



Self and Culture: A Dialogical Perspective

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Abstract

There is a growing library of literature on the relationship between self and culture. Most studies (Cousins, 1989; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sampson, 1989) in this area are quantitative and approach culture as a concept that is “internally homogenous and externally distinctive” (Hermans & Kempen, 1998, p.1113). Such studies have found cross-cultural differences in how people define their sense of self. This has led to a classificatory approach to self and culture such that the western and non-western self have been defined as distinct from one another. This thesis explores the appropriateness of such cultural dichotomies from a novel, dialogical perspective of self (Hermans, Rijks & Kempen, 1993) which allows for the special investigation of self and culture

A qualitative methodology was adopted for this investigation, within the narrative paradigm. Narrative interviews were conducted with a sample of twelve women between the ages of 35 and 50 years and these women were varied by ethnicity as one measure of culture. A voice-centred relational method (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998) was used to analyse the interviews. Both investigative and methodological aims were formulated during the analysis.

Investigative aims explore the appropriateness of the dichotomisation of the self as western and non-western. The results of the analysis question such cultural dichotomies criticised by Spiro (1993) and yet so prevalent in self and cultural studies (Cousins, 1989; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sampson, 1989). Frequently in the narratives there is an interweaving of individualistic and collectivist characteristics. Such a co-existence of traits is accommodated by the dialogical view of self, which provides a large enough framework to account for both interdependent and independent characteristics in the same self.

The methodological aims directed the researcher to investigate the appropriateness of the measurements of self and culture adopted by traditional approaches (Cousins, 1989; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sampson, 1989). The results of the thesis suggest that as intercultural connections are becoming increasingly common, culture needs to be recognised as a complex concept that is no longer homogenous. Cross-cultural approaches to this area are questioned by this investigation because of their tendency to simplify and categorise the self and culture. It is proposed that future research should approach this area of self and culture as an intersection or interface of complex factors that are not easily homogenised or dichotomised. The findings point to the value of qualitative research, and in particular the framework of the dialogical self, for exploring this interface.

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Declaration

This whole thesis, unless otherwise stated in the text, is the product of my own original work.

Opinions expressed in this thesis are those of the author, and are not necessarily those of the CSD.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Current issues in the psychology of the self

The self is a concept which almost every area of psychology uses as its starting point: whether our focus is emotions, cognition or behaviour, each seems only to follow once the concept of the self has been clarified. This is not to say that clarifying 'the self' is an easy task. A long history of attempts at clarifications of the self precedes and no doubt will proceed from this investigation. The self began as a hierarchy of selves, moving from the bodily self at the base to the spiritual self at the apex and the material and social selves in between, as conceptualised by William James in 1890. Today, the self is conceptualised as a dynamic process that consists of multiple selves, is always in context and is primarily social. Certainly, this is not where the journey ends, as each of these factors attributed to the dynamic self are debatable and have been contested or affirmed by various researchers (for example, Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Jopling, 1997; Sampson, 1988). Some issues around which debates emerge include how it is that if the self is one of multiple selves, you and I are able to live relatively coherently? If the self is a contextual being, are there then no essential aspects of the self which enable some stability in the uncertainty of post-modernism? If the self is primarily social, are some cultures not traditionally more collectivist and others traditionally more individualistic, and does this mean that the social aspect of the self might manifest quite differently in people from each culture? It is the intersection of self and culture highlighted in this final question with which this investigation is primarily concerned.

1.2 Introduction to previous research on self and culture

The self as a subject of study has gained in popularity over the last few two decades: a recent PsycLit. search on the self reveals 135 210 records. The cultural connections of the self have been an area of heated debate that has resulted in research largely quantitative in nature. The contributors to this debate can be crudely placed into two 'camps'. One 'camp' (e.g. Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Sampson, 1988; Triandis, 1989) argues for a relatively dichotomous categorisation of the self into western and non-western. The western self is one all too familiar to psychology represented as a bounded, self-contained, unique entity. In contrast, the non-western self is one that values relatedness with others, so that its context is an extension of the self as opposed to a background to the self. Researchers in the second 'camp' (e.g. Ewing, 1990; Spiro, 1993) argue against such dichotomisation along cultural lines and rather posit that each self has available to him or her numerous possible ways of 'selving'. Spiro, in particular, asserts that even the western self is bound up with the other, and research that finds to the contrary mistakenly measure a folk model of the self as opposed to the subjective experience of individuals. Significantly, Triandis (1989), despite his research supporting different characteristics of a western and non-western self, effectively argues for two levels of analysis, cultural and individual, which allow for the recognition of within-cultural differences.

While this debate, primarily concerned with the interface of self and culture continues, the very concepts of self and culture have, each on their own, been subjects of much discussion. In particular, recently the self has been explored within a narrative framework (by researchers like Neisser, 1997 and Sarbin, 1986) whereby the everyday stories we narrate are understood to be the making of the self. Following from this, Hermans' and Kempen's (1993) notion of

the self as dialogical is adopted as a theoretical framework for this research as it allows for the special investigation of the interface between self and culture. The self as dialogue suggests that the self is an imaginal space where dialogue between voices emerge, such that the self is continually being reconstructed. Not only does this theory of the self as dialogical suggest a new way of conceptualising the self, culture is also conceptualised differently as each voice has a cultural connection such that the self is a conglomeration of cultural positions. Hermans and Kempen (1998) go on to conceptualise culture as moving, as an interpenetrative process of local and global influences which, according to Markus, Mullally and Kitayama (1997) manifest at an individual level as a 'selfway'.

1.3 Unanswered questions

As cultural context has become almost inseparable from thinking about the self, so two complex notions are brought together and we are left to contemplate this interface. From one perspective the self is culture-bound, leading to discrete categories of self which can be compared cross-culturally. From this perspective the self in a non-western context is rather distinct from the self in a western context. From another viewpoint, self and culture intersect such that the self cannot be dichotomised by culture. From this perspective culture manifests at an individual level where the self produces his or her own way of being in context, frequently producing greater within-cultural differences than cross-cultural differences. Given these various approaches to this area, this investigation is interested in exploring the intersection of self and culture, especially within the South-African context, both as complex concepts in their own right, and as concepts that are inextricably bound up with one another. Despite the burgeoning amount of literature on self and culture, comparatively little research in this area has been conducted using a South-African sample. The richness of different

cultures in South-Africa seems to suggest that this country should have a large vested interest in the debate between the two 'camps'. Whether there are cultural differences in the self and how the cultural connections of the self emerge, are questions pertinent to South-Africa where cultural difference is embraced. These issues have implications for how we think about emotion, cognition and motivation, and therefore for therapeutic practices in multi-cultural contexts like South-Africa.

1.4 Brief outline of the methodology

This investigation takes a qualitative approach to an area of study steeped in quantitative tradition. Using a dialogical theoretical framework (Hermans & Kempen, 1993), a narrative approach to the subject matter is adopted. Interviews enable the researcher to explore the multi-voicedness of narrative, while allowing the subjectivities of the authors¹ sampled to facilitate the investigation of the self and culture. Mauthner and Doucet's (1998) voice-centred relational method is used and adapted for this study. It is chosen mainly for its emphasis on the self as multi-voiced and in context, which corresponds with the theoretical framework of the self as dialogue, but also for its articulation of the data analytic process, which is rare in qualitative methodology.

¹ The respondents interviewed for this investigation are referred to as authors due to the narrative focus of the thesis.

1.5 Introduction to the aims of this research

The main aims of this research are to explore the complex interface of self and culture from a dialogical perspective. First, while this study is partially guided by an attempt to explore the appropriateness of dichotomising the cultural manifestations within the self as western or non-western, it also aims to contribute to the area of self and culture in a novel way. This second aim is facilitated by adopting a dialogical framework of the self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993) which enables the researcher to approach this area as an intersection of many cultural influences with many aspects of the self.

Specifically, this research has investigative questions and methodological questions. The investigative questions centre around identified issues that are emphasised and debated frequently by both 'camps' of researchers described earlier. Methodological questions of this research aim to understand how the interface of self and culture can be appropriately measured within the framework of qualitative methods and the theory of the self as dialogical. It is hoped that in this process a greater understanding of the complexity of both self and culture, in their own rights, will unfold enabling a fuller understanding of the debates that continue to emerge in this area and of how these debates apply to our South-African context.

Chapter Two

The notion of self in psychology: a brief historical review

2.1 Introduction

To contextualise the present investigation, Scheibe's (1995) presentation of the historical perspectives on the self proves most useful as, by his own admission, little attempt has previously been made to compile an extensive history of the self within psychology. A brief historical review is deemed worthy as it is only by knowing where the self comes from that informed and notable contributions to this area of study can be embarked upon.

2.2 Early theorists on the self

Historically, the self and identity have been the focus of much academic work dating right back to William James in 1890. He approached the self in a revolutionary way, conducting demonstrations rather than experiments and understanding the self in its broadest terms, as being everything that a person can call his or hers. James (1952) set out to distinguish the components of the self, which he identified to be the material self, the social self, the spiritual self and the pure ego.

Theoretically, the self then took a social turn, with the likes of James Baldwin, Charles Cooley and George Mead, placing emphasis on the role of society and the other in self-conceptualisation. Cooley for example, viewed the self as essentially social and not only made up of a social part as James posited. A common thread throughout the writings of James,

Baldwin, Cooley and Mead is to be found in their use of the 'I' or self, not as a single entity but rather as an activity or complex process (Scheibe, 1995).

2.3 The self disappears from mainstream psychology

Despite the development of elaborate theories of the self, the advent of behaviourism in the earlier part of the twentieth century meant that the self was no longer considered an object of concern or legitimate area of study in psychology. With the popularisation of such names as Watson and Skinner, came the definition of 'proper' subject matters, namely observables that would ensure psychology gained respect as an objective experimental science. Thus the self disappeared from mainstream psychology, in fact, Mead came from a background of sociology which subsequently dominated any writings on the self (Scheibe, 1995). Meanwhile in psychology, environmental stimuli were greatly emphasised and the self was seen as merely a passive responder. However, concurrently in the psycho-analytic tradition the conception of the self was, as Scheibe notes, emerging as diametrically opposite to the previous emphasis on the social essence of the self, claiming that "Psycho-analysis is pre-eminently a psychology of the individual" (Scheibe, 1995, p. 40).

2.4 Personality and the self

A most pertinent question to pose at this point is whether or not one can turn to psycho-analytic theories of personality and the history of such theories when the subject matter is the self. Such a question refers directly to the debate over whether the notion of the self is interchangeable with that of personality. Whether they are merely associated with one another or whether they are completely different concepts altogether. Personality and the self certainly have in common

problems of definition. For decades theorists have grappled with and disagreed on what constitutes both concepts. Personality as a distinct and growing part of psychology dates back to the 1930's largely due to publications by psychologists like Gordon Allport (1937, in Pervin, 1996) and Henry Murray (1938, in Pervin, 1996). The self on the other hand has a long history of waxing and waning (Pervin, 1996) which this historical review bears testimony to.

Early personality theorists varied with regard to their emphasis on the self as well as their conception of it. Even so in the late 1950's the self occupied a prominent position in most personality theories (Hall & Lindzey, 1957). Nevertheless, Pervin (1996) has only recently included a chapter on the self in his book 'The science of personality', in which personality is defined as the organisation of cognitions, affects and behaviours that make a person's life coherent. Consisting of structures and processes, reflecting genes and experience, personality operates in the present but is influenced by the past and the future. Most contemporary personality theorists acknowledge that the self unifies our functioning. Pervin defines the self as a concept that refers to the way we perceive and experience ourselves. It is this definition that shall be alluded to when referring to the self or self-concept in this thesis.

Pervin (1996) identifies three theoretical views of the self which have evolved from personality theorists which have informed studies of the self today: the psychoanalytic self, the phenomenological self and the social-cognitive self.

2.4.1 The psycho-analytic self

Westen's (1992) review of the psycho-analytic self considers numerous psycho-analytic approaches from Sigmund Freud to object relationists, who attribute the development of the self

to early relationships with caregivers (which are referred to as objects) which become represented psychically as self- and other-representations. From these various approaches, Westen extrapolates several common factors that make up the psycho-analytic self. Briefly these are that self-representation is multi-dimensional, affectively-laden (good or bad), in relation to the other, made up of conscious and unconscious components and is juxtapositioned in relation to other representations, fears and wishes. Pervin (1996) adds a sixth common element, the organisation of representations into a self-system, such that individuals attempt to maintain the elements of the self in a cohesive, integrated and coherent fashion. Noticeable is the use of the label self-representations rather than the self, which reflects the influence of object relationists focus on cognitive processes. Westen however criticises the psycho-analytic literature for its lack of clarity in the interchangeable use of terms such as self, self-representations and self-images.

Such progress in the psycho-analytic arena on the self, and its properties was not nearly enough to awaken psychology from its behavioural slumber. However during the forties there was a rekindling of interest in the self in psychology through phenomenological or humanistic psychologists like Gordon Allport and in particular, Carl Rogers.

2.4.2 The phenomenological self

Carl Rogers (1902-1987) initially corroborated with popular notions at the time, that the self was “a vague, ambiguous, scientifically meaningless term which had gone out of the psychologist's vocabulary with the departure of the introspectionists” (Rogers, 1959, in Pescitelli, 1996, p.3), parallel to the arrival of the behaviourists. It was his consistent interest in therapy that lead him to recognise that his clients had a tendency to speak in terms of a self (Pervin, 1996). Rogers

used the term 'phenomenal field' to refer to conscious and unconscious perceptions or experiences that constitute the private world of the individual. For Rogers the self, a sense of awareness of being and functioning, became differentiated from this field through interactions with others (Pescitelli, 1996). Thus Rogers is credited for emphasising the self during periods when the concept was in disrepute and for developing objective measures (his Q-sort method) of phenomena (the self and the ideal self) that were of clinical significance (Pervin, 1996).

At this point in the historical sojourn for the self, despite recent waxing of interest, Allport (also a phenomenological psychologist) in 1955 still found it necessary to inquire as to whether the concept of the self was necessary at all (Pervin, 1996). Scheibe (1995) reflects the mood of this phase most adequately in his review of Ruth Wylie's (1974, in Scheibe, 1995) book called 'The self-concept'. Scheibe describes her unequivocal support for the abandonment of the entire area because of the vagueness of self theories and the imprecision of methodologies used. Wylie's chosen path to the self was entirely different from her predecessors who recognised the self as a process, an entity, at once incapable of being operationally defined as systematically measured. While Wylie's emphasis was on what the self is, previous focus had been on the functionality and origin of the self within, most often, a relational context.

In sociology, research continued unabated however and Erving Goffman, a sociologist, wrote extensively on the self and thus Scheibe (1995) attributes to him some of the most important contributions in thinking about the self. Observing and commentating on the "slop of social life" (Goffman, 1971, in Scheibe, 1995, p.49), Goffman was interested in how people present their selves in everyday life. Turning back to psychology, the influence of behaviourism was clear and when the question as to the necessity of the self concept was asked again in 1973 by Epstein little progress had been made within the discipline to add to the discussion (Pervin, 1996).

2.4.3 The social-cognitive self

It was in the seventies that legitimacy for the mind as an area of study was again granted with the advent of cognitivism. Behaviourism was quickly replaced by the social-cognitive perspective and as social and personality psychologists began to embrace notions from the cognitive revolution, so interest in the self returned and has been a 'hot' area of research and theorising ever since.

The roots of the cognitive perspective can be traced back much earlier than the 1970's to George Kelly's personal construct theory which emphasised the cognitive processing involved in the self-concept. Epstein (1973, in Pervin, 1996) later elaborated on Kelly's theory adding a motivational emphasis to Kelly's construct system. These earlier rumblings about the self in the social-cognitive domain truly gained momentum with the advent of the computer as a model of cognitive, information processing that could possibly be applied to theories of the self (Pervin, 1996). Such applications were undertaken by Hazel Markus from 1977 who is credited for beginning the social-cognitive approach to the self in earnest (Westen, 1992).

Markus (1980) concerned herself with how people process information through cognitions and set out to understand the system whereby information from the social world or about the self is categorised, organised and perceived. Markus used the word schemas, originally borrowed from Neisser (1976, in Markus, 1980) to refer to the knowledge structures through which information is processed. Schemas are dynamic in that they "are continually changed and updated as they are used as a basis for judgements, decisions, inferences, and predictions" (Markus, 1980, p.109). Applying this notion of schemas to the self, Markus developed the notion that we have cognitive representations about the self, which come from past experience, and operate to organise and

guide the way we process self-relevant experiences (Pervin, 1996). Through investigation Markus (1977, in Markus, 1980) demonstrated that we develop self-schemas about distinctive or important aspects of ourselves, which once developed will process relevant information, retrieve relevant behavioural evidence and resist contrary evidence related to our self-schemata both rapidly and easily.

2.5 Conclusion

From this historical review it is clear that the self has evolved as many times as its author or researcher has. All these changes and developments have laid the foundations for exciting debates in current discussions around the self. One thing is certain, that the self's falling in and out of favour has become a thing of the past, and certainly Westen's (1992) conclusion is most appropriate at this point, namely that “‘the self’ is alive and well” (p.11).

Chapter Three

Self and culture

3.1 Introduction

The historical review of the notion of self in psychology in the previous chapter presents a view of the self as autonomous, bounded and self-contained. It is a self that, although posited by some as being made up of many selves, is still unitary and consistent, internal and abstract, a self that psychologists have recommended we strive towards, closely tied to individuation. Yet it is precisely these qualities of the self that feminists (for example, Mageo, 1995), minority groups and non-western researchers (for example, Kagitcibasi, 1996; Mpofu, 1994; Ogbonnaya, 1994) have in the past two decades frequently challenged. This chapter seeks to explicate the dominant views of the self in western psychology by presenting challenges from cultural psychology and studies of the self in non-western cultures. Investigating self and culture has resulted in different ways of thinking about the self, often dichotomising the self as either non-western or western. While this categorical thinking has facilitated numerous investigations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Markus & Wurf, 1987; Sampson, 1988; Triandis, 1989) into the influence of different self-concepts on cognitive, emotional and motivational processes which are reviewed, it has been challenged as a type of all-or-nothing thinking (Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Spiro, 1993). These challenges are discussed towards the end of this chapter providing the impetus for a new way of conceptualising self and culture, which is presented against the backdrop of traditional definitions of culture.

3.2 Dominant views of the self in western psychology

Guisinger and Blatt (1994) highlight the individualistic bias reflected in the dominant view of the self in western psychology. They trace this emphasis to traditional psychological notions of personality development, which led to a view of society as “either corrupting or civilising our basically asocial nature” (Guisinger & Blatt, 1994, p.105). Western criteria for a fully matured self thus came to include separation, individuation, distinctiveness, self-containment and independence. This perspective of the maturation process was seen to be evolutionary, due to the influence of Darwin’s theory of natural selection, which was assumed to operate at the level of the individual and to select for aggressive self-interest. Contrary to this initial view, further developments in evolutionary theory (Guisinger & Blatt, 1994) have emphasised natural selection processes based on interpersonal relatedness, with a focus on the altruistic and co-operative nature of behaviour. Furthermore, the development of cross-cultural psychology has meant that there is an increasing search for non-western approaches (Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dasen, 1992) which emphasise the relatedness between the self and the other. Non-western psychologists (like Hui and Kitayama) have supplied theories and data from their own cultures and “Their work has suggested that each culture may have, at least to some extent, its own psychology” (Triandis, 1996, p.407). Cross-cultural psychology has highlighted the prevalence of ethnocentrism in research, where differences between groups are viewed as deficiencies, which has resulted in a concerted effort to avoid judgements that are rooted in one’s own particular culture. These developments collapsed the previous view of the individualistic self as universal, and exposed contemporary psychology as a western indigenous psychology.

3.3 Theoretical models of the self: a cross-cultural perspective

Accounts of indigenous psychologies and definitions and models of the self from a non-western perspective (Cousins, 1989; Kagitcibasi, 1996; Mageo, 1995; Markus & Wurf, 1987; Mpofu, 1994; Ogbonnaya, 1994; Sampson, 1988;) have proven at times very different to traditional western notions. The presentation and discussion of theoretical models or critiques of the self from a cross-cultural perspective now follows.

3.3.1 Independent and interdependent self-concept

Markus' (1980) theories on self-schemata in the social-cognitive arena, reviewed in chapter one, have been applied to cross-cultural research (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) spearheading research in the area of self-concept and culture. Markus and Kitayama's research led them to conceptualise two self-concepts that differ in the role the person ascribes to the other when defining the self. According to their model of the self, individualistic cultures (western) that emphasise separateness and encourage one to stand out from the crowd, foster the development of an independent self-concept. Subsequently the other only features as a comparable measure of the unique and independent self. Markus and Kitayama refer to Geertz (1975, in Markus & Kitayama, 1991) to further demonstrate this independent self-concept who is "a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic centre of awareness, emotion, judgement and action organised into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against a social and natural background" (p.227). The latter description proves pervasive historically, in psychological references to the self (James, 1952; Markus, 1980; Rogers, 1959, in Pescitelli, 1996; Westen, 1992).

In seeming contrast to this, research into African understandings of the person (Mpofu, 1994; Ogbonnaya, 1994) indicate that “a normative imperative of these cultures is to maintain this interdependence among individuals” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p.227). Thus Markus and Kitayama conclude that collectivist cultures presumably emphasise relatedness between the self and other, and as a result develop an interdependent self-concept. The interdependent self is conceptualised as less stable and self-contained than the independent self, rather it is defined as a “flexible, variable” self (Singelis & Brown, 1995, p.359) depending on others, relations with others and context, to regulate behaviour.

3.3.2 The private self, public self and collective self

Harry Triandis presents a different, yet compatible theoretical perspective on the self in his paper entitled “The self and social behavior [sic]in differing cultural contexts” (Triandis, 1989). He proposes that there are three kinds of selves and gives his own examples - the private self which refers to cognitions about traits, states or actions of the person (for example ‘I am stubborn’), the public self which refers to cognitions involving others’ view of the self (for example ‘People think that I am stubborn’) and finally the collective self which refers to cognitions about the self that is found in a collective (for example ‘My family/colleagues think that I am stubborn’). These selves differ in complexity and in their sampling frequency (the number of times they are accessed) depending on the culture in which the person is contextualised.

Triandis (1989) reports that different aspects of the self are accessed with varying probabilities depending on three cultural dimensions he identifies as cultural complexity, individualism-collectivism and tightness-looseness. Referring to the first dimension, Triandis (1989) argues that “the number of potential relationships is one measure of cultural complexity” (p.508),

because the more complex a culture the greater number of relationships potentially available. Whereas archaeological evidence suggests that, 15 000 years ago, human bands consisted of a maximum of thirty people, the complexity of contemporary societies means that people now have the opportunity to belong to the gym, the book club, the bank as well as a particular business. Thus loyalty is more dissipated allowing individuals to give priority to their own goals rather than to any specific goals of an in-group. Therefore in complex cultures the private self is more likely to be accessed.

On the second dimension, individualism-collectivism, Triandis (1989) supports Markus and Kitayama's (1991) findings that individualism leads to accessing of the private self while collectivism reinforces accessing of the collective self. In this way these two theoretical perspectives are complementary. Various studies (Georgas, 1989, in Triandis, 1989; Katakis, 1984, in Triandis, 1989; Watkins & Regmi, 1996) show urban samples to be more individualistic and rural samples more collectivist, even within the same culture. This points to an intersecting variable separate from the traditional notion of culture, this and other intersecting variables will be explored in this research. It also suggests that both collectivist and individualistic elements within cultures should not be overlooked. "I refer to cultures as sociocentric [collectivist] or egocentric [individualistic] as one might refer to hair color as fair or dark, knowing that in any particular case shading is infinitely variable" (Mageo, 1995, p.283). These and other arguments against the dichotomisation of cultures (Bochner, 1994; Singeles & Brown, 1995; Spiro, 1993; Trafimow et al., 1991) will be further developed later on in this chapter.

The third cultural dimension is tightness versus looseness (Triandis, 1989). Tight cultures refer to homogenous societies that have definite norms which are often imposed on members of the

in-group. Loose cultures are heterogeneous and are more flexible and lenient in dealing with deviance within groups. Loose cultures, characterised by numerous in-groups, are more likely to reinforce the private self as the person is free to choose what self to access. "If several kinds of collective selves are available, one may choose to avoid norm and role conflict by rejecting all of them and developing individual conceptions of proper behaviour" (Triandis, 1989, p.514). Tight cultures, characterised by few, cohesive in-groups, tend to reinforce the public and collective self.

3.3.3 Self-contained individualism versus ensembled individualism

Sampson (1988) suggests another way of categorising cultural conceptions of the self in his address of the debate over the merits of American individualism. He broaches the issue by conceptualising individualism as fundamentally involving the self-other relationship. He argues that this self-other relationship is defined in two different ways as a function of cultural and historical influences. A feature of American culture is, according to Sampson (1988), self-contained individualism which is characterised by an exclusionary psychology of the self, firm boundaries between the self and other, and an emphasis on personal control. Self-contained individualism results in conceptualising the other as outside of the self, an entity from whose individual action social benefits may arise, an entity that may be worthy of personal trust, an entity that may satisfy individual needs of pleasure or gratification. Nevertheless, despite pro-social motives, the implicit understanding is that the other is a self-contained individual that the self is able to help and become intimate with. The second type of individualism for which Sampson (1988) cites cross-cultural, historical and within-cultural evidence is ensembled individualism. Ensembled individualism, generally less familiar to contemporary psychology, is characterised by an inclusive conception of the self, fluid self-other boundaries, and an emphasis

on field control which is "the location of power and control in a field of forces that includes but goes well beyond the person" (Sampson, 1988, p.16). The self characterised by ensembled individualism conceptualises the other as an extension or part of the self, "the self integrally includes social relationships and social context" (Stevens, 1996, p.133).

Therefore, the description and exploration of two major types of indigenous psychologies by Sampson (1988) leads him to argue that individualism is universal and socio-cultural. According to Sampson (1988), different types of individualism develop as the self, as an embodied agent, is handled differently across historical time, cultures and even subcultures. Each type of individualism serves different social functions, thereby maintaining the various values, structures and beliefs of its particular culture. For example, Sampson (1988) explores the ways in which the cultural values of freedom, responsibility and achievement are realised (and not realised) in different ways by self-contained and ensembled individualism. While Sampson (1988) seems to be offering an alternative to the categorisation of culture into individualistic and collectivist groups, his alternative is in itself a dichotomisation. However his focus on the self-other relationship as an important feature of conceptualising the self is noteworthy.

These various theoretical models of the self-concept, developing from cross-cultural research, present alternative views of how we think about ourselves, that challenge the assumption of the western self-concept as universal.

3.4 Effects of the self-concept on cognitive, emotional and motivational processes

Sampson's (1988) explication of the different understandings of the basic values of humanity, namely freedom, responsibility and achievement, by different types of individualism, supports

the notion that there are numerous potential cognitive, emotional and motivational consequences for holding an interdependent or independent self-concept. Markus and Kitayama (1991) refer to the independent and interdependent self-concepts as the most overarching schemata of the individual's self-system so that the organisation of self-relevant processes and their consequences are rooted in whether the individual defines the self as separate from or connected with their social context.

Three cognitive consequences for holding an independent or interdependent self-concept are supported by investigations carried out by Markus and Kitayama (1991). Firstly, the cognitive elaboration of the other appears to be influenced by the individual's self and vice versa, with interdependent self-concepts promoting a sensitivity to and understanding of others thereby resulting in more distinct and elaborated interpersonal knowledge. The other is relevant to the interdependent self's defining attributes. However, for individuals with an independent self-concept, self-relevant stimuli do not include the other, rather self-knowledge is more distinctive and elaborated than information about the other.

Secondly, the distinction between an independent self-concept and an interdependent self-concept has also been described along an abstract-concrete dimension (Cousins, 1989; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Interdependent selves process, organise and retrieve knowledge about the self and other in more concrete ways, with a focus on the specific interpersonal or situational context. In contrast, independent selves are more inclined to process information about the 'self in general' or the 'other in general'. For example, Americans are more likely to abstract behaviour using personality characterisations when describing an acquaintance. The researchers (Cousins, 1989; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) conclude that for people with an independent self-concept, inner attributes and dispositions are thought to regulate behaviour, rendering a

perception of the self as independent of others, context and time. Subsequently, people with independent self-concepts access abstract definitions when asked to describe the self. However, while the interdependent self certainly possesses inner characteristics and traits, they are perceived as secondary to one's relationship with others, as situation specific and therefore unreliable. Rather, the relationship between self and other in specific situations is the significant self-representation perceived as diagnostic of the self. Therefore, more concrete, specific self-descriptions are given by those with an interdependent self-concept.

Finally Markus and Kitayama (1991) comment on the influence of the self-concept on categorising and counterfactual thinking (basic cognition). They argue that while the type of self-concept has no bearing on the acquisition of these cognitive skills, the application of these skills may be influenced. For example, a study by Bloom (1984, in Markus & Kitayama, 1991) led him to conclude that American subjects were far more willing to engage in a purely 'theoretical' exercise than Chinese subjects who rather reflected on their own relevant experience as well as on the motivation of the interviewer and their relationship with the interviewer. Once again the situational and interpersonal context played a large role in the cognitive process. Therefore, independent selves are far more willing to allow cognition about fanciful and theoretical worlds because the self-contained, autonomous self will not be implicated in this world in the same way that the interdependent self, that is connected with social context, would be.

As with cognition, the shaping of emotional experience is largely a function of culture (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The types of emotions that are expressed, the way these emotions are elicited and the intensity and frequency of the emotions vary with the individual's self-system. Markus and Kitayama identify two types of emotions. Firstly, ego-focused emotions refer to a

person's internal traits such as anger and frustration, and are thus typically experienced and communicated by those with independent selves. Secondly, other-focused emotions are identified as referring primarily to others such as sympathy and shame, and are more frequently expressed and experienced by interdependent self-systems.

The self-concept also plays a decisive role in determining the motivations that initiate specific behaviours, as the self-concept provides the "incentives, standards, plans, rules, and scripts for behaviour" (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Evidence from Bond (1986, in Markus & Kitayama, 1991) suggests that collectivist cultures tend to foster socially oriented motives like nurturance, as opposed to individually oriented motives like exhibition and power. Furthermore, the motive for cognitive consistency, a powerful force behind behaviour, may only be relevant to those with independent self-concepts. Those with interdependent self-concepts are far more concerned with restraint of the inner self, and are motivated by the need to be receptive to others, adjusting to the needs and demands of the situation.

3.5 Challenges to dichotomisation

The notion of culturally defined self-concepts has recently been challenged from a variety of perspectives (Bochner, 1994; Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Bent-Martinez, 2000; Mageo, 1995; Singelis & Brown, 1995; Spiro, 1993; Trafimow et al., 1991; Triandis, 1989) which will now be reviewed. While asserting the influence of culture on self-concept and in turn the influence of self-concept on intrapersonal processes, Triandis (1989) cautions that cultures are complex and dynamic implying that simplification should be avoided. He argues that extreme individualism may create or encourage collectivism, while extreme collectivism may result in a reaction towards individualism. Similarly "tightness may result from too much looseness, and looseness

from too much tightness.” (Triandis, 1989, p.512) Thus, Triandis (1989) distinguishes between two levels of analysis when investigating the interface between culture and self, namely the individual level and the cultural level. Individualism and collectivism are posited as appropriate terms for cultures or societies, while the terms idiocentric and allocentric respectively are posited as appropriate characterisations of individuals within these societies. By distinguishing between the cultural and individual levels at which culture manifests Triandis (1989) allows for the possibility of within-culture differences, where a culture may be termed collectivist but an individual within that culture may be characterised as idiocentric.

In support of this argument, Mageo (1995) in her anthropological study of the Samoan culture refers to ontological premises as “cultural versions of what it means to be a person” (Mageo, 1995, p.284) which may be associated with Triandis’ (1989) cultural level of analysis. For example the ontological premise of the Samoan culture emphasises the social dimension of the self in an attempt to undermine the alternative subjective dimension of the self, associated with Triandis’ (1989) individual level of analysis. By analysing certain discursive practices within the culture, investigating the individual level of analysis, Mageo identified discourses that emphasised difference and identity in collectivist cultures and, distance and closeness in individualistic cultures thereby acknowledging the exclusion of a dimension of the self in the ontological premise. Mageo (1995) refers to this as “a dialectical element in cultural systems of self” (p.292) which functions to take more fairly into account those dimensions of the self that are not socially sanctioned. Thus isomorphism is dangerous when dealing with the complex and evolving concept of culture.

Research by Triandis (1989) and Mageo (1995) point to variations within culture of interdependent and independent selves, suggesting allocentric and idiocentric individuals can co-

exist within the same culture characterised by either collectivism or individualism. Moreover, recent studies (Trafimow et al., 1991) demonstrate not only this co-existence between individuals but a co-existence within individuals of interdependent and independent traits. Thus, increasingly the perception that individualism and interdependence are mutually exclusive has come under scrutiny. Singelis and Brown (1995) also argue that “[b]oth the independent and interdependent self coexist in individuals” (p.360). Thus not only is it likely that there will be collective and individualist subcultures within one culture, but that a person may access his private self at work, especially if his job demands creativity and individual input, only to go to the local pub with ‘the rugby boys’ to reinforce and access his collective self. Thus, while culture certainly plays a large role in defining the self “people are not just cultural automatons...each person has his or her own agenda within the culturally possible.” (Goldschmidt, 1995, p.249).

Furthermore, a study of the cross-cultural differences in the self-concept of Malaysian, British and Australian subjects by Bochner (1994) also refutes the notion that cultural differences in the self are categorical. He proposes a “pan-cultural model of the self in terms of the relative salience of its components” (Bochner, 1994, p.275). Such a model recognises both the complexity of the self and the varying emphasis on the private and collective self-structures in different cultures. The study uses a modified version of the Twenty Statements Test (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954) and codes the data using Triandis’ (1989) categories of idiocentric (private self), group (collective self) and allocentric (public self) cognitions. Weighting of responses was introduced under the assumption that “the *order* in which a participant completes the ‘I am’ sentences reflects the state or trait salience of those self-references” (Bochner, 1994, p.276). The results showed the Malaysians to have significantly more group-anchored and less individualistic self-concepts than the British and the Australians (separately and combined). The

pan-cultural model was supported in that the Malaysians did have idiocentric self-references, in fact idiocentric self-references occurred more frequently than group self-references, however in comparison to the Australian and British subjects it is apparent that “the Malaysian conception of individuality is very much a self-in-relation-to-others” (Bochner, 1994, p.281). Thus Bochner’s study emphasises the notion of salience and the fact that interdependence and independence are not mutually exclusive. Furthermore, it points to the value of cross-cultural rather than mono-cultural research.

Spiro (1993) eloquently challenges the notion of the western self-concept being distinct in comparison to non-western conceptions of self. “[T]hese bipolar types of self - a western and a non-western - are wildly overdrawn...there is much more differentiation, individuation, and autonomy in the putative non-western self, and much more dependence and interdependence in the putative western self, than these binary opposite types allow” (Spiro, 1993, p.116-117). Spiro develops his argument along three lines. Firstly, he challenges studies supporting a dichotomisation of the self-concept by arguing that each study may be concerned with a different component of the self given the lack of clarity with regards to the definition of the self. Outlining several definitions of self gleaned from self studies, they vary from “cultural conception of the person” (Spiro, 1993, p.114) to personality to self-representation. Secondly, Spiro (1993) is critical of the methodologies used to assess self-conception, in particular “the ‘cultural symbols’ and ‘experimental task’ approaches” (p.127) which analyse symbolic forms such as words, images, institutions and behaviours. He argues that such approaches measure the cultural conception of the person or the folk model of the self which cannot be assumed to be the same as individuals’ subjective experience of the self. His own research suggests that “one cannot validly infer actors’ conception of the self, let alone their mental representations of their own self, from the normative cultural conception” (Spiro, 1993, p.120). Thirdly, Spiro outlines

empirical challenges to the dichotomisation of the self. For example, Ewing (1990, in Spiro, 1993) challenges the dominant anthropological view of the South Asian self as context-dependent and interdependent. Using interviews and observations Ewing (1990, in Spiro, 1993) found that Pakistani women possess “intrapyschic autonomy...[despite their embeddedness in] interpersonal dependency relationships” (p.132). For challenges to the western self as autonomous and independent Spiro cites Eric Erikson, William James and G.H. Mead reviewed in chapter one, for who the self is essentially relational. Spiro argues that while the folk model of the western self conceives of the self as autonomous, this folk model does not correspond well to the actual western self. “No major western student of the self, none at any rate that I am aware of, holds the view that the self, western or otherwise, is not interdependent” (Spiro 1993, p.136). Thus in summary Spiro argues for investigation into individual variations and against dichotomising the self as western and non-western, independent and interdependent.

Postmodernists (Baumgardner & Rappoport, 1996; Ewing, 1990) also reject the isomorphism of concluding that people from individualistic, western cultural backgrounds have an independent self-concept while collectivist, non-western cultures determine an interdependent self-concept. Post-modernists’ challenge this view as static, essentialist and deterministic. The post-modern self is one of multiplicity and “shifting selves” (Ewing, 1990, p.263) so that “where ego was, there shall egos (a pluralistic identity) be” (Baumgardner & Rappoport, 1996, p.126). Markus and Wurf (1987) refer to the “working self-concept, or the self-concept of the moment” (p.306) to encompass the notion that the self is not fixed or stable but a multifaceted, multidimensional dynamic process. Individuals continually reconstitute themselves from the self-representations available to them through culture (Ewing,1990) which emphasises the notion that the self is not an entity but a process or activity (Goldschmidt, 1995). Ewing (1990) concludes that “[t]here is no overarching, cohesive self that is identifiable to an outside observer. This is true even for

Americans who may think they have such a self' (p.259). These arguments advocate a self that cannot be defined as interdependent or independent but rather is constantly constructed and changing in innovative ways.

Finally, Hong et al. (2000) argue that "[i]n contemporary popular discourse, it is becoming increasingly rare to hear the word cultural without the prefix multi-" (p.709). Subsequently individuals are increasingly internalising more than one culture, a phenomenon cross-cultural psychology has failed to take into account. Research (Hong et al., 2000) into the experience of bicultural individuals (people who have internalised two different cultures) suggests that these individuals switch between different cultural frames depending on the accessibility of this frame. The accessibility is determined by the exposure to various cultural symbols, which prime certain cultural theories and keep these theories prominent in the minds of these individuals. Such research questions a monolithic approach to culture and self suggesting that individuals do internalise more than one cultural trait, and emphasises the prominence of intercultural connections which is changing the way we think about culture (this will be explored in more depth towards the end of the chapter).

The above arguments and observations represent a growing wariness of overly homogenous constructions of western self-concepts, while also cautioning against accounts that project allocentricism onto non-western people.

3.6 Mechanisms by which culture influences the self

So far this chapter has explored arguments around cross-cultural differences in 'selving', but what are the mechanisms by which culture becomes a major determining factor in the self? Ip

and Bond (1995, in Watkins & Gerong, 1997) identify two major pathways. Firstly, culture influences values, which in turn influence a person's self-perception. The second view is that there are differences in the socialised mode of thinking between cultures along the concrete-abstract dimension (Cousins, 1989; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), which leads to different self-systems.

Hart and Fegley's (1997) investigation into the development of self-concept in cultural context highlights the different processes by which cultural context influences the sense of self. They identify social relationships and language as processes that function to make salient particular types of self-concepts which may differ from culture to culture. Structuring of daily life and rituals are also cited as activities that shape one's self-concept in a particular way.

Cross (1992) also suggests that any grand theory of the self must take into consideration the life stage and historical period of the individual, as these may have their own impact on self-concept quite apart from cultural context, where culture refers to ethnicity. Baumeister (1987) attempts to address the impact of the historical period on the self-concept by tracing the historical variation of issues of selfhood as they appear in historical data and literature from America, England and France. Firstly Baumeister (1987) describes the Medieval person's idea of self as being "unthinkable apart from the actual context of social roles assigned to that person by God, society and family." (p.169). This notion of self is similar to the interdependent self-concept associated with collectivist societies (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Baumeister goes on to reflect that the concept of individuality, associated with the independent self-concept (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), was only articulated in the early modern period as privacy and self-fulfilment became increasingly important. This development was also influenced by the rise in social mobility, whereby one's social status was no longer a stable entity. Baumeister's research

certainly provides background for interesting discussion, however it also points to the need for a similar historical exploration of selfhood using data and literature from collectivist cultures.

Westen (1992) asserts that a thorough understanding of the self requires knowledge of economic processes as well as historical and cultural processes. He hypothesises that differences in self-conceptualisation are also a result of differences in technological development, rather than only a consequence of western and non-western cultural differences. Westen traces the development of the self from collectivist to individualistic with the progression from band societies to the rise of agriculture and finally to the advent of industrialisation. According to Westen (1992) “several processes inherent in technological development or ‘modernisation’ [that] alter both cognition about, and moral valuation of, the self” (p.77). Changing work conditions, achieved rather than ascribed identities, universalistic exchange (money), material wealth, familial experiences such as giving a child his or her own room are all factors associated with technologically advanced societies that may sustain a private self.

Such research (Baumeister, 1987; Cross, 1992; Westen, 1992) is problematic in that it supports the view that an independent self-concept correlates with a modernised, highly technological society. This argument certainly has no supporting evidence as Japanese subjects frequently define their self-concepts both concretely and collectively (Cousins, 1989) and yet make up one of the most advanced societies in our modern world. Westen warns against such uses of modern and western interchangeably, pointing out that not all modern cultures are western and that western cultures were not always modern.

In summary, what is highlighted by such research (Baumeister, 1987; Cross, 1992; Hart & Fegley, 1997; Ip & Bond, 1995, in Watkins & Gerong, 1997; Westen, 1992) is that it is

problematic to narrowly define culture as ethnicity, excluding cultural factors such as language, technology, historical period and life stage. This review will now turn to exploring the way culture has been defined in research.

3.7 The concept of culture

3.7.1 Defining culture

In 1952, a review of the definitions of culture was conducted (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, in Singelis & Brown, 1995) and the following definition was extrapolated:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; cultural systems may on the one hand be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action. (p.356)

This definition highlights a number of factors pertaining to culture. Firstly it posits that culture conditions and shapes individuals' social cognitions. Secondly it refers to Triandis' (1972, in Singelis & Brown, 1995) conceptualisation of two aspects of culture, one objective the other subjective. Culture is made up of the physical constructions of social groups (objective culture) as well as of mental constructions, referring to how the rules, group norms, roles and values are perceived (subjective culture). Thirdly, the definition highlights the shared, group nature of culture. In this sense culture is conceptualised as intersubjectively shared. From these

conceptualisations the word culture should be used to include “language, technology, economic, political, and educational systems, religious and aesthetic patterns, social structures, and so on” (Triandis, 1989, p.509). Such an inclusive definition is clearly supported by research previously discussed on the pathways by which culture shapes the self-concept (Baumeister, 1987; Cross, 1992; Hart & Fegley, 1997; Ip & Bond, 1995, in Watkins & Gerong, 1997; Westen, 1992).

3.7.2 Culture and ethnicity

An inclusive definition is however problematic often resulting in confused interpretation of the concept of culture. For example, ethnicity and culture are frequently used interchangeably in research. This is fraught with difficulties when considering a more honest reflection of the use of the term ‘ethnicity’, given by Rack (1982). Rack (1982) conceptualises the term ‘ethnicity’ as filling a gap where the term ‘race’ was previously used but has now fallen into disrepute because of its “discreditable associations” (p.18) and the term ‘culture’ has too wide a set of meanings. Rack continues to define ethnicity as unequivocally different to ‘race’¹ and culture: An ethnic group has common heritable and cultural characteristics, “they are mainly identified by their culture (which includes religion) and in which marriage within the group has been the norm” (Rack, 1982, p.18). This definition certainly seems to suggest that it is particularly hard to define ethnicity without referring to cultural characteristics, therefore in many ways the two are partially interchangeable. Partially, though because ethnicity, rather than being equivalent to culture, is a means by which culture is transmitted and a genetic pool is shared, due to the sharing of a geographical location. For example, the Koi-San in the Sahara desert are an ethnic group, defined by their geographical location, their sharing of the genetic pool and they transmit

¹ The author has placed quotes around the concept of ‘race’ to highlight that it is “an empty signifier which does not mark ontological differences between groups known as ‘Black’, ‘White’, ‘coloured’ etc.” (Durrheim & Mokeki, 1997, p.212).

cultural practices from one generation to the next. If certain Koi-San were to leave the territory of the Sahara desert and share their genetic pool with others in the urban areas their offspring would no longer define themselves as Koi-San in ethnicity, while they may still have inherited many cultural aspects of Koi-San life. Thus ethnicity seems in many ways to be determined by territorialisation whereas, it will be argued, that culture is by contrast increasingly being recognised as deterritorialised (Hermans & Kempen, 1998)

3.7.3 'Race', racism and culture in psychology

It is important to explore the various definitions of 'race' and how it is used in psychological research, so that we can delineate racial issues from cultural issues, if this is appropriate. The definition of 'race' is fraught with problems and controversy surrounding the issue has resulted in calls to drop 'race' as a term altogether (Dole, 1995) as well as appeals to psychological associations to develop a "comprehensive scientific policy on race to guide research and publications" (Yee, Fairchild, Weizmann & Wyatt, 1993, p.1138). At the same time studies on culture are becoming more widespread and racist ideology disguised as views about culture is close to the surface in cross-cultural research where ethnocentricity is difficult to distinguish from racism (Fernando, 1988). "This is possible because of an assumption, which is seldom made explicit but generally accepted, equating race and culture" (Fernando, 1988, p.52). This trend has led to a call for research to clearly specify the relevant variable under investigation, whether it is a racial, cultural, social or other variable such as socio-economic status (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993).

'Race' has traditionally been viewed as a biological term (Yee et al., 1993), with racial differences referring to differences in the inherited, genetic constitution of different groups

within the human species. These differences are most frequently cited as physical traits (skin colour, hair type and colour, eye colour, head shape and size, and facial features) that are attributed to inbreeding in different geographical locations, resulting from evolution selection pressures in the particular locale (Zuckerman, 1990). While psychologists (J. Philippe Rushton and Arther R. Jensen reviewed in Yee et al., 1993) frequently cite biological and genetic authority in their arguments for racial differences, their definitions “are basically lay stereotypes ...[which] ignore heterogeneity, assume unproven race-behaviour causal relationships, confuse race with intervening factor of bias (including inter-rater bias), ethnicity, social class, and culture, and have not been sanctioned by scientific and professional consensus” (Yee et al., 1993, p.1134). The scientific validity of ‘race’ as a concept has also been challenged on the grounds that the genes that results in physical differences is such a small proportion of the total genetic constitution of the human species, often resulting in more within-group differences than between-group differences (Rack, 1982). Thus the biological concept of ‘race’ no longer has any credibility. These issues point to the necessity of examining how the social meaning of ‘race’ is distinct from and related to the biological meaning (Sun, 1995). Such a clear distinction may enable a better understanding of the use of ‘race’ and culture interchangeably, so as to guard against racist ideology in this research.

To examine the social meaning of ‘race’, it must be acknowledged that psychology, having developed in a western culture, cannot be assumed to have been free from the social and political forces that shape ideologies and assumptions, specifically racist ideology (Fernando, 1988). “Some researchers on race seem dedicated to establishing the racist ideology on a scientific basis while denying the political beliefs that are associated with it” (Zuckerman, 1990, p.1301). The inability of psychology to filter off the non-scientific racially based influences can be attributed to: its function within society as a means of social control; a dynamic conservatism

that has been used to describe British psychiatry (Fernando, 1988); and psychologists' desire for their work to be accepted as scientific and as a sensible profession, which reflects the norms of society.

Psychology in South-Africa has had to deal with 'race' and racism, often more tenuously, given the legacy of apartheid in this country. The ways in which the discipline of psychology contributed to racist practices and ideology in South-Africa has been the subject of much academic discussion (reviewed briefly in Durrheim & Mokeki, 1997). Firstly, the perception of psychology as a value-free science concerned with the objective analysis of appropriate subject-matter, lead to an active support of apartheid practices (Foster, 1991, in Durrheim & Mokeki, 1997). Secondly, psychologists continuing practice and training in a racially segregated society, has helped maintain the racist status quo. Many of these trends are likely to not be limited to South-Africa as American psychologists report a hesitation to research 'race' (and gender) directly "because of their sensitive nature and the liability of being 'suspected of reactionary politics or malevolence toward socially disadvantaged groups' (p.56; cf. Defries & Plomin, 1978, p.504)" (Yee et al., 1993, p.1133).

What can be concluded thus far is that culture, 'race' and ethnicity are interrelated in ways that are very complex, being influenced by historical, political and social factors (Fernando, 1988).

3.7.4 Challenges to the traditional meaning of culture

A further complicating factor in defining culture is recent (Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Hong et al., 2000) challenges to traditional approaches to studying culture, in particular criticism of the use of cultural dichotomies, referring to much cross-cultural research cited in this (Markus &

Kitayama, 1991; Sampson, 1988; Triandis, 1989). The notion of cultures being “internally homogeneous and externally distinctive” (Hermans & Kempen, 1998, p.1113) is predominant in academic psychological debate. Cultures are typically classified as western or non-western, individualistic or collectivist, egocentric or sociocentric. Just as literature on the self (Bochner, 1994; Hong et al., 2000; Mageo, 1995; Spiro, 1993; Triandis, 1989) has recognised the danger of isomorphism in delineating a person as having an interdependent or independent self-concept, it is further being acknowledged that cultural groups are too frequently oversimplified leading to a disregard for the variability within and between cultural groups.

Three main challenges are posed by Hermans and Kempen (1998) to this approach of cultural dichotomization (western-non-western, individualistic-collectivist), prevalent in cross-cultural studies and implicit in traditional definitions of culture. Firstly, Hermans and Kempen (1998) criticise researchers advocating cultural dichotomies for overlooking the problem of complexity in cultures. The definitions of culture put forward traditionally, largely emphasise ideas and modes of thought, rather than including the ways these ideas are externalised and (in particular) distributed over a population and through relationships. With the emphasis solely on the former, the susceptibility of cultures to being influenced by global dynamics, through the media in particular, is undermined.

Secondly, the increasing connections in the ecological, demographic, economic and political sphere between cultures has resulted in such notions as the ‘world-wide web’ taking on a literal significance. As cultural connections increase, so hybridisation becomes common place, for example a South African boy of Mauritian origin eating biltong in the United States. As cultures connect and interweave so new genres and mixtures come into fruition, there is a gradual move towards fusion and flow not incorporated into the traditional conceptualisation of cultural

dichotomies. This notion is also supported by Hong et al. (2000) who argue that cultural psychology needs to move away from attempting to separate individuals into 'pure' groups and towards negotiating cultural complexity, such as the incorporation of multiple cultures by individuals.

The final challenge is headed by global system theorists (Robertson, 1995, in Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Wilkinson, 1995, in Hermans & Kempen, 1998) who research cultures in their broadest terms, even to go so far as to consider that the world consists of a global civilisation, the criterion for civilisation being connectedness rather than uniformity. Robertson has coined the phrase 'glocalisation' to refer to global processes that are manifested locally, thereby making the previously opposing factors of heterogeneity and homogeneity interpenetrative and complementary. Such theorising can be applied to the debates around universality as opposed to culture-specific dimensions of the self, such that a self could have both universal and culture-specific components that interpenetrate. Cultures need to be perceived as "interconnected points of a world system" (Hermans & Kempen, 1998, p.1115) influenced by global processes, a dimension of culture that is not included in the definitions formerly reviewed.

Having presented these challenges to the categorical emphasis of cultural dichotomies, Hermans and Kempen (1998) emphasise the implications these challenges have for cross-cultural psychology's core assumption, namely that "culture is geographically located" (p. 1116). Numerous studies (Triandis, 1989) have operated on this assumption, namely that culture is defined by place, time and language. This leads to a concept of culture as centralised, with an essence, not fully acknowledging "the growing heterogeneity and diversification of cultures" (p.1116). Clifford (1997, in Hermans & Kempen, 1998) leads recent developments in anthropology that align themselves with Hermans and Kempen's (1998) challenges of the

traditional view of culture. Clifford uses travel as a metaphor for describing the relationship between cultures, thereby decentralising the notion of culture. “[C]ultural action and the making and remaking of identities take place not in the middle of the dwelling but in the contact zones along the intercultural frontiers of nations, peoples, and locales” (Hermans & Kempen, 1998, p.1116). Such contacts between cultures makes acculturation a two-way process and emphasises the fragmentation of cultural homogeneity that is taking place as a result of cultural flow. Appadurai (1990, in Hermans & Kempen, 1998) refers to five categories of global landscapes which create new contact zones across cultures: ethnoscap (immigrants, tourists), technoscap (global technology), finanscap (stock markets), ideoscap (ideologies of states) and mediascap. Hermans and Kempen (1998) speak of a translocality developing as a result of these interconnections, leading to a deterritorialisation of culture. While their references to global processes can be criticised for implicitly referring to western processes, what is most useful is how their argument broadens the definition of culture beyond an ethnic, centralised, territorial concept.

3.7.5 Culture as selfways

Following from Hermans and Kempen’s (1998) challenges to the traditional notion of culture comes the notion of culture as a psychological concept (Singelis & Brown, 1995). Replacing an emphasis on the one-way influence of culture on individuals, Singelis and Brown emphasise the role individuals play in constructing, perpetuating and modifying culture by their actions and beliefs. In this way Singelis and Brown (1995) change the definition of subjective culture from referring to an aggregate of a group’s values to the “aspects of culture that have been internalized [sic] by an individual, and so is an individual variable” (p. 357). This change in definition of subjective culture is very significant, highlighting the individual level at which cultural

processes are conceptualised rather than perceiving culture as an en masse concept that defines how groups behave, think and feel. Culture is to an extent recognised as being processed differently, uniquely by each individual within a social group. Thus, developing from the deterritorialisation and decentralisation of culture, is the notion of culture as a psychological concept. It is psychological in the sense that each individual's psyche (their beliefs and cognitive processes) influences the way culture is constructed and enacted by that individual.

Markus, Mullally and Kitayama (1997) have coined the term 'selfways' to refer to characteristic ways of being a person which emerge from cultural patterns of social action, referring to an enactment of culture. 'Selfways' acknowledges that the self is a dynamic collective process, historically and culturally constructed and realised through participating in cultural contexts and practices. Thus, for example, my unique individual subjectivity is constructed from numerous competing selfways of being a White, women, graduate, young adult, psychologist (Markus et al., 1997). By interacting in each of these collective subjectivities (cultural contexts), which have global (homogeneous) and local (heterogeneous) manifestations, I develop a selfway. Markus et al. argue that it is between these different positions that I develop a culture of my own, a psychological concept that may have universal and culture-specific aspects which interpenetrate, culminating in my self-concept. This notion of culture is further explored in the following chapter where it is complemented by the theory of the dialogical self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993).

In summary, culture has traditionally been defined as having objective components such as symbols and artefacts, and subjective components such as shared beliefs and norms. Culture has also been traditionally used interchangeably with notions of ethnicity and 'race'. As 'race' is socially constructed and can be argued to no longer be a term at all (Dole, 1995) the use of

culture instead of 'race' is inappropriate and highly questionable. However, the use of culture interchangeably with ethnicity is not so easily dismissed, as ethnicity is a means by which culture is transmitted within a shared genetic pool. Using culture in close association with ethnicity suggests that culture is geographically located. More recently, researchers (Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Hong et al., 2000; Markus et al., 1997) have argued against this notion of culture. Arguments for the influence of global processes resulting in a growing heterogeneity of cultures (Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Hong et al., 2000) and arguments for culture as an individual level construct that is developed uniquely by each person who is the centre of interaction between many collective subjectivities (Markus et al., 1997) point to a deterritorialisation of culture. The implications of this argument are certainly significant for cultural research as it suggests that researching cross-cultural differences in the self is no longer appropriate because cultural units are based on the assumption that culture is geographically located, homogenous and easily categorised or dichotomised into western or non-western. Rather it seems that researchers need to explore the interface between culture and the self, thereby recognising culture as an individual level variable, with both heterogenous and homogenous forces interpenetrating to create a dynamic process that is constructed and enacted uniquely by individuals.

3.8 Conclusion

Research and theories reviewed in this chapter show unequivocally the impact of cultural psychology on self-studies. It becomes difficult to think of any other way of studying the self other than in cultural context. Certainly the importance of studying the self in context is a current theoretical perspective that emanates from social constructionism. This and other current perspectives on the self will be reviewed in the following chapter. How we think about the self

and culture has broadened significantly, with categorisation making way for more integrative ways of conceptualising self, culture and the relationship between the two, affecting the way researchers go about conducting cultural research.

Chapter Four

Current debates around the self

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to explore what current psychological theories say about the self, so as to contextualise the theoretical framework which is chosen to investigate the relationship between culture and self in this research. Contemporary theories about the self are numerous and varied, mostly they challenge traditional assumptions that were taken for granted by western researchers as being universal but have since been exposed through cross-cultural research as indigenous. The most prevalent credence in western psychology is that the self is essentially an abstract notion that refers to our unique, unifying centre. The modern challenges to this long-standing ethnocentric belief shall be discussed in turn.

4.2 The self as abstract versus contextual

Ulric Neisser (1997) reflects the growing realisation in research on the self that we cannot be studied outside of our contexts. Context has come to play a new role in how the self is defined, a view that has been greatly influenced by cross-cultural research and specifically studies on culture and self discussed in the previous chapter. For example, Markus et al. (1997) emphasise that the self is realised through participation in cultural practices. Hence their notion of selfways as a “guiding orientation to one's subjectivity and thus (a means by which to) structure feeling, knowing, wanting and doing” (Markus et al., 1997, p. 49).

The argument for the self as contextual rather than abstract is not only rooted in cultural theories but also in the notion of the intersubjectivity of the self, its inherently social nature, which makes us all active participants in our social context (Bruner, 1995; Kagitcibasi, 1996). Viewing the self as contextual, points to 'selving' as inherently a group project rather than a private endeavour, mediated by the sociocultural-historical context (Markus et al., 1997).

An investigation into the context-specific self-concept (Kihlstrom, Marchese-Foster & Klein, 1997) supports the notion that self-understanding is context sensitive and also situates the self in interpersonal space. Using a microcomputer software system called PERSPACE to assess the context-specific self-concept, researchers (Kihlstrom et al., 1997) analysed self-descriptors given by a subject who was asked to describe what she was like with different important people in her life. Results showed wide variability from one person (context) to another, supporting the notion of the self as contextual and of several self-concepts tied to the presence of specific people in her interpersonal space. The contextual variability of the self-concept challenges the traditional view of the self as an abstract concept consistent across all situations (cultural and interpersonal).

4.3 The essentialist versus socially constructed self

Traditional theories of the self reviewed in the previous chapters vary greatly on many levels, however their similarity lies in their notion of self as having an essential nature - as being constantly there, all we have to do is find it, and define it. Even if it is a process we are defining, the assumption is that this self is knowable in definitive terms. The social constructionist perspective challenges this assumption. This approach is accurately represented in Scheibe's (1995) notion of historical conditionality of the self, which suggests that the nature

of the self is not determined by its true essence but by the historical context in which the inquiry occurs. Thus for Gergen and Gergen (1993) the self is not private and subjective but rather the self is shared and comes into being in a cultural context that has a body of discourses that are enduring and sustaining. Therefore “as people are exposed to the popular narratives within the culture, they learn how to regard themselves, how to make themselves intelligible to each other, and how to fashion their conduct” (Gergen & Gergen, 1993, p.193).

The social constructionist perspective can be argued to have emerged out of the aforementioned contextualist approach - the self is not born as an essential being, process or entity, but rather emerges through narrative, through the self-stories that circulate and vary within any particular context. Most recognisable cultures contain a body of interdependent, enduring, broadly sustaining discourses (Gergen & Gergen, 1993). Thus language and, by extension, interactions are recognised as an important tool in the social construction of the self. Excerpts of conversations between mothers and their young children show a process of negotiation of a sense of self illustrating how “self-construction occurs in small interchanges, accumulating over time to form our evolving understanding of who we are” (Fivush & Buckner, 1997, p.180). Thus language is a medium through which the self is expressed as well as a means through which the self is constructed in interactions. From the social constructionist perspective, in our very being and doing within the social everyday world, we continuously construct a self (Funkenstein, 1993) which is necessarily variable rather than essentialist.

4.4 Unity versus multiplicity in self-theories

From a traditional perspective there is one self for each mind, body or person, that is unified and to which we have privileged access (Jopling, 1997). Such a belief in an integrated, whole

self can be argued to be one of the dominant assumptions about the self. However, cognitive, behavioural and neurological sciences are producing counter evidence to this assumption suggesting that “a strongly unified self would suffer from problems of adaptation in the face of the challenges of evolution and social survival” (Jopling, 1997, p.259). The self has come to be recognised as multiple, consisting of several selves rather than a unified core. Neisser (1988, as cited in Neisser, 1997), for example, argues for five forms of self-knowledge: the private self of inner experience; the ecological self situated in an environmental space, that is with a sense of embodied agency; the interpersonal self made through interactions with others; the temporarily extended self which comes alive in memory; and the conceptual self which, he argues, is a mental representation of who we think we are. This notion of many selves making up a self dates right back to William James' self-theories. What has added a further dimension to this thinking is the non-unitary nature of these selves, such that a self of selves becomes questionable. Narrative analyses have highlighted that through narratives, nonunitary subjectivities are created, recreated, explored and expressed, such that the self is more a process or verb than a unity or noun (Bloom & Munro, 1995).

Jopling (1997) seeks to explore the numerous questions that result from the conception of nonunitary subjectivity. For example, how many selves are too many for one self, what principles determine how the self is divided? He cites two arguments in response to this question, one from the antirealist model of the self and the other from the realist model. The antirealist theory is that “selves can be shaped in as many ways as are linguistically possible” (Jopling, 1997, p.260). Thus there is no dominant self of selves, the self is not determined but rather is malleable, a social-linguistic construct. Such a view is problematic for Jopling in that it leads to the evasion of personal and interpersonal responsibility, jeopardising social morality. The realist model of the self, on the other hand, recognises the self as multiple and divisible but

nevertheless with configured core traits that have a determinate structure, developmental history and are subject to changes over time. From this view Jopling identifies the self of selves as the ecological self, he identifies the most fundamental layer as the embodied agency of our selfhood. “[T]his is to say that we live within our own skin and that the prereflective perceptual awareness we have of our bodies and our co-ordinate movement (including kinesthesia) is (developmentally) one of the oldest and (epistemically) one of the most faithful connections to the real, upon which all other relations are founded” (Jopling, 1997, p.263).

Whether one agrees with Jopling’s (1997) conclusion or not, the postmodern assertion of the self’s multiplicity can be argued to undermine the search for the true real self that psychologists and sociologists for centuries have hoped to stumble upon. For many the notion of nonunitary subjectivities represents the incoherence and chaos of a psychopathological disorder. On the other hand, postmodernists conception of multiple selves and “shifting selves” (Ewing, 1990, p.263), does not necessarily imply incoherence and chaos. While, this multiplicity, frequently results in inconsistencies and contradictions in the self, the self is, nevertheless, constructed as whole or coherent by the self. This experience of coherence is facilitated firstly, by the function of memories, which support the illusion of the self as being the same ‘I’ over time and secondly, “[c]oherence emerges from the embedding and anchoring of self in social networks” (Baumgardner & Rappoport, 1996, p.125). Thus Ewing (1990) argues that there is no overarching cohesive self as “frequently the speaker juxtaposes contradictory positions without attempting to integrate them” (p.261), rather the experience of personal continuity is illusory. According to Ewing despite the self-system being made up of three selves (private, collective, public), for example, varying in complexity, the illusion of wholeness is universal and maintained through anchoring the self within ones particular cultural context. As Ewing

(1990) calls for cross-cultural research that focuses on how multiple selves are “organised, contextualised and negotiated in dialogue” (p.274) so the theory of the dialogical self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993) seems to provide a productive framework for such an investigation. This theory is outlined and discussed in the following chapter.

4.5 Conclusion

Current debates around the self present coherent arguments for a self that is always in context, that is socially constructed and that is a self of multiple selves. Thus conceptualisations of the self seem to have developed dramatically from a self that is abstract, essentialist and unified changing the way the self is approached as the subject of investigation.

Chapter Five

The narrative paradigm and the dialogical self

5.1 Introduction

The narrative paradigm is proposed as a theoretical framework for this research. It can be seen to accommodate the contemporary perspectives of the self previously discussed, namely the self as contextual, socially constructed and multiple. In this chapter the author will develop these narrative notions culminating in the notion of the self as dialogical (Hermans & Kempen, 1993) which is placed firmly within the narrative tradition and is argued to facilitate a thorough investigation of self and culture.

5.2 The narrative paradigm

Narrative is pervasive in daily life (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). It is pervasive in the way we structure our perceptions. For example, Michotte (1946 and 1963, in Sarbin, 1986) conducted experiments on human perception of causality in which subjects observed two or more small rectangles moving in relation to each other. The subjects ascribed causal attributions to the triangles (for example, 'It is as if A's approach frightened B and B ran away') using narrative to describe the movements of the triangles by way of assigning them meaning. Furthermore, narratives are pervasive in the way we structure our emotions - "It is Sarbin's (1989) thesis that for the realm of human emotions, the narratory principle provides a more satisfying and more ecologically valid explanatory model than the traditional textbook definition" (Hermans & Kempen, 1993, p.19). Narratives also provide the characters, roles, ideas and processes that we

may use to shape our behaviour, suggesting that narratives are also intrinsic to the way we structure our actions (Hermans & Kempen, 1993).

Given this pervasiveness of narrative, increasingly stories are being recognised as important for our identity and as important sources for increasing our understanding of the structure and content of that identity. “The identity of an individual and the identity of a group consist of the construction of a narrative, internal and external: the narrative construed by and the narrative construed about the subject. Such is the making of a ‘self’” (Furkenstein, 1993, p.23).

Contemporary theorists (for example, Bruner, 1995; Day & Tappan, 1996; Gergen & Gergen, 1988; Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Hermans, Kempen & Van Loon, 1992; Neisser, 1994) are popularising the self as narrative, conceptualising the self as being the author of its own story, the constructor of its own identity, through stories about the self, others and life-history, often prevalent in everyday conversation. The self as narrative becomes more explicit in the face of mental disorder, in cases of schizophrenia for example, when the ability to compose narratives - to define and redefine ourselves - is damaged, it is immediately understood that the self is impoverished (McRae, 1994).

5.2.1 Landscapes of action and landscapes of consciousness

The narrative paradigm can be approached in various ways as Bruner (1986, in White, 1995) proposes the notion of narratives having two dimensions or dual landscapes: landscapes of action and landscapes of consciousness. The landscapes of action in stories refer to the experiences or events that are temporally organised and emplotted, to the structure of texts. The landscapes of consciousness in stories “has to do with the interpretations that are made through reflection on those events that are unfolding through landscapes of action” (White,

1995, p.31). The landscapes of consciousness refers to what the events articulate about the “desires, preferences, qualities, characteristics, motives, purposes, wants, goals, values, beliefs, commitments, of various persons” (White, 1995, p.31). Both the landscapes of action and consciousness are of interest in explicating how we define our selves: “If we assume that there is an identity between the structure of texts and the structure of the stories or narratives that persons live by, and if we take as our interest the constitution of lives [selves] through stories, we might then consider the details of how persons live their lives [define themselves] through landscapes of action and landscapes of consciousness” (Epston & White, 1992, p.124). These dual landscapes of narratives will be briefly reviewed in turn.

Research in the interest of the landscapes of action attempt to identify specific narrative structures that are employed in the texts, focusing on the organisation in the story of events or experiences. For example, Propp (1975, in Alasuurtan, 1995) often credited to be the pioneer of narratology focused mainly on plot summaries or structural features of the narrative. Sarbin (1986) investigated the essential ingredients of narratives, in particular the capacity of narratives to arouse the audience through four features which he identified as the establishment of the developmental goal; the organisation of events relative to the end points of the narrative; the logical connection of developmental events; and dramatic impact. Similarly Labov and Waletzky (1967, in Sarbin, 1986) described categories of action in stories, going on to examine formal structural properties of narratives in relation to their social functions (Cortazzi, 1993).

These structural approaches to self-narrative theories focus on “psychological structures that enable people to understand or organise inputs into narrative structures or to interrogate the relevant rule, grammar, script, or schema for indications of proper or inappropriate conduct”

(Gergen & Gergen, 1988, p.19). These methods, concerned with landscapes of action, have been greatly influenced by literary approaches to analysing narratives, which investigate the form of literary discourse in a similar way to linguisticians' study of sentence grammar. The shifting of I-positions in narrative is an example of such a literary emphasis. This refers to the ability, in the first person narrative, to shift from past to present perspectives. Shifts also occur within the telling 'I' as well as in changes to the story 'I'. Cortazzi (1993) drawing on models of Rimmon-kenan (1983, in Cortazzi, 1993) and Cohan and Shires (1988, in Cortazzi, 1993) identifies five 'I's in what is labelled 'focalization', namely point of view in narrative. These include: the speaking subject ('I' in the present dialogue before beginning the story); the narrating subject ('I' as narrator now recounting the story); the subject of narration ('I then' in the narrative, the experiencing self of the past); the narrated subject ('I' as another character who is being spoken through or for); and the narrated objects (others then spoken about in the third person). This literary approach seems to highlight the notion of the self as made up of multiple selves.

Thus within these psychological and literary approaches to the landscapes of action the aim is frequently to identify the characteristics of a well-formed narrative (see Gergen & Gergen, 1988). Sometimes, this is approached even from a cultural psychological perspective (Polanyi 1979 and 1985, in Cortazzi, 1993), where the context of the narrative structure is taken into account. Certainly, cultural differences have been noted even within these structural approaches as narrative structure has been found to be culturally variable (de Beaugrande & Colby, 1979, in Cortazzi, 1993). Stories are acceptable and interesting because they conform to the cultural norm. "[I]n order to maintain intelligibility in the culture, one's stories of self must employ the commonly accepted rules for narrative construction" (Cortazzi, 1993, p.28) Therefore forms of self-narrative are constrained and created by culture. "Culture invites

certain identities and discourages others” (Cortazzi, 1993, p.28) and these normative cultural identities are evident in varying forms of narrative structure. Such investigations into narrative structure focus specifically on the landscapes of action that can be found in narratives.

To summarise, the narrative landscapes of action recognise the multiplicity of the self in narratives and the influence of context on narratives. Furthermore, the structural components of the text are of most importance resulting in an emphasis on representation.

Narrative approaches concerned with the landscapes of consciousness, with the motivations, feelings and characteristics of the storyteller, tend to have less of a focus on the narrative structure and more of a focus on the meaning of the self, constructed through narratives. The traditional, scientific definition of narrative is “discourse from which events and happenings are configured into a temporal unity by means of a plot” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.5). While this certainly remains true at one level, and is certainly a definition that complements the landscapes of action, at another level narrative has come to be seen as a powerful means by which we create meaning. Thus the narrative landscapes of consciousness start from acknowledging ourselves as interpretive beings: we interpret experience actively using stories or narratives as a “frame of intelligibility” (White, 1995, p.13) to give meaning and context to our experience. The stories or narratives that shape and constitute our selves are not mirrors of those selves or representations. The stories “provide the frames that make it possible for us to interpret our experience” (White, 1995, p.15). Stories impose beginnings and endings on experience, they are a temporal frame that organise and pattern our selves. Thus, first and foremost the narrative metaphor within the landscapes of consciousness has a construction foundation rather than a representational foundation. Applying this constructive, creative quality of stories

to the notion of the self as narrative, the self can be seen not to exist independent of stories about it, rather the self is shaped and structured by the process of articulation. "If identity is the opposite of anonymity and if identity is strengthened through the self-narrative, then telling one's story is a means of becoming, just as much as is having a story to tell" (McRae, 1994, p.215). Viewing the self as narrative, stories become meaningful, not from a viewpoint of historical truth but from that of narrative truth (Bar-On & Giland, 1994) - the way in which the story creates meaning in defining and redefining our self. Our life stories, everyday stories, are varied and often contradictory, just as subjectivity is always precarious, in this sense they reconstitute one another (Jackson, 1994). "From a narrative perspective, self is understood not as a 'prelinguistic given' that merely employs language as a tool to express internally constituted meanings, but rather as a product of language from the start - arising out of linguistic, discursive and communicative practices" (Day & Tappan, 1996, p.70). Thus, firstly thinking of the self as narrative within the landscapes of consciousness involves recognising the self as socially constructed

Secondly, the narrative paradigm concerned with the landscapes of consciousness recognises the postmodern notion of multiplicity of selves in the stories by investigating shifts in persona. For example, Jackson (1994) explored the narratives of patients dealing with chronic pain finding that narrators "attempt to portray conflicting, yet necessarily co-occurring, interpretive positions in such a way as to not privilege one over the others" (p.825). In an attempt to make sense of the chronic pain they were experiencing Jackson noticed a shifting from one position to the next, often contradicting previous positions until they emerged with the 'correct' one. Therefore, Jackson concludes that self narratives are an arena for subjectivity to be reconstituted and explored in discourse, thus contradictory self definitions are expected to emerge but these contradictions and the way in which they are negotiated

become important units of analysis. Good and Del Vecchio Good (1994) refer to the use of multiple plots as a 'subjunctivizing strategy' whereby the narratives hold multiple perspectives as well as the potential for multiple readings, they are overdetermined in that there are narratives nested within narratives. These multiple, nested narratives become the units of analysis for researchers interested in the landscapes of consciousness. Thus the narrative self of the landscapes of consciousness incorporates the notion of multiplicity as well as that of the socially constructed self.

Thirdly, narratives are contextual. Gergen and Gergen (1988) argue for self-narratives as "not fundamentally possessions of the individual; rather they are products of social interchange" (p.18). Therefore, the narrative paradigm recognises the interpersonal context of self and narratives, in other words stories about what we have experienced are always influenced by the stories of others (Widdershoven, 1993). In addition, the narrative paradigm recognises the influence of cultural stories on personal narratives. From a narrative perspective, in every culture there is a dominant story of what it means to be a person, a "culturally preferred way of being" (White, 1995, p.16). For example, cross-cultural research (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sampson, 1988; Triandis, 1989) argues for a western story emphasising separateness, containment and actualisation and a non-western story emphasising relatedness, self and other, and interdependence. It is important to note that these emphases reflect relative tendencies rather than absolute categorisations. Furthermore, arguments against such dichotomisation of cultures are increasing (Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Spiro, 1993). Nevertheless, common ground with both 'camps' is that stories are culturally and historically constructed. In this way narratives are culturally transmitted and culturally defined (Marshall & O'Keefe, 1995). For example, Garro (1994) in investigating the narrative representations of chronic illness experiences, found that individual's narratives were contrasted against shared

cultural models of responses to illness, cultural models contrasting the mind and the body, and a shared model of the specific disorder from which they were suffering (disorder of the temporomandibula joint). Thus the narrative paradigm that is concerned with the motives, characteristics and feelings within the narratives, recognises that individual narratives are situated within and partly constituted by broader cultural models and other shared models to which the narrator has been exposed. Another example comes from research conducted by Good and Del Vecchio Good (1994), who sampled patients with epilepsy and investigated their narratives around the disorder. They found that the plots and what counts as plots for stories are shaped by the cultural context and in this way, through narratives, culture mediates experience. Furthermore, Polanyi (1979 and 1985, in Cortazzi, 1993) analysed narratives of personal experience so as to identify and investigate core cultural conceptions. He was one of the first researchers to see narratives as being consistently culturally-salient, embodying cultural values and constructs and therefore very important sources of insight and in essence, cultural texts. Thus not only is a story a site of identity construction but “also a type of discourse with considerable cultural significance” (Alasuurtan, 1995, p.71).

Studies concerned with the landscapes of consciousness of narratives also recognise that these narratives are influenced by the context in which they are told, that is, the relationship between the narrator and the listener. For example, researching the medical students’ narratives of a patient’s story with AIDS (Marshall & O’Keefe, 1995), the researchers found that both the doctor and patient were dialogically involved in ‘reading’ and ‘writing’ the medical story around the syndrome. Therefore, the reason a story is told in a specific way at a specific time is a function of the relationship between the storyteller and the listener and how each one perceives the background knowledge of the other. (Bruner, 1986, in Marshall & O’Keefe, 1995). Thus for analyses concerned with the landscapes of consciousness, the

situational factors of the context in which the narrative is relayed and thus reflexivity on the researcher's part is important. Therefore, participation in cultural and interpersonal contexts provides sequence and story for our self narratives.

The two dimensions or landscapes of the notion of narratives, landscapes of actions and landscapes of consciousness, have rather different approaches to narrative study. The approach interested in the landscapes of action focuses on the structure of the text, while the approach interested in the landscapes of consciousness focuses on the interpretations and meaning-making of the text. Both landscapes recognise the multiplicity of narratives and the self, and both highlight the contextual influences on narratives, albeit in different ways. It is the socially constructed emphasis of the landscapes of consciousness that distinguishes it the most from the narrative approach of landscapes of action. The former is based on a constructional foundation whereas the latter is based on a representational foundation. Thinking of the narrative paradigm as dual landscapes enables a holistic perspective of the various dimensions of narrative.

5.2.2 The role of memory in the narrative paradigm

Thus far, the narrative paradigm is primarily concerned with story-telling, whether with its structure or its meaning-making. Memory plays an important role in being able to tell a story, as one is required to remember the story first, or to remember where one is in the story, in the beginning, middle or end. In addition, the opposite is also true: memory is a function of telling.

Ulric Neisser a researcher in the area of memory, self and narrative, has long held that humans are largely unreliable when it comes to eyewitness testimony (Neisser, 1982, in Cortazzi, 1993). Memory for real life events, rather than a copying process, has been found to reflect

more of a decision-making process where people actively construct a memory from what they desire to see (Cortazzi, 1993) and from the story told. Neisser (1982, in Cortazzi, 1993) coined the phrase 'repisodic' memory to describe the recall of a particular occasion that is typically correct in essence although entirely incorrect literally. Rather we recall situations that "represents a set of typified experiences, distilled into a single account" (Cortazzi, 1993, p.81). Goffman (1969, in Cortazzi, 1993) emphasises the 'as ifs' of narrative, referring to the phenomenon in which memories are relayed as if they represent real events. Actors in memories are presented as if they said things that way, despite the fact that very rarely is reality accurately represented in memory narratives.

If the accuracy of our recall is unremarkable, even dismal at times, what is the significance of relaying important events in our lives? Why then, as the narrative paradigm asserts, are narratives of past experience such an integral part of our everyday lives? Crites (1986) explores the function of recollections of the self from the past as psychologically necessary in the construction of the self. If we assume that the self is a name for a "free-floating life of consciousness" (Crites, 1986, p. 155) such that we are only ourselves in relation to others, we still cannot deny the phenomenon of self-certainty. Intuitively we identify ourselves as myself. According to Crites the continuity of memory plays a large role in this self-certainty. "'I' that now says 'I' actively forges, gathers, re-collects its continuity of experience out of the inchoate intersubjective stream of memory. Narrative...is one of the primary means by which I construct such a continuous life of experience" (Crites, 1986, p.159). Indefinite remembered episodes are recalled from a single point of you, the 'I' who is recalling, thereby anchoring a sense of personal continuity, a self, in an identity which can be storied over time

However, the past is not the only means by which we shape our identity. The present is the central point out of which the 'I', who recollects, retrieves its own self) and the present is not static, but interested and oriented to the future such that "I recollect the past out of my interest in the future" (Crites, 1986, p.163). Keen (1986) also recognises this past and future polarity as constitutive of experience and narrative. Therefore, memory, in particular storied memory, plays a crucial role in the self when approached within a narrative paradigm bringing continuity and self-certainty.

5.3 Self-narrative as a polyphonic novel

The narrative paradigm of the self as creator of his or her identity through discourse, is the starting point for theorising about the self as dialogical, which has been extensively researched and developed by Hermans and Kempen in conjunction with other researchers (Hermans, 1996; Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Hermans et al., 1992; Hermans, Rijks & Kempen, 1993). In developing the notion of the self as dialogical, Hermans and Kempen begin within the narrative tradition, referring to James's (1890/1902, in Hermans, 1996) distinction between the 'I' and the 'Me' - what James considered to be the two components of self. The 'I' - the self-as-knower - organises and interprets experience subjectively and has a feeling of distinctiveness from others. The 'Me' - the self-as-known - is all that the self can call his or her own, that is all the extensions of the self (his body, his clothes, his friends, his reputation). Mancuso and Sarbin (1983, in Hermans, 1996) and Sarbin (1986) translated this 'I'-'Me' distinction into a narrative framework such that the 'I' is the author and the 'Me' is the actor in the narrative.

Hermans and Kempen (1993) propose that this narrative translation can be extended, and refers to the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian literary scholar. Bakhtin (1929/1973, in Hermans,

1996) introduced the concept of a polyphonic novel which “is composed of a number of independent and mutually opposing viewpoints, embodied by characters involved in dialogical relationships” (p.32). Thus there is not one single author or voice but several voices that have varying spatial positions, which harmonise and clash with one another. Applying this notion to the self, instead of a single ‘I’ telling the story about ‘Me’, the concept of polyphony permits one person to live in a multiplicity of worlds. Each world has its own author telling his or her own story independently located in specific time and space, while also entering into dialogue with other authors and their own worlds. Thus Hermans and Kempen refer to notions of imaginative narrative and dialogue when conceptualising the self as dialogical.

5.4 Central features of the dialogical self

5.4.1 The pervasiveness of imaginal dialogues

Imaginal dialogues are pervasive in our everyday experience of the self, “[e]ven when we are outwardly silent, for example, we find ourself communicating with our critics, our parents, our consciences, our gods, our reflection in the mirror...” (Hermans et al., 1992, p.28). This concept of voice can be thought of as speaking consciousness (Day & Tappan, 1996), a kind of self-talk that is easily recognised in lay persons as an everyday phenomena. Even when we pause to contemplate, we do not do so in one voice only but in many voices that dialogue with one another (Sampson, 1993). These different voices within us result from our self as contextual, each voice coming from a perspective or experience of participating in culture and community and each voice located in time and space. Thus the cultural self may not necessarily be a distinct self, but rather all selves entering into dialogue with one another have their own cultural context.

5.4.2 The dialogical self as accommodating diversity and unification

The dialogical notion depicts a self that is decentralised, in other words a self that is made up of multiple selves, not centralised into a singular entity and yet still 'whole' through dialogical relations. This notion of the self as decentralised is pervasive in recent psychological and linguistic developments as outlined by Hermans and Kempen (1993). This decentralisation of self has emerged from a number of perspectives. Firstly, as already mentioned, it is implicit in the conception of the self as multiple rather than unified. It is a notion that developed from the recognition of the complexity of the self, which was extended to the view of the self as being a multifaceted phenomenon, that is dynamic and constantly open to developing in a range of possible directions. This notion of possible selves and of the self as a multifaceted phenomenon contributed to the notion of decentralisation. Secondly, the deconstruction of texts, the recognition of the influence of social context in constructing and reconstructing texts, pointed to the text as an open system and challenged traditional notions of self, as authorship came under scrutiny. Authorship came to be seen as a function of the self and the other, determined by whose word it is as well as for whom it is meant (Day & Tappan, 1996). Thirdly, psychotherapists have identified subpersonalities and objects that are internalised (object-relations theory), often resulting in conflict between parts of the self-structure. Finally myths, so pervasive in traditional cultural life, are no longer thought to originate within the individual's mind. Rather, "the individual tells or listens to a myth as part of an impersonalized [sic] discourse" (Hermans & Kempen, 1993, p.38). This recognises a cultural context that pervades the multiplicity of voices. From these historical influences the self has gradually become decentralised. Whereas a concept of the self as a coherent, integrated, singular entity presents a self that is monologic (Sampson, 1993), a decentralised multiple self entertains the

possibility of the self as dialogical. The dialogical relations between the multiple voices of the self enable both diversity and unification to be true.

5.4.3 Relative autonomy of voices

Rather than William James' (1952) notion of our multiple selves forming a hierarchy in which one self is subordinate to another, each voice of the self, making up the dialogical self, is autonomous and contextually bounded. The different voices or positions of the dialogical self have relative autonomy. They “may each have their own views, wishes, motives, feelings, and memories...[and]may agree and disagree, interrogate, criticize, and even ridicule one another” (Hermans, 1996, p.42). Thus the idea of a centralised ‘I’ governing the self, a centralised hierarchy, gives way to the notion of several ‘I’s that enter into a dialogical relationship (Hermans et al. 1993). Sampson (1985, in Hermans et al., 1993) argues that the centralised self, or the totalitarian self, is authoritative and characterised by unidirectional governance of the centralised ‘I’. It represents a culturally biased western view. Further, Sampson (1985, in Hermans et al., 1993) opposes the underlying assumption that order and coherence follow exclusively from centrality and equilibrium, affirming the polyphonic view of the self as “a decentralized [sic]manyness of ‘I’ positions” (Hermans et al., 1993, p.232). The western ideal resulting in one dominating I position reduces the amount of dialogue and is a “culturally based shrinking and centralisation of the self” (Hermans et al., 1992, p.30).

5.4.4 Potential for open-ended innovation

Another feature of the dialogical self is “its openness to innovation” (Hermans, 1996, p.42). The self has the capacity to position and reposition itself with a multiplicity of voices, and

dialogue between the voices always holds the potential for new knowledge to emerge. Thus truly dialogical models contain three steps (Markova, 1987, in Hermans, 1996; Linell & Markova, 1993, in Hermans, 1996). In Step 1, x might say 'This is my viewpoint'. In Step 2, y might say 'I have a different way of seeing it'. In Step 3, x modifies his or her initial view, 'Now I perceive it in another way'. Unlike a logical relationship - which is closed, as the conclusion is determined by limits and rules - the dialogical relationship lends itself to a personal, unfinalised, open-ended self-consciousness (Hermans & Kempen, 1993).

5.4.5 Voice as a spatial position

The dialogical perspective recognises that the self is a moving self because it is made up of voiced positions and both voice and position are spatial terms. When a voice sounds it is in the speaker and where it is heard. A position is always only a position in relation to other positions. Thus the terms voice and position are used as metaphors to "depict the dialogical self as an imaginal space that is stretched between a variety of positions...the self is a process of dialogical movements in an imaginal space" (Hermans, 1996, p.44). These positions are highly variable across individuals and across situations. They may be transient or permanent; established by institutional traditions or deviant; influential or inconsequential; more imaginary or less imaginary; positive or negative, characterised by a low degree of otherness or strong feeling of otherness; and they may differ in the frequency with which they enter the self. Regardless of the position, the dialogical self is embodied as it is always tied to a position in space and time (Hermans et al., 1992). Thus the dialogical self not only has a temporal dimension (past, present and future) but also a spatial dimension.

There are numerous consequences that emerge from this spatial dimension outlined by Hermans and Kempen (1993). Firstly, “The spatialization [sic] of dialogical relationships allows for the treatment of a particular idea in the context of both internal and external dialogues, creating ever-changing perspectives” (Hermans & Kempen, 1993, p.42). In other words, the self may dialogue simultaneously with real others, in an external dialogue, and with imaginal others, in an internal dialogue, as each voice is located in an independent spatial location. Secondly, this spatial component enables the simultaneity of voices, whereby there is a hidden dialogicality. Although only one voice is being heard, the second voice is invisibly present in the traces of the first voice. Thirdly, thinking of the dialogical self in spatial dimension means that it is social in a different sense to what is usually perceived as social. Rather than the self interacting only with others outside of it, the multivoiced self enters into dialogue with others that occupy positions within it. Thus another person is a position that the self can occupy, creating an alternative perspective as a result of dialogical interaction. The meaning of this perspective is always relative to the possible positions it can enter into dialogue with. Thus meaning is not a given but is emergent. Similarly the coherence of the self is not a given localised in the individual, but rather is an emergent illusion of coherence which is given in the dialogical relationship between self-positions and other-positions.

5.5 The dialogical self versus the multifaceted self

With the notion of the decentralised self, that is characterised by imaginal dialogue, the self as “a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I positions in an imaginal landscape” (Hermans, 1996, p.33) begins to gain clarity. It is important to recognise the distinction between this conception of the dialogical self and the previous conceptions of a multifaceted self. Recent researchers provide arguments for a self that can be understood as a multifaceted

phenomenon: the interdependent and independent self-concepts (Markus & Kityama, 1991); the private, public and collective self (Triandis, 1989); the actual self and possible self (Markus & Nurius, 1986, in Hermans, 1996) and Neisser's (1988, in Neisser, 1997) five forms of self-knowledge. While these conceptualisations certainly recognise the complexity of the self-concept, they fail to clarify the relationship between these different parts of the self. The self as dialogue, on the other hand, conceptualises this relationship as dialogue between the different parts of the self. "[S]elf arises within conversation, in the midst of the dialogical struggle between different voices" (Day & Tappan, 1996, p.72).

5.6 Multivoicedness and dissociative identity disorder

Talk of multivoicedness and dialogue with imaginal figures within the self points to an association between the dialogical self and the pathological state of dissociative identity disorder formerly known as multiple personality disorder. There is however a distinct difference: dissociative identity disorder is characterised by a sequential monologue rather than simultaneous dialogue (Harre, 1991, in Hermans, 1992). The problematic feature of this pathology is thus its singleness of voice rather than its multiplicity. Once self-reflection and dialogical interaction among the selves begins to occur, that is as features of the dialogical self begin to play a role, the person improves significantly. The dialogical self has multiplicity in a single moment in time whereas the pathological self indicative of dissociative identity disorder represents multiplicity over time (Hermans, 1992).

5.7 The dialogical self from a developmental perspective

Four developmental prerequisites are assumed for the emergence of a dialogical self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). The first is 'act' referring to the child's ability to interact. Initially mother-child interactions such as breast feeding and spontaneous movements are pretended to be dialogical by the mother, capturing and ensuring the dialogical potential in the long term. Memory is the second prerequisite. Already discussed, memory is important as dialogue between a multiplicity of voices requires an anchoring of the self in more than just the here and now. Memory allows for the "contradiction of divergent events" (Hermans & Kempen, 1993, p72) into the present moment. The third prerequisite is imagination, referring to the ability to partake in constructive activity, so that through dialogical exchange a new position may be constructed. Finally language is essential for narrating and exploring stories told from different positions. The importance of memory and stories (incorporated in the notions of language, imagination and interaction) for the dialogical self informs this investigation's methodology, which will be clarified in the following chapter.

5.8 New challenges raised by the dialogical view of the self

5.8.1 Dominant and subjugated voices

Hermans (1996) highlights two perspectives opened up by the dialogical view which have been neglected in research on the self and which this investigation aims to explore. The first relates to the relative autonomy of voices distinctive of the dialogical self, which may result in the possibility that the power structure of the self system is challenged by a dominant voice. Dominance is dynamically conceived, as dialogue is both horizontally structured

(different positions with different spatial properties interact) and vertically structured, as power positions enter into the dialogue. With the notion of dominance follows that of subjugated narratives or voices that are quieted through dialogue by dominant narratives or voices.

Dialogical interchange could also result in dominance reversal within the self where a hidden, subjugated position suddenly becomes more dominant than the position that is considered to be indicative of the trait that is a prevalent and stable part of his or her personality (Hermans, 1996). Thus dominance has the ability to organise the dialogical exchange between positions as well as to restrict the dialogue through subjugation which is arguably influenced by socialization and culture. As previously mentioned, Hermans et al. (1992) argue that western culture encourages one dominating I-position, resulting in a self that is more centralised.

5.8.2 Cultural voice and the concept of ventriloquation

The significance of collective voices and their workings is the second neglected area which the dialogical self opens up. The collective voice refers to the voice of the group or culture, that is not outside of the self, but rather is a position within the dialogical self. Bakhtin (1929 and 1973, in Hermans, 1996) posited that social languages unconsciously shape the individual voices utterances. Thus there is a simultaneity in the vocalizations of the collective and individual voice which Bakhtin called ventriloquation. Thus multivoicedness extends to mean the simultaneous existence of many individual positions, but also the simultaneous existence of individual positions and group, collective or cultural positions. This notion of ventriloquation compliments the idea of nested narratives, or narrative within narratives identified by Gergen and Gergen (1988). The notion of nested narratives is described as being

an individual narrative or account of an independent experience, nested within a person's cultural narrative (ventriloquation) of experience. Ventriloquation is likely to variably shape and constrain the nested narrative. Thus the cultural constraints of the dialogical self must be acknowledged (Hermans et al., 1992). The different voices in the dialogical self take meaning from the historical context which shape cultural values. “[V]alues locate one in a culture (e.g. as a man, woman, young, old, White, Black, etc.) and not only order but also constrain the content and organization for the self” (Hermans et al., 1992, p.29).

Furthermore, the self as dialogue, presented here can be combined with the view of culture as deterritorialised and present at an individual-level, as selfways (Markus et al., 1997).

Combining these theoretical perspectives has important consequences for the psychology of self and identity. Hermans and Kempen (1998) propose that the self be approached differently, not as “a learning, developmental, or social process within a culture but as an interactional meeting place of positions from diverse cultural origin” (p. 1118). Their concept of moving cultures (discussed in chapter three) complements their notion of multivoicedness such that every self can be understood to be a conglomerate of collective voices (Jew, South African, female, psychologist). The self becomes the arena for dialogical relationships between contrasting positions or voices constantly within cultural context.

5.9 Conclusion

Understanding the self as dialogue involves moving away from a paradigm of the self as a cognitive representation, a paradigm in which the self is assumed to be “a disembodied, transcendental, epistemic subject” (Day & Tappan, 1996, p.70). Instead applying dialogical notions to the study of the self embraces the notions of social constructionism and

intersubjectively shared discourses, “based on an embodied, relational, fundamentally dialogical conception of...selves” (Day & Tappan, 1996, p.70). The dialogical self, therefore, seems to be more concerned with the landscapes of consciousness within the narrative paradigm. The dialogical self enables both notions of a unified, true self and a multiple, constructed self to be simultaneously true. It also poses a view of the self that incorporates culture as ventriloquated through every voice that enters into dialogue within the imaginal space. In doing so, the dialogical self presents a useful framework for thinking about the interface between culture and self.

Chapter Six

Methodology

6.1 Introduction

Having reviewed the literature on the self, the self and culture, and the narrative paradigm, this chapter hopes to clarify the rationale behind, and the aims of, this research. Thereafter, the methodology will be discussed, a qualitative methodology explicated as most appropriate to the research questions at hand. It is worth noting that written documentation of research processes are necessarily coherent, not mirroring the researchers' experience of qualitative studies. Therefore, in outlining the data collection processes, the author is unable to depict the emergent quality of the research.

6.2 Rationale

The review of literature presents cross-cultural studies on the self (for example, Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Markus & Wurf, 1987; Sampson, 1988; Triandis, 1989) which largely argue for a conception of self that is relatively dichotomised, according to culture. That is, these studies argue for a western self as distinct from a non-western self with the self-other relationship characterised as resulting in the most compelling differences. These perspectives view culture as fairly homogenous and as resulting in culture-specific aspects of the self. Other theorists (for example, Mageo, 1995; Spiro, 1993) reviewed argue against such dichotomisation of the self and overly homogenous views of culture. They posit that the self is fundamentally interpersonal, regardless of culture, and criticise the methodologies employed in cross-cultural studies for promoting isomorphism. This research aims to

contribute to this debate, exploring the notions of culture and self as they emerge in the data and investigating the interface of culture and self. Specifically, research questions centre around the model of the self that emerges, in particular the interpersonal nature of the self and the manifestation of culture at the level of the self, and the appropriateness of dichotomising the self as western or non-western.

The literature review bears testimony to the way thinking and writing about the notions of self and culture has changed dramatically over the years. Subsequently, frameworks for studying these notions need to adapt to current theories. In this thesis, it is argued that the narrative paradigm, incorporating the self as dialogue (Hermans & Kempen, 1993), allows for the special investigation of self and culture, for a number of reasons. Firstly, thinking about the self as explicated through stories embraces current notions of the self as contextual, socially constructed and the post-modern notion of multiplicity. Secondly, the notion of the self as narrative and dialogue, enables thinking about culture, not as a one dimensional influence on the self, but as a context for multiple voices that make up a conglomeration of cultural positions within the self. This facilitates the exploration of culture as broadly defined and the interrogation of the interface between many cultural forces and the self. Finally, the narrative paradigm explicates the respondents' stories and in doing so brings intersubjectivity to the research, aiming to make the familiar strange. In other words, the narrative paradigm enables a focusing on individuals' stories which facilitates the scrutiny of subjectivity (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995).

In particular, Hermans and Kempen's (1993) notion of the dialogical self is considered to be a useful theoretical framework for this investigation as it brings together both traditionally western and non-western notions of the self. The self as dialogical shares many aspects of

object relations theory. The notion of multiple voices in dialogue resulting in an emergent self in process seems to have many parallels with the self- and other-representations of object relations theorists, which impact on the enactment of the self in the here and now. Thus the dialogical self incorporates these western psychological ideas while also recognising the social dimension of the self, through the notion that the other is a voice that I can adopt as a position within the self, and enter into dialogue with. This relatedness of the self is traditionally associated with the non-western tradition. Approaching the area of research within this theoretical framework, that incorporates both non-western and western traditions, means that these cultural positions, both present in South-Africa, can adequately be given voice.

Having decided that the research questions and aims of the investigation are best facilitated through the narrative paradigm and the theoretical framework of the self as dialogical (Hermans & Kempen, 1993), some metamethodological reflections become necessary when considering the emphasis of this narrative paradigm. Through the review of literature it emerges that narrative methodologies tend to fall within two categories. There are those that primarily consider the landscapes of action, in other words, the narrative structure of the stories. Other narrative methodologies emphasise the landscapes of consciousness investigating the construction of self-meaning through the contradictions and multiple realities evident in story telling.

As already discussed in the previous chapter, the narrative methodologies focusing on narrative structure generally reflect a representational theory of mind where the aim is to externalise a representation for prediction, control, mastery and possession. Thereby producing a “certain, single grammatical picture of our mental lives” (Shotter, 1992, p.10).

These studies are notoriously technical in that they are ultimately concerned with the cognitive structures and processes that enable us to comprehend, recall and summarise narratives even when taking the cultural context into account. They characterise most psychological (and literary) models of narrative. Such approaches to narrative analysis conduct their research in experimental situations and largely fall under the auspices of cognitive psychology.

Shotter (1992) argues for a less monologic practice in narrative research, for a rhetorico-responsive theory of mind that complements the dialogical view of the self. This theory of the mind emphasises the responsive nature of our mental lives in an interindividual and intersubjective sense. Thus Shotter advocates that the goals of social-constructionist research be to embrace dialogical practices wherein an argumentative context (Billig, 1987, in Shotter, 1992) is advocated such that a multiplicity of positions and counter positions (both spatial and temporal) are given a voice. The goal of research becomes understanding through connections, negotiations and contradictions in the dialogue. Thus certainty is replaced by adequacy, “with doing justice to the being of what we are studying” (Shotter, 1992, p.18). For these reasons, focusing primarily on the landscapes of consciousness, the meaning of the self through dialogical narrative, as opposed to the structure of the narratives, facilitates investigating the interface of culture and self. Through the landscapes of consciousness this interface can be approached through dialogical research, in other words, research that explores contradictions and aims to allow dialogue between both camps of theorists previously discussed. Furthermore, the theory of the self as dialogical (Hermans & Kempen, 1993) is one that is interested in how the self emerges as meaningful, in context and through dialogue, rather than a theory interested in the cognitive processes represented by the notion

of the self as dialogue. Thus the theory of the dialogical self reflects an emphasis on the landscapes of consciousness.

However, just as Shotter (1992) does not advocate an either/or stance, so the landscapes of action cannot be ignored as this would in itself be promoting a form of monologic practice. Therefore, one of the staple methods of data analysis, to be discussed in detail later in this chapter, is to read for plot (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998) which involves investigating the structural components of the narrative or the landscapes of action. Therefore some of the technical concepts such as the various issues of emplotment (Sarbin, 1986) are particularly useful. The second staple method of data analysis is to read for the voices of the 'I' (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). In this respect, concepts borrowed from the literary approaches are useful for psychological studies of the self, particularly the concept of the 'shift of the I' in narrative (Cortazzi, 1993). Nevertheless, with the primary emphasis on the landscapes of consciousness, this research adopts a qualitative methodology within the narrative paradigm.

6.3 Aims of this research

This research aims to explore the complex interface of culture and self from a dialogical perspective. The appropriateness of dichotomising the cultural manifestations within the self as western or non-western, is explored in a novel way by adopting the notion of the self as dialogical. Using the dialogical self as a theoretical framework enables the researcher to define culture in a broad sense rather than as a homogenous and distinctive entity. It also enables the researcher to define the self as both unified and multiple.

This research has both investigative and methodological questions. The investigative questions centre around, firstly, the social nature of the self, and aims to understand whether the importance of interpersonal relationships is common to the self across all cultures or more valued by collectivist cultures as previous research suggests (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Secondly, the investigative aspect of the research aims to explore the extent to which the self as decentralised emerges in the data and whether this is a culturally biased self-organisation. Finally, this investigation aims to use the notion of ventriloquation, as discussed in the theory of the dialogical self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993), to explore the nature of collective voices that emerge in the sample. Methodological questions of this research aim to explore the appropriate measurement of the intersection between self and culture, within the framework of qualitative methods and the self as dialogical.

6.4 Qualitative methodology

6.4.1 Data collection

While qualitative data collection procedures are less well established and less standardised, they produce a richness of data, often lacking in quantitative studies. Studies on culture and self (Cousins, 1989; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Trafimow, Triandis & Goto, 1991) have traditionally used questionnaires, self-reports and in particular the Twenty Statements Test, originally developed by Kuhn and McPartland (1954), eliciting very useful information. However, they frequently result in a very homogenous view of culture promoting dichotomisation. Qualitative approaches, on the other hand, are able to allow for the heterogeneity argued to be present in different cultures (Bochner, 1994; Ewing, 1990; Mageo, 1995; Singelis & Brown, 1995; Triandis, 1989). Not only do quantitative measurements risk

homogenising cultures, but they also tend to simplify self-processes. For example, the structured format self-report measurement techniques that have traditionally been used in studies on self concept have recently come under strong criticism (Jenkins, 1996), particularly as the postmodern notion of a dynamic self-in-process has gained attention. Traditional empirical tests like questionnaires “enforce a static model of self-processes” (Jenkins, 1996, p.100). Qualitative methodology, in particular within the narrative paradigm, aims to evoke the implicit self defining constructs which allow for a more heterogenous, dynamic, dialogical conception of self.

In this research, narrative interviews were used as a method of data collection. Some of the literature (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor & Tindall, 1994; Dunne, 1995; Mishler, 1986) bears testimony to the complexities and laboriousness of interviewing. Nevertheless there are a number of advantages in taking such an approach. Interviews are at once both personal and public in nature. They allow for the often complex and intimate exploration of subjective meanings which do not necessarily have to be well thought out or consistent. Furthermore, interviews force the interviewer to recognise the co-constructive nature of the very data to be analysed, requiring reflexivity on the part of the interviewer so as to explicate the process of negotiation of meaning. The contextual orientation of interviews forces the researcher to confront power relations that are inevitably set up between interviewer and respondent, particularly the interplay of class, culture, gender, and age relations.

The interviews for this dissertation are guided by Mishler's (1986) definition of interviewing which incorporates the advantages discussed above. “[A] view of the interview as a discourse between speakers and on the ways that the meaning of questions and responses are contextually grounded and jointly constructed by interviewer and respondent” (Mishler,

1986, p.33). This definition deviates from the traditional approach to interviews, which aimed to remove all technical problems that might obscure the path to the 'truth' of the respondents' opinions, by tightly controlling wording and sequence of questioning. Such traditional approaches ignore broad socio-cultural and subcultural contexts that inform the meanings assigned to stories in the interview. Traditional approaches also fail to acknowledge that interviews are co-constructed and that interview data captures the mediated world of the researcher and subject rather than the unmediated world of the subject (Hastrup, 1992, in Cortazzi, 1993). Mishler's interviewing approach recognises that the interviewer's questions as well as silences can greatly influence the direction and content of a story. This perspective on interview narratives is particularly important in studies concerning stories about the self, because as researchers we have preconceptions of what qualifies as an autobiographical story. Cortazzi highlights that these preconceptions generally reflect the western notion of 'Great Man' tradition where a life story is assumed to be about the development of one's personality. In contrast, research (Cortazzi, 1993) is beginning to suggest that within non-western cultures the story of the group may be more representative of a person's self story or life story. In summary, being reflexive about one's assumptions is an integral part of good interviewing skills.

The traditional approach to interviews previously described had as its goal the description of life with detail and accuracy (Ochberg, 1994). The focus was on what was told. Given the social constructionist perspective which has served to deconstruct all 'truth', recently the focus has shifted from the told to the telling, from inviting reports to inviting stories during the interviews (Chase, 1995). For this reason an open-ended semi-structured interview format is used for this research.

The interviews were semi-structured as respondents were prompted in their storytelling through a number of questions (See Appendix One for interview schedule). Thus the interviewer provided the auto-biographers with a framework for selecting narratives to be included (Wiener & Rosenwald, 1993). The questions were aimed specifically at eliciting self-narratives in and around the stories recounted, tapping the respondents' experiences, thoughts and feelings. Questions and exchange hoped to encourage respondents to articulate more fully their voices of the self, which often required listening for gaps and silences (Chase, 1995). This approach to interviewing is rather more like a therapeutic intervention without clear boundaries and less like a formal research set of rules (Josselson, 1996). Particularly as Josselson (1995) emphasises the empathic stance within research which, she argues, provides the continuity and receptivity that is necessary for a clearer perception of others.

According to Mishler (1986) transcription procedures are an important consideration when using interviews as a mode of data collection, and should be informed by the researcher's conceptual notion of the link between meaning and speech. Detailed transcriptions respect the interaction between interviewer and respondent as being an integral part of the discourse and therefore facilitate reflexivity during the analytic process. (See Appendix Two for transcription codes which were adapted from transcription codes used by Mishler).

The interviews of the English speaking respondents were conducted by the researcher, while a black, female, Zulu-speaking research assistant was employed to interview the Zulu-speaking respondents in Zulu. It was hoped that through facilitating the interviews in the respondents' home language, the interface of the self and language, considered to be an important cultural position, could be explored in the analysis. The research assistant was

currently enrolled in a post-graduate psychology diploma course and had an undergraduate degree in psychology and therefore had insight into the issues that were being researched. Furthermore, the interview assistant was thoroughly briefed on the conducting of interviews. Initial interviews conducted by the research assistant were read by the researcher and discussed at length with the research assistant with regard to how the interview technique could be improved. The interviews were each approximately thirty to forty minutes in length and were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. The Zulu interviews once transcribed in Zulu were translated into English for analysis.

6.4.2 Memory narratives

The role of memory in self-narratives, reviewed in the literature, is upheld as playing a crucial role in constructing narratives and in facilitating self-continuity and self-certainty, considered essential aspects of the self. Given that memory forms an integral part of enabling us to think about our selves, this research collected the data around memories. Respondents were asked to recount a memory of a significant event in their lives. This modality is used firstly, because of the research explicating the important role memory plays in the relationship between self and narrative (Cortazzi, 1993; Crites, 1986; Keen, 1986; Singer, 1995). Secondly, this modality is also considered less self-conscious and thus more reliable for revealing the nature of self-construction. Finally, this modality is used because it aims to facilitate story-telling, the explication of a narrative. Whereas asking respondents to define themselves may have elicited a list of descriptions, it was hoped that this approach would elicit a story or narrative thereby encouraging the engagement of different voices (multiple selves) in those remembered circumstances as well as in the present as memories are recounted. Moreover narrative in and of itself is a process of interpreting ourselves

(Josselson, 1995) thus the aim was to encourage story-telling around memories to see how respondents' conceptualised the self.

6.4.3 Sampling

Theoretical sampling, also called purposeful sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) used frequently in grounded theory modes of analysis was used for this research. It is a process of sampling in which the analysis informs what subjects to sample based on the emerging theory. Thus sampling is an ongoing process that occurs in tandem with analytic work on the data, it is emergent as opposed to representative. As the results begin to be fleshed out, so the direction of sampling is forged by unanswered theoretical questions (Strauss, 1987).

The sample consists of twelve women between the ages of thirty-five and fifty years old. The sample is specifically limited to women with the aim of excluding the investigation of gender differences in the self. This particular age group was chosen as it is argued (Gerdes, Moore, Ochse & van Ede, 1988) that subjects between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine may be perceived to be at a more individualistic stage of life, possibly skewing the results of the data. Furthermore the chosen age group is considered an active life stage, with the women engaged in multiple contexts and roles, considered important for the investigation of the self in cultural context.

Deciding on the cultural units to be studied proved particularly difficult as the review of literature highlights and criticises the commonality of using the terms 'race', culture and ethnicity interchangeably in research and the difficulties in defining some of these concepts. For practical purposes, the American Psychological Association's (1994, in Phinney, 1996)

recommendation to describe samples by ethnic group, and the social construction of culture in South-Africa are used as guidelines to operationally define the cultural units in this investigation. To elaborate on the latter, for many years the history of apartheid in South-Africa lead to the unique situation where the apartheid segregation policy separated 'races' geographically, resulting in minimal contact between the different 'racial' groups. Following from these historical facts is the assumption that the cultures of these groups became and remained relatively separate and homogenous such that it is argued that ethnic groups formed that are unofficially termed, White, Black, Coloured and Indian. The author purposefully uses the term 'ethnic groups' because ethnicity is geographically located (discussed in the review of literature) and these groups of people were limited to specific territories through the Group Areas Act, which enforced by law the separate living of different races. Despite the abolition of apartheid in 1994, the separation of 'races', territorially, is still widespread in South-Africa, such that cultural norms and values are arguably still territorialised. Thus the sampling for this research is based on the assumption that, given South-Africa's unique history, 'race', ethnicity and culture partially intersect. Certainly, Phinney uses the term ethnicity to encompass both culture and 'race'. 'Race' is encompassed in the term ethnicity because of its psychological importance, derived from the way in which others respond to you. Therefore, women from three different 'racial' groups were selected for the sample: Black, Indian and White. These 'racial' groups are argued to also represent ethnic groupings due to the political history of South-Africa. In addition, when used in this sense, it is argued that culture is not taken to be equivalent to 'race', rather culture is conceptualised as territorialised, as being geographically located in ethnic groupings. This is argued to be the social construction of culture in South-Africa, as it was socially engineered or constructed by the apartheid government and arguably continues to be socially constructed by large sectors of the South-African population. In addition to using this socially constructed definition of a cultural unit, for

practical purposes, other demographic information was taken from the subjects for research purposes. In this way, for the analysis, culture could be broadly defined to include, for example, age, religion, language, family context, stage of life and socio-economic status (See Appendix Three for demographic form required to be completed by the respondents). In collecting and using this demographic information, the within-group variation prevalent in ethnic groupings is recognised.

Women to be interviewed were chosen with variety as the major criterion which is a specific type of theoretical sampling called maximum variation sampling “when the purpose is to document unique variations that have emerged in adapting to different conditions” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.102). Thus women were sampled with various levels of education ranging from Standard nine to Honours degrees; with varying number of dependants, ranging from none to three; with a variety of careers, including a part-time community trainer, an optometrist and a teacher; and consequently women from different socio-economic groups were sampled. Women with varying relationship histories, including separated, divorced, single and married, were interviewed. Finally, women from different religious and language backgrounds were sampled including Christianity, Tamil and Hindu, and English, Afrikaans, Xhosa and Zulu, respectively. (See Appendix Four for a demographic profile of the respondents). Therefore, the researcher actively sought variety as a criterion for the sample. Furthermore, variety was also sought in terms of where the women were contextualised, from cities to rural areas to towns. Therefore, women were sampled from Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Ixopo and Newcastle where the researcher and research assistant were based for periods of time. Given that there were so many variables that were important to consider in the selecting of the sample, at times the respondents chosen showed greater variety in certain demographic domains than in others, as the demographic profile shows (See

Appendix Four). This limitation in the sample selection will be discussed further in the concluding chapter. The researcher did not personally know these women, thereby ruling out over familiarity, enabling some consistency in the story-telling manner of the respondents. Rather these women were found through acquaintances of the researcher and research assistant. Such acquaintances facilitated the choice of a subject with the required demographic profile as informed by the ongoing research process.

From these sampling details, it is particularly apparent that representativeness is approached differently in qualitative as compared to quantitative studies. Whereas from a quantitative approach representativeness is conceptualised in terms of extracting a mean, median or mode for a complex issue, the number of uncontrollable contaminating variables in this qualitative approach to sampling does not allow such an extraction. Rather than focusing on finding an average, one aims to find the unique, mapping out the variety of experiences and narratives and relating them to crucial aspects of the topic (Bar-On & Gilad, 1994). Thus the sample consisted of twelve women, five from the Black population, four from the White population and three from the Indian population. Extra subjects for the former two cultural units were decided upon during the course of analysis in the hope that further data would enable fuller exploration of tentative findings. Regardless of these extra subjects, relative to quantitative studies this reflects a very small sample size yet from a qualitative perspective. “[I]t is not necessary to know everything in order to understand something” (Geertz, 1975, in Josselson, 1995, p.95). Given the narrative emphasis, which focuses on individual stories, saturation within the local knowledges that are constructed guides the sampling process. Thus understanding replaces generalisation as the goal of research, the understanding of individual self-concepts, and the connection between these self-concepts and social practices through the explication of cross-cultural differences and similarities.

6.5 Qualitative research and the difficulties in articulating the analytic method

Various approaches to analysing data within the narrative paradigm, briefly explored in the previous chapter, while introducing useful concepts and important methodological concerns, serve to confuse and frustrate any search for a practical approach to data analysis. This feeling is one shared by Mauthner and Doucet (1998) who bemoan the difficulties of translating narrative concepts and ideas into research practices and cite the lack of detailed presentations of the step-by-step processes of how interview transcripts are analysed. In particular Mauthner and Doucet (1998) found it difficult to apply to the data analysis stage of research the feminist emphasis on firstly, understanding women's lives "in and on their own terms" (p.120) and secondly, reflexivity. They understand the paucity of literature on the subject as being a function of the difficulties of articulating methods of analysis in qualitative research. Such difficulties include the use of intuition, as opposed to necessarily using logic, to identify key issues for investigation resulting in feelings of uncertainty and confusion as intuitive processes are not easily articulated. Furthermore while reflexivity calls for uncovering our values and biases this is often uncomfortable, difficult work requiring a high level of self-awareness. It also means that "in analysing data we are confronted with ourselves, and with our own central role in shaping the outcome" (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p.122). The positivistic tradition in research frequently leads to discomfort when we are confronted with the subjective, interpretive nature of what we do. Mauthner and Doucet question whether this is perhaps one of the reasons why the use of computer programs in qualitative research has become so popular. Finally, even where detailed methods of data analysis are set out, as researchers we each interpret these methods differently, adding unique emphases and different steps while omitting others. Frequently this results in anxiety and a

glossing over of the details of data analysis because ‘we have not followed the method correctly’. Given the paucity of articulating data analysis methods in qualitative research, Mauthner and Doucet proceed to detail their voice-centred relational method on which the author bases the method of analysis.

6.6 The voice-centred relational method of data-analysis

6.6.1 Theoretical underpinnings

Mauthner and Doucet’s (1998) method of analysis is preferred for three reasons. Firstly, the step-by-step method it advocates provided a sense of security within a maze of vague narrative analytic approaches while also offering the opportunity for adaptation to address specific research questions. Secondly the method is underpinned by the theory of “relational ontology” (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p.125) emphasising the understanding of individuals within their social contexts, which necessarily extends to cultural contexts. The idea of relational ontology views human beings as embedded in a complex web of social relations thereby highlighting issues of interdependence, dependence and independence. “The voice-centred relational method...represents an attempt to translate this relational ontology into methodology and into concrete methods of data analysis by exploring individual's narrative accounts in terms of their relationship to the people around them and their relationship to the broader social, structural and cultural contexts within which they live” (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p.126). This relational emphasis reflects the dialogical (theoretical and methodological) framework that this research embraces, while also highlighting the importance of context. Therefore this narrative analytic method is considered to be very compatible with the theoretical framework of the dialogical self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993).

Thirdly, and following necessarily from the theoretical underpinnings, this method was chosen for its way of knowing the world, which corresponds to the notion of dual landscapes in narratives (Bruner, 1986, in White, 1995). Jerome Bruner (1985, in Polkinghorne, 1995) argued for two ways of knowing the world. Firstly, there is the traditional logical-scientific way of knowing employing paradigmatic cognition whereby a particular instance is clarified as belonging to a particular category. This way of knowing pervades studies that focus on the landscapes of action in narratives. A quantitative approach to this mode preselects categories and a qualitative approach constructs or discovers categories. Secondly, there is the storied way of knowing, employing narrative cognition whereby the goal is to understand human experience, focusing on the landscapes of consciousness in narratives. Narrative knowledge develops from emplotted stories, instead of moving from a specific instance to a generalisation, narrative enquiry remains at the level of specific episodes where thought moves from instance to instance, case to case. Similarities are looked for among a varied collection of cases such that common elements are drawn from stories through the analysis of narratives. Outlining the steps of the voice-centred relational method drawn from Mauthner and Doucet (1998) demonstrates these justifications further.

6.6.2 Analytic Method

The method of analysis of interview transcripts is based on the voice-centred relational method (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998) involving four readings and case studies. This method was adapted for the current investigation such that certain elements of narrative structure already discussed (concerning the landscapes of action) could be incorporated so as to guard against monologic research practices. Moreover adaptations were needed given the specific cultural and dialogical emphasis of the study thereby directing the questions posed during

analysis. Group work advocated by this method was not possible during this investigation, rather supervisory discussion and joint analysis of selected interviews aided in maintaining emotional distance and refining the analysis. The voice-centred relational method is adopted because it allows for discovery rather than merely confirmation of hypotheses, while at the same time providing the structure and guidance required for a novice qualitative researcher.

The method of analysis requires the interview texts to be read four times. Firstly the researcher reads for the plot, gleening what the narrative is about on a factual and manifest level. In this reading the text is studied for aspects of emplotment as well as for aspects of subjunctivising strategies, exploring the multiple plots or nested narratives in the text (Good & Del Vecchio Good, 1994). The second part of the first reading is aimed to incorporate reflexivity into the analysis process. Thus the “researcher reads for herself in the text in the sense that she places herself, with her own particular background, history and experiences, in relation to the person she has interviewed....how she is responding emotionally and intellectually to this person” (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p.126).

The second reading of the interview narratives reads for the voices of the ‘I’, gleening for self-constructions, self-descriptors, self-states, personal attributes, roles and self-metaphors evident in the narrative. In this reading use is made of Singer's (1995) concept of me-selves referring to the roles the self adopts, and the concept of I-positions, referring to the emotional states and self-descriptors linked to these roles. Shifts in ‘I’ positions are of primary interest, both temporally and spatially, within the framework of the dialogical self.

The third reading requires reading for relationships in the texts, that is identifying the voice of the other, the actors in the narrative in relation to the self. Finally the fourth reading attempts

to place people within their cultural contexts and social structures, as mentioned previously, culture is taken, at this analytic stage, to be defined broadly, including gender, life stage, religion, ethnicity etc. Culture is operationally defined to include any collective or group voice that makes up a conglomeration of cultural voices at an individual level. Thus the fourth reading requires specifically reading for ventriloquation in the narratives - the simultaneity of collective voices with the individual voice (Hermans et al., 1992).

Guided by these four steps of stage one, an analysis method was developed so as to direct the analysis of each interview text (See Appendix Five for the analysis sheet developed). Stage two of the research process involved writing up case summaries for each interview text under the various sections set out by the analysis sheet. Once the case summaries were written up, these were grouped according to similarities that emerged in the data along various dimensions for each reading of the text. Once grouped, those narratives that were similar were analysed in terms of their demographics such that the researcher could begin to discern what cultural factor had contributed to this similarity whether it be age, ethnicity, career etc. Thereafter the case summaries were analysed according to multiple groupings, in other words, all case summaries that represented young authors were contrasted against those that represented old authors. Furthermore, all case summaries that represented Muslim authors were contrasted against those that represented Christian authors, and so on. This method enabled the researcher to operationalise the notion of defining culture broadly to include collective positions of age and religion for example. However, this investigation, due to the sampling process, which sampled three specific 'racial' groups argued to be ethnic groupings, and the burgeoning literature on cross-cultural psychology, focuses mainly on the results that shed light on differences or similarities due to ethnicity. Despite this emphasis, approaching the analysis using a broadly defined notion of culture enabled the researcher to delineate

findings in the narratives that were from other cultural factors to those that emerged from differences in ethnicity. The merits of this methodology will be further explored in the following chapter.

6.7 Trustworthiness as the criterion appropriate for qualitative research

In critically evaluating the analytic process it soon becomes apparent that, for a variety of reasons, conventional criteria applied to quantitative research such as internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity are inappropriate for a constructionist paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Firstly, looking for internal validity to test the truth value of the results suggests that such a truth exists, whereas narratives construct multiple 'truths' or realities. Thus rather than investigating the truthfulness of a result, Lincoln and Guba maintain that it is the investigation's credibility that should be demonstrated. Credibility can be thought of as the explanatory power of the findings. Secondly, external validity or generalisation is replaced by the notion of "transferability" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.301), whereas the former suggests that information is time and context free, transferability acknowledges that knowledge is local and can be transferred to another local situation with contextual similarity. Thirdly, the criterion of reliability requires that an investigation is replicable, yielding similar results. However, again this is inappropriate to the constructionist paradigm, which refutes the assumption that things are replicable as this would presume an unchanging stable reality. Rather a substitute criterion is that of dependability, which involves taking into account both factors of inevitably changing 'reality' and factors of instrumental unreliability. Finally, objectivity is inappropriate as a criterion for a number of reasons. Firstly, from a social constructionist perspective all knowledge is constructed and there are multiple realities. Secondly, the methodology chosen for research does not make the

participant subject to unbiased scrutiny rather the interview is co-constructed. Finally, knowledge is influenced by values, just as this investigation will reflect the values of the author. More appropriate than objectivity is the criterion of “confirmability” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.300), which evokes the notion of intersubjective agreement, in other words whether or not the data is characterised by evidence that confirms the investigation.

To practically meet these more appropriate criteria of trustworthiness for qualitative research the author used methods proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). These will be briefly described and discussed.

6.7.1 Credibility

An activity aimed at producing credible findings is “persistent observation” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.301) which ensures depth in research and implies looking for things that really count. Thus the main issues outlined in the analysis and discussion chapter of this research began as tentative identifications, which were then explored in detail, implying persistent observation. Secondly referential adequacy was used in this study, which means a portion of the data (one interview from each sample group) was earmarked and archived, then recalled when tentative findings had been reached. This process ensured that tentative findings could be cross checked and referenced adequately with the archived data, not analysed with the rest of the data set.

6.7.2 Transferability

Transferability is used as a more appropriate equivalent for external validity, which refers to the generalisability of the results. The activity embarked upon to meet this criterion involves the researcher supplying a detailed description of the context of the investigation so that someone wanting to make a transfer will be able to conclude whether such a transfer is possible. The aim is thus to provide a thick description, “a data base that makes transferability judgements possible on the part of potential appliers” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.316). To meet this criteria the description of the methodology and analysis for this investigation are necessarily detailed and descriptive.

6.7.3 Dependability

Dependability was aimed for by maintaining coherence in the records kept throughout the investigation. This is facilitated by the analysis sheet (See Appendix Five) which is continually subjected to auditing, in other words the processes by which this analysis sheet is being followed remains under scrutiny.

6.7.4 Confirmability

Triangulation was used to increase confirmability of the findings, in that multiple sources (interviewees) were included in the sample. Furthermore regular supervision around the narratives analysed ensured the use of different investigators, with the goal of keeping each other more or less honest. As opposed to objectivity the criterion of confirmability recognises that research is value-laden and seeks to acknowledge these values and explicate the

relationship between researcher and subject through reflexivity. Thus the reflexivity incorporated into the voice-centred relational method of analysis enables confirmability.

6.8 Ethics of narrative analysis

The facilitation of trustworthiness by the voice-centred relational method suggests that not only is this method an acceptable logic but it is also an acceptable practice. Ethical considerations also fall under the auspices of acceptable practice. The incorporation of reflexivity in the process of analysis is essential from an ethical perspective. It gives the author the opportunity to recognise one's own biases and prejudices. This is particularly important when interviews have been conducted and thus the data is co-constructed by the researcher and the researched (Mishler, 1986). In addition this is essential in narrative analysis where the writer assumes the authority of speaking for the participants. "All research based on in-depth interviews raises ethical and process issues, but narrative research demands that we pay special attention to participant's vulnerability and analyst's interpretative authority" (Chase, 1996, p.45). With regard to the former, informed consent was required from participants who were given the guarantee of protecting their identity through anonymity (See Appendix Six for consent form). With reference to the interpretive authority of the analyst, certain researchers (Mishler, 1986) advocate the inclusion of the interviewee in the analysis process so that they can help the researcher understand what the stories are about. This approach has difficulties and dilemmas such as time-frame limitations, unwillingness of participants and disagreements in interpretation (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). It is hoped that the second part of the first reading, which highlights reflexivity, enables a self-critical stance while at the same time acknowledging the authority of the researcher. It is important to recognise that narrative research is not a neutral process, as the researcher puts the themes on

the analysis sheet, they are not discovered, or uncovered but imposed. Reflexivity enables us to recognise the theoretical and ontological framework in which we locate ourselves which invariably influences the way we hear and analyse our participant's stories.

6.9 Conclusion

Regardless of the analytic framework that informs one's research Banister et al. (1994) refer to the importance of accepting partial interpretation, which means acknowledging that the research process in narrative work is an indefinite one to which an arbitrary limit is imposed through the writing up requirement. The methodology described in this chapter aims not to uncover the truth but to come to a believable but necessarily incomplete understanding that resonates with and is congruent with our experience of the self and the self's connection to social and cultural practices.

Chapter Seven

The analytic story

7.1 Introduction

Given the emergent quality and narrative focus of this research, in writing up the investigation, the results and discussion are integrated into an analytic story (a style advocated by Silverman, 2000). This analytic story explores the self in cultural context that emerges in the data, looking specifically at the cultural position of ethnicity. Three dimensions of the interface between self and culture emerge as integral to understanding this intersection, namely the social, dialogical and cultural dimensions. The findings pertaining to each of these dimensions will be explored in turn. Extracts from the interviews collected for the investigation are included to add richness to the analytic story. The analytic story ends with reflections on the methodology employed in this investigation, which in itself sheds light on the interface between self and culture.

7.2 The social, dialogical and cultural dimensions of the interface between self and culture

The social dimension of the interface between self and culture is used here to refer specifically to the relational quality of the self and to the self-other relationship. The exploration of these issues is facilitated by the theoretical framework of the self as dialogue (Hermans & Kempen, 1993) which argues that the self is social because it occupies imaginal other-positions and incorporates them in the dialogue that is the self. These issues are explored in the light of research, by Sampson (1988) in particular, who argues that the

interdependent and independent self have fluid and firm self-other boundaries, respectively. In addition, given that a prominent argument for the categorisation into a non-western and western self has been around the role of the other in conceptualising the self, it seems important to explore this relationship as constructed in the narratives and to compare these narratives by cultural units, specifically by the cultural position of ethnicity.

The second dimension is the dialogical dimension of the interface between self and culture. This part of the analysis investigates more thoroughly, the notion of dialogue within the self, exploring cultural variations in the organisation of the self, in other words, the extent to which the self is centralised or decentralised. The important question that the analysis hopes to address is whether western culture promotes dominance by one facet of the self such that a centralised self is encouraged as opposed to a non-western culture, which encourages decentralisation?

The third and final dimension, the cultural dimension, specifically explores the notion of ventriloquation (Hermans, 1996), in other words the manifestation of the cultural or collective voice within the self. Specifically, this investigation looks at the nature of these collective voices that are ventriloquated, in terms of whether they promote a self-in-relation, an autonomous self or both.

7.3 The social dimension: exploring the role of the other

The social dimension refers to the relational quality of the self. The interview narratives were analysed focusing specifically on the self-other relationship as it emerges in the narratives. Three significant findings emerge from the investigation of this social dimension. Firstly, it

emerges that the self-narratives and self-descriptors explicated through all the interview narratives are other-related. Therefore, the self emerges as a social being across all cultural groups such that the other becomes an interpersonal context for the self. Secondly, the nature of the self-other relationship emerges as similar across cultural groups, such that it undermines Sampson's (1988) notion of ensembled and self-contained individualism, characterised by fluid and firm self-other boundaries, respectively. This investigation of the self-other relationship is facilitated by the theory of the dialogical self and seems to confirm the notion of the imaginal other-position (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). Thirdly, interview narratives that emerge as demonstrating fluid self-other boundaries also emerge with independent voices such that there is an interweaving of both independent and interdependent traits within the self. These findings contradict the dichotomisation of the self as western or non-western, with the western self valuing autonomy from others and the non-western self valuing relatedness with others. The findings point to cross-cultural similarities in the data, raising questions about cross-cultural approaches that encourage simplification and categorisation. Each of the findings and the issues raised for discussion will now be discussed in turn.

7.3.1 Cross-cultural similarities in the relational quality of the self

Analysing the common plots and the nature of the nested self-narratives and self-descriptors in the memories recalled, the frequency with which they are other-related is prominent. In other words, the other as a person outside of the self always plays a significant role in the narratives of the authors sampled. Therefore, the other emerges as important for the me-selves and I-positions that make up the dialogical selves (Singer, 1995). To clarify, the me-selves refer to the voices of the roles of the self in the narratives, for example the role of the

mother in the family, which is a relational role. The I-positions refer to the emotional states and self-descriptors associated with these roles in the narratives, for example the 'I' as a caring mother, which is also a relational position. In all the interview narratives these me-selves and I-positions that are identified as voices of the 'I' emerge as relational. There is no evidence of a non-relational self in any of the narratives sampled.

In addition, there is also evidence in the narratives of the other playing an integral role in conceptualising the self, such that frequently others form an interpersonal context, resulting in context-specific selves. To elaborate further, when analysing the narratives it becomes noticeable that frequently the voices of the self change in the presence of others. Voices of the 'I' sound different when the self is narrating a part of a memory that involves certain people, for example family, when compared to the part of the memory where the self is in the context of other people, for example friends. In this sense, the other becomes a context in itself, an interpersonal context, and in these various interpersonal contexts different voices of the self or I-positions emerge. What emerge are context-specific selves. From a dialogical perspective, the other as a person in interaction with the self also becomes a position in the imaginal plane, contextualising and shaping other I-positions in the imaginal plane.

The following extract from an interview narrative demonstrates, more specifically, the relational quality of the self and the role of the interpersonal context that is depicted in the narratives of all authors. These issues are demonstrated in extract 1 by the way the author emphasises the social contacts she has, and by the way in which her relationships with others shapes the voices of her me-selves.

"A: *Um (P) I think that the social thing would have been extremely important, in how I saw myself. I also think you do see yourself in terms of how, of other people in quite a large degree (P).*

I: *Would you like to tell me a bit more about that?*

A: *Perhaps it comes down to a matter of roles, certainly I determine myself in terms of roles and roles involve other people, mother, wife, friend, supporter, daughter, sister (P) Um, I mean the social contacts are, the more of them perhaps your social roles are richer and maybe your life is somehow richer. Am I going off the point?*

[

I: *No, not at all.*

A: *What was the question you asked me?*

I: *Um (P) and you spoke about your role, do you see a different self in each of those roles?*

A: *Yes, definitely without a doubt.*

I: *Can you describe that for me?*

A: *I think it almost comes down to different personality characteristics for each different role. Um (P) or perhaps different personality characteristics which come into play in the different roles. As a mother, I am a provider and a cook and sympathiser, and nose wiper and story-reader and you know those things. The friends I am going to see this afternoon, I am a psychologically minded, spiritual companion, um reader, literate person, we discuss a whole lot of esoteric stuff. With my husband I am the person who (P) you know I am a whole bunch of different roles again. And I think it does draw on different characteristics possibly not so much personality characteristics, like for my husband I will be cook (P)." (6; p.9/16-p.10/12) **Extract 1***

For the author in extract 1 the voices of the self that dialogue with one another are intricately connected to others, shaped by others. What emerges is a self that is in relation with others, a self that is a social being. Furthermore, with each person the self interacts with, a new and different voice arises in dialogue, and through this the notion of context-specific selves is demonstrated. This can be seen in that the dialogue of the self sounds different when the author is with her husband when compared to the dialogue of the self when she is with her children or her friends. The children, for example, form an interpersonal context, which encourages the voice of carer to become dominant in the dialogical self. In this way there are context-specific voices that emerge in the different interpersonal contexts, shaping the dialogue that makes up the self in that particular context. When the other-position of her husband voices itself in the dialogical space, for example, so the I-positions or self-roles associated with this interpersonal context, like self-as-cook, become dominant.

These two associated findings of the analysis, namely the relational quality of the self and the notion of context-specific selves within interpersonal contexts, enable the researcher to further understand the social dimension of the interface between self and culture. The strong relational focus of the self across all interview narratives, emphasises that the self is a social being across all ethnic groups. This finding supports Spiro's (1993) view that the western self is as relationally focused and as much of a social being, as the non-western self. In addition these findings suggest that the western self does value interdependence with others and that the self-in-relation may certainly also apply to the western self. This finding is contrary to dominant views of the self in western psychology (Guisinger & Blatt, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sampson, 1988). The notion of context-specific selves, which emerges in the narratives and is demonstrated in extract 1, further asserts the self as fundamentally interpersonal where intersubjectivity is largely at work. The wide variability in the self-

descriptions from person to person, or context to context, supports the findings of Kihlstrom et al. (1997) suggesting that the self is contextual with several self-concepts tied to the presence of specific people in the interpersonal space. This image complements the notion of the self as dialogue (Hermans & Kempen, 1993), where other-positions are voices or contexts within the self, shaping the dialogue.

7.3.2 Cross-cultural similarities in the self-other relationship

The second finding concerned with the social dimension of the interface between self and culture highlights the similarities across ethnic groups in the self-other relationship.

Traditionally this relationship has been characterised with the western self having firm self-other boundaries and the non-western self having fluid self-other boundaries (Sampson, 1988). This traditional viewpoint argues for cross-cultural differences in the self, where culture refers to ethnicity, and where the focus is specifically around the self-other relationship. This investigation aims to explore this dichotomisation of the self, using the framework of the dialogical self and its notion of the imaginal other-position.

According to Hermans (1996), the dialogical self is social because it occupies and dialogues with other-positions that are imaginatively present. Firstly, an other-position is construed by the self as a position that 'I' can occupy. Secondly, this position is imaginary because it may not correspond with the actual other's position, which can only be verified through actual conversation. It is imaginary because once occupied by the 'I', a number of attributes are given to this other-position that the other may not, in reality possess. Nevertheless, in the imaginal plane, the real qualities of the other are irrelevant, and the 'I' is able to adopt the position or voice of the imaginal other, and in doing is able to construct the self through

dialogue.

Despite this dialogical perspective, there are arguments against the western self being easily able to adopt the position of the imaginal other. Sampson (1988), as previously mentioned, in his theory around self-contained and ensembled individualism advocates that the self-other relationship is conceptualised very differently in western and non-western cultures.

According to Sampson (1988), people from non-western cultures conceptualise the other as an extension of the self, suggesting fluid self-other boundaries, while people from western cultures conceptualise the other as an entity separate from but in relation to the self, suggesting firm self-other boundaries. Thus while both these types of individualism value the other, as supported by the previous finding already discussed, the way in which this interpersonal relationship is conceptualised is argued by Sampson (1988) to vary across cultures, where 'culture' refers to ethnicity. Following this argument it would seem that the western self, with firm self-other boundaries may not accommodate imaginal other-positions as easily or as frequently as the non-western self with fluid self-other boundaries. Certainly, even Hermans and Kempen (1993), in recognising that the amount of dialogue making up the self may vary, also recognise that the self could restrict the voicing of an imaginal other-position within the self, particularly if the cultural context of the self advocates independent notions such as thinking for yourself. Therefore, it seems important to explore cross-cultural variations in the occupation of the imaginal other within the narratives, given the consequences it has for the self-other relationship, a prominent area of debate for cross-cultural research (Sampson, 1988).

In analysing the interview narratives it emerges that every narrative, across all ethnic groups, bears examples of the imaginal other being a position that the 'I' can occupy. This emerges in

the narratives through the interweaving of voices that were categorised and identified, by the researcher, as me-selves, I-positions or imaginal other-positions. The voice of the imaginal other is identified when, in the telling of a story memory, the views, beliefs, feeling and thoughts as imagined to belong to significant others in the narrative are expressed. For example, in relaying a story, the author might relate how her father felt about the significant event. In doing so this imaginal other-position is occupied by the 'I' for the narrative, thereby creating an alternative perspective for the self. The following extract, demonstrates specifically the voice of the imaginal other as occupied by the self, which emerges as common in all the interview narratives sampled across all ethnic groups.

"A: (P) In the morning I think, you see now I'm going to start crying, (laugh) I'm very close to my dad and um that morning was very emotional

I: Sad

A: Ja and um (P) I almost remember him being you know happy at the same time but he was quiet, as if he was sad too. Because I could feel that um (P) he was very happy as well, you know these two totally different emotions on you (laugh) and um I'm crying again (laugh) and I think that's probably how I felt on that day and excited."

(8; p.3/5-p.3/11) Extract 2

Extract 2 demonstrates how the self occupies the imaginal other-position in the narrative. Firstly, the author describes how the other felt, which may have been her father's actual emotions but nevertheless are imagined to be his emotions by his daughter, and is therefore the voice of the imaginal other. Secondly, the author describes how she felt the same way as her father. The 'I' occupies this other-position, which shapes the self within that context and within the storytelling context as the author narrates the story, expresses these feelings and

becomes emotional. All the interview narratives sampled reflect similar instances such as the one demonstrated in extract 2, of the self occupying the position of the imaginal other. The prevalence of the self occupying the position of imaginal others across all cultural groups, where culture refers specifically to ethnicity, lends support to the theory of the dialogical self, which argues that the inner world of the self is also an imaginary social world. Therefore these findings, in support of the notion of imaginal others dialoguing within the self, suggest that a categorical conceptualisation of ensembled or self-contained individualism is inappropriate and perhaps “represents an ethnocentric projection of narrow assumptions in western social science” (Hermans et al., 1993, p.214). The perspective held by Sampson (1988), that the western self has firm self-other boundaries is questioned by the findings in this investigation as the ability to occupy the position of an imaginal other points to relatively fluid self-other boundaries.

7.3.3 Cross-cultural similarities in the co-existence of interdependent and independent voices

The danger of simplifying the interface of self and culture is further emphasised by a very significant finding of the analysis, which will now be explored, namely the interweaving of interdependent and independent voices of the self in the narratives sampled. Chapter three reviews the notion of the independent self for whom the other only features as a comparable measure of the unique and bounded self. The independent self is fostered by western cultures whereas non-western cultures foster the development of the interdependent self for whom the other is an extension of the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Such research offers a dichotomous view of the interface between self and culture, a view that is undermined by the finding of this investigation, that across ethnic groups there is an interweaving and co-existence of interdependent and independent voices in the same narrative. Interdependent

voices are identified in the narratives for their emphasis on relatedness between the self and other, while independent voices are identified in the narratives for their emphasis on the separateness of the self and other. With both of these voices emergent as co-existing in the narratives sampled, support is given to arguments against dichotomisation and for the co-existence within the self of both self-construals (Trafimow et al., 1991).

Extract 3 demonstrates this interweaving of both independent (traditionally assumed to be western) voices and interdependent (traditionally assumed to be non-western) voices. Extract 3 narrates the story of the occupation of the other-position of sangoma such that it is rapidly taken to be the self of selves or the 'real' self by the author. The author immediately identifies with the me-self of sangoma and occupies it as a position within the self. This suggests fluid self-other boundaries, where the other is conceptualised as an extension of the self, just as the ancestors become an extension of the self-as-sangoma. These fluid self-other boundaries, Sampson (1988) suggests, are characteristic of people from collectivist cultures, and point to an interdependent self (Triandis, 1989). However interwoven amongst these interdependent voices emphasising relatedness between self and other are independent voices emergent in the following example.

"I: Coming to the incident of being a sangoma, how would you describe yourself?

A: I look at this thing as a gift, I believe in ancestors and I think all this is the gift from them. It is easy to meet different people when you are a sangoma. I did not plan it or even wish for it. I am happy because I am a unique person even from my family. But I feel like I am a different person and I am sometimes shy about it, when I am attending a meeting I feel like everyone is looking at me and that makes me feel

lonely. In fact I am a shy person whenever I am with other people I feel like everyone thinks that I am stupid. When I 'm invited to other people's houses I hardly go because I feel inferior." (4; p.7/6-16). **Extract 3**

Extract 3 is a good example of the co-existence of interdependent and independent voices in the self-narrative. Despite being contextualised in the rural areas and taking on the position of sangoma, suggestive of a strong connection to the traditional Zulu (collectivist) culture, the author voices independent notions of the self in two ways. Firstly, the author uses abstract self-descriptors like 'unique', 'different' and 'shy', which emphasise that the self is separate from others, is bounded and therefore consistent across contexts. Secondly, the author compares herself to others, suggesting that the other is taken as a separate entity which is comparable to the self, pointing to firm self-other boundaries. These features suggest a relationship with the other that is characteristic of the independent self and yet these features are interwoven with highly interdependent features such as fluid self-other boundaries. These findings lend weight to Spiro's (1993) argument against the dichotomisation of western and non-western cultures with respect to the self.

7.3.4 Summary of findings in the social dimension

In summary, the exploration of the social dimension and specifically the role of the other in the self-narratives, is facilitated by the notion of the imaginal other-position in the theory of the dialogical self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). The importance of interpersonal relationships and of the other in self-conceptualisation is supported by the findings in this research. Therefore, this research finds that self-representation is always in relation to the other, the self becomes differentiated through interactions with the other and is socially embedded.

Furthermore the dichotomisation of the self as western and non-western and subsequently as having firm and fluid self-other boundaries is questioned by the research findings. These findings thus far support Spiro's (1993) argument that "these bipolar types of self – a western and a non-western – are wildly overdrawn" (p.116)

7.4 The dialogical dimension: cultural variations in the decentralisation and centralisation of the self

The decentralisation and centralisation of the self is of particular interest to this investigation because different viewpoints emerge with respect to self-organisation and cultural variation. On the one hand, Sampson (1985, in Hermans et al., 1993) argues for a dichotomous view of the self with respect to self-organisation across cultures. He argues that the centralised self represents a culturally biased western view suggesting that there are cultural differences in the extent to which the self is centralised or decentralised. According to him, the western ideal results in one dominating I-position reducing the amount of dialogue and centralising the self. This centralised self may be paralleled with the notion of a hierarchical self as posited firstly by James (1952) for example, and by researchers thereafter like Jopling (1997) who argues that the ecological self is at the pinnacle of this hierarchy. This centralised self complements the notion of the abstract self, which has been used to characterise the western self, as it is a self that is bounded and stable across contexts. By contrast, the non-western self has been characterised as decentralised with multiple selves that are concrete and situation-specific (Cousins, 1989).

On the other hand, and as an alternative to this dichotomisation of the self around notions of centralisation and decentralisation, the theory of the dialogical self accommodates both

notions. Hermans and Kempen's (1993) theory of the dialogical self provides an alternative to previous theories which frequently dichotomise the characteristics of the self as western or non-western, centralised or decentralised, and abstract or concrete (Cousins, 1989; Sampson, 1985, in Hermans et al., 1993). The dialogical approach to self provides a large enough framework to enable a conception of the self that accommodates diversity and unification in the self rather than dichotomising them across cultural groups. To elaborate, Hermans and Kempen maintain that the self is not heard as one single voice but as several voices that have varying spatial positions. In other words, these multiple voiced positions or selves exist side by side, each contextualised in space and time. This notion complements the notion of the concrete self which is context-specific and has been used by Cousins to characterise the decentralised, non-western self. However, the theory of the dialogical self also centres around the notion of dialogue between these relatively autonomous voices which may harmonise and conflict with one another. The result is a self that is "a highly active process of positioning and repositioning, expressed in the dynamics of self-negotiation, self-oppositions and self-integrations" (Hermans, 1996, p.47). The metaphor of a group of musicians has been used to describe this self (Hermans et al., 1993), where each musician occupies a different position in a space and listens to the other musicians, each accompanying the polyphonic music with their own melody. Therefore at one level the self is multiple and context-specific. At another level, the self is like music, which is heard as a one melody. Thus in the dialogical framework, the self is an open, dynamic, dialogical self which complements the notion of an abstract self which is (in this case) consistently dialogical across all contexts, is coherent and has been used to characterise the centralised, western self (Cousins, 1989). Therefore, as much as the dialogical self is decentralised in the sense that it is multiple, it is also unified and coherent because a dialogical relationship

exists between these multiple selves. The value of the theory of the dialogical self as an alternative to dichotomising self-organisation across cultures is supported by the findings of this research, which show inconsistencies in the self-organisation of the narratives when compared to the dichotomous picture presented by Sampson (1985, in Hermans et al. 1993) and finds an interweaving of traditionally western and non-western self traits.

More specifically, when grouped by ethnicity as a cultural phenomenon, four of five narratives by Black authors emerge as suggestive of a relatively decentralised self-system that nevertheless uses abstract self-descriptors and values the experience of illusory coherence, suggesting centralisation at the same time. All the narratives by Indian and White authors emerge as similar to each other, with a relatively centralised self-system which nevertheless also emerges as encouraging dialogue between context-specific selves. Each of these findings will now be discussed in detail.

7.4.1 The emergence of a decentralised, abstract self in narratives by Black authors

The narratives by Black authors that were sampled for this investigation emerge as constructing a self that is both decentralised and centralised, both multiple and unified. This result would be perceived by traditional researchers (Sampson, 1988) as contradictory and difficult to explain given their theoretical framework. However the theory of the dialogical self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993) could account for this contradiction and inconsistency with previous research, which frequently emerges in cross-cultural studies and remains unexplained (Phinney, 1996).

Firstly, the self emerges as decentralised in the narratives because there are frequently multiple me-selves that are relatively autonomous, suggesting a decentralised self in process. The following extract demonstrates this expression of multi-layered voices in the narrative where no one voice is ultimately dominant but the voices exist side by side and enter into dialogical relations.

"A: My husband was working during the day and would come back in the afternoon. Things started to change, sometimes he never came home and we had no idea where he should be. After that he just disappeared in such a way that he was away from home for some time. Then he went and never came back until I left. Since my childhood years I was the person who trusted God very much since it was the way I was brought up. But by that time it seemed like God was not listening to my prayers at all, (P) when I realised that there was no solution for my problems I then decided to solve it by committing suicide. After deciding about suicide I had a problem about who was going to look after my sick mother-in-law and my sick daughter. That was the problem because I was the only person who was trained to care for her. Then I thought it would be better if all three of us can die so that no one will be worried about my death." (1; p.1/20-p.2/8) Extract 4

In extract 4, the self occupies many me-selves simultaneously in the dialogue around her decision to commit suicide, that of self-as-wife, self-as-daughter-in-law, self-as-mother, self-as-nurse and self-as-spiritual. In addition the self voices contradictory I-positions simultaneously, that of self-as-carer and that of self-as-murderer. These me-selves and I-positions seem to dialogue together in the imaginal space, dominating and subjugating one another such that there is an expression of multi-layered voices that result in a decentralised

self.

Secondly, in addition to this emergent decentralised self in the narratives by Black authors, four of five narratives by Black authors emerge constructing an illusory wholeness of self, despite the decentralisation of the self, by using abstract self-descriptors. These self-descriptors include the self-as-displaced, self-as-confused, self-as-separate and self-as-different. They emerge as common threads throughout the narrative due to the frequency or emphasis with which the authors' use them to describe themselves and due to the fact that they seem to be general descriptions of the authors' self-state throughout the narrative. Significantly, these are abstract self-descriptors thought from previous research (Cousins, 1989; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) to be more typical of the self-conceptualisation of westerners.

The following extract demonstrates this use of abstractions by Black authors in describing the self. The narrative in extract 5 allows a decentralised manyness of 'I's and yet constructs an illusory wholeness of self through the use of a common self-descriptor. Extract 5 emerges as a narrative that constructs the self as occupying many me-selves, self-as-scholar (which alternates between successful and failed scholar), self-as-defender and self-as-abused-child. Interwoven amongst these voices of multiple selves, the self-as-displaced (from her familiar context) is reflected in all these I-positions and can be seen to bring about the illusion of coherence amongst contradictory and simultaneous voices, suggesting a unification of self. It is the common self-descriptor that facilitates dialogue while promoting multiplicity and decentralisation at the same time.

"A: *Remember I was coming from the school in rural areas and now I was at the township school. The teaching was completely different. So as usual that when a person comes from rural areas to township school they encounter problems. That is because of the differences in the syllabus and even the behaviour of the learners. Another problem that I had was that the girl from the house we were living in was a troublesome person. She used to have quarrels with other children at school. When that happened I was forced to join her at the quarrel that I knew nothing about them. She always wanted me to take her side. At some stage when I was still very new in that school, she had a quarrel with another girl that child that she had a quarrel with was from a family with whom the parents were not in good terms in the first place. In their quarrel I find myself in for it. I remember these girls even asked where I was coming from. I was also assigned to fight with another girl and the person was involved with Busisiwe not me.*

A: *Were you fighting on behalf of Busisiwe your cousin?*

R: *My fighting was for her defence but this girl also provoked me although she didn't even know me. I was angry with her when she asked me where I was coming from. I knew I was stronger than them since I was from the farm. I wanted to show them that children from the farm can hit and they are strong enough to fight."*

(5; p. 4/2-20) Extract 5

In extract 5 an illusion of coherence is constructed through the notion of self-as-displaced explicating the reasons for the voices of self-as-failed-scholar, the self-as-abused child and the self-as-defender, namely that the author has been displaced from the rural areas to the

township areas. Throughout the extract and the narrative the author emphasises this displacement, bringing about an illusion of coherence in the decentralised self.

Therefore, the narratives by Black authors suggest that decentralising and centralising factors in the self-organisation are not mutually exclusive. The use of an abstract self-descriptor does not exclude the possibility of a decentralised self. In understanding how this is accomplished, it is important to recognise that these self-descriptors are I-positions. They refer to the emotional state of the self rather than a role the self is playing. Therefore, being I-positions these common self-descriptors are still able to encourage and enable dialogue between the multiple me-selves (roles), which also emerge in the narratives. This suggests that the common self-descriptor still promotes and allows a decentralisation of the self. In other words, while the self-as-displaced is used as a re-occurring self-descriptor in one particular narrative, for example, other voices of self-as-scholar, self-as-son, self-as-failure continue to enjoy relative autonomy. The self-organisations that emerge in these self-narratives may be described as having an overarching meta-position like self-as-displaced, which provides a common 'language' for autonomous positions within this meta-position to dialogue with one another. Furthermore, this meta-position enables the experience of illusory coherence. This finding questions the categorisation of the non-western self as concrete and decentralised.

Thus far the notion of a postmodern self, that is characterised by multiplicity, decentralisation and "shifting selves" (Ewing, 1990, p.263) has emerged strongly in the narratives by Black authors. This multiplicity, acknowledged in the theory of the dialogical self (Hermans et al., 1992), frequently results in inconsistencies and contradictions in the self. Nevertheless, facilitated by the use of a common self-descriptor, the self is constructed

as whole or coherent. This supports research by Ewing (1990) who argues that there is no overarching cohesive self as “frequently the speaker juxtaposes contradictory positions without attempting to integrate them” (p.261), rather the experience of personal continuity is illusory. This experience of illusory continuity is facilitated by memories, which enable the author to carry a self-descriptor through a story of an event as a common thread. Furthermore, this illusion of wholeness emerges as important for Black authors. Certainly Ewing argues that it is a universal illusion.

To summarise, the general finding when comparing and contrasting the Black authors’ narratives with one another and with the White and Indian authors suggests a decentralisation of the self that emerges together with the use of an abstract self-descriptor. This abstract self-descriptor has a unifying function in that it enables dialogical exchange between multiple constructed me-selves and it facilitates an experience of illusory coherence. These findings are significant in that they question the notion of the non-western self as a concrete self, not familiar with using abstractions in self-descriptions. These findings suggest that even for the non-western self, abstract notions that are independent of time and context, might apply, and these apply in conjunction with a self that is context-specific and variable, with a decentralised self. Therefore, the simplification of the non-western self as exclusively concrete and decentralised does not apply to the Black authors sampled for this investigation.

A possible explanation for the use of abstract self-descriptors by four Black authors, other than the ones drawn above is the influences of acculturation. In other words, it would seem that western processes have influenced the selves constructed by these authors.

Unfortunately, the level of this acculturation can only be assumed from the jobs or level of western education of the authors. When analysing the demographics, it emerges that even

those authors with low educational qualifications, working and living in rural areas, emerge as having common self-descriptors in their narratives thereby undermining the emergence of abstractions in the narratives as the function of acculturation. Rather this abstraction functions to construct the experience of illusory wholeness amidst a decentralised self, leading to the conclusion that this illusion of wholeness is something of a universal experience not limited to the western self. This self-organisation is adequately accounted for by the theory of the dialogical self (Hermans & Kempen, 1993) which enables both notions of a multiple and unified self to be true. The theory of the self as dialogue provides a framework that incorporates and integrates the notions of a coherent, centralised, abstract self and a multiple, decentralised, concrete self.

7.4.2 The emergence of a centralised, hierarchical self in narratives by Indian and White authors

When comparing and contrasting the narratives by ethnic groups, the narratives by the Indian and White authors emerge as having more in common when compared to the narratives by Black authors. There emerges in the narratives by Indian and White authors a centralised self that is constructed in a hierarchical organisation. This finding corresponds with a quantitative study (Saville, 1998) on self and culture, which used a South-African sample and found that self-definitions given by the Indian sample were more similar to the individualistic White sample than the collectivist Black sample. Certainly with respect to the result of the White sample, this finding lends support to the argument that the western self encourages a shrinking and centralising of selves. However, while these narratives point to a centralised self these narratives also emerge with dialogical relations between voices suggesting relative autonomy of these voices and thus factors of decentralisation. Thus again, it seems that

researchers cannot categorise and dichotomise the self across cultures because these findings suggest that centralising factors and dialogicality (a decentralising factor) are not mutually exclusive. These findings will each be demonstrated and discussed in turn.

The interview narratives by Indian authors emerge as constructing a self that is relatively centralised. In particular, the Indian authors' self-narratives constructs a self-system that is hierarchical, characterised by a me-self that is dominant and therefore at the apex of the hierarchy. This dominant me-self serves as a centralising factor, frequently subjugating the voices of other me-selves. While this hierarchical self-organisation still allows dialogical exchange, the organisation of a meta-position emergent in the narratives by Black authors differs from the hierarchical organisation in a number of ways. Firstly, a me-self (which refers to a self role like mother) as opposed to an I-position (which refers to a feeling state like displaced) is dominant in the hierarchical self-organisation, resulting in more of a centralising effect. Consequently, while there is dialogue, this dialogical exchange is dominated by one me-self which, being a role, imposes certain I-positions onto the dialogue and limits the number of other roles the self is able to voice, resulting in relatively less autonomy for positions lower down in the hierarchy. This hierarchical self-organisation and its centralising effects are demonstrated in the following extract.

“A: *And it just so happened that around about four o'clock we just went into the room to see how he was doing and there was an old lady, she was a non-Christian lady (P) who sort of knew that he was dying at that moment, she kind of said 'Ask him what he wants' and so um we said 'Dad what do you want?' My dad sat on the bed and he said um 'Pray for me'. And in that group I had two brothers who were in the priesthood and um and nobody prayed. (P) And so I just said a prayer, I wasn't a priest or anything at that*

time. So I just said a prayer thanking God for my dad just asking him to do his best for him, to give him peace and rest and then my dad wanted to lie down again so I just cradled him in my arms and I put him onto the bed and um everyone was around and then (P) I think you know he was he was beginning to froth a bit (P) so somebody wiped him and then the next thing was that um there was an absolute silence (P) um as we uh and then of course lots of tears around

I: Hm

A: and everyone was quite emotional

I: Hm

A: And ja there was absolute silence and then after a long while there was heavy breathing just one breath it was like the last gasp. You know ja (P) and we thought that he had died then..."(10; p.3/12-32).

"I: And afterwards do you remember much from the funeral and

[

A: Ja but oh ja but I was there to arrange all the physical things of phoning Doves and going into the room and you know uncovering his body and putting it onto a stretcher and covering the stretcher and just (you know) wheeling it out (P)

I: Hm very emotional I'm sure

A: Ja it was although we you know we wanted peace for him I mean he was 87

I: Ja

A: you know and we had that couple of days with him when we made life as comfortable as possible for him even putting a drip on him at home

I: Hm ja there's something special about nursing for your loved ones at home

[

- A: *Ja (P) right and I also felt I think that that was the basis for my ministry in handling you know those who are dying*
- I: *Okay*
- A: *Ja I think that was like a like um a preparation" (10; p.5/9-27).*
- "A : *Uh ja um (...) you know I think the strain was so great that I did fall sick in a week after the funeral and I went to see the family doctor and the family doctor was very good and he said you know (Name) you've given your life to your dad you need to to make a way for yourself and uh ja otherwise life just followed for Eighty seven (P) about normally you know it was just the adjustment of having to lock up the house before you went because I mean that we didn't have to do before. My dad was at home. Ja, it was those kinds of things those little things (P)."* (10; p.8/9-16). **Extract 6**

In extract 6, the author's dominant me-self is self-as-carer. The narrative is as much about the author's ministry as a carer as it is about her father's death. In this sense, the self-as-carer is at the apex of the hierarchy, which dominates other me-selves and prescribes other I-positions that make up the dialogical self. This dominant me-self also prescribes and seeks spaces in which to play out the self-as-carer. Initially the position is played out at her father's deathbed but when her father dies there is a loss of a space in which she can be carer. Towards the end of the extract the author narrates the effects of this loss, and expresses difficulty with 'the adjustment of having to lock up the house before you went'. Significant in this statement is the change to the third person, the use of 'you' instead of 'I', suggesting the loss of subjective agency that is felt when the self-as-carer, the dominant me-self, no longer has a space within which to enact. Significantly, the self, hierarchically organised with self-as-carer at the apex, finds a new space in which she can re-enact the emerging narrative of self-as-carer and thus the voice becomes located in old age homes and places for the dying. Later, as the author

becomes more of a professional carer, and the self-as-carer becomes even more dominant, the self actually gives up other spaces, the space of school for example and the me-self of teacher, thereby constructing a self that is even more hierarchical.

Extract 6 demonstrates the centralised self that emerges amongst self-narratives by Indian authors. It is a centralised self that is hierarchically structured, with a dominant me-self. Importantly, this centralisation is relative as dialogue still emerges between voices in the narrative, therefore suggesting that centralising features and dialogical features are not mutually exclusive. One can argue that this finding of a centralised, hierarchical self for Indian authors results from the effects of acculturation, from the influences of western processes that are leading to a culturally biased shrinking of the self associated with the western self. However, the categorisation of the self along these lines, namely that the western self is centralised while the non-western self is decentralised, may be inappropriate. Certainly the inappropriateness of dichotomising the interface between culture and the self has been upheld by the findings discussed thus far in this analytic story.

The self-narratives by White authors emerge as demonstrating a self that is also relatively centralised, however dialogical relations between voices still emerge. The self-narratives by the White authors tend to share the self-organisations of the self-narratives by Indian authors. There is relative autonomy of multiple selves however a particular me-self seems dominant. The following extract is taken from a narrative that is characterised by a centralisation of self, a hierarchical self-organisation, where other me-selves or I-positions have little autonomy in relation to the dominant self that restricts dialogical exchange. In extract 7, the narrative is centralised around and dominated by the self-as-Christian. The centralising power of this me-self in the self-system is evident in that all other voices in the self have nested within them

the dominant voice of the self-as-Christian. For example, in extract 7 the voice of self-as-employer serves as a position for the me-self of employer but also as a position to voice the dominant, centralising self-as-Christian.

"A: *And it was just the most amazing thing to actually sit back and watch God find (it) because after that they brought about incentives for people who were doing my job and I just like, I just did so well, God caused me to find such favour, its like I was the best in the whole country, like wonderful incredible commission and it was literally in about four months I had saved ten thousand rand which I needed to go over.*" (7; p.3/16-20). **Extract 7**

Extract 7 is a self-narrative that encourages a centralising of the self as the dominant voice subjugates other voiced positions, however dialogicality still emerges. Dialogical exchange that emerges in the narrative is a hidden dialogicality (Hermans & Kempen, 1993) again emphasising the restriction constructed within the self but nevertheless pointing to the co-existence of centralising and decentralising factors (in the form of dialogical relations between relatively autonomous voices). Although the voice of the self-as-employer is being heard there are traces of the voice of self-as-Christian present.

It is important to consider, in the light of these findings, for both the Indian and White authors, that frequently this dominance of a me-self might be linked to the plot of the story. For example, a story about the author's wedding day emerges with a hierarchical self-organisation with self-as-bride at the apex (extract 2). Nevertheless dialogical exchange still emerges with self-as-daughter, self-as-friend and many other selves with relative autonomy in

the hierarchy. It is difficult to know whether the selves at the apex are simply organised that way during the telling of the story or whether the story reflects a relatively stable self-organisation. The latter could be true as the authors were not prompted on the type of story they could tell but free-associated.

7.4.3 Summary of findings in the dialogical dimension

This investigation into the interface between self and culture finds that centralised, hierarchical self-systems with dialogical features (suggesting a decentralisation and multiplicity) emerge in the narratives by White and Indian authors. In contrast, decentralised self-systems with abstract self-descriptors that construct an illusion of coherence (suggesting a centralisation and unification) emerge in the narratives by Black authors. These findings suggest that centralising and decentralising factors, diversity and unification, can co-exist in self-organisations, a conclusion that is accommodated by the theory of the dialogical self. Certainly, relative differences emerge when comparing the narratives by White and Black authors, with the White authors emerging with a relatively more centralised self and the Black authors a relatively more decentralised self. This suggests that one could reasonably apply Sampson's argument (1985, in Hermans et al., 1992) that the western self is more centralised and the non-western self more decentralised, however importantly this is a relative difference. Thus while these findings do qualify some support for Sampson's position that dichotomises the self across cultures, it does raise some questions about this notion. Questioning this finding is the result that the Indian authors' self-narratives also present as relatively more centralised which either contradicts the previous statement, points to the influence of acculturation on the Indian South-African culture or suggests something specific to the Indian population within South-Africa. The findings emergent in the narratives by

Black authors also suggest that collectivist features, in the decentralisation of the self, and individualistic features, in the use of abstract self-descriptors and the experience of illusory coherence, can coexist in self-narratives and argues against categorical thinking with respect to cultural models of the self. Furthermore these findings support the value of the theory of the dialogical self in explaining inconsistent findings with theories that dichotomise the self (Cousins, 1989, Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sampson, 1988) that according to Phinney (1996) frequently emerge in cross-cultural research.

7.5 The cultural dimension: cultural variations in ventriloquation

Ventriloquation is used by Hermans (1996) to refer to the simultaneous vocalisation of both individual and collective voices. The notion of ventriloquation refers to the phenomenon when “an individual speaker is not simply talking as an individual, but in his or her utterances the voices of groups and institutions are heard” (Hermans, 1996, p.46). This analysis finds that ventriloquation is widespread in the interview narratives, such that the collective positions emerge as positions within and not outside of the self. The authors sampled for this investigation ventriloquate a variety of collective positions around motherhood, ancestors, religious beliefs, gender roles, marriage and death. Therefore ventriloquation is found to be a useful concept in reading for the interface between self and culture. In many ways, each ‘I’ identified in the narratives during the analysis emerges as having a cultural connection, as being contextualised within a culture that influences the individual voice of that ‘I’ such that it dialogues with the collective voice.

Of particular interest for this investigation is the extent to which the collective voices

ventriloquated, emphasise relatedness or autonomy of the self. Theorists (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Sampson, 1988; Triandis, 1989;) reviewed argue that group positions can be characterised as either collectivist or individualistic according to their emphasis on the self-in-relation or the self-as-autonomous, respectively. However, there are many arguments against this assumption (Ewing, 1990; Mageo, 1995; Spiro, 1993). To explore this further, the interview narratives and the cultural voices ventriloquated are analysed for signifying the relatedness of the self, the autonomy of the self or both. When analysing for cross-cultural variations, where the sample is grouped by ethnicity, narratives by White and Indian authors emerge as ventriloquating individualistic positions of self-as-autonomous. In contrast, narratives by Black authors emerge as ventriloquating collectivist positions of self-in-relation. However, analysing differences within-cultures, many variations emerge such that there is frequently a co-existence of individualistic and collectivist voices being ventriloquated by the individual. These findings will now be demonstrated and discussed in further detail.

7.5.1 The manifestation of cultural connections for multiple selves as emergent in the narratives

Traditionally culture was defined as actions, rituals and customs that existed 'out there', outside of the self. The theory of the self as dialogue thinks of culture as being within the self, such that culture is a social language, a voice that influences what individuals say in a process that is termed ventriloquation. Hermans (1996) argues that these individual and collective aspects of self, or voices within the self, are relatively autonomous such that dialogical relations emerge between them. These theoretical notions are demonstrated in the following extract where collective voices dialogue with individual voices. In extract 8 the self emerges

with numerous me-selves and each of these me-selves dialogues with a collective voice or ventriloquates a different cultural position.

“A: When the interview results came out I find that I passed the interview and I was going to be the first Black lady to work at Ixopo Police station. When I get to work I didn't wait I started to study some courses related to my work. I worked very hard in my studies. I finished that course and then I was promoted to be a sergeant. (P) That was wonderful for me because there were many people who were long been there who were still struggling with their studies. (P) I liked my studies very much and also my job although other members did not like it that I was studying. So I continued my studies until I was further promoted as an Inspector which is the rank I'm currently holding. I was the first person to complete the diploma at Ixopo Police station. (P) Still working as police lady I had to become a sangoma. You might like to hear how that happened. (P) I was still working and started to see things that other people could not see. People who saw me could easily thought I was somehow crazy. In the days of childhood sangomas use to say to my parents that one day I will become a sangoma. I was holding the rank of an Inspector when I get to the process of being a sangoma (P).

I: How did this happen to you?

A: I used to have strange dreams and other things that were happening to me, like sometimes I felt I could cry out loudly. One day in the dream I was shown the place I had to go to for my training as the sangoma.(P)

I: How did you feel that made you want to cry?

A: I just felt like I could cry and did cry and there was no pain I was feeling. I was still studying and I was an Inspector at that time. I had to undergo a treatment as one need to

be treated to become a sangoma you may call it a training if you like. Fortunately the person who was training me allowed me to continue with the job and take the treatment using my spare time. I also did not interfere with my studies. During the day I did my work and go for sangoma's training after hours. (P) I was in a real dilemma during this time. I encountered many problems. I was not staying at home and I had to work. Before I completed my sangoma training, I had to go for a graduation ceremony at Johannesburg for one of my studies. I was very happy when I found that I was allowed to attend the ceremony. I started to be proud of my self for I started to realise that there were no one who had what I had in Ixopo since you know that Ixopo is a small town."

(4; p.2/8-p.3/16)

"I: When you hear that you are becoming a sangoma how did you feel?

A: I thought I would lose my job, I was worried because I was thinking about my poor family as I was the breadwinner at home. I had no choice, I had to take it. I even thought of a suicide but I was not brave enough for it. So I became brave on the other side of the situation which was to face the reality. I did not want to be taken differently from what I really was. To be a sangoma is something very difficult to explain to the other person. In fact it is something that a person can feel not hear it from someone else." (4; p.5/22-p.6/6).

Extract 8

In extract 8 it emerges that there are multiple me-selves in dialogue that maintain relatively autonomy from one another. There is self-as-policewoman, self-as-sangoma, self-as-student and self-as-breadwinner each emerging with their own respective voices in the narrative. Of particular significance to this discussion is that each me-self is contextualised in a different cultural context and therefore ventriloquates various collective positions. Firstly, there is the self-as-policewoman who is contextualised in the space of a patriarchal, western culture.

Secondly, there is self-as-sangoma who is contextualised in the space of a traditional, non-western (Zulu) culture. Thirdly, there is the self-as-student who is contextualised in the space of an academic, western culture. Fourthly, the self-as-breadwinner is contextualised in a traditional collectivist, non-western culture. Finally self-as-colleague is contextualised across two very different cultural spaces, that of a western (policewoman) and non-western culture (sangoma) and therefore is culturally conflicted. Thus it seems that there is not one distinct culturally located self but rather each self is connected and ventriloquates a cultural or collective position. This supports Hermans and Kempen's (1998) notion of moving cultures whereby every self can be understood to be a conglomeration of collective voices.

Also emergent in the extract is the relative autonomy of the individual and collective voices such that they have a dialogical relationship. The individual voice is evident in the author describing her subjective experiences of 'feeling like crying out'. This individual voice dialogues with the collective voice of other sangomas who told the author's parents when she was young that once day she would be a sangoma. These voices also dialogue with the collective voice of the community who 'would easily have thought that she was crazy'. Thus collective and individual voices dialogue with one another and shape the self in process such that culture cannot be seen to be outside the self but rather is a conglomeration of positions within the self.

7.5.2 Cross-cultural differences in the ventriloquation of collectivist and individualistic positions

Analysing the interview narratives across cultural groups, where authors were grouped according to ethnicity, there emerges variability in the nature of voices ventriloquated within

the self. This variability emerges around the voices ventriloquating primarily a self-in-relation, traditionally associated with collectivist cultures, or a self-as-autonomous, traditionally associated with the individualistic cultures.

Interview narratives that ventriloquate positions that emphasise the autonomous self, tend largely to be by White and Indian authors. Importantly these narratives still value interpersonal relatedness, however in these interpersonal relationships the self emerges as relatively separate from others. The main feature of these ventriloquations that suggest an autonomous self is the use of abstract self-descriptors thereby suggesting that the self is autonomous, bounded and stable across time and contexts. Such abstract self-descriptors included the frequent use of western folk psychology positions around ‘maturity’, which reflects a western, autonomous value linked to the self. The following extract demonstrates this ventriloquation of an autonomous self.

“A: Ja and um probably since then I have um I’m probably not as quiet as I was then only due to (P) () because of life really you grow and because of growth we just continue to grow, no matter how old we are we just grow as people, our personalities you know we develop more and and we never stop growing and and God never stops stretching us and that spurts that growth so I suppose because of the ja but but I al, I will always be a person that would rather sit back than be the one to to to launch forward” (7; p. 7/13-19). Extract 9

In extract 9 the author ventriloquates a collective voice indicative of the western psychological notion of the self: a bounded abstract unity that individuates and yet remains

relatively stable over time. It is a notion of the self that is separate and autonomous from others, while valuing interpersonal relationships.

Interview narratives that ventriloquate positions that are steeped in relatedness, emerge as being by Black authors. The self-in-relation emerges as being strongly emphasised in ventriloquations through an emphasis on 'blood relations', through the devastating effects of being dislocated from familiar contexts and people, and through decisions around the self automatically involving and incorporating others. The following extract points to the latter description of decisions around the self that extend to decisions involving others. Extract 10 demonstrates the extent to which the self emerges as in relation to others, such that others are conceptualised as an extension of the self.

"A: After deciding about suicide I had a problem about who was going to look after my sick mother-in-law and my sick daughter. That was the problem because I was the only person who was trained to take care for them. Then I thought it would be better if all three of us can die. I started to collect some tablets that had drugs in them. I kept those tablets so that when I had enough I would give them to my patients and myself in overdoses" (1; p.2/5-10). Extract 10

In the above extract the self-in-relation persists even in death such that homicidal thoughts become a cultural script associated with that of suicide. The author, in contemplating killing herself, extends this self-destruction to her mother-in-law and daughter highlighting the extent to which they are conceptualised to be an extension of her self.

These findings of cross-cultural differences in the voicing of self-as-autonomous or self-in-relation seem to support the notion that cultural emphases on collectivism or individualism

manifest at an individual level in that they are nested in the narratives. The narratives by White and Indian authors tend to have nested within them voices that ventriloquate the self-as-autonomous. In comparison the narratives by Black authors tend to have nested within them voices that ventriloquate the self-in-relation. However, when the narratives are analysed for within-culture differences, in other words when the phenomenon of ventriloquation is investigated at an individual level, significant findings emerge in the narratives of individuals within each ethnic group.

7.5.3 Within-culture findings emerge as emphasising the co-existence of voices of relatedness and autonomy

When analysing for within-cultural variations in the narratives, a majority of the interview narratives emerge as containing both elements that point to the self-in-relation as well as elements that uphold an autonomous self. This interweaving of both voices of relatedness and autonomy has already been discussed and demonstrated through extract 3, where despite being in relation to the ancestors and the pain of her clients, the sangoma voices a position that describes herself as separate, different and unique. Extract 1 also emerges as an intermingling of positions of relatedness and autonomy. The author narrates a strong position of self-in-relation to friends and family and yet also refers to the autonomous notion of personality characteristics, which are perceived to be within a person and yet are simultaneously linked to who the person is in relation with.

7.5.4 Summary of findings in the cultural dimension

Therefore, to summarise, when comparing cultural groups, where culture refers to ethnicity, the findings suggest that the Indian and White sample are more likely to voice the self-as-autonomous while the Black sample is more likely to voice the self-in-relation. However, when comparing individuals within the various cultural groups the findings point to the co-existence of voices emphasising relatedness and autonomy within the same narrative.

Therefore, at a cultural level it seems that the Indian and White samples are relatively more individualistic while the Black sample is relatively more collectivist. However, at an individual level it seems that both aspects of collectivism and individualism co-exist.

These findings promote the usefulness of Triandis' (1989) two levels of characterisation when talking about culture, a cultural level of collectivism and individualism and an individual level termed allocentric and idiocentric. Triandis argues that the terms individualism and collectivism should be used to characterise cultures and societies, while the terms allocentric and idiocentric should be used to characterise individuals who value relatedness or autonomy respectively, thereby allowing for the possibility of investigating the behaviour of allocentrics in individualistic societies. When the investigation focuses on cross-cultural variations, it emerges that White and Indian authors' ventriloquate relatively individualistic positions by emphasising the self as separate when compared to the narratives by Black authors. In contrast, Black authors' ventriloquate collectivist positions by emphasising the self in relation when compared to the narratives by Indian and White authors. This cross-cultural level of analysis taps into the cultural characterisation referred to by Triandis (1989), as each ethnic group is compared and contrasted with one another at a cultural or societal level. At this level the finding that is most surprising, and yet corresponds

with the findings thus far in the investigation, is the individualistic emphasis narrated by Indian authors.

Once the analysis moves onto investigating within-cultural variations, collective voices at an individual level are explicated. At this individual level both idiocentric and allocentric self-conceptualisations emerge in the same sample group or in the same self-narrative as co-existing together. Therefore, the findings suggest that at a societal level culture is relatively dichotomised but at the level of individuals the interface between self and culture is not so easily categorised. This suggests that cultural differences in the sample emerge at a cultural level, where each sample group is compared to the other along the dimension of ethnicity. However, when individual narratives are compared with one another to investigate within-cultural variations the self is conceptualised as in relation and as separate across cultures.

7.6 Findings facilitating methodological reflections

Having thus far analysed the data to answer investigative questions, the analytic story now turns to methodological questions. Importantly, Spiro (1993) argues that both these types of questions are linked. According to Spiro (1993), the methodology used in cultural research may produce different types of data and therefore “at least some of the reported differences between the western and non-western self and/or their respective cultural conceptions of the self, may be a function of the differences in techniques of investigation” (p.114). Two methodological considerations have influenced the results of this research. Both of these considerations guard against the simplification and dichotomisation of the complex interface of self and culture which is criticised by Spiro.

7.6.1 The use of culture as broadly defined in the analysis

Firstly, the use of culture as broadly defined in the analysis, facilitates the more appropriate recognition of which cultural factors result in specific findings. Rather than homogenising culture such that all variation emergent in the data is attributed to ethnicity, the analysis facilitates multiple contrasting at multiple levels of cultural positions, whether these positions refer to age, career, socio-economic status, marital status or context. Approaching the analysis in this way facilitates the differentiation of the interface between self and culture, such that when variations in narratives emerge the results are scrutinised for the specific cultural factor that results in this variation. As already mentioned the cultural position of ethnicity is of particular interest to this research, given that traditionally cross-cultural research has dichotomised the self according to ethnicity, therefore only the results attributed to variations due to ethnicity are included in this analytic story. Nevertheless the usefulness of broadly defining culture for the analysis is demonstrated through the following finding.

7.6.1.1 Variations in the occupation of the imaginal other-position as a function of cultural factors other than ethnicity

While the ability to occupy the imaginal other-position seems to be reflected by all authors across all ethnic groups (already explored in section 7.3.2), in investigating cross-cultural differences some subtle variations emerge. In particular, the ease with which this process of occupying an imaginal other-position occurs, or with which comfortable dialogue follows, is found to vary within the narratives sampled. In analysing this process of occupation of the imaginal other-position, two variations emerge in the narratives. Other-positions are either occupied gradually by the 'I' over time or occupied immediately as a position within the self.

With regards to the former, when the imaginal other-position is occupied gradually, the author initially narrates the views, feelings, beliefs etc. of the other in a manner that highlights the differences between this imaginal other-position and the I-position currently occupied by the self. With temporal shifts, however, the author narrates the way in which these differences decrease to the point where the self is able to fully occupy the imaginal other-position as a voice within the self that contributes to the dialogue. In this way, there is a gradual occupation of the other-position. In contrast to this style, the immediate style of occupation of the imaginal other-position emerges with the author introducing an other-position and immediately occupying it as a self-role or I-position, regardless of whether it is foreign in nature to her or not. Initially, these variations emerge in the narratives sampled as seemingly influenced by ethnicity. The immediate style of occupation emerges more frequently in the narratives of Black authors while the gradual style of occupation of the other-position emerges more frequently in the narratives of Indian and White authors.

Examples of these different styles of occupation are demonstrated in the following extracts.

Extract 11 shows how occupying imaginal other-positions emerges as a gradual process.

"A: It was more I think fear of childbirth and eventually it was just like you know how would I react and when I used to read stories about women having babies and this happening and that I just thought, well for one, breastfeeding (P) I didn't think I could breastfeed and uh ja I think it was just the total fear of childbirth ja and that's why I said I'd rather just not have children but as time went on and people would say, no come on you've been married quite a while and no babies and its just the two of you and (laugh) eventually (P)" (11; p.3/18-25). Extract 11

In the above extract the author describes the imaginal other-position of mother or 'women having babies' as a position that involves the ability to manage pain and breastfeeding. The emphasis in narrating the imaginal voice of this other-position in the narrative is on this position as being foreign to and separate from the self. There is no difficulty imagining what motherhood entails, but a difficulty imagining the 'I' occupying such an imaginal other-position. However with time this imaginal other-position *is* occupied as a position within the self, as the author falls pregnant and goes on to have a child (not included in the extract). Therefore as the imaginal other-position voices itself in the imaginal plane so the voice of the other-as-mother becomes less foreign and is gradually occupied by the 'I'. In this way the extract demonstrates a gradual process of occupation of the other-position by the 'I' influenced by temporal shifts. In contrast, extract 12 demonstrates an immediate occupation of the other-position by the 'I' .

I: So how do you feel now as you recall this event?

A: I feel different now and also I think different from other people (4; p.5/8-9).

I: Well at the stage where you were a sangoma how did you feel?

A: It was hard to accept it but I accepted it because I was told when I was still young that I will become a sangoma one day. (P) In fact it is something that anybody can accept when it comes.(P)

A: When you heard that you are becoming a sangoma how did you feel?

R: I thought I would lose my job, I was worried because I was thinking about my poor family, as I was the breadwinner at home. I had no choice I had to take it. I even thought of a suicide but I was not brave enough for it. So I became brave on the other side of the situation which was to face the reality. I did not want to be taken

differently from what I really was. To be a sangoma is something very difficult to explain to the other person. In fact it is something that a person can feel, not hear it from someone else." (4; p.5/17-p.6/6) **Extract 12**

The imaginal other-position of the other-as-sangoma, while foreign, is accepted immediately by the self as a me-self, as 'what I really was', because she was told when she was young and because 'I had no choice'. Interestingly, both extract 11 and extract 12 use other-positions that are culturally sanctioned, being a mother and being a sangoma are respected roles for women in each of the respective ethnic groups represented by the authors. However, the Black author, despite expressing doubts and fears, adopts this other-position almost immediately such that it shapes the world of the self. In extract 12 the author does not describe the imaginal other-position as foreign but as identifiable with the self, neither is a substantial temporal shift described in occupying this imaginal other-position of sangoma. Extract 12 in particular is a good example of occupying the position of an imaginal other, because as the sangoma is required to dialogue with the imaginal other of the ancestors so the 'I' is required to also occupy this position.

The differences between the gradual and immediate style of occupation of the imaginal self initially seem to emerge between ethnic groups, with the Black group using the immediate style of occupation while the White and Indian groups use a gradual style of occupation of the imaginal other-position. These differences have implications for our view on the self-other relationship. Firstly, these finding may suggest that the White authors, contextualised in a more individualistic culture, occupy the other-position less easily due to having *relatively* firmer boundaries between the self and other. The Black authors, by contrast, contextualised in a more collectivist culture, occupy the other-position more easily due to having boundaries

between self and other that are *relatively* fluid. These cross-cultural differences seem to support the notion that the cultural differences in the self emerge frequently around the role of the other (Sampson, 1988).

However, although the investigation at face value seems to support the notion that non-western selves tend to have more fluid self-other boundaries whereas western selves tend to have firmer self-other boundaries, this notion appears more complex in the data. As previously explored all self-narratives across all ethnic groups, emerge as occupying an imaginal other-position even if this occupation by the 'I' occurs gradually. Therefore, the categorical approach advocated by Sampson (1988) fails to recognise that the features of the self-other relationship may be better understood by a 'matter of degree' or relative description, where sometimes fluidity and firmness flow into one another and alternate with temporal shifts. For example, in extract 3 the author emerges as moving from having relatively firm self-other boundaries, not easily occupying the other-position, to with time having relatively fluid self-other boundaries and occupying the other-position of mother.

Secondly, these findings may not in fact represent differences due to ethnicity at all. Other cultural factors, besides ethnicity, influence the self-other boundaries emergent in the narratives. The self-narratives that emerge as gradually occupying the other-position, suggesting firmer self-other boundaries, frequently emerge with plots that are around developmental milestones in life, for example, having a baby, dealing with death for the first time and getting married. In contrast to these self-narratives, those narratives of authors not relating the experiences of developmental milestones emerge as immediately occupying the other-position, suggesting fluid self-other boundaries. While managing a new stage of life, like motherhood, refers to new facets of the self, the position of mother emerges initially as

an imaginal other-position, a position that real others have occupied about whom the author imagines associated feelings, beliefs, actions etc. With temporal shifts this other-position is occupied by the 'I', becoming a new voice within the self. Thus the differences in the firmness or fluidity of the self-other boundaries may not be so much attributed to ethnic variation, but to stage of life of the author. It seems to make intuitive sense that new developmental stages of life, involving new me-selves (adopting new other-positions) take time to be integrated into the self as dialogue.

Furthermore, self-narratives with a gradual occupation of the other-position emerge from authors from the Indian cultural group, thought to be a more collectivist culture, thereby undermining the theory that non-western selves have fluid self-other boundaries. These self-narratives by Indian authors are also around developmental milestones in life undermining again the notion that ethnicity is responsible for variations in the style of occupation of the imaginal other-position. In addition, the immediate occupation of the other-position seems to be common in self-narratives that are frequently contextualised in the transpersonal space, demonstrated in extract 12. Narratives where god(s) or ancestors play a dominant reciprocal role with the self emerge as enabling the immediate occupation of this other-position within the self, regardless of the ethnicity of the author and when compared to narratives where the transpersonal is not emphasised. Dialoguing with others, such as god or the ancestors, emerges as involving the occupation of an imaginal other-position of god or the ancestors, such that they can be voiced within the dialogical self. Following from this, narratives that emphasise the transpersonal are easily able to occupy other-positions where the other refers to an imaginal self in the interpersonal context, as it is no different to occupying an imaginal self in the transpersonal context.

The most important issue that is highlighted by this finding is the usefulness of broadly defining culture in the analysis. Cultural difference, where culture refers to the stage of life or religion of the author, may have more impact on the emergence of firm self-other boundaries, than cultural differences where culture refers to ethnic group. Thus culture as defined in this investigation as being a conglomeration of positions that might refer to gender, religion, race, stage of life etc., guards against gross simplifications of equating ethnic groups defined as collectivist or individualistic with fluid or firm self-other boundaries respectively. There are many cultural positions within the self, that dialogue together to make a conglomerate cultural self. The consequences of separating out one cultural voice (e.g. ethnicity) while not accounting for the impact of others (e.g. religion and stage of life) is a simplification of culture and a disregard for selfways. This highlights the importance of thinking about cultural research of the self not as cross-cultural comparisons but rather as an exploration of the interface of self and culture. This interface is explored in the research through multiple contrasting at all cultural levels. In other words, authors in different stages of life are compared, for example as discussed above. Furthermore, spiritual authors are compared to non-spiritual authors, Christian authors with Muslim authors, Black authors with Indian authors and so on. Therefore, to guard against a simplification of culture and a dichotomisation of the relationship between self and culture, numerous cultural influences intersecting with the self are explored in the analysis, although only those pertaining to ethnicity were used for the discussion in this investigation. This methodological approach to the interface of self and culture is upheld by the findings thus far, that stage of life and religiosity of the author may have more of an influence in determining firm or fluid self-other boundaries than ethnicity of the author.

Finally, emphasising further the importance of defining culture broadly is the finding that the most common voices narrated within this relational context are that of mother and carer. These positions appear frequently in the interview narratives and emerge in association with one another. These frequently emerging voices highlight that for the women sampled the me-self of mother and I-position of carer are dominant voices that are positioned within the dialogical self. The dominance of these voices in the interview narratives emphasises the gender roles of mother and carer that are ascribed to across cultures and which impact on the self as dialogue. This finding points to the importance of recognising gender as a cultural voice that shapes the dialogue that is the self. It is a reminder of the importance of including gender when considering the interface between self and culture. Further research analysing the interviews of a sample of men is needed to explore these gender roles and their impact on the self-concept more thoroughly.

7.6.2 The appropriate measurement of cultural manifestations in the self

We now turn to the second methodological consideration that prevents the simplification and dichotomisation of the complex interface of self and culture criticised by Spiro (1993). The qualitative nature of the study lends richness to the data that enables a more appropriate multi-dimensional, complex interface between self and culture to emerge, such that the danger of dichotomisation is exposed. According to Spiro, the categorisation of cultural variances in self frequently arises from measuring the cultural folk model of the self which may differ from the actual subjective experience of the people within that culture. This type of measurement frequently emerges in quantitative studies of the self. In contrast a narrative inquiry seems more able to understand the difference between the selfway or subjective experience of culture and the folk models of culture in a self-narrative. The following extract around choosing a career path, narrated by an author from the Indian cultural group,

demonstrates this difference between the person's subjective experience of the self and the folk model of the self.

"A: *Ja you know I don't know why I can't tell you but you know that feeling was in me you know I don't know I think I was born with that feeling of caring and I wanted, looking at nurses I used to admire nurses I would see them giving this service, this wonderful service to children you know I thought I would like to be maybe I saw somebody I must have known somebody at that stage that made me really think ja this is what I want to be.*" (12; p.7/3-9) **Extract 13**

Initially when asked what led her to nursing, the author describes an individualistic, independent notion of believing some abstract, vague feeling within the self which results in the self-role of nurse. This goes against the argument that people from Indian (collectivist) cultures tend to portray an interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Only later does the author suggest the possibility that she might have known someone who made her want to occupy this imaginal other-position, which is more indicative of an interdependent self-construal, as the emphasis is on the relatedness between self and others. The author's explanation of choosing nursing because 'that feeling was in me' is her subjective experience of the cultural choice of choosing a career, whereas the explanation of there being a role model is a reflection of the folk model of choosing a career which the author attempts to enforce on the narrative. Thus qualitative narrative inquiry enables the investigator to delineate the folk model of the self-concept from the subjective experience of the self, resulting in more appropriate measurement. What emerge are results contradicting the categorisation of the self as western and non-western, independent and interdependent.

Cross-cultural differences emerge in the degree of fluidity or firmness of the boundaries between self and other, with fluidity leading to the immediate occupation of the other-position and firmness resulting in a more gradual occupation of the other-position within the self. This finding initially seems to support Sampson's (1988) notions of ensembled and self-contained individualism with fluid and firm self-other boundaries respectively. Importantly, these cultural differences cannot be attributed merely to the ethnic differences of collectivism and individualism. This is supported by the emergence of both interdependent and independent features concurrently in the self-narratives. Rather, cultural contributions to these differences are highlighted as possibly including stage of life and religious beliefs.

Approaching this research within a qualitative, narrative methodology and having the theoretical framework of the dialogical self and selfways, highlights the self, not as definable or measurable, but as in process and relational. Consequently, simplification and categorisations while seductive, are clearly oversights when considering the complexity of culture. Moreover, this research seems to uphold qualitative methodology as providing useful measuring tools that guard against measuring folk models as opposed to people's subjective experiences of the interface between culture and the self.

7.7 Highlights of the analytic story

In concluding the analytic story, the researcher will briefly revisit the main findings that have been outlined and the issues that these findings have raised. Firstly, this investigation points to the self as relational across all cultural groups and is facilitated in exploring this relational quality by the theoretical framework of the dialogical self. This finding of the importance of the other across all ethnic groups argues against the categorisation of the non-western self as

interdependent and the western self as independent, particularly the notion that the other is of more significance to the non-western self than the western self. The history of research on cultural differences in the self has largely focused on the self-other relationship and subsequently dichotomised this relationship. This finding suggests that this perspective is not appropriate and is in line with Spiro's (1993) viewpoint that "(n)o major western student of the self, none at any rate that I am aware of, holds the view that the self, western or otherwise is not interdependent" (p.136).

Secondly, the findings do suggest that there are relative differences across cultures, where culture refers to ethnicity, with respect to the organisation of the self. However these differences are not consistent and question the dichotomisation of the non-western self as decentralised and the western self as centralised. The White sample emerges as constructing a relatively more centralised self when compared to the Black sample which emerges as constructing a relatively decentralised self through their narratives. However, this does not suggest that as researchers we should fall back on the isomorphism of concluding that the non-western self is variable and concrete while the western self is bounded and abstract. Firstly, the Indian sample of authors, traditionally categorised as non-western, were more similar with respect to their self-organisation to the White authors than the Black authors. Secondly, abstractions are common in the narratives of Black authors, enabling these authors to construct an illusion of coherence. This finding suggests a co-existence of centralising and decentralising factors in the narratives by Black authors, which also emerges in the narratives by Indian and White authors and which is not accounted for in traditional cross-cultural theories (Sampson, 1988). However, this notion is accounted for by the theory of the dialogical self (Hermans and Kempen, 1993) which argues for a unified and a multiple self that has features of concrete, context-specific selves that are decentralised and relatively

autonomous while also having features of a centralised, coherent, unified self through the dialogical relations that exist between the polyphony of voices that make up the self.

Thirdly, Triandis' (1989) use of two levels of analysis is particularly helpful in understanding the findings of this research. Certainly at a cultural level the White authors as a group, from an individualistic context, emerge with relatively more emphasis on autonomy. While at a cultural level the Black authors as a group, from a collectivist context, emerge with relatively more emphasis on relatedness. Significantly, once again the Indian authors reflected an emphasis more similar to the White authors than the Black authors. However, at an individual level the danger of dichotomising the interface between self and culture is further emphasised through the finding that there emerges intermingling of both traits of individualistic and collectivist cultures.

These findings point to the heterogeneity of culture at an individual level and a homogenisation of culture at a cultural level. There are a number of possible reasons for this. Firstly, this investigation, being qualitative and dialogical in nature is able to distinguish between measuring the folk models of culture (tapping the cultural level of characterisation) and the subjective experience of culture (tapping the individual level of characterisation). Also using the broad definition of culture facilitated this investigation. Thus, the results support Spiro's (1993) argument that at an individual level one cannot dichotomise the complex interface between self and culture as being western or non-western, independent or interdependent. Secondly, the findings of this study may point to the effect of global processes interpenetrating with local processes as advocated by Hermans and Kempen (1998), resulting in hybridisation, that is an interweaving of different cultural emphases at an individual level. It is difficult to estimate the effects of acculturation on the self-concept, where global processes are seen to be another name for western processes. However, not only

do narratives from Black and Indian authors' emerge with features of autonomy, narratives of White authors emerge with features of relatedness. This suggests that acculturation is a two way process, supporting the relevance of the notion of glocalisation.

Approaching this research within a qualitative, narrative methodology and having the theoretical framework of the dialogical self, highlights the self, not as definable or measurable, but as in process and relational. Consequently, simplification and categorisations while seductive, are clearly oversights when considering the complexity of the concepts of self and culture respectively. While this investigation points to variations that emerge between the cultural groups sampled it also just as emphatically points to variations within these cultural groups that are sampled. By the same token while this investigation points to the variations that emerge between cultural groups sampled it also just as emphatically points to similarities between cultural groups sampled.

Chapter Eight

Concluding Remarks

8.1 Revisiting the aims

This research began with a number of aims, some methodological and others investigative in nature. With respect to the methodological aims, this research hoped to clarify an appropriate measurement of the interface between self and culture. With respect to the investigative aims, these will be revisited for a brief moment. The general aim of this investigation was to explore the complexity of the interface between self and culture. More specifically this research aimed to contribute to the debates that have arisen historically around the dichotomisation of cultural differences in self, investigating the cross-cultural comparison of the self and questioning its relevance. To do this, the way in which culture manifests within self was explored in a novel way, using a dialogical approach, in the hope that the appropriateness of studying self-construction across culture, in South-African contexts, could be ascertained.

8.2 What then of the original research questions?

The investigation turns now to the original research questions. Firstly, the inappropriateness of cultural dichotomies of self is emphasised by the findings of this investigation. Previous notions of the western self and non-western self; of firm and fluid self-other boundaries (Sampson, 1988); of the independent and interdependent self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991); of

the abstract and concrete self (Cousins, 1989); and of the self-as-autonomous and self-in-relation (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) do not emerge as appropriate, discrete classifications of self by culture. Differences in self that do emerge across cultures are relative differences, frequently undermined by greater within-culture differences than cross-cultural variations. These findings support the notion that “the tradition of cultural dichotomies: the west versus the rest” (Hermans & Kempen, 1998, p.1111) is no longer appropriate

Secondly, and following from the first point discussed above, culture emerges in this research as a construct that is undergoing much change. In one respect the way culture manifests itself is changing because of the increasing prevalence of globalisation, multi-culturalism and acculturation such that culture is no longer homogenous, geographically located and distinctive. The concept of moving cultures (Hermans & Kempen, 1998) and the notion of culture as an individual level construct emerges in the data of this research. Moreover, the findings suggest that qualitative research and the theory of the dialogical self are valuable ‘tools’ for exploring this new cultural construct. These ‘tools’ enable the researcher to explore self and culture as an interface as opposed to a dichotomous dimension. The theory of the dialogical self provides a contemporary, relevant framework for understanding how multiple selves are organised, contextualised and negotiated in dialogue and in cultural context. The findings of this thesis support the notion that each self is culturally connected such that there is not a cultural self but a conglomeration of cultural voices as posited by Hermans et al. (1993). Within this conglomeration, voices are able to be both allocentric and idiocentric within the same self in western or non-western contexts. The notion of dialogue enables both unity and multiplicity of the self to be true.

8.3 Implications of the research findings

The most important implication of this thesis is research related. This investigation questions the usefulness and appropriateness of cross-cultural comparisons to the area of the self. Such approaches dichotomise and categorise the self inappropriately, defining complex notions of the self and culture as homogeneous and discrete entities. Such views generally arise from quantitative approaches to this area of self and culture, which erroneously measure cultural folk models rather than the subjective experiences of individuals within the culture (Spiro, 1993). Furthermore, inconsistencies that emerge in such research are not appropriately accounted for by theories that dichotomise self and culture (Phinney, 1996). In contrast this investigation upholds the usefulness of qualitative methodology in research on the interface between self and culture. This methodology needs to be recognised for what it brings to the subject matter – respect of complexity, richness of understanding and a tapping into of co-constructed subjective meanings. Qualitative methodology may also prove valuable in this area of research as the meaning of culture changes. Certainly, this investigation points to the effects of multi-culturalism and acculturation, suggesting that previous conceptualisations of culture may no longer apply, requiring new approaches to this complex subject matter. Researchers are faced with the challenge of thinking about and investigating culture differently. As previously mentioned, this thesis suggests that qualitative methodology and a dialogical theory of self may be particularly useful in facing this challenge.

A second implication pertains to the viewpoint that so called western therapies and psychological interventions are not appropriate for and should not be applied to non-western clients. This perspective is based on theories that categorise the self as western or non-western (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Trafimow et al., 1991). This investigation questions such dichotomisation and argues that the notion of the self as dialogue is a useful concept when investigating the self across cultures. In particular, a dialogical theory of self accommodates western and non-western traits of independence and interdependence which are found to co-exist in individuals and is therefore applicable within all cultural contexts. Following from this, findings of this research and dialogical notions of self would suggest that interventions based on object-relations theory and those based on traditional African healing, while radically different in appearance might have much similarities at core. For example, both approaches accommodate the notion of others (whether object-representations or other-positions) impacting on the self, seem interested in the construction of the self-object or the I-position and other-position, and emphasise that this construction manifests itself through dialogue, whether referring to dialogue in the here-and-now with the therapist or dialogue in the imaginal space that is the self.

8.4 Limitations of the research

The limitations of this research will now be briefly discussed. Firstly, it was hoped that defining culture broadly in the analysis would increase the awareness that “individuals vary along a number of underlying human dimensions and cannot simply be categorised by group membership” (Phinney, 1996, p.925). Such a broad definition of culture also complemented

the notion that the self is a conglomeration of cultural voices (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). However, defining culture broadly for this investigation created some difficulty in differentiating which variables contributed most to variance or commonality in the narratives, particularly because a wide variety of culture-related variables were considered (for example, age, stage of life, religion and career). Little research has been conducted which identifies all these cultural characteristics and therefore no precedent exists as to how to operationalise this broad definition. This research could also be criticised for limiting the discussion to those factors that pertain to ethnicity, as this could encourage the incorrect assumption that each cultural factor and its impact on the intersection of self and culture can be isolated. These and many other difficulties highlighted by Phinney emerge when working with ethnicity in research, such as the complex relationship between ethnicity, 'race' and culture and problems of definition. However, the American Psychological Association (1994, in Phinney, 1996) recommends the description of samples by ethnic group and cross-cultural research in this area continues to do so.

A further critique of this research is the extent to which the dialogical framework of the self and the narrative, qualitative methodology influenced the findings. Certainly, Spiro (1993) posits that the investigative techniques always effect the data collected and findings to a certain extent as researchers apply a wide variety of different meanings to the term 'self' and may ascertain the characteristics of this 'self' from classical texts, cultural symbols or behavioural observations. However, this critique also holds true for quantitative research. The reflective nature of the methodology enabled a certain amount of reflection by the researcher on these issues, thereby not eliminating them but creating awareness of them as opposed to

ignorance.

Finally, while qualitative methodology applies different criteria to quantitative methodology in ensuring rigorous research, the validity and reliability of the data collection process may be considered a weakness. Firstly, inter-rater reliability is a component missing in this investigation as the researcher analysed all the interviews. Future research in this area might consider using independent codings of the narratives that includes inter-rater reliability. However, qualitative research is always subjective whether one uses three people for coding or one person for coding the data, and therefore cannot be generalised which again may be considered a limitation. Secondly, this investigation could be criticised for bias in the selection of subjects. While the sample was selected on the basis of variation, including some organising principle for the selection of subjects is likely to have increased the rigour of the data collection. Moreover, maximum variation sampling resulted in unique variations in career and highest educational qualification however demographic qualities, such as religion, were dominated by a sub-group, Christianity. Thus maximum variation was not possible with all demographic qualities. Thirdly, Black respondents were interviewed by a Zulu-speaking research assistant in Zulu so as to access the intersection of self and language, as one cultural variable. However, for analysis purposes these interviews were translated into English and some information may have been lost in the process further jeopardising the reliability of the data collection. Finally, using a research assistant to conduct a portion of the interviews, while having its advantages brings with it the disadvantage of a possible lack of uniformity between the two interviewers. While attempts were made to combat this disadvantage, through the 'supervision' of the research assistant by the researcher, the inclusion of a pilot

study in the research may have proved most useful in terms of consistency in data collection. In conclusion, this critique could itself be criticised for applying quantitative principles to a qualitative study. Nevertheless, these limitations need to inform future research in the area of self and culture.

8.5 Directions for future research

Much research is needed in this area of self and culture, as both these concepts are increasingly recognised as central to psychology. In particular more qualitative research is needed to contribute in a different way to an area that has historically been dominated by quantitative research. More research is needed which applies a dialogical framework offering a rich approach to the area of self and culture. In particular within a dialogical framework, the notion of space needs to be explored. The spatial dimension of the dialogical self sets it apart from many other self-theories and may open the door to investigating the traditional notion that the non-western self tends to occupy a shared, interpersonal space while the western self tends to occupy an intrapsychic space. Such a notion has fueled arguments that psycho-analytic theory and therapies have no applicability beyond a narrowly individualistic western context which is a notion that needs to be more fully explored. There is also a need to explore variations in and intersections of the self on other cultural dimensions, besides ethnicity. Little is known about the impact of culture-related factors like stage of life, religion, age and gender on self-conceptualisation.

Finally, with multi-culturalism becoming a norm in our societies, it seems important to begin exploring new ways that culture is manifesting and the implications of these new cultural forces for individuals. For example, the impact of acculturation seems important to investigate as Hermans and Kempen (1998) argue that exposing people to alternative cultural factors, resulting in the problematisation of their cultural connections, may have significant effects.

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Appendices

Appendix One

Interview Schedule

1. Introduce yourself as interviewer.
2. Explain the confidential nature of the interview, in other words, that the respondents name will not be divulged but that the interview will be transcribed and used as data. Get the respondent to sign the consent form.
3. Explain that this is a study of memory and its operation, and that the interest is in how memory operates with different events. Ask respondents to report in detail a memory of some important event/s that have happened in their lives.
4. Ask the following questions that require the respondents to reflect on themselves in the memory:

How did you feel in that event?

How do you feel now as you recall the event?

What did you think about the event at the time?

What do you think about the events now?

How would you describe yourself in that memory?

What might others have thought of you at the time?

How did that event or memory impact on your life?

What was life like for you at that time?

How did you make the decisions you made at the time?

How did you know the decisions/s was/were right?

Why did you recall that memory?

Appendix Two

Transcription Codes

- P - Pause
- [- Overlap in speech
- () - Unclear speech
- A - Author
- I - Interviewer

Each author's interview was given a number (1 through to 12). The number given to each respondent denotes the narratives from which the extracts were taken for chapter seven. The page number and the line number of the extract follow this number in brackets.

Appendix Three

Demographic Form

Thank-you for participating in this psychology research project. This project is looking at various aspects of memory and how it operates with different events. Please provide us with the following information before you commence the interview:

Your age:

Your gender:

Your occupation:

Your highest educational qualification:

Your marital status:

Do you have any dependents? (if so, specify age):

Your home language:

To what cultural group do you belong?

Your religion (specify denomination):

Appendix Four

Demographic Profile

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	44	Part-time community developer	Std. 9	Separated	3	Zulu	Black	Christianity
2	36	Part-time counsellor	Matric	Single	1	Zulu	Black	Christianity
3	36	Teacher	Honours degree	Divorced	1	Zulu	Black	Christianity
4	40	Police woman and sangoma	Diploma	Single	1	Zulu	Black	Christianity
5	39	Bank consultant	Bachelors degree and diploma	Married	2	Xhosa	Black	Christianity
6	38	Student	Honours degree	Married	2	English	White	Christianity
7	44	Shopkeeper	Matric	Married	0	English	White	Christianity
8	35	Optometrist	Bachelors degree	Married	0	English	White	Christianity
9	36	Bank clerk	Matric and diploma	Married	2	English	White	Christianity
10	47	Anglican priest	Honours degree	Single	1	English	Indian	Christianity
11	38	Legal secretary	Matric	Married	2	English	Indian	Hinduism
12	48	Community nurse	Diploma	Married	2	English	Indian	Hinduism

Key

Column A: Respondent's number
 Column B: Age
 Column C: Occupation
 Column D: Highest educational qualification
 Column E: Marital status
 Column F: Number of dependents
 Column G: Home language
 Column H: Ethnicity
 Column I: Religion

Appendix Five

Analysis Sheet

Issues for major attention in analysis, based on analysis of interview narratives in Mauthner and Doucet (1998).

Reading 1: Reading for the plot and for our responses to the narrative

a) Plot: Firstly, reading for the manifest content, for multiple plots or nested narratives (i.e. subjunctivising strategy), for recurrent images and metaphors.

b) Reflexivity: Reading for reflexivity means the “researcher reads for herself in the text in the sense that she places herself, with her own particular background, history and experiences, in relation to the person she has interviewed...how she is responding emotionally and intellectually to this person” (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p.126). The goal is to “Make more explicit...the role of the researcher's theoretical location and ideas in this process and how these influence the interpretations and conclusions which are made” (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p.127) and to “retain some grasp over the blurred boundary between the narratives and our interpretations of those narratives” (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p127). Thus reflexivity involves locating yourself socially in relation to the respondent and asking ‘What are my emotional responses?’, ‘How do I make theoretical interpretations of the respondent's narrative?’.

Reading 2: Reading for the voice/s of the "I"

This reading involves focusing on personal pronoun statements and looking for multi-layered voices, views and perspectives. The me-self categories (e.g. self-as-mother) and I-positions (e.g. self-as-rejected) are identified and the affective, cognitive, motivational, behavioural and psychophysiological information related to each self is explored. The following questions are explored in this reading: How does the respondent experience, feel and speak about the self?; What are the self-constructions, self-descriptors, self-states, personal attributes, roles and self-metaphors evident in the narrative?; What are the shifts in "I" positions both spatially and temporally?; Where is the dialogue spatially located?; Identify the contradictions and inconsistencies in the narrative, how are these woven together?; Is there evidence of dominant and subjugated voices?; Is there evidence of dialogue or rather a serial monologue?; How is dialogue (or conflict) of multiple voices orchestrated in the construction of the self narrative?; How do subjects create an illusion of coherence?; How are conflicts between contrasting, contradicting voices handled through dialogue?

Reading 3: Reading for relationships

The following questions are asked of the data in this reading: How does the interviewee speak about her interpersonal relationships?; Who are the actors in the narrative and what role do they play in relation to the self?; Does the self occupy other-positions in the narrative?

Reading 4: Placing people within cultural contexts and social structures

For the final reading the following questions are explored: Is there evidence of ventriloquation in the narratives?; How is ventriloquation achieved in self-narratives?; Are socio-cultural voices constraining or engaging?; Are these socio-cultural voices conceptualised as being located in the social, external space or are they incorporated into the personal, internal space of the self?; Are there dominant and normative conceptions of self that are culture-specific?; Is each me-self culturally connected?; Are there multiple selves each located in a different cultural space?

Appendix Six

Consent form

I _____ consent to an interview administered by Lisa Saville on this day _____.

The subject nature of the material has been explained to me and I understand this nature. I understand that this interview will be recorded and consent to it. I understand that this recorded information will be used as material for the study and give the interviewer permission to share this information with the supervisor in charge of the research. I understand that my name will not be divulged during the course of the study and that my anonymity is guaranteed. I understand that I can acquire a copy of the final study at my own expense.

I hereby declare that I am 18 years of age and over.

Signature