic trance states, a review of the literature concerning the distinction between shamanic trance states and meditation is relevant at this point. This leads to a major issue concerning ecstatic and possession trance states, for it is due to this distinction that Africa has been marginalised and neglected in the literature on shamanism. This discussion is followed by setting out a 'phenomenological map' of shamanic trance states, which will be referred to in the analysis of the discourses of South African shamans. Another important aspect in the shamanic literature is the developmental aspect of shamanic trance states, and its application to South African shamans will close the literature review of this chapter.

1. The Healing Function of Shamanic Trance States

According to Krippner (1988), shamans represent the 'first healers' in that they apply healing methods that closely parallel contemporary behaviour therapy, chemotherapy, hypnotherapy, milieu therapy, family therapy, and dream interpretation. Jilek (1982), in his analysis of shamans in the Northwest of Canada, reveals how the shamanic trance states as well as rituals associated with these are, not only therapeutic for the shaman and the patient, but also for the family and the community as a whole. Mindell (1993) notes that in his contact with African shamans, he understood that the essential healing process was the person's connectedness to her/his environment. Field (1992) in a more psychodynamic framework, considers the healing and therapeutic functioning of trance states as resulting in the lowering of tension and the release of 'bad objects' through

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abreaction, thereby creating a restorative emotional experience, and enhancing creativity.

Villoldo and Krippner (1986) argue that for shamans healing becomes a form of establishing a harmonious connection with the natural and the supernatural, a view of healing that presupposes a life after death. An example of a healing trance in Africa is the !Kung's *!kia*-curing. This occurs in the context of a dance that lasts from dusk to dawn, once or twice a week. The men dance around the clapping and singing women in a circle, some entering into a *!kia* state (Katz, 1973). The *!kia* state is "due to the activation of an energy, which they call *n um*, or medicine" (Katz, 1973, p. 140). The *!kia* becomes a transcending experience in which the *n um* master is able to contact the ancestors in the supernatural realm.

In this cosmology sickness is a process in which the ancestors try to carry off the sick person into this supernatural realm and the *n um* master struggles with the ancestors and often wins (Katz, 1973, p. 141). During another form of trance state, some shamans are able to 'see' the cause of illness (Turner (1992). Amongst the !Kung, a powerful healer *(giha)* 'sees' the illness itself with a steady gaze (Katz, 1982, p. 105). In Mozambique amongst the Tsonga, the healers have the power of 'second sight' which is attributed to the ancestors (Turner, 1992).

In yet a further form of trance state extractions of objects from patients by shamans occurs. Harner (1980) notes that illness due to harmful power intrusions, expressed as localised pain, is healed by shamans in trance states by sucking out the intrusions physically, emotionally and mentally. "This technique is widely used in shamanic cultures in such distant places as Australia, North and South America, and Siberia" (Harner, 1980, p. 115). Turner (1992) witnessed an account of extraction not due to trickery amongst the Ndembu of Zambia in Africa. Extractions or cuppings also occur amongst the !Kung in Botswana (Katz, 1982), amongst the Shona in Zimbabwe and the Zulu in South Africa (Turner, 1992).

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Sceptics have often called such extractions trickery, and point to the fact that in some cases shamans have used objects 'hidden' in their mouths. However, as Harner (1980) notes, "the shaman is aware of two realities" (Harner, 1980, p. 116), and the object in the mouth becomes the material home of the harmful intrusion when 't has been extracted. Importantly, when a shaman is ill, s/he goes to another shaman fully aware of the sleight of hand, yet s/he has the belief in the efficacy of the practice. It therefore cannot be simply a placebo effect (Edge, 1986). Turner's (1992) experience of the extracted tooth was not simply symbolic, for her husband Victor Turner also experienced it. Rather, the tooth became a symbol transmuted into reality, because she "*saw* the large thing come out of Meru's body" (Turner, 1992, p. 170). These healing experiences occur when a shaman induces shamanic states of consciousness.

2. The Inductive Technologies of Shamanic Trance States

It might be of value to consider, in a general manner, the technologies that make these trance states possible. In this section the induction techniques will be discussed separately from specific trance states. The induction of ASCs and their significant physiological, biochemical and psychological effects have been shown in over one thousand research reports (Kwee, 1990; Murphy & Donavan, 1989; Shapiro, 1990). Altered states have been induced throughout history in various ways. The Ancient Egyptians relied on sensory deprivation, social isolation and fasting, whilst for the Delphi in Graeco-Roman times, trances were induced in the Pythoness by carbon dioxide which emerged from the rock fissures.

Contemporary yoga practices in India rely on physical postures, inner mental images and breathing exercises. In Iraq the Sufis depend on vigils, breathing retention and the swirling dances of the dervishes. The sun ritual of the North American Indians leads to the induction of trance states through the physical stress of pain, heat and thirst. All the above mentioned induction techniques are complemented with the use of psychoactive substances (Kiev, 1972, pp. 29-30).

Tart (1975) has described phenomenologically the stages of induction that lead to an ASC. The induction of altered states can be categorised into three stages. The initial stage is characterised by a destabilisation of the normal state of consciousness. The next stage is characterised by repatterning and is a stage of transition while in the final stage, stabilisation of an altered state occurs. In the first stage, the everyday state of consciousness is disrupted by certain destabilising forces that operate on the usual brain-mind functions. Various types of destabilising forces are used, for example, sensory disruptors such as intense drumming or music; physiological disruptors such as hunger, sleep deprivation or exposure to extreme temperatures; and chemical disruptors such as psychedelic drugs or other psychoactive substances. South African shamans use mainly intense drumming, dancing, as well as psychoactive substances to destabilise normal states of consciousness.

When such destabilising factors become sufficiently intense, the usual states of consciousness become disturbed, as research on sleep deprivation and sensory deprivation with prisoners has shown (Storr, 1994). The negative effects are often profound, leading to severe psychological symptoms. In shamanism, however, the destabilised state of consciousness is repatterned into a new state of consciousness, depending on the patterning forces that mould it. The aim is not to damage the mind in order to control others, but rather to master the mind in order to transcend usual states of consciousness. These patterning forces include specific beliefs, drugs, physiological conditions as well as the environmental setting affecting the brain-mind functions. The repatterning forces induce specific states of consciousness. In South African shamanism, the central belief in the ancestors is a major patterning force of a specific state of consciousness.

When such an altered state has been induced, consciousness restabilises into a new and altered state, which is the third and final stage of the induction process. For example, hypnotic induction destabilises the usual waking consciousness. The

nature of the experience as well as the state of consciousness is patterned by the force of the instructions as well as the expectations of the hypnotist. When the new state is stabilised, it remains so until a new instruction or patterning force is given (Tart, 1975). In South African shamanism, it is the particular relationship with the ancestor that determines the shamanic trance state.

3. Shamanic Trance States and Meditation

The trance states of shamans have been compared to meditative states, and according to Walsh (1990), this comparison is often done in an uncritical manner. There are various techniques that allow for the entry into altered states. One of them is meditation. One difficulty with studying meditation begins is the lack of clear definitions as to what exactly meditation is. Meditation and the ASCs it produces have been researched both within quantitative and qualitative reset designs (Shapiro, 1983). There are many different types of meditation techniques, but Goleman (1988) states that the greatest common denominator amongst meditation schools is the focus on attention and concentration.

While meditation has been defined as a relaxation technique, such a definition is limited for it does not consider the myriad of techniques within meditation (Shapiro, 1982). Some meditational techniques involve sitting still, producing states of restfulness and relaxation, while other techniques create states of excitement and arousal while sitting still (Tantric yoga). Movement meditations, such as the whirling dervishes and shamanic practices, result in both states of excitement and states of relaxation (Fisher, 1971). This has been supported by psychophysiological research of Tantric yoga meditation in which yogic ecstatic states were recorded, thereby challenging the 'relaxation' model of meditation (Corby, Roth, Zarcone & Kopell, 1978). Depending on the type of meditation and on the body level, the body is either motionless or active, relaxed or aroused.

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On the cognitive level, attention in meditation can be grouped into three attentional strategies: focus on the field (mindful meditation), focus on a specific object within the field (concentrative meditation), and a shifting back and forth between the two. Using attentional strategies as a basis for a definition, Shapiro (1982) defines meditation as "a family of techniques which have in common a conscious attempt to focus attention in a nonanalytic way and an attempt not to dwell on discursive, ruminating thoughts" (Shapiro, 1982, p. 268).

This definition considers meditation to be 'conscious', which means that meditation involves intention and motivation to focus attention. In other words, self-mastery becomes an important aspect in attempting to achieve the focus of attention. This definition also has the advantage of being noncultic and does not depend on a religious framework, which in no ways denies the importance of the context within which meditation occurs (Shapiro, 1990). Furthermore, by defining meditation as an 'attempt', this allows for the meditation to be conceptualised as a process and thereby includes a developmental dimension. It is important to note that the traditions that teach meditation do not merely attempt to achieve an ASC, but rather a higher state of consciousness compared to consciousness of the consensus reality (Tart, 1975).

Shamanic states of consciousness have been compared to the meditative states such as found in yogic and Buddhist practices (Walsh, 1993; 1995). Very briefly, classical yoga is a concentration practice in which the mind is stilled to such an extent that an unwavering attention on an inner experience (breath, image, or *mantra*) is achieved (Eliade, 1958; Feuerstein, 189; Worthington, 1982). The yogi is required to withdraw attention from the body and the outer world, a technique called *pratyahara*, in order to focus inwards (Feuerstein, 1989). In time the yogi loses awareness of the body and the outer world, and the focus is on subtle, internal objects (Eliade, 1958). Eventually, all objects drop away and the yogic experience of *samadhi* emerges, which is understood to be a classic example of the ecstatic,

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mystical union of the Atman and Brahman or the *unio mystica* (Stace, 1987; Underhill, 1955).

Classical Buddhism employs two central meditative practices, namely concentration (*samatha*) and insight *(vipassana)* practices (Goleman, 1988). Buddhist *vipassana* insight meditation is an awareness practice. Whereas the yogic practice emphasises fixed attention on inner objects, insight meditation focuses fluid attention on all objects, both inner and outer (Goldstein, 1976). During insight meditation all stimuli are observed and understood to be the workings of the body, sensations, and the mind, the aim being to dispel the effects of clouded awareness and thereby see things for what they are (Goldstein, 1976; Goleman, 1988). The Buddhist *jhanic* concentrative states however, are in many ways similar to the yogic *samadhis* in that the eight increasingly refined *jhanic* states are originally derived from yogic concentration practices (Goleman, 1988).

In terms of trance states, Eliade (1964) distinguishes between ecstasy and *enstasis*. Ecstasy is an ASC related to shamanism with its visionary state. It is a soul's journey, its healing function being in the service of the community. *Enstasis* is an ASC linked to the meditative practices of the Hindu-Buddhist tradition of *samadhi*. *Samadhi* is defined as an "invulnerable state in which perception of the external world is absent" (Eliade, 1958, p. 78). The meditative state is aimed at producing a state of enlightenment - self-realisation in Hinduism, and *nirvana* in Buddhism. According to Eliade (1958), spirit possession, and therefore possession trance states, are modelled on the yogic embodiment techniques. It could even be claimed that possession might be "one of the purest forms of mythic identity" (Larsen, 1988, p. 53).

Another distinction that is often made in regard to the cultural aspects of trance states between the yogic and shamanic practices. However, the cultural aspects of trance are often very similar, as is evident in the comparison between Tibetan yogis

and Aboriginal shamans (Elkin, 1977) or, for that matter, the research by Katz (1982) which describes the experiences of Bushmen shamans as being closely parallel to the *kundalini* experiences of Tantric yoga. There is an arousal of energy from the base of the spine into the head, ending in an experience of 'nothingness'. This experience of arousing the *kundalini* to the seventh *chakra* at the crown of the head, thereby creating an *enstasis* or *samadhi* (Woodroffe, 1974), has resulted in OBEs (Krishna, 1968), which are characteristic of shamanic trance states.

Both in yogic and shamanic practices, visionary and non-visionary techniques are present, and the mastery of these images is an essential goal of both practices (Peters & Price-Williams, 1980). The shamanic calling and certain meditative experiences are very similar in nature. The shamanic calling, the *ukuthwasa* in South Africa, is often characterised by hyperaroused states, severe anxiety, shaking, as well as fear of death and the emergence through a rebirth (Thorpe, 1991; Eliade, 1964). Similarly, Gopi Krishna (1968), in raising the *kundalini* during his yogic meditation, experiences terror, fear of death and shivers, and is finally saved by a glowing radiance. Both the shamanic calling and the *kundalini* experiences could be considered to be mystical types of experiences which comprise of a 'dark night of the soul' (Underhill, 1955), followed by a sense of unity or a cure (Washburn, 1994).

In this regard Doore (1988) states that "shamans, yogis and Buddhists alike are accessing the same state of consciousness" (Doore, 1988, p. 223). Kalweit (1988) suggests that the shaman "experiences existential unity - the *samadhi* of the Hindus or what Western spiritualists and mystics call enlightenment, illumination, *unio mystica*" (Kalweit, 1988, p. 236). Given the similarities of experiences between shamans, yogis and Buddhists, advocates of perennial philosophy would claim that core mystical experiences are common across culture and traditions. This contrasts with the view of the constructivists who would suggest that the mystical experience is constructed and mediated by personal and cultural factors (Walsh, 1995).

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Taking up the middle ground, Walsh (1995) notes that although a careful phenomenological mapping of altered states in different traditions, such as yogic, Buddhist, or shamanic practices seems to support a constructivist view of mystical experiences, mystical experiences are by their nature considered out of reach of reason, as the Zen notion of "not-one, not-two" (Watts, 1957) and the concept of *"neti, neti"* (neither this nor that) of the advaita vedanta (Deutsch, 1969). In a similar vein, Wilber (1983) notes that reason cannot grasp absolute reality and merely falls into dualistic incompatibilities in its attempt to capture the mystical experience. In meditative practices there is a reliance on transrational intuition based on personal experiences (Walsh, 1995) and therefore, the existence of common core mystical experiences cannot be accepted or denied for, "what can be said at all can be said clearly, what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence (Wittgenstein [1922] 1981, p. 3).

However, it is important to note that while many authors assume a similarity between, for example, shamanic experiences and the samadhi states of Hindus, there is an absence of references pertaining to the *unio mystica* in the shamanic literature. This which has lead one authority on shamanism to state that "we never find the mystical union with the divinity" (Hultkrantz 1973, quoted in Walsh, 1995, p. 49). Walsh (1995) raises three important objections to this statement by pointing out that, firstly, shamanism is an oral tradition, and that records of this expression of shamanic traditions may have been lost through the oral transmission of knowledge. Secondly, psychoactive substances are widely used by shamans across the world (DeKorne, 1994; Lukoff, 1988), and it is known that some of these substances, for example, *peyote* and *ayahuasca* have been capable of inducing experiences that some researchers have deemed to be mystical in nature (Roney-Dougal, 1991; Lukoff 1988).

Finally, Walsh (1995) notes that Western practitioners trained in shamanic practices have indeed reported unitive experiences. "All of this suggests that, although the

unio mystica is not the goal of shamanic practices, it may sometimes occur" (Walsh, 1995, p. 50). Importantly, shamanism provides the very root of mysticism, namely the subjective transformation of the individual. It is from shamanism that a basic discovery of mysticism is highlighted: "the ecstatic expe   nce aligned to religious meaning" (Ellwood, 1980, p. 47). Parrinder (1995) states that the public manifestation of mysticism in Africa is generally found as a form of a possession of the divine or spirits. "If polytheism is a form of theism, these [African] mediums are theistic rather than monistic mystics" (Parrinder, 1995, p. 84). The distinction between meditative and shamanic practices cannot be upheld on the grounds made above. Distinctions therefore need to be made on the basis of specific dimensions of the trance states themselves.

Be this as it may, attention is now turned to distinctions between ecstatic trance states and possession trance states, both of which South African shamans undoubtedly experience. It is the experience of possession trance states that has often led to the marginalisation of Africa in shamanic literature because possession trance states in Africa were not considered to be shamanic or ecstatic in nature. The distinction between ecstatic and possession trance states is however, questionable.

The distinction between ecstatic and possession trance states finds its strongest representation in Eliade's (1964) classical work on shamanism, and it has in turn influenced many subsequent writers on shamanism in perpetuating this distinction of trance states. Given the effect this distinction has had on the discourse of shamanism, a brief outline of Eliade's view is presented before it is critiqued.

The trance state known as shamanic ecstasy is often understood in the literature as a visionary state of a soul's journey frequenting the spirit world, ascending and descending the cosmic axis (Eliade, 1964; Halifax, 1979; Harner, 1980; Walsh, 1990). Eliade (1964) uses the term 'ecstasy' to refer to the ascent to a sky-god which he believes to be the core of pure shamanism. For Eliade (1964), possession trances

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or the descent of an earth motif is a corruption of shamanism.

Most authors present ecstasy trance states as being hallucinatory, remembered, volitional and related to hunter societies and men, whilst dissociation or possession trance states are understood as being amnesic, non-visual and related to agricultural societies and women. Two types of trance are therefore set up that essentially contrast each other.

Some scholars, however, claim that shamanism can entail both types of trance to varying degrees (Lewis, 1971; Peters & Price-Williams, 1980). A more fundamental critique, however, questions the very nature of this distinction between two types of trance states. For example, possession trance states, usually characterised as being amnesic and non-visual, have been found to involve memory and may also include visual experiences (Peters, 1981). In Nepal Tamang shamans visualise their tutelary deity before inducing possession or embodiment (Peters, 1981), while Tantric meditative techniques include visual hallucinations of deities.

In Africa, ancestors and hallucinatory animals are seen in a trance (Hall, 1994; Marahele, 1993). "Thus the distinction between possession and visionary states based on memory and visual hallucinations seem to be unfounded". If anything, "the similarities between trance states seem to vastly outweigh their differences" (Peters & Price-Williams, 1983, pp. 25-26). Furthermore, both the ecstasy trance state as well as the possession trance state seem to psychotherapeutically entail catharsis. Furthermore, Lewis (1971) in his discussion of ecstasy and possession trance states notes that while the subjective experience may differ in that the one entails a sense of ecstasy and the other a sense of possession, the outward manifestation of the phenomena can be the same. For example, the shaman can appear to be embodied or possessed and still claim to have mastery over the spirits.

Trance possession or embodiment has an important tradition in shamanism. Animal embodiment is possibly one of the oldest religious elements found in the tribal hunter and gatherer societies, probably going as far back as the Old Stone Age Euroasiatic shamanism (Campbell, 1983). The earliest depiction of a human being found in the Palaeolithic caves of Le Trois Freres is that of a shaman wearing upon his head a mask of a stag with antlers (Bancroft, 1987). By embodying the animal, the shaman secures the success of the hunt. The shaman wearing a buffalo skin, deer's antlers, or a bird mask becomes the very spirit of the animal through the act of intentional identification with the animal whose occult powers are invoked (Campbell, 1987). Grof and Grof (1991), in LSD sessions with patients, found that reports on animal and spirit possessions, as well as cosmic soul flights would spontaneously emerge. This may suggest that, although culturally contextualised, shamanic trance states might be universal in nature and therefore found across the world.

Historical examples of possession trance states range from the *Wu* shamans of Ancient China to the possession-like entranced shamans of the Dionysian cults of Ancient Greece, from the Ancient Celts to Saul of the Old Testament (1 Sam.28) calling Samuel through a medium, from the Holy Ghost phenomena to Mohammed's Channeled teachings of the Koran, from the mediums of the last century to the channels of today (Klimo, 1987; Hastings, 1991). Inglis (1989) notes that the shaman of traditional societies have been equated with the mediums of the West in terms of trance states. The channel or medium of today and the shaman in traditional societies both "act as a privileged channel of communication between man and the supernatural" (Lewis 1989, p. 15). Such a channel of communication occurs during a possession trance. Some authors do therefore consider the controlled or positive possession trance as part of shamanism, such as Lewis' (1989) notion of ecstatic possession, Peters and Price-Williams (1980) whose definition of shamanism includes soul flight as well as embodiment techniques, as well Kakar's (1982) East Indian research.

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important for this study is the notion of the mastery of trance states. The mastery of trance states also relates to the distinction between ecstatic and possession trance states. One central distinguishing characteristic noted is that possession trance states are involuntary and lack control, whilst the ecstatic trance states are voluntary, controlled and mastered. Such a distinction is questionable. With practice, entering any trance state becomes a learned skill. Over time, not only does the practitioner's ability to enter such states become more rapid and effective, but the quality of consciousness with altered states become available to normal states of consciousness. For example, a meditator who masters states of extreme calm and concentration will eventually become more calm and his powers of concentration will increase in the usual state of consciousness. Likewise, the shaman's spirit possession may with practice become more sensitive and accessible in an ordinary state. "Indeed, shamanic training has as its object transforming the apprentice magician's initial and momentary ecstatic experience into a permanent condition" (Walsh, 1990, p. 164), thereby achieving a state of self-mastery.

This means that through self-mastery an altered 'state' of consciousness becomes an altered 'trait' of consciousness. This is often dependent on the intensity and duration of the training, which is by Western standards quite extraordinary, in some cases the length of training being measured in decades. In some cases, possession trance states are considered to be the highest form of shamanic mastery. Kelly and Locke (1982) note that in 1931 Rasmussen observed that, amongst the Eskimos, shamanic practices ranged from very 'low' grades of shamanism, such as simple divinatory behaviour, to the 'higher' grades of possession trance states.

Equally, in a phenomenological analysis of the !Kung Bushmen trance-dance dynamics, it is clear that the novices show signs of poor self-control, while the experienced shaman achieves control over the ASC, thereby experiencing, amongst other things, remote viewing, seeing of the gods, the ability to heal, as well as sensitivity to others (Kelly & Locke, 1982; Lewis-Williams & Dowson, 1989). A

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hierarchy of shamanic abilities also exists amongst South African shamans, and the "highest class of diviners are known as *izanusi*" (Laubs-' ·963, p. 148). Walsh (1980) quotes one of the most respected Hindu teachers, Ramana Maharishi, who stated: "No one succeeds without effort. Mind control is not your birthright. Those who succeed owe their liberation to perseverance." (Walsh, 1980, p. 665).

In summary then, the distinction between ecstatic and possession trance states on the basis of whether the shaman is in control or not, or whether there is any memory or visual hallucination, cannot be upheld and seems rather unnecessary. Walsh (1990) therefore proposes that a phenomenological mapping of trance states or states of consciousness that enables a more specific comparison of trance states from a subjective perspective would be the most useful approach in understanding the differences between these states. Walsh (1995) thus proposes that the subjective experience of trance states be mapped on twelve dimensions which he considers to be important in trance states and which will be discussed below.

4. A Cartography of Shamanic States of Consciousness

In considering shamanic states of consciousness as trance states, questions need to be asked as to what type of trance states, as well as the manner in which this can be differentiated from other states of consciousness, because "claims for similarities or differences spin their wheels until they get down to ways and degrees in which things differ or are alike" (Smith, 1987, p. 558). Some maps of states of consciousness, such as the yogic *chakra* systems, are ancient (Tart, 1975), whilst more recent Western models include maps based on levels of arousal (Fisher, 1971), mental systems (Tart, 1975), induction techniques (Ludwig, [1969] 1990), phenomenological dimensions (Clark, 1983), as well as developmental stages (Wilber, 1980). Walsh (1995) concludes that these maps are ultimately insufficient. His twelve key dimensions are based on the frequency with which these dimensions are described. It is an attempt to map out ASCs more clearly.

The key dimensions for mapping ASCs according to Walsh (1995, pp. 33-34) are the following:

1. Degree of the reduction of awareness of experimental context or environment (from complete to minimal to none).

2. Ability to communicate (from clear to vague to not at all).

3. Type of concentration (degree of concentration; fixed (focused on single object) or fluid attention (shifting between various selected objects)).

4. Degree of control (ability to enter and exit ASC at will; ability to control content of ASC).

5 Degree of arousal (from high to medium to none).

6. Degree of calm (depth of calmness).

7. Degree of sensory perception (from reduced to heightened).

8. Sense of self or identity.

9. Type of affect (from pleasure to pain).

10. Degree of out-of-the-body-experience (OBE) (clarity and mobility)

11. Content of inner experience (from formless to differentiated, if differentiated determine

   i) degree of organisation

   ii) modality (auditory, visual, somatic)

   iii) intensity of object

   iv) personal or archetypal images (psychological level of objects)).

12. Developmental level of the state (different ASCs emerge in sequences of stages).

According to Walsh (1995), this map of altered states is related to the general literature on shamanism in the following manner: The shamanic journey state usually entails a reduced awareness of the environment, which is at times incomplete, as some shamans are able to communicate with people whilst journeying (Harner, 1988; Peters & Price Williams, 1980). Walsh (1990) considers concentration during a shamanic journey to be generally momentary rather than

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fixed, with a greater fluidity of attention, shifting from object to object. Shamans are able to enter and exit ASCs at will, or at least partially in the case of lucid dreams (Walsh, 1995). The shamanic journey usually entails a high degree of arousal and agitation, and is seldom calm. In terms of identity, shamans experience themselves as souls or spirits separate from the bodies, and travel to other worlds, which relates directly to the dimension of OBEs.

Walsh (1995) compares the ASCs in shamanism to those in other traditions along these dimensions, and concludes that "claims that shamans and masters of other traditions are equivalent and access identical states" will require much more refined research (Walsh, 1995, p. 40). This of course does not preclude any experiential or functional overlap between different states in that they have similar processes, training and aims. However, differences also need to be acknowledged, and detailed comparisons along the dimensions outlined above will facilitate this.

5. The Developmental Aspect of Shamanic Trance States

Shamanic trance states occur within a developmental framework, and the journey of the South African shaman is no exception. The developmental aspect of the South African shamanic trance states is largely determined by self-mastery which increases as the individual moves from the position of the neophyte to that of the shaman. Mastery of shamanic trance states implicates issues pertaining to power and knowledge, and these will be discussed in detail below. What will follow now is a review and integration of the literature on general shamanism and South African shamanism specifically within a developmental framework. In this part of the review the development of the shaman's self-mastery is paramount.

The outline of becoming a South African shaman can be analysed in terms of developmental stages. In shamanism, the survival of the initiation crisis, the training period and the graduation ceremony is reminiscent of that power gained by a hero's journey (Walsh, 1990). Campbell (1968), in his analysis of myths, has mapped out

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the life stages of a hero. Walsh (1990) considers Campbell's (1968) analysis to be an important horizontal map that sets out developmentally the stages of the composite hero (warrior, ruler, healer, saint and gods).

Walsh (1990) adds a vertical map which allows for the important distinction of different kinds of heroes, i.e., distinguishing saints from gods, warriors from sages. Different heroes will have different strategies or games to achieve their own goals. Different types of heroes apply different types of games, 'games' here being understood in terms of Wittgenstein's language games (Wittgenstein [1953], 1981). In de Ropp's (1972) Master Game, the quest for enlightenment or awakening is epitomised in the game played by the great saints and shamans in many different cultures and during different times. The aim of the game is to achieve mastery of the inner world rather than the outer world. The Master Game "still remains the most demanding and difficult of games and, in our society, there are few who play" (De Ropp, 1972, p. 99). This game is played by those that have come to the conclusion that the ordinary waking state of consciousness is not the highest level of consciousness, and the heroes of this game seek, through self-mastery, to go beyond the ordinary.

In shamanism, self-mastery, understood developmentally, emerges as a hero's journey with five distinct stages: the hero's life as a conventional citizen, the call to adventure or awakening, the period of discipline and training, the completion of the quest and finally the return and contribution to society. Briefly, in the first stage the hero is born into and slumbers within the norms and values of society. Society is accepted as being real, limits are adapted to, and morals are believed to be appropriate. In Asia this state is known as *maya* or illusion, in the West it is often called collective psychosis, or more kindly, consensus trance (Tart, 1986). This stage in South African shamanism is depicted by the requirements of the traditional values and social rituals in the social network, as well as by the ordinary initiation into manhood or womanhood.

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Mastery of this stage is achieved when the hero recognises and has personal knowledge of the limitations of social norms, not merely as a reaction of defiance but as a personal understanding of the emptiness and illusory nature of social and traditional values. When this is achieved, a sense of existential despair occurs, depicted by existentialists such as Sartre [1946] (1980) and Yalom (1980). The calling or the *ukuthwasa* to become a shaman is the existential call to move beyond social conventions.

5.1. The 'Call' of the Ancestors

In South African shamanism, the journey begins with the 'call' of the ancestors. The 'call' of the ancestors often emerges through dreams of deceased relatives, dreams which are often interpreted by other shamans as being a sign or 'call' from the ancestors. Berglund (1976) states that nobody can become a diviner by personal choice, at least not in theory. Among the Nguni, the South African shaman, especially the *isangoma* (Zulu) or the *igqira* (Xhosa) are 'called' by the ancestors. Amongst the Shona people in Zimbabwe, there exist strict criteria in order for a person to become a *nganga*. He must not only be possessed by a spirit but by a spirit who is a relative and who was a practising *nganga* himself (Gelfand, 1964, p. 56). The 'call' of the ancestors is genealogical. This is also evident in Siberian shamanism (Kharitidi, 1996). It could be said that the spirit first expresses itself through illness, and once the spirit is acknowledged and the relationship between the shaman and the spirit improves, then the shaman begins to heal and benefit from the spirit (Boddy, 1992).

The neophyte during the time of calling might enter a fugue state. In a fugue state, a *thwasa* may wander off into the fields and forests and generally avoid socialising, being 'bored' with people. Shamans might refer to such a *thwasa* as being 'in the forest' or 'at the mountain' as a metaphor for waywardness and mental confusion (O'Connell, 1980, p. 19). Equally, it is in this fugue state during the *ukuthwasa* that the possessed finds the household of her/his shamanic teacher (Gussler, 1973), a

teacher that was often already shown through the dreams. This fugue state during the *ukuthwasa* begins with a need for solitude and a consequent withdrawal from the social field.

Sometimes herbs seen in dreams are sought, sometimes snakes are sought in order to hang them around the neck, for snakes are seen to harbour the spirits of the ancestors. A common symbol, very central to South African shamanism, is the serpent, especially the serpent submerged in water, which "represents the instinctual side of unconsciousness [...] the serpent symbolises the upward movement of instinctual energy (kundalini)" (Downton, 1989, p. 79). The *umbilini* represents such a snake in the body of the shaman. The symbol of the serpent is considered to be important for the South African *thwasa*, be it in a dream or during an experience (Mutwa, 1996a).

If the person resists the 'call' of her/his ancestors, she/he may become vulnerable, through witchcraft, to fall prey to a more serious illness, namely the *phambana* (Xhosa). This illness is understood as being a form of madness induced by a witch with the help of a familiar. Contrary to the *ukuthwasa*, the person in this state does not dream or have visions. The person is either extremely aggressive or isolated, lacks insight into her/his condition and believes nothing is wrong. If the shaman chases away the bad spirits, this illness can be converted into an *ukuthwasa*, which is then curable (Schweitzer, 1977). Schweitzer and (1978) interpret the *ukuthwasa* as a particular crisis of a person, who is experiencing a dysfunctional relationship with the ancestors.

During this stage, the 'call' to adventure follows the crisis as a pull from within. This may take the form of a dream or vision of divine discontent. This pull towards adventure or awakening confronts the hero with an existential choice of either being authentic and entering into the unknown, or retreating towards the familiar by being seduced by the anaesthetising effects of conventionality. Such inauthentic *Dasein*

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(Heidegger [1926], 1983) or alienation (Sartre [1946], 1980) may possibly lead to illness, insanity or even death, should the shaman refuse to take up the 'call' (Kalweit, 1988).

As an intra-psychic conflict, the ancestors could be viewed as directing the person towards a vocation, namely shamanism, in order to heal the split functions or aspects of the psyche. The ancestors, within a Jungian framework, can be interpreted as primary unconscious complexes which can either aid or obstruct a person, depending on how they are integrated into that person's life (Bührmann, 1979). The 'call' to become a shaman is thus a resolution of a conflict, in which the chaos of the illness is given a symbolic form through rituals and specific activities during training (Schweitzer & Bührmann, 1978).

The means to achieve this is through the shamanic teacher acting as a therapist, the use of dream interpretation (Bührmann, 1979), and ritual dancing as an integrative therapeutic tool (Bührmann, 1981), as well as the special song of the novice with its symbolically integrative and ego-soothing function (Bührmann & Gqomfa, 1981), and the ritual slaughter or sacrifice as a symbolic act of renewal (Bührmann & Gqomfa, 1982b), all of these factors serving to integrate the individual into the community (Bührmann & Gqomfa, 1982b).

Many spiritual heroes, such as Jesus, Buddha, Shankara, and others, in response to the call of awakening, become wanderers, and in doing so leave behind status, wealth, and security. Shamans, on entering into the training period, often relinquish their social position, only to reclaim them once the training has been completed. Amongst South African shamans this manifests in the social exclusion of the novice during training, due to certain taboos as well as the fear of ritual impurity (*umlaza*). This isolates the novice both socially and psychologically. The 'call' towards awakening marks the introduction to the training and disciplines of the quest.

The acceptance of the 'call', after a period of denial, could be understood as having a 'transcendent function' (Jung [1916], 1957) in that the resistance to the unconscious material in opposition to the conscious material finds it's reconciliation (Dehing, 1993) in the acceptance of the 'call' to shamanism. The acceptance leads to an *Aufhebung* or the resolution of the synthesis in the dialectics between the unconscious and the conscious during the initiation illness. Shamanism has been understood psychoanalytically as "a transformational ordeal of dismemberment and rebirth" and used "as a metaphor for understanding individuation, it emphasises the difficulties integrating the archetypal level of the collective unconscious in the process of reaching wholeness" (Downton, 1989, p. 73).

According to Jung's conceptualisation of development there is a "psychological inference that may be drawn from shamanic symbolism, namely that it is a projection of the individuation process", and thereby comparable to 'philosophical' alchemy (Jung [1954], 1967, p. 341). The Chinese ideogram for crisis is the same as that for opportunity and, similarly, a temporary psychological crisis or disturbance can, at a later stage, be re-framed or re-interpreted as a stage of development and growth, as is clearly evident in Erikson's developmental model (Erikson, 1977). Thus the initiation crisis of the shaman can be conceptualised as not merely a pathological process, but rather as a specific developmental crisis on the road to development of self-actualisation (Washburn, 1994), individuation (Jung, [1934], 1950), or spiritual awakening of the transpersonal will (Assagioli, 1974; 1991).

A Jungian analysis of Carlos Castaneda's path of knowledge depicts the shaman's inner development, as a constant integration of and receptivity towards the border crossings from the conscious (the tonal) to the unconscious (the *nagual*) (Williams, 1981). It could be said that the 'call' of the ancestors in the South African setting is a 'call' from the unconscious that requires integration. The training programme could be conceptualised as a therapeutic process of integration. When the developmental

crisis in the form of *ukuthwasa* arises, the ancestors 'call' the afflicted one demanding "that he must become what he must be" (quoted in Bührmann, 1981, p. 188).

The world tree of shamanism could be understood as representing the archetype of wholeness, whilst the initiation crisis, the rituals and the final graduation ceremony could be seen as stages of transformation on the path of individuation. Structurally, the shamanic three-tier universe (lower, middle and upper world) as presented by Eliade (1964) could be compared to the three-levelled personal unconscious of Assagioli (1978), in which the conscious self or 'I' represents the 'centre' of the shamanic universe. Approaching the higher unconscious through the lower ones, as suggested by Assagioli (1978), would mirror the shaman's travels through the lower world before reaching the higher one.

5.2. The Death and Rebirth of the South African Shaman

Self-mastery in shamanism is most clearly evident in the shaman's training and development, which most often includes the overcoming of the initiatory crisis. As an Eskimo put it: "I am not a shaman, as I have neither had dreams nor been ill" (Ilcinilik quoted in Halifax, 1979, p. 4). The shaman's initiation highlights the themes of death, resurrection, realisation or illumination as powerful experiences in the shaman's travels across the threshold into the Beyond (Kalweit, 1988). Explicit instructions and methods are given to the potential shaman which, if properly carried out, will lead to an experience of rebirth. At this point a teacher is sought (De Ropp, 1972, p. 98-99). A teacher, guru, shaman, or wise person often play a vital role, the teacher being either in the outer world or in the inner world in the form of a spiritual guide or ancestor. Sullivan (1994) states that the presence of a master or teacher for the novice is essential, in that the novice dies to her/his former life. The teacher is required in order to guide the novice through a death and into a rebirth, i.e., into a new life as a shaman.

Self-mastery emerges as a process of first having to exercise a very active self-control while continuing with a demanding induction technique (Jilek, 1982) that will ultimately produce contact with the spirits. Equally, the "commonest Bushman metaphor for trance is 'death'. They say that shamans 'die' when they cross over into the spirit world" (Lewis-Williams & Dowson, 1989, p. 50). At a significant point, a yielding, passive self-control needs to occur, a yielding to the emergence of the spirit and to a death of the old self.

When a South African shamanic novice faints or is unconscious, it is believed that the ancestors have 'killed' him. The rebirth or awakening of the unconscious novice occurs only once the ancestors have been appeased by the slaughtering of a beast. The word *ukuthwasa* means 'coming out' or 'emergence', and is the end result of possession by ancestor spirits - ideas of 'rebirth' as a 'new' person are involved (Lee, 1969, p. 134). A specific narrative highlights this theme most clearly: "I heard that once a certain diviner was dead for a long time, about a month. On awakening from this state she was a fully initiated *isangoma*. Having arisen she said she had returned from far away, that she had traversed the whole country, and had even been in heaven, that she had seen her child, who had told her to go back, because her time had not yet come. The *induna* [ancestor] of heaven said: "Your mother must go back, she is merely being initiated." She woke up then and returned to earth as a great *isangoma*, and went to seek white ochre in the pool" (Sikhumbana quoted in Kohler, 1941, p. 22). Such experiences resemble OBEs as well as NDEs, both often containing mystical experiences, and both found to be relatively independent in terms of cultural factors (Noyes, 1979; Osis & Haraldsson, 1977; Ring, 1984).

Similarly, the experience of death and rebirth is also found amongst the Plain Indians of North America. The vision quest is associated with changes during the life passages of a person, including purification, isolation and sometimes body mortification (Kalweit, 1988). Among the Siberian Yakut, the shaman becomes an observer of her/his own death in the form of dismemberment. Related to this theme,

Berglund (1976) states that the term *ukufukamela* means 'brooding', as a hen broods over her eggs. The term refers to the ancestors' effect on the birth and growth of the novice. As hens produce chicks from hard old shells, so do the ancestors transform the novice from an old form into somebody new. Excessive brooding manifests in the novices as being excessively self-absorbed and depressed. It is very much feared, as it creates madness, insanity, and acts of wild behaviour (Berglund, 1976), especially if the 'call' to become a shaman is resisted. Death through madness is a real danger, and the passage to rebirth lies with becoming a shaman.

The continuous acts of purification that are performed during the training of a novice also relate to this theme of death and rebirth. In this regard an *isangoma* states that in the training of the novice the first thing that is done is to isolate him from his 'old life', so that a 'new man' can emerge. "We want to create another heart for him, a heart as the spirits like it. For this purpose we apply a cleansing process of the inner man by enemetics and purgatives until nothing of the former substance that kept the person alive is left in him. Then we clean the outer man by extensive washing and by inducing perspiration with the help of blankets and hot stones. We also apply the smoking cure, and by the time this is all over the pupil is as soft as wax bodily and mentally and will submit to all we tell him" (an *isangoma* teacher quoted in Schimlek, 1950, pp. 101-102).

Eliade (1964) uses the example of a Zulu shamanic novice dreaming of being dismembered and put back together again as being symbolic of the death and rebirth a shaman has to withstand. The shaman's sacrifice of self to the spiritual forces through the divesting of flesh and consequently being reduced to a skeleton, a common symbol for this process, is for Eliade a means of re-entering the "womb of primordial life" (Eliade, 1964, p. 63) in order to be born anew. In this training it is acknowledged that to be consumed by the spirits is essential in order that the shaman may understand and be familiar with the territory of the spirit world. The yielding of self-control to the spirits is a means of delaying the gratification. This

yielding in effect results in a more active self-control at a later stage. Through self-mastery the shamans, having sacrificed the self to the spiritual forces, become the 'wounded healers' (Samuels, 1985) in that they "learn the art of dying and acquire the knowledge of healing particular illnesses from the spirits that have consumed their flesh. [...] The territory of disease has been revealed to them, and they can now guide the suffering across the terrain of sickness and even death" (Halifax, 1979, p.14).

5.3. The Spiritual Crises of the South African Shaman

The overcoming of the shamanic initiation crisis has been equated with spiritual emergencies. The shaman or hero is confronted by a traumatic crisis or calling, which questions on an existential level her/his sense of self and the world. This may take the form of a personal illness as is the case with shamans or it may take the form of being confronted by the sickness or death of others.

The training has as its aim the healing of the novice, even though those that remain sickly as a shaman are often considered to be very talented (Berglund, 1976). The initiation illness presents with a variety of symptoms, such as "body pains, uncontrollable nervous twitchings and periods of dissociation or trance" (Thorpe, 1991, p.41). Other symptoms which alert the community to the troubled presence of the ancestors are loss of hair, excessive sneezing and yawning, weeping and singing songs at night.

It has been noted by Gussler (1973) in a follow up study on Lee's (1969) research, that the symptoms of the *ukuthwasa* observed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century have remained unchanged for at least one hundred years. Here are some examples of the earliest accounts witnessed by Westerners which show how stable the symptoms of the *ukuthwasa* have een over time. Thorpe (1993) notes that one of the earliest eye-witness accounts by Henry Francis Fynn taken from his diary in the early 1800's shows that the calling is initiated by a fit of sickness, (which

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he called a trance), which is accompanied by persistent, troubling dreams, and that such afflicted people would run wildly into the rivers and woods, during which time the spirits would appear to them with a song composed especially for them. This song then plays a central role during future healing seances. Shooter, in 1857, described the troubling dreams as being populated with lions, leopards, wolves and serpents. A person having these dreams would run around shrieking, plunge him/herself into water and generally be seen by others to be behaving in a mad fashion. In 1870 Callaway, who lived amongst the Zulu, wrote that a person becoming a traditional healer would initially become fussy about food and begin to waste away. Different parts of the body would ache, and the troubling dreams would be dominant. The entire village would support the person in becoming a traditional healer in order that they may heal themselves of the maladies (Thorpe, 1993, pp. 104-105).

Often the relentless pain leads to an acceptance and, through the apprenticeship, the illness is healed. Of 114 women who sought out medical services in order to avoid the 'call' of the ancestors, Lee (1969) stated that only 6 women wanted to become *izangoma*. To refuse the 'call' is considered to be dangerous, as it can lead to prolonged illness, deformity, madness, or even death (Hammond-Tooke, 1989). Another reason for the resistance is the realisation that a radical life change would occur on acceptance of the 'call'. The psyche creates a crisis in order to avoid stagnation, presenting an "archetype of the way" (Moore, 1983, p. 227). Similarly, the shamans may, in the initial stage, resist their new profession, deny their experiences or fight against new opportunities. This is also evident in South African shamanism. Amongst the Zulu such an acceptance is called the *ukuvuma idlozi*, 'the acceptance of the ancestors' (Berglund, 1976), the beginning of life as a novice.

Developmental crises involving a spiritual dimension, such as the shamanic initiation crisis, have been termed transpersonal crises or spiritual emergencies (Assagioli, 1992; Grof & Grof, 1991). The study of transpersonal crises is still in it's

infancy, but Grof & Grof (1991) have outlined certain types of spiritual emergencies. The first type includes mystical experiences with psychotic features, these usually being short-lived episodes having a better prognosis than other psychoses (Lukoff, 1988).

The second type of spiritual emergency parallels certain themes and images of the shaman's initiation and journey, and is called 'shamanic crisis' (Grof & Grof, 1991). "In the experiences of individuals whose transpersonal crises have strong shamanic features there is a great emphasis on physical suffering, and an encounter with death followed by rebirth and elements of ascent or magical flight. They also typically sense a special connection with the elements of nature and have experiences with animals or animal spirits. It is also not unusual to feel an upsurge of extraordinary powers and impulses to heal. Like the initiatory crisis, the transpersonal episodes of a shamanic type, if properly supported, can lead to good adjustment and superior functioning" (Grof quoted in Walsh, 1990, p. 94).

Another type of spiritual emergency relevant to the shamanic initiation crisis concerns itself with experiences of possession. The *ukuthwasa* as a shamanic illness is similar to the notion of 'shamanic sickness' in Siberian shamanism, in which a person looks dishevelled, downcast and is troubled by dreams. This person in Siberia is understood as being tortured and tested by the spirits (Balzer, 1996), which is similar to the South African shamanic understanding of the *ukuthwasa*.

Conventional psychologists can on the other hand explain the experience of being possessed as resulting from intensely negative emotions such as rage or hatred. So intense are these emotions that they are experienced as alien and demonic. Jung explained such feelings from possessions as being dissociated bits of the personality or splinter psyches (Noll, 1987).

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This might be due to the psychological defence of splitting off unacceptable feelings and therefore experiencing them as alien (Klein [1946], 1975), or it could be understood in Jungian terms as a powerful archetypal pattern or process of the shadow that requires integration in order to resolve the crisis. Maslow (1971) noted that to deliberately plan to be less than you are capable of being or to resist the call to being more, is a way of ensuring deep unhappiness in life, thereby creating a Jonah complex (Maslow, 1971, p. 34). Given these psychological explanations, it follows that the isolation of the initiatory illness and the psychic isolation brought about by the vocational 'call' can contribute to the disintegration of the individual's social and psychological being (Sullivan, 1994), but can also lead to a mastery over the split off parts or spirits.

Within shamanism, the resolution of the crisis makes the shamans "masters of spirits" (Noll, 1987, p.49). To master the spirits is of course not only limited to shamanism. Jesus commanded spirits, Socrates conversed with his guardian spirit or *daimon*, while Jung spoke about Philen n as his guardian spirit (Noll, 1987). The initiation crisis of South African shamanism could be understood as shifting a difficult form of possession trance, with a" :ts anger, pain, illness and crisis material to a beneficial and healing form of possession trance, in which the shaman has mastered the possession of the ancestors through her/his improved relationship with them.

5.4. The Culmination of the South African Shamanic Journey
The final developmental stage of the journey concerns itself with self-mastery. The aim of the training is "to remove everything that connects the pupil with his old life. We want to make a new man of the future member of our guild." (an *isangoma* quoted in Schimlek, 1950, p. 101). De Ropp (1972) notes that, at this stage, the person either remains in everyday life or chooses to play the Master Game, is a decision linked to the intense dislike for everyday life, and the strong desire for a real awakening.

Self-mastery at this stage involves physical, psychological, contemplative and social discipline. Physical discipline may involve fasting, sleep deprivation, physical exertion as well as the endurance of extreme heat or cold (Achterberg, 1987). Psychological and contemplative practices involve ASCs developed via meditation, trance, dance, ritual or prayer, and often combined with periods of solitude (Kalweit, 1988). Social disciplines include compassionate acts of service or performances of humility (Walsh, 1990). Whatever the method, the aim is to train the mind and strengthen the capacities of concentration, will, compassion and joy. The novice in South African shamanism learns about medicinal herbs, divination, and how to trance during the dance in order to access her/his ancestors. The final ritualistic test of the mastery of such trance states is common amongst the various 'shamanic schools' across the world. It signifies the end of a phase of development achieved through training and illness, and permits the novice to become a shaman (Kalweit, 1992).

During the culmination of the quest, the hero or shaman achieves successful self-mastery. In some cases, South African shamans receive a song which signifies the culmination of the neophyte's journey. Some of the side effects are a mastery of certain mental powers that include ESP and PK (Rogo, 1987), signified by the test for the hidden objects during the graduation ceremony of South African shamans. The final graduation ritual symbolises the transition from the novice into the shaman.

In conclusion then, the quest of the South African shaman is reflected in a healthy and interdependent relationship with the ancestors. The ancestors are understood as working with, rather than against, the shaman. The greatest struggle occurs initially, during the *ukuthwasa*, when the ancestors are rejected. Final acceptance of the inner journey is what makes it possible for there to be an improved relationship with the ancestors, and thereby giving the shaman a stronger degree of self-mastery. It is during the training period that the rules that make up the Master Game are mastered.

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The tests at the end of the graduation are an indication to the community that the shaman has mastered these rules of the game and has achieved controlled access to the ancestors, allowing her/him to heal the ill and the distraught within the community. Having outlined the developmental stages of the South African shaman and how it may be seen from within and without, these perceptions of shamanism will now be explored in more depth.

5.5. The Shamanic Trance States: Pathology or Transformation?

The shaman experiencing an ASC has often been labelled, pathologised and dismissed as being a "primitive madman" (Walsh, 1990, p. 70). Shamans practising trance states have been categorised as hysterics, schizophrenics, epileptics, neurotics or even charlatans. Such labels are so pervasive in the literature that it is essential at this point to address these accusations in order to make a clear distinction between trance states that evidence self-mastery and psychopathology. However, in commenting on how shamanic experiences and behaviours show similarities with certain Western forms of psychopathology it is necessary to consider the fact that shamans are not a homogeneous group, as psychological testing has shown (Fabrega & Silver, 1970). A single diagnostic category is as unlikely to apply to all Western doctors as it is to all shamans. The shaman's seemingly pathological behaviour cannot be viewed in isolation, but rather the diagnosis needs to be understood in light of the psychological skills and cultural ideologies of the respective researchers responsible for the diagnoses.

For example, the diagnosis of psychopathology in reference to the shaman's behaviour and experiences is often made by anthropologists lacking in psychodiagnostic skills, and who usually also lack personal experiences of shamanic disciplines and journeying. Although more recently anthropologists have become aware of ideological and cultural biases in the study of shamanism (Hoppal, 1987), nevertheless the negative picture of the shaman, primarily (though not exclusively) found in the earlier anthropological literature, wherein the Western rationalistic-

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positivistic ideology was considered the norm against which other cultures and institutions were judged, still has a general currency. It is often the case that non-western systems of explanation, where they deviate from these Eurocentric positivistic norms, are "considered abnormal, a collective ignorance and error, in psychopathological terms, an expression of 'poor reality testing'" (Kakar, 1982, p. 90).

Psychoanalysis has been extensively used in anthropology (Walsh, 1990), with many valuable contributions, but unfortunately this has often led to it being used as a justification for psychoanalytic theory pathologising cross-cultural differences. Generally, psychoanalytic literature has tended to interpret mystical experiences and other ecstatic states as expressions of narcissism (Walsh & Vaughn, 1980). This is not surprising, given the fact that Freud himself considered the 'oceanic feeling' of mysticism to be a regression to an intrauterine or pre-egoic state (Freud [1929], 1985). Such diagnoses, together with the influence of Freudian psychoanalytic thinking within the field of anthropology, have resulted in "unnecessary psychopathological interpretations of cross-cultural behaviours" (Noll, 1983, p. 447).

Given the limited experience with ASCs of most Westerners, it is hardly surprising that "Western psychiatry has a long history of viewing mystics as madmen, saints as psychotics, and sages as schizophrenics" (Walsh, 1990, p.75). This equation of altered states of consciousness with pathological states of consciousness has, however, been refuted in several hundred studies which reveal that the altered states induced by meditation and yoga are unique and cannot be confused with psychopathology (Levey & Levey, 1991). It must be pointed out, however, that some constructive and integrated psychoanalytic understandings of meditation (Shaffii, 1973), of shamanism (Coward, 1985; Laderman, 1988), and specifically of Xhosa shamanism (Bührmann & Gqomba, 1981, 1982a, 1982b) have provided invaluable contributions to this area of research.

In this study, a brief examination of the diagnoses of schizophrenia, psychosis, epilepsy and hysteria, attributed to shamans in the anthropological literature will be undertaken in order to demonstrate the shortcomings of such labels. Shamanic behaviour during initiation has been described and analysed from the outside in terms of acute schizophrenia (Silverman, 1967). From inside shamanism, schizophrenia, as well as psychosis, are differentially diagnosed and distinguished from the initiation crisis by South African shamans (Ngubane, 1977). Furthermore, not all shamans experience a severe initiation crisis that includes psychotic elements. However, during an initiation crisis, a person stating that s/he is being persecuted by spirits would, within the positivistic normative framework, be considered to be making utterances that reflect psychosis (Laubscher, 1937).

Agosin (1992) notes that both psychotic and mystic states are intensely subjective experiences. In both states an ineffable quality is present with a loss of ego boundaries. ASCs occur in both states, with the concomitant distortions of time, perception and affect. The difference, however, between the mystic and the psychotic is that the mystic seeks to reduce the importance of the ego, whilst the psychotic often has a sense of feeling both omnipotent and omniscient. Whereas the mystic seeks to shed and transcend an ego identity in favour of a more expansive sense of self, the psychotic holds onto fragments of an ego. Importantly, the mystic experiences an inner serenity and tranquillity. Change is welcomed, the mystical experience having the effect of leaving the individual more connected and involved in the world. The psychotic, however, becomes more self-involved. The disturbance in reality testing, including certain hallucinations which instil aggressive and paranoid feelings, often leave the psychotic feeling excluded from the world.

Lukoff (1988) notes that there are nevertheless important overlaps when comparing psychosis, mania, and mystical states. While these two former states cannot be equated with mystical states, transpersonal states of consciousness do seem to occur to some degree in certain mental disorders. Similarly, it could also be said that the

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initiation crisis might contain elements of pathological psychosis.

Importantly however, the lack of personal experience of most researchers in the field of ASCs has led to problems which Harner (1980), an established anthropologist at an academic institute who also has personal shamanic training, has called 'cognicentrism', this being the tendency to interpret, and at times denigrate, ASCs within the limited range of experiences of our own state.

In this regard, the psychologist Noll (1983) states that "devoid of personal experiences of ASCs, yet quite familiar with altered states of the diagnostic manual, the incredible sagas of the shamans must indeed seem psychotic to an interpreter who only considers experiences in an ordinary state of consciousness to be valid, mentally healthy phenomena" (Noll, 1983, p. 444). However, psychopathology could also be considered to be disturbed states of consciousness, which are uncontrolled or involuntary trances (Silverman, 1975). Peters & Price-Williams (1983) therefore reinterpret schizophrenia as an ASC with a negative outcome, namely an inability to control a state of consciousness. This is supported by Walsh's (1995) phenomenological comparison of schizophrenic and shamanic states, in which it becomes clear that lack of control and a high degree of psychic disorganisation is a characteristic of the schizophrenic state rather than the shamanic state.

Turning now to the confusion that exists between shamanic trance states and epilepsy, Walsh (1990) notes that while shamans have been diagnosed as being epileptics, there is very little evidence for any organic epilepsy in terms of *grand mal* or *petit mal* seizures. The psychiatrist Lee (1969) notes that the trance possession of the *isangoma* cannot be explained by epilepsy, as the Zulu themselves distinguish between major epileptic seizures and the *ukuthwasa*. Nevertheless, temporal epilepsy, with its range of intense emotions and hallucinations, and even automatic movements, seems to come closest to the description of some initiation crises (Boshier in Huizer, 1991; Robinson, 1984).

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Temporal lobe epilepsy (TLE) is organic in nature and is due to brain abnormality, and TLE seizures usually occur over a long period of time. Shamanic 'fits', however, occur only during periods of intense emotional agitation and arousal during the initiation crisis. They then disappear spontaneously and do not appear again. This does not suggest an organic aetiology for the 'fits' (Walsh, 1990). Krippner (1987) quotes a case in which Margaret became an *isangoma,* and her initiatory illness in the form of seizures, that no Western medicine could cure, subsided and did not recur once her training was completed.

As far as the diagnosis of hysteria is concerned, the descriptions of anthropologists provide little clarity as to the nature and extent of hysteria. The category of hysteria in the Western literature has been supplanted by the notion of dissociation, a diagnostic category that has gained in popularity and has emerged after a century of neglect, which was due to Freud's support of the mechanism of repression over the mechanism of dissociation in clinical hypnosis (Kirkmayer, 1992, p.283). Given the dissociative nature of trance states, it is central to discuss the notion of dissociation thoroughly.

When the *ukuthwasa* is experienced as distressing, individuals in this state often become exposed to psychiatric diagnoses. It could then also be argued that the *ukuthwasa* represents an example of a dissociative trance disorder (300.15 - DSM IV) (DSM IV, p. 490, p. 727-728). A dissociative trance may be considered to be an involuntary trance state or possession state which causes significant clinical distress and functional impairment. It is also, significantly, not accepted within the person's cultural context. Examples of such culture-bound syndromes would be *amok* in Malaysa-Indonesia or the Arctic hysteria called *pibloktoq* (Lewis-Fernández, 1992). Such pathological trances occur spontaneously rather than voluntarily (Bourguignon, 1992).

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Clearly, trance states and possession states which are entered into voluntarily as well as being culturally or religiously sanctioned do not fall into this diagnostic category (Cardena, 1992). Thus the trance state or possession state is in itself not pathological, but outside of being accepted in a cultural framework it becomes a maladjustment, much as sorrowing or mourning is not pathological while depression is, despite sharing many symptoms. Depression is a maladjustment, while sorrowing is an appropriate response in a specific context. Outside the containing framework of the *ukuthwasa* and training as a shaman, the symptoms of initiation crisis may be seen as forms of pathology and maladjustment. Within the framework of the shamanic training, such maladjustments become the starting point in order to achieve self-mastery and health.

In these terms it could, for example, be argued that the trances of shamans are a local and cultural expression of a Western diagnostic category called dissociative identity disorder (previously multiple personality disorder), just as schizophrenia has surface varieties across many cultures but retains a core set of symptoms (Cardena, 1992, p. 294). In this regard it is interesting to note that dissociation as a diagnosis was popular, and with it dissociative identity disorder, between 1880 and 1910. During that time identity disorder was not as related to early sexual abuse as it is today; rather identity disorder was sometimes modelled on the presence of the spirits of the departed (Antze, 1992), a model so similar to the traditional view held about the *ukuthwasa* in South Africa. The *ukuthwasa* could thus be conceptualised in early Western terms as being a pathological possession state or in contemporary terms it could be seen to be a cultural variant of an dissociative identity disorder.

The social psychology theorist Spanos has, however argued persuasively, that dissociative identity disorder and possession are but variants of complex social roles which are enacted by a person within a religious context (possession) or in a secular one (dissociative identity disorder) in order to avoid the responsibility of certain other roles (Cardena, 1992). In other words, dissociative identity disorder is but a

secular form of possession. Such an equation is "seductive", making dissociative identity disorder "the latest version of possession", but the question remains whether possession and identity dissociative disorder are the same condition in different cultural settings (Cardena, 1992, p. 294). Although classical dissociative identity disorder shares with possession the alteration of identity and the presence of amnesia, what is different is the display of physical contortions, the blasphemy, as well as the special knowledge claimed to be present in the latter.

One study (Hughes, 1992) specifically addresses the issue of special knowledge and compares the features of this in dissociative identity disorder with possession trance or channeling. Channeling is defined as a communication through a person from a source that claims to exist on another level of reality, and this definition would include classical mediumship; the communication with the departed in a possession trance state (Klimo, 1987, p. 2). Both present with the phenomena of dissociation, yet in Hughes' (1992) study the channelers did not present with the symptoms of dissociative fugue, depersonalisation disorder, somatization disorder, depression, borderline personality disorder or schizophrenia, which the dissociative identity disorders did. As opposed to the persons suffering from dissociative identity disorder, the alternate identities of channelers also claimed special knowledge which promoted spiritual teachings and philosophical discussions within their cultural context (Hughes, 1992). Given that there do seem to be definite differences between trance states and dissociative identity disorders, it is therefore important to note that the *ukuthwasa* cannot be treated by Western means of treating dissociative identity disorder even if are similarities in the psychological mechanisms implicated in both states.

Diagnosing such shamanic experiences as dissociative identity disorder runs the risk of imposing positivistic norms upon such experiences, and thereby denying the meaning, their power and the effectiveness of the healing that such journeys often bring with them. Within the South African context, Lee (1969) quotes a person who

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was treated for anxiety and hysteria with little success. She then became possessed by the powerful ancestral spirit of her grandfather who died in battle in 1879. She was consequently trained by a senior *isangoma*, "a process which included six months isolation in a hut, and she set up a lucrative practice in my backyard. A fairly typical case, certainly not psychotic" (Lee, 1969, p. 146). Devereux (1956) and Lee (1969) do, however, find some signs of severe neurosis in the *ukuthwasa* experience, and Lee (1969) considers post-partum depression as possibly evoking some of the signs and symptoms of *ukuthwasa*. Also, it cannot be denied that the symptoms of possession trance states might display a diverse combination of psychotic, anxiety, depressive, characterological and somatic features or symptoms (Lewis-Fernández, 1992, p. 305).

However, in conclusion, Walsh (1990) notes that "contrary to decades of speculation, the vast majority of shamans cannot be diagnosed as mentally ill or labelled as epileptic, hysterical, schizophrenic or psychotic. In short, shamanism can no longer be dismissed as the confused production of primitive or pathological minds" (Walsh, 1990, p. 86). This also applies to the South African context, as Lee's (1969) research indicates. In which various questionnaires as well as the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) were administered, could not find any evidence of psychopathology amongst the shamans, and found the female shamans to be particularly well-integrated. The male shamans appeared less well-integrated but this may be because they were found to be effeminate as compared to male behavioural norms (Lee, 1969). These findings are supported by Hammond Tooke's (1989) observations, as well as in other traditions by the cross-cultural Rorschach findings on Vipassana meditation masters, Apache shamans, and Indian shamans in Mexico, in which it was suggested that such cross-cultural similarities represent a style of a "Master's Rorschach regardless of the spiritual tradition" (quoted in Peters, 1989b, p. 17).

Commenting on many of the writings in the area, Wilber (1983) points to two types of diagnostic error which are applicable in the analysis of spiritual disciplines and

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the related initiation crises, namely reductionistic and elevationistic errors. The equation of shamanic initiation crises with psychopathology is a reductionistic error, and it is often found in the literature when ASCs are discussed. The elevationistic error is one in which psychopathological processes such as psychosis or residual psychological conflicts are interpreted as being expressions of the spiritual. To a certain degree it could be argued that this occurs in Laing's later writings (Laing 1972). In terms of shamanism, the elevationistic error is evident in glorifying shamanism and in minimising any residual psychological conflict emerging during or after the initiation crisis, as is evident in some of Kalweit's writings on shamanism (Kalweit, 1988; 1992). While both pathological and religio-mystical experiences exist, neither can be reduced or solely explained by the other.

However, in this regard, it is important to bear in mind Eliade's (1964) understanding of the shaman's initiation crisis as not central in itself, but rather its purpose in healing others is paramount. He noted that the shaman "is not only a sick man, he is a sick man who has been cured, who has succeeded in curing himself" (Eliade, 1964, p. 27). The shaman becomes the 'wounded healer' (Achterberg, 1988; Halifax, 1985; Schoffeleers, 1994). Shamans not only recover from their wounds during the initiation phase but they "may continue to function exceptionally well as leaders and healers of their people" (Walsh, 1990, p. 90). In the South African context, it has been noted that the "izangoma are considered to be among the quickest, most observant, and most intelligent members of the community" (Gussler, 1973, p. 102), who generally utilise their knowledge and power in being observant and intelligent healers, after having transformed themselves.

This concludes the literature review which began with an overall view of shamanism. The concept of shamanism as a mastery of ASCs was a central theme. This was followed by contextualising shamanism in South Africa in order to provide a framework in which to investigate the trance states of South African shamans. Given the focus of this study on trance states, it was necessary to provide a critical

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reading of various models of trance states. Such a critique provided the basis to examine various theories concerning shamanic trance states, which provide a framework within which the discourse of the South African shamans in this study will be placed. This literature review now turns its attention to a careful investigation into the method of inquiry commonly used in the investigation of ASCs.

CHAPTER FOUR
METHODS OF INQUIRY INTO TRANCE STATES

As previously outlined, in the last two decades an increasing number of assessments of non-western consciousness disciplines have been conducted by Western behavioural scientists. Research in ASCs has been governed by a strong behaviouristic approach resulting in a reluctance to examine internal and intangible mental states not easily governed by an experimental design. In the 1960's and 1970's there was therefore a largely experimental approach to ASCs, research also often being confined to the artificially induced ASCs produced in a laboratory setting (e.g. drugs, hypnosis). Furthermore, the research was mostly based on an ethnocentric definition of what is normal and pathological (Ward, 1989).

Walsh (1980, 1993) questions the methodological framework within which such research occurred, questioning whether this kind of research truly captures the essential qualities of consciousness disciplines. He postulates that such research highlights a problem of methodology. This is the result of a paradigm clash. "The failure to recognise this clash seems to have resulted in inappropriate pathologising interpretations" (Walsh, 1980, p. 663). Also, the spectrum of research is limited within an ethnocentric and pathologising perspective on ASCs (Ward, 1989).

An example of this would be the Group for Advancement of Psychiatry who, in 1979, declared that it was unable to distinguish between mysticism and pathology (Ward, 1989, p. 24). An example more pertinent to this study is Silverman's (1967) ethnocentric medical analysis of shamanic behaviour in terms of psychosis. Walsh (1980), who has analysed more phenom .ological approaches to consciousness, notes that most consciousness disciplin describe human nature within their own paradigm, and show a certain degree c : consistency across cultures and ages.

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A deep conceptual understanding of consciousness disciplines is therefore dependent on personal experiences within a cultural context. Several, initially sceptical, Western behavioural scientists, after personal experiences of these disciplines have noted that only after beginning to practice did some statements and claims become more understandable (Deikman, 1977; Walsh, 1980). This is because despite ASCs "observable psychological, physiological and behavioural correlates, their definition is ultimately based upon subjective interpretation" (Ward, 1989, p. 17). For example, various forms of meditation demonstrate quantitatively a decreased pulse rate, respiratory rate and reduced blood pressure with concomitant enhanced alpha waves of the brain. Studies of Kriya yoga, however, indicate high levels of beta waves despite psychological withdrawal and a physical resting posture. This can only be understood phenomenologically, in that Kriya meditative states rely on rich visual imagery to control the vital energy moving up the spine into the brain, resulting in a highly arousing, ecstatic, imagery-laden ASC (Ward, 1989, pp. 17-18).

Tart (1972) suggests that one possible research design would be to utilise the subject as a 'participant experimenter' or a 'yogi-scientist'. Despite the more experientially based works of Huxley (1954) and Castaneda (1976), research into ASC has nonetheless remained more quantitatively orientated. Within a cross-cultural context however, as in this study, qualitative experiential data needs to be incorporated (Ward, 1989). Another path of research that would not exclude Tart's (1972) 'participant experimenter' method is a qualitative research design.

In shamanism, the notion of the participant experimenter became both popular and controversial through Castaneda's (1976) work. Since then many others, amongst them anthropologists and psychologists, have entered the shamanic world in a phenomenological and experiential manner: the ethnologist Peters (1981) by a shaman in Nepal; the survivalist Brown (1988, 1994) by his Apache teacher Stalking Wolf; Perkins (1994) during his travels to the Amazon and Andes; the psychologist

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Villoldo (1990, 1995) in Peru by the Quechua Indian Don Jicaram; Whitaker's (1991) reluctant shamanic initiation by a shamanic couple from the Amazon basin of Brazil; the anthropologist Wesselman's (1995) shamanic travels into the future; the anti-anthropologist Sanchez (1995, 1996) amongst the Toltecs; Mares' (1995; 1997) explorations of Toltec shamanism; Some's (1994) entry into other worlds in West Africa; and in South Africa, Boshier's travels and entry into the shamanic world (Watson, 1982); Rae Graham's activity as a traditional healer (McCallum, 1993); Hall's (1994) training and initiation to become a *sangoma* in Swaziland; Keeney's (1994) experiences as a psychotherapist with Credo Mutwa; and Arden's (1996) shamanic training and initiation in Johannesburg. All of these authors entered and investigated the shamanic world in a participatory and collaborative manner. Their experiences of shamanic states of consciousness provide an insider view, a phenomenological account of experiences during shamanic trance states. What is also required however is the view from outside which nonetheless respects the ontological framework within which an ASC may occur.

1. The Research Process

From the above arguments it is evident that the nature of the phenomenon being investigated in this research project is not suitable for quantitative measures, it being an investigation of human experience that is experiential. The aim is to determine the meaning of the phenomenon from the subjects involved. Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in important ways. The term *qualitative* implies an emphasis on process and meaning that is not measured or examined in relation to quantity, amount, intensity and frequency (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, p. 4). Qualitative research occurs in the natural setting in which humans describe their inner world and their social interactions. The researcher becomes the primary instrument of data collection rather than an inanimate mechanism (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The focus of the research is the participants' perceptions and experiences, and the manner in which they make sense of their world. The data which emerges from a qualitative study is descriptive and an inductive method is applied to allow

categories of meaning to emerge (Creswell, 1994). More central distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research methods are highlighted by the differing approaches towards verification, as will be discussed below. Qualitative research is applied in many interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and possibly counter-disciplinary fields of knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). It operates within a complex historical matrix with various epistemological positions, ranging from the social sciences to Marxism, from constructivism to feminism. Therefore it could be stated that qualitative research "as a set of interpretative practices, privileges no single methodology over any other. As a site of discussion, or discourse, qualitative research is difficult to define clearly." (Lincoln & Denzin, 1994, p. 576).

Given the importance of the researcher as a research instrument, the theoretical attitude of the researcher becomes central in the choice of research tools, in the formulation and collection of data, as well as in determining the outcome of the study. It is therefore necessary, within the research process, to take into account the researcher's paradigm as a basic belief system, which is made up of ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107). In the first phase of the research process, the stage of self-reflection and the theoretical perspective relevant to this research approach is outlined. The second phase will introduce the researcher as an instrument, a subject who is ethically, epistemologically and culturally constructed. In the next chapter the third and fourth phase is presented. The third phase highlights the research strategy of inquiry that will be employed. The fourth phase describes the methods of data collection and analysis, and the final phase is concerned with interpreting and writing.

2. The Self-Reflective Research Strategy

In this section the epistemological and ontological assumptions of the research process of this study are investigated in a self-reflective manner. Qualitative research must be very aware of its own theoretical assumptions, for they shape not only the research process but also determine the framework in which the data and results are understood.

2.1. The Phenomenological Voice

The aim of this study is to understand the lived experiences of South African shamans during trance states or ASCs. As already stated, trance states are experienced as inner mental states which gain meaning within a cultural context. It therefore seems appropriate to investigate a method, namely the phenomenological method, that seeks to understand and describe acts of consciousness. Phenomenc¹ ʒical research has been undertaken in the field of meditation, in order to describe the transformation of consciousness (Glifford-May & Thompson, 1994).

Phenomenological research receives its rationale from Husserl's phenomenology. Phenomenology is often understood as providing "an alternative basis for the project of a scientific psychology" (Kruger, 1979, p. 6). Husserl, however, was not anti-science, but rather his criticism was aimed at the logical positivism of the Vienna Circle (Lubbe, 1978; Gurwitsch, 1978). If anything Husserl, originally educated in mathematics, hoped that his phenomenology would elevate philosophy to the status of a rigorous science (Gadamer, 1976).

Husserl's criticism of logical positivism was largely directed at its acceptance of Wittgenstein's slogan: "The meaning of a proposition is its method of verification" (Kenny, 1973, p. 9). This lead to exclusive attempts to base knowledge on empiricism and experimental methods in order to avoid the production of metaphysics. Research using alternative methods v ʌs considered meaningless or metaphysical. Wittgenstein would consequently, in his early work, proclaim: "Where

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one cannot speak, there one must be silent." (Wittgenstein [1922], 1981, p. 189).

Yet Husserl [1936] (1978) refused to be silenced by the philosophical enclosure of positivism, and so focused on consciousness and meaning. H. phenomenological method, which aims to describe the life-world in all its directness without all the presuppositions, has far more acceptance today th. . .'d several decades ago (Gurwitsch, 1966, Biemel, 1977). It is this method which is adapted in this study, thus the nature of phenomenological research will be further elaborated below.

Giorgi (1983) stresses that phenomenology is not the same as Wundt's introspection, and it is not merely subjective, but rather seeks to understand the relationship between subjects and objects. It is interested in understr·   the objective in terms of subjectivity, rather than describing the subjective r   ·site to the objective. Phenomenology also does not merely reflect private and inner realities, for consciousness through its intentionality is always relational, and thus the private and the public cannot be separated. Furthermore, phenomenology is not merely experiential versus behavioural, but rather understands behaviour in the context of experience and meaning. It focuses on the way the behavioural task is experienced (Klein, 1978) This aspect is important in this study for trance states occur within the confines of certain behavioural practices and shamanic rituals. For example, the behaviour of a South African shaman during a trance, such as shaking or dancing, will be made part of the phenomenological description in terms of what it means for the shamanic practice.

Husserl developed the phenomenological method of *epoche* or reduction. The essence or meaning of a thing is revealed through suspensions of all presuppositions or "natural attitudes" (Husserl, [1913] 1969, p.212). Husserl, being a mathematician, described the phenomenological reduction as placing the natural attitudes towards the world in brackets, a mathematical strategy, aimed at treating what is in the brackets differently to the rest of the equation. To question or suspend the natural

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attitude allows the objects of consciousness to emerge in all clarity. Husserl's call: "To the things themselves!" thus becomes a primary force, and as Derrida notes, this call proclaims the phenomenologist to be the "true positivist who returns to the things themselves, self-effacing before the originality and primordiality of meanings" (Derrida, 1978, p.155).

Whereas phenomenology brackets the whole world and its natural attitudes in a radical manner, phenomenological psychology remains within the world and brackets out attitudes pertaining to the areas researched (Giorgi, 1979). It is the lifeworld which becomes investigated and researched, and it is not bracketed out. Phenomenological research in psychology operates within the life-world and "places emphasis on the subject as a conscious, intentional contributor in constituting, maintaining, and renewing activities" (Andrew, 1986, p. 91). The life-world is always experienced relative to the subjects within it. It is hence characterised by a certain relativity. Inter-subjective agreements become the common ground for experience (Gurwitsch, 1978). Numerous interviews are consequently conducted in this study, in order to establish a certain degree of inter-subjective agreement concerning the trance experiences of South African shamans.

An individual approaches the life-world with a stock of acquired knowledge, composed of common sense constructs and categories, such as images, theories, values and attitudes which make their experiences meaningful (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994). Hence categories in the life-world concerning the ego and the other arise, namely intimacy and anonymity, familiarity and strangeness, as well as accessibility. All these categories are the result of the ego interpreting its relation with the other in the life-world. The subjects in their life-world set up life plans according to intended or motivational relevancy (Schutz [1966], 1978). The life-world, therefore, presents itself to the ego through meaning, relevance and interpretation (Schutz [1950], 1978). Thus consciousness necessarily typifies, i.e., makes it possible to account for experience, and given that, then language becomes

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the privileged medium of transmitting meaning (Schutz [1940], 1978). In this study there will be a sensitivity to how South African shamans themselves, interpret, motivate for and experience their trances. Their own models of understanding trance states and the values they attach to them will be explored and described, thereby giving some insight into the experienced life-world of a South African shaman. One limitation of the study, similarly experienced in other psychological studies (Bührmann, 1980), is that interviews will not be conducted in the first language of the interviewees but will be conducted in English. Nevertheless, within this framework, the actual words, phrases and metaphors used will be respected.

2.2. The Ontological Considerations

Heidegger's phenomenology differs from Husserl's in that its existential perspective does not conceptualise people as detached subjects existing in a world of objects. There is an attempt at understanding the person as not isolated from her/his environment, but rather being-in-the-world (Dreyfuss, 1991). Heidegger ([1926], 1983) noted that although Husserl wanted to let things show themselves through consciousness, people do not relate to things in this manner. For Heidegger (1983), existential dimensions such as dread, anxiety, forelorness and death are foregrounded. He shifts the debate from epistemological considerations to ontological ones (Gelven, 1989), referring to human existence as *Dasein* or being-there, thereby emphasising the way existence throws us into the world (Heidegger, 1983, p. 75). Heidegger's hermeneutic method is an interpretation of being-in-the-world. He claims that hermeneutics applies to all understanding, in the sense of how people make sense of, or understand their *Dasein* (Dreyfuss, 1991).

The aim in this study is to achieve a hermeneutical interpretation of the South African shaman's being-in-the-world, and does not bracket out the life-world (Carr, 1987, Kockelmans, 1987). The shaman's call by the ancestors is, in a sense, a being torn out of a 'normal' world i.e. a death of an old *Dasein*, and an entry into the dread of a new one. The initiation illness is the struggle of a new existence, an existence

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that not only creates new roles and meanings, but rather, within a transformational process, re-creates a new person, a shaman. It is thus a process which illustrates Sartre's proclamation: "Existence before essence" (Sartre, [1946] 1980, p.26). The subject is not merely transcendental and the result of pure consciousness, but rather is a subject being-in-the-world (Stapleton, 1978). Despite this it is important to bear in mind that, for a mystic or a shaman, events that occur in being-in-the-world might seem 'normal' whilst these same events might appear as 'paranormal' from within a Western 'common sense reality' (Wheatley, 1977). In other words, for a shaman, certain trance experiences belong to her/his specific and familiar *Dasein*, and are not experienced as either paranormal or exotic (de Sardan, 1993).

2.3. The Spiral of Understanding
Based on Heidegger's *Verstehen*, Ricoeur (1971), Taylor (1987) and Gadamer (1976) formulated a hermeneutical methodology that is relevant to this study. Hermeneutics presupposes the interpreter's prior understanding. This is because it proposes that for an understanding to contribute to understanding it must already have understood what is understood (Heidegger [1926], 1983). Hermeneutics, as the study of the interpretation of texts, means then that the understanding of the text is a process in which the meaning of the separate parts are determined by the global meaning (Kvale, 1983). This relates to the hermeneutical circle, which could be understood in a circular manner, in that *jedes Verstehen ist ein besser Verstehen* (every understanding is a better understanding) (Kvale, 1983, p. 187), or as a dialectical movement between comprehension (*Verstehen*) and explanation (*Erklaeren*) (Hollnagel, 1978). The "narrative is both phenomenon and method" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 416)

If meaning is no longer restricted to the subject as pure consciousness, then it means that the subject and the production of meaning are placed within a whole network or circles of meaning made possible by history. Subjects are no longer considered to be ahistorical in their life-world, but rather participate in hermeneutical circles

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or language games (Wittgenstein [1953], 1981). For Gadamer (1976), the life-world hence also incorporates a practical and political common sense, and the knowledge and interpretation of meaning achieves a certain historical relativity (Carr, 1987). Shamanism has been analysed in terms of its "cultural function as a metaphor in myth, religion, art and language" (Ripinsky-Naxon, 1993, p. 2). Tucker (1992) takes this even further and argues that twentieth century artists, such as Van Gogh, Kandinsky, Brancusi, Miro, Beuys, and many others combine provocative modern art with the visions of the shamans of old, who were 'the first' of all artists.

Thus it becomes clearer that trance states are only meaningful within the cultural-religious context in which they occur (Bourguignon, 1992; Halperin, 1996; Lambek, 1989). The South African shaman's trance states cannot be read as being merely psychophysiological events, but rather can only be understood within the cultural context. Bourguignon (1973) presents important anthropological dimensions of ASC. In a statistical analysis, using a sample of 488 societies, 90% of these societies were found to have institutionalised some set of procedures or disciplines for the systematic cultivation of ASCs. This statistical analysis of the relation of ASCs to social stratification were confirmed in a later study by Shaara and Strathern 1992. ASCs are therefore intimately related to the sociological and political structures of communities. This suggest that ASCs, rather than being mere historical or anthropological esoterica, are of major importance and need to be taken seriously.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, amongst 114 societies, possession trances were found to be significantly related to the presence of slavery and to a rigid social stratification system (Greenbaum, 1973a). The Zulu shamans enter possession trances, and the Zulu culture would be an example of a rigid social stratification with the presence of slavery. The !Kung on the other hand enter different trance states and they also do not present with such rigid social stratification, nor do they have slaves (Greenbaum, 1973b).

South African shamans themselves frame their trance states within their experience of ancestor contact. This in itself demands an understanding of the importance of the belief of ancestors for the South African shaman. As Lambek (1989) wittingly states, "no theory of marriage is based on the physiological properties of orgasm. It is time students of spirit possession stopped apologising for not doing EEG's in the field and accepted the social reality of what they observe." (Lambek, 1989, p. 46).

2.4. The Archaeology of the Subject

Qualitative research privileges both the subjective experience and the context within which it occurs. It is therefore important to acknowledge the context in which the data concerning subjectivity is collected. In this regard it is worth noting that in this study, the researcher is a white male who is both a South African shaman and a psychotherapist (clinical psychologist). This undoubtedly influenced both the interviews and the structure of the interviews, as well as their interpretation. The construction of a person's meaning becomes therefore the site in which the past, with its desires and motives, are located, enabling a psychoanalytic discourse on the subject to occur (Ricoeur, 1970).

Given that the interviewer is a psychotherapist, psychoanalytic understanding was drawn upon in order to interpret, within the interview, the role of affects and emotions, as well as the researcher's own motives and desires, wherein both transference and countertransference were active (Hunt, 1989, Koenig, 1982). There was a mindfulness of the fact that both the negative and positive transference of the shamans to the researcher could effect the data collection. A possible negative transference with all unconscious fantasies could have been elicited in the fact that the researcher is white, while a possible positive transference was created around the fact that the researcher is a South African shaman. In bringing a psychoanalytic framework to bear on the material, the researcher was following a long line of tradition from Levi-Strauss' (1963) notion of the shaman being a psychoanalyst to Lambek's (1989) psychoanalytic interpretation of possession trance states.

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This was not, however, the only framework used, and given that this research is located within a specific cultural arena, the interpretative anthropology of Geertz (1973) is worth mentioning. It justifies an interpretative approach to culture, being based on Ricoeur's notion (1977) that meanings are constituted in a culture and must be read or interpreted as a complicated text. This interpretative anthropology critiques the structuralist approach of, for example, Levi-Strauss as being reductionistic (Bernard, 1994; Schwandt, 1994). For Geertz (1973), language and other symbols within a culture do not simply refer to objects but are constitutive of them. Lambek (1989) uses Geertz's (1973) critique of the 'layer cake' model of humanity to argue that the attempt to isolate neurobiological, psychological, social and cultural factors of trance states, is artificial.

In regard to the present study, it is fully acknowledged that trance states are difficult to understand. They appear to be the result of a whole complex of factors and the balance of these factors can shift according to the cultural as well as individual context. For example, the researcher's shamanic teacher spoke about an internal debate that occurred many years ago amongst some South African shamans. The debate centred around whether a black South African shaman could read the divination 'bones' thrown for a white South African when it was uncertain whether a black shaman could access white ancestors. After some debate around this cultural-political context of divination, it was concluded that a black shaman could certainly access the white ancestors. Interestingly, the researcher's shamanic teacher argued from within a politico-psychoanalytic framework, in that he stated that the difficulty was based on a deep fear, unconsciously reflecting the black shamans' feelings of inadequacy created by the Apartheid system.

On an individual level, the complex factors that make up trance states present differently, for example with white South African shamans. In the case of three white *izangoma* that were interviewed outside the parameters of this study, all of them said that they did not see or hear their ancestors. Despite this important

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cornerstone of South African shamanism, these three white shamans are fully accepted as *izangoma*, and they were allowed to complete their graduation on the basis that through divination, dreams and the initiation illnesses, black *izangoma* believed that the ancestors had called upon these persons to become shamans. These are examples as to how complex elements of the trance state, within the South African context, can shift according to varying circumstances.

2.5. The Political Domain

Freud's discourse on the subject focuses on the notions of desire and origin, while Geertz interpretative anthropology focuses on the cultural context within which a subject exists. Habermas' critical hermeneutics however analyses these theorists' views and challenges the idealistic assumptions of ontological hermeneutics (Schwandt, 1994), and therefore integrates the political as an essential component in an interpretation of the subject. Habermas (1971) therefore posits three types of knowledges constituting specific interests: technical knowledge, knowledge embedded in understanding and emancipatory knowledge. The natural sciences are characterised by technical knowledge and interest, which is directed towards technical control over objectified processes. These are dominated by quantitative research and a positivistic approach. The hermeneutical approach of the human sciences is guided by the potential consensus of understanding between actors within the arena of culture. The critical social sciences attempt on the other hand to establish an emancipatory knowledge, this knowledge constitutes itself in dialogue, and Habermas (1971) considers psychoanalysis to be an example of such an emancipatory self-reflection, although his views in this regard have been heavily criticised by socio-political theorists, such as Foucault (1972).

In researching the trance states of South African shamans, the researcher is mindful of its political dimensions. For example, a major reason for the high presence of women in the shamanic profession is a political or social one in that women, especially amongst the Nguni people, suffer structural and ritual inferiority (Lewis,

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1989). To become a shaman is often the only way for women to attain some of the power and freedom from men, thereby achieving a greater political and psychological independence (Gussler, 1973; O'Connell, 1980), and emancipation. This might explain the predominance of women amongst Zulu *izangcma* (Gussler in Huizer, 1991 p. 43)

Furthermore, Lambek (1989) notes that the spirits are powerful, and that the power of the possession trance is socially constructed within a specific context. Possession trances can "provide a significant arena for expressing resistance, submitting acceptance, articulating consensus, negotiating or transcending contradictory values, raising unpalatable issues, and making or avoiding decisions, though it cannot be reduced to any of these." (Lambek, 1989, p. 51). Lambek (1989) considers power in relation to possession trances as being creative and not merely repressive, thereby acknowledging a more Foucaultian stance to power.

Although it is beyond the scope of this study to fully explore these dimensions, the political status of shamans is acknowledged. Thus it is accepted that shamans are "political actors or mediators of historically constituted social contradictions and resistances" (Thomas & Humphrey, 1994, p. 1). Although Thomas & Humphrey's (1994) definition of shamanism presented above has been construed as being over-inclusive in that they make no real distinction between practices at Christian shrines, Roman astrologers, and ancestor cults, nonetheless, their work represents an attempt to deconstruct shamanism in terms of "politicized meanings and efforts to monopolize certain forms of symbolic power and knowledge" (Thomas & Humphrey, 1994, p. 4).

Winkelman (1996) notes that within shamanism a distinction has been made between 'horizontal shamanism' (the access of ASCs to all) and 'vertical shamanism' (maintained by esoteric transmission of knowledge for the elite to be used as political power rather than for ASCs). A typical example of the involvement of

ASCs in politics is the political activism of Joan of Arc in the fifteenth century (Hastings, 1991; Johnson, 1996). In South Africa, the shamans have been central in forming history and politics in their community. In 1856, in South African history, a young Xhosa shaman called Nonquawusa had a vision of two figures, which told her that the Xhosa nation had sinned, and would only be redeemed and be made powerful if they slaughtered all their cattle (a form of wealth for the Xhosa) and destroyed their crop. The prophecy of political freedom was never fulfilled, and an estimated 40 000 to 105 000 Xhosa people slowly starved to death, many abandoning their lands, and therefore nearly the whole territory was absorbed into the British colony of South Africa (Dash, 1997). A similar process occurred with the Ghost Dance of the American Indians in 1890 (Thorpe, 1993).

It is inconceivable that South African shamans as diviners were not involved in major political and military campaigns within their traditional societies. Shamans were in great demand in order to find lost or stolen cattle through divination, interpret omens, and smell out witches (Gussler, 1973). Another political function was the protection of kings and warriors with *muti*. In recent times, it has been reported that some shamans were consulted by ANC or IFP youth and *muti* was prescribed so that they might be protected against injuries and bullets in the battles between themselves or in their conflict with the state police during South Africa's civil war (Straker, 1992). According to the researcher's shamanic teacher, on the battle field of South African soccer, every major player has his own shaman. It is clear then that the South African shaman has always been and indeed remains closely integrated into the political fabric of South Africa.

It is not surprising therefore that there is at present a drive by certain South African shamans to be acknowledged by the state, and that a constitutional body representing traditional healers is in the process of being instituted. Furthermore, the political and emancipatory efforts of South African shamans to find a political voice has allowed this research to be considered important by the chairman of the

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committee of traditional healers association in Gauteng, for it is hoped that the research will legitimise and support their efforts to be heard, understood and empowered. Furthermore, all too often only the medical work of the traditional healer is given acknowledgement and not their ASCs. To find academic legitimisation would again empower the shamans. The researcher was unaware of this process when approaching the subjects, yet repeatedly, after the interview had been completed, it emerged that the motives of the shamans were not merely hermeneutical but also political and emancipatory.

2.6. The Space of the Other

The political aspect of research allows another central issue to emerge, namely the site and the construction of the Other in research. In many ways, human research is always problematic in this regard as it is difficult to study the Other without making the other into an object or into the Other, the stranger, the exotic whose subjectivity becomes colonised by the researcher's meanings and agenda. Vidich and Lyman (1994) outline how, in the ethnographic traditions of Ancient Greece through the Renaissance of the West, up to the current century in Europe and the United States, researchers have sought their origins in so-called primitive cultures in order to highlight the particular countries own cultural beginnings, as if other cultures could not be as advanced as they were. It also led to the colonialisation of the Other. he Other becomes known and understood as a means of exploitation in the form of slavery, and especially in South Africa, as a political labour force (Hosle, 1992; Kane-Berman, 1981). While the colonisation of the Other is always present, it is reduced in research which attempts to be self-reflexive concerning its political agenda, to examine the motivation of the researcher and the successes and failures of being collaborative.

One way to overcome otherness is for the Other to become co-authors in the narrative, allowing multiple voices to be heard (Lincoln & Denzin, 1994). Poststructural feminist theories have provided a critique of the narrative realism of

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single voiced texts, and have sought to highlight the missing voices. This has lead to a reflexivity in discourse, often taking the form of an autobiography, and in giving a voice to the marginalised, challenging the researcher's own values (Marcus, 1994). Fine (1994) notes, however, that often "this speech of the Other is also a mask" (Fine, 1994, p. 70). Fine (1994) therefore proposes a hyphen at which Self-Other both separate and merge personal identities in the politics of everyday life. Qualitative researchers who self-consciously work the hyphen begin to unpack the meta-narrative of neutrality, universality and dispassionate research. In the present study an attempt is made to reduce Othering by including much of the interviewees data in the text and by discussing the results with the interviewees. This would reduce the effect of outside meaning on the text. This is further supported by the fact that the researcher is a shaman, and therefore is in some ways a voice from within.

The above mentioned approach to research has however been criticised by de Sardan (1992), who argues that the first-person narrative is "far from being an effective guarantee against ethnocentrism. Ethnologists who display their personal feelings are no more exempt from prejudices and preconceptions than those who hide them or force them back" (de Sardan, 1993, p. 8). It creates an "ethno-egocentrism" that leads to an over-dramatisation and over-aestheticiation of anthropological work. De Sardan (1993) shows how the African magico-religious phenomena have, in the name of the postmodern approach, been over-dramatised, leading to the obscuration of how familiar the magico-religious phenomena actually are within the cultural setting. Anthropology is seen as having the bad habit of taking literally conventional metaphors of other cultures and making them exotic.

A good but reverse example would be to consider 'luck' as viewed by a non-western outsider. It could be described as being an invisible force that individuals have to a lesser or greater extent, or as being a supernatural being that controls events in daily life. The dangers of an ideology of the exotic or the occultization needs to be taken into account, no matter whether the narrative in ethnology is in the first or third

person (de Sardan, 1993). The current researcher intends to bear this in mind in his approach to the data.

2.7. The Postmodern Song

Although postmodernism has exploded into philosophy and research arena, ult..nately postmodernists would resist any definite categorisation. Lyotard's (1984) notion of the incredulity towards the meta-narratives in discourse is nonetheless a defining factor of postmodernism. Meta-narratives legitimise and justify truth and history. Derrida (1978) began to extend texts to include persons, events and institutions. To deconstruct them meant not to destroy the texts, but rather to situate the possibilities and constructions of meanings in their histories. No authoritative interpretation of any text is possible. Deconstruction is "the art of announcing that the emperor has no clothes on" (Feldman, 1995, p. 62). The disruptive, discursive order of modern knowledge (Foucault, 1973), the power/knowledge configurations in institutions (Foucault, 1977a), as well as the history of desire and the body (Foucault, 1979) has questioned archaeologically and genealogically the very foundation of modern emancipatory discourse with its overarching narrative.

Even in the philosophy of science and the human sciences, the meta-narrative research requirements such as the verification, truth and domination of the narrative field in special disciplines has been critiqued (Rosenau, 1992; Rouse, 1990). Butchart (1997) points out that in some critiques that have emerged from the South African socio-medical sciences the Foucaultian schema of power-knowledge relations has been applied in order to critique the sovereign Apartheid state, thereby portraying the Foucaultian method as a tool of emancipation.

This means that the productive aspect of power has not been acknowledged, and that the repressive hypothesis is supported, even in the form of a monolithic emancipation, the very thing Foucault aimed at dispelling. In this study there is no attempt made to present a more enlightened view of shamanic trance states, but

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rather to analyse a specific aspect of the knowledge-power relatic· .3 which determine South African shamanic trance states.

In the present study trance will be analysed and deconstructed as discourse, as well as described phenomenologically. The advantage of viewing possession trance as discourse is that it avoids the reduction of trance states into only physiological, psychological or sociological factors. Trances occur within a cultural context with their own specific genres, modes of representation, grammars of production, levels of constraints, rhetorical devices and metaphors. The trance becomes a "means of symbolically articulating experience. Mostly it makes use of an essentially public code. Like various forms of Western art, it can be self-reflective; it is superbly suited to handle paradox." (Lambek, 1989, p. 53). In such a reading of trance states, the author and reader of the trance set up relations as a social activity or political performance. In the South African context, the ancestors embodied in the shaman require an audience or readers of their text or message, which they have authored. Without the community's reading of the possession trance, given the amnesia of the shaman, the authored text remains without power and effect.

Geertz's response to the effects of postmodernism on interpretative and qualitative research is that the storm seems to be over, but the effect will be enduring and far-reaching. The emphasis of research is on discourse structures, as well as on local and institutionalised cultures (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994). An example would be to consider the shamanic practices in South Africa as constructing the body and the self by the culturally determined technology of the t· . 1ce, as will be discussed below in detail.

It is clear that this study is situated in an interdisciplinary tradition, bridging the disciplines of psychology, neuropsychology, para-psychology and anthropology. It accepts Marcus (1994) notion that while in postmodern anthropology there are no innovate ethnographic moves, what is new is the open use of, and sensitivity

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towards, reflexivity, collage, montage and ialogism. There is a constant struggle with these liberating technologies as we'i is the desire to report objectively on a reality other than the anthropologist's own.

This struggle is central to this research, in that while the researcher has been ste ʰed in postmodern and interdisciplinary thinking, he does not wish to merely collapse the discourses of South African shamans into a solips'sm (my account is the only one) or into a relativism (any account will do). It is for this reason that both the phenomenological method and the attempt to read the discourse as texts are used as strategic choices because they allow the expression of the subjectivity of subjects but also allows some codification of the material in order to make more generalised claims, which are themselves subject to critique. Thus the aim is to hold the tension between the totalisation of the narrative and the potential infinite regress which post-modernism may create.

2.8. The Sound of the Sacred

Another tension which this study seeks to confront is that between the sacred and the scientific, which the Enlightenment meta-narrative has established. This dichotomy is questioned as more and more ecological-spiritual concerns sketch out a sacred science that respects the earth and the other worlds (Lincoln & Denzin, 1994). There is a mindfulness that science and the human sciences have not provided the answers necessary for this planet. This is not a denial of science, but rather a recognition to integrate it with the sacred. A very relevant and important example of this is the close relationship between shamanism and ecology, for it is in this relationship that shamanism in general and South African shamanism in particular have gained some scientific 'respectability'.

Furst (1994) notes that ethnobotanists have voiced their fear that with the destruction of the rain forests of South America, valuable shamanic knowledge on medicinal plants will be lost. A study is quoted in which, of twenty plants collected

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on the shaman's advice, five killed the HIV virus but spared the T cells. However, the abuse of the shamanic knowledge by large pharmaceutical companies is problematic. These huge companies extract the effective part of the plants as advised by the shamans. They then patent and reproduce this effective part of the plant, and the shamans and the Third World countries receive no royalties or compensation. In South Africa at the moment a collaborative organisation called the South African Traditional Medicines Research Group aims at protecting the intellectual rights of and sharing the royalties with the South African shaman during the research of traditional medicines (Mowszowski, 1998). The biological wealth and diversity of 23 000 species of indigenous plants in South Africa has recently been the focus of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, who have in collaboration with South African shamans so far discovered a new appetite suppressant, a high-intensity sweetener and a mosquito repellent (Malan, 1998).

Concerning shamanic trance states specifically, Rogo (1987) notes that most shamans are not unwilling to talk about their supernatural powers, as Joan Halifax, a medical anthropologist, found in her interviews with shamans around the world. For shamans, the contemporary Western separation of natural and supernatural does not apply. Transpersonal anthropology seeks to understand 'polyphasic consciousness' of multiple realities, which avoids some of the dangers of ethnocentricity in the formulation of a theory about consciousness and culture. "For one thing, we are slowly coming to see that there exist real, direct experiences somewhere behind any seemingly (to us anthropologists) bizarre beliefs, myths, legends, and 'superstitions'" (Laughlin, McManus, & Shearer, 1992, p. 191).

The anthropological work of Turner (1992) is a good example, in that she addresses this methodological problem directly in having herself witnessed a shamanic extraction of a tooth out of the body of a patient. "Now, modern anthropologists have learned to regard the tales told by fieldwork subjects about spirits and powers as greatly significant [...]. Anthropologists study the manifestations that the people

they are studying feel to be spiritual in their cultural aspect, how they originated from those peoples' experiences of living on this earth" (Turner, 1992, p. 3). She then states that it "can be seen that for such a thing to happen it was essential to be an actual participant, not just an actor going through the motions" (Turner, 1992, p. 5). Turner's (1992) work reflects a respect for the spiritual through the process of participation. As ﹍ ﹍ of the commitment to honouring the subjectivity of the shamans, the data collected in this study concerning the sacred and the parapsychological will be both respected, explored and expanded upon.

3. The Voice of the Researcher

In qualitative research where the researcher is identical to the primary data collection instrument, it is particularly necessary that the researcher as subject needs to be contextualised (Creswell, 1994). This is directly related to the ethical concerns of this research. The ethical choices are dependent on the researcher. Qualitative researchers often struggle with the establishment of ethical standards that will guide their studies (Punch, 1986). Four ethical stances have been outlined by Denzin & Lincoln (1994); the absolutist stance proclaims that the invasion of the privacy of others is unacceptable and disguised research is unethical; the deception model endorses disguised research in the name of truth, using any method to achieve deeper understanding; the relativist stance assumes that the researcher has absolute freedom to study what s/he wishes to, for no over-arching ethics can apply where contexts are changing; the consequentialist model builds on feminist ethics which support an open and sharing relationship between researcher and informant, a relationship based on mutual respect, noncoercion, nonmanipulation, as well as the acknowledgement that ethical decisions are contextual in nature. Such a model focuses on the consequences of the research act. It also presupposes the commitment of researchers to an ethic of personal accountability, caring, the capacity for empathy, the sharing of emotionality, as well as the value of individual expressiveness. The researcher endorses this consequentialist model with its feminist ethics, and consequently applies an aphorism used on an East German

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placard before the fall of the Berlin wall, that the freedom of the researcher ends where the freedom of the other begins.

Feminist writers have highlighted the issue of the author's place in the text, and have deconstructed the false dichotomy between the personal and researcher's self as being based on the belief that it is possible to write a text without the author leaving some traces (Lincoln & Denzin, 1994). This is not possible, as all texts are personal statements. There is, however, equally the danger of embedding the personal self so deeply into the text, that the text becomes completely narcissistically dominated by the writer. This self-indulgence is not advocated, but rather the "goal is to return the author to the text openly in a way that does not squeeze out the object of the study" (Lincoln & Denzin, 1994, p. 578). The way to return the author to the text is through reflexivity, as well as through the style of narration (Cres- -ll, 1994; Holstein & Gubrium, 19.5).

Peters (1981), in his experiential study of Nepalese shamanism, notes that his experiential and participatory method is neither exclusively subjective nor objective, but the synthesis of both. Peters (1981) was trained as a Nepalese shaman, and therefore became intimately involved in his own research topic. The researcher himself became the instrument and observer of the research. Peters (1981) notes that such research demands an intimate participatory and introspective involvement and knowledge of the cultural categories by which experiences are interpreted, as well as a discursive perspective. Equally, Turner (1992) refers to the subjectivity and objectivity of an anthropology of experience.

Although this study is not an exclusively experiential study of the researcher, it would be naive to not acknowledge that the experiential component of the researcher's apprenticeship and practice as a South African shaman has shaped and categorised knowledge in a particular manner. This is by no means necessarily a hindrance, but rather could also be productive of knowledge, as has been argued

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. bove. Hence it is considered important to provide certain information about the researcher of this study.

My interest in shamanic practices has been shaped by my own experiences as a *thwasa* in the early eighties. I was studying second year psychology at Wits, when I had the opportunity to see an *isangoma* at university, for we had just done a course on African psychology. In one of those dingy, small rooms somewhere at the end of a long corridor, this *isangoma* told me that I had powerful ancestors, and that I should become an apprentice in order to become an *isangoma*. He was prepared to teach me. He lived in Meadowlands, Soweto. I would visit him on the weekends, wear my beads around my neck, and wear the typical *th asa* outfit, the blue vest and a red patterned cloth wrapped around my legs. I was still a bit puzzled how I could have been chosen, for in my ideological framework at that time, which was Althusserian mixed with cultural incommensurability theories, my experience of acceptance was at odds with my paradigmatic thinking. While my head was shaking, my heart was, however, rejoicing.

I was told by my teacher that one cannot just enrol to become an *isangoma*, the ancestors have to decide. He said that my prominent ancestors were my grandfather, who was a medical doctor, and my great-great grandparents on my father's side, who were artistically inclined. I did not know whether they were or not, but after checking it cut with my father, it turned out to be true, my great-great grandfather was an artist.

Every weekend for a few months I entered another world, full of unusual practices and colours, and the ring of ancestral voices. It was here that my subversive side, which hardly found any space in the academic field, could emerge. Thus the learning of the throwing of the 'bones' resonated with my work with astrology, the Tarot and the I Ching. I observed, I practised, I drummed, I danced, I tranced.

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However, the political climate in Soweto at that time intensified, making it finally too dangerous to enter Meadowlands. I lost contact with my teacher, and as the army called me up, I left for Germany, for I was not prepared to fight in this civil war, in which the government was an unacceptable option, and the self-proclaimed Stalinists of student politics could not allow for a self-critical Marxism to arise. In Germany, I studied further and became a *Heilpraktiker* (state-recognised naturopath). I returned to South Africa as political hope began to dawn and completed my psychology studies. I am at present a clinical psychologist in private practice, whose integrative stance is strongly determined by the client's needs within a pragmatic psychodynamic and transpersonal framework.

In January 1997, during a rally of *izangoma*, two *izangoma* recognised me from my early *thwasa* days. They knew the whereabouts of my *baba* or teacher, and we resumed our contact. Certain dreams were interpreted by Credo Mutwa as indicating that I should return to my shamanic teacher. Furthermore, the divination 'bones' of a few *izangoma* suggested that I should complete my apprenticeship, which I duly did with my original teacher, graduating at the Dlamini household at Basani in Mpumalanga (Eastern province), which is the stronghold of the *Majoye* school. The residing *isangoma* is my teachers' teacher, and she herself was trained by the founder of the school, who never had a teacher, and was taught by the underwater beings at Komatiepoort.

Being a white male, as well as a foreigner (German) in the post-Apartheid era did not deter my entry into the South African shamanic practices. Having experienced this, I therefore knew that my access to shamanic information was not determined by cultural obstacles; besides, there have always been a few white *izangoma* around, and their numbers seem to be increasing. Access to informants for this study came through some private contacts, and through peer selection of subjects as I followed the recommendations of the *izangoma*.

The steps I took to enhance my rapport with subjects involved telling them that I was a shaman and supporting this claim with photographs which depict me in *thwasa* gear, drumming away, a picture of my teacher, as well as my beads signifying my apprenticeship. When this was done, the informants seem to visibly relaxed, and open up more. They stated that they felt they could now be more open and less defensive or self-conscious about their practices, and thus spoke more freely. I only realised later when interviewing them that this study also seemed to support the political interests of some of the informants.

My own political stance is strongly determined by a Foucaultian approach to discourse and institutions, in that the self is determined by power/knowledge networks, which are not merely repressive but also productive. The agenda of this study is to make known the missing voices of the South African shamans. Their generally silenced voices within the dominant white discourse in South Africa are an example of how the local discourses of technologies that alter states of consciousness are generally denied, ignored, ridiculed, and seldom given access to institutionalised power. This does not mean that such technologies are powerless in themselves. On the contrary, there is often an overt production of power with these technologies. The political strategies of some South African shamans are an example of how they seek to be heard as shamans and not merely as traditional healers, without denying the latter. With a new government, the possibility exists that there might be more strategic openings available for them than there were before. Whether this study will be useful and productive in enhancing their political status will be determined by whether they choose to use this research, and if so, in what manner.

CHAPTER FIVE
A STRATEGY OF INQUIRY INTO TRANCE STATES

For reasons outlined in the previous chapter, a phenomenological method of inquiry was chosen for this study. Before the specificity of the phenomenological method is outlined, issues concerning verification, i.e., validity and reliability, will be addressed, following which sampling, data collection procedures, and data analysis will be presented.

1. Verification in the Context of Discovery

Giorgi (1986) emphasises the fact that the phenomenological method is placed within the context of discovery rather than verification, and therefore around reliability and validity are not applicable to qualitative research in the same way as to quantitative research. Nevertheless, there is no clear consensus in this regard (Creswell, 1994), and attempts at integrating these concepts into qualitative research have been made.

Kirk and Miller (1986) note that whereas reliability, loosely speaking, is the extent to which the methodological procedure yields the same answer however and whenever it is carried out, validity is the extent to which it provides the correct answer. The issue of validity is, at its core, a problem of theory (construct validity), i.e., whether the theoretical paradigm corresponds correctly to the data, and this is acknowledged as being context dependent (Polkinghorne, 1986). In this sense validity involves a verification of meaning. "There is a form of verification through understanding. It is a self-verification wherein I sense a certain harmony or response between an evolving formulation and its felt-meaning, the bodily aftermath of the experience as lived" (Shapiro, 1986, p. 177).

Reliability on the other hand refers to the persistence of meaning through factual variations, and as Wertz (1986) states, reliability is related to the researcher as a measurement instrument, and thus reliability in phenomenological research is directly related to the researcher's 'bias'. It is not achieved by mere repeated re-enactments. Thus the context-bound nature of the researcher and the subjects of the study requires reflected subjectivity rather than technical objectivity (Kvale, 1983). Elaborating on the notion of reflected subjectivity, such as trustworthiness, has gained in importance (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

There are four aspects to trustworthiness, the first being truth value or credibility, which relates to internal validity within quantitative research. Truth value pertains to the researcher's confidence and credibility in having established the truth of the findings in regard to the particular subjects studied in their specific context. Truth value is obtained from human experiences. It is therefore subject-bound, and consequently, multiple realities emerge, with the researcher representing the multiplicity as adequately as possible. This means that people who share similar experiences could recognise themselves in the findings of the study. Strategies to achieve this are prolonged field experience, triangulation, peer examination, member checking, reflexivity, and structural coherence (Krefting, 1991).

The second aspect to trustworthiness is applicability or transferability, which relates to external validity in quantitative research. This refers to the degree to which findings can be applied to other contexts or settings. This therefore relates directly to the sampling techniques. Generalisability is not relevant in many qualitative projects because of the context-bound nature of the research. Transferability is directed at the findings in terms of the degree of similarity or goodness of fit between two contexts. Lincoln & Guba (1985) note that the responsibility of transferability lies with the person wanting to transfer the findings to another situation or population rather than with the researcher of the original study. Techniques to support transferability are nominated sampling and dense description

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techniques, designed to ascertain whether the data is typical (Krefting, 1991).

The third aspect to trustworthiness is consistency of data or dependability, which refers to reliability in the quantitative approach. Consistency is involved when the inquiry is replicated with the same subjects or occurs in a similar context. The multiple realities of subjects means that reliability is not so relevant in a qualitative approach. There is an attempt to learn from subjects rather than control for them. In terms of data analysis, keeping good ʾ ʾ ʾ audit trail records supports dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The tec. .ques of data dependability are the audit trail, the dense description of research methods, triangulation, as well as peer examination (Krefting, 1991). The final aspect to trustworthiness is neutrality or confirmability, which relates to objectivity in quantitative research. However, rather than focus on the neutrality of the investigator, Lincoln & Guba (1985) relate neutrality to the data. This neutrality of data is achieved when truth value and applicability are established (Krefting, 1991).

In this study, in order to ensure credibility or internal validity, the following strategies have been employed. The data collected from the interviews of the South African shamans have been triangulated with other texts that directly relate to the research question. Furthermore, member checking was applied, meaning that the emerging themes or categories were taken back to three South African shamans in order for the subjects to check the data analysis. In this participatory mode, the ongoing dialogue with the subjects regarding the findings and the interpretations ensured, to some extent, the truth value of the data. Also, the peer examination of the data analysis by two experienced qualitative research consultants meant that the emerging themes and categories increased in truth value. Furthermore, the reflexivity or clarification of researcher's 'bias' or voice was articulated.

In terms of the applicability or transferability of this study (external validity), the primary strategy to ensure this is the provision of rich, thick and detailed

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descriptions which will allow anyone interested in transferability, a good-enough framework for comparison. Peer selection by the South African shamans of the subjects ensured a certain degree of transferability.

In terms of consistency or dependability of this study (reliability), the researcher has established, besides triangulation, peer examination and dense descriptions, as already mentioned, a clear audit track of data collection and analysis to ensure dependability, thereby highlighting a clear decision trail used by the researcher, which will be discussed below in the data collection and analysis section.

2. The Strategy of Sampling

The strategy of sampling is taken from the research strategies of a qualitative research design. In this study the subjects were selected by their peers. The criteria of inclusion was one of nomination, in that subjects themselves nominated subjects for the study (Krefting, 1991). The sample of South African shamans was nominated according to specific criteria of inclusion. The South African shamans needed to have been practising for more than five years. This ensured that the shamans were relatively proficient at trance states and had had years of experience applying trance states. Furthermore, given that trance states are experiential, it was necessary to find shamans that are powerful enough or good enough at producing trance states, as judged by the community of shamans themselves. This peer selection in itself guaranteed to some extent reliability and validity (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995).

Levey (1973) states that subjects suitable for phenomenological research are those who are verbally fluent, and are able to communicate thoughts, feelings and perceptions. Thus besides competency, South African shamans were chosen who were fluent in English or Afrikaans, which were the languages of the interview. Although all the subjects are verbally fluent in an African language, the use of an interpreter was not considered to be a viable option because of the loss of meaning through translation.

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This sampling method may be described as purposive and convenient (Morse, 1994), in that appropriate subjects, who are experts at trance states, or who purposefully fulfil the criteria of inclusion were selected because they happened to be available for the participation in this research at the time of its i. lementation (Morse, 1994). The appropriate subjects were therefore selected because they happened to be available in the Gauteng and the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. Furthermore, the choice of subjects was not dependent on whether or not the subject was a member of a particular organisation of shamans with high profile.

There is no directory of South African shamans who are powerful in their production of trance states. The method of selection, hence, relied on peer selection which functions according to word of mouth. No predetermined number of subjects of this study was specified, as interviews continued until the categories in the analysis of the interviews became saturated, and no new relevant information emerged. Morse (1994), however, states that the average number of subjects for a phenomenological study is six participants. In this study it was necessary to interview ten subjects before a certain saturation of themes was achieved.

3. The Strategy of Data Collection

In this qualitative study, an informal but semi-structured interview was used, which allowed for dynamic and flexible adjustment to the topic. In the active in-depth interviews which were conducted, the subjects were not assumed to be "passive vessels of answers" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 7), but rather the aim of the interviews was to achieve a open-ended communication and dialogue between researcher and subject, the subject being a narrator producing knowledge. The aim was to make experiential details present, or the history of the active subject's experience a history of the present (Foucault, 1979, p. 31). To achieve this it is acknowledged that the researcher was deeply implicated in the activation of the narrative production. The researcher therefore, in a direct or subtle manner, 'provoked' certain topics that were deemed germane to the study or the researcher's

interest while other topics were not pursued.

The methods used to activate narrative production are related to certain interpersonal and communication skills. These include open-ended questions (e.g.: what happened to you?), reflection of affect and content (e.g.: You said that...), clarification (e.g.: I wonder what you mean?), validating their experiences (e.g.: That seemed quite difficult...), and probing (e.g.: I wonder what you felt about that?). It also involved active listening, which involved the researcher in focusing intently on the subject. This was an essential component of the interviewing, as was the use of the researcher's self in that through the body, language, sounds, and affect, the subject was guided, supported, and probed. The researcher's mode of inquiry, however, was at all times determined by the principles of respect, courtesy, acceptance and understanding, as well as integrity and trust.

Ethical considerations concerning the data collection were emphasised in the beginning of the interview at which time informed consent was sought. The purpose of the research and the nature of the institution that governed the research, namely the Psychology Department of the University of the Witwatersrand was revealed. In addition, the notion of collaboration in the data collection and analysis was explained. Privacy and confidentiality was offered to the subjects. After this introduction, the researcher showed the subjects photographs of himself when he was a *thwasa*, an apprentice in a shamanic practice. At this point there was usually a noticeable shift of trust, and often openness increased. Some interviewees stated that they felt that their experiences would be viewed as more authentic and that it was safer to reveal them. The setting of the interviews differed according to the access of the subjects. Some were interviewed in the office of the Gauteng traditional healers association committee, in huts, in a restaurant, or at their homes.

4. The Feasibility of the Study

To assess the feasibility of the study, a pilot interview was conducted with an established South African shaman or *isangoma*. Some new findings concerning shamanic trance states emerged, thereby supporting the notion that further research into this area was justified. The interview was conducted in English, and a meaningful dialogue was achieved. Language did not emerge as a major barrier, although the language limitations cannot be dismissed.

The *isangoma* was helpful in making further contacts with other experienced shamans. In the pilot study, the common phenomenological approach of asking a single question about an experience was not appropriate and did not generate much data. This difficulty has been encountered by others who have worked with black people, for example, black nurses who found that amongst blacks the term 'experience' did not evoke sufficient data, while changing it to 'your world view' did (Sokhela, 1990). A more didactic approach was found to be far more productive, and thus nine specific questions were prepared to probe the experiences of trance states. Although the nine questions are presented here chronologically, it must be made clear that the interview was conducted in a semi-structured way, i.e., the informant was followed in the narrative that was produced, and the questions were asked when it was most appropriate. The questions themselves were based on some background information gleamed from Walsh's (1995) phenomenology of shamanic trance states, as well as personal experiences (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). All interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. The specific research questions asked were the following:

5. The Research Questions

Name:

Age:

Length of time practising as an *isangoma*:

Length and place of training:

1. Tell me how you became an *isangoma*?
2. I wonder what you think makes an *isangoma* powerful or good?
3. I am curious about what happens in your mind when you
a) communicate (listen or speak) with your ancestors,
b) and how does this contact start or end in your mind?
4. How do you prepare your mind for this communication?

   Probe: a) auditory, visual, tactile trance experiences

      b) techniques supporting the trance

       c) differences in stages of training, and how trance was taught
5. Tell me about how much control you have when you communicate with your ancestors?
6. I wonder what feelings come up during this contact with the ancestors?
7. I am curious about how important dreams are for you? Probe: lucidity
8. Tell me about your mind during drumming and dancing?
9. Have you ever left your body and travelled in your mind?

6. The Description of the Subjects

The biographical information pertaining to the shamans or subjects of this study relate specifically to them being shamans. All shamans gave permission for their names to be used. The subjects comprised of six females and four males. The ages of the subjects range from 36 to 76 years. The number of years the subjects have been practising as shamans ranges from ten to over fifty years. This suggests that the shamans interviewed in this study are experienced in their practice. Five of the subjects were Sotho, three were Zulu, one was a Ndebele, and another was a Tsonga. In this study, each subject is numbered, which allows for quick reference and

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identification of the source of information. When specific information or knowledge from the shamans is referred to, the numbers cor : in brackets behind a statement indicate the source of such knowledge. The numbers one to ten were designated to the shamans in the sequence in which the interviews occurred. Therefore shaman Stan (1) was interviewed first and shaman Julia (2) was the second shaman interviewed.

Shaman Stan Matsitse (1) is 45 years old, a Sotho, and has been practising as a shaman for the last thirteen years. He trained in Soweto, Johannesburg, for eighteen months, but he has no recollection of the beginning phases of his training. He is only able to remember parts of his training period.

Shaman Julia Raseboya (2) is 36 years old, a Sotho, and has had a shamanic practice for ten years. She became very ill, and no cure seemed to be effective. She was taken to a shaman who told her that only by training to become a shaman would she be healed. Her training period in Soweto was only eight months She stated : the reason for this short period was because she received shamanic knowledge from her ancestors in her dreams.

Shaman Obed Mndaweni (3) is 59 years old and is a Zulu. He has been practising for the last twenty years, and is the chairperson of the Gauteng Traditional Healers Association. His introduction into shamanism began with severe problems with his taxi business, difficulties with his wife, as well as a deterioration of his own physical and mental health. His training at Bushbuckridge in the Eastern province for two years not only healed him, but gave him the shamanic powers to heal others.

Shaman Paulina Mokoae, a (4) is 54 years old and is a Sotho. She has been practising as a shaman for eighteen years. She became very ill, and resisted the call to become a shaman. After having dreamt of her shamanic teacher, she travelled to Natal where she trained for two years.

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Shaman Caroline Mukashelwa (6) is 53 years old and is a Sotho. She has been a shaman for twenty five years. Already as a young child she played games that resembled the divination with 'bones'. As an adult, a severe and seemingly incurable illness, as well as dreams about her shamanic teacher, brought her to Louis Trichard in the Northern province, where she underwent her shamanic training for a time period of eighteen months.

Shaman Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa (6) is 76 years old and a Zulu. As a young man working on the mines, Credo Mutwa was raped, and he was rejected by his stepmother and father in Johannesburg. He went to live in Natal, where he overcame his sense of rage and guilt in his training with his aunt who was a high *isanusi* of the Zulu. In time he took over the office of high *isanusi*, and in his colourful life and travels through Africa, he has been practising as a shaman for the last fifty years. He is either highly revered or rejected out of hand, often for political reasons. The shamans of this study have all expressed their respect for him, and have referred the researcher to him concerning specific knowledge.

Shaman Nobela Ndlangisa (7) is 46 years old and belongs to the Ndebele. She was referred to the researcher as a talented *isanusi* by Credo Mutwa. She became very ill and saw Credo Mutwa in her dreams. She sought him out and became his apprentice or *thwasa*. She has been practising as a shaman for over ten years.

Shaman Virginia Rethele (8) is 51 years old and is a Sotho. She was a faith healer before she became a shaman. She became very ill and dreamt of Credo Mutwa. However, another shaman claimed that he no longer trained *thwasas* and she thus trained with this shaman. The training was not successful, and she was warned in her dreams to seek out her original shamanic teacher. She finally sought out Credo Mutwa and completed her training under his guidance.

Nomsa Dlamini (9) is 46 years old and is a Zulu. She is a trained nurse, who after severe and chronic illnesses resisted the call to become a shaman before she finally accepted her calling. She went to Swaziland for four months where she received her training. The short training period was explained by the fact that she knew the herbal medicines as she had helped to prepare them as a child when her parents were shamans. She has been a shaman for the last twelve years.

Daniel Baloyi (10) is 41 years old and a Tsonga. At the age of eleven years he became very ill and began his training at Bushbuckridge in the Eastern province. His training lasted for three years. For the last twenty seven years he has been practising as a shaman. He has also been the researcher's shamanic teacher.

7. The Strategy of Data Analysis

The strategy of data analysis or explication occurred after the tape-recorded interview had been transcribed. The subject's discourse in the form of the protocol was read several times to obtain an intuitive and holistic grasp of the data. The protocol was read repeatedly in order to attain a sense of wholeness. This was followed by a qualitative analysis of each interview, in which the subject's everyday language was transferred into a psychological language and the data was categorised into themes. The potential for multiple interpretations of the data from different subjects was always respected. One example of this data analysis which pertains to interview 4, is presented in the data analysis section. The themes of all the other interviews are to be found in the appendix.

The process of naming the themes which emerged from the data was informed by the input of the shamanic literature on trance states, as well as the researcher's own understanding and experience of the South African shamanic trance states. The research questions used in the interviews were also chosen to provide data on themes deemed *a priori* to be important, but they were expressed in everyday language. For example, the fourth research question: How do you prepare for this

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communication (with the ancestors)? refers to the theme of trance induction. The central or main themes that both emerged from the data and in regard to which the data was interrogated were the following:

Calling

Genealogy

Training

Induction Techniques

Ancestor Contact or Trance States

The Meaning of Ancestor Contact

Dreaming

Other World

OBEs

Divination

The Power of the Shaman

The result section is a consolidation of all the themes found in all the interviews. All themes are placed according to the main themes listed above In some cases certain themes found in some interviews were consolidated by becoming sub-themes to a main theme. For example, the theme 'umbilini', as found in certain interviews (4, 6, 7, 8, 9) is categorised under the theme 'ancestor contact or trance states'. It is on the basis of this organisation of the central or main themes, as well as the subsequent sub-themes, that inferences are made and the results are discussed. A structured theory or understanding of South African shamanic trance states is then interconnected with the theories of shamanism found in the literature review. This leads to the presentation of a model of South African shamanic trance states.

CHAPTER SIX
THE DATA ANALYSIS OF A FIELD TEXT

In this chapter, the findings of the shamans' discourses are presented. In order to allow the reader greater access to the material and how the researcher abstracted themes from the interviews, a full interview and its analysis according to a phenomenological method are presented. The themes that emerged from all the interviews will be presented in a summary form in the results section. The original data is presented in the appendix.

As already indicated, theme headings were generated on the basis of the literature on shamanism, the researcher's own experiences, as well as the data itself. Themes found in interviews were organised according to theme headings. All themes concerning, for example, ancestor contact, which were scattered throughout the interview were presented under the heading 'ancestor contact'.

1. Data Analysis of an Interview
Date: 20.10.1996, Time: 3pm - 4pm
Place: Orlando, Soweto, Jhb.
Interviewee: Paulina Mokoaena (4) (Sotho)
Present: Obed Mndaweni (3)
Age: 35 years
In Practice: 17 years
Training: Natal, 2 years

Interviewer: Tell me, how did you become an *isangoma?*
Paulina: Yes, you know, I was very sick, terrible headache, and I went to the clinic, doctors, *izangoma.* They couldn't help me.

Theme: Calling

This shaman became very ill. Doctors and izangoma were unable to heal her.

But when I sit like this (sitting on the floor, legs stretched out in front of her) in the house, I feel that something is coming, but when I look around I didn't see. It seems that something is moving up and down in my body. When it comes here (shoulders), it holds, and sometimes I just fall down.

Theme: Calling

During her illness she experienced unusual physical sensations. Something moves in her body, and when it reaches the shoulders she falls down.

Even if I am sleeping, I saw my ancestors, my mother my granny, they show me the 'bones', and they tell me.

Theme: Calling

During this illness, this shaman saw her grandmother or ancestor in her dreams.

I was one of the Watchtower Jehovah's Witnesses, I was attending their church, then they showed me a bible. "Do you think this is going to help you?" I said: "Yes". They said: "Never". They showed me 'bones'.

Theme: Calling

She was a Jehovah's Witness, and she resisted the call of her ancestor, who also showed her divination 'bones'.

You know I was sick, I was fighting with everyone. I had power, strength, I could even kill people, you see. And then I went too, and my brother took me, but before that, they told me I was dead for three days.

Interviewer: Dead for three days?

Paulina: Yes, I was sleeping deep, they called the ambulance and they said no after they felt my pulse. They said I was unconscious. I saw myself with my granny somewhere, I didn't know the place, talking to me, you know, and I then woke up and when I came out of the room, you know they nearly fainted, seeing me: "What's wrong with you, what is happening?"

Theme: Calling

During her illness, she was very aggressive, and at one point was unconscious for three days.

Then my brother give me ten rand you see, that I must go see African doctors, I was mad. I was running, shouting at everyone, screaming, you feel like that something in your body wanting to say something and you don't understand, funny things. Hmm, and the *isangoma* says: "You've got the powers of the ancestors". I said: "No, what?"

Theme: Calling

A shaman's diagnosis of her illness was that she had the "powers of the ancestors", which is a sign of calling.

I was sick, I tell you, I couldn't even walk to the toilet. I was only eating soil, everyday. It was painful, I couldn't eat anything. When I arrived at the hospital, I hit the doctor (laughter). They gave me the injection to sleep. Yes, I did sleep, and in the evening my granny came to me and said: "What's wrong?" I explain, I'm sick. She said: "No, you're not sick." Then I say to her: "Tell that doctor to come and discharge me, I'm not sick." Then, just then the doctor came in, and looked, and

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said: "Paulina, there is nothing wrong with you." Then I was discharged.

Theme: Calling
Due to the illness she was in hospital. Her ancestor stated that she was not ill, and she was discharged by the doctor.

Then they slaughter a goat, praying for the ancestors that they will take care for me, and then they said she can go. You know, in Natal there, the ancestors showed me the way. I saw my teacher sleeping. You know how much I had from Johannesburg to Natal? Two hundred and sixty rand, and I only spent six rand. Every taxi said, no go, and every taxi I tried to give money, but they say no go. They said you have got the ancestors, *amadlozi*, iesch. They see these things, and I didn't want it. Then I dreamt my teacher. When I arrived there they slaughtered the goat and prayed for my ancestors, saying: "She is here, don't fight with her."

Theme: Calling
A goat was slaughtered to appease the ancestors now that she had accepted the calling. She sought out her teacher whom she had dreamt of. When she finally arrived in Natal, a goat was slaughtered thereby appeasing the ancestors for she was now in training.

Every day in the morning and in the afternoon they make us drink the *muti*, and then they, every day in the morning and afternoon, they would hide things for us. We must say where that thing is.

Theme: Training
During her training, the shaman had to drink specific medicinal herbs or muti, and practice finding hidden things with the help of the ancestors.

Since then till now I am healing people. You know when the ancestors come, you

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can hear, you can feel, because something is going to happen in your body.

Theme: Ancestor Contact

The ancestor contact is heard, felt and experienced in the body.

Interviewer: Tell me more about that.

Paulina: Something is going to happen.

Interviewer: How does it feel like?

Paulina: Like myself, I've got this thing, the ancestors when they come, and I'm with you, I will change automatically, I will just do like this (stares ahead of her). Even if you say: "Paulina, no." I will not even hear you. And it is painful when they come, it is painful, yes. You see, someone who knows about it must come, and say: "*Thokhosa*, what you want?" Then they will say what they want. Now, in here when you with the prophecies you will feel a pain (points to her stomach and then to her liver area) and then you see visions. Sometimes when I pray, and take the bible and as I say: "Our father..." then the vision comes straight away.

Theme: Ancestor Contact

Once the ancestor contact has been established, the shaman stares in front of her and is oblivious to her environment. The ancestors then provide information or instructions according to the pains in the patient's body. Sometimes the ancestor contact is painful, especially shortly before the visions occur and then mainly in the stomach or liver area. This shaman is also a faith healer and uses the bible to receive information from the ancestors.

The vision comes and tell me that so and so has got problem and this and this and this. Like this bible, I'm the only one who touches it because it is blessed by my ancestors. But the 'bones', no problem, but the bible is blessed. The power with it is only with it when I hold it. You see, you know, you open it and I can tell you the problems.

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Theme: Divination

Visions occur when the shaman, as a faith healer, uses the bible and prayer as divinatory tools.

Theme: Ancestor Contact

The ancestors can be contacted through two different professional roles, namely as a faith healer and a shaman. These roles are not in opposition to each other.

When the ancestors come you get a feeling. It becomes in your lower legs, and as if you in water.

Interviewer: Tell me a bit more about that feeling about water.

Paulina: Yes, you know they can take me here and throw me in the yard, and you wont even see those people, but that power it can throw me out.

Theme: Ancestor Contact

The ancestors are considered to have immense powers, for besides giving information to the shaman, they are able to physically transport her to another place.

I am going to be able to see but I can't talk. So they are taking me. But if you can say: " *Thokhosa*, no, be in peace," then they don't.

Interviewer: Can you hear yourself talking?

Paulina: No.

Interviewer: Can you remember the ancestors talking?

Paulina: No. Somebody, you know how the ancestors are? They don't just come out when you alone, they want somebody to hear what they want.

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Theme: Ancestor Contact

The shaman is unable to remember the content of the ancestor contact, and therefore the shaman requires the presence of others to hear the message of the ancestors.

Interviewer: What I am really curious about is what happens in your mind when you communicate with your ancestors?

Paulina: Chuh, you, I don't know, like ah, like myself, when I take the *snuff*, and *imphepho*, I become, my mind is not here.

Theme: Induction

A certain change in, or absence of mind occurs. It is induced, when snuff is taken or imphepho is burned.

Interviewer: So *snuff* helps you to get there?

Paulina: It brings them quickly to you. You can't just say now my ancestors must come. You must keep quiet and forget about yourself.

Interviewer: So you become quiet.

Paulina: Ya, and I forget I'm Paulina now. Maybe you are here, and I bring you next to my ancestors. Then the vision will come, and when I throw the 'bones' I already know what is going to happen.

Theme: Ancestor Contact

It is not possible to simply call upon the ancestors, for the mind needs to be "quiet" and the shaman must defocus from herself. There is a sense of an absence of personality. This brings about a closeness to the ancestors. As a result of this close contact visions appear and consequently during divination, the shaman knows what will happen to a client.

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Interviewer: So you are not thinking of yourself. Do you see the ancestors coming?

Paulina: Yes, yes, I see them. Something can tell you that, and sometimes you can feel the pain your body when someone is sick.

Interviewer: So you ⸱ l it. Tell me, you hear the ancestors?

Paulina⸱ Yes.

Theme: Ancestor Contact

This shaman has visual, auditory and tactile contact with her ancestors, and she actively interacts with them.

Interviewer: So when you keep your mind still the ancestors come, you see them, but not all the time?

Paulina: But not all the time.

Interviewer: So you see them, hear them...

Paulina: And talk to them.

Interviewer: So you can actually talk to them? So how is that different to when you don't remember what they say?

Paulina: When you are in *amadlozi*, you see, you must understand. When you are in *amadlozi*, you don't hear, or even see the ancestors, because this ancestor is holding you, the body is moving, you are talking, you are, you don't feel yourself.

Obed: It is not you.

Interviewer: But you do speak to them sometimes?

Paulina: So I sometimes am going into *amakhosi*.

Interviewer: What is that?

Paulina: Ah, the ancestors, like I can speak to them mouth to mouth, and they can reply immediately.

Interviewer: So *amakhosi*, is it the ancestors?

Paulina: Hmm, the spirits.

Interviewer: But it is the spirits you talk to?

Paulina. Ya.

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Interviewer: And *amadlozi*?

Paulina: That is when the spirit is in you, and *amakhosi* is when the ancestors are out.

Interviewer: Are you also in *amakhosi* when you talk to them in your dreams?

Paulina: You know wt . ' you throw the 'bones' and I'm using my head then it is *amakhosi*. That is different because you get an answer. In dreams the ancestors are both in and out.

Theme: Ancestor Contact

Two forms of ancestor contact exist for this shaman, i.e., she experiences the ancestors as both within and without her. During the amadlozi contact the shaman has no memory of the ancestral contact, whilst during the amakhosi contact, the shaman interacts consciously with the ancestors. The amadlozi contact is described as occurring when the ancestors are within the shaman, i.e. embodied within the shaman. The shaman loses control, her his body shakes and the voice and mannerisms of the shaman take on the characteristics of the ancestor. The amakhosi contact is evident during divination when the ancestor contact occurs in the head, and is interactive in nature. Ancestor contact during dreams lies between the amadlozi and amakhosi forms of contact.

Interviewer: Tell me, can you remember at the beginning of your training, could you hear the voices of your ancestors or did you have to learn to hear them?

Paulina: Eh, now I can control my ancestors, but before I couldn't control them. You know how to hold them, where they come. But now, because I know, I can stop them, I can just do this (claps with her hands the *isangoma* greeting). Like myself here, I've got an ancestor of a man. When that ancestor comes out, you wont hear Paulina speaking. You will hear voice of a different somebody, it is like that.

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Theme: Ancestor Contact

When the ancestor contact has been established, the personality of the shaman is eclipsed by the personality of the ancestor. After the contact the shaman feels exhausted.

Interviewer: So what kind of feelings come up when you like that?

Paulina: You feel tired.

Interviewer: Tired, is that before, during, or afterwards?

Paulina: While you are talking, no, you concentrate, but afterwards you feel tired. Even before that you feel tired and you know that something is coming.

Theme: Ancestor Contact

During the ancestor contact the shaman concentrates, but after the ancestor contact the shaman feels exhausted.

Interviewer: And if it is in the body?

Paulina: You are shaking, you feel something is moving from your legs up and down. Up and down, and when it comes to the shoulders, it starts shaking, ya. The chest here you feel you have a ball, and you feel like yawning.

Theme: Umbilini

The body is experienced as shaking and at the same time there is a feeling of energy moving firstly up and down the legs, and then up to the shoulders and chest. In the chest the energy is experienced as a ball. The shaman then feels like yawning.

Interviewer: How important are your dreams?

Paulina: Very important, like myself, I dream a straight dream.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Paulina: Sometimes I can, I can see that tomorrow morning a lady with this and this illness will come tomorrow and it will happen like that exactly.

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Theme: Dreaming

This shaman has "straight dreams", meaning that the manifest content of the dream is predictive of future events. She will sometimes dream of a patient with a particular illness arriving the next day. This patient would then appear the next day, exactly as she had dreamt.

Interviewer: So the ancestors also speak in your dreams?

Paulina: Yes, but there I won't forget because I am trained not to forget.

Theme: Dreaming

Ancestors make contact during dreams. It is therefore important for the shaman to remember her dreams. Remembering dreams is part of the training to be a shaman.

Interviewer: How did your teacher train you to do that?

Paulina: Eh, by, if you came as an *isangoma*, it is very difficult, because you don't know when the *amadlozi* are coming out, it is painful. And the teacher say to you do this and do this, and they shout at you so you must wake up, so that the ancestors must be clever. They teach you, but you think they teach Paulina. No, they teach your *amadlozi* how to communicate, how to find things, how to talk, how to think, how to do something.

Theme: Training

Part of the training includes training the ancestors in both to talk through the shaman as well as to find hidden objects.

They say: "There is something here we already hide, come, let's go, where's it, where's it?" And you become scared, and the attention comes, you pray and call them, and they say: "Hey come on, come on, we want it." And then your *amadlozi* says, others just go and get it. So you forget about everything and concentrate.

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Theme: Training

A feeling of fear emerges after which the ancestors are called upon to solve the task of finding things. This requires concentration and attention.

They also teach you respect. Like other African doctors, I mustn't you know, I must respect them, because I'm not exactly respecting them, but I am respecting their ancestors. Everytime I respect, the powers become stronger.

Interviewer: I've noticed sometimes a lot of jealousy amongst *izangoma*.

Paulina: Yes

Interviewer: Tell me a bit about that.

Paulina: It is like this, as I told you I cured someone, the lady that has got AIDS, and remember I told you she got better. Tshu, if I go to another *isangoma*, and ask how can we mix something to cure, he won't like it, because he wants the person to come to her, it is not like the doctors at Baragwanath. They call other doctors.

Theme: Relationship amongst shamans

Jealousy is a major issue amongst izangoma, according to this shaman. This is understood as being based on both a fear of losing status as well as of losing patients to a better shaman.

Like myself, I can take pure water from the tap, and pray: "God change this water into a medicine, cure this person." I give it, and he will be cured.

Interviewer: Do you sometimes become aware in your dreams that you are dreaming?

Paulina: Yes. Like yesterday, and I was scared, I ran out of the bedroom. You know I was just relaxing, when I look at the pillow, I started yawning, my body is shaking, I know it is the *amadlozi*. When I look at the other side, I see a snake, a head of a snake, I knew what was happening, but I was not ready for that, and I ran out (laughter). They were trying to explain something. And do you know what is that: Careful, something is going to happen, an accident. When we go to you in town, we

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nearly had two accidents in the taxi.

Interviewer: So you sometimes fall asleep and dream and say: "Ah this is a dream."?

Paulina: Yes.

Theme: Dreaming

The shaman acknowledged that she was aware of being conscious in a dream, she is therefore able to be lucid in her dreams. She uses the ancestor contact in dreams for pre-cognition.

Interviewer: Tell me what happens in your mind when you are drumming and dancing?

Paulina: Eisch, now you asking me a question, my head is burning and dizzy, it is not me who is answering now, my ancestors are helping to talk. They are desiring to talk. What was the question?

Interviewer: I was wondering what happens in your mind when you drum and dance?

Paulina: Good question. When you got the *amadlozi*, they put the drum behind you or even next to you, and they start singing and drumming: godukudu godukudu godukudu. When you keep quiet and listening to the drum, sometimes the *amadlozi* will make you shake and you fall back. Another way of taking them or letting them come out.

Interviewer: So you listen to the drums and forget about yourself?

Paulina: Listen to the drums carefully, think of what you are doing. You just keep quiet, and it comes quickly now. Even at church they are clapping and singing, then they just come and tell the people: "You have got this and this."

Theme: Dancing

During dancing a burning and dizzy sensation is experienced in the head. The body then begins to shake, and the shaman's sense of self retreats. As the shaman lets go of the self she may fall back physically. An important step is to keep quiet in the

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beginning. Even in church as a faith healer, this shaman can induce a trance through clapping and singing.

Interviewer: Tell me a bit about the dancing?

Paulina: Yes, that is different, you can become an *isangoma*, but you don't have to dance. It is traditional, they used to do this (some dance movements), and they are not *izangoma*, and the Sotho, they sing and shake (Shakes her upper body), the Xhosas, they dance like Xhosas do, but they are not *izangoma*. But if you are an *isangoma*, you are going to follow the rules of your tradition.

Theme: Dancing

According to this shaman, dancing is not an essential part of shamanism in South Africa. It is more a part of the specific culture that a shaman participates in, especially where special movements are involved.

Interviewer: Do you notice your mind changing when you are dancing?

Paulina: Oh yes quickly, and when there is a song.

Interviewer: Song?

Paulina: You see when you sing, like myself I've got a song, all this *izangoma*, they can sing all kinds of different songs, they can do, and nothing will happen to me. But if they can sing this song, sometimes I just think, sometimes I cry, just in tears, for it reminds me of like I am, all them problems I had when I became an *isangoma*.

Interviewer: I've heard that with some *izangoma*, at the end of their training, the ancestors give them a song, their song.

Paulina: It is what I am telling you. That song is what motivates me. When I sing it, I feel the spirit you know, yes, I have one song as an *isangoma*, and one for the church.

Theme: Song

Every shaman has a special, ancestrally transferred song. This song in itself is able to induce trance states as well as strong feelings, and it becomes a strong motivation for the spirit. Receiving the song from the ancestors is an indication that the training of the shaman is complete. This shaman has two songs, one of which is used in her role as an isangoma, the other in her role as a faith healer.

Interviewer: When you sing and dance, you often dance for a very long time?
Paulina: It is because they are holding you. You dance, Paulina dances, but at some stage you can see that it is not Paulina dancing, something is there, that is going on for long time, and someone will say: "Stop", but you won't, keep on, keep on, until they are finished.

Theme: Dancing

The shaman, whilst dancing, takes on the personality of the ancestor that is coming through. The shaman will dance for a long period until the ancestor withdraws from the shaman.

Interviewer: How do your know someone is dancing with the ancestors?
Paulina: It is easy, even you, you are in your powers, I can see you. You concentrate on the thing as if you see something. You do it for a long time.
Interviewer: Tell me Paulina, have you ever experienced lying down and leaving your body?
Paulina: You know, yesterday I cried, I remembered I saw myself sleeping in the morning, and then I was wet. My whole family couldn't understand, it was a miracle. I saw myself in an ocean, inside an ocean.

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Theme: OBE

The shaman responded positively to the description of classical signs of OBEs, and related it to her underwater experience.

Interviewer: Tell me more.

Paulina: I have been inside the ocean, moving. My surname is Mokoaena and it means crocodile.

Theme: Totem animal

This shaman's surname is Mokoaena and this means that her totem animal is a crocodile.

I was holding the tail of the crocodile, moving in the water, and the water was blue, and on that day, my sister was telling the people who came to see me, no they must go because I am sick, the ancestors you know, they didn't know what happened.

Interviewer: When I was a *thwasa*, I heard this and others who were trained by a snake underwater.

Paulina: Yes, but I didn't go for long, only for a night. Then when I was in training my teacher told me about that. You know I was really sick, and she said I must go underwater, and I was scared. She said: "No you mustn't be scared, talk to your ancestors." You know the Umkumasi river in Nelspruit, yeah, it was where I was put, there are falls.

Theme: Underwater Experience

This shaman experienced an event underwater during her training. Her teacher suggested that she have this experience, given that she was so ill.

I was sitting there, they wanted me to the powers of my body wanted me to sit there. I went there, you know it was horrible, when I look at that Umkumasi river, uhh. But I prayed. I was singing, singing, but I didn't know what happened. I heard they said

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afterwards, you know your back was like a crocodile and then I was not there.

Interviewer: Gone?

Paulina: Yes, there I met my granny. We were talking, not inside the sea, but inside the sea. We were talking, she give me something to drink, water, then this African pots were there. And she said: "Do you know me?" I didn't, but when I look at her I could see the features of my mother, and then she said: "I'm your granny." I said: "My granny, houw."

Theme: Underwater Experience

She was placed next to the river and then felt herself transported underwater where she made contact with her deceased grandmother.

She said: "My dear, I have chosen you somebody who can take my reign." She was also an *isangoma*.

Theme: Genealogy

Her deceased grandmother was an isangoma or shaman, and she would be continuing the family tradition.

She said that I was the best. When I come out, you know they dress my hair with the beads, and she said: "No, this is not good because you are not a Zulu." Then I just took the beads off. When I came back, I wasn't even wet.

Theme: Underwater Experience

When she returned home, she was told that she had vanished, but on her return she was not wet.

Interviewer: So you vanished?

Paulina: Yes, and when I think back, the whole week I was sick, I was sleeping, and my teacher said I was going to be all right.

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Theme: Underwater Experience

The consequence of this experience was that she was very ill for one week, but her teacher felt confident of the healing properties of this event.

Interviewer: Did you have it again that your body disappeared?

Paulina: Yes, before I went to *thwasa*. When I was sleeping in my bedroom, then I saw myself at the gate. I was myself at the gate and the door was locked. I shouted: "Hey man, let me in!" and they said: "Hey man, no, there is some *tokoloshe* outside." They didn't believe it. Then my brother went to Lesotho where my mother came from, and they explained it to him. They showed me an *indumba* of my grandmother.

Theme: Teleportation Experience

A related event occurred before her apprenticeship, when her ancestors are believed to have teleported her out of her room to the gate of the property. When she tried to enter the house she found the door locked.

Interviewer: Have you had it since that your body vanished?

Paulina: If you are already trained, you can control your ancestors. If you feel that they are coming, you can step outside, or walk around, Heyy (the presence of ancestors).

Theme: Training

The training helps the shaman to achieve more control over the effects of ancestral contact.

Interviewer: Can you use your mind to see things far away?

Paulina: Yes. You know I am a different *isangoma* in a way, and I ask myself why I know about things happen in the future. You see, even Obed can tell you that tomorrow will be like this and this, and in three months time this and this.

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Interviewer: How do you do that?

Paulina: While I'm sitting it just comes.

Theme: Ancestor Contact
With the help of the ancestors the shaman can reveal the future.

Interviewer: Can you do that for a person?

Paulina: Yes, and I don't need the 'bones' for that.

Theme: Divination
At times this shaman does not even need to use divination 'bones'.

Interviewer: How do you get your mind ready for that?

Paulina: I answered it, you know to pay attention and to concentrate, and to believe, that is very important, that a true thing is going to come.

Theme: Divination
By concentrating her mind, she is able to see the future without divination 'bones'.

Interviewer: Did your teacher teach you this?

Paulina: No, my ancestors come and show me.

Theme: Training
Precognition was taught by her ancestors and not by her shamanic teacher.

Interviewer: What do you think makes a powerful or good *isangoma*?

Paulina: Respect, and *amadlozi*. Your ancestors, you must respect them, believe them. You are not curing, no, they are. Even ask God to give you power to do that.

Obed: We believe in one God, God is there.

Paulina: If you want your *isangoma* things to be strong, you must slaughter a goat.

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Theme: Power of the shaman

The ancestors determine the power of the shaman, and the tools of the shaman are strengthened by the slaughtering of a goat. There is a belief in one God.

Interviewer: So I need to arrange a goat?

Paulina: Yes.

Interviewer: So what happens then?

Paulina: In the bible it is there in Christianity, and if you have problems, you get a goat and make a feast and make an ark with the fire. Then you do the burnings of the goat, *mielie meel* (maize flower) and oil. Before I slaughter the goat, I put it here, even in the house. I put on my things, take my *snuff,* and talk to my ancestors with the goat (starts clapping). You tell them what you want, you don't ask. I want this person to be cured, slaughter it, and then you have the blood. I am going to ask my ancestors to help you to become what you want to be. Yes, they are going with their powers to help you.

Theme: Ancestor Contact

The ritual of ancestor contact includes the slaughtering of a goat, the burning of its meat, maize flower and oil. During this ritual the ancestors are asked "to help you to become what you want to be".

When you were in Meadowlands, you know that *muti,* that white stuff, yes, it is also good. You shake it and drink it every night a..d ask your ancestors every night, this and this, and this. You put the foam here and here and here (points to head, elbow and knees).

Interviewer: What is the foam made out of?

Paulina: Different herbs of the *amadlozis.* It is there for the sick and those who want their *amadlozis* to come out.

Interviewer: What herbs do you use?

Paulina: You know, I only know them in Sotho.

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Theme: Induction

Muti is whipped into white foam and is drunk every night, especially as a thwasa, in order to support good ancestral contact.

Interviewer: Some use *imphepho.*

Paulina: No, it is used for bad spirits, for steaming, and for luck. *Imphepho* helps you to concentrate, and makes you listen, you see when I was throwing your 'bones', I lit it for my ancestors.

Theme: Induction and Divination

Imphepho is used against bad spirits and also supports concentration skills during divination.

But I can talk to this *imphepho,* and if my boyfriend is giving me a problem, I take this *imphepho,* boil it, while I'm steaming, I can call him with it. Also, if you have a bad spirit in the house, you light it. It changes to many things. Heyyy. And this one is called sweet mouth. Taste it. (it tastes very sweet) It is to make a man fall in love with a woman, and also if there are problems at home, you give it to someone and they will start to talk nicely.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you think I should know to understand the mind of an *isangoma*?

Paulina: No, your questions are good, they make me think.

Obed: Ya, they make me think about being an *isangoma*, it is good. You know you can talk about the spirit, but you cannot talk about the *muti.*

Interviewer: So the secrets you have and cannot share with me are the *mutis* but not the spirits?

Obed: Ya.

Paulina: Yes, the spirit, we can share. *Muti* is important for the cure. Like I can teach you the 'bones', you won't take the 'bones' away from me, you can't take my ancestors away from me, that is why we can talk about it and share the knowledge.

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Theme: Relationship amongst shamans

Divination and information about ancestors can be shared, yet information about medicinal herbs or muti is not shared with others.

Interviewer: Tell me about the *umbilini?*

Paulina: We call it the conscience You know it is something that guides you. When you going to town and you get a feeling, you are going to have problems, it will tell ou. So you keep quiet, and your spirit will tell you.

nterviewer: And the *umbilini* is that?

ed: It is your conscience.

Paulina: You feel it in the stomach, gut, your stomach becomes hot.

Interviewer: Does it stay there?

Paulina: Yes, you can shake and become tired.

Interviewer: OK, what does *umbilini* mean?

Obed: It means intestines.

Interviewer: When you make that sound: Heyii, what happens?

Paulina: Your stomach is full of air, then the air goes up and you make the noise. You have goose bumps, and then you must become quiet because the ancestors will speak to you. You get a message, you cannot walk, you must be quiet, and after that you stretch because your body was relaxed.

Theme: Umbilini

Umbilini means intestines, and is understood to be a feeling of conscience. This feeling is expressed as a sound Heyyii, and is experienced as a heat in the stomach, as goosebumps all over the body, and at the same time as the body is shaking. In order to listen to the message of the ancestors, the body must then remain quiet.

Paulina: You know, when Obed first saw my ancestors he was shocked. My ancestor is an old woman from deep hole. When she comes out she looks like a snake. When she comes I won't stand up, but I lie down and talk. I relax. They can come right

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now, they don't ask for permission, but if they don't want to come and you are dancing and singing, they don't want to come. But you see, you know they are coming, and if you don't want other people to see you just go out. You know, sometimes they are very clever because they come when others are there so that you can hear the stories.

Theme: Ancestor Contact
Ancestors emerge without permission and usually appear when others are present to hear their message.

Interviewer: Well, thank you Paulina, and thank you Obed.
END OF INTERVIEW

2. Themes from an Interview:

Shaman: Paulina Mokoeana (4)

Age: 35 years

In Practice: 17 years

Training: Natal, 2 years

Theme: Calling

1) This shaman became very ill. Doctors and *izangoma* were unable to heal her. (I was very sick. [...] They couldn't help me [...].)

2) During her illness she experienced unusual physical sensations. Something moves in her body, and when it reaches the shoulders she falls down. (It seems that something is moving up and down in my body When it comes here [shoulders], it holds, and sometimes I just fall down.)

3) During this illness, this shaman saw her grandmother or ancestor in her dreams. (Even if I am sleeping, I saw my ancestors, my mother, my granny, they show me the 'bones', and they tell me.)

4) She was a Jehovah's Witness, and she resisted the call of her ancestor, who also showed her divination 'bones'. (I was one of the Watchtower Jehovah's Witnesses, I was attending their church, then they showed me a bible. "Do you think this is going to help you?" I said: "Yes". They said: "Never". They showed me 'bones'.)

5) During her illness, she was very aggressive, and at one point was unconscious for three days. (You know I was sick, I was fighting with everyone. [...], they told me I was dead for three days. [...] Yes, I was sleeping deep, they called the ambulance and they said no after they felt my pulse. They said I was unconscious.)

6) A shaman's diagnosis of her illness was that she had the "powers of the ancestors", which is a sign of calling. (Then my brother give me ten rand you see, that I must go see African doctors, I was mad. [...] Hmm, and the *isangoma* says: "You've got the powers of the ancestors".)

7) Due to the illness she was in hospital. Her ancestor stated that she was not ill, and she was discharged by the doctor. (I was sick, I tell you, I couldn't even walk to the toilet. When I arrived at the hospital, I hit the doctor (laughter). They gave me the injection to sleep. Yes, I did sleep, and in the evening my granny came to me and said: "What's wrong?" I explain, I'm sick. She said: "No, you're not sick." Then I say to her: "Tell that doctor to come and discharge me, I'm not sick." Then, just then the doctor came in, and looked, and said: "Paulina, there is nothing wrong with you." Then I was discharged.)

8) A goat was slaughtered to appease the ancestors now that she had accepted the calling. She sought out her teacher whom she had dreamt of. When she finally arrived in Natal, a goat was slaughtered thereby appeasing the ancestors for she was now in training. (Then they slaughter a goat, praying for the ancestors that they will take care for me, and then they said she can go. You know, in Natal there, the ancestors showed me the way. I saw my teacher sleeping. [...] Then I dreamt my teacher. When I arrived there they slaughtered the goat and prayed for my ancestors, saying: "She is here, don't fight with her."

Theme: Genealogy
1) Her deceased grandmother was an *isangoma*. ([...], and then she said: "I'm your granny. I said: "My granny, houw. She said: "My dear, I haven chosen you, somebody who can take my reign". She was also an *isangoma*.)

Theme: Training
1) During her training, this shaman had to drink specific medicinal herbs or *muti*, and practice finding hidden things with the help of the ancestors. (Every morning and afternoon they make us drink *muti*, and then they, every day in the morning and afternoon, they would hide things for us. We must say where that thing is.)

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2) A feeling of fear emerges after which the ancestors are called upon to solve the task of finding things. This requires concentration and attention. (And you become scared, and the attention comes, you pray and call them [...].)

3) Part of the training includes training the ancestors both to talk through the shaman as well as to find hidden objects. (They teach you, but you think they teach Paulina, no they teach your *amadlozi* [ancestors] how to communicate, how to find things, how to talk, how to think, how to do something.)

4) Precognition was taught by her ancestors and not by her shamanic teacher. (My ancestors come and show me [future events].)

5) The training helps the shaman to achieve more control over the effects of ancestral contact. (If you are already trained you can control your ancestors. If you feel that they are coming, you can step outside, or walk around.)

Theme: Ancestor Contact

1) The ancestor contact is heard, felt and experienced in the body. (You know when the ancestors come, you can hear, you can feel, because something is going to happen 2) Once the contact with the ancestors has been established, the shaman stares in front of her, oblivious to her environment. (I've got this thing, when the ancestors come, and I'm with you, I will change automatically. I will just do like this [stares ahead of her in a blank manner]. Even if you say: Paulina, no, I will not even hear you.)

3) The shaman is unable to remember the content of the ancestor contact, and therefore the shaman requires the presence of others to hear the message of the ancestors. (No [cannot remember content of the ancestor contact]. Somebody, you know how the ancestors are? They don't just come out when you alone, they want somebody to hear what they want.)

4) Ancestors emerge without permission and usually appear when others are present to hear their message. (They can come out right now, they don't ask for permission. [...] You know, sometimes they are very clever because they come when others are there so that you can hear the stories.)

5) During the ancestor contact the shaman concentrates, but after the ancestor contact the shaman feels exhausted. (While you are talking, no, you concentrate, but afterwards you feel tired. Even before that you feel tired and you know that something is coming.)

6) Ancestor contact can be painful, especially shortly before the visions occur, and then mainly in the stomach and liver area. (Then they will say what they want. Now, in here when you with the prophecies you will feel pain [points to he stomach and then to her liver area].)

7) This shaman is also a faith healer, and uses the bible and prayer (Our father [...] then the visions come straight away) to achieve a visionary state, thereby receiving information from the ancestors which she can use (You see, you know, you open it, and I can tell you the problems.)

8) Furthermore, the ancestor contact can occur through two different professions, namely that of the faith healer and the shaman. These different roles are not understood as being in opposition to each other, but rather as complementary. (Like this bible, I'm the only one who touches it because it is blessed by my ancestors.)

9) The ancestors are considered to have immense powers, for besides giving information to the shaman, they are able to physically transport her to another place. (Yes, you know they can take me here and throw me in the yard, and you won't even see those people, but that power it can throw me out.)

10) It is not possible to simply call upon the ancestors, for the mind needs to be "quiet" and the shaman must defocus from herself (You must keep quiet and forget about yourself). There is a sense of an absence of personality. (Ya, and I forget I'm Paulina now).

11) This shaman has visual and auditory contact with her ancestors, and she actively interacts with them. (Yes, yes, I see them [...] like I can speak to them mouth to mouth, and they can reply immediately).

12) A certain change in or absence of mind occurs, or is induced, when *snuff* is taken or *imphepho* is burned. ([...] when I take *snuff* and *imphepho*, I become, my

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mind is not here.)

13) *Muti* is whipped into white foam and is drunk every night, especially as a *thwasa,* in order to support good ancestral contact. ([...], you know that *muti,* that white stuff, yes it is also good. [...] It is there for the sick and those who want their *amadlozis* to come out.)

14) Two forms of ancestor contact exist for this ... in, i.e. she experiences the ancestors as both within and without her. During the amadlozi contact the shaman has no memory of the ancestral contact, whilst during the amakhosi contact, the shaman interacts consciously with the ancestors. The amadlozi contact is described as occurring when the ancestors are within the shaman, i.e. being embodied within the shaman. (When you are in *amadlozi,* you see, you must understand. When you are in *amadlozi,* you don't hear, or even see the anc... , because this ancestor is holding you, the body is moving, you are talking, · · ., you don't feel yourself.)

15) The amakhosi contact is evident during divination when the ancestor contact occurs in the head, and is interactive in nature. Ancestor contact during dreams lies between the amadlozi and amakhosi forms of contact. (So sometimes I going into *amakhosi.* [...] Ah, the ancestors, like I can speak to them mouth to mouth, and they can reply immediately. [...] That is when the spirit is in you, and the *amakhosi* is when the ancestors are out. [...] You know when you throw the 'bones' and I'm using my head then it is *amakhosi.* That is different because you get an answer. I dreams the ancestors are both in and out.)

16) When the ancestor contact has been established, the personality of the shaman is eclipsed by the personality of the ancestor. After the contact the shaman feels exhausted. (Like myself here, I've got an ancestor for a man. When that ancestor comes out, you won't hear Paulina speaking. You will hear a voice of a different somebody. [...] but afterwards you feel tired.)

17) The body is experienced as shaking and at the same time there is a feeling of energy moving firstly up and down the legs, and then up to the shoulders and chest. In the chest the energy is experienced as a ball. The shaman then feels like yawning. (You are shaking, you feel something moving from your legs up and down. Up and down, and when it comes to the shoulders, it starts shaking, ya. The chest you feel you have a ball, and you feel like yawning.)

18) With the help of the ancestors, this shaman can reveal the future. At times this shaman does not even need to use divination, and simply through concentration is able to see the future. ('Yes, and I don't need the 'bones' for that. [...] I answered it, you know to pay attention and to concentrate, and to believe, that is very important, that a true thing is going to come.)

19) The ritual of ancestor contact includes the slaughtering of a goat, the burning of its meat, as well as having available maize flower and oil. During this ritual the ancestors are asked "to help you to become what you want to be". (Then you do the burnings of the goat, *mielie meel* and oil. Before I slaughter the goat, I put it here, even in the house. I put on my things, take my *snuff*, and talk to my ancestors with the goat [starts clapping]. [...] I am going to ask my ancestors to help you to become what you want to be.)

Theme: Induction Techniques

1) *Snuff* is taken and *imphepho* is burned in order to shift the mind. ([...] like myself, when I take *snuff* and *imphepho*, I become, my mind is not here.)

2) The mind needs to be quietened and a defocus from self is achieved in order to allow ancestral contact to occur. (You must keep quiet and forget about yourself).

3) *Imphepho* is used against bad spirits and supports the concentration skills during divination. (*Imphepho* helps you concentrate, and makes you listen, you see when I was throwing your 'bones', I lit it for my ancestors.)

Theme: Dancing

1) The shaman, whilst dancing, takes on the personality of the ancestor that is coming through. The shaman will dance for a long period until the ancestor withdraws from the shaman. (You dance, Paulina dances, but at some stage you can see that it is not Paulina dancing, something is there, that is going on for a long time[...].)

2) According to this shaman, dancing is not an essential part of shamanism in South Africa. It is more a part of the specific culture that a shaman participates in, especially where special movements are involved. ([...] you can become an *isangoma*, but you don't have to dance. It is traditional [...].)

3) During dancing, a burning and dizzy sensation is experienced in the head. The body then begins to shake and the shaman's sense of self retreats. As the shaman lets go of the self, she may fall back physically. An important step is to keep quiet in the beginning. ([...] my head is burning and dizzy, it is not me who is answering now, my ancestors are helping to talk. [...] When you keep quiet and listening to the drum, sometimes the amadlozi will make you shake and you will fall back.) Even in church as a faith healer, this shaman can induces trance through clapping and singing. ([...] my head is burning and dizzy. [...] When you keep quiet and listening to the drum, sometimes the *amadlozi* will make you shake and you fall back.)

Theme: Song

1) Every shaman has a special, ancestrally transferred song. This song in itself is able to induce trance states as well as strong feelings, and becomes a strong motivation for the spirit. Receiving the song from the ancestors is an indication that the training of the shaman is complete. ([...] like myself, I've got a song [...] if they can sing this song, sometimes I just think, sometimes I cry, just tears, for it reminds me of like I am, all them problems I had when I became an *isangoma*.)

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Theme: Divination

1) *Imphepho* is burned for the ancestors as well as to help the shaman's concentration abilities during divination. (*Imphepho* helps you to concentrate, and makes you listen, you see when I was throwing your 'bones', I lit it for my ancestors).

2) Visions occur when this shaman, as a faith healer, uses the bible and prayer as divinatory tools. (Sometimes when I pray and take the bible and as I say: Our father [...] then the visions come straight away.)

3) At times this shaman does not even need to use divination 'bones'. (Yes, and I don't need the 'bones' for that.)

4) By concentrating her mind, she is able to see the future without divination 'bones'. (I answered it, you know to pay attention and to concentrate, and to believe, that is very important, that a true thing is going to come.)

Theme: Dreaming

1) This shaman has "straight dreams", meaning that the manifest content of the dream is predictive of future events. (Very important, like myself, I dream a straight dream. [...] Sometimes I can, I can see that tomorrow morning a lady with this and this illness will come tomorrow and it will happen like that exactly.)

2) This shaman will sometimes dream of a patient with a particular illness arriving the next day. This patient would then appear the next day, exactly as she had dreamt. (I can see that tomorrow morning a lady with this and this illness will come tomorrow and it will happen like that exactly.)

3) Ancestors make contact during dreams. It therefore important for the shaman to remember her dreams. Remembering dreams is part of the training to be a shaman. (Yes, but there I won't forget, because I'm trained not to forget.)

4) The shaman acknowledged that she was aware of being conscious in a dream, she is therefore able to be lucid in her dreams. She uses the ancestor contact in dreams for pre-cognition. (You know I was just relaxing, when I look at the pillow, I started yawning, my body shaking, I know it is the *amadlozi*. When I look at the other side, I see a snake, a head of a snake. I knew what was happening, but I was not ready for

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that, and I ran out [laughs].)

Theme: OBE

1) The shaman responded positively to the description of classical signs of OBEs, and related it to her underwater experience. (You know yesterday I cried, I remembered I saw myself sleeping in the morning, and then I was wet. My whole family couldn't understand, it was a miracle. I saw myself in an ocean, inside an ocean. I have been inside the ocean, moving. My surname is Mokoaena and it means crocodile. I was holding the tail of the crocodile, moving in the water, and the water was blue, and on that day, my sister was telling the people who came to see me, no they must go because I'm sick, the ancestors you know, they didn't know what happened.)

Theme: Underwater Experience

1) This shaman experienced an event underwater during her training. Her teacher suggested that she have this experience given that she was so ill. (You know I was really sick, and she said I must go underwater, and I was scared. She said: No, you mustn't be scared, talk to your ancestors.)

2) She was placed next to the river and then felt herself being transported underwater where she made contact with her deceased grandmother. (You know the Umkumasi river in Nelspruit, yeah, it was where I was put, there are falls, I was sitting there. They wanted me to the powers of my body, wanted me to sit there. I went there, you know it was horrible, when I look at the Umkumasi river, uuh. But I prayed. I was singing, singing, but I didn't know what happened. I heard they said afterwards, you know your back was like a crocodile and then I was not there. Yes there I met my granny. We were talking, not inside the sea, but inside the sea [...] she give me something to drink, water, then this African pots were there.)

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3) Her ancestor supported her in that she was continuing the family tradition of becoming a shaman. (She said: My dear, I have chosen you somebody who can take my reign. She was also an *isangoma*. She said I was the best.)

4) When she returned home she was told that she had vanished, but on her return she was not wet. (When I came back I wasn't even wet.)

5) The consequence of this experience was that she was very ill for one week, but her teacher felt confident of the healing properties of this event. (Yes, [...] the whole week I was sick, I was sleeping, and my teacher said I was going to be all right.)

6) A related event occurred before her apprenticeship, when her ancestors are believed to have teleported her out of her room to the gate of the property. When she tried to enter the house she found the door locked (Yes, before I went to *thwasa*. When I was sleeping, then I saw myself at the gate. I was myself at the gate and the door was locked, I shouted: Hey, man let me in, and they said: Hei, man, no there is a *thokoloshe* outside. They didn't believe it.)

Theme: Totem animal

1) This shaman's surname is Mokoaena and it means crocodile. She stated that this animal becomes her protector during visions and dreams. (My surname is Mokoaena and it means crocodile. I was holding the tail of a crocodile, moving in the water, and the water was blue [...].)

Theme: Relationship amongst shamans

1) Jealousy is a major issue amongst *isangoma*, according to this shaman. This is understood as being based on both a fear of loosing status as well as of losing patients to a better shaman. (It is like this, as I told you I cured someone, a lady that has got AIDS, and remember I told you she got better. Tshu, if I go to another *isangoma*, and ask how we can mix something to cure, he won't like it, because he wants the person to come to her, it is not like the doctors at Baragwanath [hospital].)

2) Divination and information about ancestors can be shared, yet information about

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medicinal herbs or *muti* is not shared with others. (Yes, the spirits we can share. *Muti* is important for cure. Like I can teach you the 'bones', you won't take away the 'bones' from me, you can't take my ancestors away from me, that is why we can talk about it and share knowledge.)

Theme: Power of the shaman

1) The ancestors determine the power of the shaman, and the tools of the shaman are strengthened by the slaughtering of a goat. There is a belief in one God. (If you want your *isangoma* things to be strong, you must slaughter a goat. [...] We believe in one God. God is there.)

2) It is necessary to respect the ancestors for it is not the shaman who heals, but rather the ancestors and God. The shaman transmits the healing powers of the ancestors and God. (Your ancestors, you must respect them, believe them. You are not curing, no they are. Even ask God to give you power to do that.)

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE RESULTS OF THE DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter will highlight both the dominance and marginality of certain themes in the thematic network found in the field texts. The themes from all the interviews have been organised into main themes in this results chapter. The main themes will be presented in terms of major and minor subthemes. For example, the theme of the 'underwater experience' emerged in two interviews (4, 10). Given that the 'underwater experience' clearly occurs during the training period, it has been considered as a subtheme of the training theme. The themes of the interviews have been organised as presented in the chapter on the strategies of inquiries, but additional themes which emerged from the data have been included. In this results section the numbers in brackets reflect the numbers of the interviews in which particular themes appeared. The main themes that emerged through the consolidation of the themes from all the interviews are the following:

1. Theme: Calling
1) The calling for the South African shaman means that the shaman was chosen by the ancestors to practice her/his profession (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10). According to one shaman (1), the calling also reflects a gift for healing. The calling to become a shaman manifests in two forms:

i) The calling of the shaman is reflected in shamanic tendencies since childhood such as dreaming about divination 'bones', playing games that resemble divination (5, 9), or dreaming about patients who are going to be visiting the child's parents who are healers (9). This form of calling therefore manifests in the shaman having a long history of shamanic tendencies.

ii) The second form of calling is more common and manifests as a specific, critical phase in the shaman's life. This critical phase may be marked by work and

relationship difficulties (1, 3), sexual traumas (6) or an initiation illness called *ukuthwasa* (2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10).

2) The initiation illness or *ukuthwasa* is characterised by a chronic condition that cannot be cured by either allopathic, naturopathic or shamanic means (2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10). Other shamans, when divining the cause or reason for the illness, suggest that the only path of healing is to become a shaman (2, 3, 4, 5, 9). This suggestion is often resisted, until the continual pain of the illness leads to an acceptance (4, 9). Through the apprenticeship to become a shaman, the illness is healed (2, 4, 9).

3) Another important element in the calling are recurring dreams, especially about goats (1, 5), white chickens, as well as red and white beads (9), these all being signs of the South African shaman. Dreams about ancestors are particularly significant in the calling period (1, 3, 4, 9, 10), as well as dreams that lead the shaman to find her/his shamanic teacher (2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10).

2. Theme: Genealogy

1) The genealogy of the shaman is often pertinent to the choice of ancestors. All shamans interviewed bar one had some past family member who was either a herbal healer (2, 3, 8, 9) or a shaman (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10).

2) The death of a shaman may mean that the deceased shaman becomes the ancestor for another family member in the next generation, who will be called upon to become a shaman (4, 10).

3) It is possible to have ancestors from outside the family line, but this is believed to be the result of a past connection with the shaman. An example given by a shaman was of the case where a shaman from a foreign country dies at the homestead of a previous generation. The deceased shaman is therefore connected to the family, and as an ancestor calls forth a member of the family (4).

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3. Theme: Training

1) The training of the apprentice or *thwasa* occurs mostly with the support of the shamanic teacher as well as the input of the ancestors while dreaming. (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10). Different *thwasas* have different strengths and weaknesses. Some are good at dancing while others are better at curing illnesses (10).

2) The teaching of the ancestors during dreams revolves mainly around herbal medicine, including the location of herbs in the fields, the preparation of the herbs into medicines, as well as the application of these herbs to specific illnesses or problems (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10).

3) A typical training programme was described in full by one shaman (9). The apprentice is woken up between twelve midnight and two a.m. by her/his teacher or by the ancestors. The first task for the *thwasa* on awakening is to *phalaza* or vomit (1, 2, 4), after which the dreams of the previous night are recalled by the apprentice and in turn interpreted by the teacher (2, 9). After the dream interpretation, the apprentice dances between three and five a.m. following which the house is cleaned prior to going to the fields in search of herbs, especially those that had been dreamt about (2, 4, 8, 9). After the herbs have been gathered, they are washed, dried, ground to powder, and stored in labelled bottles. Divination is then taught (9).

Another shaman (5) described how "strict" her teacher was during divination lessons. The teacher would allow her novices to interpret the 'bones' for patients. If, however, she was not satisfied with the reading, she would give the patient the correct reading and after the patient had left, would hit her novices and withhold food from them as punishment.

Sometimes animals would be slaughtered, cut up, and the skins treated and hung up to dry. As the sun goes down, the apprentices dance again. Prayers to the ancestors would take place at 10 a.m., 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. (9). Another shaman (8) prayed at

noon, 3 p.m., 7 p.m. and 3 a.m. The 7 p.m. prayers would mark the end of a long day for the novice, who besides learning about how to become a shaman, is also involved in the household chores (9).

4) Training has been defined by one s^{...} man as actually being a training of the ancestors to communicate appropriately as well as learn to find things (2, 4, 5). The training facilitates some form of control over the ancestors (1, 2, 3, 4, 9) which in turn enhances the ability to enter trance states in a more controlled fashion (1, 2, 3).

5) The shaman's training is never considered to be complete, as the learning process continues after graduation (5).

6) During the training certain practices and taboos are implemented in order to purify the *thwasa* and thereby transform her/him into a new and pure vessel for the ancestors. The purification process enhances contact with the ancestors and often functions as an inductive technique (1, 5, 7, 8, 9) (see inductive techniques). An example is the purification practice called *phalaza* in which the apprentice vomits after drinking water containing a specific herbal mixture (5). Certain herbal mixtures or *mutis* are used to purify the *thwasa* and thereby support ancestor contact during training (1, 2, 5, 7).

7) The graduation of the *thwasa* is a celebration which includes feasting and dancing and lasts over 2 days. Before the *thwasa* is accepted as a fully fledged shaman s/he has to complete a central test in front of all present. This test involves finding hidden objects with the help of the ancestors (3). The test is experienced as fearful, and a certain degree of performance anxiety exists (2, 5). The *thwasa* in the trance state is often unaware of how s/he found the hidden objects (1, 5).

Finding the hidden object involves the *thwasa* in a trance state stating what the object is and where it is hidden. If the answer is incorrect, the *thwasa* has to once

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again make contact with the ancestors. Only once the shamanic teacher or the person who has hidden the object confirms the accuracy of the *thwasa's* answers, may the *thwasa* actually retrieve the object (2). Example of hidden objects are coins or shamanic beads. In two cases (2, 5) three objects were hidden, namely a goat's gallbladder, red and white beads, as well as a sheepskin vest. Both these shamans (2, 5) stated that they had never known of a graduation ceremony in which a *thwasa* did not find the hidden objects. In one case (5), a cat had eaten the hidden gallbladder of a goat. The *thwasa*, in a trance state, tore the living cat apart in order to retrieve the gallbladder from the cat's stomach.

8) While the song is often a simple refrain (8), at the end of the training the ancestors give the *thwasa* a special song. It assists the shaman to induce trance states. It is a special gift, and gives power to the *thwasa* (1, 2, 4, 5, 8), but it was also noted that not every *thwasa* receives a song (2).

9) During the training the ancestors give the *thwasa* her/his shamanic name (2, 3, 4, 10).

10) During the training a shaman may be instructed by the ancestors to participate in a vision quest in which the *thwasa* must go to the mountains or into a cave so that s/he can pray and dream about her/his ancestors. One shaman (8) stated how her ancestors had instructed her to go to a certain cave and had told her to exit the cave through another opening, an exit that no one knew about except a resident faith healer. Typically, *thwasas* on a vision quest will disappear, without food, often not eating or washing. Solitude is sought in order to pray and dream about the ancestors. After the vision quest the *thwasa* returns home (2, 8, 10).

11) Underwater experiences or being with the "snake in the river" (9) are an important part of the training of some shamans (4, 10). Other shamans did not have

an underwater experience, but one shaman (9) spoke of another water experience of standing under a icy cold waterfall that numbed her body and switched her mind "off", thereby causing visions to occur (9). Of significance is that ancestors are honoured at rivers, for they are considered to live under the river (9, 10).

One sh..man (10) stated that the underwater people, *the nzunzu* in Tsonga, are fish from the hips down. These water people take the shaman to a safe underwater place where teaching occurs. This shaman received his 'bones' f~. divination from a 'water person'. He commented that some shamans stay underwater for up to a year. His experience was that of jumping into the water and staying there for "only" two days. He went into an underwater cave in which there was no water and which was filled with what seemed like an indoor light. In this cave a woman, whose body was shaped like a fish form from her hips down, taught him to divine and gave him his 'bones'. He added a 1991 coin as well as certain bones around which he wrapped copper wire in order to distinguish the male from female 'bones'. While in this cave, he was told that he would be a shaman for the rest of his life. After two days his shamanic teacher came and picked him up because he had been underwater for too long. A certain drum rhythm, the *'handawu* rhythm is used to call the shaman back. This shaman has not been underwater again (10).

Another shaman (4) also had an underwater experience during her training. She was told by her shamanic teacher that her illness would be healed if she would undergo this experience. She went to the Umkumasi river, danced and then jumped into the water She found herself underwater where her deceased grandmother awaited her and told her that she was continuing a family tradition of shamans. She was told by others at the ceremony that she had vanished whilst dancing. However, when she returned she was not even wet. The after-effects were that she became ill for a week, but her shamanic teacher was confident of the healing effects of this underwater experience (4).

This same shaman (4) stated that before her apprenticeship began and while suffering from the *ukuthwasa*, she was teleported during the night from her room to the outside of her house. Family members thought she was a *tokoloshe* outside, as they could not explain how she could have been out of the house if all the doors were locked. This event was considered to be a signal for her to become a shaman. She believes the ancestors had teleported her to the outside gate (4).

4. Theme: Induction Techniques

1) During training many practices and taboos are implemented in order to purify the body and mind of the *thwasa* and thereby creating a clean and pure vessel for the ancestors (1, 7, 8, 9). The main forms of purification are to *phalaza*, have enemas, and follow certain food taboos, as well as remaining celibate (1, 5, 8, 9).

i) The *thwasa phalazas* in order to cleanse her/himself internally. A certain herbal mixture or *muti* is added to approximately one litre of water, of which the *thwasa* swallows as much as possible. When her/his stomach is full, the mixture is vomited out (5). To *phalaza* means to open up the body and the lungs in order to enhance ancestor contact, dreaming, as well as the skills of divination (8).

ii) Enemas are likewise used to clean out the *thwasa* internally (9).

iii) Food taboos consist of not partaking of any alcoholic substances, eggs, beans, canned food or any milk products, such as milk, cheeses, yoghurt, etc. for the period of the training (5, 9). The reason given for these particular food taboos is that the taboos help to inhibit sexual desires (1, 9).

iv) In order to remain pure the *thwasa* may not have any sexual intercourse during her/his training (1, 9).

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v) Transgressions of any of the above mentioned purification practices can be discovered by the teacher's psychic ability, through confession, when the ancestors tell the teacher during a trance state, or when a *thwasa* falls during dancing (9).

2) An *isanusi* method of trance induction is to have the *thwasa* covered up in blankets, with her/his ears blocked. After two hours in this condition, OBEs occur (7). Firewalking three times in a row was part of a graduation ceremony for another *isanusi* (6).

3) In order for the *izangoma* to induce ancestor contact or trance states, the body is required to be held still, relaxed and quiet. (1, 2, 4, 8). The shaman must take her/his time, sit straight and still, close the eyes and seek inner silence. This both opens up the shaman to experience visions, as well as supports divinatory skills (8). To defocus from the personality brings about a certain quietude of mind (4). The activity of beading also supports such a sense of quietude (1).

4) The induction of inner silence was associated with the ability to "let go" in order to make contact with the ancestors. It occurs during states of relaxation and quietude, while dancing, shaking the body and screaming, as well as through mind altering substances (1, 2).

5) Prayers and rituals are a means of inducing a focused state of mind. These are learnt during the training and are practised once qualified as a shaman. Prayers to the ancestors take place prior to divination, in front of the *indumba* or shrine, where the mind is quietened in preparation for the ancestor contact (2, 3, 10).

i) The *indumba* is a shrine dedicated to the ancestors and is situated in a corner or against a wall of a room facing east. The walls are covered with *isangoma* cloths. At the time prayer incense is burned and then the shaman, on his knees and while clapping with her/his hands, prays to the ancestors (3, 4).

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ii) The *gandelo* is a dead tree trunk that becomes a sacred site outside of the house where the shaman prays to her/his ancestors (10).

iii) A further ritual is the slaughtering of a goat. Its meat is then burnt and cooked with maize flower and oil. During this ritual the ancestors are asked "to help you become what you want to be" (4).

Another ritual at the *indumba* is to slaughter two white chickens. The shaman then kneels alone, places an *isangoma* cloth over her/his head, puts water in the mouth and spits it out, after which the ancestors are called by their surname whilst clapping rhythmically with the hands and saying "*thokhosa*" (2, 5, 10).

6) The element of time in the inductive process is essential (6). The best times given for ancestor contact were noon, three p.m., seven p.m. and three a.m., but generally, the best time to induce ancestor contact is in the early hours of the morning (2, 4, 5, 9, 10).

7) The "uniform" (3) or special dress code of the *thwasa* differs from culture to culture.

8) The induction of ancestor contact by means of mind altering substances is common for South African shamans. The substances are used to support and induce divinatory skills, dream contact with ancestors, as well as the ancestor contact while dancing (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10).

i) *Snuff* in its powder form is used symbolically to represent the ancestors. It is placed on the ground at the *indumba*, next to the bed to enhance dreaming, as well as on the mat for divination (3, 5). *Snuff* is also sniffed which induces an altered state of mind (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10).

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ii) The herb *imphepho* is burned to attract the ancestors, and it is claimed that this herb has mind altering properties (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9). Another shaman claimed that *imphepho* is actually used to exit a trance rather than to induce one (6).

iii) Certain *mutis* or herbal mixtures may be taken in liquid form or else the shaman is steamed in them in . der to enhance ancestor contact or induce trance states (3, 4, 5).

iv) A *muti* called the "opener", the dried Eastern Cape aloe leaf, as well as certain mushroom from pine trees, all have hallucinogenic effects (6).

9) Drumming is an essential inductive technique in South African shamanism. The drumming induces feelings "in the head" like a "knocking", after which the mind enters an altered state (2, 4, 5, 8, 9). Drumming makes the ancestors "come out" (3). One shaman stated that two main rhythms exist, namely the *bhandawu* rhythm, which is used to honour the ancestors at the rivers, and the *gida* beat, which is used for dancing (10).

10) Dancing is another major inductive technique used for ancestor contact. However, while dancing the shaman is unable to remember the contact with, or the message from the ancestors (1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10). Dancing "wakes up" the ancestors (7).

i) According to two shamans (2, 4), dancing is not an essential inductive technique for all shamans, but is rather an aspect of the shaman's culture. Dancing is taught by copying or modelling other dancing shamans (2).

ii) Dancing is understood to improve the shaman's health, to increase the ability to withstand pain, as well as giving her/him added strength (1, 2, 4, 5, 8).

iii) While dancing, the personality of the ancestor emerges, and the shaman will dance fo· a lengthy period of time until the ancestor withdraws (4).

iv) The feelings and states of mind experienced while dancing were described as a certain lightness, euphoria, and a knowingness (1, 4, 5, 8). While dancing the mind is experienced as a burning or dizzy sensation within the head. At the same time the body begins to shake and the sense of self of the shaman begins to retreat (4, 5, 8). Even in church as a faith healer clapping and singing can induce a similar feeling (4).

v) In order to induce the *umbilini*, it is important to dance in a circular manner, and not in a straight manner (6).

11) One shaman (6) described a technique in which the shaman stands in a circle of bowls which hold burning hallucinogenic herbs. The shaman stretches out her/his arms, gently swaying like a tree. After two hours, the shaman enters into a trance state.

12) A further inductive technique is a breathing exercise taught by the *isanusi*. The exercise is one of relatively fast breathing, and with each breath first one and then the other nostril is closed. The closing of one and then the other nostril is related to the male ancestor and the left hemisphere of the brain as well as the female ancestor and the right hemisphere of the brain respectively. This exercise needs to be continued until a certain light-headedness is achieved. Combined with the breathing exercise is a visualisation exercise in which a positive image of love is breathed in while negative images of war, hunger and desolation are breathed out. Each breath becomes a wish. This exercise belongs to the repertoire of the *isanusi* and not the normal *isangoma*, but according to this shaman (6), it is also found in Swaziland, Mozambique and Botswana.

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5. Theme: Ancestor Contact or Trance States

1) There are four types of seers, each making contact with their ancestors using a different sensory modality. There are those shamans that only hear voices, those that smell odours, such as the blood of catastrophes, illnesses or they may even "smell out witches". There are those that make contact through their sense of feel, and finally there are those who have visions (6).

2) Most shamans do not have any memory while in a trance state in which s/he embodies the ancestor. While dancing, or even after the dance, the ancestor communicates a message directly to the present community which is not remembered by the shaman (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10). The lack of memory is explained by the fact that the ancestors, and not the shaman, are in control (1, 3, 4). However, the ancestors can allow memory to re-surface (1). One shaman remembers only half of his training, the initial part having been lost from memory (1). Others present recognise that the shaman is entering a trance state because the shaman no longer responds to the environment (1, 4), and s/he begins to breathe in a certain way, says: "Heyeii", and begins to take on the personality of the ancestor (4).

3) The experience of ancestor contact is one of the ancestors being in control during the contact (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10). The ancestors are experienced as "pushing" themselves into the shaman (3). The ancestors are understood as having control over the beginning and end of the trance state (1). The training has been depicted as being centrally to do with the *thwasa* gaining over time more and more control of the ancestor contact over time. Thus the shaman learns to regain some control and is then able to stop a trance through distraction or by asking the ancestors to withdraw. This prevents the unfolding of the trance state at inappropriate times. Gaining control in this way is not considered to be an easy task (3, 4, 9, 10).

4) Fear can be experienced strongly at the beginning of the ancestor contact, but this subsides with training and the use of *muti*. The experience of the ancestor contact

is described as a feeling of being "asleep or dizzy", "half-dizzy" or "dazed" (1, 2, 6, 7, 9). Other experiences are of the mind changing, of becoming "semi-conscious" with a burning sensation in the chest, and of energy running up and down the legs into the chest (3, 4), of mood changes (3), a sense of a defocusing of self (4), or of the brains "shaking" (8), and the mind being "off" (10).

5) Most shamans hear the ancestors in their head during divination or whilst dancing, and see them only in dreams (1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10) or in visions (4, 6, 7, 8, 10). At the beginning of the shamanic training, the voice of the ancestor can sound like that of a baby's voice. Over time the voice grows stronger (3). Sometimes the presence of the ancestors is "felt" rather than heard (1, 9). Others have visions besides hearing voices, as well as OBEs (4, 6, 7, 8).

6) At times, the ancestors are experienced as supporting the shaman's healing powers. Part of this experience is the feeling of holding the patient's pain in the shaman's body. Being in a trance can thus be painful, and result in a sympathetic stomach and head ache (1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10).

7) The *umbilini* experience occurs during a trance state or while in contact with the ancestors.

i) It is induced by a circular dance, and not a straight line dance (6). It can also be induced by the technique in which the shaman is wrapped up in blankets, with her/his ears blocked and having to lie still for more than two hours (7). The *umbilini* can be also elicited accidentally by a sudden trauma (6). Another inductive technique practised by the Mpondo is to tighten the muscle between the buttocks while dancing at the same time as shaking the body strongly in order to make "this spark" grow into a force that rises up to the head (6).

ii) One shaman learnt about the *umbilini* experience as an *isanusi*. He was aware of similar experiences amongst the San of the Kalahari, the Ovahimba of Namibia, the Nawati of Angola, and the Mpondo in South Africa. The source of the *umbilini* is that of "a sacred snake" that has been brought to humans from the inhabitants of other star systems. The San call it *!Num!*, a word that according to this shaman means "star being". In Zulu, Sotho, amongst the San, everywhere according to this shaman, *!Num!* refers to the "star force" being upward (6).

iii) The *umbilini* experience is described as a heat in the chest area (4, 5, 9) and is understood as a wind of the spirit or "the wind of the ancestors" present in the body that must emerge in the scream "Heyeii", otherwise the shaman will become ill (9). The experience is one of the feet dancing by themselves while the head is absent, and the body shakes as if it were in the throws of "a holy madness" (6). The *umbilini* causes strong emotions, the body shakes, the hairs of the body stand on end, the body perspires strongly, and the whole body itches (9). The *umbilini* is described as "a fire" and "a force" (6) which builds up during the day through the contact of the feet with the earth or sand (6, 8), and in the evening it collects at the bottom of the spine. Dancing and drumming induce this energy to rise "like a coil" or "like a hot snake" up the spine (6). The energy is described as moving up and down the legs (4, 8), up to the shoulders, and in three shamans it was described as entering the chest or thymus in the form of a hot ball (4, 5, 9). In three other shamans the energy rises right up to the head (6, 7, 8).

iv) The progression of the *umbilini* relates to certain energy points in the body, namely the genitals, womb, solar plexus, heart, throat and head, in consecutive order (7, 8). For women, it starts in the womb, whilst for men it starts at the testicles (7, 8). When the *umbilini* reaches the head, a dizziness is experienced (7). Upon the energy reaching the head, the shaman experiences a darkness, a separation from the body similar to an alcohol intoxication, and similar to a feeling of being dizzy. There is a sense of breaking through a barrier, sometimes three barriers. The shaman

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then finds her/himself in a dark tunnel in which a light appears. The shaman approaches the light and merges with it. At this point the shaman enters a "strange place" in which all senses of the body remain active, such as smelling wet hair and hearing animals talking (6). In this "land of the spirit animals", the shaman communicates with animals and is able to achieve a sense of knowingness to the extent of being able to invent apparatuses (6). In this place, either a bird will gaze at the shaman or the shaman becomes a flying bird that transports her/him across the land, and with the eyes of the bird, the shaman can see the illness as lights in the patient's body, as well as view the process of future events unfolding below (6, 7).

v) The after-effects of this *umbilini* experience is that the body is experienced as cold, including the feet and arms, while the centre of the head feels hot causing severe headaches or terrible nausea (6). After such trances some shamans may experience a certain degree of disorientation, of being off balance, of feeling exceptionally exhausted, and of needing a lengthy period of time to adjust (1, 4 5, 9).

8) One shaman (6) stated that the aim in a particular Zulu meditation is to see a star in your eyes when you awaken in the morning and to then concentrate on it. The person must then imagine a heavenly body, such as the sun or moon and merge with the image, at the same time imagining being surrounded by the sun in an ocean of light. Healing can occur if the warmth of the sun is felt. This can also be achieved by imagining being a bird in flight or a fish in a river (6).

6. Theme: The Meaning of Ancestor Contact
The relationship between the shaman and the ancestors is the most central issue in shamanic practices in South Africa, and therefore the communication with the ancestors is extremely important (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10). Ancestor contact is expressed in the following ways:

1) The ancestors are experienced 'within' and 'without' the shaman. During the amadlozi contact, the shaman has no ontrol over her/his body, the body shakes and the voice changes according .o the personality of the ancestor, and afterwards the shaman feels exhausted. The ancestors ar ' 'within' the shaman in that they are embodied in the shaman. Energy moves up and down the legs, i.e., the *umbilini* is activated. During the amakhosi contact on the other hand, the ancestoi contact is experienced as 'without' in that the shaman hears the ancestors' voices in her/his head, and s/he can interact with the ancestors. In dreams, the ancestors are both 'within' and 'without' in that they are in the mind of the shaman, but the shaman can interact with them (4).

2) The contact with the ancestors provides the shaman with warnings about future events. This usually occurs by means ɤf divination (1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10). At times, some shamans do nᴜ even require the tools of divination (4, 5), and at other times some shamans receive the warnings via visions (4, 6, 7, 8). The shaman benefits from the ancestor contact, in that it creates positive changes in the shaman's life, and the ancestors are generally understood as being protective and supportive (2, 4, 5, 8).

3) Ancestors are believed to have immense powers and are seen as being able to physically transport the shaman to another place (4, 10).

4) The shaman mainly interacts with the ancestors in order to heal patients. Ancestors may answer health issues through the medium of divination, dreams, or whilst being embodied in the shaman (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10). The ancestors are understood as supporting the healing powers of the shaman, the shaman's body often reflecting the patient's pain. The location of the sympathetic pain is quite specific, such as a headache on one side of the head or a stomach ache. (2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10). A specific pain can also signify to a shaman that a patient is waiting for her/him at home (2, 4, 5). At other times, a shaman might be woken up in the middle of the

night and be directed, while in a trance state, to a specific house to heal a person. The ancestor tells the shaman what herbs and what healing procedure to use (8). The patient is expected to remain silent upon seeing the shaman, for the shaman diagnoses the illness by feeling the pain in her/his own body (2). The patient is "scanned" in order to feel the sympathetic pain (1).

5) With the support of the ancestors, the shaman must be able to diagnose the presence of witches. This is often done through the medium of divination. The shaman must also effectively deal with the co.   juences of witchcraft, which is understood by this shaman to be mainly the result of envy and jealousy (2).

7. Theme: Dreaming
Dreams are exceptionally important for South African shamans, as they are another significant form of ancestor contact:

1) The induction of dreams is believed to be supported by *muti* (2, 5, 9), by the act of *phalaza* (5, 9), as well as by the taking of *snuff* which is believed to help the shaman remember her/his dreams (2, 5, 9).

2) During the training, the *thwasa* is expected to sleep on the floor because the noises made by the bed are seen to interfere with the dream process (2, 8). While in training, dream interpretation is a central practice, and the messages of the dream are heeded, be they the collection of specific herbs or the slaughtering of a white chicken (2, 8, 9). Furthermore, the *thwasa* is expected to become lucid in the dream state so that s/he can interact with the ancestors, ask questions, clarify instructions and establish the identity of the ancestor (2, 5).

3) Serial dreams, as well as those dreams that occur in colour are considered to be especially significant (2, 6). *Snuff* is used to continue serial dreams, as well as to become more lucid in dreams (2, 4). Ancestors can also be contacted whilst in a

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relaxed hypnogogic state (8, 10). The best time to have significant dreams is in the early hours of the morning (2, 5, 10).

4) Lucid dream states were reported by many of the South African shamans interviewed (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10). Dreams about future events are considered to be significant (2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10). These are "straight dreams", in which the manifest content is predictive of the future (4) or the dream may be about the patients who will be coming to see the shaman the next day (2, 4, 5).

5) Electro-magnetic pollution of the urban environment was considered by one shaman to be a disturbing quality in the dream process. Dreams that occurred in nature or in rural settings are seen to have more validity (6).

6) Shamans have totem animals connected to their names, such as the leopard or crocodile, and if these totem animals appear in dreams, such dreams then gain in significance (4, 9).

8. Theme: Other World

The "land of the spirit animals" can be induced by mind altering substances, but this may lead the shaman to enter a "false land" instead of the true one. Trance states are a way of entering this land, possibly also dreams (6). In this land, the shaman travels at the speed of thought (6, 7), and there is a strong sense of well-being and completeness, a sense of oneness with life. It is a land where fairy tales come true. It is also a land of knowingness, in which this shaman has invented an instrument made out of crystals that can light up an empty battery torch (6).

9. Theme: OBEs

Some South African shamans do have OBEs, but they are not specifically trained for them (1, 3, 6, 7, 8). Other shamans denied having classical OBEs when specifically questioned and often related the question to dreaming about other

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places, underwater experiences, viewing future events in dreams, and possibly bilocation (2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10).

10. Theme: Divination

1) Divinatory skills are induced by purifying the shaman. The shaman *phalazas*, which opens up her/his chest, helping the shaman to divine (2). *Snuff* is used to alter the mind and support divinatory skills, and is placed on the mat to signify the presence of the ancestors (2, 5). *Imphepho* is burned in order to focus the mind during divination (2, 4), and a prayer to the ancestors asking for support is uttered before the 'bones' are thrown (1, 3, 10).

2) The training in divination is provided by the shamanic teacher, who explains the meaning of the 'bones', as well as the patterns in which they fall (3, 5, 8). One shaman had a strict teacher who would allow the *thwasas* to divine for her patients, but if she was not satisfied with the reading, she would give the correct reading, and after the patient had left would beat the novices and withhold food from them (5).

3) The shaman sometimes enter such a deep trance state during divination that s/he forgets how the 'bones' were interpreted (1). During divination the shaman hears the voices of the ancestors (2, 3, 4, 5, 10). The ancestors are powerfully experienced during the ritual of "*savuma*", i.e. when a patient agrees with the reading (2). The shaman focuses her/his mind, and needs to concentrate (2), and consequently a certain state of relaxation and silence of mind is beneficial for the divinatory process (5, 8, 9). The shaman goes into a "semi-trance" when divining (3).

4) Another divinatory tool is the bible if the shaman is also a faith healer in that, with the guidance of the ancestors, meaningful phrases from the bible are picked out and applied to the patient's situation (3, 4). Pre-cognitive trances and visions are often pre-empted by minor signal events that are shown to the shaman in a vision. For example, one shaman saw a vision, and then in another signal vision she saw a

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man screaming and swallowing mud underground. Two days later in fact a mining disaster in Gauteng did occur in which miners drowned in mud. Thus this was a signal event that validated the major vision of the future (6). Such vision trances cannot be taught, but the shaman can be supported (6).

11. Theme: The Power of the Shaman

1) A powerful and good shaman is defined by the power of the ancestors and of God, by a strong belief in the ancestors, as well as by the effort the shaman puts into her/his work (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9). The power of the shaman is revealed during divination (2, 4, 5). A temporary loss of shamanic power is remedied by appeasing the ancestors with a feast in which some meat, goat's blood, *snuff* and sorghum beer are offered to the ancestors (5). Slaughtering a goat is also considered a way of strengthening the tools of a shaman (4).

2) Relationships amongst the shamans themselves are dominated by jealousy. The reason given for this is that shamanism has become a business and is commercialised rather than a function of a community (6). Shamans fear the loss of patients as well as of status, and hence the interaction between them is often guarded (4).

3) Knowledge of shamanism has in the past been abused by governments in order to torture people, as well as by universities in order to incite racism (6). Given that the relationship amongst shamans is tainted by envy, this shaman (6) discouraged any verification of knowledge by means of taking the results of this study back to shamans. He felt they would discredit the knowledge out of envy. According to this shaman (6), shamans have an ancient decree that states that sharing of knowledge is important if it is asked for. Disinformation is sometimes given to scientists in order to guard shamanic traditions. Only if approached respectfully or by insiders (shamans), or if a person has a specific sign that signifies shamanic tendencies such as a white tuft of hair, will the shamans be prepared to share their knowledge (6).

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Shamans are prepared to share knowledge about trance states, ancestors and divination. Knowledge about *muti* or medicinal herbs, however, is not shared (4).

CHAPTER EIGHT
THE DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Writing and theorising about South African shamans' discourses about trance states is the result of a reading of the interviews by this researcher, as well as the researcher's personal experiences of these trance state during his own training and practice as a shaman. The voice of the researcher as a participant will therefore be acknowledged. As discussed above, the interviews as discourses were read in terms of field texts from which major patterns of themes emerged. The recurrence of themes creates a density of a theme matrix, and it is this density of matrix that determined a certain dominant discourse amongst South African shamans. For example, there is a clear clustering or density around the centrality of ancestors for the South African shamans.

Throughout the discussions on trance states with the shamans, it was the central role of the ancestors that revealed itself to be crucial in understanding the South African shaman's perspective. In fact, it could be said that to understand trance states amongst South African shamans is to focus on the relationship of the shaman with the ancestor. The differences between trance states can be seen to be reflected in the different positions a shaman takes up in relation to her/his ancestors. This will be discussed in greater detail below.

The discussion of results has two broad sections. The first section comments on the different ways of inducing trance states amongst South African shamans. The second section presents a model of the major trance states found in South African shamanism. In the text below, as in the results section, the numbers in the brackets refer to the interview from which the information came from. It also gives the reader an indication of the density of the theme, in that the more numbers appear in a bracket after a theme or construct, the more a theme was found amongst the field texts.

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1. The Induction of Shamanic Trance States amongst South African Shamans

The various inductive techniques described by South African shamans in order to enter trance states will be presented in this section. From   above discussion about the density of themes involving the centrality of the ancestors in relation to trance states, it follows that the various inductive processes are not understood by the South African shaman as merely being ways of accessing mental states, but rather as a means to relate with the ancestors more effectively.

1. 1. The Outer and Inner Spaces of Trance Induction

The space in which trance induction occurs is clearly important in that the repeated training of an altered mind set within a specific setting will begin to trigger off a preparedness to shift mind states through the very act of inhabiting that space. Thus certain geographical places, rituals, ceremonies, specific clothing, particular body movements as well as the clapping of hands all have inductive powers for the shaman.

The South African shamans who participated in this study all commented   the importance of certain outer, transitional and inner spaces in inducing trance states. Outer spaces refer to geographical spaces, transitional spaces to clothes and objects, and inner spaces to states of mind. In regard to outer and transitional spaces, shaman Obed (3) spoke about the "uniform" of the novice as being a trigger towards inducing a trance state. This is in accord with the researcher's own experience. Before dancing, shamans and apprentices enter the space of the shaman's room or hut. During the preparations for the dance, whilst putting on specific cloths and beads, some shamans already begin to enter into trance states. The space of the shaman's hut as well as the habitual pattern of dressing for the dance become triggers for the induction of trance states.

Another outer inductive space is the shrine or *indumba*, which is a space dedicated to the ancestors. Shamans Julia, Obed and Paulina (2, 3, 4) described this space as

most often occupying a corner of the wall furthest from the door, and facing east if possible. The walls are covered in *isangoma* cloths, incense is burned, and it is here where the shaman takes off her/his shoes, kneels down and calls upon her/his ancestors whilst clapping hands (2, 3, 4). As shaman Obed (3) put it: "[I sit] with my legs crossed, and then I go quiet and my mind changes." Another shrine is the *gandelo* which, according to shaman Daniel (10), is a dead tree trunk or a live tree centrally placed, a sacred site outside the house where a shaman can induce a trance state by calling on the ancestors. The *gandelo*, as an analogy of the shamanic world tree (Eliade, 1964), is an obvious one.

The social aspect of induction is evident when the shaman dances because, as shaman Obed (3) noted, an observing group is necessary in order to record what the embodied ancestor says through the shaman whilst s/he is in a certain trance state. The shaman does not remember what has been said after the trance state. This is reiterated by Walsh (1990) when he maintains that shamans prepare their outer space by reorganising the environment around them, donning clothes and masks, and gathering the tribe or family around them. The group provides support as well as justification, reinforcing the belief in the shaman's power and mastery, thus providing a social force to the induction.

For the shamans in this study, the inner spaces of induction were represented by an inner silence. This is achieved if the body is held still, relaxed and quiet (1, 2, 4, 8). Shaman Virginia (8) suggested that a shaman should sit straight and still, with their eyes closed, and thereby seek inner silence. This induces trance states that can produce visions or support divination. Shaman Paulina (4) maintained that the ability to defocus from the personality brings about a certain quietude of the mind. She stated that the mind needs to be "quiet, [...] forget about yourself. Ya, and I forget I'm Paulina now." Shaman Stan (1) stated that the continuous activity of beading creates an inner space of silence and quietude. Shaman Nobela (7) described the effects of such an approach: "I must be slow with the thing I do [...].

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The time when you speak with the *amadlozi* [the ancestors], take time, sit straight and still, put your head straight, sometimes close your eyes and be quiet and you hear something through your ears, and appearances in your eyes, you see something. It will take time, and then when you heard something, open your eyes, you see something, and immediately you open your eyes you see something."

Credo Mutwa (6), in his interview, gave a more specific example of such an inner trance induction technique, namely in the form of a Zulu meditation: "You must have a look sir, we believe that everyone has got a little star with which she or he is born. You will see the star when you flick your eyes open in the morning. Now you concentrate on that star [...]. But now you think of a heavenly body [...] and you concentrate on it, and then you go to it in your imagination, you imagine yourself surrounded by the sun, like a wonderful ocean of light all around you. You find all your sickness being eaten by the sun, and you feel the warmth of the sun. Now that is the *isangoma* way, or you look at a flight of birds against a sky, and you imagine yourself as one of them, flying through the air, beautiful, free, unthreatened, untouched. and imagine yourself as a fish in the river. I love this one, a fish in the river that goes all around in the water."

Walsh (1990) notes that the inner space of imagination is prepared by the meaning of the symbols and the rituals, as well as the acceptance of the ordinarily hidden reality. Shamanic methods of inducing altered states include physiological, pharmacological as well as psychological techniques all of which create inner spaces. The psychological techniques are those exercises that are practised both before and during a ritual. The usual preparatory techniques include periods of contemplation, solitude, prayer, the production of an appropriate attitude or mind-set and an environmental setting. All of these inductive techniques are found in South African shamanism. It is important to note that these techniques are related to healing. Rituals and symbols of outer and inner spaces have a different yet very real meaning during shamanic states of consciousness. It is therefore "not the tools

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and rituals that heal, it is the power endowed in them by imagination" (Achterberg, 1987, p. 112).

1.2. Solitude and Vision Quests

Vision quests or seeking out a space of solitude in order to induce a trance state is especially prevalent during the training period of a South African shaman. The *thwasa* or novice is requested by her/his ancestors to wander to the mountains or find a cave so that the novice may pray, meditate and dream about the ancestors. Typically, *thwasas* on a vision quest will disappear without food, often not eating or washing themselves. Solitude is sought in order to pray and dream about the ancestors. After the vision quest, the *thwasas* return home (2, 8, 10). The researcher has visited a popular cave for vision quests near Clarens, close to the Lesotho border, and found a few *thwasas* and even shamans withdrawing deep into the cave.

Whilst being sensorily deprived and fasting, they were singing and praying to their ancestors. According to shaman Daniel (10), "those in the caves, they workshop their ancestors. They talk, sleep there, and they will come and dream there." Shaman Virginia (8) in her interview stated that her ancestors had instructed her in a trance state to find a certain cave. She was told to exit the cave through another opening, an exit that no one knew about except the resident faith healer. She completed her quest in the manner in which her ancestors had instructed her.

Ludwig [1969] (1990) considers ASCs induced by isolation to result in the reduction of exteroceptive stimulation and/or motor activity. Such states are achieved by solitary confinement, prolonged social and stimulus deprivation while at sea or in the desert, highway hypnosis, extreme boredom and experimental sensory deprivation. The shamanic novice is often sent into the wilderness to face the wild beasts and spirits. Nature's wilderness symbolises but also elicits the individual's own inner wilderness, and as a Caribou shaman put it: "all true wisdom is only learnt far from the dwellings of men, out in the great solitudes [...]. Privation and suffering

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are the only things that can open the mind of a man to those things that are hidden" (Igjugarijuk quoted in Halifax, 1979, p. 69).

It is not unusual for shamanic novices in the Zulu tradition to be isolated in a hut for up to six months (Lee, 1969). This relates to novices experiencing sensory deprivation. "During ecstatic states, there is neither capacity nor necessity for motor verification of the intense sensations. What is one man's loss of freedom, therefore may be another's gain in creativity" (Fisher, 1971, p. 901). Storr (1994) shows how creativity and solitude as the capacity to be alone are closely related. It is in solitude that acts of creativity are often born.

Devereux (1992) notes that caves, mountain peaks and waterfalls are all places at which natural ionisation occurs. Ionised air is known to have an effect on certain hormone levels in mammals, hormones in turn effecting brain function and thereby consciousness. Cave mouths tend to attract lightning, and likewise mountain peaks can sometimes evoke ionised glows around them, a light phenomena that has been seen around the apex of the Great Pyramid. Also, certain locations used by shamans for initiation are known for their high levels of radon, or might lie along geological faults with the concomitant geomagnetic anomalies (Devereux, 1992, pp. 142-143). South African shamanic novices may therefore seek out caves that enhance the inductive factors used to elicit trance states.

1.3. The Times of Trance Induction
The times of trance induction are also important in that, for some South African shamans, it is not appropriate to divine at noon because no shadows are present, and therefore the ancestors are not present (Hammond-Tooke, 1989). Shaman Credo Mutwa (6) noted that to induce trance states timing "has to be right". The shamanic trance state usually occurs at night or in a darkened chamber so that the spirits can be seen more effectively. According to Hammond-Tooke (1989), the dance of the shamanic novice occurs in the hut, and is not allowed to be performed in sunlight,

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except on the day of initiation.

However, most of the shamans in this study (2, 4, 5, 9, 10) stated that the best times for the contact with the ancestors were noon, three o'clock in the afternoon, seven o'clock in the evening, and three o'clock in the morning. Generally, the shamans state that the early hours of the morning are the best time for the trance contact with the ancestors. Furthermore, dancing through the night during graduation or in the early morning during training (9), as well as dreaming more lucidly during the early hours of the morning, as the researcher's shamanic teacher (10) suggested, are practices of trance induction that make unconscious use of the fact that melatonin is excreted at night. Melatonin is the brain chemical that is responsible for dreaming and visions. It is a well known practice in many traditions to alter states of consciousness at night or in the early hours of the morning, be it in the shamanic tradition or in the meditative traditions of Buddhism and Christianity (Roney-Dougal, 1991)

1.4. The Physiology of Trance Induction

Important purification techniques that are believed by South African shamans to support trance states are the act of *phalaza*, the use of enemas, certain food taboos, as well as celibacy (1, 5, 8, 9). The *thwasa* is required to be a clean vessel or vehicle for the ancestors. Shaman Nomsa (9) stated: "Yes, you must be clean and purified. To communicate with the ancestors, they don't want you dirty." Shaman Caroline (5) noted that the act of *phalaza*, i.e., the vomiting of *muti*-enriched water from a five litre bucket, should occur first thing in the morning. The liquid is drunk until the stomach is filled, after which it is vomited out, and the procedure then begins again. This continues until the bucket is empty. Shaman Caroline (5) *phalazas* once a week. "You drink another, wuruch, even the bile come out. After that the dreams will be clear, clear, clear, even the horses' number [for betting in horse races], you can catch them." Arden (1996) describes how one shaman "swirls the stick through the contents and pulls from it sheets of clear mucus. "This", she says, "is what you

must vomit out. This is the bad stuff inside of you. We sangomas like to phalaza to keep our insides clean"" (Arden, 1996, p. 46).

Shaman Virginia (8) claimed that to *phalaza* means to open up the body and lungs, thereby enhancing ancestor contact, dreaming and divination skills. In polarity therapy (Stone, 1986), a similar ritual is recommend upon awakening as it is claimed that vomiting releases the diaphragm and thereby opens up the person to express blocked feelings and emotions. The researcher's own experiences support this somewhat in that, after having completed the exercise of *phalaza*, I felt slightly light-headed, my breathing was deeper and a certain openness was detected which would be conducive to more profound divination. Shaman Stan (1) also stated that letting go was beneficial when reading 'bones' in the trance state.

Every morning and evening, the novice is required to ingest the foam of a woody tasting *muti* called the *isitundu* (Arden, 1996). During my own training, I was instructed to kneel before the calabash and say *thokhosa* [a shamanic greeting] to my ancestors. I then took the calabash from the open air shrine or tree, the *gandelo*, and placed it on the ground before me. With a stick the *muti* was stirred until the foam rose. Then kneeling forward and without using the hands for leverage, I took a mouthful of foam and spat it onto the ground at the top, bottom, left and right to the calabash, these four markings on the ground representing the four compass points. After this was completed, I sucked the foam off the surface of the *muti* and swallowed it. When I completed this task, the calabash was returned to the *gandelo* and covered up, after which the ancestors were thanked once again. This process is said to support the emergence and embodiment of the ancestors. My shamanic teacher said that it would "draw the ancestors to you. It will open you up for them."

Other inductive techniques that are applied during the apprenticeship or the time of the *thwasa* are the various taboos on food (1, 5, 9). A *thwasa* is not allowed to have eggs, meat, fish, certain beans or milk products. After the apprenticeship, the food

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taboo concerning goat's meat, pork, certain beans and fish remains. The reasons given for these taboos were that these particular foods excite the body, thereby enhancing sexual energy. This blocks the contact with the ancestors. Shaman Stan (1) stated that "you can't eat cold drinks, coffee, eggs, or rich food because it blocks you [pointing at his head]". Shaman Nomsa (9) believed that "if you eat rich food you feel like having sex". Sex is considered disadvantageous for the early contact with the ancestors.

This is also the reason why the *thwasa* is required to remain celibate during the training period (Hall, 1994). My shamanic teacher Daniel (10), as well as shaman Nomsa (9) claimed that one of the reasons why the *thwasa* actually lives with the shamanic teacher is to avoid sexual temptations. Those *thwasas* that are married may now and then receive a visitation from their family, but no sexual contact is allowed until after the training. This is one of the reasons given as to why it requires such commitment to become a shaman. Hall (1994) notes, however, that the vow of celibacy is often not kept, in which case a purification act is necessary. Transgressions of any of the above mentioned purification practices would, according to shaman Nomsa (9), be discovered either by the teacher's psychic ability, during confession, or when the *thwasa* falls during dancing. Thus to produce certain trance states a certain ascetic body is shaped through the withdrawal of sexual activity while, at the same time, a certain diet is applied to support the hypostimulation of sexual desires.

An inductive tool used specifically by the *izanusi* [plural for *isanusi*] and aimed at the hypostimulation of the body, is when the *thwasa* gets covered up by blankets at the same time as having her/his ears blocked. In this condition the *thwasa* lies still for at least two hours, and thereby creates trance states which are similar to certain shamanic journeys (7).

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A further inductive technique is breathing. While not stressed, it seems that before the act of divination certain forms of deep breathing induce a quietude of the mind (1, 2, 4, 8), and thereby focus the mind. Credo Mutwa (6) and Shaman Nobela (7) described an *isanusi* technique of breathing. One of the exercises is to breathe relatively fast, and with each breath, first one, and then the other, nostril is closed. The closing of the nostrils is related to the male ancestor head (Credo Mutwa pointed to the left side of the head) and the female ancestor head (he pointed to the right side of the head). With every breath the nostrils are switched. Credo Mutwa (6) said "then you must breathe until you get dronk [drunk] but not too dronk [drunk] otherwise you lose control."

Credo Mutwa (6) combined the breathing exercises with certain visualisation exercises in order to induce trance states. "When you breathe inside, you must not merely let it be air that goes into your lungs, you must let it be a picture, let us say a picture of children running around peacefully [...] In other words you exhale the evil and inhale the good. That is the way of the *isanusi* [...] and then I went to Swaziland, Mozambique and Bechuanaland, and so on, and I found that these great knowledges are similar, and you must not waste air and breathe in nothing." It needs to be noted that such breathing and visualisation exercises were not found to be part of the dominant discourse of the shamans, and were found to be only part of the *isanusi* discourse.

Ludwig [1969] (1990) states that certain physiological changes can induce ASCs. These are hypoglycaemia due to fasting, dehydration, thyroid and adrenal dysfunctions, sleep deprivation, hyperventilation, narcolepsy and temporal lobe epilepsy. Physiological techniques are usually of an ascetic kind, leading toward hypo-stimulation or hyper-stimulation of various sensory systems (Achterberg, 1987). Shamans go without food, sleep, and even water, for a certain number of days. Exposure to extreme temperatures such as the heat in the sweat lodge or the freezing cold of a winter stream, is another common induction technique. Thus the

Vedic derivation of the word shaman, namely *sram*, meaning "to heat oneself" or "practice austerities" (Halifax, 1979) is rather fitting at this point.

1.5. The Substances of Trance Induction

South African shamans use certain herbs to facilitate an opening up to the ancestors, to dream and to divine more clearly, as well as to enter a trance state more easily (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10). Certain *mutis* or herbs are used to induce trance states, for example the herbal brew used to *phalaza* with (5, 8, 9). Other *mutis* are taken in liquid form or the steam is inhaled (3, 4, 5). Arden (1996) states that the act of *phalaza* is also one of purification. Hall (1994) notes that certain *mutis* are applied by what he calls 'African injections', which means that small incisions with a razor blade are made on the person, namely on the head, shoulder blades, elbows, wrists, hands, knees, and feet. Herbal medicine, in the form of powder, is rubbed into these tiny incisions.

Also, the dried plant *imphepho*, with its lightly coloured stems and small flowers is burnt while throwing 'bones' or is used in order to induce meaningful dreams (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9), as well as to attract the ancestors. Shaman Julia (2) described the mind altering effect of *imphepho* in the following manner: "The mind changes and it feels like liquor. You are not drunk." One shaman (6) claimed that *imphepho* is not used to induce trance states but rather to exit them. The use of *snuff*, which is tobacco powder, is wide-spread amongst shamans, giving the shaman a certain light-headed feeling that disorientates her/him sufficiently from everyday consciousness to facilitate an altered state of mind (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10). Shaman Paulina (4) stated that "when I take *snuff* and *imphepho*, I become, my mind is not here". *Snuff* is at times used before 'bone' throwing, before sleep in order to dream, as well as for recreational purposes during the day (3, 5).

Marijuana or *cannabis* has been used traditionally by South African shamans, despite the fact that state laws have made the use of this herb a criminal offence

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(10). *Cannabis* was widely used in the Indo-European world, and an ancient Indo-European text considers it to be a "liberator of sin" and a "heavenly guide" (Devereux, 1992, p. 147). My shamanic teacher Daniel (10) stated many years ago that he uses *marijuana* "to dream or to know". He further explained that it can be used for recreational purposes by facilitating daydreaming and that knowledge can be gained while smoking *marijuana,* in that it induces a state of mind that opens the shaman up to "know". Shaman Numsa (9) also maintained that "it is a pity I don't smoke [*marijuana*], and they [other shamans] can tell you better, but it relaxes your mind so it opens your mind to have more contact" with the ancestors.

Credo Mutwa (6), in his interview, suggested that South African shamans know of few very effective hallucinogenic substances that facilitate the induction of trance states. Some seem to be kept as a secret or are marginalised, while other substances are known to some shamans, for example the dried aloe leaves found in the Eastern Cape, or a certain type of mushroom from pine trees, all of which have hallucinogenic effects.

New discoveries in neurochemistry, anthropology, ethnopsychopharmacology and transpersonal psychology have brought about a resurgence of research into psychoactive substances. A wide range of psychoactive substances have been used to achieve ASCs, and the close connection between transcendence and addiction as an ASC has been established (Metzner, 1994). Hallucinogenics are often linked to ASCs, in that, as expressed by a group of shamans "all psychoactive plants are considered potential teachers" (quoted in Lukoff *et al,* 1990, p. 13). Fisher (1971) claims that moderate dosages of the hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD, *psilocybin* and *mescaline* can induce ecstatic states, while drugs that tranquillise or function as muscle relaxants induce quiet or *samadhi* states.

Trance states can also be induced by hallucinatory drugs. The shamans of Siberia have used psychedelics such as the mushroom *agaric,* while the shamans in Latin

America use *peyote* and *yage*, with its active component of *mescaline* (Walsh, 1990). *Yage* or *ayahuasca*, as it is called in the Amazon, appears to elicit strong visual experiences. Roney-Dougal (1991) notes that *ayahuasca's* most important psychoactive comp nt seems to be harmaline, which is chemically close to the structure of melatonin, that is produced by the pineal gland in the brain, and which possibly allows us to dream. The central concern for the shaman is that the psychoactive substance becomes an 'ally', i.e., that it becomes a link by which to communicate with other beings or spirits (De Korne, 1994), or in the case of South African shamanism, the ancestors.

Importantly, the environmental setting as well as personality decisively influence the effectiveness and interpretations of the drug-induced trance states (Fisher, 1971; Metzner, 1989; Walsh, 1990). An interpretation of drug-induced trance states is given by Langdon (1992) in his analysis of the Siona shaman in South America. The Siona shaman is the 'master' of *yage* visions. Three classes of shamans are recognised, each class representing a level of knowledge and power based on the mastery of the *yage* visions. Langdon (1992) states that at "each stage of knowledge, the individual is expected to go through a set of culturally anticipated visions. The *yage* experience is not one of individual random visions of free association of the unconscious while under the drug's influence. It is, rather, an ordering of the induced visions into culturally meaningful symbols and experiences, thus gaining increasing control over the visions and events occurring" (Langdon, 1992, p. 53).

In Africa, shamanic trance states are induced by, for example, the inhaling of fumes, a method used in northern Ghana (Peek, 1991, p. 199), or the chewing of a psychoactive *ojo* bulb, as used by the Lubara diviners (Middelton, 1969, p. 225). The Zande shaman in Central Africa exercises his "supernatural powers solely because he knows the right medicines and has eaten them in the right manner" (Evan-Pritchards, 1937, p. 157). The use of psychoactive substances has been overlooked in recent ethnographic accounts of the *kia* healing ritual of the !Kung. Almost half

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of the !Kung medicinal plants contain psychoactive substances which probably play a part in trance induction (Lukoff *et al*, 1990).

Equally, the Zulu shaman's initiation is "a series of sacrifices and treatments with white medicines [which] all aim at promoting her illumination" (Ngubane, 1977, p. 87). Such medicines are believed to aid the sharpening of the sensory capacities of the shaman as well as enhancing their inner sight. Similarly, in the training of the Swazi *sangoma*, mind-altering drugs are used (Makhubu, 1978, p. 58). Kohler (1941) states that in the South African context drugs are used in order to increase knowledge. One is told to "go and dig up medicine in such and such a place, let it make you vomit, and besmear yourself with it, then you will know all things" (Sikhumbana quoted in Kohler, 1941, p. 9).

Relevant to the South African shamanic context is the fact that certain herbs such as *imphepho, snuff, marijuana*, tobacco, beverages, such as sorghum beer, and enemas all have psychoactive components (Lukoff *et al*, 1990). All of these psychoactive substances are used to induce trance states in the South African shamanic context. *Snuffs* are preparations of finely powered, dried medicinal plants that are drawn up into the nostrils through inhalation (Van Wyk *et al*, 1997). South African shamans often use *snuff* made from finely powered tobacco to achieve an altered state of mind. *Imphepho* is used, as discussed above, as ritual incense in order to alter states of consciousness. It is also used for pain relief in that the smoke of the burning leaves are inhaled. As a medicinal plant, *imphepho* or everlastings' in English is used to cure coughs, colds, fever, infections, headache, and is used for wound dressings. Its pharmacological effects are pain-relieving, and it has an anti-infective and anti-inflammatory activity. The proven antimicrobial activity provides scientific evidence for the traditional use of wound dressing (Van Wyk *et al*, 1997, p. 148).

1.6. The Drums of Trance Induction

Hall (1994) notes that in his experience of drumming as an induction technique, he "didn't submerge entirely, something was happening, and I knew what the drums were now saying. Their slow rhythm was meant to mimic the human heart. But now my body felt cold" (Hall, 1994, p. 101). The shamans in this study considered drumming to be an essential trance inducing instrument. Shaman Julia (2) described her experience of drumming as intoxicating and affecting her head, for "there is something knocking in your head, and then you will change [...]. That time when the drums are coming, it hits you as you dance. It is like the liquors, your head is changing because of the drums." Shaman Obed (3) stated that drumming helps the ancestors to "come out".

Similarly shaman Nomsa (9) stated: "The drums also play an important part, because it works on your brain. [...] You know, the drum and the music, that is the first thing you use to prepare, the whole thing automatically changes. The feeling, you know the feeling, it is so peaceful in your mind, in your heart, you are in a different place. I can't even explain." The different place is clearly the place of shamanic ecstasy.

A powerful inductive technique is produced by the rhythm of the drumming during major ceremonies as well as during training when the *thwasa* dance and are embodied by the ancestors. The researcher has been taught specific rhythms for various trance states. One rhythm, called the *gida* rhythm, is much like that of galloping horses, and is used to induce a trance state aimed at embodying the ancestor in the shaman. The accompanying dance to the *gida* rhythm is described as beginning with short side steps and then becoming a gallop (Arden, 1996, p. 95). During this trance state, various songs are performed with variations of the *gida* rhythm. Another rhythm called the *bhandawu* rhythm is applied when a shaman is initiated at the river and meets the people of the river (10).

According to one researcher, the shaman's brain waves become entrained by the rhythm (Moss, 1996), and certain rhythms of the drums seem to entrain certain feelings and states of mind, as described by the shamans above. Bruce Cassidy, a renowned jazz musician and teacher in Canada and South Africa analysed tape recordings of these two drum rhythms. The *gida* rhythm has 160 beats per minute, while the more complicated triplet beat of the *bhandawu* rhythm has 87 beats per minute. Whereas the *gida* rhythm is a simple two pick up beat, the *bhandawu* beat is more polyrhythmically suggestive (Cassidy, personal communication, 1998).

Drumming facilitates shamanic states in several ways. It is effective in destabilising usual states of consciousness in that, as maintained by Tart (1975), a sufficiently loud drumbeat rapidly overcomes the stabilising forces, making abrupt changes very easy. It also acts as a means to focus attention and enhance concentration on the given task. It further drowns out any distracting stimuli, thereby allowing the shaman to focus inward. If heightened ability to sustain attention and concentration is the key element of effective spiritual disciplines, then "shamans appear to have found one of the quickest and easiest ways of attaining it" (Walsh, 1990, p. 174).

Sturtevant (1968) comments that three important variables are involved in the induction of an ASC by drumming. Firstly, it is not the percussion *per se* that matters but rather the sound of the drums, with their wide range of acoustic frequencies, especially those containing high amplitudes in the lower frequencies. The wide range of frequencies stimulates the whole basilar ear membrane, thereby transmitting impulses along many different nerve pathways, and consequently effecting larger areas of the brain than any single frequency could. Secondly, given that different individuals respond to different frequencies, the drummer needs to vary the rhythms in order to ensure the effect on the different trancing persons. The sounds must at least be near or below the basic alpha brain rhythm (seven to nine cycles per second). This would require a rather rapid drumming rhythm. Thirdly, the psychological effects of an auditory induction are enhanced by additional drumming

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rhythms (reinforcing multiples of the basic rhythm), the rhythmic movement of the body, as well as general stress such as fatigue and hyperventilation (Sturtevant, 1968, p. 134).

On a physiological level, drumming rhythms are most effective if they correspond to the theta brain rhythms, which have four to seven cycles per second, a rhythm that is found in Haitian voodoo drumming (Neher, 1962). Kenyon (1994) believes that the rhythm of shamanic drumming 'entrains' the brain waves into equal or similar rhythms, thereby creating ASCs. Recent research amongst the Salish Indians of the Northwest Coast of Canada also suggests that drum beat frequencies in the theta wave EEG frequency range (four to seven cycles per second) are most conducive to producing trance states (Jilek, 1982). Some physiologists therefore believe that 'shamanic drumming' may harmonise neural activity in the brain with the frequency of the beat, an effect that is also described as 'sonic driving' (Moss, 1996, p. 148).

The South African shamans rely on drums and multiples of rhythms to induce trance states. The body and the mind are supported in letting go through the techniques of hyperstimulation. In the move towards exhaustion, everyday consciousness is given up, and a certain openness occurs, thereby allowing for the establishment of an ASC. In the researcher's experience of following the rhythms of the drums and focusing on the dancing, a single focus is created which in turn slowly leads to a clearing of the mind. A pull towards a void is then experienced. It is this void that shamans experience just prior to becoming embodied by the ancestors and as a result of which the shamans no longer remember what happened.

Janzen (1994) notes that the term 'drums of affliction' was introduced by Turner in his study of the Ndembu religion in Northern Zambia. The drums of affliction reflects the significance of drumming and rhythmic song-dancing, and the designation of all of the expressive dimensions found in the term *ngoma* (drum). The linguistic root of the *isangoma* (Zulu) or *mungoma* (Venda) refers to the 'drum'

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(Hammond-Tooke, 1989, p. 116).

Thus for Janzen (1994), *ngoma* or drums of affliction is an institution which varies across historical and social conditions. The *ngoma* experience becomes the initiate's personal pilgrimage, the song-dance mirroring dreams, visions, as well as more mundane experiences. "The moving-pulsating context of ritual celebration is conducive to cognitive dissociation and restructuring, lending affliction cults a psychotherapeutic, even a conversion-like quality" (Janzen, 1994, p. 170). The shaman who yields to the rhythm of the song and the dance, expresses a more yielding form of self-control.

It allows for "a deeper self to come to the surface. Somehow these rhythmic melodies tap this union of all feeling and the singularity of thought's purpose, harkening back to some archaic awakening" (Laubscher, 1963, p. 160). Not surprisingly, the shaman's drum is one of the most important induction means to enter ASCs (Achterberg, 1987; Diallo & Hall, 1989). According to Eliade (1964), the drum is made of the wood of the world tree, and the animal skin is at times linked to the animal spirit the shaman encounters in the other world. "The sound of the drum thus acts as a focusing device for the shaman. It creates an atmosphere of concentration and resolve, enabling him to sink into deep trance as he shifts his attention to the inner journey of the spirit" (Drury, 1989c, p. 38). For the South African shamans, drumming is one of the most important forms of trance induction.

1.7. The Dance of Ecstasy
Dancing is another major trance inducing technique for South African shamans, for it is the technique that establishes ancestor contact. As already stated, during dancing the shaman is unable to remember the ancestor contact (1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10). According to two shamans (2, 4), dancing is not an essential inductive trance technique for all shamans, but rather is an aspect of the shaman's culture. Dancing is taught by copying or modelling other dancing shamans (2). Equally, my shamanic

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teacher Daniel (10) has stated on a few occasions that what determines a shaman's excellence is not the ability to dance, but rather the ability to heal through divination and herbal medicines. Nevertheless, shaman Nobela (7) stated that dancing "wakes up" the ancestors. During dancing, according to shaman Paulina (4), the personality of the ancestor emerges, and the shaman will dance for a lengthy period of time until the ancestor withdraws. "You dance, Paulina dances, but at some stage you can see it is not Paulina dancing, something is there, that is going on for a long time."

Some shamans experience a certain lightness, euphoria, and knowingness during dancing (1, 4, 5, 8). Shaman Stan (1) stated: "You feel light and wonderful, that's why we like dancing." Equally, shaman Julia (2) experienced "good feelings" during dancing, and the joy or ecstasy is like "a madness". Dancing also improves the health of the shaman and builds up strength, as is manifest in the ability to withstand pain. Dancing also brings forth messages from the ancestors (1, 2, 4, 5, 8). Shaman Stan (1) claimed that if "you feel that there is something wrong with you, or something is happening, and then you must get up and dance". Shaman Obed (3) emphasised the fact that dancing changes feelings or alters the mind.

Shaman Paulina (4) described her head as "burning and dizzy" during dancing. This experience was supported by Shaman Caroline (5): "Oh, your mind, you know you feel like your head is getting mad or you are drunk or dizzy. And your feet, when you walk they are not your feet, you sway". For many shamans, the most characteristic body experience is "shaking" of the body (3, 6). Shaman Caroline (5) also mentioned the ability to withstand pain during the trance whilst dancing: "when you hear the drums and you dance on glass you don't feel anything, only in the morning do you see your feet."

Dancing opens up the shaman to ancestral contact. According to shaman Daniel (10), during dancing "you feel the spirits in your body [...]. You feel different. Then you know the spirits are controlling your body, [are] inside your mind. [...] After the

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ancestors are gone, she doesn't know what happened." Shaman Virginia (8) summed it up in the following manner: "You see when I dance, I can feel happy and healthy, I feel something coming out of my brain, and from dancing when I just sit down, and then my ancestors come and show me things, and how I can use medicines."

Arden (1996) describes a common South African ritual used for the first greeting of the embodied ancestor after the ancestor has been induced by the dancing and drumming. "The drums and the singing stop. Madota kneels in front of Miriam, and in a hoarse growl-speak welcomes her. Then she rises, and once again, in a high pitch, sings down the spirits, and dances again, first stepping, then increasing to a fast gallop. Once again the drums join her, and then the sangomas, voices rising and ululating" (Arden, 1996, p. 76). The experience of ecstasy emerges as a dominant theme during the ancestral contact that occurs while dancing. At the end of the dance, the shaman sits on a mat with her/his legs forward, reaching down to the toes means that the ancestors are sent back and the embodiment of the spirits is over (Arden, 1996).

The more marginal discourse of the *isanusi* suggests that this form of dancing can cause the *umbilini* to rise through the body and into the head (6, 8). Credo Mutwa (6) noted that it is during the dancing, when the body is shaking vigorously, that the dancer tightens her/his anus muscles in order to push that 'snake of energy' up into the higher regions of the body until the energy reaches the brain. At that point the *isanusi* enters into a trance state.

Although this *umbilini* experience was known only by the following shamans: (3, 4, 7, 8, 9), it is supported by research amongst the !Kung (Katz, 1982) and the Xhosa (Bührmann, 1981), as well as bearing a striking similarity to the concept of *kundalini* and *chi* in the east. The *isanusi* discourse is clearly marginal although highly respected, in that it belongs to certain traditions in Africa, and is not necessarily a widely spread technique of trance induction.

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Historically, the trance dance is closely associated with the induction of trance states, be it King David dancing ecstatically before the Ark or the Dionysian cult members becoming entranced during dance. Today dancing induces trances amongst Hassidic Jews, North American Indians, Voodoo followers in Haiti and shamans in Africa. Dance, singing, music, hand clapping, costumes, the presence of an expectant and participatory audience, a ritual setting in terms of time and place, all of these are ideally suited to inducing possession trance states and achieving the therapeutic effects. Dancing is a community activity. It unites sound, rhythm and movement, and in the early stages of the dance, the human body was itself the sound-producing instrument, as found today in hand clapping and thigh slapping (Wosien, 1974).

Wosien (1974) states that for the shaman "the dance is part of his function of linking the tribe with the ancestral spirit; it serves as a channel for the divine power in all his tasks, including those of healing and exorcism" (Wosien, 1974, p. 18). Thus trance possessions are public phenomena, and require "an audience not only to validate the experience but, in most cases, to bring it about in the first place" (Bourguignon, 1972, p. 333). Shaman Obed (3) and shaman Paulina (4) pointed out that an audience is required in order to hear and remember the messages from the ancestors, as the shaman is unable to remember any information whilst in a dancing trance state.

Bourguignon (1972) notes that the psychological effects of the intense musical rhythm might induce the dancer to release her/his responsibility through movements and actions. The physiologically inductive components are that the breathing patterns are altered, bringing about hyperventilation and partial exhaustion. Drumming and dancing also increase exteroceptive stimulation and motor activity (Ludwig [1969], 1990). Furthermore, the frequent whirling and turning in terms of circular and rotational movements have an important effect on the sense of balance, creating a sense of dizziness.

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This sense of dizziness is experienced as a precursor to the possession trance in that "disturbance in the sense of balance is believed to be a preliminary to possession, to being "mounted" by a spirit as it is so frequently phrased, this in itself will contribute to the likelihood of the occurrence of trance" (Bourguignon, 1972, p. 333). Berglund (1976) states that the shaking and quivering amongst Zulu shamans during dancing is a sign that the ancestors are present. During training the shaking is learnt and controlled, and dancing is believed to excite and awaken the ancestors. During dancing, the sense of dizziness, the shaking and the feeling of losing a sense of self whilst being embodied by an ancestor is common amongst the South African shamans. Dancing for South African shamans is the main vehicle for entering into trance states, the rhythm of the drums being the major driving force of this vehicle. In the "classical possession cultures they say that the ancestor spirits, ride the rhythm of the drum into the dancing bodies" (Hart & Lieberman, 1991).

1.8. The Songs of Izangoma

In addition to drumming and dancing, singing or chanting are also used as inductive techniques. For the South African shaman, the sudden emergence of a sacred song delivered by the ancestors denotes the end of training and the initiation into shamanhood (Hall, 1994). Shaman Stan (1) stated: "Ya, you must bring a song from your ancestors, it comes, it just comes." Shaman Julia (2) noted that although this might be common, it does not happen to every shaman. Shaman Paulina (4) highlighted the trance inductive quality of the song: "I've got a song [...] if they can sing this song, sometimes I just think, sometimes I cry, just tears, for it reminds me of like I am, all them problems I had when I became an *isangoma.*" Some shamans hear it in the deep of night (Hall, 1994), whilst others "get it in your dream, and when you wake up you still know it" (5).

Hall (1994) states that the special song, the *inkhanyan,* emerges when the ancestor embodies an apprentice in the middle of the night. It is a sign that the apprentice is ready to graduate. Hall's own spirit told him: "You will find your song, and you will

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sing this song until you die" (Hall, 1994, p. 201). An example of such a song is given by Hall (1994). The first verse: Run to the river / It is coming, the sun / Hurry to the river / It is setting, the moon. Second verse: Run to the river / It is flowing, the water / Hurry to the river / They are calling you, the Tmzmzu [water spirits]." When the song emerged for the first time, Hall states that he "hurried to get ready but I was not nearly fast enough, for even as I was tying my dancing skirts the lidlots emerged, took over my body and voice, and headed us out into the night. No single spirit with a recognisable personality seized the sangoma or kutfwasa student when he or she danced; it was a trance-like condition that made the voice deep and urgent. In this state my arms swung the dancing sticks, and a voice emerged singing from my throat, sounding both powerful and lonely in the night's stillness" (Hall, 1994, p. 201)

Similarly, in the shamanic traditions across the world, singing is central to trance induction. The Latin term *cantare* is generally translated as 'singing'. However, the term originally referred to 'the ability to create through magic'. For the Huichole Indians of Mexico, the Spanish word *cantor* refers to a magician or a shaman (Berendt, 1988, p. 69). Sullivan (1994) notes that the shamanic mastery of sound and song is a reflection of a belief that all beings have a sonic structure. It is the shaman who is trained to hear the voices of the spirits, or sing in order to call them.

The Apache shaman-chief Geronimo told an ethnomusicologist: "As I sing, I go through the air to a holy place where Yusun [the Supreme Being] will give me power to do wonderful things" (quoted in Halifax, 1979, p. 32). Through the songs the power and intent of the shaman is expressed. The Australian Aborigines link their sacred songs to the gods of the Dreamtime (Drury, 1989c). Shamanic songs also have a healing power. Aua, a Netsilik Eskimo, discovered that the spontaneous emergence of song accompanied the end of his initiation illness (Halifax, 1979).

Halifax (1979) shows that the shamanic song represents a powerful relationship between spirit and matter. The spirit of breath emerges from the body as a song. The English word *spirit* is derived from the Latin word *spirare*, which means 'to breathe'. "As the World Tree stands at the centre of the vast planes of the cosmos, song stands at the intimate centre of the cosmos of the individual. At that moment when the shaman's song emerges, when the sacred breath rises from the depths of the heart, the centre is found, and the source of all that is divine has been tapped" (Halifax, 1979, p. 30).

Turner (1992) states that a number of songs in succession can lead to hyperventilation. Overexertion and fatigue increase the adrenaline secretion, thereby lowering the blood sugar level. Also, a chemical called adrenochrome has been isolated from adrenaline as having hallucinogenic properties. Turner (1992) regards the songs and lyrics that emerge during trance possessions as having a *mantra*-like quality which thereby facilitates a trance state. *Mantras* reduce sensory input through repetition, thereby monopolising the verbal-logical activities of the left hemisphere, and setting free more right hemisphere functioning (Ornstein, 1975). *Mantras* or chants focus the mind and in doing so create a sense of ecstasy (Greenwell, 1990). In this regard the importance of songs for South African shamans as an inductive technique cannot be emphasised enough.

In summary then it would appear that in line with many other shamanic traditions, South African shamans apply the major forms of trance induction found all over the world. Besides the setting of inner, transitional, and outer spaces, drumming, dancing and singing are the major forms of trance induction. The substances to induce trances are used in a more supportive manner and do not represent a major form of trance induction.

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2. A Model of South African Shamanic Trance States

Within South African shamanism, the shaman is understood as having achieved her or his abilities due to the ancestors (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9). According to Shaman Stan (1): "You know what makes a good *isangoma*, it's your ancestors. They make you a good *isangoma*. You also got to want to be good as well." The relationship with the ancestors is not merely an important personal event, but rather is the defining characteristic as recognised by the shamans themselves "That is IT!" (1). Furthermore, it is through the contact with the ancestors that the shaman feels protected and supported in life (4, 6, 7, 8). Positive changes in the shaman's life are generally attributed to the ancestors, whilst negative changes are attributed to witchcraft (2, 4, 5, 8). The systemic understanding of the trance states of South African shamans will therefore model itself on this defining relationship of ancestor and shaman.

The construction of a model for shamanic trance states is based on shaman Paulina's (4) statement that there were three forms in which ancestors could be understood. The ancestors as the *amadlozi* are those that appear during the frenzied dance, and they are not remembered by the shaman, but are heard by the community in which the trance takes place. The ancestors as the *amakhosi* are those ancestors present during divination. The ancestors as the *amathongo* are those ancestors present during dreams. Shaman Paulina (4) distinguished between the first two categories as follows: "with the *amadlozi* the ancestors are in, while with the *amakhosi* the ancestors are out, but they are all the same ancestors".

These are, therefore, two major ways in which South African shamans experience their ancestors, as either 'in' or 'out', as either embodied within their body, or communicating with the shaman from without. The researcher asked Paulina whether the ancestors in the dream space hold another position, and she acknowledged that they did somewhere between 'in' and 'out'. The shaman in this dream space needed to remember the ancestors and relate to them. As already stated,

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the ancestors are called the *amathongo* when they appear in dreams. During the interviews with all the shamans it became clear that the experience of trance states makes sense only within the South African shamanic epistemology if a trance state is construed as the relationship experienced by the shaman with her/his ancestors.

The trance model to be presented consequently attempts to respect the shamans' own understanding of trance states. While there is full awareness that this model has sprung from the categories of one shaman, Paulina's (4) categorisation has been an excellent lens through which the data from the interviews were given clarity and focus. The researcher has questioned other shamans about such a categorisation, and they agreed that such categories could be useful, as long as it is understood that all the ancestors are the same.

Following this categorisation, four major trance states are described as being relevant to South African shamanism, namely the amadlozi, the amakhosi, the amathongo, and the umbilini trance states. There is of course full recognition that there are possibly as many states of consciousness as there are practitioners of these states. Furthermore, the categories described are by no means to be considered absolute or unbridgeable in the experience of them. It is also acknowledged that there might be many more ASCs. The main argument of this study is that these categorisations are a useful tool in distinguishing between the major trance states of South African shamans.

Each main trance state will be separately introduced, described and interpreted. A description of the trance experience will be taken from the interview material. This will be followed by contextualising the trance state with reference to the literature on shamanism. All of this will be preceded by a brief comment on the main inductive tools that are used to facilitr the specific trance state, as these have already been discussed in detail above. Finally, a cartography of each trance state will be set out, which will provide the essential data necessary to compare the

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different trance states with each other. This cartography uses the dimensions set out by Walsh (1995), as discussed in chapter three.

2.1. The Amadlozi Trance State

Of the four main trance states, the shaman in the amadlozi trance state achieves the highest degree of immersion into a state of identification. It is within this state of consciousness that the ancestors are in full control of the body, its limbs and vocal ords. In this state, the shaman becomes a vehicle, a medium or a channel of the irit world. The shaman becomes the embodiment of the ancestor, givin form to ι formless, a voice to the speechles., and signifying for those that are silenced by death.

2. 1. 1. The Induction of the Amadlozi Trance State

The induction into the amadlozi trance state in an 'official' graduation includes dancing, drumming and singing. A certain enu ainment occurs within this trance state, as others begin to join in with the dancing, which sets off the trance amongst other shamans more readily and quickly. Thus a modelling effect has occurred. A certain entrainment of feelings, altered states of mind, and brain waves might be occurring. *Imphepho* might be burning, and *snuff* will be taken, both of which represent physiological inductions into this trance state. As was evident in the interviev with shaman Obed (3), and to some extent with shaman Paulina (4), the intense discussion of ancestors with the researcher induced the beginnings of the trance state, with a specific outbreath "Heyeii!".

2.1.2. The Experience of the Amadlozi Trance State

The central experience of the amadlozi trance state is one of the ancestors being in control dur ng the time of contact (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10). Shaman Stan (1) stated: "Whatever you do is your ancestors, because the ancestors are in control. [...] they are the people with power." Shaman Obed (3) experiences his ancestors as at times "pushing" themselves into him, and at that point he forgets everything. He

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experiences himself as absent and out of control, and he cannot remember what happened. "Ah, well, you cannot hear somebody, because I'm just gone" (3). Equally, shaman Paulina (4) commented: "I've got this thing, when the ancestors come, and I'm with you, I will change automatically. I will just do like this [stares ahead of her in a blank manner]. Even if you say: Paulina, no I will not even hear you."

Hall (1994) had some form of memory of this experience: "As if floating within the darkness of my body I heard the words coming from my throat, but I was mostly aware of the timidness and fear of this spirit" (Hall, 1994, p. 95). This amadlozi trance state is most evident during dancing. Usually, each of the shamans take their turn "speaking the growling spirit-talk, moving back and forth in front of seated others, whisks drawing stories in space, then leading solo-voiced into the song, the other voices joining, followed by the hard beat of the drums. Then the feet move in the prescribed steps of the dance" (Arden, 1996, p. 83).

The lack of memory during the trance state is explained by the fact that the ancestors, and not the shaman, are in control (1, 3, 4). Others recognise the shaman entering the amadlozi trance state because the shaman no longer responds to the environment (1, 4). Furthermore, the breathing changes, with powerful outbreaths and exclamations: "Heyeiii!!!" At that point, the shaman can take on the personality of the ancestor (4). Most of the shamans in this study do not have any memory while in the amadlozi trance state, including any memory of the message the ancestor gives to the community present (1, 2, 3 4, 5, 8, 9, 10). If memories do re-surface, this was made possible by the ancestor (1).

With age and experience, the contr over the amadlozi trance states improves (3). The apprenticeship in fact was depicted by some of the shamans in this study as a means of gaining more and more control over the amadlozi trance state. Shaman Obed (3) stated that the ancestor voice might in the beginning sound like a "baby's

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voice", which over time grows stronger and "older". The shaman is therefore, with training, able to stop the trance through distracting her- or himself or asking the ancestors to withdraw, thereby stopping the amadlozi state from unfolding at inappropriate times. This is considered to be difficult to achieve (3, 4, 9, 10). The feeling of fear is associated with the beginning of the amadlozi trance state during the training phase, but with training and *muti* the feeling subsides (2).

Subjective experiences that occur before reaching the threshold of forgetfulness, include "light-headedness", feeling "half-dizzy or dizzy", even "dazed" (1, 2, 6, 7, 9). The experience is one of the mind shifting, of being "semi-conscious" and the mood changes (3). For shaman Paulina (4), there is a sense of being defocused from the self, which is similar to Arden's (1996) experience. "It is not every time when I dance now that the spirit rises from my belly, sometimes it comes without warning, erupting like some slow volcano of sound, possessing me. Sometimes it does not rise at all, and then I push the sound out, contracting my stomach, my diaphragm. But it is not the same, for when it rises naturally, I am absorbed in its power, enveloped in a force that isolates, [...] and I, with no real self left, become a focused point of growling energy" (Arden, 1996, p. 153).

The manner in which this is experienced is described in her words: "Suddenly my head is jerked back, my knees buckle, and I almost collapse. In slow motion now, as though in a dream, I see Joyce's hand reach out to steady me, growing larger as it reaches forward. Their singing has been replaced with a roaring sound; I cannot tel... if it surrounds me or is only in my ears. Then again my head is jerked back and deep in my gut the muscles contract" (Arden, 1996, p. 144). At times with the amadlozi trance state there is a burning sensation in the chest and energy running up and down the legs (3, 4). It is as if the brains are "shaking" (8), and the mind is simply "off" (10).

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Hall (1994) describes his trance experience during his training in Swaziland as having been precipitated by a certain apprehension around the ancestor spirits being embodied within him. He notes that there is certain developmental factor in connection with this trance state, in that there "seemed to be evolving a transparency in my body and mind. More and more was entering with less and less resistance" (Hall, 1994, p. 45). He continues by stating that his body "shook until it convulsed, though somewhere I seemed to be deep within myself, I felt nothing. My arms had a will of their own, and they lashed out, groping with the sheet covering me. The woman pulled it off. My body rose, and I seemed to feel two excitements simultaneously: my own and one belonging to somebody else acting through me, the being who now roared mightily with life-affirming joy and kicked up his - my - legs in a merry jig.

The people in the indumba said they had never seen a dance like this before. They clapped along with enthusiasm, happy that at last this spirit had arrived. My body was like a marionette pulled by the strings of another will as it jumped left, right, and then dropped with a pleased sigh emerging from my throat to the floor, to kneel before the assembly. I was curious as everybody else: what was this thing? And I clearly heard, along with other people, his first words: Aye there be spirits here tonight! But I was to hear nothing more. What consciousness I had held out up to this point faded away - after that the spirit emerged. A voice that was my own and yet not my own, for it possessed an unhurried, gentle, otherworldly tone" (Hall, 1994, p. 49).

2.1.3. The Context and Meaning of the Amadlozi Trance State

The shamans in this amadlozi trance state identify with the ancestors who possess or takes ownership of the body. There is a certain degree of passive or yielding self-control of the shaman in that s/he can inhibit or stop the ancestors taking over the body, but once a certain threshold of consciousness is reached, the ancestors take control, the shaman experiences a loss of memory. For some shamans, this loss of

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memory is evidence of the power of the trance (?). The shaman awakens as the powers of the ancestors recede, leaving the shaman in a groggy state, exhausted and disorientated.

The amadlozi trance state is the most passive or yielding in its self-mastery, and hence it is not surprising that this trance occurs in the most public arena, compared to the other trance states. It is induced only in the presence of a community of shamans or during training with other *thwasas* and the teacher present, because the shaman loses all sense of being present. The shaman as an embodied ancestor requires the ears of the community in order to be heard. This trance is practised during graduation ceremonies and on certain other occasions.

This trance, at least in the researcher's experience and training, is induced through a specific drum or *gida* rhythm that is similar to the galloping of horses. The dance is a healing dance, as Bührmann and Gqomfa (1982a), Hall (1994), and the shamans interviewed in this study have stated. One shaman during a meeting of shamans told the interviewer that on his initiation night, the long dance throughout the night had healed his left leg that had been affected by a stroke a few years before then. This amadlozi trance heals the shaman as it heals the community with knowledge.

The context of this amadlozi trance state begins with the galloping rhythm of the drums. As the shaman feels the ancestor's presence, the breathing changes, and the breathing becomes more heavy (another induction process). Finally, the exclamation of "Heyeii!!" is to be heard. The shaman goes to the shaman's hut or room and there others dress the shaman in his or her attire which is culture bound. For example, amongst the Tsonga, brightly coloured Ostrich feathers are worn on the head, strings of beads are hung across the shoulders, and rattles are tied to the ankles. The shaman emerges from the hut and joins the other dancing shamans, and follows the rhythm. In this specific dance rhythm a certain frenzy is reached, which ebbs and

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flows according to the songs sung, until the embodied ancestor finally delivers the message in front of the person for whom it is intended. The shaman might go on her/his knees, body shaking, and begin to deliver the message, either diagnosing or predicting. After this has been done, the shaman as an embodied ancestor is thrown back into the relentless yet healing rhythm of the dance.

Often other shamans become entrained by the atmosphere and begin to open their minds to the ancestors as their breathing changes. Exhaustion and over-stimulation can be effective inductive techniques to achieving trance states. After some time, the shamans begin to withdraw, move into the hut or room, and it is here that the ancestor lets go of the shaman's body. The shaman after a period of calmness, returns to support the other shamans.

An important part of the training for the *thwasa* involves the learning of a special dance the *xhentsa* dance found especially in the Xhosa tradition. This dance transports the novice into a trance state in order to communicate with the ancestors, and allowing her or him to speak through her (Hammond-Tooke, 1993). During this dance a confession of dreams occurs. *Xhentsa* is defined as 'dancing', which is a special kind of stamping in a rhythmic manner, while moving in a circle (Bührmann, 1981).

The *xhentsa* dance is best described in the following way: "The audience sit around the wall, and the performer gives them the time to clap, and possibly a phrase to chant. She stands in the centre of the hut, lifts her feet alternatively in time to the clapping, comes lightly down on her toes, stamps her heels, and quivers every muscle up her body to her cheeks and arms. The time gets faster and faster, the dancer lifts her feet higher and higher till after five minutes she stops abruptly, panting and dripping with perspiration. The clapping stops. After a bout of dancing the novice addresses the company, thanking them for being present and confessing her dreams, and then addresses her ancestors, thanking them for recovery from

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sickness (partial, if not complete). Then she dances again." (Hunter, 1936 quoted in Hammond-Tooke, 1989, p.108).

Hammond-Tooke (1989) states that the dance may be p -formed at any time, but because it has to be 'clapped for', these dances usually occur when a crowd is gathered at her homestead for meat or beer. One m- · not *xhentsa* in sunlight, thus the dance must be performed inside, except for the ↓ ↓f the graduation. The dance is usually performed solo, although others might join in at times.

The ritual dance might serve as an example of a rich symbolic and therapeutic integration. The ritual dancing is described by Bührmann (1981), in her observation of the Xhosa *xhentsa*, as therapeutic and healing. This dance is performed indoors and consists of four concentric circles. The inner c⁻ · ⁻ a shallow, round pit used for cooking, in which the ashes represent symbol ↓ ↓he 'sacred fire', fire being closely associated with the ancestors. The second circle contains the dancers, patients and novices who are the first to fall away as trained shamans take over during the long dance. The third circle consists of clapping and singing participants, the men on one side facing the women. The final circle is the wall of the round hut which is seen as keeping out the bad influences.

Together, the whole could be interpreted as a mandala, which represents integration and wholeness. According to Bührmann (1981), during such a dance the mind and the body of the dancer become integrated. Firstly, the anticlockwise movement represents the introversion of psychic or libidinal energy. The person turns inward as attention and libido is withdrawn from the external world. Secondly, feelings are expressed in that the novice is focused on her/his 'illness', talking about it, singing about it, and invoking the help of the ancestors (Bührmann, 1981b). The body is strengthened and integrated in the dance, for dancing is believed to strengthen the body and support the blood circulation (Bührmann, 1981b). After the dance there is a sense of rejuvenation and health (Bührmann, 1982b).

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The success of an amadlozi trance state is judged by the effects in two areas, namely health (diagnosis and healing), as well as remote viewing (recognising and locating lost or hidden objects). The community, as well as the other shamans at a celebration, judge and value this form of amadlozi trance according to the success achieved in these two areas of application. This judgement of a trance state reflects a judgement of the shaman's power in so much as s/he can access powerful ancestors. It is the ancestors, however, with whom the power resides.

2.1.4. The Cartography of the Amadlozi Trance State

The cartography of this trance involves a total reduction of the normal waking awareness, in other words, a switch of awareness and identity seems to take place. From the perspective of the shaman, there is a lack of awareness, from the perspective of the community there is a switch of identity. In this trance state, the community and the shaman believe it is not the shaman who is communicating, but rather an other, an ancestor who uses the shaman as a vehicle of expression. Shaman Paulina (4) experiences her sense of self as absent, creating a dissociation in the service of the self, or to be more specific, in service of the contact with the ancestors during the trance.

In terms of concentration, shamans seem to achieve a certain free-floating attention through their inductive techniques. A "letting-go" (1) or a dizziness is sought, rather than a mental fixation on an object in thought or in the environment. The form of concentration is not so much the ability to focus, but rather the ability to open the gates of the mind, to relax and de-focus sufficiently in order to allow the ancestors to enter. A focused concentration would inhibit this process of ancestral entry. The concentration becomes the capacity to follow the rhythm of the drums, and thereby create a drifting off into this trance. During training, practice aims at achieving the discipline to let go and transcend everyday consciousness and to dissociate in a healthy manner. Training therefore enables the shaman, amongst other things, to achieve a form of positive yielding self-mastery.

The issue of control needs to be addressed carefully. According to the shamans' experiences and the community's role, the shaman is no longer present and therefore a yielding and passive form of self-control is evident, as has been discussed concerning possession trance states. It is the community's role to honour and understand the ancestor's voice. Although the shaman has no control according to her/his own understanding, there seems to be a subtle control provided by the community. The community creates a space of safety for the shaman in which the shaman can lose her/himself and yield to the experience. The rituals, the dances, and the rhythms produce a state of containment in which this trance state can be mastered in the form of passive self-control. The researcher has observed how during such trance states when certain shamans are inadvertently injuring themselves, that other shamans will gently remove the shaman and take her/him to the hut, where s/he is given the space to calm down and resurface.

The shaman, therefore, could be understood as handing over the external control of the trance state to the ritualised containment of the community of shamans. The individual shaman has at times sufficient inner control to stop the trance state at the beginning. An example of this is provided in one interview in which the shaman Obed (3) stopped the ancestors from coming forth because there was no one who would have understood the ancestors.

Another shaman, Paulina (4), stated that with certain ancestors in this trance state, it is wise to treat them respectfully but firmly, and they are asked not to appear at certain inappropriate times, and not to be so severe with the shaman. The community of shamans will therefore contain the dangerous edges of this trance, and the shaman places her/his trust in her/his ancestors and the community's support, for which the community receives information from the ancestors.

In this trance state, the degree of arousal is high, while calmness is absent. This is evidenced in the shaman's expressing the ancestors' voice at a high level of intensity,

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while the community on the whole remains calm, except those singing, dancing and drumming. The methods of induction (drumming and dancing) are geared towards achieving high levels of arousal, affect and intensity. As the shaman enters the trance state, s/he starts shaking with the whole body, the voice is strong and pressured, and until the ancestor leaves the body, this body will dance, shake, sing, speak and signify with intensity. When the shaman exists the trance or the ancestor leaves, the shaman returns to the hut from which s/he originally emerged. After having calmed down, the shaman will join the others in a supportive role, either drumming or singing.

The degree of sensory perception is directly related to a sense of self in that sensory sensations cease to be remembered as the self of the shaman disappears in this trance. For the shamans the dancing and the call of the ancestors can at times be experienced as a rush of energy in the body (3, 4, 6). There is a rush or pressure of air coming out of the body, which is at times verbalised as "Heyeii". This is the sign of the immanent presence or arrival of the ancestors, the call of the ancestors to enter the mind of the shaman. At this very point, the shaman can halt the approaching trance state by getting up, walking around and distracting her/himself. If the shaman allows the trance state to envelop him/her, then feelings of dizziness, "like feeling drunk", "weird", out of touch, "swaying slightly". These were the descriptions given for the sensory perceptions of this ASC. The feeling of going through a membrane was also stated (6). After these sensations, a shroud or veil of forgetfulness settles over the self of the shaman.

In this trance state there is no evidence of OBEs. Furthermore, the content of the amadlozi trance is clearly organised and structured within the rituals of the occasion. The trance occurs more in the auditory modality rather than the visual one. Ancestors speak and their voices carry information which is usually highly personal and seldom archetypal in that the message relates directly to the person's state of well-being, or is a diagnosis of illnesses, or the unfolding of the person's fate.

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2.2. The Amakhosi Trance State

In this trance state, the ancestors were described to be "out" (4). No embodiment takes place, but rather the voice of the ancestor becomes an inner articulation as opposed to an outer expression. The voice of the ancestors traverses the inner mind spaces of the shaman, while in the amadlozi trance state, the ancestors inhabit both the spaces of the mind and the body. The three forms in which the amakhosi trance state manifests are in the form of omens, during divination, and by sympathetic pain. In these three rather disparate realms of shamanic activity, the South African shaman experiences the ancestor as within, and the shaman retains her/his own sense of identity.

The amakhosi trance state can manifest in the reading of omens or visions (4, 6, 7, 8). The omens signify within a synchronistic net of meaning, and the ancestors speak within the shaman as moments of insight and intuition. In some moments, the voices of the ancestors become clear, for the ancestors accompany the shaman throughout life. These trance states are most often brief but nevertheless enlightening. The amakhosi trance state seems less obvious and d initely less theatrical or public in its nature. It is important to note that this amakhosi trance state was considered by my shamanic teacher (10) and those shamans around him at that time as being more important than the amadlozi trance state. "You can dance beautifully, but if you cannot *bhula* [divine] and if you cannot know *muti*, then you are no good. Dancing does not make you good *isangoma*. You must know and heal, you must be able to *bhula*." Equally, Hall (1994) states that the ability to find hidden objects had as its final aim to draw out the hidden ailments of patients through divination. He was told by his teacher: "I am telling you: the proof of lidlotis is in the bones." (Hall, 1994, p. 62). Another form of the amakhosi trance state is the feeling that ancestors give the shamans. The shamans feel sympathetically the pain of their patients in their body (2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10). This is used for diagnostic purposes.

2.2.1. The Induction of the Amakhosi Trance State

This trance state is induced through the specific context of divination or healing. The ritual as well as the call for the ancestral presence allows the shaman to focus and to move beyond everyday consciousness into an altered state. The amakhosi trance state is further induced by purifying the shaman. According to shaman Julia (2), to *phalaza* opens up the shaman's chest area, and it is believed that this supports divinatory skills. Furthermore, shaman Caroline (5) noted that the psy . oactive effects of taking *snuff*, and at times alcoholic beverages, are used to alter the mind and support the readings of 'bones'. She stated: "When I can have a can of beer, my husband also knows that, I don't even need to look at the 'bones', I just push them aside (5)." Shaman Paulina (4) claimed: "*Imphepho* helps you concentrate, and makes you listen, you see when I was throwing your 'bones', I lit it for my ancestors." It is also placed on the divinatory mat in order to signify the presence of the ancestors (2, 5).

Importantly, the shamans spoke of creating an inner quietude of the mind, a state of relaxation, that allows the ancestors to direct and support a trance state (5, 8, 9). One shaman stated that slowing down the breathing is part of the induction process (7). Shaman Virginia (8) summarised all the trance inductive techniques in her statement: "Yes, when I am throwing the 'bones' [...] the time you put on your hair and your bag of 'bones', put on your things, taken your *snuff*, before that you must be quiet, silence, and I burn *imphepho*, quietly without speaking. After that I take my *snuff*, and in seconds or a minute I talk to my ancestors, I pray." Prayer to the ancestor becomes an essential form of focusing and entering the amakhosi trance state (1, 3, 10).

2.2.2. The Experience of the Amakhosi Trance State

The amakhosi trance state is evident in the reading of omens and visions (4, 6, 7, 8), like the appearance of a snake crossing the path ahead of a *thwasa* can be an ominous sign of power. Such omens are also read from dream material. For

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example, shaman Paulina (4) recounted how she dreamt of a taxi with the number two, and she experienced a sense of foreboding. On the way to town, this taxi, which had a two inscribed on it as part of an advert, narrowly avoided two accidents. Shaman Paulina 'knew' that her ancestors had warned her.

The amakhosi trance state is also evident as an inner voice. Mashele (Simon, 1993) heard an inner voice she identified as her ancestor, who told her specifically to get a certain powder in order to heal someone. She was to "go and get some powder from a tree. There are a lot of bushes outside the mill, bushes and trees, and he told me which tree I must go to. It was big but not very tall. It had flowers with a lot of leaves [...]. There is something eating those trees and it leaves a powder inside" (Simon, 1993, p. 29).

The amakhosi trance state is most evident during divination, and Shaman Julia (2) stated that she could hear the ancestral voice during divination whilst in this trance state, thus "when I throw them down and say *siyavuma, siyavuma*, then the voice comes to me." For shaman Obed (3) this amakhosi trance state is experienced as a "semi-trance" in which the "shapes" of the way the 'bones' fall is interpreted. He also noted that the bible could be used for divinatory purposes: "they [the ancestors] give you the spirit to understand and feel what the bible says." Shaman Caroline (5) experiences the ancestors in the amakhosi trance state as voices in her head, with whom she is able to interact with: "Ya, I talk back to them." Most shamans noted that the ancestors are heard internally (2, 3, 4, 5, 10). "There is something that tells you to say this and this and this" (10). During the researcher's training, his shamanic teacher (10) noted that the ancestors in this trance state "give you the eyes to see", to scan the patterns of meanings that the scattering of 'bones' have produced.

Shaman Caroline (5), as well as Sarah Mashele (Simon, 1993), dreamt about divining at an early age. They would see the bones in their dreams, and this was one of the identifying markers of becoming a shaman. Furthermore, shaman Caroline (5)

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recounted her strict training in divination during her apprenticeship. Her teacher would allow the *thwasas* to divine for patients, but if she was not satisfied with the reading, she would firstly give the correct reading to the patient, and secondly, after the patient had left, she would beat the novices and withhold food from them (5).

Another important form of the amakhosi trance state is that the shaman experiences the ancestors as answering the health problems of their patients. This is done either by inner voices or sympathetic feelings of pain in the shaman's body. The location of the sympathetic pain in the shaman's body is quite specific, like a headache on one side of the head or a stomach ache (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10). Shaman Stan (1) spoke about "scanning" the patients in order to feel their pain: "You scan them [...] you just feel it, I don't know how. Sometimes, when someone has a headache or at the back, I can feel it on my back." Also a certain pain within the shaman's body can be a signal from the ancestors that there is a patient waiting at home (2, 4, 5) Shaman Julia (2) stated: "Immediately when you come through my gate my body will change."

Shaman Virginia (8) spoke of one experience in which she was awoken by an ancestor in the middle of the night, and despite some resistance was directed with some sternness to a specific house, many kilometres away, to heal a child. The shaman knocked on the door of a surprised mother, who had thought her child had died of an illness. Shaman Virginia (8), under instructions from the ancestor, treated and healed the child, and brought it back to life. Similarly, her own child was diagnosed as being dead, and as she left the hospital, she heard the voice of her ancestor within her stating that her child was still alive. "The report was written that my child had passed away at three during the night. But my ancestors told me she was not dead." After lengthy difficulties with the nurses, who thought this was a mother denying the reality of her child's condition, her daughter was healed by her.

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2.2.3. The Context and Meaning of the Amakhosi Trance State

As already stated, the amakhosi trance state is most evident during divination. It is therefore crucial to investigate fully the context within which divination takes place. Briefly, Peek (1991) notes that the analysis of divination in the history of anthropology has shown that the French find symbol systems and cosmologies, while the British encounter social systems. Divination is an intricate means of attaining knowledge and is closely related to African philosophy (Burton, 1991; Verin & Rajaonarimanana, 1991). This knowledge becomes further translated into power through the social position of the shaman as an advisor or consultant (Blier, 1991). Knowledge is power, and access to knowledge through divination is a means to maintain it (Whyte, 1991).

Mendonsa (1982) considers divination to have a powerful political influence in coercing others within a social environment, for it labels that which is deviant. Divination is a form of symbolic management that reaffirms or alters a social order. The divinatory process is a political process that creates an ordered forum for recognising and resolving conflict within kinship structures. In this process, symbols get used, combined, altered and supplanted to interact between people, to overpower them, and to solve problems. Thus "the ritual process of divination is a political process, but the political power lies in the manipulation of symbols, not food or goods" (Mendonsa, 1982, p.203). Divination thus produces meaning within a history. It re-authors the client's narrative in a whole system of symbolic and social networks (Whyte, 1991).

From a parapsychological perspective, there appear to be three main types of divinatory procedures (Winkelman, 1983). The first procedure involves ASCs such as the amakhosi trance state. The second procedure involves physiological or behavioural responses on the part of the practitioner or client, such as dowsing, or in the South African context, sympathetic body pains that are used by the shaman to divine the client's illness. The third procedure is the result of the creation and

observation of an indeterminate random event, which is interpreted in a symbolic manner in order to gather certain information, for example, the runes, the Tarot, or the I Ching, and in the South African shamanic context, the' bones'. South African shamans use all three procedures in their divinatory practice.

The amakhosi trance states during the practice of divination are ritualised and contextualised in those spaces between the 'bones'. It is important to respect the different methods of divination found amongst South African shamans. The most common method of divination involves the divining dice (in Sotho: *ditaola*), the so-called 'bones'. It is believed that with the access to and communication with the ancestors, the shaman, through the use of the 'bones', can answer the questions posed to her/him. Besides being able to diagnose illnesses and recommend medicines, the coming of rainfall and the outcome of battles can be predicted, as well as lost or stolen objects can be found (Hammond-Tooke, 1993). In the Zulu tradition, these 'bones' are placed in 'white' medicine to enhance their effectiveness (Kohler, 1941, p. 41).

A set of 'bones' will usually be made up of the astragalus (ankle) bones of either sheep, cattle, antelope, baboon or antbear, and sometimes wild pig. It may also include objects such as sea shells, coins, dice or strangely shaped stones. Fundamental to the complete set of 'bones' are a set of four 'bones' or small ivory tablets, which are at times triangular or quadrangular in shape. The one face of each of these is incised with dots or lines, while the other face is plain. The dots or lines of each of the four signify the adult male, the young boy, the adult woman and the young girl respectively. They therefore represent the whole family unit (Hammond-Tooke, 1989). It is said that the *isanusi* divined with ten knucklebones, five of which were from male animals and five from female animals (Berglund, 1976, p. 185).

Another form of divination is ventriloquism, in which, instead of statements being uttered from the shaman's mouth, the voices of whistling spirits (*imilozi*) emanate

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from all around the hut. Such a voice is regarded as the voice of the ancestors (Ngubane, 1977), or as among the Mpondo, the shaman's power animals (Hammond-Tooke, 1989). The rarity of this divination method makes the shaman who has access to such a method, popular and prestigious (Thorpe, 1993). The shaman then interprets theses whistles ι ιessages from the ancestors.

Other abilities of the shaman as a diviner in the amakhosi trance, include for example kindling a roaring fire under a pot of medicated water, but the water never boils. Furthermore the shaman in this trance state can determine the direction from which a disease has come by observing from which direction the water spurts out of a calabash with holes in it. The shaman can also 'smell out' a witch by placing a heated *assegai* (short spear) on the bare body of each member of the assembled group in such a way that only the guilty will feel pain, and thereby be discovered. Other divination techniques include striking the ground with sticks about a foot long or with tree branches, which jump about in answer to the diviner's question (Krige, 1962, pp. 301-302). The Venda divination technique is unique in South Africa in that a divining bowl is used. This is a shallow bowl marked with symbols along its raised edge and at the bottom. The position of the shells of fruit floating in the water in relation to the symbols, allows the shaman to interpret and answer the question posed by the inquirer (Hammond-Tooke, 1989, p. 115).

The ritualised aspect of the amakhosi trance state during divination has been stated by shaman Julia (2) as being supportive of this trance state. The inquirers can be an afflicted person, her or his family members or even neighbours of the afflicted person. The shaman sought out should not reside too close in order not to have access to local gossip. They sit down in the shaman's hut while the shaman squats opposite them. Between them lies a grass mat upon which the divination 'bones' are thrown. The money is folded up and slid under the mat. After this transaction, the shaman takes the 'bones' into her/his hands, and begins to call upon her/his ancestors, and as one shaman stated (8), it is like a prayer. The shaman asks the

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patient her or his full name, and this name is included in the call to the ancestors. The shaman might also request the patient to blow on the 'bones' in her/his hands. Importantly, the shaman has no prior knowledge as to why the patient is sitting there silently. Thus the first throw of the 'bones' is to establish the reason for the visit of the patient. As the 'bones' are scattered across the mat and begin to settle into a meaningful pattern, the shaman gazes silently at the 'bones', sometimes listening to her/his own body for the sympathetic pain.

The shaman is expected to make statements after which the inquirers clap their hands or click their fingers saying: *"Siyavuma"* (We agree!). If a point was established to the satisfaction of the client then they would say: *"Phosa ngemva"* (Put it behind you), and if the shaman was wrong, they would say: *"Asiva"* (We do not hear) (Hammond-Tooke, 1993, p. 190). From the heartiness of the responses the shaman can determine whether s/he is on the right track. If the shaman continues to make wrong statements, the inquirers may take their money and go elsewhere (Thorpe, 1993). In the diagnosis, no names are mentioned, but the suspect witch or sorcerer is referred to in terms of relationship or status (Hammond-Tooke, 1989). If the shaman has correctly established the reason for the patient's visit, then it means that the shaman is worthy of her/his craft, and is a worthy healer who can be trusted, for s/he has passed the test. It is accepted that despite a successful reading, patients go for second and often third opinions, in order to check out the diagnosis and remedies.

In the amakhosi trance state, the focus of the trance is placed on the pattern of the 'bones', the various positions and relations of the 'bones', which begin to form a network of symbols and meaning. These four specific ivory tablets mentioned above can fall into 16 different combinations, and if the variable of direction is added, there are 32 combinations (Hammond-Tooke, 1989, p. 114). In the researcher's own training it became clear that the pattern of 'bones' often have a focal point. For example, the cowry pointing to the upturned lion bone indicates that one reason that

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the patient was here was that she had problems with the police or that they had been robbed. The fact that the six of dice lies significantly close to the other family member 'bones', indicates perhaps the patient is seeking guidance because of a family argument.

Furthermore, the patient might have womb problems if the 'female' shell is lying on its side next to the 'bone' that signifies the patient. As the symbolic Gestalt emerges and the patient proclaims "siyavuma" (we agree), it is important to remain within this Gestalt of meaning, for now all the 'bones' will be related to this meaning construct. (For a more specific description and presentation of the meaning of the various 'bones' see Hammond-Tooke, 1993, p. 194-195; Schlosser, 1972, p. 443-447; Ulufudu, 1989.)

Attempts have been made to understand the divinatory process as a psychological and transferential process (the diviner in dialogue with the client), or as involving psychic elements (trance states), or as being a synchronistic process understood in Jungian terms in which two acausally related events are considered to be meaningful (Parkin, 1991). The researcher has witnessed the psychotherapeutic component of divination. The researcher was told by his teacher that a shaman must never talk to others about a patient's divination session. This is similar to the confidentiality code of psychotherapists. Furthermore, the teacher pressed on the researcher to never treat serious ailments or bewitchment of his own family, for the shaman's own feelings become involved.

Also, if the shaman is seriously ill, another shaman should be sought out. The researcher's shamanic teacher is therefore fully aware of transference and its ramifications. The researcher agrees with the statement that often patients or clients continue talking "long after the divining and prescribing are done. This is when the sangoma becomes both priest and counsellor, who else, after all, do these people have to talk with?" (Arden, 1996, p. 143).

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Specifically in terms of the amakhosi trance state, Peek (1991) argues that "all the drama of divination serves to move the participants out of their normal mode of thinking, shaking them up in order to change their minds because their current understanding of the situation is inadequate" (Peek, 1991, p. 205). The diviner becomes both the messenger and the interpreter, and does so by entering a trance state (Peek, 1991).

The cognitive self-mastery is the "key to our understanding of divination [and] is found in the continual reference to an intermediate category between the poles of mathematical calculation and spirit mediumship. [...] All divination forms involve a non-normal state of inquiry which then requires a rational interpretation of the revealed information by th· client if not by the diviner" (Peek, 1991, p. 12). This dichotomy of intellectual-rational versus intuitional-inspirational could be understood as mirroring the characteristics of the brain's hemispherical specialisation in which the left hemisphere is associated mainly with more analytical and linear thinking, while the right hemisphere is associated mostly with synthetical and analogical thinking.

Although far more research is required in order to substantiate such claims fully, some phenomenological evidence of this is suggested for example by the entry of the divining spirit which "shifts one's mind to ·he side" (Blier 1991, p. 75). Furthermore, a shaman during divination in a trance state whose brain waves were measured, showed a shift into alpha rhythms (Bucher, 1980), which supports to some extent the concept that some physiological change might occur. By introducing this level of analysis and understanding, which incorporates "the brain's physiological differentiation of hemispheres and the mind's alteration of cognitive functioning, we are able to better understand divination's universality among human cultures" (Peek, 1991, p. 205). This important insight needs to be tempered by the dangers of neuromythology (Noll, 1985) as well as the controversy surrounding EEG and meditation research (Eichenhofer & Coombs, 1987), for not sufficient specific

and replicable neuropsychological data exist in order to support such claims.

In this trance state, the ancestors are supportive and quiet. They whisper answers, they suggest and nudge with intuition and insight, and as the flow of information becomes fluent and graceful, the shaman can often begin to access knowledge that is not dependent on the 'bones'. As some shamans report, they stop using the 'bones' as a trigger for their accurate knowingness, and achieve a flow of knowledge in a trance state (1, 2, 4, 5). In this trance state, the shaman is far more active as a person and has more self-control. The ancestral voices are subtle but present. The shaman is supported, but the openness of mind does not lead to an embodiment, even though some shamans have stated that often, after the reading, they do not remember what it is they had communicated, and claim that it was their ancestors who spoke. (1)

2.2.4. The Cartography of the Amakhosi Trance State

The cartography of this trance state is significantly different to the amadlozi trance state. There is a reduction of awareness, but not in the total sense as in the amadlozi trance state, but rather awareness is focused and bundled. In the amakhosi trance state the shaman's consciousness functions like a spotlight. This is achieved through inner silence and focus, a virtually meditative state in that the mind is emptied, allowing the ancestors to speak, to suggest and to highlight the meaning of the omens, the 'bones', as well as that of sympathetic pain.

The shaman in this state has a heightened ability to concentrate for s/he becomes a mediator between the physical and the spirit world, and thus weaves the knowledge from the ancestors with her/his own ability to read the 'bones'. Concentration is focused on the 'bones', and at the same time there is an openness of mind which allows the Gestalt of meaning to emerge. This focus on the emptiness of the mind means that an empty canvas of the mind is sought, upon which the ancestors whisper and sculpt thoughts in the head of the shaman. Some shamans give themselves over to this mind space to such an extent that in effect they find it difficult to remember

what was said during the divination.

In this trance state, there is a large degree of control on the part of the shaman which is far more active and assertive, for it is really the function of the shaman in this divinatory arena to become a mediator rather than a medium of the ancestors. Thus the shaman can and will modify, change, or even ignore the messages of the ancestors if s/he deems it fit to do so. In this trance state the degree of arousal is low while the degree of calmness is far greater than in the amadlozi state. Calmness becomes the inductive tool serving to keep arousal at bay and affect at its lowest level, the intensity of the affect being low key in order to create an empty space in the mind. In the amakhosi trance state, sensory perception is bodily in terms of sympathetic pain and more visual during the act of divination than auditory, for clearly in an interpretative framework the 'bones' are required to be read as visual symbols of the patient's condition. However, the sensory perception of the amakhosi trance state is also auditory when the ancestors are experienced as inner voices.

The symbolic material or content of this trance is visual and symbolic rather than just auditory. The visual and symbolic material of the trance becomes organised according to the strict structure of the many possible associations of the 'bones'. Thus the content of the trance becomes tested by the silence of the patient, for it is the shaman who has to declare why the patient came to see her/him. The content of the trance is therefore far more personal rather than archetypal. In other words, the archetypal imagery emerging from the 'bones' become personalised and adapted to the patient's life.

There is a strong sense of self present in that the shaman is aware of her/his role as a mediator carrying the message across the boundary of the spirit world to the material world. There is also no evidence of any OBEs. In summary, the shaman functions on a superficial level as a diviner if s/he reads the 'bones' based on her/his own knowledge alone, while for the shaman who has accessed a deeper amakhosi

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trance state, the 'bones' become triggers for the ancestral messages. In this amakhosi trance state, the community is not so much the container but the tester, the judge or critic, for it is the self of the shaman that contains this trance state.

2.3. The Amathongo Trance State

The amathongo trance state is a state characterised by dreams and visions. The importance of dreams for the South African shaman cannot be overemphasised Shaman Stan (1) claimed that they "are very important, if you don't believe in dreams you've got a problem. If you don't dream, you've got a problem [...]. Ya, because if you are a patient, and if you go home, I've got to think about you, dream about you." Ancestors make contact with the shaman through dreams, and therefore it is important to remember them. Shaman Paulina (4) stated regarding dreaming that "there I won't forget, because I'm trained not to forget." During training, dream interpretation first thing in the mornings encourages the memory faculty and it is a central practice for the novice. Messages from the dreams are heeded, be they to collect certain herbs, to slaughter a white chicken, or to adorn oneself with certain coloured beads (2, 8, 9).

Lucid dream states were reported by most of the shamans in this study (2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10). Furthermore, the novice is expected to become lucid in the dream state in order that s/he can interact with the ancestors, ask questions, clarify instructions, and help identify the ancestor in the dream (2, 5). Dreams about future events are also considered to be significant (2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10). These are "straight dreams", as shaman Paulina (4) put it, in which the manifest content of the dream is predictive of the future. Often shamans dream about the patients they will see the next day (2, 4, 5, 9).

The amathongo trance state presents as a separate category of ASCs for the shamans, because the interaction with the ancestors in the dream state differs from the other two forms of ancestral interactions. In this trance state, the shaman is

neither embodied nor is s/he a mediator. It is as if the shaman and the ancestors in sharing the dream meet in a common space of an alternate reality. The ancestors might appear in the form of their previous incarnation, such as the grandfather who was a healer or the grandmother who was a shaman (3, 4). Some shamans might be able to verify who the ancestor is by describing the dream figure to the older generation (5). The ancestors can also take on the more symbolic forms of totem animals such as lions, leopards or crocodiles (4, 6, 9).

The amathongo trance state not only includes 'ordinary' dreams, but also lucid dreams, pre-cognitive dreams, visions, underwater experiences, as well as OBEs. During the amathongo trance state, the ancestor and the shaman access an alternate reality through a specific state of consciousness. It is therefore important not to equate the amathongo trance state specifically with night time dreams, but rather to consider it as a category of a shamanic trance state in which the South African shaman interacts with her/his ancestors on a different plane of reality as compared to that of everyday life.

2.3.1. The Induction of the Amathongo Trance State

This dream trance state is induced on a physiological level with the use of *muti* (2, 5, 8, 9) by burning *imphepho*, a mildly mind-altering substance, before going to bed (8), as well as taking by *snuff* before falling asleep (2, 5, 9). Added to this inductive process, a deliberate request is made by the shaman to the ancestors for "good dreams" (8). *Snuff* is used to continue serial dreams (2, 4), and in that regard, colour and serial dreams are considered to be significant (6, 8, 10). The ancestors can also be contacted in a hypnogogic state (6, 10). Credo Mutwa (6): "But sometimes you can dream something on the verge of waking and sleeping. Also, we are taught not to rely on dreams unless it is a technicolour dream with all the colours visible, with all the details. This kind of dream will go on like a serial in the night." Shaman Virginia (8) summed it up in the following way: "We use *imphepho* and *snuff* to ask them [the ancestors] for things. [...] When I want to see a nice dream tonight, I use

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it as a *thwasa*, shake my *lekamba*, and ask my *amadlozi*, and I talk to this medicine to give me good dreams. You use it as an *isangoma* to wake up the *amadlozi* so that they don't sleep." This is similar to the practice of self-hypnotic suggestion as well as the declaration of affirmations.

Most South African shamans state that a novice must lie on the floor on a mattress in order that s/he is not awakened by the squeaking of the bed. Also, it is believed that the body lies more still on the floor than on the bed (2, 8). This suggests that keeping the body still during this trance state is beneficial. This idea is supported in the lucid dream and OBE literature (Buhlman, 1996; La Berge & Rheingold 1990; Monroe, 1982). Interestingly, some shamans reported that their lucid engagement with their ancestors usually occurred in the early hours of the morning, between twelve and three o'clock (2, 5, 10). Shaman Caroline (5) commented: "My dreams always come when it is coming three o'clock in the morning. It doesn't come straight at night."

This is the time when the pineal gland excretes melatonin at its highest level, melatonin being a neurotransmitter that makes dreams possible (Roney-Dougal, 1991). Lucid dreaming and OBE literature support the finding that this is often the best time to induce these ASCs (La Berge & Rheingold, 1990; Monroe, 1982; Roney-Dougal, 1991). Electro-magnetic pollution of the urban environment was considered by Credo Mutwa (6), as well as by my shamanic teacher, to have a disturbing influence on the dream process. Dreams that occurred in nature or rural settings are seen to have more validity (6). It is where one would have "African dreams", as my shamanic teacher put it.

In terms of the 'underwater experience', an experience of the shaman going underwater to either meet a teaching snake or the river people, a certain ritual in this regard is performed during the graduation of the shaman. In the researcher's experience, a specific rhythm called the *bhandawu* rhythm is played on drums,

whilst the shaman jumps into the river or lake. The shaman is submerged three times. It is believed that this specific drum beat induces or calls the water people to come forward.

2.3.2. The Experience of the Amathongo Trance State

Most shamans during their initiation illness, the *ukuthwasa*, saw their future shamanic teacher in their dreams (2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10). Mashele (Simon, 1993) was told by her ancestor to go to Rhodesia, now called Zimbabwe, in order to find her shamanic teacher. Shaman Caroline (5) found her shamanic teacher by seeing her in her dreams, and hearing her speak a language she could not understand. Although a Sotho, she began speaking Tsonga in her sleep. Her shamanic teacher turned out to be Tsonga. "I dreamt the lady talking Tsonga, and in my dream, my husband say I was talking Tsonga. Then I dream the lady, and then my husband find a friend, and he take me to the lady."

In one case, a shaman (8) did not follow the advice of her ancestors, and chose the wrong teacher with dire consequences. Shaman Virginia (8) remembered how she "was shown Credo Mutwa in my dreams. Just a big black man with a skin in front of him and with specs, very bad in my dream. So my ancestors told me that he is the one who is going to teach you. Then in 1989, I came to a place where I can find him. So I fell by another lady, she crooked me, she said that he doesn't work with the *isangoma*, the *thwasas*, he is now working with American people, so this lady takes me to teach me to become a *thwasa*. Because my ancestors were not happy I can't, I felt dizzy and miserable in my dreams.

So in my dream my grandmother says to me this is not the one, and this is not the proper person we sent you to. So I asked this lady, will you take me to the man that I have been shown to. So when the time when I saw Mr. Mutwa my period of *thwasa* was through. Mr. Credo told me: All right, if your ancestors still wants you to come to me they will show you again. In January 1990, he takes me out from this lady, and

then when I got home I couldn't work, I could do nothing. I became miserable and confused. As I came back to Mr. Credo. Now I beg him to become my teacher. So he started to teach me to be a *thwasa*, some subjects."

Shaman Julia (2) actually received most of her training in medicinal herbs and divination from her ancestors during her dreams. This is not unusual as a shaman is expected to gather information, for example about patients, from the ancestors in this dream space. Shaman Paulina (4) would dream, and then could "see that tomorrow morning a lady with this and this illness will come tomorrow and it will happen like that exactly." For this reason a certain lucidity during the dream phase of amathongo trance state is necessary.

Credo Mutwa (6) acknowledged that he regularly achieves this lucid state: "Yes, a lot. You are aware, sometimes you end up within a dream within a dream. You know that you are dreaming." The reason for this is that the shaman needs to actively interact with the ancestors in order to obtain the information. Shaman Julia (2) commented: "Ya, in the dream, when he [the ancestor] wants him to go far, you can't just say yes, you must ask how am I going to get there."

Shaman Obed (3) uses the lucid state in order to ask the ancestors about the illnesses of his patients and in his dreams ancestors give instructions. Shaman Obed (3) commented: "Well, if you are asleep, you dream of course, and when you are dreaming they [the ancestors] will tell you to go to Germiston, you will find something there." During the training period, the *thwasas* receive suggestions from the ancestors in dreams, especially about finding hidden objects. Shaman Obed (3) commented further: "For instance, when you are a *thwasa*, they buy a goat or a cow, and you don't know the colour, whether it is female or male, and then you got to visualise, you got to have a vision, that will show you that the goat is in the third street, because you haven't seen it, they are hiding it."

For the shamans in this study, the pre-cognitive quality of their dreams in their amathongo trance state are of importance (2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10). Shaman Caroline (5): "For sure, even somebody, I can dream somebody can die, I tell my husband, and also Julia knows, that person is going to die." Similarly, Sarah Mashele (Simon, 1993) as a young girl woke up in the middle of the night, and when wanting to relieve herself at the outside toilet, was chased by a skeleton figure who told her that she "must tell Evelyn [...] that she and the other children must settle everything otherwise she [the ancestor] couldn't relax" (Simon, 1993, p. 19). Sarah Mashele was told her mother afterwards that they nearly lost certain things because they didn't know where to find them but they found them through her advice (Simon, 1993).

The shamans in this study do have visions of ancestors and future events. These visions are not dream states, but occur in a trance state (4, 6, 7, 8). Shaman Paulina (4) described one of her visions: "You know I was just relaxing, when I look at the pillow, I started yawning, my body shaking, I know it is the *amadlozi* [ancestors]. When I look at the other side, I see a snake, a head of a snake. I knew what was happening, but I was not ready for that, and I ran out [laughs]." Hall (1994) also began to have visions of his spirits: "And then a new set of visions would appear suddenly after drum-beating and under the sheet" (Hall, 1994, p. 94). Hall (1994) also experienced the vision of an old homestead of one of his embodied spirits. This vision for a brief moment overlaid his view of his surroundings. Furthermore, he has "seen" the spirits separate from himself (Hall, 1994, p. 127-128).

In terms of pre-cognitive visions, Credo Mutwa (6) as an *isanusi* noted that such visions are often pre-empted by signal events, and that such pre-cognitive vision "shows you all that is going to happen and then it will give you a signal which says, if you want to know that what you were shown is true then it will give you one little incident that is going to happen tomorrow. [...] For example, Nobela (7) saw naked men drowning in mud, she saw a man screaming horribly with the dirt mud flowing

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like a river into his mouth and throat, and then there came this incident of the mine workers who drowned in the mud in the mine. This incident was the signal incident which tells me and Nobela that the horrendous vision is true and is going to happen."

Both Credo Mutwa (6) and shaman Nobela (7) are able to enter a trance state that seems to belong to the *isanusi* practices. Both shamans are able to enter an alternate reality that Credo Mutwa (6) called the "land of the spirit animals", in which the shaman travels at the speed of thought. There is a strong sense of well-being and completeness, a certain holistic sense of life. In this alternate reality, a knowingness can be accessed, enabling Credo Mutwa (6) to invent instruments made out of crystals that can light up a torch without batteries. "It is a mysterious land where all human souls go. [...] It is a land where the animate and the inanimate become interchangeable [...] / ..d it is the same texture, the same texture as our grandmother's fairy tales. [...] There you feel fulfilled, you feel complete [...], you are one with the biosphere of the earth, one with the cosmos, there is nothing you cannot know.

Now look, I only studied until Standard Six. I don't have access to books, but if I go to the land of animals, I come back with knowledge. [...] I created an artefact which used stones and crystals. If you held your hands over the artefact, you felt like a stinging under your palm [...] then a flashlight would shine. I showed this to people who were sceptical, they looked at it and were amazed. That is the place where the great mind, the mother of knowledge is. That is the place if you come back from that, you walk in the bush, and the trees themselves will tell you which are poisonous, it is where the human being becomes one with all creation, and you feel like a god."

Shaman Nobela (7) stated that she enters this trance state through specific *isanusi* trance induction technique in which one is covered up in blankets, with eyes and

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ears closed for up to two hours. She then experiences a separation from her body, a drifting away from her body. At this point she begins to see an event in the future from a bird's perspective, i.e., she sees the event happening on the ground, while she experiences herself watching from above. Shaman Nobela's (7) experience suggests the possibility of an OBE. Some South African shamans did acknowledge that they have OBEs, but that they were not specifically trained for it (1, 3, 6, 7, 8). Other shamans when specifically questioned denied having had the classical OBEs, and often related such questioning to dreaming ⌐t other places, underwater experiences, and viewing future events in dreams (2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10).

In this amathongo trance state, the interaction with the ancestors is often highly informative. It appears that the herbal knowledge of the shaman is not merely the result of an evolutionary route of medical knowledge passed down from one generation of shamans to another, but rather a result of knowledge often transmitted while either in this dream space, or else possibly while gaining some form of access to the "land of the spirit animals". During the interviews, it became clear that, besides the usual transfer of knowledge from one shaman to another, most shamans would receive medical knowledge from their ancestors, who were themselves shamans or herbalists in their own earthly life. This transmitted medical knowledge during dreams is not merely vague or suggestive, but rather specific and concrete (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10).

Shaman Nomsa (9) stated: "I know exactly, they [the ancestors] tell me everything, and they say this medicine, then I know exactly. They tell me what is going to happen." Shaman Daniel (10) noted that "when you talk to them [the ancestors] at night in a dream they show you what you are seeking. Maybe they show me that I must get a herb and show me where it is, and how I must treat it, ya lots of herbs." The ancestors will not only show the shaman the exact part of a plant that s/he must use, but will also specify the location of the plant. Furthermore, the method of preparation of the medicine or *muti* is also given, for example, whether the roots

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need to be crushed or only the leaves need to be boiled. The dosage and application of the *muti* is specified. This transmission of specific knowledge in the dream space was not considered by the shamans to be in any way unusual or strange. After the dream, the shaman will often feel the strong urge to look for the plant, and will feel guided by the ancestors to find the exact location of the plant. Furthermore, at times the ancestors will order the novice to go to the mountains, to a specific cave and to undergo a vision quest. The novice will sit in the cave, pray or call for the presence of the ancestors, and meet her or him in that dream space (2, 8, 9, 10).

For completion sake, the 'underwater experience' of two shamans (4, 10), given its rarity, is worth quoting. Shaman Daniel (10) stated that there are underwater people called *nzunzu* (Tsonga), and that they are like women, but take on the form of a fish from the hips down. These water people take shamans to a safe place under the water, where the shaman will be taught. He stated: "The water, I don't know how to call it, *watermens*, or what, ya. That thing takes you and you go inside the water, there is a safety place there where they are going to teach you. Sometimes you come out there and you are a faith healer, sometimes you come out and you are an *isangoma*. Some stay under water for six months, sometimes for a year. [...] Ya, I was at Bushbuckridge.

You know that time I was at school, my ancestors tell me that I must go there and check it. Then I get there at the water. Then I jumped in." Daniel (10) was given his divination 'bones' underwater. It was claimed that some shamans stay under water for up to a year. This shaman jumped into the water and "only" stayed underwater for two days. He went underwater to a cave in which there was no water, and it was filled with normal light. His shamanic teacher came to pick him up from the cave after two days because he had been underwater too long. The reason given for being able to stay underwater so long and not drown was that the ancestors were with the shaman.

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In this cave the shaman was taught how to divine and was given his set of 'bones' for divination. He did add a 1991 coin to his collection, and wrapped copper wire around some bones in order to distinguish the male ˄˯d female bones from one another. Daniel (10) was told by this being that he would be a shaman for the rest of his life. Drums were beaten with the *bhandawu* rhythm to call him back to the surface. He has not been underwater in this manner again.

Shaman Paulina (4) also experienced an event underwater during her training. Her teacher suggested that she have this experience given that she was so ill. She was placed next to the river and then felt transported underwater where she made contact with her deceased grandmother. She said: "You know the Umkumasi river in Nelspruit, yeah, it was where I was put, there are falls, I was sitting there. They wanted me to have the powers of my body, wanted me to sit there. I went there, you know it was horrible, when I look at the Umkumasi river, uuh. But I prayed. I was singing, singing, but I didn't know what happened. I heard they said afterwards, you know your back was like a crocodile and then I was not there. Yes there I met my granny. We were talking, not inside the sea, but inside the sea. [...] she give me something to drink, water, then this African pots were there. [...] She said: My dear, I have chosen you somebody who can take my reign. She was also an *isangoma*. She said I was the best. [...] When I came back I wasn't even wet." The after-effects of this experience were that she was very ill for one week, but her teacher felt confident of the healing properties of this event.

This experience parallels others reported in the literature. Mashele (Simon, 1993) as a little girl finally found her shamanic teacher through a dream. When she arrived at her teacher's home, she ran outside, feeling persecuted by the beat of the drums that were playing. She reached a small lake with some willow trees. She went into the water. "I didn't swim, I just fell in. I can't explain how it happened because it was just like an accident. You get a shock and you don't know what is happening. Afterwards I found myself deep inside the lake, right underneath, and there was no

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water any more, just grass. There were trees also but they were smaller than the ones in the forest. They weren't close together and the sun was shining. It was so light and there were a lot of flowers. I saw three snakes. One snake was green and the other two black ones were making noises....*Shhhh! Shhhh!*" (Simon, 1993, pp. 38-39). The snakes began talking to her and taught her how to read the 'bones' and how to use herbs for healing.

Her parents who had been running after her saw her vanish into the lake, and her shamanic teacher stopped the father from jumping in. He told them that their "daughter will come very soon if you don't cry. If you let the tears come, you will never see her again" (Simon, 1993, p. 40). After she had been taught, she was told it was time to go back to her parents. "I looked at him and he was just like a person but when I looked at him again I saw that he was a snake. [...] I sat on top of the snake and went out, away from the other snakes and the trees. We went up and up like in a lift. At last we came out in the same lake where I went down. The snake brought me out of the water and put me down in the place where I had been standing looking into the lake [...] 'You have to look after these people', the snake said. 'You must do everything I told you, and you have to help any person from any nation. Help in the way I showed you - the right way.' As soon as he finished talking, the snake left me" (Simon, 1993, pp. 41-42). Her parents were overjoyed at her return and sacrificed a white goat, while her shamanic teacher treated her with *muti*.

2.3.3. The Context and Meaning of the Amathongo Trance State
Amongst specific ASCs that have been related to the magical flights or states of ecstasy of the shamans are those particular altered states that in Western literature are referred to as lucid dreaming states and OBEs. Tart (1986) notes that the notion of dream states being illusory or unreal is culturally relative. Some cultures, and certainly South African shamans, accept dreams as being very important and real, although it might not always be a mirror of everyday reality. "Indeed it is only a historically recent development in our own culture to reject dreams so thoroughly.

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The rejection of the reality of dreams goes hand in hand with a mainstream rejection of the reality of altered states in general" (Tart, 1986, p. 169). The variables that are believed in Western research to effect the content and process of dreams are naturally occurring stimuli such as thunder or stomach cramps, sleep deprivation and social isolation (Tart, 1990a), yet for the South African shamans the ancestors are responsible for the dreams

Dreams, from ancient times, have been understood as sources of inspiration and conveyers of messages. For the shaman the message is often related to her/his calling. (Walsh, 1990). In North America amongst the Wintu and Shasta tribes of California, dreams of dead relatives are seen to be the mark of the shaman (Villoldo & Krippner, 1986). Among the Australian Aborigines, the 'spirit men' are also called by dreams and serve their apprenticeship inside the dreamworld (Elkin, 1977; Moss, 1996). This is similar to South African shamans whose calling is often pre-determined by dreaming about ancestors (Krippner, 1987; Moss, 1996; Thorpe, 1991).

Examples from other traditions are the prophets of Israel who considered dreams to be messages from God, while in the Mediterranean cultures, dreams were a source of healing in the temple of Asklepios. In modern times, psychology has considered dreams to be the royal road to the unconscious (Freud), or messages of healing and wisdom from the unconscious (Jung) (Walsh, 1990). Generally, psychoanalytic writings on prophetic dreams consider such dreams to be the result of a neurotic constellation (Freud, [1899] 1973; Zulliger, 1973), although Eisenbud (1974) has presented examples and explarations more accepting of precognitive moments both in dreams and in the therane. the process of psychoanalysis.

For the South African shaman, dreams represent a place where the communication with the ancestors is direct, concrete and intimate. In these dreams, the novice is told where to find medicinal plants, as well as gets instructions as to the attire or

beadwork that the apprentice needs to acquire and wear (Prins, 1996). "Dreams are a channel of communication between survivo. : and the shades" (Berglund, 1976, p. 98). Given this approach to dreams, dreams often do not become interpreted but rather are taken for what they represent (Mfusi, 1989). In Freudian terms, the manifest content and not the latent content of dreams is the focus for the South African shamans.

Berglund (1976) states that in Zulu thought, the ancestors that appear in dreams are termed *amathongo*, and generally deliver good news. Bad news is generally shown differently, either by remaining silent or absent in dreams. For the South African shamans, their dreams are considered to be their "eyes in the work" when healing patients (Mfusi, 1989, p. 9). Often before having seen the patient, the shaman dreams about the patient's illness and possible healing techniques (Krippner, 1987).

Lucid dreaming implies a qualitative difference to other dreams, in that the dreamer is fully conscious and awake within the dream, and can change the dream according to her/his will (Tart, 1990b). Lucid dreaming has a long history that reaches back to the fourth century AD when Patanjali recommended lucid dreaming in the classical yoga sutra, to Tibetan Buddhists dream yoga in the eight century AD, to Sufi mystics in the twelfth century AD, and in modern times to Aurobindo's and Steiner's successes with such altered states (Walsh & Vaughan, 1992).

Van Eeden (1990), who was the first person to coin the term 'lucid dreaming' in 1913, notes that although lucid dreaming reveals an awakened consciousness, this does not mean that lucid dreams are without symbolism. The symbolism might not be so much sexual or erotic, but is rather to be found in the meaning of the beautiful landscapes. This is suggestive of the interpretation of experiences of two shamans (6, 7) in the "land of spirit animals".

Western research into dreams has shifted significantly since the work of La Berge (La Berge & Rheingold, 1990). La Berge signalled that ' was dreaming while dreaming in the REM sleep phase, and these signals were monitored electrophysiologically. "For the first time someone has brought back a message from the world of dreams while still dreaming. Dream research has never been the same again. Interestingly, for some time La Berge was unable to get his reports published because "reviewers simply refused to believe that lucid dreaming was possible" (Walsh & Vaughan, 1992).

This attitude of disbelief is still affecting other areas of ASCs till this day. La Berge and Rheingold (1990) have set out exercises to achieve lucid states of dreaming. Walsh and Vaughan (1992) discuss three strategies used in lucid dreaming. Firstly, lucid dreamers actively seek spiritual experience, be it through a symbol, a teacher or deity. Secondly, they might, in a passive manner, hand over the dreams to a 'higher' power. The third strategy is typically Tibetan in that in the lucid dream state, meditative-yogic practices are implemented, which is called dream yoga. The final step of this dream yoga would be to realise that all Creation is but the content of a Supreme Dream (La Berge, 1993, p. 86).

Of these three strategies, the South African shamans apply the first one, in that they seek to engage in a lucid manner with the ancestors in their dreams and thereby receive herbal and medical knowledge from them. Chinkwita (1993) calls this type of dreams 'medicine dreams'. In Africa, lucid dreaming is also used to access knowledge about the past as well as the future. Such precognitive dreams at times occur in a lucid state (Chinkwita, 1993). Shamans "through trance, vision or lucid dream, are able to penetrate diverse universes and realms of being" (Godwin, 1994, p.86).

Parapsychological research into precognitive dreams places such dreams into three major categories, namely dreams as omens, dreams with telepathic and precognitive

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qualities, and dreams that occur during shamanic initiation rituals (Ebon, 1978, p. 394).

Ebon (1978) quotes a Freiburg study in which precognitive experiences occurred 31.5 % in dreams while 20.6% occurred during waking states. An important factor seems to be that the dreamer is aware or convinced that the dream is not a usual dream and has a 'conviction' that it is precognitive. Such a conviction might in some cases actually be the expression of an unconscious awareness, but at times a more psychodynamic understanding rather than an explanation of precognition seems to be more appropriate (Ebon, 1978). For South African shamans, precognitive dreams which are essentially used for prediction and healing, are an essential part of their dream activities (Mutwa, 1996a; Krippner, 1987).

Out-of-the-body experiences or OBEs have been on the periphery of parapsychological research, partly because of their illusive nature within an experimental setting. Many researchers in the past thought of OBEs as relatively rare phenomena, experienced only by powerful mystics or psychics. In various cultures many techniques have been used to induce OBEs such as yoga, breathing exercises, reciting *mantras*, dietary control, progressive muscle relaxation, dynamic concentration and dream control (Rogo, 1983).

A change in attitude happened in the 1960s, and OBEs began to be accepted as part of the spectrum of common paranormal phenomena in that statistics show that roughly one in five people will have an OBE in their lifetime. Importantly most of these experiences are joyous or egosyntonic (Rogo, 1983). A fairly representative OBE would include an initial roaring sound in the ears, followed by a feeling of leaving the body and then a witnessing of the body being left behind as the person moves on or passes through walls (Rogo, 1983).

Tart's (1978) study of Mrs. Z is a psychophysiological research study of OBEs. From this study it appears that OBEs do not occur during normal dream states (REM), as shown by the EEG, but rather a significant alpha rhythm activity was shown to be evident. There was no slowing of respiration or heart beat during the OBE as is often suggested by the occult literature in which OBEs are described in terms of a deathlike trance.

There are indications based on further EEG research that the theta brain wave facilitates OBEs and that a naturally relaxed and meditative individual is particularly prone to having OBEs (Rogo, 1983). This suggests that shamans with their ability to access trance states, may well fall into this category. Furthermore, it seems that the paleocerebellum is involved in OBEs. The paleocerebellum governs proprioception, the sense of balance in movement, and feelings of being weightless. OBEs as well as the experience of depersonalisation might also be related to the specific functioning of the cerebellum and the cerebellar-limbic nerve connections (Greenwell, 1990).

Some researchers such as Rogo and Tart hold the view that in OBEs the mind separates from the body, whilst others such as Blackmore and Palmer consider OBEs to be a quirk of mental imagery (Rogo, 1983). Tart (1995) in his analysis of Monroe's experiences (1971, 1982) presents various hypotheses for OBEs. These range from OBEs being a subjective or pathological mental state, to OBEs being seen to be just a dream, or even a lucid dream. Other hypotheses are that OBEs represent a subjective reality of the mind, or an objective reality outside of the mind, or that some OBEs are selective, both objectively real and having non-physical aspects. An example of the latter is Monroe's (1994) account of how he interacted with a person at a certain place whilst in an OBE state, and although this person later verified that he was at that particular place, this person emphatically denied having noticed or interacted with Monroe's out-of-body identity.

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In conclusion, in recent years the psychophysiological theory has gained ground and has become the generally accepted explanation for OBEs (Dash, 1997). This theory suggests that the OBE is the brain's response to a disruption of normal sensory inputs, which function to anchor the perceptions of consciousness in the body. This may typically occur in the early stages of sleep, in conditions of deep relaxation, or even extreme physical excitement. In this ASC, purely mental imagery is created in the mind, and Blackmore (1982) states that the vivid world through which a person travels is actually the brain's own map. This would explain why the world of the OBE so closely resembles the real world, while sometimes, especially in far-off unvisited places, elements of pure fantasy are evident. Attempts to disprove this hypothesis by simply asking the person to read off a number in another room or give an exact description of locations have thus far failed to produce irrefutable evidence (Dash, 1997).

OBE seems to be the modern term for the shamanic notion of magical flight, which for Eliade is the defining characteristic of shamanism (Eliade, 1964). Shamans often use a bird as a vehicle in order to fly or a fish is used in order to swim underwater. "Vehicles express the shaman's extraordinary power of locomotion, which is not available to the unaided human body" (Vitebsky, 1995, p. 70).

Such accounts of magical flight are found across the world, and Eliade (1964) notes that shamanic flight is very closely associated with bird symbolism across the world. Examples are found in ancient India within Hinduism and Buddhism (Devereux, 1992), in ancient China, amongst the Dervishes of central Asia, amongst the Eskimo shamans, in the stories of the flights of the shamans in both North and South Americas, in the Celtic druid's flight as a supernatural birdman (Bancroft, 1987), in Merlin's transformations as a shaman (Noel, 1990), in the stories of witches of the Middle Ages, as well as in the flying Santa Claus of the West, a mythical figure who was originally a shaman (Renterghem, 1995).

The flight symbolism of shamanic flight has been compared to the modern phenomena of NDEs and UFO abductions (Ring, 1992; Schnabel, 1994). Credo Mutwa (6), in his interview in this study, spoke of how his experiencing a sudden trauma on being attacked by a mob elicited an *umbilini* trance experience, an experience that resonates with classical OBEs and NDEs. "I was stoned, you suddenly feel like your body is breaking in two. One part of yourself, the body part will become so peaceful, you no longer care what the people are doing. [...] and you look down and you see it covered in blood [...] and when you go away through a long tunnel, you feel so happy, so forgiving, ah, there are some things that you can't describe." Furthermore, Credo Mutwa's (6) and shaman Nobela's (7) flights into the "land of spirit animals" took place in the form of a bird.

Some South African shamans of this study, especially the *izanusi*, are trained to make use of the OBE to access information about the future (6, 7). Other shamans reported having OBEs but were never trained specifically for them (1, 3, 8). It is not always clear whether some shamans have in fact lucid dreams rather than classical OBEs, or whether the OBEs might begin with a lucid dream, which is one of the techniques to achieve an OBE (Buhlman, 1996).

2.3.4. The Cartography of the Amathongo Trance State

This trance state is very different to the two previously described trance states, in that the shaman does not attempt to reduce awareness, but rather seeks to enhance the awareness from normal dream consciousness to higher levels of lucidity. Furthermore, for the shaman the aim of enhancing awareness is to remember the interaction with the ancestors on awakening from her/his sleep. This increased ability to remember dreams is an enhancement of awareness, a process which is emphasised early on in the novice's training by constantly reminding the novice to attempt to remember and interpret the dreams on awakening. It is the first exercise the novice does with her/his teacher upon awakening.

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The degree of control is dependent upon achieving the lucid state. In the normal dream state, the shaman's control is passive and receptive, and upon awakening the shaman takes control through her/his analysis or interpretation of the dream in relation to her/his life. In the lucid state, however, the control is more active and direct. Ancestors are asked to be more specific if necessary, and the information gleamed from this trance state is treated as real. The more control, the richer the material, and consequently the more interactive the relationship becomes between the shaman and the ancestor.

The ability to communicate with the outside world is non-existent in this trance state. However, from the shaman's position, this is one of the highest levels of interaction with the ancestry, and represents the most powerful contact with the ancestors. The shaman is not embodied and forgotten as in the amadlozi state, nor are the ancestors mere whispers in the mind such as in the amakhosi state, but rather they appear in technicolour in a space or state in which the shaman can see and listen to them directly as an other. The knowledge that the shaman receives in order to heal, find objects or enhance her/his medic_ı knowledge increases the shaman's own power in the outside world.

The interaction with the ancestors is hypnotically induced in the fragrance of *imphepho* and the psychoactive effect of taking *snuff* before falling asleep. The act of concentration is similar to that discussed in the lucid dreaming literature (La Berge & Rheingold, 1990). The lucid state in itself allows for a stream of consciousness to unfold, thus neither being totally focused on one object nor being just passive. The level of arousal or calmness, or any type of affect for that matter, would depend on the actual interaction with the ancestor in the lucid state.

It appears, however, that too high levels of arousal can lead to a loss of lucidity (Buhlman, 1996). The sense of self is dependent on the level of lucidity which is achieved. The higher the level of lucidity, the higher the sense of self. The clarity

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of sensory perception depends on the intensity of this dream trance state, and not necessarily on the level of lucidity, for a dream can have a rich sensory tapestry of different modalities. It therefore follows that, in terms of the content of the trance, the level of meaning and organisation is heightened in proportion to the degree of lucidity achieved. All modalities of sensations are presented, while the relationship between the content of the trance state and reality is tested by finding the specific plant dreamt about, by locating the lost object, or by healing the ailment. The images are often personal or, in the dream state, the archetypal images are personalised.

The question arises whether an actual OBE is achieved in this dream trance state. Only one shaman (9) in this series of interviews described a typical sequence of an OBE beginning with the separation from the body, followed by the observation of one's own body lying there, thereby experiencing a nucleus of consciousness outside of the body. However, in the Toltec shamanic path, shamans are trained to experience OBEs during lucid dreaming (Mares, 1993, 1997; Sanchez, 1995). It appears that in this trance state, the information is not merely allegorical or symbolic but can correspond directly to reality. This trance state can therefore be considered to have elements of pre-cognition.

Further, there may well be evidence for bilocation of consciousness (3, 5) and thereby possibly OBEs. For the South African shamans, the OBE is generally not recognised as a separate state from the lucid dream trance state. For the shamans, the lucid dream state is not accepted as a dream state in the same manner as Westerners regard their dreams (La Berge & Rheingold, 1990). As shaman Paulina (4) stated, "you dream real". The 'underwater experience' as well as the journey to the "land of the spirit animals" seem to be forms of shamanic journeys or OBEs.

The important issue here is that all psychic abilities, be they bilocation of consciousness, pre-cognition, or remote viewing, are understood by the South

African shamans to be as a result of the ancestors. The locus of control lies with the ancestor rather than with the powers of the shaman. The shamans consequently readily acknowledge that their powers are solely dependent on the powers of the ancestors, for without these powers the shaman would be nobody.

2.4. The Umbilini Trance State

The umbilini trance state belongs to a more marginal but specialised discourse of the *isanusi* shamans in this study, as well as to the Xhosa informants of Bührmann's study (1981). According to Credo Mutwa (6), he was taught about the *umbilini* experience as an *isanusi*, and found similar experiences amongst the San people of the Kalahari, the Ovahimba People of Namibia, the Nawati People of Angola, and the Mpondo in South Africa. For Credo Mutwa (6), the source of the *umbilini* as the "sacred snake" has been brought to humans from the inhabitants of other star systems. The San call it *!Num!*, a word that according to Credo Mutwa (6) means "star being". In Zulu, Sotho and amongst the San people, everywhere according to Credo Mutwa (6), *!Num!* means the "star force" sent upward. The *kia* experience of the hot rising *n um* amongst the !Kung people is suggestive of a similar trance state (Katz, 1973).

2.4.1. The Induction of the Umbilini Trance State

Credo Mutwa (6) stated that while dancing the *umbilini* trance is best induced by a circular dance, and not a straight line dance. Another inductive technique practised by the Mpondo while dancing, is to tighten the muscle between the buttocks and to shake strongly in order to make "this spark" grow into a force that rises up to the head. In a similar fashion, research conducted with the newest biofeedback techniques by Eggetsberger (1996) suggests that one method of inducing energies up the spine is to tighten *pubcoccygeus* muscle regularly, the same muscle Credo Mutwa (6) was referring to. According to Credo Mutwa (6), what "the man is doing, he tightened up the muscle between his buttocks to really arouse this spark, it grows and grows until it is lightning up the spine and into the head."

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Shaman Nobela (7) referred to another *isanusi* induction technique in which the shaman is wrapped up in blankets, blocks her/his ears and lies still for more than two hours. Credo Mutwa (6) noted that the *umbilini* can also be elicited accidentally by ; sudden trauma or by the use of psychoactive substances. However, this can lead to a false trance state. According to Credo Mutwa (6), some "use that bulb, which you call in Afrikaans *fengerboom*, but it is dangerous. You shouldn't reach the land of the gods through drugs because they will take you and throw you into a false land instead of a true one."

2.4.2. The Experience of the Umbilini Trance

Some of the shamans in this study (3, 4, 9) described the *umbilini* experience as an experience of heat in the chest area. This is understood to be a wind of the spirit or "the wind of the ancestors" that manifests in the body and must emerge in the scream "Heyeii!", for otherwise the shaman becomes ill (9). The experience is also of one of feet dancing by themselves while the head is absent, and the body shakes as if it were in the throws of "a holy madness" (6). Shaman Virginia (8) said that she felt as if "you are going to fly, you are perspiring, and you feel like going up and down [she moves her hands up and down her body]. You are dancing, you feel you are moving up but your shoulders are not moving."

Shaman Nomsa (9) stated that *umbilini* creates strong emotions, a shaking of the body, the hairs of the body stand on end, there is strong perspiration, and the whole body itches. She further stated that "you are in the spirit, you feel something, you feel itchy, funny, electric shock" (9). Credo Mutwa (6) described the *umbilini* as "a fire" and "a force", which builds up during the day through the contact of the feet with the earth or sand (6, 8), and in the evening collects at the bottom of the spine. Dancing and drumming induces this energy to rise "like a coil" up the spine, "like a hot snake" (6). This energy is described as moving up and down the legs and up to the shoulders (4, 8). Shaman Paulina (4) stated that she "started shaking, you feel something moving from your legs up and down. Up and down, and when it comes

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to the shoulders, it starts shaking, ya. The chest you feel you have a ball, and you feel like yawning." In three shamans (3, 4, 9) the energy centres itself as a hot ball in the chest or thymus, whilst in three others (6, 7, 8) the energy rises to the head.

The progression of the *umbilini* relates to certain energy points in the body, namely the genitals, womb, solar plexus, heart, throat, and head, in that particular order (7, 8). In women, it starts in the womb, whilst in men it starts at the testicles (7, 8). Shaman Virginia (8) stated that "with the ladies it goes straight to the womb, with the men it goes straight to the testicles. [...] that is why a lady who doesn't have a womb cannot become an *isangoma*. The power of a woman *isangoma* is in the womb, and the power of the man is in the testicles." When the *umbilini* reaches the head, shaman Nobela (7) stated that a certain dizziness is experienced.

According to Credo Mutwa (6), when the energy has reached the head, the shaman experiences a darkness, a separation from the body, like an alcoholic intoxication, similar to being dizzy. There is a sense of breaking through a barrier, sometimes three barriers. The shaman then finds him/herself in a dark tunnel in which a light appears. S/he approaches the light and merges with it. At this point the shaman enters a "strange place", in which all the senses of the body remain active, such as smelling wet hair, and hearing animals talking.

In this "land of the spirit animals", the shaman communicates with animals and is able to achieve a sense of knowingness to the extent of being able to invent apparatuses. In this place, both Credo Mutwa (6) and shaman Nobela (7) note that they experience either a bird gazing at them or they become a flying bird that transports them across the land, and with the eyes of the bird, the shaman can see the illness as lights in the patient's body, as well as view the process of future events unfolding below from a bird's perspective.

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The after-effects of this *umbilini* experience is described by Credo Mutwa (6) as feeling cold, with cold feet and arms, while the centre of the head feels hot, creating severe headaches or terrible nausea. Other shamans (4, 5, 9) experience the after-effects as a sense of disorientation, of feeling off balance, feeling exceptionally exhausted, and needing a lengthy period of time to adjust.

2.4.3. The Context and Meaning of the Umbilini Trance

In Africa, as in the rest of the world alike, during the shamanic trance state, the shaman encounters spirits of people, animals, and even plants. The Zulu shaman Madela states that he undertakes vast journeys in his dreams and visions, in which together with his ancestors, "distant times and distant places" are visited and knowledge is acquired (Schlosser, 1972, p. 48). Worlds are explored, and healing procedures are learnt, mastered and applied. In regard to these healing procedures, it is a relatively common theme according to Willis (1986) that the spinal axis is often explicitly regarded as an analogue to the 'tree of life', the *axis mundi*, that vertical channel that joins the three domains of Heaven, Earth, and the Underworld.

Thus the understanding of the body, and its healing, are affected by this world view. The explorer Rasmussen quotes an Eskimo as saying that "every real shaman has to feel *qaumaneq*, a light within the body, inside his head or brain, something that gleams like fire, that enables him to see in the dark, and with closed eyes see into things which are hidden, and also into the future" (quoted in Greenwell, 1990, p. 10-11).

The Fipa in south-western Tanzania polarised the body by identifying the head with rationality, the loins with raw energy, and the heart, the site of sentiment, as being the mediator. An inversion of this polarity is believed to produce madness and illness. Also the San shaman uses his energy that rises in his body in order to heal (Lewis-Williams & Dowson, 1989). The *umbilini* or life-force of the Nguni people is a similar notion. It is spoken of as a snake (Mutwa, 1996b), which represents a

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force that needs to rise through the body in the right way in order to clear the mind in order to divine and heal (Bührmann, 1981).

Berglund (1⁹ ⁻⁾ notes that for the Zulu, snakes are a manifestation of the ancestors. A snake that is an ancestor does not die, it merely changes its skin. Such snakes are also said to not have forked tongues. The annual change of skin refers to the annual cycle of death and rebirth. The snake shedding it's skin is likened to a child leaving the womb (Berglund, 1976, p. 94). Thus snakes not only symbolise death and rebirth but represent the ancestor itself. Dreams of snakes, especially in water, is believed to be an urgent signal from the ancestor wishing to make contact. To dream that a snake is biting you suggests that a powerful enemy might inflict serious injury in the future (Mutwa, 1996b).

The ancestors are accessed through ecstatic possession trances, and it is of interest that the gods of ecstasy, Shiva of the Ancient East and Dionysus of the Ancient West were symbolised by snakes (Danie'lou, 1992). Snakes as symbols of death and rebirth are found in cultures throughout the world, from the Nordic myths to the North American myths, from the Ancient Egyptian Ouroboros to the symbol of Asclepius, from Sumerian myths to the Rio Indians in the Amazon who consider the anaconda to be the mythical ancestor that vomited the first people onto dry land (Saunders, 1995). Mutwa (1996b) notes that there is an African belief of a large feathered serpent, larger than the biggest python, and it is said to have a crest of green feathers on its he..d. Mutwa (1996b) compares this feathered serpent with the hero god *Quetzalcoatl*, who was sy¬bolised as a green feathered serpent by the Aztecs and Toltecs in Central and South America.

The *ixanthi* is a black snake, often believed to be a python, and is known only to the shaman (Kohler, 1941). This si..e is not an ancestor. Most Zulu shamans, accordin⁻ to Berglund (1976), have personal experiences with these snakes, and they are often described as being at the bottom of pools or in rivers. These pools are

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described as being close to waterfalls and are often overshadowed by trees. This snake is fear-inducing, for it stares at the diviner while it lies under water on a bed of white clay. The shaman is expected to move the snake in order to get to the white clay. This clay is the clay of the ancestors. Many *izangoma* claim to have captured this huge reptile, "and many more have drowned while diving into lakes and rivers in search of the great serpent, which is said to have the ability to supply any sangoma with great knowledge" (Mutwa, 1996b, p. 193).

The apprentice's confrontation with the serpent underwater may occur as a real event or in a dream (Prins, 1996). Shamanic teachers in non-human form range across the world from Cheiron, the wise centaur who taught Asklepios, the patron of medicine of Ancient Greece (Graves, 1986), to the *ban jhakari*, a shamanic teacher in the form of a small male *yeti* in present Nepal (Peters, 1997), to the serpents in South African waters, who teach novices either underwater or in dreams.

The confrontation of the shaman with the snake often occurs during a time of solitude when the shaman is away from home. This time of solitude and wandering is part of the shaman's training. Some shamans claim to stay in the pool of water until they are 'returned', which may be after a few days. Members of the community of the shaman claim that s/he was wandering in the fields for a few days before s/he returned. One shaman stated that after being in the pool of water with the *ixhanthi* "I returned to the earth with a snake, carrying it in the hand. [...] How could I divine not having seen them [shades]? So it was the most important thing besides the initiation. These two. They are the important things with the diviners" (Berglund, 1976, p. 149).

This direct experience signals the novice's initiation into being a shaman, after which an ox must be slaughtered at the apprentice's home (Prins, 1996). The importance of the white clay, according to Berglund's (1976) informants, lies in the fact that it is smeared onto the face of the shaman, and it is symbolically related to

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the white paleness of a child. The novice becomes like a child, is naked like a child, as some novices are when they return from this ordeal. The novice is reborn into a shamanic state of being.

Prins (1996) notes that the capturing of the underwater serpent is also a common theme amongst San shamans, notably those that are in contact with black farmers. In Prins' (1996) investigation into the Xhosa divination school in Tsolo, situated within the Drakensberg of the Eastern Cape, his informant acknowledged the San as ancestors, and in fact, "a common perception among all diviners interviewed is that underwater symbolism and associated ritual was borrowed and adapted from the San" (Prins, 1996, p. 218).

Bührmann (1981) notes that, for the Xhosa, the *umbelini* refers to the raising of the life-force. Its generic meaning is intestines or guts. It is described as a feeling of unease, a feeling in the stomach. Some feel it in the chest area of the body, similar to some of the shamans in this study (4, 5, 9). Some have a feeling of an impending sense of doom. For the shaman, the *umbelini* is the wind or spirit, which is awoken by clapping, dancing, and singing. No one can become a shaman if "the *umbelini* remains in the lower parts, it must come up and go to the head, but it must go up the right way to clear your mind - make you see things clearly and enable you to say the right things. [...]. If it goes up the wrong way you may become mad" (quoted in Bührmann, 1981, p. 193).

Mutwa (1996b) equally refers to a snake that is made up of some kind of 'electrical energy' in the body as *umbilini* (Xhosa). He states that the 'Bushmen of the Kalahari' have a similar concept of an energy in the body called *n um*. The !Kung experience the *n um* heating up and rising from the stomach up the spine to the head, at which point they have the *!kia* experience, "You dance, dance, dance. Then the *n'um* lifts you in your belly and lifts you in your back, and then you start to shiver. *N/um* makes you tremble; it's hot [..]. Then the base of your spine is tingling, tingling,

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tingling [...] and then it makes your thoughts nothing in your head" (Katz, 1973, p.140). During the *!kia* experience, the !Kung claim to be able to cure, handle hot coals and walk on fire, see with X-ray vision, and see over great distances (Katz, 1982).

This *umbilini* is believed to live in every person, and is aroused during dancing. "When a sangoma dances, she reaches a certain stage during the dance when she goes into a trance-like state, when she no longer feels her legs moving. When she sings she feels as if she is floating in mid-air, or swimming in a warm ocean of unseen water. It is at this time that the *umbilini*, which supposedly lives at the bottom of the spine, is unleashed, uncoils like a fiery spring and races up the sangoma's spine to explode through the top of her head, and flies skywards towards the dark reaches of the unseen world" (Mutwa, 1996b, p. 194). Once the *umbilini* is unleashed, the person is said to be able to access immense psychic powers, as well as see and cure illnesses in others. From his own experience, Mutwa (1996b) states that illnesses and injuries look like dar! atches in the glow of a person's aura. After the *umbilini* experience, the shaman feels rejuvenated, both spiritually and physically, and the sense of hearing becomes acute (Mutwa, 1996b).

Schweitzer (1977) notes that the *umbilini* refers to a body sensation at the solar plexus. His informant interpreted the word as meaning intestines. The term *umbilini*, a different spelling to Bührmann's term *umbelini*, refers to the sinking feeling in the solar plexus, which is associated with anxiety (O'Connell, 1980, p. 19). *Umbilini* is defined as the inside of a cavity, but as O'Connell (1980) notes, his shaman informants seemed to combine the Xhosa terms of *imbilini* and *izibilini*. *Imbilini* is defined as that which is inside mentally, while *izibilini* are material things contained inside, the entrails (O'Connell, 1980, p. 23).

Bührmann (1981) in her Jungian interpretation relates the *umbelini* to the solar plexus and refers to a picture of a mandala in the Chinese work: The Secret of the

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Golden Flower in which the caption reads as follows: "The cosmos rotates around the centre, which attracts its emanations. Around the outside is spread nerve tissue indicating that the process takes place in the solar plexus" (Wilhelm quoted in Bührmann, 1981, p. 199). The mandala is conceptualised be the "central point within the psyche to which everything is related, by which everything is arranged and which is itself a source of energy.

The energy of the central point is manifested in the almost irresistible compulsion and urge to become what one is" (Jung quoted in Bührmann, 1981, p. 199). Bührmann (1981) considers the core of the *thwasa* illness being the illness in which the ancestors demand that "you must become their servant" and "you must become what you must be" (Bührmann, 1981, p. 199). In other words, the *umbelini* is the energy that brings the novice and the shaman to a point of self-realisation and individuation.

Devereux (1992) equates the *!kia* experience with the *kundalini* experience of Hinduism. The above mentioned experiences of the shamans in this study find parallels in the *kundalini* of Tantric yoga in India, *chi* of Taoism in China, and the chariot experience of the *Merkabah* in the Qaballistic writings of esoteric Judaism (King, 1986). Curiously, the Hebrew word *'Merkabah'* means flying vehicle of light, and it has a strange correlate in the Zulu word *'merkar.bah'* or *'merkarivah'*, which refers to a circular space vehicle in which the first Zulu people were transported to earth, for earth according to Credo Mutwa as the high *isanusi* of the Zulu, is not the first world in which people have existed (Ulufudu, 1989).

Similarly, Bührmann's (1981) notion of the *umbeli* rising up the spine and Credo Mutwa's (1996a) *umbilini*, which is understood as being a hot snake rising up the spine into the head and creating an ASC, possibly suggest important parallels and analogies between *n'um*, *umbilini* and *kundalini*. For example, besides the descriptions of rising heat in the spine moving towards the head, the dread that the

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!Kung experience about the *!kia* is similar to Krishna's (1968) terror when experiencing the *kundalini,* and Peters (1989b) expands the analogy to 'the dark night of the soul' experienced by Western mystics.

It is tempting to equate the two words *'umbilini'* and *'kundalini'* even in terms of their similar sound, and at least one maverick historian named Hromnik (Mowazowski, 1997) has suggested that Indian traders in the first millennium AD were active in South Africa, leaving behind certain customs and artefacts similar to those found in India. Hromnik claims that the Nguni language is "peppered with Indian words" (Mowazowski, 1997, p. 27). It is important to note that much controversy surrounds this theory and further studies would be necessary in order to support or falsify Hromnik's claims.

Kundalini, in Eastern spiritual traditions, is considered to be a psychobiological mechanism for individual enlightenment, and when this energy is awakened, it has certain physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual effects (Greyson, 1993). Sannella (1987) as a psychiatrist, encountered patients with problems which he attributed to the *kundalini* activation. He bases his understanding on the physio-*kundalini* syndrome of Bentov (1977), which conceptualises the *kundalini* as being an electrical impulse, induced by acoustical standing waves in the ventricles of the brain. This electrical impulse spreads along the sensory and motor cortexes of the brain which create the typical bodily experiences of the *kundalini*. Greyson's analysis (1993) supports the notion that the experiences of the *kundalini* are similar to near-death-experiences or NDEs. There is a belief that some psychotic patients are misdiagnosed, in the sense that they are actually suffering from the negative effects of the physio-*kundalini* syndrome (Bentov, 1977; Krishna, 1968; Sanella, 1992). Greenwell (1990) similarly states that the negative activation of the *kundalini* will bring about a psychosis in patients with borderline and narcissistic personality disorders. However, these claims are not supported by the Greyson study (1993).

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Life energy in yogic texts is referred to as *prana*, and the *kundalini*, as a collection of *prana*, is described as lying dormant at the base of the spine. When it is aroused, it rises up the spine into the brain which leads to transcendental transformations (Krishna, 1968). The *kundalini*, as well as the *umbilini*, is symbolised and sometimes experienced, as a snake rising up the spine which, when entering the brain, creates a transpersonal state of consciousness. The *kundalini*, as well as the *umbilini*, rises up the spine through six centres or *chakras*, reaching the seventh at the top of the head. The *chakras* refer to specifically localised and major energy patterns that present certain attitudes, motives and mental states (Goleman, 1988). These centres were referred to by shaman Nobela (7) and shaman Virginia (8), which further suggests that the *kundalini* and the *umbilini* are similar in nature.

2.4.4. The Cartography of the Umbilini Trance State

As a trance state, the *umbilini* brings about a certain reduction of awareness of the external environment in that the focus becomes centred within the body. It does, however, lead to an increase in sensitivity to, and awareness of the internal surface of the body, particularly at the base of the spine. This is experienced as a heat building up in the body. This increase in heat is experienced as a "hot snake" or a "hot coil" (6) rising up the spine.

In this trance state the focus is internal, and there is no need to communicate with the external environment. Communication might occur after the trance state is over, and then the information is shared with the community or patient regarding health matters or future events. The final arrival of the heat into the head leads to a breakthrough of barriers (6), and at that point the inner shamanic journey begins. The trance state remains personal, although in the case of the *izanusi*, Credo Mutwa (6) and shaman Nobela (7), experience interactions with other beings when entering the "land of the spirit animals". Therefore while the experience may be personal this does not exclude it being interactional.

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Concentration during this trance state is fluid, in that it requires an awareness without fixation. The degree of control is both active and passive for different stages. The self-mastery of activating the *umbilini* is very active, and through practice becomes a repeatable activity in bringing up the heat to the head. From that point onwards, a certain passive or yielding control seems to occur, in that the self-mastery then becomes one of the shaman surrendering to the experiences of the shamanic journey. A certain degree of interactional activity during the journey is expected, similar to the lucid dream states in the amathongo trance states.

The level of arousal is very high when the *umbilini* rises from the spine to the head. During this experience, a certain hyperstimulation is achieved, after which a calmness occurs. Thus, the overstimulation leads to hypostimulation and relaxation. The level of affect is also high and feelings of fear might be present. Once the shaman has broken through the barrier, feelings of sweet ecstasy may emerge. In this trance state, the content is powerfully determined by motor-perceptual stimuli. The motor sensations of the body include heat rising up through the spine, while the perceptual sensations are the images that pass in front of the shaman during the journey. These images are functional in that they are used to diagnose illnesses, as well as being either representative or symbolic of future events.

A sense of identity or self is maintained and possibly enlarged as a result of what is experienced during the journey. The shaman might shift-shape into a bird (6) thereby viewing future events from a bird's eye perspective. Furthermore, the shaman experiences her-/himself as soul or spirit that travels separately from their bodies. In this trance state, the OBEs include for the *izanusi* (6, 7) a clarity of images, as well as an experience of mobility (on the wings of a bird). For other shamans (4, 8, 9) it is a powerful form of contacting the ancestors.

In summary, these four trance states present the major categories of the ASCs experienced by South African shamans in this study. Of note is that these categories

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of ASCs are found in other shamanic traditions, which suggests that shamans across the world have similar trance experiences. Having presented the inductive processes of the various trance states, as well as having set out the phenomenology of major shamanic trance states in South Africa, it is important to consider some of the implications that arise from this model of South African shamanic trance states.

CHAPTER NINE

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESULTS

In this chapter the implications of the results will be presented. While the four major South African shamanic trance states have previously been outlined, what is still required is an investigation into their specific effects. The aim is to identify more specifically some of the productive power relations that come about when these major South African shamanic trance states are practised. This would presuppose an understanding of the power-knowledge relations of the South African shamanic discourse.

1. The Production of Shamanic Knowledge and Power

A central implication of the findings of this study investigated at this point is the power of the various shamanic trance states which are related not merely to the intensity of the experience during the trance state, but rather to the effect of the knowledge gained. In this manner, the shamanic trance can function as a discourse within a web of power and knowledge. In order to examine such an implication it is necessary to clarify the relationship between power and knowledge. According to Foucault (1977a), power is usually negatively conceptualised in a relation to liberation and truth. It is understood in terms of exclusion, blockage, concealment or as being a mask. Power is construed as a limiting force, which through insistence on rules, dictates laws. This in turn sets up a binary system as to what is permitted and what is forbidden, resulting in the problem of taboo and domination.

Power's aim is to suppress using laws of prohibition and power-apparatuses. Such structures are seen as exercising force from top to bottom, from the state to the citizen. Such a conceptualisation of power proposes power as a force that can only operate negatively; it can only say: No. It can only set limits, and is basically "anti-energy" (Foucault, 1979, p.85). Foucault (1979) suggests that one reason for such a formulation of power is a tactical one, in that it masks its substantial part of itself, and thus power as a limit to freedom becomes the general form of acceptability.

The relationship between truth and power is usually put forward in the following manner: How is a discourse on truth or philosophy able to fix the limits to the rights of power? Foucault (1972), on the other hand, poses the question: "What rules of right are implemented by the relations of power in the production of truth?" (Foucault, 1972, p. 93). Relations of power could not be established without "the production, the accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. [...] We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth" (Foucault, 1972, pp. 93-94). The possibility of truth and power are immanently linked and inseparable. The analysis of power is no longer placed in the violence-ideology opposition, nor should power be regarded as a metaphor of property or placed within the model of contract or conquest, as most Marxist politics have presented power.

Knowledge should not be placed in the interested-disinterested opposition, nor should it depend on the primacy of the subject. Foucault (1977a) described two modalities of power, namely sovereign and disciplinary power. Sovereign power dominated the west up until the mid-1800's, while the disciplinary power is characteristic of the modern times and contemporary life. Sovereign power is power that operates with a high degree of visibility. It is a show of strength and runs from the top to the bottom of the hierarchy. Disciplinary power on the other hand is a new economy of power that uses techniques of surveillance with new methods of observation and examination rituals. Such new observational methods created new objects of knowledge, and these new objects would in turn be the targets through which power operated. This form of disciplinary power is therefore "a type of force [which] is productive and illuminating, a form of power that cannot be held or seized, but instead suffuses each and every relationship to manufacture multiple objects of knowledge" (Butchart, 1997, p. 103).

Conventional views assume that the mind and subjectivity "were shrouded in darkness and ignorance until discovered by psychology" (Butchart, 1997, p. 101).

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A Foucaultian analysis would suggest that certain power and knowledge relations create the very objects of discourse. It is the disciplinary power that makes possible the fabrication of the taken-for-granted objects of sovereign power. "It is not that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather that the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technology of forces and bodies" (Foucault, 1977a, p. 217).

Within the Foucault scheme, the human body, culture, society, subjectivity are not the origins of power but rather the effects of forces that require investigation. Within a discursive practice of South African shamanism, a power-knowledge relation will be investigated in order to show the production of the South African shamanic subject. A discursive practice is characterised by "the delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories" (Foucault, 1977b, p. 199). Such discursive practices are not merely ways of producing discourses, but are also embodied in technical processes, in institutions, in patterns of general behaviour, and in forms of transmission such as teaching and training, which at once impose and maintain discursive practices. Power is invested in the production of truth, even shamanic trance truths. This becomes evident in the training to produce trance states, the training being the site where power and knowledge engage intimately in the production of truth and power. Such a discursive practice as a training programme does not only silence or limit, but is rather productive, moulding the novice's body and mind in order to produce trance states.

In South Africa, within the institution of shamanic training, the novice follows a specific timetable, as depicted in the daily programme of a *thwasa* (9) presented later in this chapter. Local power relations between the novice and the teacher are established through the hierarchies of knowledge and experience. This is a capacity-communication-power model, in which these three types of relationships continuously overlap. According to Foucault (1982), the "production and circulation

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of elements of meaning can have as their objective or as their consequence certain results in the realm of power, the latter are not merely aspects of the former" (Foucault, 1982, p. 217). This might mean that the meaning produced by a lucid dream state, in itself effects the power relations, even in the form of resistance, i.e., an ancestor would ask the novice in the dream to wear certain beads that are different to the ones proposed by the shamanic teacher, generally a more sovereign position, as shaman Paulina (4) recounts in her 'underwater experience'.

The activity and training during the apprenticeship is developed in a pedagogical system by means of an ensemble of regulated communications, as in lectures, a process of questions and answers and the giving of instructions. All of this operates by means of a series of power processes, expressed in the forms of enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, as well as a pyramidal hierarchy. For Foucault (1982), these three types of relationships (capacity-communication-power) constitute disciplines. "The chief function of the disciplinary power is to 'train', rather than to select and to levy; or, no doubt, to train in order to levy and select all the more. It does not link forces together in order to reduce them; it seeks to bind them together in such a way as to multiply and use them" (Foucault, 1977a, p. 170).

In this sense, disciplines are specific techniques that regard individuals as objects and as instruments. In other words, discipline produces individuals through training. For this reason, just as much as an art training in the modern Western culture re-models the gaze and hand of an artist as a sub,..ct (Lambrecht, 1986), so too does the shamanic training of a specific trance state produce the shaman as a specific subject of the trance. There will be no assumption made that power is a bold and triumphant force, but rather that it articulates itself in modest, calculating and economic ways.

It is possible to analyse the shaman as a political figure, or to consider the possession trance as a means of supporting the power of the unspeakable in society (Bourguignon, 1973; Lambek, 1989), or even as a means to shift the power base of

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some women who become shamans through their ability to trance (Gussler, 1973; Lewis, 1989). Such analyses have been alluded to in the methods of inquiry section of this study, i.e., analysing the shaman's sovereign power in terms of the bold and the political. The aim of this section is not merely to highlight political power, but rather to investigate the power-knowledge relations of shamanic trance states. The focus will not be on shamanic power against a repressive mode of society, but rather on how the power of shamanic trance states is positive and productive in its knowledge effect. Power and knowledge operate in a supportive and circular manner. What follows is an investigation into some forms of specific disciplinary power, the production of a new shamanic body that enables the creation and the crystallisation of new objects of knowledge.

2. The Body of the Shamanic Trance

For the South African shaman, the body becomes trained to receive the ancestors. The training takes the form of repetition of certain exercises. It might be of benefit to set out a typical training day in the life of a *thwasa*. From the field texts it is possible to generate an approximation of a day in the life of a novice during training. A typical training programme (9) begins when the apprentice is woken up between midnight and two a.m. by the teacher or by the ancestors. The first duty is for the *thwasa* to *phalaza* or vomit (1, 2, 4), after which dreams are recalled and interpreted by the teacher (2, 9). Between three and five a.m., the apprentice dances. After that the house is cleaned before going off to the fields in search of herbs, especially those that have been dreamt about (2, 4, 8, 9). After the herbs have been gathered, they are washed, dried, ground to powder, and stored in labelled bottles. Divination is then taught. As already stated, Shaman Caroline (5) described how "strict" her teacher was during divination lessons. She would allow her novices to interpret the bones for patients. If, however, she was not satisfied with the reading, she would give the patient the correct reading and, after the patient had left, would hit her novices and as punishment withhold food from them

After the divination lessons, animals might be slaughtered and cut up, after which the skins are treated and hung up. As the sun goes down, the apprentices dance again. Prayers to the ancestors take place at ten a.m. and at three and seven p.m. Shaman Virginia (8) prayed at noon, three p.m., seven p.m. and at three a.m. These prayers are the end to a long day for the novice who, besides learning about how to become a shaman. is also involved in the household chores. When asked about her training, shaman Nomsa (9) stated that, "ya, it was hard." [...] There was no time for relaxing, all the time you were working, because the minute you relax, you feel sleepy, and you start thinking about the old things from home, you know I was a mother of two, I had a husband, a house, and it can make you worry, and that is why it is important you work all through the day."

Importantly, for the shamans of this study, the training is not only guided by the shamanic teacher, but also by the ancestors. In shaman Julia's (2) case, provided the main body of training during her dreams. The teachings of the ancestors in dreams mainly revolves around herbal medicine, which includes the location of herbs in the fields, the preparation of the herbs into medicines. and the application of these herbs to specific illnesses or problems (1, 2, 3, 4. 5, 8, 9, 10). The training has been defined by some shamans as actually being the training of the ancestors, in order that they may communicate appropriately, as well as learn to find things (2, 4, 5).

Shaman Paulina (4) noted that "the teacher say to you do this and do this, and they shout at you so you must wake up, so that the ancestors must be clever. They teach you, but you think they teach Paulina, no, they teach your *amadlozi* [ancestors] how to communicate, how to find things, how to talk, how to think, how to do something." The training enhances some form of control over the ancestors (1, 2, 3, 4, 9). This in turn develops the ability to enter trance states in a more controlled fashion (1, 2, 3). The shaman's training is, however, never considered to be fully complete, as the learning continues after the graduation (5).

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Shaman Daniel (10) suggested that different *thwasas* have different strengths and weaknesses, because some are good at dancing while others might be better at curing illnesses. The training would be also adapted to the strengths and weaknesses of the novice. My shamanic teacher Daniel, stated that the levels within a shamanic school are related to the generations of shamans. After the graduation ceremony, a *thwasa* becomes an *isangoma*. When this shaman in turn trains another *thwasa*, s/he now becomes a *gobela*. The newly trained shaman who then trains another *thwasa* honours her/his previous teacher by allowing him/her to move from the rank of the father to the rank of grandfather. Thus the hierarchy in the *Majoye* school, the school within which the researcher was trained, is much like a family tree in that it goes back to a founder (the root of the family tree), not unlike the school of psychoanalysis, in which the practitioners follow the line of their analysts all the way back to Papa Freud.

This is supported by the literature to some extent in that, according to Boshier (1973) there are twelve stages of training amongst the Zulu, twelve 'vessels' or types of spirits. Very few South African shamans reach the last or highest stage. Similarly, a Blackfoot novice of the North American tradition must pass through seven 'tents' before becoming a fully accomplished shaman. Each year the novice must pass an examination by the master designed to test spiritual knowledge and experience (Kalweit, 1992). The training of shamanic trance states of the South African shamans in this study suggests that the main developmental phase for the shamanic trance states lies in the beginning training stage which is finalised by a graduation ceremony, after which the shaman continues to improve and train others in shamanic trance stat᠎ ᠎.

These exercises d ᠎ing the training period are practices of trance induction, but the shamans understand these practices to be forms of clearing the channel between themselves and the ancestors. Thus the body of the shaman is purified by *muti*, enemas or the act of *phalaza*. The novice, still placed in everyday consciousness, is

changed into a new person and undergoes a rebirth towards being a shaman. The "essence of all purification is self-simplification; the doing away of the unnecessary and the unreal, the tangles and complications of consciousness" (Underhill, 1986, p. 56).

This is directly portrayed by the words of an *isangoma* who stated that in the training of the novice the first thing that is done, is to isolate him from his "old life", so that a "new man" can emerge. "We want to create another heart for him, a heart as the spirits like it. For this purpose, we apply a cleansing process of the inner man by enemetics and purgatives until nothing of the former substance that kept the person alive is left in him. Then we clean the outer man by extensive washing and by inducing perspiration with the help of blankets and hot stones. We also apply the smoking cure, and by the time this is all over the pupil is as soft as wax bodily and mentally and will submit to all we tell him" (an *isangoma* quoted in Schimlek, 1950, pp. 101-102).

As already discussed, other substances such as *snuff* and *imphepho* open the body for the contact with the spirit world. These mildly hallucinogenic substances are means of bridging different states of mind, or rather destabilising everyday consciousness in order to achieve an altered state. The body is furthermore entrained by the rhythms of the drums and energised by dancing, and in some cases the rise of the *umbilini* creates a specific vessel for trance states. Importantly, although stimulation occurs, the aim is to specifically avoid sexual stimulation, or possibly, the sexual energy is transformed in the service of reaching shamanic trance states.

The central factor here is that the body of the apprentice or *thwasa* is moulded, shaped and sculptured into the body of the shaman. It is the body of the shaman that has, through repeated practices, achieved a 'hardwiring' that allows for an entry into trance states. It could therefore be stated that, in South Africa, the shaman's body takes up two major positions in its aim to achieve trance states. The names of these

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two positions have been derived from modern Western magic literature (Carroll, 1987; Jungkurth, 1988), namely the 'death posture' and the 'ecstasy posture' which relate to hypostimulation and hyperstimulation respectively. The 'death posture' is an inhibitory mode of the body during the trance state. In this mode sensory deprivation prevails, and concentration on stillness of the body and mind is paramount. The 'ecstasy posture' is an excitatory mode of the body during the trance state. It can be induced through pain, torture, dancing, drumming or sexual excitement. Sensory overload is prevalent in this posture. These two major positions are used world-wide in shamanic practices. South African shamanism uses both positions for different trance states.

The ascetic and medicinal purification of the body guarantees that the past of the *thwasa* is destroyed and conquered, and that a new pattern of existence emerges that makes the contact with the ancestors bearable and "controllable" (4). The *thwasa* suffers her/his initiation illness because her/his body is unable to align itself with the energies of the ancestors. The *thwasa* has to leave her or his social past behind, and take on a new role in the community. During the shaman's graduation, s/he is required to crawl out of the shaman's hut. This is symbolic of a rebirth after having gone through a separation and a cleansing of the past, a death of her/his old self (Ngubane, 1977). The training, practice and discipline begins to create a new body, a new channel that can tolerate the presence of the ancestors. For example, the hypostimulation of the 'death posture' is important in certain respects for the production of a shamanic body, especially in the production of knowledge in the amakhosi trance state. The body and mind of this amakhosi trance-body is required to remain still and quiet in order to listen to the voices of the ancestors. The quiet and repetitive activities of beading are part of the training and induce the 'death posture' of this trance-body.

The hyperstimulation or activation of the body in the 'ecstatic posture' is, however, also central in other practices that, in a specific manner, enhance the amadlozi and

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umbilini trance states, be it through drumming, dancing, the rising of the *umbilini*, or even the heavy breathing during the embodiment of the ancestor in the shaman's body. Here the body is brought to high levels of exhaustion in order for the shaman to let go of everyday consciousness, and to achieve states of ecstasy. The South African shaman, during ceremonies of initiation, will dance throughout the night in states of ecstasy, and will thereby achieve trance states that allow the ancestors to speak through her/his body. The shamans understand themselves as standing outside of themselves (the very meaning of the Greek word *ekstasis*) when the ancestors speak through them. In summary, it is in the application of the 'death' and 'ecstatic' posture through various induction techniques that the South African shamans are able to unfold the shamanic trance states in a specifically trained and moulded shamanic trance-body.

3. The Shamanic Production of Trance Power

Mastery of shamanic trance states has as its aim an enhancing of the shaman's ability to access more information, but also the creation of a new self that is able to process the power and knowledge effects of such trance states. The *ukuthwasa*, as well as the training to become a shaman, are strategic means to build up and discipline the power of the shaman. The more the shaman learns how to enter a trance state through various induction techniques, the more powerful the trance states become. The more powerful the trance states become, the more the shaman is able to access information during the trance state, information that is believed to lie outside ordinary reality.

A new body, a 'trance-body', as discussed above, is produced in order to enhance the shaman's power and knowledge. For example, the more the novice knows as to how to induce a trance state through herbs and other practices, then with practice or habitual entrainment of neural networks, the novice is able to enter the amadlozi or amakhosi trance state more easily. Through the power of these trance states, the novice is then able to access the knowledge effect of diagnosing an illness.

However, within the shamanic trance states, the access to information occurs through parapsychological means, for example, in pre-cognition in which the shaman reports something that might happen in the future.

The shaman becomes a new person through training and discipline. The new self of the shaman means that the shaman becomes a productive trance machine able to diagnose, heal, and reveal secrets about the past, present and future. The shaman becomes a master of liminality (Peters, 1997, p. 61) who, through the trance states, bridges consensual and alternate realities, constantly transgressing the limits of consensual reality as well as bridging dreamscape and reality. An incident that occurred on one of Magellan's voyages in his navigation around the world might support this argument in a rather dramatic fashion. Sailing around the tip of South America, Magellan went ashore at Terra del Feugo, the southernmost point in the Western hemisphere. As he stepped ashore he met the local people who had come to meet the strange visitors. What then transpired, although hard to believe, was documented by the ship's historian. The local people asked Magellan how he had got to be there. He in turn pointed to the full-masted sailing ships at anchor off the coast. The local people, however, were unable to see the ships so clearly visible to Magellan and his crew.

According to the historian's record, the first person to see the ships was the village shaman. He stated that if they looked out to sea from the corner of their eyes they would be able to see something. Finally, everyone in the village could see the ships. The shaman through her/his trance states gains access more easily to other realities, and thus the shaman's perception was more flexible than the perceptions of his own kinsman. He was able to see "Magellan's ships even though they violated the consensus reality of his kinsmen" (Kenyon, 1994, p. 210). Different realities have different power-knowledge effects, and the shamanic reality during the shamanic trance states has certain specific power-knowledge relations.

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The training and practice of shamanic trance states produces a specific power-knowledge effect which, in modern Western culture, is investigated by parapsychology, or more precisely anthropological parapsychology (Roney-Dougal, 1991). Butchart (1997) has highlighted the fact that there is no 'enlightened' or only one way to apply Foucaultian methods. There is a full awareness that the objects of knowledge created by parapsychology in a Foucaultian schema need to take into account modern Western knowledge and cultural relations. In this regard parapsychological constructs have been found to be useful in unravelling more specifically the types of power-knowledge effects the four major trance states produce that go beyond the mere psychological effects. It is important to note that there is an awareness that the power-knowledge relations of these shamanic trances in this study are most definitely not the only relations that could be established.

A very brief introduction into parapsychology and its relation to shamanism will be presented in order to establish the necessary foundation for an analysis of the shamanic trance states. Parapsychological research has demonstrated that humans have extra-sensory perception (ESP) as well as psychokinesis (PK) (Palmer, 1978, 1986; Roney-Dougal, 1991; Rush, 1986; Schmeidler, 1977). Winkelman (1982a) notes from a review of 87 parapsychological studies, it seems indicative that a wide range of altered states and procedures ranging from hypnosis, meditation, induced relaxation and sensory deprivation, significantly improve ESP and PK performance. Since "many magical practices have evolved over long periods of time, in response to cultural needs, and with the intent of utilising psi, this suggests they many have evolved highly efficient psi-elicitation techniques, and could reveal important information about the functioning of psi" (Winkelman, 1982b, p. 23).

In parapsychology, the term 'psi' is used to refer to a unitary force, personal factors or processes in nature that transcend accepted laws (Rao, 1978). There is evidence that an ASC such as hypnosis is a psi-conducive state (Sargent, 1978). Winkelman (1982a) points out that some anthropological data of magical and shamanistic

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practices is suggestive of psi involvement. Inglis (1989) notes, when commenting on Field's work in West Africa, that "one feature of shamanism - in trances, individuals displayed powers they did not possess in their everyday lives - was beyond dispute" (Inglis, 1989, p. 27). A very strong case of PK is teleportation of the whole person. Shaman Paulina (4) presented her personal account of such an event, which was, however, an uncontrolled event. This event occurred before shaman Paulina's (4) apprenticeship. According to her, her ancestors teleported her out of her room to the gate of the property. When she tried to enter the house she found the door locked. "Yes, before I went to *thwasa*. When I was sleeping, then I saw myself at the gate. I was myself at the gate and the door was locked, I shouted: Hey, man let me in, and they said: He, man, no there is a *tokoloshe* outside. They didn't believe it" (4).

Shamanic "power depends on keeping control over the trance state" (Vitebsky, 1995, p. 22). For example, a wide range of paranormal skills are recognised and fostered in the Netsilik Eskimo society, in which the full range of abilities is parcelled out to different types and grades of shamans, from the 'low' forms such as simple divinatory behaviour and sorcery to the 'high' forms of possession trance (Locke & Kelly, 1982). Such abilities at times become a source of identifying the power of the shaman. This is true in South American shamanism, in that the shaman is distinguished from an 'ordinary' person in three major ways. Firstly, the shaman is the master of the ecstatic experience. Secondly the shaman has, through trance states, acquired auxiliary spirits, and thirdly, the shaman has acquired songs.

The mastering of the ecstatic trance states is, however, at the basis of everything else as it is this which makes the other two features possible (Langdon, 1992). The combat of shamans or the battle of the shaman with the sorcerer or witch have also to do with the power of psi. In this manner, the . haman is also a 'psychic warrior' (Schnabel, 1997), who protects the patients and the community from dangers. This is especially relevant in South African shamanism in which the South African

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shaman becomes a psychic warrior by using shamanic trance states to 'smell out' witches and to create counter-measures against the deeds of the sorcerers.

Thus the psi phenomenon, as it is called in the modern Western tradition, is inherent to shamanism, and unlike in the West where the dominant ideology leads to a marginalisation of individuals involved with such phenomena, in shamanism psi phenomena are linked to the power of the shaman. This discrepancy between contemporary Western and shamanic interpretations of psi phenomena pertains also to inner voices.

4. The Access to Inner Voices

In South African shamanism, access to the voice of the ancestors is paramount in establishing productive power-knowledge effects. Inner voices have been described in texts that span many thousands of years, including the oracles as important guides in Ancient Egypt, Babylon, Tibet and Greece (Hastings, 1991). Socrates' guiding inner voice was his *daimon* or 'the divine'. Jewish rabbis conversed with deceased teachers known as *maggadim*, and Christian mystics heard inner voices, which they believed were angels, deceased saints, or the Holy Ghost (Liester, 1996). Equally, shamans throughout the world converse with their inner voices (Achterberg, 1985: Harner, 1980)

Liester (1996) notes that, despite the contemporary marginalisation of inner voices, modern respected leaders such as Ghandi, Martin Luther King Jr., Jung, Scott Peck, Kuebler-Ross and Krishnamurti, have referred to the importance of their inner voice. The historical reason for the marginalisation of persons with access to inner voices is that during the Inquisition of the Middle Ages, the inner voice was no longer considered to be divine but rather to be demonic in order to control the heretics in the power struggle with the church. In the sixteenth century with its more scientific approach, the inner voice became attributed to brain pathology. In the nineteenth century it was considered to be part of the defining features of schizophrenia, while

today the inner voice is generally considered to be a hallucination, and therefore a psychopathological symptom.

Liester (1996) presents a model in which sensory experiences as inner voices are described as existing on a continuum, the ego being placed at the centre of this continuum. On the left side, the sensory experiences are associated with ego disintegration, regression, pathology and hallucination. On the right side, the sensory experiences are associated with well-being and ego transcendence, reflecting an intuitive inner voice which is ultimately revelatory in nature. This is an attempt to avoid the 'pre-trans fallacy' described by Wilber (1983), as previously discussed. Thus Jaynes' (1976) equation of Socrates' benevolent inner voice with the hallucinations of today's schizophrenics is an example of such a 'pre-trans fallacy'. Liester (1996) would therefore consider revelations to be messages that are experienced as coming from beyond the ego, and that create states of transcendence rather than disintegration. It is, however, equally problematic to read pathological inner voices as signs of transcendence. "Only a fine line may separate authentic revelation from complete self-delusion" (quoted in Liester, 1996, p. 7).

One study of inner voices by Heery (1989) is pertinent to this discussion. It divides the experiences of thirty subjects into three categories. The first category is where the inner voice is experienced as a fragmented part of the self, in the second category the inner voice is understood as an experience that allows for a dialogue which enhances the growth of the individual, while the third category belongs to those inner voices that are experienced as "channels opened toward and beyond a higher self" (Heery, 1989, p. 77).

For South African shamanism, the inner voices of the ancestors expressed in the four major trance states are of central importance. Without access to the inner voice of the ancestors the South African shaman cannot function. If the ancestors "do not speak, he does not know what they will say; he cannot tell those who come for

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divination what they will be told" (Callaway [1870], 1991, p. 29). There would be no power-knowledge effect because this inner voice is used to heal patients, as well as to acquire information about the patient's illness before they arrive at the shaman through dreams (amathongo trance state) and sympathetic pain in the bodies of the shaman (amakhosi trance state) (1, 2, 4, 8). It provides essential guidance on the use of herbs and medicines (amathongo trance state) (2, 3, 8, 9, 10), as well as to help find lost objects (amadlozi trance state) (2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10).

Importantly, during the *ukuthwasa*, the inner voice is experienced as persecutory and is experienced as fragmenting the ego (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9). The symptoms of fragmentation in this study ranged from amnesia (1) to depression (9), from trauma (6) to a sense of madness (3), as well as a whole range of pain from physical symptoms (2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10). It is through the training of the shaman in the trance states that the shaman achieves a more beneficial relationship with the inner voice of the ancestors as a new healed self is established, as mentioned above. The South African shamans themselves define the power being with the voices of the ancestors (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9), and it could therefore be said that the voice of the ancestors is experienced as an inner voice that transcends the ego of the shaman, for the power is contained in the voice of the ancestor and not in the ego of the shaman.

This experience is also found in the shamanic literature. For example, Black Elk, the shaman of the Ogalala Sioux, was assisted and guided to a ridge by an inner voice in order to find the bison, as described by the inner voice (Liester, 1996). It is therefore possible to consider such transpersonal inner voices as moving beyond time and space. A transpersonal psychological interpretation that acknowledges the phenomena of inner voices would parallel the experience of such inner voices as a form of spiritual awakening as set out by Assagioli (1991). It could also be characterised as 'peak' or transpersonal experience, as described by Maslow (1972). The inner voice could be considered as operating within the transpersonal bands of consciousness (Wilber, 1977), in which the self is aware of its supra-individual

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nature. Such an inner voice becomes a transpersonal experience, which is an experience "in which the sense of identity or self extends the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos" (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993, p. 203).

5. The Training of the Inner Voice and Inner Vision

In South African shamanism it is the access to the inner voice and the inner vision, made possible through the various disciplines of training, that produces a different subject, a newly moulded individual. The access to the inner voices and visions through training unfolds new experiences of power-knowledge relations. Shamanism as a tradition that enhances ASCs, has developed certain techniques which induce, maintain and interpret mental and auditory imager. De Martino (1988) states that shamans have special techniques to intensify perception and understanding, such as telepathy, clairaudience, bilocation of consciousness and remote viewing.

Lewis-Williams and Dowson (1989) note that the ne psychological research by Siegel (1977) into ASCs has relevance to shamanism. The results of this research correlate closely with the reported visual experiences of shamans taking the drug *yage* or *ayahuasca* in the Amazon Basin, as well as with their analysis of San rock art, the artists having been shamans depicting their experiences of trance states. The San or Bushmen shamans use metaphors and symbols in their rock art that express certain cross-cultural features of trances, trance dances and chants. "Because the nervous system is common to all people, certain hallucinations - neurological rather than cultural in form - are the same for all people" (Lewis-Williams (1986) quoted in De Maret, 1991, p. 187).

After the induction of the trance through rhythmic auditory stimulation and movement, namely clapping, singing and dancing, the early stages of the trance are characterised by subjects seeing neurologically predicted geometric forms and

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