

Ray Charles: A psychobiographical study

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ABSTRACT

Psychobiography is the formulation of an individual's narrative according to a psychological theory. Psychobiographical researchers face a number of challenges. One pertinent challenge is the limited amount of psychobiographical research conducted at academic institutions, including South Africa. Although a number of studies had been completed in the past decade, the impact of psychobiographical research remains negligible. Although much has been written about Ray Charles, none of the existing literature adopted a specific psychological focus. Charles developed from a young boy in a poverty stricken, racially segregated society into an exceptionally successful musician who worked productively until he died at the age of 73. He was selected as the subject on the basis of interest value, uniqueness and significance of life achievements. The primary aim of this study was to explore and describe the development of Charles according to Levinson's (Levinson, et. al, 1978) theoretical framework. Levinson's theory of adult development identifies and describes the important changes that occur throughout the lifespan of an individual. A secondary aim was to provide an understanding of Charles within the social, economic and historical context in which he lived. The data collection and analysis was conducted according to Yin's (2003) 'analytic generalization'. The data was analysed according to three linked sub-processes proposed by Huberman and Miles (1994).

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter preview

There are few things more fascinating or informative than learning about the experiences of other people as they make their way through the world. In this regard, the field of psychobiography is concerned with the study of lived or finished lives, with the emphasis on providing explanations for aspects of the life history which are not derived through the use of common sense or psychological principles (Stroud, 2004). This study utilised Daniel Levinson's theory of adult development (Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978) to describe the life of Ray Charles, an American-born musician who died at the age of 73 in 2004. This introductory chapter provides the reader with a brief outline of the psychobiographical approach to research, a brief account of Charles' life and an overview of the theory of adult development according to Levinson (Levinson et al., 1978).

1.2 The psychobiographical approach

The term psychobiography has been defined in many ways. A psychobiography is a psychologically informed biography that describes an individual life in an in depth manner. This has developed as a method of research since a wider variety of hermeneutic approaches has become available to psychological research (McAdams, 2006). The essence of psychobiographical research was encapsulated by McAdams (2006) who stated that psychobiography is the study of an entire life, from birth to death, with the aim of discerning, discovering, or formulating the central story of the life, a story structured according to psychological theory. McAdams (1988) defined psychobiography as the "systematic use of psychological (especially personality) theory to transform a life into a coherent and illuminating story" (p.2). Howe (1997) stated that psychobiography is a way of doing psychological research in which extensive use is made of biographical data to examine the growth of original thinking, creativity and productivity in unusual

individuals. A psychobiography is a qualitative case study that is both longitudinal and cross-cultural in nature (McLeod, 1994). It studies the entire lifespan of an individual as opposed to a specific period in a person's life and is an idiographic approach that serves to verify and/or illustrate the life of an individual according to a specific psychological theory (Green, 2006). Finally, Schultz (2001) describes psychobiography as life histories that make substantial use of psychological theory and/or research as a means of understanding the interior lives of biographical subjects. This includes the connection between the life and the work.

Essentially, interdisciplinary psychobiography assumes a variety of shapes and forms, its allegiances are indeterminate. In psychobiography the unit of analysis is the single case, the single life. Thus, it is not pooled responses elicited from participants in carefully controlled experimental situations. It is not quite biography because the aims of psychobiography tend to be more modest. Instead of telling the story of an entire life it usually confines itself to salient episodes or fragments abstracted from the life (Schultz, 2001).

In the last ten to fifteen years, the psychobiographical method has become a significant approach in research (Roberts, 2002). This surge of interest in the method can be attributed to a variety of factors: (a) a developing disillusionment with static approaches to data collection, (b) a growing interest in the life course, (c) an increased concern with lived experience and how best to express and reveal it, and lastly (d) a sharing in the growing popularity of qualitative research in general (Roberts, 2002).

In South Africa much work has been done in the past decade. Examples of psychobiographies include: *The Life of Jan Christiaan Smuts: A Psychobiographical Study* (Fouché, 1999); *The Life of Helen Martins, Creator of the Owl House: A Psychobiographical Study* (Bareira, 2001); *Bantu Stephen Biko: A Psychobiographical Case Study* (Kotton, 2002); *A Psychobiographical Study of Mother Theresa* (Stroud, 2004); *Karen Horney: A Psychobiographical Study* (Green, 2006); and *A Psychobiographical Study of Dr. H.F. Verwoerd* (Claasen, 2007).

1.3 A brief introduction to Ray Charles

Ray Charles' life has been documented extensively (Charles & Ritz; 1978, 2004; Hackford, Benjamin, Baldwin, & Baldwin, 2004; Lydon, 2004; *Ray Charles Enterprises. Inc. homepage*, 2004). Charles was born on 23 September 1930 in Albany, Georgia. After his birth, the Charles family moved to Greenville, Florida. Shortly afterwards, his father abandoned the family. A series of tragic events altered the course of his life. Charles' baby brother, George, drowned in front of him in a freak washtub accident. Shortly thereafter, Charles progressively started to lose his sight. By the age of seven he had gone completely blind and, at his mother's insistence, learned to navigate his environment.

In the hopes of providing a better future for Charles, his mother sent him to the state school for the blind in St. Augustine, where he was accepted as a charity student. Charles' mother died while he was at this school and he was left orphaned at the age of 16 years. Charles decided to drop out of school and pursue a career in music. He had started playing piano before he was five years old. Now, as a teenager, Charles became part of the Southern *musical circuit*. He gradually gained a reputation and eventually achieved worldwide fame when he pioneered an integrated style of gospel, country, jazz and orchestral influences.

During his career Charles earned 12 *Grammy Awards*, as well as a 1988 *Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award*. He placed 76 singles on the best-selling charts and recorded more than 75 albums. In addition, he was a *Kennedy Centre Honours* recipient, received the *National Medal of the Arts* and was an inductee into the *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame*, the *Blues Hall of Fame* as well as the *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Image Awards Hall of Fame*.

Charles achieved exceptional musical success in spite of being born into poverty, being black at a time of segregation, being blind and experiencing numerous personal tragedies. Despite his musical success, Charles was a

heroin addict for 16 years, had two failed marriages, and fathered 12 children both in and outside marriage. In December 2003, Charles was diagnosed with a liver disease. He died on 10 June 2004 at the age of 73 years.

1.4 Overview of theoretical framework

Daniel Levinson's (1978; 1996) theory of adult development will be used to explore the development and changes that occurred throughout the life of Charles. Levinson's theory of adult development identifies and describes the important changes that occur throughout the lifespan of an individual. Levinson traced the scheme of development in sequential life stages. He proposed that after childhood and adolescence the individual spends about twenty-five years each in the separate eras of early adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood, with a five-year transitional period between stages. Each era has a unique biopsychosocial character that contributes to the development of the individual and contains developmental periods in which specific changes are identified and described. This sequential life course will be used to systematically describe the life of Charles. In addition, the significant relationships he developed with family, friends and work colleagues will be explored as important issues in his development.

1.5 Data used in the collection of material

Various sources of data were consulted in this research to obtain information on the life of Charles. These included a primary source written by Ray Charles in conjunction with David Ritz, "Brother Ray: Ray Charles' Own Story" (1978; 1992; 2004) and secondary sources (documents produced by others):

- Michael Lydon's (2004) biography entitled "Ray Charles, Man and Music";
- A motion picture entitled Ray (Hackford, Benjamin, Baldwin, & Baldwin, 2004);
- A homepage created by Ray Charles Enterprises Inc. (retrieved January, 31, 2007, from [http:// www.raycharles.com](http://www.raycharles.com)).

1.6 Rationale for the selection of Ray Charles as the research subject

A purposive sampling procedure was used to select Charles as the subject for this research. When psychobiographical studies are conducted, one of the reasons for selecting a particular personality is based on the individual's significance or interest (Howe, 1997). Charles can be considered a personality worthy of psychobiographical study. He was selected as the subject on the basis of interest value, uniqueness and significance of life achievements. His success is set against a background of loss, poverty, disability, drug addiction and racial discrimination. These distinguishing factors were essential in the identification of Charles as a suitable individual to explore.

1.7 Outline of the structure of the thesis

This study consists of eight chapters, the first being an introduction. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical overview of psychobiography. Chapter 3 presents Levinson's theory of adult development. Chapter 4 provides a discussion of the methodological procedure followed in this study. Here the ethical considerations of this research are presented. Chapter 5 provides the results of the data collection and Chapter 6 presents a discussion of these results. The final chapter focuses on the conclusions and limitations of this research as well as recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

PSYCHOBIOGRAPHY: A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

2.1 Chapter preview

The aim of this chapter is to provide an understanding of the psychobiographical approach. This chapter provides a brief overview of psychobiography. In addition, various related concepts are discussed in an attempt to separate these different terms from each other. Case study research is then described and finally the benefits of utilizing a psychobiographical case study are discussed.

2.2 Psychobiography and related concepts

The life stories and histories of famous and enigmatic figures have captivated and intrigued scholars in the diverse disciplines of biography and scientific psychology (Howe, 1997). The growing awareness that both literary biography and psychology make fundamental contributions to the understanding and unravelling of human lives is indicated by the fact that psychologists interested in individual development have drawn on biographical sources of information.

This has resulted in a symbiotic alliance between psychology and biography. Psychobiography reflects this synthesis (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005b). The focus of these fields has typically been discerning how differences in the development of individuals come about and asking questions such as: How do particular children develop into unusually capable, exceptionally innovative, productive or competent people? How can we attempt to understand the life course of such individuals? Both fields have also attempted to discover how to study a single life, as it develops, to achieve valuable insight into that person's entire life (McAdams, 2006).

Personality theorists (such as Erik Erikson, Alfred Adler and Henry Murray) dedicated to the *study of lives* have suggested that a psychologically informed biography is probably the best means of capturing a human life situated in time (McAdams, 2006). Despite the interest in life stories and the alluring contention that people may be best understood in their biographical contexts, biographical approaches to the person have occupied a contentious and ambiguous standing in personality psychology (Anderson, 1981a; 1981b; Runyan, 1984). According to McAdams (2006), critics have asserted that biographical methods of investigation are generally too unwieldy and subjective, implying that biographical examinations of the single case lack reliability and external validity.

Counter-arguments against these critics have asserted that they have an overly narrow view of science. They are neglecting the fact that good biographical studies are extremely illuminating and psychologists are avoiding their intellectual responsibility when they fail to take biographical information into account (McAdams, 2006).

Nonetheless, personality psychologists and other social scientists have shown an increased interest in, and acceptance of biographical and autobiographical approaches over the past two decades (Bertaux, 1981; Elms, 1988; McAdams, 1988; Ochberg, 1988; Runyan, 1988; Schultz, 2005).

There are many concepts that are closely related to, and overlap with psychobiography. An explanation of these follows to provide the reader with clarification regarding the differences in these concepts.

2.2.1 Autobiography

An autobiography is the documentation of an individual's life, or a component of the life, which is interpreted or written by the individuals themselves. Autobiography tends to be a selective, biased and subjective account even though the author may refer to objective sources of information or facts (Bromley, 1986).

2.2.2 Life histories and life stories

Psychobiographies concentrate on one particular life, while life histories examine the relationships across many lives (McAdams, 2006). In life history research investigators seek to understand similarities amongst different individuals as opposed to the uniqueness of a single life (Rosenwald, 1988). This is based on both subjective (i.e., life story evidence) and objective (i.e., observations, factual records) data.

Life stories are oral or written accounts by a person of the events, circumstances, and relationships in his or her life (Atkinson, 1998; Bromley, 1986; Cole & Knowles, 2001). Thus life stories are limited to the material provided by the narrator (Bujold, 1990). The essential feature of life stories is its subjectivity (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005b).

2.2.3 Life narratives

Humans are story-telling beings and they are able to reflect upon their life events in the social contexts where they occur. From this they are able to create a narrative of their own lives by which they can make sense of their past, present and future (Elms, 1994). McAdams (1988) refers to life narratives as storied autobiographical accounts told in the person's own words. Bromley (1986) refers to narratives as orderly accounts of a series of events which may take the form of a story or a log, with the emphasis on description rather than exploration.

2.2.4 Psychohistories, historical psychology and historiographies

Psychohistory makes use of psychological theory, usually psychoanalytic, in the historical interpretation of a political, social or cultural event (Berg, 1995; Loewenberg, 1983 Runyan, 1988b). Schultz (2005) described psychohistory as the application of psychological theory to historical events. *Historical psychology* researches the history of psychological phenomena and the history of thought about psychological development and the life course

(Runyan, 1988b). *Historiography* refers to historical research that makes use of government documents, public records, confidential reports, newspaper editorials, photographs, films and artefacts in an effort to collect information from the past and reconstruct a meaningful and suitable historical explanation for past events (Berg, 1995).

2.2.5 Case studies

Psychobiographies, single-case experiments and psychological case studies are all forms of individual case research that are similar in character to wider case research (McLeod, 1994). Historically, case-based research has always had a place in psychology, but recognition of its value was increasingly lost as enthusiasm grew for the development of quantitative methodologies. Over the past three decades the value of case-study research has begun to be recognised, since knowledge that was previously unobtainable through traditional research designs has become accessible to researchers and practitioners of psychological treatment interventions (Edwards, 1998).

In contrast to a psychobiography, a psychological case study deals with the documentation of specific events or emotional episodes within a certain period in an individual's life as opposed to an extended period of time (Bromley, 1986). The case study method forms the backbone of research in the development of new approaches to therapy (Louw & Edwards, 1993).

The single-case experiment, on the other hand, is a study of one or more aspects of behaviour under closely controlled conditions (Bromley, 1986; Yin, 2003). These studies aim to record and measure specific changes that occur as a result of the application of specific interventions (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005b). Due to the conditions being controlled, an advantage is created for the researchers as definite, accurate and valid conclusions about causal relationships can be drawn. The primary disadvantage is that the controlled circumstances remove any external influences which would influence the subject under normal conditions (Gerdes, 1989).

Case research is typically non-experimental in that it lacks control and manipulation of the variables being studied. It is the study of psychological phenomena within the natural context that utilises qualitative tools and techniques for data collection and analysis. Case research provides a contribution to knowledge by relating findings to a generalisable theory (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005b). This enables the testing of an existing theory or the formulation of a new theory (Cavaye, 1996; McLeod, 1994).

Psychobiography has a single-case research design. It aims to provide rich description and an in depth study of an individual life to confirm or refute existing psychological theory (Cavaye, 1996). Psychobiography uses qualitative material, including diaries, letters, autobiographies, biographies, and other materials to provide an extensive description of the life of an individual (McLeod, 1994).

When psychobiographical studies of *finished lives* are undertaken, the researcher focuses on the biographical sketching of the life history of the subject within a psychological paradigm and within a historical context (Runyan, 1982; Runyan, 1988b). According to Berg (1995) researchers have two major sources from which to extract their evidence. Primary sources involve the oral or written testimony of the subject under study and/or eyewitnesses present at the given time in history. These are usually original artefacts, documents, and items related to the direct outcome of an event or experience.

Examples include diaries, letters and autobiographies or film documentaries. Secondary sources involve the oral or written testimony of people not immediately present at the time of a given event or experience. These represent second-hand or hearsay accounts of someone, some event, or some development. Examples of secondary sources include biographies, textbooks, articles, newspaper stories and oral histories of individuals or a group (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005b).

The significant value of psychobiographical case studies has been advocated by many scholars in the field of life history research for the development of testing theories related to human development (e.g., Carlson, 1988; Fouche, 1999; McAdams, 2006; Runyan, 1988). A discussion of the value and benefits of psychobiographical research is elaborated on below.

2.3 The value and benefits of a psychobiographical case study

The value and benefit of life history research and psychobiographical studies lie within five areas.

2.3.1 Uniqueness of the individual case

Psychobiography tends to be morphogenic in nature, emphasizing the individuality of the whole person, rather than individuality found in a single element (Runyan, 1984). This approach to research provides a unique and holistic description of the individual being investigated and focuses on understanding a single life (Carlson, 1988; Elms, 1994).

2.3.2 Socio-historical context

In order to provide a unique and holistic description of the individual, it is essential to consider the larger contextualized background within which the individual existed. Psychobiography provides the researcher with a framework to explore the subject's socio-historical background, cultural experience, process of socialization, and family history (Runyan, 1984). Through the thoughtful choice of life history materials, the detailed consideration of a variety of socio-historical contexts is allowed (Carlson, 1988).

2.3.3. Process and pattern over time

Finished lives enable the researcher to trace patterns of human development over a continuum of time, from birth until death (Carlson, 1988). Fiske (1988) suggested that the study of life history and personality over time provides the

researcher with a more comprehensive understanding of *personality in action*. This enables the researcher to record different dimensions and processes in the personality functioning at any point in time and in any specific situation (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005b).

2.3.4. Subjective reality

Mouton (1988) indicated that life history research provides the researcher with an illuminating description and understanding of the inner experiences, thoughts and feelings of the subject. Watson (1976) emphasised the significance of understanding a subject's life story as a subjective document. This requires a hermeneutical and phenomenological perspective for understanding subjective reality (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005b). It is the appreciation and understanding of this subjective reality that facilitates empathy and sympathy in order to provide a clear picture of the individual's life story (Runyan, 1984). According to Yin (2003), a good case report should be so compelling, vivid and interesting that the reader is guaranteed to continue reading until the end of the report.

2.3.5 Theory testing and development

According to Yin (2003), theory plays an important role in both the collection of data and generalization. During the data collection, the theory guides the researcher with the identification of the objectives and data of the case. Furthermore, the theory also serves as the basis on which the researcher can compare and analyze the collected data. This assists in conceptualizing the case within the chosen theoretical domains or constructs (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005b). In addition, theory plays a role in generalizing from a case study to a specific theory (analytic generalization), and this allows a previously developed theory to act as a basis against which to compare the results of the study. This facilitates testing, extending and further development of the theory (Yin, 2003). Life history material thus forms an ideal laboratory for validating and developing various theories of human development (Carlson, 1988).

2.4 The development of psychobiography

Before the 20th century literary biographers rarely employed psychological concepts to interpret the lives of their subjects (McAdams, 2006). The first psychobiography is considered to be Freud's study of *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood* written in 1910 (McAdams, 2006). In the case of Leonardo, Freud's theory of choice undoubtedly was psychoanalysis. The rising tide of psychoanalytic biographies during the 1910s and 1920s led to a number of attacks on the method (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005b). Despite these criticisms the production of psychobiographies continued in the 1930s.

According to Runyan (1988a), the 1940s was a relatively slow period for psychological biography with the exceptions of Guttmacher's 1941 study of George III and Langer's *The Mind of Adolf Hitler*. Langer's psychobiography was written in 1943, but was only published in 1972. According to Runyan (1988a), the 1950s and 1960s were characterised by a slowly renewed interest in psychobiography and a number of significant works continued to be produced. In 1958, Erik Erikson produced *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History*, and in 1969 *Gandhi's Truth: On The Origins of Militant Nonviolence*.

Research by Runyan (1988a) has indicated an increase in psychobiographical publications, particularly since the 1970s. This has been accompanied by a growing institutionalisation of the field, as indicated by the development of professional organisations, conferences, speciality journals and dissertations. Initially, it was rare to have academic training in psychobiography, but it has now developed into a formal academic programme at certain universities in the United States of America (Alexander, 1988; 1990; Carlson, 1988; Elms, 1988; 1994; McAdams, 1994; 2006; Runyan, 1988a). An internet search on August 10, 2007 identified the following influential figures in the field of psychobiography:

- Dan P. McAdams: Director of the Foley Center for the Study of Lives at the Northwestern University (<http://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/foley/>).

- Todd Schultz: Psychology professor at the Pacific University (<http://www.psychobiography.com>).
- William MacKinley Runyan: Professor in Psychology at the University of California Berkeley (<http://socialwelfare.berkeley.edu/faculty/runyan.htm>).
- Alan C. Elms: Influential theorist of psychobiography at the University of California, Davis (www.ulmus.net).

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief outline to facilitate an understanding of the case study and the psychobiographical approach. This was done by outlining the relationship between biography and psychology and giving a description of the factors and concepts that are closely related to the approach. Case-study research was described and finally, the benefits of utilizing this approach were discussed. In the following chapter Daniel Levinson's theory of lifespan development will be presented.

CHAPTER 3

LEVINSON'S THEORY OF LIFESPAN DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Chapter preview

Levinson's (Levinson et al., 1978) theory of adult development describes the important changes that occur throughout the lifespan of an individual. This chapter will provide an overview of the main tenets of Levinson's theory. A description of the terms: lifespan, life cycle, seasons and life course will be presented. Similarly, the central component of Levinson's theory, life structure development and the tasks and transitional periods involved will be described. The eras in the life cycle of adult development will be presented together with the periods of transition that link these developmental eras. The eras and transitional periods are the era of pre-adulthood, the early adult transition, era of early adulthood, the first adult life structure, the age thirty transition, the second adult life structure, the mid-life transition, the era of middle adulthood, entering middle adulthood, the age fifty transition, culmination of middle adulthood, the late adult transition and the era of late adulthood. This theory will be used to explore the development of Ray Charles in Chapter 6 of the research.

3.2 An introduction to theories of development

Development can be defined as systematic, orderly, patterned and relatively enduring changes and continuities in the individual that occur between conception and death (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). This process is the product of many strands – “the blending of biological and cultural, the intertwining of thought and feeling and the synthesis of internal stirrings and external pressures” (Craig, 1996, p. 4). Each individual develops in a unique way, embedded in a particular context of relationships, family, community, history and circumstance (Craig, 1996). Most modern developmental scientists have rejected the simple model of the lifespan and have recognized that developmental change at any age involves both gains and losses (Sigelman & Rider, 2006). According to McAdams (2006), development is not limited to

childhood and adults continue to grow and mature into and through middle age.

3.3 Levinson's theory of lifespan development

Levinson et al. (1978) formulated a detailed and influential model of the *Human Life Cycle* based on biographical interviews with men, and later on interviews with women (Levinson, 1996). Levinson's description of human development is one of the strengths of the theory in that it provides a good account of normal development (Stroud, 2004). A second strength is that Levinson provides an integrated approach to the understanding of adult development. His theory is an integration of other theories such as those of Freud, Jung, Piaget, and Erikson (Stroud, 2004). Levinson acknowledges a basic sequence of adult development. According to his conceptualisation, development for both genders follows a similar life course (Levinson, 1996). His theory recognises the unique elements in each individual life and considers interpersonal relationships with family, friends, work, religious affiliations and the community as significant influences throughout adult development (Levinson et al., 1978).

3.4 The life cycle and its seasons

It is important to distinguish between the terms lifespan, life course, life cycle and season, as they are often used synonymously. The term *lifespan* refers to the period of time from birth until death. The term *life course* refers to the flow of individual life over time, meaning the patterning of specific events, relationships, achievements, failures and aspirations that are the substance of life (Levinson et al., 1978). The term *life cycle* is not an exact concept and can be seen as a metaphor. It suggests that the life course has a particular character and follows a basic sequence. Firstly, the life cycle refers to the process of life as a journey that has a starting point (birth) and termination point (death).

Secondly, there are qualitatively different phases or seasons, each with its own distinctive character. A *season* can be viewed as a relatively stable segment of the total cycle. Although a season is predominantly stable, change occurs within each season and a transition is required for the shift from one season to the next. Every season is significant and no season is more important than the other, as each season contributes a special character to the whole (Levinson et al., 1978).

3.5 The individual life structure

Lifespan development is conceptualised by Levinson et al. (1978) as *life structure development*. The life structure is the central component in his theory and he explained it as follows: “the underlying pattern or design of a person’s life at a given time” (Levinson et al., 1978, p. 41). The individual life structure is one of the most inclusive notions in personality theory (McAdams, 2006). Levinson et al. (1978) stated that it is important to remember that a man’s life has many components such as his occupation; his love relationships, his marriage and family; his relation to himself; his use of solitude; his roles in various contexts; and all the relationships with individuals, groups and institutions that have significance for him.

The concept of the life structure provides a tool for analyzing the “fabric of one’s life” (Levinson et al., 1978, p. 42). It gives an indication on how various aspects of the self and the world influence the formation of a life structure and shape its change over time. The individual life structure includes the individual’s socio-cultural world (class, religion, family, political systems, historical era), his participation in this world (relationships and roles with respect to significant people and institutions in his life) and various *aspects of the self*, which may remain stable or may be transformed over time (McAdams, 2006). It is important to consider the life structure from these three perspectives (Levinson et al., 1978).

- The individual's socio-cultural world
To understand a person's life it is important to take the society in which he lives into account. Levinson et al. (1978) advised that the biographer place the individual within various social contexts such as class, religion, ethnicity, family, political system, and occupational structure and to understand their relevance for him. His life is affected by events such as war and by more particular conditions in his own work, family and community.
- The aspects of the self, which are lived out, or neglected
The self refers to a complex patterning of wishes, conflicts, anxieties, and ways of controlling them. It includes moral values and ideals, fantasies, talents and skills, character traits, modes of feeling, thought and action. Important aspects of the self are formed in the pre-adult era and influence a person's life in adulthood.
- Participation in the world
The external world provides a landscape, a cast of characters, a variety of resources and constraints out of which the individual can build his own life. An individual selectively uses and is used by his world, through his evolving relationships and roles in the world.

The primary components of a life structure are the person's relationships with various others in the external world. According to Levinson (1996), a significant relationship may be with an immediately present other such as a friend, lover, spouse, parent, or offspring. The other may also be a person from the past, a symbolic or imagined figure, a group or institution, an aspect of nature, a loved or hated place, even a painting or a book. The concept of the life structure requires us to examine the nature and patterning of an adult's relationships with all significant others, and the evolution of these relationships over the years (Levinson, 1996).

A life structure may have few or many components. The *central components* are those that have the greatest significance for the self and life. They receive the greatest share of one's time and energy, and they strongly influence the character of other components. They have the greatest significance for the self and for the evolving life course (Levinson et al., 1978). Other components in the life structure include peripheral and unfilled components (Levinson, 1996).

Peripheral components include those that are easier to change or remove as the individual invests less time and energy in these directions. They involve less investment of self and can be modified with less effect on the fabric of one's life (Levinson, 1996).

Unfulfilled components are those important things that the person wants but for some reason has not managed to attain, such as meaningful employment or a career, marriage or family. The absence of any of these components influences a major part of the life structure (Levinson, 1996).

Levinson et al. (1978) found that the central components in a man's life are likely to be occupation, marriage, family, friendship, ethnicity, leisure and religion. Occupation, marriage and family are usually the most central components, though there are significant variations in their relative influence and in the importance of other components. The family is part of a complex world involving different people, activities and social contexts. This family may include the current nuclear family of spouses and children, previous marriages, the family of origin, or an extended family. The individual's relationship with family is also interwoven with his ethnic group, race, occupation and culture as these would influence the relationship that he has with the family.

The importance of an occupation to an individual is more than specific work activities, rewards relating to career or belonging to an occupational group of people. Work engages a person in an elaborate occupational world which is interwoven with other components of the life structure (Levinson et al., 1978).

According to Levinson (1996), the life structure develops as a result of the interaction between the self and the external world, and this connects the individual with his or her social environment. The life structure is the framework within which internal aspects (i.e., subjective meanings, motives, conflicts, personal qualities) and external aspects (i.e., events, social contexts, roles, influences of all kind) are interwoven.

The life structure emerges during the life course according to a certain sequence. This sequence involves a period in which a structure is built and maintained and is followed by a transitional period in which transformation of the life structure occurs and a new structure is formed. The *developmental tasks* are crucial to the evolution of the periods (Levinson et al., 1978). The fundamental task of each stable period is to build a life structure. The individual is required to make key choices, form a structure around and pursue goals and values within the structure. Structure building periods last approximately five to seven years (Levinson et al., 1978).

During this time the life structure is questioned, evaluated and possibly altered or modified (Levinson et al., 1978). This results in transitional periods that last approximately four to five years. These transitional periods terminate the existing life structures and create the possibility for a new structure. The primary tasks of transitional periods require questioning and reappraisal of existing life structures, searching for new possibilities in the self and world and to move toward commitment to the crucial choices that form the basis for new life structures in the subsequent stable periods (Levinson et al., 1978).

Transitional periods reflect a termination of a time in one's life, and these periods frequently represent a time of crisis and profound inner conflict. This involves an acceptance of the losses that the termination holds, a review and evaluation of the past, decisions about which aspects of the past to keep and which to reject and to consider the possibilities for the future (Levinson et al., 1978).

3.6 Eras: the anatomy of the life cycle

Levinson et al. (1978) conceived of the life cycle as a sequence of eras, each lasting approximately 25 years. Each era has its own biopsychosocial character that influences the development of individuals. The shift from one era to the next is neither effortless nor quick and it requires that the individual make significant adjustments and adaptations (Levinson et al., 1978). Each new era begins as the previous one comes to an end, while a cross-era transition concludes the outgoing era and starts the next. The transition between eras takes four to five years. The eras and transitional periods form the structure of the life cycle, provide an underlying order in the flow of all human lives, yet permitting countless variations in the individual life course (Stroud, 2004). Each era and developmental period begins and ends at a well-defined average age, with a range of about two years above and below this average. Levinson et al. (1978) identified the following four eras in adult development:

- Era of pre-adulthood (age 0-22),
- Era of early adulthood (age 17-45),
- Era of middle adulthood (age 40-65),
- Era of late adulthood (age 60 onwards).

In between these eras, the cross-era transitions are the following:

- Early adult transition (age 17-22),
- Mid-life transition (age 40-45),
- Late adult transition (age 60-65).

These eras and transitional periods will be discussed as they occur chronologically throughout the life cycle of the individual.

3.6.1 Era of pre-adulthood (age 0 – 22)

This era includes childhood, middle childhood, adolescence and the *early adult transition*. During this time one ordinarily lives within the family or an equivalent social unit that provides protection, socialisation and supports growth. The transition into childhood starts before birth and the process of individuation begins in the first two to three years of life. Individuation is a developmental effort towards the resolution of four polarities that occur throughout the individual lifecycle. The four polarities are *attachment/separateness*, *creation/destruction*, *young/old* and *masculine/feminine*. In pre-adulthood the child is developing an ego capable of managing his powerful drives and using them for socially constructive purposes. The child develops into a separate person and develops a concept of *me* and *not me* while also realizing that other persons have a lasting existence and character (Levinson et al., 1978).

Through various experiences a child develops a sense of what it means to be young, while also forming a sense of what it means to be ageing. Through experiences with his mother, likewise with his father, a boy develops powerful feelings, fantasies and conceptions regarding the masculine and feminine. Levinson et al. (1978) stated that a growing wish to be creative is accompanied by a greater awareness of the destructive forces in nature, human life and the self.

At the age of five or six the child expands his social world from the immediate family to a larger sphere containing school, a wider peer group and the neighbourhood. He begins to resolve his emotional struggles within the family and becomes more disciplined, industrious and skilled. With good enough development the child forms an internal figure of himself as a promising person with remarkable potentials in a world full of opportunities and dangers (Levinson et al., 1978). Puberty usually starts at around 12 or 13 and is characterised by bodily changes leading to sexual maturity. Adolescence is the culmination of the pre-adult era (Levinson et al., 1978).

3.6.2 Early adult transition (age 17 – 22)

During this period childhood gradually ends and early adulthood begins. The young individual is on the boundary between adolescence and adulthood and this is a critical point in the life cycle (Levinson et al., 1978). The first task is to start moving out of the pre-adult world. Young adults leave home for university, the military, their first employment, or some other living situation in which they begin to assume financial independence from parents and achieve greater levels of autonomy (McAdams, 2006). The second task is to make preliminary steps into the adult world. Young adults explore the possibilities of the adult world, they develop an initial adult identity and start exploring initial choices for adult living (Levinson et al., 1978). The pre-adult era is a time of extraordinary growth, but is only a prelude to adult living. Its result is an immature and vulnerable individual making his entry into the adult world (Levinson et al., 1978).

3.6.3 Era of early adulthood (age 17 – 45)

Early adulthood is the second era in the life cycle and is the most dramatic of all eras. The span from 20 to 40 is the era of greatest biological abundance, contradiction and stress (Levinson, 1996). Early adulthood is characterised by its fulness of energy, capability and potential, as well as external pressure. Personal drives and societal requirements are powerfully intermeshed, at times reinforcing each other and at times in stark contradiction (Levinson et al., 1978).

During the twenties the young person's instinctual drives are at their height. They seek personal gratification of numerous kinds, but are also troubled by the residues of childhood conflicts regarding such gratification. The individual is also struggling to establish a place in society and this is both satisfying and stressful. During this time the first major life choices concerning marriage, occupation, residence and style of living are made. Within this era there is a basic sequence of change. Over its course the individual normally moves from being a *novice adult* through a series of steps to the point where he can

assume a more *senior* position in work, family and community (Levinson et al., 1978).

3.6.3.1 The first adult life structure: entering the adult world (age 22-28)

This is the period where the young person is *entering the adult world*. The paramount task of this period is to create a provisional structure that provides a workable link between the valued self and the adult society (Levinson et al., 1978). The individual is no longer a child in the family of origin and must become a *novice adult* with a home base of his own. The individual has two primary yet antithetical tasks. The young adult needs to delve into the possibilities for adult living, to keep options open, avoid strong commitments and maximize options. The corresponding task is to create a stable life structure, to become more responsible and make something of one's life. Each task has sources and supports in the external world (Levinson et al., 1978).

To achieve complete entry into adulthood the young man must master four main developmental tasks: (1) define a *dream* of adult accomplishment, (2) find a *mentor*, (3) develop a career, and (4) establish intimacy (Craig, 1996). The most important aspect of the *dream* is its ability to provide inspiration in current activities. Ideally, the young adult structures his life in realistic ways that help facilitate the realization of the dream. In achieving the dream, the young person can be aided by a *mentor* (Craig, 1996).

The most crucial function of the mentor is to support and facilitate the realization of the dream. The mentor can instil self-confidence by sharing and approving of the dream and by imparting skill and wisdom (Craig, 1996). Besides forming a dream and finding a mentor, the young adult faces a complex sociopsychological process of career formation that extends beyond the mere selection of an occupation. A primary relationship with a *special woman* also fills a need similar to that of the mentor role (Craig, 1996).

3.6.3.2 Age 30 transition: changing the first life structure (age 28 - 33)

This transition provides an opportunity to work on the flaws and limitations of the first adult life structure and to create the basis for a more satisfactory structure with which to complete the era of early adulthood. At about 28, the provisional quality of the twenties is ending and life is becoming more serious. Some men have a rather smooth transition, without overt disturbance or sense of crisis. They modify their lives in certain respects, but they build directly on the past and do not make fundamental changes. However, for most men this transition takes a more stressful form and a moderate or severe crisis is very common in this period (Levinson et al., 1978).

The shift from the end of the *age thirty transition* to the start of the next period is one of the crucial steps in adult development. At this time a man may make important new choices, or he may reaffirm old choices. If these choices are congruent with his dreams, talents and external possibilities, they provide the basis for a relatively satisfactory life structure. If the choices are poorly made and the new structure is seriously flawed, he will pay a heavy price in the next period (Levinson et al., 1978).

3.6.3.3 The second adult life structure: settling down (age 33 - 40)

This structure is the vehicle for the culmination of early adulthood. In this period a man has two major tasks. He tries to establish a *niche* in society, to anchor his life more firmly, develop competence in a chosen craft and become a member of a valued world. He works at *making it*, striving to advance and to progress. The man in his early thirties is preoccupied both with *making it* and *building a nest*, and therefore he invests himself in issues of order, stability, security and control (McAdams, 2006). He further invests in the major components of the structure (work, family, friendships, leisure and community) and to realise his youthful aspirations and goals (Levinson et al., 1978).

Until the early thirties the young man has been a *novice adult* and the task in the *settling down* period is to become a fully fledged adult within his own world

(Levinson et al., 1978). He defines a personal enterprise, a direction in which to strive and a sense of the future. There is some conflict between anchoring one's life firmly in existing structures and being creative and seeking change. The imagery of the ladder is central to the settling down enterprise. The *ladder* refers to all dimensions of advancement that are important for the man and his world, such as increases in social rank, income, power, fame, creativity, quality of family life and social contributions (Levinson et al., 1978).

The ladder has both objective and subjective aspects. It is defined by the person in terms of his own meanings and resolutions and reflects the realities of the external social world. A man's sense of wellbeing during this period depends strongly on his own and other's evaluation of his progress toward his goals in life (Levinson et al., 1978). At the end of the settling down period from about age 36 to 40 there is a distinctive phase called *Becoming One's Own Man* (BOOM). This is a fateful time in a man's life (Levinson et al., 1978).

A key element in this period is a man's feeling that no matter what he has achieved to date, he is not sufficiently his own man (McAdams, 2006). Attaining seniority and approaching the top rung of his ladder are signs to him that he is becoming a man, but even though this progress brings new rewards, it also carries the burden of greater responsibilities and pressures. The man may feel overly dependent upon and constrained by persons or groups who have authority over him and who, for various reasons, exert great influence upon him (McAdams, 2006). This period sets the stage for the *mid-life transition*.

3.6.4 The mid-life transition: moving from early to middle adulthood (age 40 – 45)

The *mid-life transition* provides a bridge from early to middle adulthood and is therefore part of both eras of development. The life structure again comes into question. The man encounters serious doubts concerning the direction of his life and yearns for a life in which his actual desires, values, talents and aspirations can be expressed. For some men this period does not represent a

time of questioning or searching, but for a great majority this is a period of struggle within the self and the external world (Levinson et al., 1978). This may be a painful period in an individual's life, but others may benefit from the searching re-evaluation of the life structure precipitated by this transition (McAdams, 2006).

Levinson et al. (1978) proposed that three major tasks must be worked on in the mid-life transition. The first task is to critically examine the life structure developed during the settling down period. The second task is to take the first steps toward the initiation of middle adulthood and begin to modify the negative elements of the present life structure. The third task is to integrate the four polarities which coexist within each person *young/old, destruction/creation, masculine/feminine, and attachment/separateness*.

During a transition period, especially in the mid-life transition, the neglected parts of the self more urgently seek expression and stimulate the modification of the existing structure (Levinson et al., 1978). The mid-life transition may result in a rejuvenated life structure, a restabilization around new plans and goals designed to maximize the individual's potential for fulfilment in many realms of life (McAdams, 2006).

3.6.5 Era of middle adulthood (age 40 – 65)

After the mid-life transition early adulthood comes to an end and middle adulthood begins. Around the age of 40, crucial developmental changes occur, both bodily and psychologically. Biological capacities may be below those of early adulthood, but are normally still sufficient for an energetic, personally satisfying and socially valuable life (Levinson, 1996). The instinctual energies, too, have passed their maximal level and are somewhat reduced. However, the man is not lacking in his youthful drives and passions, in the capacity for anger and moral indignation, in self assertiveness and ambition and in the wish to be cared for and supported. However, he does suffer less from the tyranny of these drives (Levinson et al., 1978).

The modest decline in the elemental drives may, with mid-life development, enable a man to enrich his life (Levinson et al., 1978). It is common for men to undergo mid-life changes in style of work and living. While early adulthood is a season that produces qualities of strength, quickness, endurance and output, middle adulthood is a season when other qualities such as wisdom, good judgement, generosity of spirit and unsentimental compassion can ripen (Levinson, 1996).

It is not uncommon for great artists who continue their creative endeavours after 40 to produce more profound works than before and middle adulthood represents a time where one can make the most effective contributions to politics, diplomacy and philosophy (Levinson et al., 1978). According to Levinson (1996) individuals may become more responsible concerning themselves and others, more creative, more open-minded, purposeful and capable of intimacy than before. However, this time is also potentially a period in which a sense of emptiness, stagnation and a loss of vitality could be experienced.

3.6.5.1 Entering middle adulthood: building a new life structure (age 45 – 50)

The end of the *mid-life transition* is marked by a series of changes rather than one dramatic event. In some lives the shift may be signalled by a crucial event such as divorce, whereas other lives show no conspicuous change, but rather minor changes that make a considerable difference. At the age of 45 the man has had his allotted time for reappraising, exploring, testing choices and creating the basis for a new life (Levinson et al., 1978). The main tasks now are to make important choices, give them meaning, commit to them and build a life structure around them. This structure is often dramatically different from that of the late thirties (Levinson, 1996).

Some men face a middle adulthood of constriction and decline, while others form a structure that is reasonably viable in the world but poorly connected to the self (Levinson et al., 1978). Although they do their bit for themselves and

others, their lives are lacking in inner excitement and meaning. On the other hand, some men have started a middle adulthood that will have its own special satisfaction and fulfilments. For these men, middle adulthood is often the fullest and most creative season in the life cycle. They are less tyrannized by their ambitions, passions and the illusions of youth. Therefore, they can be more deeply attached to others and yet more separate and centred in the self (Levinson et al., 1978).

3.6.5.2 The age 50 transition (age 50 – 55)

This is an opportunity to evaluate the entry life structure and explore the concepts of self and world. The purpose and task of the *age 50 transition* are similar to those of the *age 30 transition*. In this period a man can work further on the tasks of the *mid-life transition* and modify the life structure formed in the mid-forties (Levinson et al., 1978). Developmental crises are common at this time, particularly for those who have made few significant life changes or who have made unsuitable life changes in the previous 10-15 years (Levinson, 1996).

3.6.5.3 The culmination of middle adulthood: building a second adult structure (age 55 – 60)

This period lasts from the age of 55 to 60. The *culmination of middle adulthood* is a stable period that is devoted to building a second middle adult structure. This structure provides a vehicle for the realization of the era's major aspirations and goals and the completion of middle adulthood (Levinson, 1996). This period is analogous to *settling down* in early adulthood. The decade of the fifties can be a time of great fulfilment for those who are able to rejuvenate their selves and enrich their lives (Levinson et al., 1978).

3.6.6 The late adult transition (age 60 – 65)

The transition period, *late adult transition*, lasts from about 60 to 65. The late adult transition terminates middle adulthood and creates the basis for initiating

late adulthood. The task of this transition is to conclude the efforts of middle adulthood. It requires reappraisal of the past and a shift to prepare for the era to come (Levinson, 1996). It is a period of significant development and represents a major turning point in the life cycle (Levinson et al., 1978).

3.6.7 Era of late adulthood (age 60 onwards)

Late adulthood typically begins at the age of 60. This era can be seen as a distinctive and fulfilling season in life. As a result of numerous biological, psychological and social changes, the individual's life is altered in fundamental ways. Retirement and health issues are predominant challenges of this time. Therefore, these issues influence the transitional process as the person enters this era. In late adulthood a man can no longer occupy the centre stage of his world. Levinson et al. (1978, p. 35) said: *"he is called upon, and increasingly calls upon himself, to reduce the heavy responsibilities of middle adulthood and to live in a changed relationship with society and himself"*.

According to Levinson et al. (1978), moving out of centre stage can be traumatic for people because (a) their generation is no longer the dominant one, (b) they receive less recognition, and (c) they have less authority and power. Difficulties can arise if a person holds a position of formal authority in their work life beyond age 65 or 70. Levinson et al. (1978) have said that the person will be in conflict with the generation in middle adulthood who needs to assume greater responsibility. At times a person in his or her 70s or older retains a pre-eminent position in government, religion, business, or some other institution.

However, even when the person still has high levels of energy and skill, they are ill-advised to retain power in late adulthood, as they tend to be isolated leaders, in poor touch with their followers, and overly idealized or hated by them. Levinson et al. (1978) stated that a person can engage in valued work after retirement, but that it should stem from his own creative energies rather than from external pressure or financial need. A primary task of late adulthood

is to find a new balance of involvement with society and self. An individual can gain greater wisdom regarding the external world only through a stronger centring in the self.

If a man creates a new form of self-in-world, late adulthood can be a season as full and rich as the others. Some of the greatest intellectual and artistic works have been produced by men and women in their sixties, seventies and even eighties such as Freud, Jung, Picasso and Michelangelo to name only a few (Levinson et al., 1978).

Levinson et al. (1978) proposed that to gain a genuine sense of integrity individuals must confront the lack of integrity in their lives. Yet, Levinson et al. (1978) stated that whatever a person's values, they cannot fully be lived up to. This requires that the individual reconciles the source of flaws and corruption in his life. These sources are multiple: they are in ourselves, our enemies, and loved ones. They are in the imperfect world where each of us tries to build a life of integrity. Making peace with all the enemies in the self and world is an important part of this task. *"To make peace in this inner sense does not keep a man from fighting for his convictions, but does enable him to fight with less rancour, with fewer illusions and with a broader perspective"* (Levinson et al., 1978, p. 38).

3.7 Conclusion

Levinson et al. (1978) developed a theory of life structure development that identifies and describes four eras in which the life cycle of an individual evolves. Each era lasts approximately 25 years and is linked to periods of transition lasting approximately five years. During each era a person constructs a life structure. A basic sequence of life structure development is acknowledged in the theory, but it does not exclude the fact that each individual life is unique and that differences in adult development may occur.

The life structure is the pattern underlying a person's life, serving both as boundary and mediator between personality and society (Craig, 1996). The

life structure is composed mainly of a person's relationships with the outside world. The relationships may be with individuals, groups, system or even objects (Craig, 1996). Especially important in the evolution of the life structure is the expression of the *dream* and the influence of a *mentor* and *special woman* (McAdams, 2006).

According to McAdams (2006), the general idea that the adult life course may be viewed in terms of a sequence of periods or seasons is a controversial one today. Researchers, outside of in depth biographical explorations, such as Levinson's, have not found a great deal of support for a dramatic *mid-life transition* in adult lives. According to Levinson (1996), although his theory appears to be different from other theories, it is not contradictory. He said that one of the advantages of his theory was that it provided a framework within which the evolution of more specific aspects of living could be understood. Levinson's (1978; 1996) research evidence clearly indicates that there is an age-linked sequence for life structure development.

Levinson's life span development theory has been used in a number of psychobiographical studies, including *The Life of Helen Martins, Creator of the Owl House: A Psychobiographical Study* (Bareira, 2001;) *Balthazar Johannes Vorster: A psychobiographical study* (Vorster, 2003;) *A Psychobiographical Study of Mother Theresa* (Stroud, 2004); *Cornelis Jacobus Langenhoven: A psychobiographical study* (Jacobs, 2005) and *Karen Horney: A Psychobiographical Study* (Green, 2006). This theory forms the basis on which the life of Ray Charles will be studied. The following chapter will discuss the methodology followed in this research.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Chapter preview

This chapter provides a discussion of the preliminary methodological considerations important to psychobiographical research as well as strategies to overcome the difficulties inherent in this type of research. These considerations include studying an absent subject, researcher bias, reductionism, cross-cultural differences, validity and reliability criticisms, elitism and the easy genre, inflated expectations and an infinite amount of biographical data. The abovementioned considerations will then be applied to the life of Ray Charles. Following this, the aims of the research, research design, psychobiographical subject, data collection procedures and data analysis methods are presented. The chapter ends with a discussion of the ethical considerations pertaining to this field of research.

4.2 Preliminary methodological considerations in psychobiography

An exploration of the methodological issues and difficulties that necessitate careful consideration when undertaking a psychobiography is required in order to ensure that quality in the research process is maintained (Stroud, 2004).

4.2.1 Analyzing an absent subject

Critics have argued that the psychobiographers are at a disadvantage compared with psychotherapists because the information which can be expected from historical sources is less than the information therapists derive from their direct contact with subjects (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005a). In response to this criticism, Anderson (1981) contended that psychobiographers are at an advantage. He suggested that the following considerations emphasise the advantages.

- a) Psychobiographers are able to access various sources of information and have the opportunity to study events in the context of their effects. These information sources include family, friends, colleagues, diaries, public speeches, written books, drawings, photographs and other creations (Anderson, 1981a; 1981b).

- b) Psychobiographers are not limited by therapeutic considerations (Anderson, 1981). Therapists may develop distorted views of their clients because they focus on their maladaptive behaviour, whereas psychobiographers are free to develop a comprehensive, balanced description of the research subject (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005a).

4.2.2 Researcher bias

According to Elms (1988), one of the difficulties in the field of psychobiographical research is the tendency to idealise or disparage the biographical subject. Psychobiographers may experience a range of complex, unconscious, non-deliberate and personal reactions to their subjects (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005a). Psychobiographical research is usually a long-term and in depth process and the psychobiographer may develop countertransference-like reactions to their subjects (Anderson, 1981a; 1981b). The subject may be idealised and the psychobiographer may feel privileged to be connected to such an extraordinary person.

On the other hand, psychobiographers may feel contempt for their subjects and find fault with their lives in order to convince themselves that they are smarter and friendlier than the subject (Anderson, 1981a). According to Elms (1994), the pursuit of a psychobiography is delicate and treacherous and can go wrong even for the most well-meaning investigator. The following steps can be undertaken to avoid this:

- a) Psychobiographers need to examine the range of feelings they experience towards their subject (Anderson, 1981a; 1981b).

- b) Psychobiographers need to develop empathy with their research subjects. This is important as a means to prevent the tendency of being critical of an infamous personality (Anderson, 1981a).
- c) Psychobiographers should enlist the assistance of intimate acquaintances and biographical specialists by allowing them to comment on the psychobiographer's relationship with the subject.
- d) In cases where the psychobiographical subject is still alive, the subject should read and personally critique and comment on the researcher-subject relationship (Schurink, 1988).

4.2.3 Reductionism

Psychobiographers are often criticised for emphasising psychological factors at the expense of external social and historical factors, even though the subject's life is strongly influenced by cultural dynamics (Runyan, 1988b). Similarly, psychobiography gives limited attention to normality and health, and focuses instead on psychopathological processes (Anderson, 1981a; Elms, 1988; 1994; Runyan, 1988b). Also, too much attention can be focused on early childhood experiences to explain adult character and behaviour without considering later developmental influences (Runyan, 1988b; Wallace, 1989). The following strategies can be implemented to avoid these limitations:

- a) Psychobiographers need to be thorough and base their research on multiple sources of information. It is crucial to double check social and historical sources to attain sufficient evidence beyond mere psychological reductionism (Anderson, 1981; Runyan, 1988b; McAdams, 2006).
- b) The excessive use of esoteric psychological terminology and jargon is discouraged and sufficient explanations should be provided for the terminology used in the study (Anderson, 1981a; Runyan, 1988b).

- c) Elms (1994) suggested that psychobiographers adopt a eugraphic rather than a pathographic approach. In the eugraphic approach the psychobiographer looks at the process of how the subject becomes and remains psychologically relatively healthy (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005a).

- d) Anderson (1981a) and Howe (1997) indicated that the researcher needs to consider the psychobiographical subject in a holistic manner. This precaution amounts to maintaining an appreciation of the complexity of an individual's personality and socio-historical background (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005a).

4.2.4 Cross-cultural differences

Psychobiography is a form of cross-cultural research. This is evident by the fact that the subject of study usually lives in a culture different from that of the researcher (Anderson, 1981a; 1981b). The cross-cultural application of psychological concepts has been criticised because of the likelihood that the culture within which the subject lived would vary considerably from the culture of the researcher (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005a). The result is that the concepts would not necessarily be applicable to the behaviour of the subject and it would not be cross-culturally relevant. To minimise this challenge the following strategy should be implemented:

- a) Historical research should be undertaken to provide an understanding of the cultural context in which the research subject lived in order to develop a culturally empathic understanding of the subject (Anderson, 1981a; 1981b). This requires that the researcher should consult a variety of data, ranging from primary sources (i.e., original artefacts, documents) to secondary sources (i.e., published documents, newspaper editorials, interviews) (Berg, 1995).

4.2.5 Validity and reliability criticisms

The most frequent criticism against psychobiographical research is related to its validity and reliability as an idiographic approach (Runyan, 1983). This relates to the lack of control in the case study approach as well as the difficulty of generalization (Runyan, 1988b). The quality of a case study design can be judged by four tests that are common to all social science methods, namely, construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability (Yin, 2003). The following strategies and precautions are proposed to meet these tests:

- a) Construct validity may be defined as the extent to which the operational definition of a variable actually reflects the true theoretical meaning of the variable (Cozby, 1997). This is addressed through the selection and conceptualisation of the specific constructs and variables of the research according to the objectives of the study (Yin, 2003).

- b) Internal validity refers to the ability to draw conclusions about causal relationships from the available data. A study has high internal validity when strong inferences can be made that one variable caused the other (Cozby, 1997). This is addressed by the use of multiple sources of information which could be examined by means of triangulation. Sokolovsky (1996) identified three types of triangulation. Firstly, data triangulation is recommended and is based on using different sources of data. Secondly, investigator triangulation is recommended, and here the research is evaluated by an independent researcher. Finally, methodological triangulation, which is based on the utilization of different methods of research and the strategy of structural corroboration, is recommended. Structural corroboration is achieved by spending time to conduct in depth research with the subject material to enable the researcher to check for distortions (Rudestam & Newton, 1992).

- c) External validity is the extent to which the results can be generalized to other populations and settings (Cozby, 1997). This is addressed by stipulating in the aims of the research that findings would be generalised to a psychological theory (analytic generalisation) rather than to the larger population or other case studies (Yin, 2003).

- d) Reliability refers to the consistency or stability of a measure of behaviour (Cozby, 1997). To address this, the researcher could ensure the replication of the study under similar circumstances by following a consistent coding scheme during data collection (Rudestam & Newton, 1992).

4.2.6 Easy genre and elitism

Psychobiographies have been criticised for being elitist and an *easy genre* (Runyan, 1988b). In the case of elitism, psychobiographers are criticised for focusing on prominent and privileged people while ignoring the experiences of ordinary men and women (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005a). Runyan (1988b) warned that it is the level of aggregation, rather than the social class that should be the issue under consideration. Critics have asserted that psychobiography is an easy form of research with an obvious shape, based on the birth, development and death of the subject of the biography (Runyan, 1988b). A good psychobiography is extremely difficult to do and the following steps can be applied to achieve this:

- a) A good psychobiography requires consultation with a great range of sources.

- b) A good psychobiography necessitates an extensive knowledge of the subject's socio-cultural world (Runyan, 1988b).

4.2.7 Inflated expectations

Describing the research subject's behaviours, decisions and actions in purely psychological terms disregards the complexity of the human personality. It is therefore important to acknowledge that psychological explanations add to rather than replace our understanding of a person (Stroud, 2004). It is important for psychobiographers to be aware of the limitations inherent in psychobiographical research. Anderson (1981) proposed the following strategies:

- a) Psychobiographical explanations should be recognized as speculative, and not viewed as the final word about the subject.
- b) Psychobiographers need to be cognisant of the shortcomings of the psychobiographical approach and must acknowledge that psychological explanations do not replace, but add to other explanations.

4.2.8 Infinite amount of biographical data

One of the disadvantages psychobiographers encounter is the infinite amount of information at their disposal (Anderson, 1981b; McAdams, 2006). To minimise this challenge the following strategy should be implemented:

Psychobiographers can manage information by using selected theories (e.g. Levinson et al., 1978) and proven data reduction methods of analysis (e.g. Miles and Huberman, 1994) as guidelines to determine what material is relevant to the research (Green, 2006).

4.3 Methodological considerations in the psychobiographical study of Charles

The abovementioned methodological issues were considered in this study of Ray Charles.

4.3.1 Analyzing an absent subject

In order to analyze an absent subject, the biographical researcher needs to collect and collate personal data relating to the subject (Stroud, 2004). Although the researcher did not have direct contact with Charles, multiple sources of information were available and consulted on his life. A complete overview of Charles' life enabled the researcher to explore and discuss the consequences of his decisions, actions and choices (Green, 2006). This may be considered a benefit when studying a person who has completed his life.

4.3.2 Researcher bias

In an attempt to minimize the bias of idealising or criticising Charles, the researcher continually examined her feelings towards the subject throughout the research process. In addition, the researcher discussed her ideas, feelings and attitudes with close acquaintances and the supervisor of the study. These efforts were applied to ensure the best possible level of self-awareness on the part of the researcher.

4.3.3 Reductionism

In order to prevent and minimize the issue of *reductionism*, multiple sources of information were used and a balance between a eugraphic and pathographic approach was followed. The socio-historical context in which Charles lived was considered, thus enabling the researcher to study him in a holistic manner. The researcher also attempted to provide adequate explanations of the psychological terminology used in Levinson's (Levinson et al., 1978) theory.

4.3.4 Cross-cultural differences

Charles lived in a significantly different historical time and culture to the researcher. He was a black, American male born in 1930, while the researcher is a white, South African female born in 1980. In an attempt to

bridge the cultural gap between researcher and subject, one specific source (Lydon, 2004) was especially useful in order to become culturally sensitive to the historical period and community in which Charles lived.

4.3.5 Validity and reliability criticisms

To ensure *construct validity*, the researcher used the theoretical constructs of Levinson's developmental theory to conceptualise the adult development of Charles. This was achieved by categorising the life course of Charles according to the developmental time frame of Levinson's (Levinson et al., 1978) theory. The primary aim of this study was to explore and describe life structure development over the lifespan of Charles. *Internal validity* is thus a concern. Nevertheless, multiple sources of data were used to maintain a high level of credibility in making general inferences throughout the study. Multiple sources of information enabled the researcher to cross-reference the information obtained, thereby increasing the internal validity of the study. *External validity* was not of major concern for this study as the findings of the research are not to be generalised to the larger population but rather to Levinson's developmental theory.

In order to achieve the highest degree of *reliability* the researcher utilized a coding scheme for the raw data. The coding scheme consisted of a table (see Table 4.1, p. 47) which categorizes chronological events in the appropriate period of lifespan development as proposed by Levinson.

4.3.6 Easy genre and elitism

Charles was selected as the subject of this research based on his significant contribution to music in spite of his blindness. Due to his worldwide fame and recognition this study could be interpreted as elitist. However, his success is set against a background of poverty and one can thus argue that he did not grow up in elitist conditions. The criticism of this being an easy study is countered by the attempt of this study to be a thorough analysis of his life within the limits of a Master's treatise. Biographical sources consisted of

visual data that were 2 hours and 12 minutes in length, while written material comprised 821 pages.

4.3.7 Inflated expectations

The researcher recognises the limits of this study as it has focused on Charles from a psychological perspective using an adult developmental theory. This study is only one means of explaining his life experiences and should be seen within this context and restriction (Green, 2006).

4.3.8 Infinite amount of biographical data

The primary and secondary sources of information for this research were published material. This ensured that the information was easily accessible and the researcher was able to cross-reference and verify certain details. The focus of the study was Charles' life structure development. Therefore only information pertaining to his life structure development was recorded.

4.4 Aims of the research

The primary aim of this psychobiographical study was to explore and describe the development of Charles according to Levinson's (Levinson et al., 1978) theoretical framework. A secondary aim was to provide an in depth understanding of Charles within the particular social, economic and historical context in which he lived.

4.5 Research design

The proposed study of Charles is a *life history* research project (Runyan, 1982, 1988b; Yin, 2003). It utilizes a qualitative single-case research design and can be described as qualitative-morphogenic in nature. This type of design emphasises the individuality of the person within their socio-historical context (Elms, 1994; Runyan, 1988a).

4.6 The psychobiographical subject

A purposive sampling procedure was used to select Charles as the subject for this research. When psychobiographical studies are conducted, one of the reasons for selecting a particular personality is based on the individual's significance or interest (Howe, 1997). Charles can be considered a personality worthy of psychobiographical study. He was selected as the subject on the basis of interest value, uniqueness and significance of life achievements. His success is set against a background of loss, poverty, disability, drug addiction and racial discrimination. These distinguishing factors were essential in the identification of Charles as a suitable individual to explore.

4.7 Data collection procedures

A primary source (a document produced by the subject in conjunction with another author) and three secondary sources (documents produced by other authors) were used in the collection of data. The primary source was Ray Charles' autobiography, *Brother Ray: Ray Charles' own story*. The secondary sources included a biography, *Ray Charles, Man and Music*; a motion picture, *Ray*, and the *Ray Charles Enterprises* homepage. According to Yin (2003), the use of published data is advantageous since it enables the researcher to access information as needed and according to his or her own timeframe. In addition, stable sources of data can be viewed as needed, the information from other sources can be corroborated, spelling of names and dates can be checked and verified, and information is relatively accessible.

Despite its advantages, Yin (2003) warned that written and published materials may be subject to author bias. This can be overcome through data triangulation which is the use of multiple sources of data collection in order to increase reliability. In addition, the researcher will also attempt to prevent a distorted interpretation of the literature by considering and reflecting on the feedback and criticism provided by the supervisor of this study.

4.8 Data analysis

The analysis of case study data is described by Yin (2003) as a process of examining, extracting, categorising and compiling information regarding the subject. The analysis of data is guided by an adherence to the aims of the study, the theoretical constructs and the focus of the theory. According to Huberman and Miles (1994), data analysis involves three linked sub-processes that occur throughout the research process, namely, (a) data reduction, (b) data display, and (c) conclusion drawing and verification.

4.8.1 Data reduction

Data reduction refers to the process by which the potential universe of data can be reduced by the researcher in an anticipatory way (Stroud, 2004). Data reduction occurs through the initial choice of a conceptual framework that guides the researcher in the choice of information that is selected and recorded (Huberman & Miles, 1994). The purpose is to focus, sort and discard irrelevant material so that final conclusions can be drawn (Green, 2006).

4.8.2 Data display

Data display is an organised, concise assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and/or action taking (Stroud, 2004). According to Huberman and Miles (1994), the researcher needs to record the data in an organized way so that the meaning of the data can be formulated. The use of matrices and charts to display the data enables information to be concise and easily accessible. The researcher's efforts to remain systematic and consistent during the process of data analysis have been aided by the use of timelines depicted in Table 5.1, Appendix B and Appendix C. In addition, the information relevant to the development of Ray Charles' life structure was placed in the developmental eras and the specific age-linked periods in which various events and experiences occurred.

4.8.3 Conclusion drawing and verification

Conclusion drawing and verification involves the researcher in making interpretations, and drawing meaning from the displayed data in the descriptive frameworks (Stroud, 2004). Conclusions can be drawn from the outset. However, the researcher should attempt to keep an open attitude throughout the process so that conclusions can be verified (Green, 2006). Numerous strategies can be applied, including comparison/contrast, noting of patterns and themes, use of metaphors, clustering and triangulation (Huberman & Miles, 1994).

Table 4. 1 Matrix of life structure development over the lifespan of Ray Charles

Levinson's Periods in Lifespan Development

Social-historical context	Era of pre-adulthood (0-22)	Early Adult Transition (17-22)	Entering the Adult World (22-28)	Age 30 Transition (28-33)	Settling Down (33-40)	Midlife Transition (40-45)	Entering Middle Adulthood (45-50)	Age 50 Transition (50-55)	Culmination of Middle Adulthood (55-60)	The Late Adult Transition (60-65)	Era of Late Adulthood (65-?)
1930-1952											
1957-1975											
1970-1995											
1990-2004											

In order to categorize the most salient data available the researcher used this matrix (Table 4. 1) to categorize the indicators of life structure development over Charles' lifespan, according to Levinson's (Levinson et al., 1978) theoretical framework. This matrix allows for a schematic representation of Charles' lifespan development. The vertical columns represent the periods specified by Levinson's theory of lifespan development while the horizontal columns represent the socio-historical context (i.e., the four eras of Charles' life course). The researcher's effort to remain systematic and consistent during the process of data collection and analysis was aided by the use of the matrix.

4.9 Ethical considerations

Elms (1994) pointed to the limited existence and availability of ethical guidelines for psychobiography, but suggested that all intimate knowledge obtained be treated and documented with respect. Elms (1994) noted the guidelines for psychobiographical studies which were issued by the American Psychiatric Association in 1976. Firstly, psychobiographies may be done on deceased persons. These individuals should preferably be long dead and should have no surviving relatives close enough to be embarrassed by unsavoury revelations.

Charles died in 2004 and although this may be considered recent, the researcher did obtain informed consent from the *Ray Charles Enterprise* marketing group. This can be found in Appendix A. Secondly, psychobiographies may not be done on living persons, unless they have freely consented to be studied, interviewed and written up for publication. The one interesting exception to the latter guideline is that a psychiatrist may ethically prepare official psychobiographies or profiles of significant international figures whose personality formation should be clearly understood in order to carry out national policy more effectively. More recently Elms (1994) insisted that a psychobiographers' task be seen in the same light as that of journalists. Thus they are justified to commence research into individual lives.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the preliminary methodological considerations relevant in psychobiographical research. These considerations were applied to the study of Charles. This was followed by a discussion of the research method and design as well as the subject of this particular psychobiographical study. In addition, the primary aim, research procedure, data collection methods and data analysis procedures employed were described. The following chapter presents a discussion of the results obtained from the sources of information used in this study.

CHAPTER 5 RESULTS

5.1 Chapter preview

According to Levinson (1996), a basic and generic sequence in the life course of both men and women can be identified, while acknowledging the unique elements in each individual life. The sequential stages of Ray Charles' life will be presented chronologically according to the four eras of development identified by Levinson et al. (1978). The relevant information pertaining to his development during each era will be presented according to the age at which the life experiences and important life events occurred. The life history is presented over a period of almost 73 years, from his birth on 23 September 1930 to his death on 10 June 2004.

5.2 The developmental periods in the life of Ray Charles

Levinson et al. (1978) identified four eras in adult development including the era's of pre-adulthood (age 0-22); early adulthood (age 17-45); middle adulthood (age 40-65) and late adulthood (age 60 onwards). In between these eras, the cross-era transitions include the early adult transition (age 17-22); the mid-life transition (age 40-45) and the late adult transition (age 60-65). These eras and transitional periods, along with a biographical account, will be discussed as they unfolded chronologically throughout the life cycle of Charles. Furthermore, the information on Charles will be presented chronologically within each era and transitional period.

5.2.1 Era of pre-adulthood (age 0 - 22)

During this era the *central components* identified in Charles' life are his family of origin, blindness, music and education. The *peripheral components* include his relationships with peers and family friends.

Ray Charles Robinson was born in Albany, Georgia on 30 September 1930. His mother, Aretha was adopted by Margaret Robinson. They lived with Bailey, Margaret's eldest son, and his wife Mary Jane. Aretha and Bailey had an affair and she fell pregnant with Charles at the age of sixteen (Lydon, 2004). A few months after his birth, the Robinson family moved to Greenville, Florida. Shortly afterwards, Charles' father abandoned the family.

Charles never formed a close bond with his father who did not play a significant role in his life. Although he felt confused about his family relationships, he nevertheless felt cared for and loved by two women, his mother whom he called Mama and Mary Jane, whom he called Mother (Charles & Ritz, 1978). Although Mary Jane did not live in the same house as Charles, he saw her almost every day (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004). Regarding his childhood Charles stated:

There is a lot about this part of my life – the earliest years – that remains mysterious, but you have to remember that I was too young to do any serious questioning, and besides children were not supposed to ask questions...I was a curious kid, a little mischievous, but for the most part well behaved, I was brought up to obey my mama. (Charles & Ritz; 1978, p. 5 & 7)

Charles and his mother were one of the poorest families in Jellyroll, a black community in Greenville. Charles recalled that blacks lived on one side of Greenville and whites on the other, but he perceived Greenville as a connected community and the place where he belonged (Charles & Ritz; 1978). During this time period, for black people, physical strength was considered an essential characteristic in the acquisition of employment. This made it difficult for Charles' mother to find regular work as she was sickly and weak.

Aretha was strict and a disciplinarian who set many house rules. Charles admired her strength and encouragement. By his first birthday, Charles' brother, George was born. It was unclear who his father was. The two boys shared a close relationship. While still too young for school both displayed remarkable strengths. George amazed people with his skill at arithmetic and

his inventiveness in making toys. At the age of three Charles began to demonstrate an interest and aptitude for mechanics and music (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004). Later in his life Charles said: *“I was born with music inside me”* (Charles & Ritz, 1978; p. 8). This was his sole description given to explain his passion for music. Ironically, none of his relatives could sing or play an instrument. Mr Pit, the owner of the Red Wing Café, was Charles’ biggest musical influence during his childhood. Mr. Pit, who owned a piano and a jukebox, was an important father figure and musical inspiration for Charles.

In 1935, when Charles was five years old, a tragedy occurred in the Robinson family. Charles and his four-year old brother, George, were playing outside in a big washtub, while Aretha was ironing in the house. George fell into the washtub and for a moment Charles hesitated, not knowing what to do. He attempted to pull George out of the tub, but he couldn’t, then immediately ran to call Aretha. She pulled George from the tub and tried to resuscitate him, but it was too late (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004). Charles had no memory of the events after his brother’s death. As an adult Charles reflected:

It was an afternoon, I can still see it almost too vividly, it’s hard to look at it again, it’s hard to recreate the scene and it hurts...it was one of the last things I would ever see. It was my first real taste of tragedy, and even after more than forty years, the taste hasn’t left my mouth...sometimes I think I might have felt guilty for not saving my brother. (Charles & Ritz, 1978 p. 12 & 13)

A few months after his brother’s death, Charles’ eyes started watering. Some mornings his eyes were so thick with mucus he had to pry them open or his mother would use a damp cloth to help him. His sight deteriorated gradually for two years until he was completely blind. Over months the breadth of his vision began to shrink. He found that he could see less and less into the horizons (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004; www.raycharles.com). Many years later doctors guessed that it may have been congenital juvenile glaucoma that caused Charles to go blind. If this were the case, his loss of vision was not a consequence of emotional distress

caused by the traumatic loss of his brother (Lydon, 2004). He did not feel scared or sad about going blind and attributed his feelings to the gradual loss of his sight (Charles & Ritz, 1978). However, when his sight deteriorated, Charles was still in shock over George's death and the pain of his first loss may have prevented him from processing the pain of the second, with both tragedies becoming one major life-changing event (Lydon, 2004). Aretha taught Charles to rely on his hearing and his fascination with sounds guided him through the world. Aretha's commitment to fostering his independence caused many of their neighbours to complain to her for enforcing discipline and chores on the young Charles. He said:

My mother was a country woman with a whole lot of common sense – she made me scrub floors, chop wood, wash clothes, she made sure I could wash and dress myself and her discipline did not stop just because I was blind. She used to tell people – he is blind, but he is not stupid. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 17)

Aretha was no more than twenty-three years of age by the time Charles was blind and she knew he would need an education better than she or the school in Greenville could provide (Charles & Ritz, 1978). Through the assistance of the white community, Aretha was told of St Augustine, the state school for the blind, which accepted a few black children each year. Charles recalled not wanting to leave his mother or Mary Jane. Despite his protests and Mary Jane's insistence that he stay, his mother was firm about her decision (Charles & Ritz, 1978).

Charles cried, pleaded and promised that he would be good just like George. His mother explained that it had nothing to do with George, but rather his education. She asked him to promise that he would never become a cripple and that he would be strong and stand on his own two feet. Charles nodded his head in agreement to which his mother conveyed her pride in him (Hackford et. al, 2004, Scene 21).

At the age of seven, on the 23rd October 1937, Charles started school at St Augustine. The school was segregated by race. The north campus belonged

to the white students and teachers, while the south campus belonged to the black students and teachers. Within each colour group there was division between the deaf and blind. Then within the deaf and blind groups, the girls were separated from the boys (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004). Regarding these divides Charles said:

I can't say it made me angry, it didn't, I was too far into my own problems and I just didn't think in those terms. The whole race business only hit me years later. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 22)

This would become Charles' second home for the next eight years of his life. The black faculty was always short staffed and the curriculum geared towards what was described as industrial arts, like broom making, rather than proper school education (Lydon, 2004). He was sad and lonely during his first year at the school. He started six weeks later than the other students, which made him feel like an outsider. The fact of being so poor that he needed clothes donated by the state gave older boys ammunition to tease him. Incidentally, he was called *Foots* because he had no shoes and they taunted him as a cry baby when he missed his mother.

Scholastically, Charles found Braille easy and within a few months he could read storybooks. He made some friends and in the afternoons they played together. Charles spent the two week Christmas break alone at St Augustine. His mother could not afford his train ticket and he recalled crying his eyes out: "*Crying has always been a way for me to get things out which are buried deep, deep down*" (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 25). During the second part of the school year his right eye started aching and the school doctor declared that his eye would need to be removed. The prospect of having his eye removed terrified Charles more than going blind, but he could not stand the pain. After the operation he slowly returned to his normal routine.

In June 1938, after nine months away, he returned home to Greenville for his summer holiday. In Greenville he was the only blind child and sometimes children excluded him from their games. The attitude of many people during

that time was that the blind were helpless and they believed that Charles would not be able to achieve anything except being led around. He stated:

There were three things that I never wanted to own when I was a kid – a dog, a cane and a guitar. In my brain they each meant blindness and helplessness...I did not want to have to depend on anyone or anything other than myself. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 41 & 42)

During his second year at school the eight-year old Charles discovered his grand ambition to be a great musician. He never thought of being famous or rich, but he wanted to be great. He had formal music instruction, sang in the choir, and learnt to read music in Braille. To learn a piece he and the other blind students needed to play the piano's left hand part, while reading with their right hand, then switch to playing the right hand part, while reading with their left, and then combine the two into the whole piece (Lydon, 2004). This was a time that afforded him the opportunities to expand his musical horizons. There were many artists who inspired Charles. At school he enjoyed listening to one of the older blind boys, Joe Lee Lawrence, play the piano. In the music industry there were many artists that were inspirational, especially Art Tatum, Artie Shaw, Charles Brown and Nat Cole. Regarding Nat Cole, Charles said:

I quickly learnt that by being able to duplicate his popular hits I could enjoy some recognition of my own.....even though I was not a teenager yet, my confidence as a musician was slowly building. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 45)

Charles learnt about the facts of life around the age of eleven. At school he was always attempting to sneak into the practice rooms with girls. The possibility of being caught, in Charles' opinion, was another big hazard of being blind. In 1943 Charles visited with family friends in Tallahassee. He got some gigs as a pianist and enjoyed his first experience of professional music. The women at the club liked Charles and at the age of thirteen, he had his first sexual experience (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004).

In the spring of 1945, the middle of May, Charles received news that his mother had died and he had to go home for her funeral. He stated:

Nothing had ever hit me like that, not George drowning, not going blind....Mama had raised me and now she was gone, I couldn't deal with that and for a while, I went a little crazy.
(Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 45)

Charles was aware that his mother was frail and sickly. She had, constantly throughout his life, told him that she was not always going to be with him, but at the age of fifteen Charles was not prepared for this loss (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004). Charles was in Jellyroll for a week before the funeral; people were concerned about his behaviour and felt that he could be a danger to himself. Everyone tried their best to comfort him, but to no avail. A religious woman of Christian faith and a close family friend, named Ma Beck, approached Charles. She spoke to and comforted him.

Charles described the deaths of his mother and brother as the two greatest tragedies in his life. He described the months after his mother's death as a turning point in his life. He did not ask anyone for advice and he felt that he needed to make up his own mind about his future.

At the age of fifteen Charles felt that he was ready for the world. Since he had no money, he believed that he only had two choices, either to go back to school or to quit. He decided to quit (Charles & Ritz, 1978). Although Mary Jane did not want Charles to leave, she told him of the Thompsons in Jacksonville, Florida who were prepared to take him in. Mary Jane bought his train ticket and leaving Greenville, Charles stated:

I was beginning a new life....deep inside I was also scared out of my wits, but that was alright, sometimes its fear which makes you move, and keeps you moving.....So what the hell I was carrying on, I was healthy, young and as nervy as the next kid, I knew I was going to have to make my own way...What choices did I have? I was not about to get a tin cup, a cane and find myself a street corner...I could sense something ticking inside me, a rhythm, a beat, a pulse...Even with all the wild fears and terrible pain brought on by Mama's death, I could feel a new

sensation, I was starting to generate a little faith – in myself.
(Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 65)

Fred and Lena Mae Thompson lived in a modest house situated in a neighbourhood called *La Villa*. In city directories of the mid-1940s, La Villa residents all had a little “(C)”, designated coloured, after their names. The Thompsons had no children of their own and they welcomed Charles into their home (Lydon, 2004). Charles got to know the city quickly and experienced little difficulty getting around on his own. With his acute sense of hearing and fascination with sounds Charles memorized routes. He also paid close attention to small details such as the height of each curb, pipes, sewers, or cracks in the sidewalk (Lydon, 2004).

Charles was determined to become a professional musician. Fred told him to join the musicians’ union and this is where he went every afternoon (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004). In popular music, black musicians could get gigs, national record contracts and radio shows, as well as local jobs. Black bands and combos played in clubs and bars in the black communities as well as country club balls and society events in the white communities. Charles was young compared to the other musicians. Everyone was at least five or ten years older than him. To play with the musicians at the union and to be able to cover any gig that might come up, Charles needed a working knowledge of popular music’s entire repertoire of songs (Lydon, 2004).

Like most beginners Charles had to learn songs one by one. He took some jobs where he offered to play for free though he was usually paid for his work. Since Charles was new at the union, he had to wait his turn at the piano, but as he waited he listened to the players. Some gladly showed Charles a new chord, but some would stop playing when they saw him coming, since they knew he would copy their songs and they did not want to give them away (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004). Charles stated:

I was so happy to be able to duplicate things I was hearing around me I did not see any problems...I was doubly proud when I found out I could duplicate other singers... I'd never had a voice lesson in my life. At school I had instruction for the piano

and clarinet, but my singing went its own merry way. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 72)

In the fall of 1946, Charles turned sixteen. After only a year, he had made a name for himself in Jacksonville. He was excited by the opportunity to perform as a pianist in a band travelling to Orlando (Charles & Ritz, 1978). Once there, the band was unsuccessful. They offered to pay for his ticket home, but Charles decided to stay. He was unemployed in a city where he knew no one and no one knew him, but he did not feel anxious to get back to Jacksonville. Although the Thompsons were wonderful to him, Charles wanted more independence (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004).

Few people reach this turning point so young, fewer still that are blind. It also stands as a first clear example of many such choices to come. From Orlando onwards when faced with the choice of independence or dependence, he usually chose independence...*“Independence became, in time, an ingrained habit of the man, an element of his character that some found grouchy, others cold-blooded”* (Lydon, 2004, p. 40).

Charles described his first few months in Orlando as the hardest days, often wondering whether he may actually starve to death (Charles & Ritz, 1978). Work was difficult to come by, the music industry was very competitive and some weeks he did not eat for a couple of days at a time (Charles & Ritz, 1978). At the age of 16 Charles had left Greenville for Jacksonville and was now pursuing his career in Orlando. This period represents a significant shift from his life as a young boy in Greenville. Charles concluded this period as an unknown musician, poorer than he had ever been, but determined to pursue his musical career.

5.2.2 Early adult transition (age 17 - 22)

Three sets of components were identified during this era. The *central components* identified during this era of transition include his career and musical success. The *peripheral components* include his experimentation with drugs and his relationships with friends, women and colleagues, while the

unfulfilled components include his longing for a wife and children as well as racial segregation.

In 1947 Charles was employed as a pianist in a band. He was given the opportunity to write music and do original arrangements for the band. This was a big step in his musical career and in his excitement he did not even ask to be paid (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004). Writing gave Charles a big lift, he felt that his worth as a musician had increased. In addition to singing and playing the piano, he could now legitimately call himself a writer. Nevertheless, disappointment followed when he auditioned for a position as a pianist and was told that he was not good enough.

Reflecting on this experience Charles could not recall anyone, except Mr Pit, who had provided him with much encouragement. He said:

Real musicians weren't pampered, they figured out what they had to do, and then they went out and did it. Sure it was cruel and hard nosed, but, baby you did learn to play. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 80)

After this experience, Charles' hurt pride forged a new determination, fuelling long hours of practice at the piano. After eight months in Orlando, a friend suggested they go to Tampa. Since work had dried up again, Charles left Orlando. By his seventeenth birthday in 1947, he had landed two good gigs. The first was playing as a pianist for a seven-piece band. Charles stood out on the second gig being the only black musician in a white country band (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 1988 & 2004). He said:

Can you feature that? The Deep South, 1948, a black dude playing piano in a hillbilly band? Well it happened, and I'm glad to say it happened to me. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 87)

Charles was aware of racial segregation in those years, but it was an issue that he decided to avoid (Charles & Ritz, 1978). At this time he met a sixteen-year old girl named Louise Mitchell. She is described as his first true love interest. Her parents did not support their relationship. They did not feel that a blind musician was the right person for their daughter. This tension impacted

on their love affair and for a short period they ran away to Miami. They returned once her parents agreed that she could be in a relationship with him. Although things were going well in Tampa, he became restless. His friend, Gossie McGee also wanted to get away and suggested Seattle. Charles did not know anything about Seattle. He simply felt that it seemed like a reasonable place to go. In March 1948 he arrived in Seattle and after a month Louise joined him (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004, Hackford et al., 2004, www.raycharles.com). He said:

I'd been on my own for three years, Florida toughened me up. Mama had been gone for a long time....I got news my father died, without me ever knowing him. I never even learned the details of his death, only that he passed in Adel, Georgia, while he was still a young man...When I think back on this part of my life – blowing into new cities and trying to make it, I can see that music was my means of survival, it was medicine for my brain...music allowed me to eat but it also allowed me to express myself. I played because I had to play, I rid myself of bad dreams and rotten memories, I got everything out of me.
(Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 97 & 98)

Charles got regular gigs at a nightclub. Along with Gossie and another musician, Milt, they formed a permanent group called the *McSon Trio*, also referred to as *Maxim Trio*. Gossie had suggested that Charles wear dark glasses in public since some people found his eyeless visage disconcerting. Sunglasses worked as an instant, glamorous solution, and thus was born the Ray Charles mask, known around the world, as a sightless singer who could not fully be seen (Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004). The *McSon Trio* played everywhere and after a couple of months someone asked them to play on the radio. This led to a small TV show that ran for five or six weeks. This was the first programme of its kind featuring black people (Charles & Ritz, 1978).

At this time, Charles became friends with a fifteen-year old musician, named Quincy Jones (Charles & Ritz, 1978). Quincy idolized Charles and his admiration penetrated the defences that Charles kept up with most musicians. The two musicians became close and formed a bond that lasted throughout their careers as they often worked together and supported each other in difficult times (Lydon, 2004). Towards the end of 1948, Jack Lauderdale,

president of *Down Beat Records* from Los Angeles told the Trio that he wanted to record their music. This was Charles' dream come true. He would be on a record just like the records on Mr Pit's jukebox. It was around this time that Charles changed his name. RC Robinson was not a good stage name and Ray Robinson was not good either because of the boxer Sugar Ray Robinson. Lauderdale suggested Ray Charles and since then he went by his first and middle name. In February 1949, the record was released and on the 9 April 1949 the song *Confession Blues* entered Billboards Best Selling Race Records Chart at no. 11 (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004; www.raycharles.com).

There had been tension in the trio for some time and drugs fuelled this tension (Lydon, 2004). Milt and his friends smoked marijuana and used heroin. Gossie did not want to be part of it, but Charles was intrigued. When he first arrived in Seattle he did not know what marijuana was, but he could smell it after performances. He started asking musicians about what they were smoking and he asked whether he could join them. At first they always said 'no', but Charles kept pushing and pestering (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004).

He liked the taste of marijuana and he enjoyed the mellow effect it had on his body and mind. He enjoyed playing on marijuana, he could feel the groove of the music and he thought it added to lovemaking, and so like everyone else, he smoked it (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004; Hackford et al., 2004). About two or three months later, he tried heroin. Charles said:

Now in my case it (heroin) happened because I wanted it to happen, there was not a pusher (dealer) hanging around in a back alley who enticed me into it... there was no profound philosophical or psychological reason for me wanting to try heroin, it was curiosity more than anything... the secrecy surrounding drugs made them even more intriguing and many of the great musicians could really play well on drugs, I wanted to find out why and I wanted to see if dope (heroin) helped. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 111 & 112)

Heroin would become a significant part of his life for the next sixteen to seventeen years. So too would marijuana, alcohol and nicotine for many years longer, but these caused him no particular problem. Heroin would become his private pleasure and the lies and secrets attendant on addiction scarred his character with a sour mistrust of other people (Lydon, 2004). According to Charles, if he had seen the bad effects of heroin, the vulgar side that everyone talks about, he would not have done it. He said:

I just wanted to get high like everyone else, enjoy life, and play my music – remember: I love me and I haven't ever wanted to destroy myself. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 112)

Charles' relationship with Louise was passionate, but their relationship was marred by conflict. She was homesick for Tampa and Charles felt the strain of being the sole breadwinner. During the time Charles was with Louise, he cheated on her about two or three times. Being a musician and being exposed to so much at the age of eighteen, made it easy for Charles to meet women. Charles really loved Louise and he never allowed her to find out about his infidelity. Marriage was not something they thought about, but they did want a child and when Louise had a miscarriage they were very sad (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004).

At the age of nineteen Charles knew his love affair with Louise was over and when he finally said good bye and she returned to her family in Tampa neither of them was aware that she was pregnant (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004). Alone, Charles withdrew deep inside himself as he had when his mother had died. Gigs with the trio dwindled, he moved into a cheap hotel with drug sellers close by and he used a lot of heroin. A friend once found him here slumped in a chair, scratching himself while listening to records (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004).

By 1950 the tension in the trio had reached a breaking point. Charles was suspicious about his share of the money believing he was being cheated. To prevent anyone from cheating him in the future he insisted to be paid in \$1 notes (Hackford et. al, 2004). Lauderdale mentioned he would record Charles

with a big band, subsequently setting up a session in Los Angeles. Charles felt it was time to go, and he told no one he was leaving (Lydon, 2004).

Charles' daughter Evelyn was born in 1950 and he sent Louise money whenever he could. When his relationship ended he started having sexual relations with many different women. In Los Angeles he started living as he would for years to come: making his music, using heroin and having two, three or more affairs at the same time (Lydon, 2004). He started enjoying his time in L.A. and he mostly attributed it to Lauderdale's friendship and his business interest in him. Lauderdale also introduced him to Lowell Fullson and they toured together. Charles described this as a significant shift in his career. He said:

This was the first time I headed out on the road with someone who was a big star. I didn't know it back then, but this was the same goddamn road that I'd be working for the next twenty-eight years, the road where most of my life – my musical life and my love life – was going to be spent. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p.117)

While touring the South in 1951, Charles became aware of the prejudice against black people for the first time. He did not feel that Seattle or L.A had been perfect, far from it. There were many places black people could not go, but he felt it was more sensible than the Deep South. Charles said:

All these things were new revelations for me. My little country town of Greenville was so quiet, so peaceful, so backwards that I grew up without any idea that there was actual hatred between the races. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p.127)

By the spring of 1951, months before his twenty-first birthday, Charles began to wonder why he was only doing well, not better. Imitating Nat Cole and Charles Brown for about seven years had proven to be worthwhile, but now he wanted people to recognize him. During this time he started experimenting with his own voice. While touring, he asked a girl named Eileen Williams, whom he had met before, to travel with him to Atlanta. Charles and Eileen got married three weeks later. Charles wanted a wife and a family and it seemed like the right time for him. A couple of months after they got married Charles

decided to quit Lowell's band and go on his own. They had formed a close friendship, but they started having financial difficulties and before things between them turned bad Charles decided to quit. He said:

If a cat (person) wrongs me, and if I haven't had time to free myself from the situation, then the guy is as good as dead as far as I am concerned. I won't be glad, I won't be sad, it won't mean nothing to me...When I cancel a person, that's it.
(Charles & Ritz, 1978 p. 132)

At the age of 22, Charles felt unsure about his future in music and his marriage. He believed that his marriage to Eileen had broken down because he was never at home and she had started drinking. Although he got high every day, he did not approve of Eileen's alcohol use. Charles soon separated from Eileen and they officially got divorced in 1953 (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004).

Jack Lauderdale was struggling and he had to sell Charles' contract. This was successful and Charles was now represented by the Billy Shaw Agency in New York. By the end of this period he had relocated from Orlando to Tampa, then Seattle, L. A. and finally New York. At the age of 22 he was entering a new period in his life. He had ended a significant two-year relationship and become a father; he had married and been divorced. He had established himself in the world of music, first as part of the Maxim Trio, then as a pianist in Lowell Fullson's band. He concluded this period as a single, determined person striving to pursue his solo music career.

5.2.3 Era of early adulthood (age 17 – 45)

This era is divided into three developmental periods including the first adult life structure (entering the adult world); the age thirty transition and the second adult life structure (settling down).

5.2.3.1 The first adult life structure: entering the adult world (age 22-28)

The *central components* identified in this first adult life structure are Charles' career, success and drugs. In the *early adult transition* experimentation with drugs was considered as a *peripheral component*, but it is evident that drugs occupied a more central role in his life during the *first adult life structure*. Racial segregation was identified as an *unfulfilled component* in the previous period and shifted to the periphery during this time. Other *peripheral components* included his marriage and children, his relationships with women, band members and colleagues. An *unfulfilled component* the researcher identified was Charles' dissatisfaction with the money he was making.

Charles signed with *Atlantic Records* in New York in 1952. By the end of the year, and a couple of times in 1953, he made his first records for Atlantic. The *Atlantic* team was disappointed with his first recordings, but not overly so. They believed in Charles and gave him time to develop his own style (Lydon, 2004; www.raycharles.com). Charles formed a close bond with the Atlantic team, specifically Ahmet Ertugen and Jerry Wexler. His social life centred on finding work and when he went to bars and clubs it was with that purpose in mind. He said:

Of all the people I have met in my life, I'd have to struggle hard to find five I'd call my friends, people I can really count on...that's my doing. I'm just not the type to have scores of long-lasting, intimate friendships. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 138)

He did not view New York as his home. After separating from Eileen he lived in one hotel after another. Charles sensed that the financial struggle was not over and money was something that continued to worry him. In 1953, Charles lost another member of his family. Mary Jane, who had been sick for a long time had died. He returned home to attend her funeral. This was difficult for Charles as he was very hurt by this loss. He started longing for different things

such as having his own house, a wife and children. Charles was in Houston, Texas for a gig when he met a girl named Della Beatrice. Charles called her 'B' and he liked her immediately. She was a singer, did not smoke or drink and was very shy. Della's bashfulness attracted Charles and their romance grew stronger. He had been singing about a happy home and kids since *Baby Let Me Hold Your Hand* (released 1951), but so far it had not worked:

*Baby I'll buy you a diamond ring
Cadillac and everything
I'm going to buy you a house in style
Then I'll live there forever
With my little wife and child.* (Lydon, 2004, p. 69)

Charles did not maintain fidelity, but between gigs he stayed with Della. He desperately wanted to get away from Houston as the city did not appeal to him (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004). After his experience with Louise and her family, Charles hoped to get Della away from her family in Houston. In addition, while he was still touring with Lowell in 1952, he met David Newman, nicknamed Fathead. They became close friends and ended up working together for twenty years. Once while in Houston, a policeman stopped them for no reason. They soon realized they were pulled over because the police did not like Fathead's hair. They took him down to the station leaving Charles alone on the side of the road by his car. He said:

They'd bust you if they felt like it. They'd call you nigger, motherfucker or anything else which tickled their fancy. And the worst thing you could do was talk back. Try to explain, try to defend yourself, try to reason - that's all the excuse the cop needed to bust you up the head. If you didn't want to get fucked up, you just kept quiet and bit your tongue. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 147)

When Della fell pregnant Charles convinced her to move with him to Dallas (Lydon, 2004).

The following map provides a visual representation of Charles' relocations from the age of sixteen to the present time.

Figure 5.1 Map of the United States of America:



While in Dallas, Charles met up with Jeff Brown who would become the manager of Charles and his group once it was formed. Della got a job at a drugstore to help pay their bills and they were happy together. In 1954, after three years on the road by himself, Charles was tired of having to play with any available band feeling that it was time he had one of his own. He knew he would be able to impose his own musical discipline. Eventually Billy Shaw agreed. Charles said:

These are the years – '53, '54, '55 – when I became myself. I opened up the floodgate, let myself do things I hadn't done before, created sounds which, people told me afterward, had never been created before. If I was inventing something I was not aware of it. In my mind I was just bringing out more of me.
 (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 148)

When *Atlantic* sent Charles songs they thought he should record, he often did not like them. This inspired him to write more of his own songs. He started taking gospel lyrics and transformed them into regular songs. He had been singing spiritual songs since he was three and listening to blues music for just as long. Nothing felt more natural to him than to combine the two. Now with his own band, he could create the musical world he had first heard in Greenville (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004).

Atlantic allowed Charles to record anything he had wanted. They trusted him and gave him the freedom to create his own style of music. The same could have been said for Jack Lauderdale at *Swingtime* and would be no different when he started recording for *ABC* years later (Lydon, 2004). Charles still was not much of a name, incidentally feeling that he had no right to demand or dictate anything. He believed he was developing, and that Ahmet and Jerry gave him the space to find himself (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004).

Charles recorded *I Got a Woman* which became his first real hit song. *I Got a Woman* was Charles' declaration of his love for Della and her support to find his own style of music. Even though this record, made toward the end of 1954, was very successful, Charles still felt he was making too little money (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004). With *I Got a Woman* he entered rock n roll and the national consciousness. At the beginning of 1955 he was still unknown, but by the end of that year the 25-year old Charles had become known to millions of Americans (Lydon, 2004).

During 1955 Charles and Della got married. He told her about his past relationships and his daughter Evelyn. He informed his girlfriends that he was married and they were not to make contact with him. They moved into a modest house in South Dallas. Charles emphasised the need for them to respect each other's privacy. More specifically, he did not want Della to find out about his heroin use (Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004). He did not remain faithful to Della and started a relationship with a singer named Mary Ann Fischer, whom he told he was single. She was the first female vocalist

that he had used in the band. Two months after their wedding Della gave birth to their first son Ray Jr. Charles said:

He was so small. I was scared I would hurt him...By the time he was two or three months old, I got over my fear. I started playing with him and roughing him around. He liked that as much as I liked being papa...My life was what it was. Whatever it became I made it so. I had a wife, a child, I was the leader of a little band, a singer and recording artist of modest stature. I was also a man who loved women and getting high. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 160 & 161)

Della found out about Charles' heroin use when he was arrested in Philadelphia. Charles and some of his band members were relaxing in his hotel room when the police raided their room and found drugs. The arrest was featured in newspapers, but it had little effect on his career. This experience made him very angry. He became more hostile towards the authorities and perhaps even a bit more defiant (Lydon, 2004). Della was very distressed by this revelation and she wanted Charles to stop using heroin, but he refused (Hackford et al., 2004).

From 1956 to 1958 he worked on his music relentlessly (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004). Three times each year he put out a new single. One of these singles also reached the pop charts. Charles recorded his first jazz album and he added the Raeletts to his touring act (Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004). During this time Della gave birth to their second son, David. Charles relocated the family from South Dallas to Los Angeles. The Raeletts included Mary Ann and three girls, one named Margie Hendrix. Generations of Raeletts succeeded the original three (Lydon, 2004).

Charles would sleep with one of his lady singers while seducing a second, and romanticising the third (Lydon, 2004). Charles started an affair with Margie Hendrix who replaced Mary Ann as his girlfriend on tour. Mary Anne was not prepared to share him with Margie, which promptly led to her resignation. Della did not like drugs or the fact that he had affairs, but being

compliant by nature she accepted life on his terms (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004).

By the age of 28, Charles' career as a solo artist was established and he expanded his musical style by using female vocalists in his band. He was recognized as a professional musician and he relocated his family to Los Angeles. He had always longed for a family and by this stage he was married with children. However, his family were kept in the periphery and he continued using heroin and having affairs.

5.2.3.2 Age 30 transition: changing the first life structure (age 28 - 33)

The *central components* identified in the life of Charles during this transitional period are his career, success and drugs. The *peripheral components* include his marriage and family, relationships with women, band members and colleagues, as well as racial segregation. It is evident that he did not make any significant changes during this transitional period as the *central* and *peripheral* components identified are considered to be the same in this period as in the previous one.

Around 1958 Charles was using heroin daily, but he was also writing music and working very hard. He was making more money and, therefore, using more heroin. He did not believe that heroin stimulated his productivity or creativity, but he also did not believe that it hurt his music (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004). When high, he often scratched himself in jerky movements, but he also knew how to project a calm front to the world (Lydon, 2004).

He knew his heroin use hurt Della more than any other person and he regretted this, but not enough to quit. His manager Jeff Brown, hated heroin and he never used it in front of him. They were like brothers and Charles respected that it disturbed Jeff. The same can be said for everyone at *The Shaw Agency* and *Atlantic* records. They were not providing him with heroin,

but they put up with it because they knew it was a part of him (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004).

At the age of 29 a lot of his dreams had come true and one was realized in 1959 when he played at Carnegie Hall, appearing with Billie Holiday and Lady Day. Charles' affair with Margie continued. Della and the children were on the sidelines, in touch by phone, but emotionally out of touch (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004). That spring Margie fell pregnant. They decided to have the baby and Charles would provide for it (Lydon, 2004). During Margie's months off, Mae Mosely Lyles became Charles' girlfriend on tour. Mae became a major mistress, with some people calling her his New York wife. By the end of 1959 Charles had changed labels, leaving *Atlantic* for *ABC*, and although it was difficult for him he described this as the smartest money decision of his life (Lydon, 2004).

Ahmet Ertugen and Jerry Wexler told him that they loved him, but they could not match *ABC's* lucrative offer. They felt Charles had abandoned them at the height of their success. They were angry and felt betrayed (Hackford et. al, 2004; Lydon, 2004). Through the sixties Charles circled the globe. These were the years when, after a decade of struggling upwards, he had reached the top. In 1960, he worked for weeks on his first album for *ABC Paramount*, *Genius Hits the Road*. One song in particular, *Georgia On My Mind*, stands out.

Georgia, Georgia
A song of you
Comes sweet and clear
As moonlight through the pines...
The arms that reached out to me
The eyes smile tenderly
Still in peaceful dreams I see
The road leads back to you. (Lydon, 2004, p. 182)

He invested the lyrics with much of his own life, the longing for his childhood, Greenville, and his mother, and in it he conveys the universal yearning for home (Lydon, 2004). *Georgia* reached number one on the charts and for

Charles it was a major accomplishment. He loved the growing excitement and size of his audiences, incidentally he loved the growing money for himself and the plans it made possible. The long battle to the top had imbued him with a certain stoicism. Since he really did not know how well a record would do, he put everything into all of his songs (Lydon, 2004). Charles won four Grammy Awards including two for *Georgia On My Mind*, and one each for *The Genius Of Ray Charles* and *Let The Good Times Roll* (www.raycharles.com). In this year Margie gave birth to a boy and named him Charles Wayne. Charles, however, did not see much of them (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004).

Charles did not get directly involved with the civil rights movement. He liked what the Reverend Martin Luther King had to say and how he said it. He felt a kinship with King, another ambitious black man, only a year older than himself. Yet, Charles did not march for King and explained this to him personally. Firstly, he said that he would not be able to duck when people started throwing beer bottles at his head. Secondly, he would not be able to tolerate certain treatment and with that he felt that he would defeat King's purpose (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004).

On March 15, 1961 in Augusta, Georgia, Charles was confronted with the national battle over segregation. A promoter insisted that their performance be segregated, the blacks upstairs and the whites downstairs. He could not tolerate the racial prejudice and refused to play if the promoter insisted on segregation (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004). The promoter did not budge and Charles did not play. He was sued by the promoter, lost the case and was banned from playing in the state of Georgia. Racial segregation became an issue that he could no longer ignore. The story of Charles' 'no' to segregation got wide and appreciative coverage in the black press (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004).

During 1961, while sleeping in a hotel room in Indianapolis, police burst into Charles' room and found heroin (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004 Lydon, 2004). He was at the police station for an hour before he was

released. The arrest was serious, but still did not deter him from using heroin (Lydon, 2004). He would get sick and experience convulsions, but he did not feel that heroin was hurting his music or his career. This arrest turned his addiction from an open secret to a known fact. After this incident, in city after city, police detectives showed up backstage at his shows, for no reason except that they were just checking (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004).

While in New York, Mae Mosely Lyles told Charles that she was pregnant (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004). He agreed to support her and the baby. Back in Los Angeles, Della gave birth to their third son, Robert. When Charles returned home for the holidays, he felt awkward with his children (Lydon, 2004). His son, Ray Jr. was beginning to understand that his father was not like other parents, he was not home very much and when he was he barely spoke to him or his brothers. Ray Jr. thought that his father had a strange way of moving, wiggling and slapping himself and when he asked his mother about this, she responded by saying that it was just the way he was (Lydon, 2004).

At the age of 31, in January 1962 Charles was in a courtroom for the drug arrest in Indianapolis. His lawyer contended that the police had entered his hotel room on false pretences and without a proper warrant. Three weeks later the judge ruled the police search illegal and dismissed the charges (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004).

Joe Adams became a significant person in his life. At this time they had been working together for one year. Charles had an acute awareness of Adams who seemed unafraid of anybody, white or black, and he did not hesitate to confront anyone whom he deemed incompetent (Lydon, 2004). They often had fierce arguments, and Adams, unlike anyone else in the entourage could hold his own and sometimes win. Charles was merciless about getting the music right onstage, but Jeff Brown, his manager for many years now, had the job of keeping band members in line offstage (Lydon, 2004).

Even in his small band days, Charles thought Jeff was too soft, but now that the band had doubled in size, he became more impatient with his relaxed style (Lydon, 2004). Adams, on the other hand, was a dominant and forceful character. In 1963 Adams officially became his manager. Charles was convinced that Jeff had stolen from him through the years, and despite Jeff's protests, Charles did not relent (Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004). Once he had made that decision, Jeff was replaced. Until his death, Jeff Brown denied ever stealing from him, saying that he wished he had because he deserved more from Charles than he ever got (Lydon, 2004).

Charles had relationships with numerous women over his lifetime and he had twelve children. He acknowledged that he did not know all the children he fathered. The following table is a schematic representation of the significant relationships he had and the child/children he had fathered.

Table 5.1 Timeline representing Charles' women and children

Year	Levinson's Developmental Period	Women (relationship status)	Year	Levinson's Developmental Period	Children
1947	Early Adult Transition (age 17-22)	Louise Mitchell (girlfriend for 2 years)	1950	Early Adult Transition (age 17-22)	Daughter Evelyn
1951	Early Adult Transition (age 17-22)	Eileen Williams (Wife for approximately 1 year)			
1955	First adult life structure (age 22-28)	Della Beatrice (Wife for 20 years)	1956	First adult life structure (age 22-28)	Son Ray Jr
			1957	Age 30 Transition (age 28-33)	Son David
			1961		Son Robert
1955	First adult life structure (age 22-28)	Mary Anne Fischer (Band member and mistress)			
1956	First adult life structure (age 22-28)	Margie Hendrix (Band member and mistress)	1960	Age 30 Transition (age 28-33)	Son Charles Wayne
1959	First adult life structure (age 22-28)	Mae Mosely Lyles (Mistress)	1962	Age 30 Transition (age 28-33)	Daughter Ranaee
1962	Age 30 transition (age 28-33)	Sandra Jean Betts (Mistress)	1963	Age 30 Transition (age 28-33)	Daughter Sheila
1967	Age 30 transition (age 28-33)	Arlette Kotchounian (Mistress)	1976	Entering middle adulthood (age 45-50)	Son Vincent
1970's	Mid-life transition (age 40-45)	Sysaye (Band member and mistress) Ruth Robinson (Mistress for 18 years) Norma (Mistress for approximately 20 years)			
1976	Entering middle adulthood (age 45-50)	French lady (name unknown)	1976	Entering middle adulthood (age 45-50)	Daughter (name unknown)

Charles started an affair with Sandra Jean Betts. When she fell pregnant he agreed to help with her medical costs and he put her in contact with his doctor (Lydon, 2004). However, Sandra apprehended that Charles was vague about financial assistance in the future and in August 1963, she filed a paternity suit against him. He felt that the suit was legal blackmail. Whatever the cost in bad publicity and embarrassment to Della, he would not budge and said that she would have to fight for every penny (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004).

Billboard declared Charles the number one recording artist of 1962 with *I can't stop loving you* the top selling single and *Modern Sound* the top selling album. He won seven Grammy Awards during this transitional period (see Appendix C).

By the end of this transition Charles had been in court for saying 'no' to segregation, drug charges and would soon be in court to face a paternity suit. He had made changes in the structure of his career by replacing his long-time manager Jeff Brown with Joe Adams. From the information available Charles had fathered four children during this period and by this stage he was the father of seven children altogether. Charles concludes this period as an award winning, successful musician.

5.2.3.3 The second adult life structure: settling down (age 33 - 40)

The *central components* identified during the settling down period include his career, the law and quitting heroin. Charles' difficulties with the law are considered a *central component* in his life, as they consumed much of his time and energy during this period which also had a direct influence on his heroin use. Heroin had been identified as a *central component* in his life since the *first adult life structure*, but during this period there was a shift, namely that the focus was on quitting heroin. The *peripheral components* include his family, his relationships with women, his manager, colleagues and band members.

In 1963 Charles bought two properties in Los Angeles. He bought a house for Della and their children in an upper middle class black neighbourhood and an empty plot where he built his business. This building, West Washington Boulevard, became, in time, his true home on earth. The building he built there included with its offices, recording studio, and bachelor pad, became the place that he called home for the next thirty years (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004). When Charles switched from *Atlantic* to *ABC*, he decided to begin a publishing firm, called *Ray Charles Enterprises*, and with that *Tangerine Records*. This was a significant step up in the music business industry. All royalties from record sales and air play would be paid directly to *Tangerine*, and anyone who wanted to use *Tangerine* songs would have to consult him personally (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004).

On 30 September 1963 Sandra gave birth to a baby girl and the court case resumed in January 1964. The jury only needed an hour to decide that Charles was the father of Sandra's child and he was ordered to pay child support and her lawyer's fees. The trial was very distressing for Della, but she was by his side throughout the process. Della tolerated his affairs, but with this lawsuit his infidelity became public knowledge. She felt ashamed that the secrets of her marriage were exposed by the press and that her family had discovered the truth about her emotionally empty marriage. She did not say much, but felt sick with grief and rage (Lydon, 2004).

During this year *ABC* put out five of Charles' singles. These did not achieve much success. However, at the age of 34 he felt that he was still too young and tough to move into pop music obscurity. In June, Charles fired Margie Hendrix. They were close, but he was not happy with her drug use and he had grown tired of her defiant attitude. Margie's departure ended a historical partnership. He sang with many other women later in his career, but none matched him in tone or challenged him in emotional intensity as had Margie (Lydon, 2004).

Toward the end of the year Charles performed in Cleveland, then Montreal and finally he flew to Boston. When he got off his private aeroplane he had

marijuana and heroin on him. He was stopped by Federal Agents. It would be a year before he was sentenced (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004).

Charles decided to take a break from touring in 1965. This was the first time in twenty years that he would not be performing in public (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004). He told his band they were off till further notice. Mae Mosely Lyles took this as a sign that Charles was abandoning her and their daughter. She consulted a lawyer and filed a petition against him. A second paternity suit on top of the drug arrest did not deter Charles from settling out of court. At the age of 34, on 26 February 1965 a federal grand jury returned a criminal indictment against him on four narcotics charges. If convicted he could face a maximum of sixty years in prison and \$40 000 in fines (Lydon, 2004).

In April and May, Charles was feeling the strain. He appeared in court for the paternity suit and lost the case against Mae. Once again the tension between Charles and Della reached breaking point. Reflecting on these two paternity suits he said:

I think the ladies now regret what they did, I pay exactly what the court ordered and not a dime more...if they had only cooled it and let the thing ride out naturally they would have ended up with more bread (money), but they misunderstood, got a little greedy, started pushing and found out I was not budging.
(Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 237)

At this time Charles became worried about his heroin use. He continued using it every day while at the same time reflecting on his life. He realized that he had to make a choice between heroin and his music (Lydon, 2004). The climax of his decision came when he realized the impact a prison sentence would have on his oldest son, Ray Jr. He had never been a demonstrative dad, being seldom at home, and when he managed to be there he was too busy for his children (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004).

Charles realized that if he continued using heroin, he would lose, along with his music and women, the love and respect of his son. Charles went to

Adams and told him that he wanted to check into hospital. He needed a doctor with the credentials to convince the court that he had truly quit and that he would never use it again. Discreet enquiry yielded the name of Dr Friederich J. Hacker a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst from Vienna who had a thriving celebrity practice in Beverly Hills (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004). He said:

I saw that if I was going to give up heroin it was a deal I had to make with myself, no one else could be involved, I might bullshit others but I cannot bullshit Ray. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 256)

On 26 July 1965, Charles went to hospital. He had told Dr Hacker that he did not want psychoanalysis or medication to assist with the withdrawal. After two days the vomiting and diarrhoea passed and after the third and fourth day the spasms ceased. The physical addiction was something he felt he could put behind him, but the psychological addiction was the real struggle. At this point though, Charles had already promised himself that he would quit. He felt that his mind and body were working together during those first days. Three times a week he attended sessions with Dr Hacker. He resisted his questions trying to keep the subject to music and politics, but after weeks a bond grew between patient and therapist. He told Dr Hacker about George drowning, going blind and the lonely first days at St Augustine as well as his mother's death (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004). Charles was edgy during the first few months off heroin and he easily burst into tears at the memory of his brother's death (Lydon, 2004).

On 22 November, at the age of 35, he appeared in front of the Judge in Federal Court. By the end of the day, the Judge agreed to waive immediate sentence and continue the case after a year with the provision that Charles report to Government doctors at such times as designated by the Court. He went back to Los Angeles elated. He thanked Dr Hacker most of all and continued seeing him for informal therapy sessions that tapered off into friendship. He did not feel that quitting heroin provided him with a new lease on life, neither did he sense any change for better or worse in his mental or physical state.

The only significant change in Charles' opinion was that he did not crave heroin every morning (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004). Reflecting on his experience he said:

Looking back, I can't say that kicking (quitting) was a nightmare or the low point of my life. For a few days I was sick – that's as far as I can go... I was a junkie for seventeen years, but maybe my habit was not as severe as other people's. I can only speak for myself and describe my own condition....Cigarettes and smack (heroin) are the only two addictive habits I've known (you might add women). I can't put booze or reefer (marijuana) in that category, even though I like to do both. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 260)

In 1966 he was ready to start touring again. In April he had to go to hospital for his court-ordered heroin check and after three days he was pronounced clean. In November, at the age of 36, Charles was sentenced to a five-year probation and he paid a fine of \$10 000 (Lydon, 2004). During this period he was the youngest member inducted into Playboy Magazine's Jazz Hall of Fame and he won a Grammy Award (see Appendix C).

In the course of this period Charles bought two properties and established his own business. He took his first break from touring in twenty years and he quit heroin that had been part of his life for seventeen years. Quitting heroin enabled him to escape a prison sentence and he was placed on five years probation. In addition to the drug charges he had also lost two paternity suits. As the 1960s drew to a close Charles had become an acclaimed star all across the world. Approaching forty, he was beginning to enter a second maturity as an artist at the height of his success (Lydon, 2004).

5.2.4 The mid-life transition: moving from early to middle adulthood (age 40 – 45)

The *central component* identified during this period is Charles' career and relationship with his manager. A major shift in this period is that heroin did not occupy a place in his life structure and his relationship with his manager played a more central role in his life. The *peripheral components* include his

family, relationships with women and his band members. It is evident that by the *mid-life transition*, as well as during this transition, Charles had not made his family a *central component* in his life structure. Although he had significant relationships with a variety of women, none of these relationships were of primary importance in his life. Many of his band members had been part of his life for many years, but it was evident that none of them were irreplaceable.

In the early and mid-70s, he continued to work at the same steadfast pace he had for been years. He recorded, played concert after concert, circled the globe dozens of times, he appeared on television shows and won a Grammy award (see Appendix C). He also continued to have affairs with many women. Charles believed in having options. If a woman ended their affair he needed to know two or three others who would take him in (Charles & Ritz, 1978).

These women were deeply attached to him and for many he was the only man in their lives (Lydon, 2004). He did not consider these relationships to be light hearted or silly, on the contrary, he viewed many as serious, but he did not feel that he was able to discipline himself sexually (Charles & Ritz, 1978). He felt lucky that his mother was neutral regarding sex, especially considering the times he grew up in. In the Deep South the word sex was never even mentioned. Sex was considered a sin for which you would spend an eternity in hell (Charles & Ritz, 1978). Regarding his love of women, Charles said:

Women anchor me...I'm not saying I've loved that many women, love is a special word and I only use it when I mean it...But sex is something else, I'm not sure that there can ever be too much sex, to me it's another of our daily requirements – like eating. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 239)

During the winter of 1970, Charles was interviewed for Playboy magazine. He refused to talk about his drug use, but spoke out about race “...*the greatest handicap I've had, and still have, is my colour*” (Lydon, 2004, p. 288). Musically he was not producing any hit songs and ABC wanted him to make some changes. He was angry about this suggestion, for he never allowed anyone to dictate what he should be doing musically (Lydon, 2004). His need

to keep control over his music appears to have been his attempt to survive in the business, to keep working and hope to stay in the limelight. He said:

I don't think the day will ever come when I think I'm at my peak. First of all, the game is not that way. Once you're at the status where life is liveable for you, what you try for thereafter is to stay there. (Lydon, 2004, p. 287)

Charles started an affair with Ruth Robinson, a young woman who worked at *Ray Charles Enterprises*. She fell in love with him and was faithful to him. She knew that he was married, but did not realize that she would become one of the many women in his life. Ruth felt that their relationship was more than sex. She believed that he was really interested in her ideas and plans. He encouraged her ambitions to write songs and to be a journalist. When Charles was in Los Angeles he would often not tell Della that he was back, while instead spending his time with Ruth. He also started an affair with a woman named Norma and one of the Raelettes, Susaye. Charles was romantic and often adorned his women with lavish gifts. He shared his experiences with these women and was open about the loss of his brother and mother (Lydon, 2004).

By 1972 Charles and Adams had been working together for 10 years and their partnership was strong. Charles gave him authority and power to assert control over the band, his business and money. He had come to depend on Adams. Charles enjoyed being the patriarch of *Ray Charles Enterprises*, but no matter how much money he made, he often told his employees “...I have to go to work, so you all can have something to eat” (Lydon, 2004, p. 297).

He held his employees to a high standard. His valets had to be available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Secretaries often only lasted a month and his ceaseless drive made *Ray Charles Enterprises* a volatile place to work. Adams exacerbated this tension. Many band members working for them felt they were cheap and mean, especially, while touring. Adams openly scorned musicians as riffraff while Charles projected a distant, disdainful attitude to his band members (Lydon, 2004).

Adams was intimidating, but at the same time he was also intimidated by Charles. He did whatever his boss wanted. Charles was often very difficult to work with not only on tour, but also when recording. Many artists idealized him and revelled in the opportunity to work with him, but if he did not like what he heard he would get angry with musicians until they were too scared to play. It appears that he believed he had to do everything himself to get his music right (Lydon, 2004). He released *Volcanic Action of My Soul* and it peaked at number 52 on the charts. At this time, after working together for twenty years, Fathead Newman left Charles for a better offer. In the future, they would sometimes work together on special occasions (Lydon, 2004).

In 1974 Charles left *ABC*. This ended a fourteen-year partnership in his recording career. For the first time *Ray Charles Enterprises* was not affiliated with a major record label. He released *Come Live with Me*, a single which peaked at number 82, and the album never reached the charts. The public did not dislike *Come Live with Me*, but without *ABC's* marketing strategies and because of his five-year slump, distributors did not want to buy the product. In the concert halls, he was still successful and his nine-months a year tour continued (Lydon, 2004).

During this period Charles continued to work at a fast pace. He had maintained this pace of work since his early twenties. He also continued to have numerous affairs. The end of this period represented a change in Charles' musical success. He ended a significant partnership with *ABC*, he had been in a five-year slump and his recent album sales were also poor. Approaching 45, Charles was entering a new period in his life.

5.2.5 Era of middle adulthood (age 40 – 65)

Levinson et al. (1978) divide this period into life structure building and maintaining periods. This era includes entering middle adulthood (building a new life structure); the age fifty transition; the culmination of middle adulthood (building a second structure) and the late adult transition.

5.2.5.1 Entering middle adulthood: building a new life structure (age 45 – 50)

There are significant changes in the *central components* identified during this period. His career and the role his manager played in his life were still of primary significance, but the ending of his marriage and his emotional struggle occupied a central role in his life. The *peripheral components* include his relationships with women and his children and the awards he received.

Charles and Della had been married for 21 years, and by 1976 their marriage was over. After a trial separation, initiated by Della, they officially divorced. Charles could see how his series of love affairs had finally ended his marriage. Charles felt that things may have been different if he took more time off. He believed the opportunities were there to improve the marriage, but he was not. He reflected that he was too preoccupied with music and money. He felt that they may have had a better chance at a good marriage if Della had toured with him and shared his life. Reflecting on his relationship with Della, he said:

I have to blame myself for 80 or 85 percent of the damage to our marriage. I was the one who fell into dope (heroin) and into paternity suits. I knew what I was doing, I saw the risks, I was selfish. All these babies, all these drugs, all these months and years away on the road – they took their toll. The collapse of a marriage – especially one that began so many years ago – is a sad and hurtful thing. And all I can do – all I want to do – is recall those happy, good years, when we were both singers in Texas, very young and starry eyed in love. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 284 & 285)

Charles did not believe in comparing women or his children. He described growing closer to his sons with Della, but only because he was there more often. He was also close with his daughter Evelyn, his first child whom he fathered with Louise. He described her aptly as Louise his first love. He was

unable to integrate all his children into his life. They were leading lives of their own and existed outside of his day-to-day life. Charles said:

But then again, even the boys I had with Della – the kids who see me the most – have grown up with an absentee father.
(Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 237)

By the time his divorce was finalised he had two children with two different women (see Table 5.1). His youngest son with Della, Robert, was still a young kid, but David the middle son, was involved with a group of friends that was a source of concern for Della. Ray Jr. was getting C's in his business course and Charles was only prepared to give him a small allowance. For his first date with his girlfriend he took her to McDonalds with coupons Della gave him. Ray Jr. wanted to work for his father, but they seldom saw each other and fought when they did (Lydon, 2004).

In March 1976 Charles won his 10th Grammy Award, proof to him that the industry, if not the public, was listening to his new work. He was honoured as man of the year and received this award the day after his divorce (Lydon, 2004; www.raycharles.com). In addition to these awards Charles received much recognition during this time (see Appendix C).

At the age of 46 Charles agreed to collaborate on his autobiography with author David Ritz. He considered all the possible consequences and rewards involved in this undertaking. He considered whether he would be hurting himself or anyone else, he contemplated if there was anything he felt ashamed of and he realized there was nothing he needed to censor. Regarding this undertaking he said:

I've been hearing a lot about myself for a long time. Some of the things people say are good and bad, others are highly inaccurate and misleading. There is also lavish praise, folk calling me a cornerstone of music or a legend in my own time. That's strong language and lately I've been trying to figure out how I feel about it all. In order to do that I must look into myself. That requires going back, putting everything in perspective. Seeing where I come from and everything I've been through takes some time and some thought. (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 2)

He was heavily involved in the process of the book. He wanted it to provide an honest account of his life. Ritz described Charles as a man who was incapable of faking his feelings. He was genuinely angry, upset, excited or moved by a piece of music. Charles reflected on his expression of his feelings through his music. He said: “...*those melodies and rhythms can only do so much...but if the pain is really deep, nothing short of brain surgery is going to make it go away*” (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 295).

He reflected on getting older and expressed his fear of death, the frightening thought of possibly dying of cancer and his spiritual beliefs. He acknowledged that if he was dying, he would not be able to sleep alone. Charles indicated that he would not retire, saying: “...*I don't understand what retirement is, and I don't intend to find out. Music is nothing separate from me, it is me...I believe the Lord will retire me when He is ready and then I'll have plenty of time for a long vacation*” (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 307).

By 1977 Charles had reached a point in his career where he stopped selling records. For the first time in thirty years he had no record company eager for his work. He went back to *Atlantic* and after satisfactory financial arrangements he signed a multi-album deal. In 1978 Charles released *Love and Peace*. Current stars had been outselling him for years and by this time the confidence that had carried him through decades of ups and downs seemed finally to falter (Lydon, 2004).

Professional as always, he kept working and kept up appearances towards the public, but the people around him noticed a change (Lydon, 2004). The restlessness and anger that had been characteristic of Charles changed and people experienced him as sad and resentful. The divorce played a role as did his approaching fiftieth birthday. Memories stirred up by his autobiography, *Brother Ray* may also have played a role. Charles still longed for hits, yet release after release his songs did not make it (Lydon, 2004). Touring had always been tedious, but playing to half-empty audiences became very difficult for him.

He found this experience aggravating and unbearably boring. He became irritable and demanding, on stage and off (Lydon, 2004). The atmosphere in the band got so tense that members were leaving and joining regularly. The women in his life witnessed his anger. Sometimes he exploded about old losses saying that he had been robbed by his old friends Jeff Brown, Gossie McGee and Milt Shaw. He would get angry that Frank Sinatra made more money than he did and at other times reflected that if he had been stronger he could have pulled George out of the washtub (Lydon, 2004).

Brother Ray came out in the fall of 1978 and its positive reviews and strong sales provided for a buoyant atmosphere in the generally despondent environment. In March 1979, the *Georgia House of Representatives* proclaimed *Georgia on My Mind* the state song. They apologised for the ban and invited Charles to sing at the capitol in Atlanta. Recognition from the state where he had been born fifty years before moved him deeply. The thunderous standing ovation he received did a lot to lift his spirits (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004; www.raycharles.com).

Approaching 50 Charles had created his life around his career. The difficulties in his career, the ending of his twenty-year marriage to Della, as well as writing his autobiography contributed to his emotional struggle during this period. While this period represents a time of significant struggle in Charles' emotional, personal and professional life he also experienced major success with his autobiography and he received numerous awards for his accomplishments.

5.2.5.2 The age 50 transition (age 50 – 55)

During the *age 50 transition* Charles' career remained the *central component* in his life while health issues also became of primary importance. His relationship with his manager was also significant and remained a *central component* in his life during this period. There were no changes in the *peripheral components* identified which include his relationships with women,

band members and his children. Another *peripheral component* identified during this period is his political views and racial issues.

In the winter of 1980 Charles released another album called *At It Again*. It appeared and disappeared just like its predecessors. He was ready to give up on his music career (Lydon, 2004). He liked what he was doing but nobody else was interested. He realized that to win the mass record market he had to come up with a different plan and he started playing concerts with a symphony orchestra. This proved profitable and in years to come he performed countless such gigs (Lydon, 2004).

In September 1980 Charles turned fifty. Ray Jr. got married and in 1981 Charles became a grandfather (Lydon, 2004). In 1983 while touring for approximately one month, he started experiencing a strange sensation in his left ear. With one ear not working correctly his balance was thrown out, and he found it harder to gauge corridors. For a week or so, it got worse until the pain became unbearable. Charles consulted a doctor, received treatment and after some time his hearing was restored. This experience had shaken Charles, the thought of losing his hearing was intolerable. He said:

If I had lost my hearing, I would not be able to hear music, I'd eventually lose the ability to speak or sing, I'd no longer be able to get around by myself...With me so much depends on my hearing, when I walk, I listen to where I'm going. I know people by their voices. I see the world with my ears. I know all about Helen Keller, but she was a miracle, there has only been one Helen Keller as far as I know and she was an amazing and inspirational person, I sure don't put myself in her category...Folk underestimate the blind. The blind don't have to live in fear and the blind don't have to tremble in the dark. Blindness can be overcome, that's fact, but blindness and deafness... well that's another matter. (Charles & Ritz, 2004, p. 300 & 301)

Charles had stopped viewing his blindness as a handicap a long time ago, but he never forgot his limitations. In his private life his love of women continued to absorb much of his time and energy. Since the divorce Della was doing well and had started seeing male friends, but Charles was still the patriarch of the

Robinson family. His youngest son Robert was a serious young man who wanted to become a preacher. However, his older sons were having a harder time (Lydon, 2004).

David, his second son, got involved with drugs, including the hallucinogen, PCP. In April 1983, he sexually assaulted two women at gunpoint, got arrested and was eventually found guilty on two counts of rape. He was sentenced to eleven years in prison (Lydon, 2004). This event was traumatic for everyone, but it hurt Della the most. She had struggled for years to provide a good home environment for her children without the help of Charles. She felt that she had failed as a mother. Ray Jr. at the age of 30 was still trying to establish a career. He clung to the idea that he would work for his father and he felt angry when Charles refused to support him in business ventures. He talked this over with his older sister Evelyn and she agreed that their father was selfish with his children (Lydon, 2004).

Many people felt that Charles, fatherless himself, had no idea how to be a father. Blindness and constant travel prevented him from watching his children grow up. His pursuit of women had provided an escape from the pains, joys, hence responsibilities of family life. He seemed awkward with his three sons. He could have helped Ray Jr. get started in the music business, but instead he did little but say 'no' to his son's requests. Charles was disappointed with his children. Being a realist above all he knew that none would ever match him in intellect, talent or ambition. He did not think that Ray Jr. could be entrusted with *Ray Charles Enterprises*. Charles' secretiveness kept him from preparing any of his heirs for the wealth they stood to inherit (Lydon, 2004).

In 1984, *The Republic National Convention* in Dallas was taking place. Re-electing Ronald Reagan after his triumphant first term required a grand finale to follow his acceptance speech. The Democrats were saying that Ronald Regan's New Morning excluded black people and ignored civil rights, stole from the poor and gave to the rich. The Republicans asked Charles to perform *America the Beautiful* and he agreed. Though he seldom discussed politics in public he had during the 70s gone on record as a Democrat. Many of his fans

were surprised to see a Martin Luther King supporter singing to a president who opposed making King's birthday a national holiday (Lydon, 2004).

About the same time, anti-apartheid critics began pointing out that Charles had performed in South Africa. He felt hurt by the criticism and he responded angrily (Lydon, 2004). He said that playing the Republican Convention was just one more gig. The Democrats wanted him to do the same thing but they did not want to pay him. As for the situation in South Africa, he declared that he had played there long before entertainers began boycotting the Afrikaner regime and his audiences there had been more integrated than many he could remember a few years back in the American South. He commented that black singers, himself included, still got paid less than white singers in America (Lydon, 2004).

For Charles the main point of his argument was that he was a musician who would take his music anywhere in the world where people wanted to hear it. He commented that he hadn't been to Russia, but if the president of Russia wanted him to play there he would be happy to go (Lydon, 2004).

Playing *America the Beautiful* on national television was a profound moment in his music career and in his relationship with his audience. Through the years *America* had grown from an overlooked album track to an anthem that conveyed to millions a determined love of the country and its highest ideals (Lydon, 2004). In January 1985 he recorded *We are the World* in which all the celebrity artists performed for free and proceeds from the record sales went to famine relief in Africa. Charles' single, *Seven Spanish Angels* from the album *Friendship*, reached number one on the country chart. He sang at Ronald Reagan's second inaugural gala where Frank Sinatra intoned a reverent introduction. He led Charles to the piano amidst powerful applause from the audience, while millions of viewers across the nation watched on their television sets (Lydon, 2004).

This period started as quite a tumultuous time in Charles' career and he considered giving up on music. He was confronted with health concerns and

the possibility of losing his hearing. This was an experience that terrified Charles, the thought of losing his hearing was unbearable, but he received treatment and his hearing was restored. Racial issues had been a significant factor in Charles' adult years and in this period he was vocal about these issues as well as his political views. By the age of 55, Charles was approaching a new period in his life. He experienced renewed success in his career and although he considered giving up on music, his music was the driving force in his life.

5.2.5.3 The culmination of middle adulthood: building a second adult structure (age 55 – 60)

During this structure building period, Charles' career and relationship with his manager remained the *central components* of his life. In addition, the awards he received were identified as *central components* during this period. He continued to keep his relationships with his children, women and band members in the periphery.

During this period Charles expanded his celebrity presence by appearing in television shows, and in January 1986, at the age of 55, he was inducted into the *Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame*. He released a country music album, *From the Pages of My Mind*. It sold fairly well and he now felt that he needed to return to R&B music. At this time, his son Ray Jr. divorced his wife. Charles finally agreed, after seeing his son's efforts to be independent fail, to give him a job and a salary. He did not protect Ray Jr. from Adams, who would reject all his ideas for movies, TV shows and CDs. Ray Jr. felt excluded and he did not view himself as part of his father's inner circle (Lydon, 2004).

When touring, more than ever before, Charles travelled in solitude often meeting the crew and the band at the performance. Women, games of chess and music were the only things that provided him comfort in the long hours of travelling. The younger members of the band admired Charles, but he did not show much interest in them (Lydon, 2004).

Charles had been convinced for many years that white singers made more money than he did. Repeatedly, he told interviewers that his colour prevented him from earning big money and in private he complained about this to Ruth. She realized that whether in fact he did or did not earn less than his white colleagues was irrelevant, what mattered was, that he believed he earned less (Lydon, 2004).

In August Charles, along with other artists, received the *Kennedy Center Honors Medal*, America's most distinguished award for the arts. Awards already covered the walls of his office, but this honour was as special for him as the honour when *Georgia on my Mind* was proclaimed the official song of the state of Georgia. Afterwards he told an interviewer "...you feel you've come a long way, you think of what it was like wearing short pants and going barefoot, and what problems the South used to have" (Lydon, 2004, p. 363). After his hearing difficulties three years previously, Charles felt that he wanted to do something, and in 1987 he announced the formation of the *Robinson Foundation for Hearing Disorder*. He contributed \$1 million for the first year (Lydon, 2004).

At this time Joe Adams employed a new valet, David Simmons, who would be Charles' personal assistant for the next three years. Simmons was at his side 24 hours a day, seven days a week and they formed a close relationship. While other artists, such as Stevie Wonder, had 5 or 6 valets, Charles only had Simmons. He recognized that people were in awe of Charles, and he viewed him as a wise uncle whom he did not want to disappoint. Simmons drove him to all his business appointments and was sworn to secrecy about the women in his life (Lydon, 2004).

During the yearly tour one of Charles' lead band members for the past ten years was diagnosed with cancer. His treatment was successful and Charles did contact him, but *Ray Charles Enterprises* did not help him with financial costs. The company did have insurance for office workers, but not for band members. He felt that Charles could have done more, but he did not hold this against him (Lydon, 2004).

In 1988 the touring season started in May, seemingly later and later each year. Charles, however, performed at two notable events at the beginning of the year in New York. He featured in a *Legends of Rock n Roll* television show. *Parade* magazine held a promotion to replace the national anthem with his *America the Beautiful* and he was featured as a cartoon raisin in a successful television commercial. His appearance in this commercial created an upsurge of fame, as a younger generation became aware of him.

Charles' 18-year affair with Ruth Robinson ended once he discovered that he was not the only man in her life. Ruth would have happily continued making herself available whenever he wanted her, but for Charles their relationship was over. He moved on to other women, but as this period came to a close he was aware and scared of AIDS and he ventured less often from the familiar women in his life (Lydon, 2004).

Charles was approaching 60. Despite his age this had been a very productive time in his career. His celebrity presence was renewed, especially by his appearance in a cartoon raisin commercial. Charles had always rejected his son, Ray Jr's, efforts to work with him, but during this period he helped his son by giving him a job at *Ray Charles Enterprises*. Racial injustice and his experience of feeling hard done by was evident and he verbalized his feelings in the press and in private. Charles' 18-year relationship with Ruth ended and he continued his affairs with numerous other women.

5.2.6 The late adult transition (age 60 – 65)

The central components identified during *the late adult transition* include his career and relationship with his manager. While Charles had always been a successful musician, it is evident that there was an upsurge in his fame during the start of this period, but there were also difficulties towards the end of the period. The *peripheral components* include his children, relationships with women and his health. Health issues were identified as a central component during the previous period.

Charles agreed to appear in a series of diet Pepsi advertisements which in 1990 aired on television. This was a major success resulting in Pepsi planning a more elaborate campaign featuring Charles for 1991. This campaign was another major success and the advertisements ran for two years. Charles made a lot of money from these campaigns and it provided a renewed surge of fame. With his sixtieth birthday approaching his work continued as if his age meant nothing (Lydon, 2004). His birthday was celebrated with a show that was recorded for television. Although Ray Jr. had proved his worth as producer on the show, *Ray Charles 50 years in music*, it did not lead to a promotion. This frustrated Ray Jr., then almost forty years old, fuelling a destructive cocaine habit that resulted in his disappearance for weeks at a time. This worried Della endlessly. The Robinson family had grown apart. David was released from prison, got married and started a quiet new life. Robert was the pastor of a small church in San Diego. Charles kept only distant contact with them and Adams often kept Della away from him, especially concerning important matters (Lydon, 2004).

In January 1992, *Ray Charles: The Genius of Soul*, a one-hour biography, was aired on television. Only months before, *Atlantic* had released a three-CD box entitled *Ray Charles: The Birth of Soul*. This together with the documentary marked a new stage in his critical acclaim as a musical icon. In 1993 Charles sang *America the Beautiful* for President Clinton's inaugural gala at the Lincoln Memorial and in October, President Clinton awarded him the *National Medal of Arts*. He received many awards during this period including a Grammy award, life-time achievement award, the Helen Keller personal achievement award, the Horatio Alger award and the Governor's performing arts award (see Appendix C).

After *ABC*, Charles went back to *Atlantic*, then *Columbia* and now *Warner Brothers*. He released *My World* and although the album received good reviews the sales reflected that he had lost his hold on the black record buying market. Radio stations did not want to play his songs. They were not interested in his music believing that he was "*ancient history*" (Lydon, 2004, p.

383). This resulted in his agent losing his job and with that Charles decided to leave *Warner Brothers*. In 1994, Ray Jr. returned to work for his father after he had completed drug rehabilitation. He had an idea for a new project and Charles agreed to provide the financial backing on condition that Ray Jr. pays him back.

Charles had been working with French music producer, Jean-Pierre Grosz, for some time on the album *Strong Love Affair*. When Grosz looked for a label to represent Charles he had success in France, but in America there was disappointment. Record labels did not consider Charles a current major artist and when Grosz confessed his discontent, Charles decided to try for himself. He had no success until he approached his friend Quincy Jones. Jones agreed to represent him on his own label *Qwest*. They had been close friends since their early years and although Jones felt the album was weak, both commercially and musically, he felt obligated by friendship (Lydon, 2004).

While touring in 1995 Charles experienced pain in his back and he was hospitalised overnight, but they found nothing wrong. This did not deter him and he continued working at a fast pace. During this time he continued his affairs with the familiar women in his life. In December he got news that his first love Louise Mitchell had died. He had kept in contact with Louise over the years and was hurt by the loss. He told a close friend “...*I feel sometimes that I am lost in a dark forest and behind every tree there are ghosts*” (Lydon, 2004, p. 388).

This period started with Charles’ highly successful diet Pepsi commercials, a documentary on his life and also a three-CD box release of his old songs. Later, difficulties were evident as reflected by his poor album sales and the fact that no major record label was interested in his music. Charles performed at President Clinton’s inaugural gala and received numerous awards during this transitional period. Despite experiencing back pain and being hospitalised he continued working and did not take a break from his routine, once again highlighting that his music was the driving force in his life.

5.2.7 Era of late adulthood

This is the final era in Charles' life. The *central components* during this era include his career, relationship with his manager and his health. The *peripheral components* include his spirituality and relationships with women and his children.

At the age of 66, Charles continued to work and tour, however business was slow at *Ray Charles Enterprises*. Charles and Adams had become known as the “*two crankies of West Washington Boulevard*” (Lydon, 2004, p. 391). Ray Jr came up with the concept that they should start a Ray Charles website and after months of pointless arguments and conflicting meetings, they did (Lydon, 2004). At the age of 67, Charles realized that changes would need to be made in the business. He needed a younger manager. He felt that Adams was too old and Ray Jr. too naïve. He appointed Jean-Pierre Grosz, a showbiz professional and a loyal friend. This, in the end, did not work out and although he liked Grosz's ideas, Adams blocked everything Grosz tried to implement. Charles and Adams had major arguments, with Adams constantly reminding Charles of his honesty, the money they had made and their trust. He surrendered to Adams, partly because he liked the routine and was unwilling or unable to change (Lydon, 2004).

A major change in his life after this is simply that he slowed down. The big band's touring season shrunk from its nine-month April to Christmas tour, to a three-month summer tour with many nights off. Many of his performances were for private parties and corporate clients, which resulted in the diminishment of the public's awareness of Charles as a contemporary artist (Lydon, 2004).

In 1999 he experienced difficulties with his voice; he tried to sing, but his voice was completely gone. His doctor told him to stop smoking, take six months off

and not sing at all. He did not listen to his doctor and followed through with his tour plans in Sweden, Germany, France and Austria. He struggled every night, but did all 21 shows in 23 days. His voice did come back, but he lost a few high notes (Lydon, 2004).

When he turned seventy in 2000, David Ritz approached him and asked whether he wanted to collaborate on a sequel to his autobiography. Charles did not feel that he had anything more to add to *Brother Ray*, and although Ritz felt that he could reflect on the changes he had been through since 1978, Charles said: “...I don't see no changes, baby. I'm still me. Still kicking plenty ass” (Charles & Ritz, 2004, p. 324). In September 2001, after the World Trade Centre attack, Charles' song *America the Beautiful* was played on all radio and television stations as comforting, encouraging music to rally the nation's spirits (Lydon, 2004).

In June 2002, Charles released a new album, *Thanks for Bringing Love around Again*. Sex is the unifying theme of this album, with the seven middle tracks depicting the pleasures of making love. The album did not receive much attention and only sold a few thousand copies. The CD's final song *Mother* is the first time Charles had openly put his feelings for his mother into music. He sang every word as a personal statement:

*Since she's gone, all I have are the memories of those days
I think of the things I didn't get a chance to say
I surely still love my Mama, doesn't matter how old I grow
Mother's love will stay with me, no matter where I go.* (Lydon, 2004, p. 406)

Film director Taylor Hackford first got the idea of telling Charles' story on the big screen in the mid-1980s. In early 2003, Charles agreed to the movie which would be released in 2004. By this time his website had become a valuable element of his public presence. In September there were various rumours about his health, including that he needed hip replacement surgery, after which he would continue touring in the fall. This was the first time he had not toured since his drug bust in 1965 (Lydon, 2004).

Ritz had heard of the rumours surrounding his health and contacted him. Charles said: “...my livers’ not right...I’m not putting out a press release, but I heard them use the word cancer” (Charles & Ritz, 2004, p. 324). He was diagnosed with terminal liver cancer, complicated by emphysema (Lydon, 2004). Charles called Ritz a month after their initial telephone conversation and told him that he wanted to add some stuff to the book. It would be another five or six weeks before he called again. Ritz continued to maintain contact with him. Charles tried his best to focus on the future, but often wandered to the past. He remembered the musicians who had inspired him and emphasised that Ritz needed to mention them in his book. He reflected on how often he had been harsh and impatient with the members of his band stating:

I hurt some musicians...Being too much in a hurry, too impatient, looking for everything to be perfect. Lost my head. Said some nasty shit to guys who didn’t deserve it. You know me man. I’m always fucking with the drummers. If they don’t get my time, I pitch a bitch. Treat them bad. I feel like I hurt people. I know I hurt people. Well tell them I am not an asshole. Tell them I have feelings too. I can feel their feelings, man. Tell them I appreciate them... just tell them Brother Ray loves them.
(Charles & Ritz, 2004, p. 331)

Charles cried in front of Ritz, something he had never witnessed before. Many people noticed that Charles was more affectionate and tender during everyday encounters. Charles reflected on many aspects of his life, he realized the independence Aretha had taught him as a child, the self-reliance that had carried him through seven decades of his life had given him the illusion that he controlled his own life, that he could bend the world to his will, (Lydon, 2004). He said:

I ain’t afraid to admit it...Folks said, Ray you got balls. When you were just a little scrawny kid you drove a bus from Tampa to Seattle and somehow got over. You rode a bike. You drove a car. You put together a band when everyone said you would go broke. You ain’t scared of nothing...Well maybe I got caught up in hearing that. Maybe that got me thinking – I’m in control of

this motherfucking operation – my music, my band, my life, my ladies. (Charles & Ritz, 2004, p. 331)

He felt his strength slipping away, he wanted more time, but there was no bargaining with God. Though he was not a churchgoer he had kept the religious faith instilled by his mother and Jellyroll's Baptist Church. He read his Braille Bible and said the Lord's Prayer most nights before he fell asleep, but, until now he had not been deeply religious. He believed that God worked in mysterious ways. He worked through Ma Beck when Aretha died. He believed that Ma Beck saved him, but also reflected that it could have been God working through Ma Beck (Charles & Ritz, 2004; Lydon, 2004).

Charles never believed in Jesus, but during this time he was speaking to Mable John regularly and reconsidered. Mable John was a former lead Raelett who had become a minister and was, for many years, a close confidant to Charles (Charles & Ritz, 2004; Lydon, 2004). At times he achieved a certain serenity, feeling grateful for all he had been given and entrusting himself to forces greater than himself. Through these months he often met with lawyers and accountants, settling his affairs and providing for his heirs. His estate was worth \$50 million, not including his vault of master recordings. Settling his monetary affairs took a long time. He had twelve children, twenty grandchildren, and five great grandchildren to leave it all to (Charles & Ritz, 2004; Lydon, 2004).

Charles and Norma had been together for over twenty-years and when he was not at the studio he was with her in their Beverly Hills apartment. Music provided solace and he pushed forward on the duets album, *Genius Loves Company*, which started in June 2003. Over his lifetime Charles had recorded approximately 65 albums and over 600 songs. The key works in his music career will be presented schematically in Appendix B.

On 30 April 2004 Charles' professional home, 2107 West Washington Boulevard, was declared a historical monument. It was obvious that Charles was in pain. He was lifted from his wheelchair and brought to the podium where he thanked the city for the honour (Charles & Ritz, 2004; Lydon, 2004).

He progressively got weaker, and on 10 June 2004 he died. The news was broadcast on the radio and television, and on 18 June, Ray Charles Robinson was laid to rest.

5.3 Conclusion

The life course of Ray Charles has been divided according to Levinson's four eras of adult development. These eras, together with the concepts of central, peripheral and unfulfilled components allowed the researcher to identify significant events, issues and experiences that were relevant to his life as it unfolded. The following chapter will discuss these results in order to facilitate an understanding of Charles' life from the perspective of Levinson's theory of adult development.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 Chapter preview

In this chapter the researcher attempted to formulate a discussion on Ray Charles' life structure development from the perspective of Levinson's (1978; 1996) theoretical framework. Furthermore, Charles' life is described according to the chronological divisions of the four eras of development proposed by Levinson. Each era of adult development will be discussed in detail to facilitate an understanding of Charles' life during that period of time. The researcher acknowledged the complexities and challenges surrounding the interpretation of the human personality.

6.2 The developmental periods in the life of Ray Charles.

6.2.1 Era of pre-adulthood (age 0 – 22)

Levinson (1978, 1996) regards the era of pre-adulthood as including early childhood, middle childhood, adolescence and a transitional period referred to as the early adult transition. Levinson identified the process of individuation that occurs early in the era as the infant separates from the primary caregiver and begins to develop an identity. Individuation is a developmental effort towards the resolution of four polarities that occur throughout the individual lifecycle. The four polarities include *attachment/separateness, creation/destruction, young/old and masculine/feminine*.

6.2.1.1 1930 – 1937

Charles' birth and early years were described in section 5.2.1 of this study. Charles grew up in an unconventional family environment. He did not have a father, but he felt lucky because he had two mothers who deeply cared about him. The researcher proposed that Aretha played a more fatherly role in his life. She was the patriarch of the family, the provider and the ultimate

authority. Although she was a strict disciplinarian, Charles admired her for her emotional strength, willingness to work hard, and fairness. Mary Jane did not live in his family home, but she played the role of a nurturing and comforting mother. Charles became fascinated with music from the age of three. Mr Pit, a family friend, stands as the only example of a male influence in Charles' early years. His attention and encouragement of Charles' musical development provided him with a caring and supportive environment that facilitated his interest in music and the development of his inner *Dream*.

Charles was five years old when his brother died, the events of which were described in section 5.2.1. It was apparent that he was unable to express his feelings or process the pain of his brother's death. There was no account in the literature covered by the researcher which spoke of any intervention by Charles' family. Therefore, the adults in his life did not facilitate his grieving process by providing the space to work through his beliefs, feelings and the pain of this traumatic loss.

A few months after his brother's death he started losing his sight and by the age of seven he was completely blind. He described going blind nonchalantly, unemotionally and with apparent immediate acceptance. In his adult years doctors guessed that it may have been juvenile glaucoma that caused the blindness. The researcher conjectured that his blindness may also be a physiological expression of the psychological trauma associated with this loss.

The researcher postulated that confrontation with death and blindness would have unconsciously presented the powerful forces of *destructiveness/creativity* and *young/old* that coexist in every human being according to Levinson et al. (1978). The development of the polarities starts in childhood through various experiences. A child develops a sense of what it means to be young when the child experiences its own growth, brings plans and possibilities into realization and observes the growth of animals, flowers, projects and relationships (Levinson et al., 1978).

With good enough development the child forms an internal figure of himself as a promising person with remarkable potentials in a world full of opportunities and dangers. A child also forms a sense of what it means to be ageing, declining, suffering a loss of formal powers and dying. Many experiences contribute to this process and a child's experience of his own and others' ageing contributes to his formation of an internal figure of himself as a person in decline and no longer full of promise (Levinson et al., 1978).

Creation represents the power to do great good and destruction represents the power to do great harm. Levinson et al. (1978) provide little information on the *destruction/creation* polarity as it develops in childhood. However, a growing wish to be creative is accompanied by a greater awareness of the destructive forces in nature, human life and in the self. An acute sense of his own ultimate destruction intensifies a man's wish for creation. The creative impulse is the desire to create products of genuine value for self and others (Levinson et al., 1978).

Charles' experiences of death and blindness represent the polarities of destruction and decline (old age). The researcher inferred that through his traumatic experience Charles internalised the belief that he was intrinsically bad for not saving his brother, and blindness may have symbolised the evidence of his badness. His emotionally detached reception to losing his sight signifies an acceptance of his badness. Feelings of guilt augmented his inner turmoil, his means of hurting and punishing himself.

The researcher was of the opinion that his love of music represented the opposing polarities of *young/creative*. His love of music accompanied by his extraordinary talent facilitated the creation of an internal figure of himself as a remarkable person full of promise. Music provided the vehicle through which his passionate, powerful, determined desire to create could be expressed. In one way Charles' desire to create was spawned from the pain of his sense of destruction and mortality.

6.2.1.2 1937 – 1943

The perceptions of most people in Jellyroll were that the blind were helpless, but Aretha did not accept this belief. Her attitude, parenting style and Charles' application to St Augustine were described in section 5.2.1. It was apparent that Charles did not want to leave his mother or Mary Jane. Upon leaving he pleaded with his mother that he would be good like his brother. She asked him to promise that he would never be a cripple and that he would stand on his own two feet. This indicates that Charles believed he was being sent away because he was bad and attempted to negotiate with his mother by pleading to be good like his brother.

Although his mother told him that this had nothing to do with his brother, it is evident that he had internalised the belief that he was bad. The data in section 5.2.1 revealed that Aretha was physically weak and sickly. She had regularly told Charles that some day she was not going to be with him. The researcher proposed that an awareness of her mortality would have played a significant role in her almost desperate assertion that he needed to be a strong and independent person.

Her attitude facilitated Charles' development in major ways. She taught Charles to rely on himself, fostering his independence, self-sufficiency and determination. She made him promise that he would never be a cripple. Therefore, she did not want him to be subject to the victimisation of others who had more power than him and who would use this power exploitatively (Levinson et al., 1978). On the other hand, he may have experienced his mother's attitude as cold and rejecting and he may have felt a sense of loneliness in his struggle to adapt. The researcher deduced that dependency, vulnerability and helplessness (needing care) were internalised as weaknesses, whereas independence and self sufficiency were internalised as strengths. Showing any sign of weakness, Charles may have feared his mother's rejection. The researcher posited that if she allowed him to assume the role of a helpless victim who constantly depended on her he may not have adapted to his blindness in the manner in which he did.

Charles' experiences and difficulties during his first year at St Augustine were described in section 5.2.1. The researcher postulated that these experiences added additional evidence to the belief that he held of himself as being intrinsically bad. Charles' early childhood was marred by significant trauma and losses. He had to learn to adapt to continuing changing and unpredictable circumstances. In pre-adulthood the child is developing an ego capable of managing his powerful drives and using them for socially constructive purposes.

The emotional forces of attachment must be harnessed in the service of adaptation. The child has to form stable relationships, acquire new information and skills, and mature to the point where he can begin living as a relatively independent adult. With good enough conditions of development, he acquires the learning, values and character traits required for adaptation within his culture (Levinson et al., 1978). Nonetheless the forces of imagination and fantasy enable him to maintain some degree of separateness from the external world. The separateness allows him to nourish his creativity, sustain his individuality and develop his inner *Dream*. The child must be attached enough to make a place for himself in society and he must be separate enough to be able to strike out on his own, question the traditional ways of society and make a better life for himself and others (Levinson et al., 1978). Charles' family provided the space for him to become himself. He acquired the learning, values and character traits that were required for him to adapt within his environment. The researcher was of the opinion that music facilitated his imagination and fantasy that enabled him to maintain some degree of separateness from the external world. The separateness allowed Charles to nourish his creativity, sustain his individuality and develop his inner *Dream*.

At the age of eight, Charles realized his *Dream* of becoming a great musician. As indicated in section 5.2.1 middle childhood was a time that afforded Charles opportunities to expand his musical horizons. During his childhood he felt that Mr Pit was the only person that encouraged him to follow his *Dream*. He believed that his mother was proud of him stating: "...I'm sure she was

proud that I was learning to be a musician, but that did not stop her from teaching me the lessons of life” (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 50). This statement suggests his uncertainty about his mother’s feelings. She did not have any clear, defined aspirations for him, but she wanted him to make a better life for himself. At the age of 13 he started performing as a pianist during his school holidays and during this time he had his first sexual experience. This gave Charles a glimpse of life as a professional musician.

6.2.1.3 1944 – 1945

At the age of 15, Charles’ mother died unexpectedly. He described the death of his mother and brother as the two greatest tragedies in his life. Through experiences with his mother, likewise with fathers, a boy develops powerful feelings, fantasies and conceptions regarding the masculine and feminine. For example, the nurturing, good mother, the depriving, destructive mother and the erotic, seductive mother (Levinson et al., 1978). On the one hand Charles’ mother represented a powerful source of care and protection, but with her death she also represented abandonment, pain and loneliness.

According to Levinson et al. (1978), an individual that has experienced profound loss must come to terms with painful feelings of abandonment, grief and rage. Charles may have unconsciously internalised his anger and rage at his mother for leaving him alone and vulnerable. Through his experiences with his mother he was not allowed feelings of dependency, or vulnerability, feelings that are usually associated with femininity (Levinson et al., 1978). Charles’ powerful feelings about his mother were re-enacted time and again in his relationships with women.

Charles’ conception of masculinity would have developed in many relationships, but those of significance were Mr Pit and his father. Mr Pit accepted, encouraged and facilitated his musical development. His support and belief in his *Dream* would have facilitated the development of his masculine strivings of hard work and ambition that were evident throughout his life. The researcher inferred that his early experience of abandonment by

his father contributed to his development of masculine representations as exploitative and mistrustful. This inner conflict of abandonment and betrayal was re-enacted throughout his life and would be evident in his relationships with women, his children and colleagues.

Charles described the months after his mother's death as a turning point in his life. At the age of 15 he decided to quit school and pursue his *Dream*. The data covering Charles' era of pre-adulthood highlight that his family of origin and the social context of this period in the USA offered limited resources and models for his later development. There was no admired teacher, relative or friend whose life Charles wanted to emulate. These early experiences of Charles' pre-adulthood created tensions that ran through the core of his adult life: dependence/ independence, ambition/failure and power/love, trust/ mistrust and longing for care/ unable to provide care.

6.2.2 Early adult transition (age 17 – 22)

According to Levinson et al. (1978), the *early adult transition* represents a profound change in self and the world which was evident in Charles' life. The task of a developmental transition is to terminate a time in one's life and to accept the losses that termination brings. It requires a review and evaluation of the past, a decision on which aspects of the past to keep and which to reject. In addition, it requires considerations of one's wishes and possibilities for the future.

Levinson et al. (1978) proposed that the *early adult transition* roughly begins at the age of 17 or 18, but for Charles it began at the age of 15. Therefore, Charles' life course did not progress according to the average age at which the *early adult transition* allegedly occurs. During this period he moved from a life structure characteristic of early adolescence to one characteristic of early adulthood.

6.2.2.1 1945 – 1946

After his mother's death and with Mary Jane's assistance Charles moved to Jacksonville, Florida where he stayed with the Thompsons. He got to know Jacksonville quickly and he formed a close relationship with the Thompsons. They facilitated his entry into the adult world by providing a home base and a supportive environment. The first task presented during this transition is the termination of the adolescent life structure and *leaving the pre-adult world*. A major component of this task is to separate from the family of origin. The process of separation from parents continues over the entire life span and requires that the young adult must remove the family from the centre of his life and begin a process of change that will lead to a new home base for living as a young adult in an adult world (Levinson et al., 1978).

Charles' pre-adult life was terminated prematurely due to the death of his mother. His process of separation was early and sudden. His process of separation, therefore, did not continue throughout his life as proposed by Levinson et al. (1978). The loss of his mother forced him to make major life choices. The researcher proposed that Charles made his central choices in an attempt to get away from his painful past with the hope of creating a better future. Through his decision to quit school and pursue his *Dream* of becoming a professional musician, Charles made his career the *central component* of his life.

According to Levinson et al. (1978), society makes available to each of its members a limited range of individuals, groups, material resources, occupations and possibilities for social involvement and self-fulfilment. As a blind, black man this range was extremely limited. Music was the only career option Charles ever considered. For black people the music industry provided opportunities to make money through performances, record contracts and radio shows. He was a gifted piano and clarinet player. He was also talented at impersonating artists such as Nat Cole and Charles Brown. To pursue his *Dream* he joined the musicians union in Jacksonville. The researcher conjectured that his *Dream* was unrealistic and unattainable considering his

social circumstances, his family context and his blindness. It was palpable that he was unwavering in decisions involving his career. He was determined to achieve his goals and prove his worth as a musician.

According to Levinson et al. (1978), a particular choice moves the individual into a given world. Every social world (e.g. the world of music) has its own culture, social structure and material conditions which affect the character of the relationships among the members (Levinson et al., 1978). The choice to become a musician moved Charles into a world significantly different from his family of origin. He was at least five to ten years younger than most musicians.

For adolescents, adults usually figure as authorities, teachers, helpers and enemies, and the adolescent rarely enter their world as an equal, but Charles did (Levinson, et. al 1978). At this time he was driven to become a member within this culture, for example, by offering to play gigs for free. Some musicians would gladly show him a new song or chord, but many would stop playing when they saw him approaching. He was ignorant of the fact that copying musicians was looked down upon, but rather felt proud of his ability to duplicate other musicians, especially singers, since he never had a voice lesson in his life.

At the age of 16 Charles had made a name for himself in Jacksonville. He accepted a position as a pianist in a band travelling to Orlando. Soon after arriving, performances with the band fell through. This presented a major life choice, he had the option of returning to Jacksonville, but he decided to explore a new world with new possibilities. Although he had a close relationship with the Thompsons, he wanted more independence. Through this move Charles officially cut his ties with his pre-adult world and chose to rely on himself at the age of 16.

The researcher deduced that his choice reflected his reluctance to remain dependent on the Thompsons, which in itself could represent a fear of an emotionally close attachment. However, this choice may also represent his

striving for success and through this move he was exploring the possibilities of the adult world.

Charles was an unknown, unemployed musician in an unfamiliar city. The music industry was extremely competitive, he struggled to earn a living or find regular work. Financial struggle had been a significant aspect of his early life and imbued him with a miserliness that would become evident in his later years. At this time he experienced major emotional struggle, which was encapsulated by his statement: “...*this was when I had to dig down and see what was really going on inside me*” (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 75).

Charles obtained a job as a piano player in a band. Through this he was given the opportunity to write original arrangements for the band. This experience did a lot to increase his confidence. He also experienced rejection when he auditioned for a prominent musician and was told that he was not good enough. In section 5.2.2 it was revealed that his hurt pride fuelled long hours of practice at the piano. The researcher inferred that his experience of rejection activated his internal belief of badness. At the same time, it activated his determination to prove his worth. The activation on the negative side of the polarity sparked a drive in the opposite direction. His long hours of practice reflected his dedication to his creative and musical development.

A man’s particular external world presents significant meanings, feelings, identities and myths which are selectively used and internalised. The external world furthermore provides invitations to heroism, martyrdom, empty conformity, bitter or zestful struggle. It encourages the development of certain parts of the self, while hindering the development of others (Levinson et al., 1978).

Pursuing his *Dream* and forming his occupation took Charles from Jacksonville to Orlando, then Tampa, Seattle and Los Angeles. It is evident that it was important for him to keep moving, there was no sense of certainty of what he would be getting into, what jobs would be available or what people

he would encounter. This reflected his risk-taking, nothing-to-lose approach to life.

6.2.2.2 1946 – 1948

After eight months in Orlando, a friend suggested that they move to Tampa to pursue their careers. Here Charles met a 16-year old girl, Louise Mitchell. He described her as his first true love interest and their relationship was serious. Her parents did not support their relationship and this tension impacted on their love affair. They did not believe that a blind musician was the right person for their daughter, indicating that they did not view him as good enough. The researcher posited that this experience was very difficult for him. Once again Charles experienced rejection. His defiance of their opinion is reflected when he ran away with Louise and when she joined him in Seattle. During their time together, Charles cheated on her a few times. One can thus deduce that he had a strong emotional connection with Louise, but his infidelity prevented him from making a strong commitment.

The information pertaining to his work, the death of his father, his friendship with Gossie McGee and their move to Seattle were described in section 5.2.2. The researcher postulated that his father's death activated feelings of guilt, sadness, grief and rage. Music provided the vehicle through which he could express his painful, anguished, sorrowful emotions. His desire to create served the purpose of relieving his pain.

At this time Charles became friends with a young musician named Quincy Jones. The data in section 5.2.2 revealed that Jones idolized Charles. His admiration got through the defences that Charles kept up with most musicians. The researcher construed that his defensiveness served the purpose of protecting himself from being hurt, used or exploited. It was significant that Charles was able to form a meaningful friendship with Jones since this relationship is one of the few examples of a close long-term friendship that he had with another man.

Charles got regular gigs at a nightclub and with Gossie and another musician, Milt they formed a permanent group called the *McSon Trio*, also referred to as *Maxim Trio* (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Lydon, 2004). At this time, Charles started experimenting with drugs, including marijuana and heroin. Heroin would become a significant part of his life for the next two decades. The data in section 5.2.2 revealed that marijuana, alcohol and nicotine remained a part of his life for many years longer, but these caused him no particular problem. He was intrigued by the secrecy surrounding drugs and he tried heroin because he was curious. The researcher postulated that his use of heroin served many purposes during this time.

Drugs were accepted as part of the music sub-culture and he may have wanted to experience a sense of belonging within his peer group. His naivety and curiosity around heroin and desire for experimentation could be inferred as the developmental effort of forming his adult identity (Levinson et al., 1978). He was exploring an adult way of being and living. Heroin was thus used as a supporting vehicle for his entry into adulthood. On the other hand, heroin represented his self-destructiveness. With heroin Charles was acting out his inner sense of badness. His difficulties with heroin would become evident in later years.

The trio enjoyed some success and in 1948 they were approached by Jack Lauderdale, the president of *Downbeat Records* in Los Angeles. It was around this time that Charles changed his name. Lauderdale suggested the name Ray Charles and since then he went by his first and middle name. Lauderdale wanted to record the trio and in February 1949 the record was released. The researcher conjectured that this success was internalised as a sense of himself being a capable, competent and accomplished individual.

6.2.2.3 1948 – 1952

Charles and Louise were together for approximately two years when their relationship ended. Their relationship was passionate, but also marred by conflict as described in section 5.2.2. Their relationship was formed when

neither of them possessed the inner resources nor the external support to form a more adult relationship (Levinson et al., 1978). When Louise left Seattle neither of them was aware that she was pregnant. According to Levinson et al. (1978), the novelists in their research sample had to make a sharp break with parents and the pre-adult world to pursue their literary dreams. They had intense, intimate and stormy relationships and the love-family aspect of their lives was often problematic. Charles did make a sharp break with the pre-adult world and his life long struggle with the love-family component of his life is congruent with Levinson's findings. It was evident that Charles experienced the loss of Louise as significant. Alone, he withdrew as he had when his mother had died. Gigs with the trio dwindled and he used a lot of heroin. The ending of this relationship is another experience of loss. The researcher construed that the loss of this relationship activated his feelings of abandonment, guilt, grief and rage.

There had been tension in the trio for some time, specifically concerning money and drugs. Heroin represented both his means of coping with the loss of his relationship to Louise and the destruction of the band. In addition to the difficulties surrounding drugs, Charles also believed that he was being cheated financially. The researcher conjectured that his experience of being cheated, whether imaginary or real, would have activated his issues of mistrust through his sense of being victimised and exploited, thus fitting the stereotype his mother instilled in him not to be.

At this time Jack Lauderdale offered Charles an opportunity to move to Los Angeles. It appeared that Lauderdale helped him in the way Ma Beck had helped him after his mother's death. Charles' daughter Evelyn was born in 1950 and he sent Louise money whenever he could. At the age of 20, Charles started living as he would for years to come: making his music, using heroin and having two, three or more affairs at the same time.

He started enjoying his time in Los Angeles. He mostly attributed this to Lauderdale's friendship and his business interest in him. Lauderdale appears to have served a mentoring function during this time period. He supported and

facilitated Charles' entry into the adult world. He believed in his ability as a musician and created opportunities for him to realize his *Dream*. Lauderdale put him in contact with Lowell Fullson, a prominent musician. They toured together and for Charles this was a major breakthrough. The racial prejudice Charles endured during this time was described in section 5.2.2.

At the age of 21, Charles wanted to be recognized for his own singing style as opposed to the recognition he received for impersonating Nat Cole and Charles Brown. He started experimenting with his own voice and the development of his own singing style. In 1952 he got married to Eileen Williams. He had been longing for a wife and children. He had only courted Eileen for three weeks before they got married and they separated later that same year.

According to Levinson et al. (1978), courtship and marital choice during this transition are heavily influenced by the individuals' efforts to separate from parents. In Charles' case it may have been an attempt to fulfil a longing need for a mother figure, stability and family. He attempted to fulfil this need impulsively and ended the relationship or perhaps he created only to destroy, in the process acting out his internalised bad self as well as achieving retribution for the abandonment he felt at the loss of his mother. Therefore, it served a different purpose as opposed to what Levinson suggested. His separation from Eileen coincided with him quitting Lowell's band and at the age of 22 Charles was ready to pursue a solo music career.

Eileen and Lowell both represent choices that facilitated his entry into the adult world, but these choices were not permanent. It is evident that he was striving for more fulfilling possibilities by ending an unsatisfying marriage and pursuing his solo career.

The researcher was of the opinion that Charles worked on the tasks presented by Levinson et al. (1978) throughout this time period. During this transition Charles terminated his adolescent life structure and established the groundwork for an identity and career as a musician. He made major life

choices that formed the basis for his first adult life structure and his career would be the *central component* throughout his life.

6.2.3 Era of early adulthood (age 17 – 45)

Charles' life choices up to this stage had formed the basis for his life as a professional musician and during this era he firmly established himself as a successful musician. It is possible that, if his music had not been recognised or if he had not achieved success, that he may have had to alter his career path at a later stage of his life.

However, he was successful and his career became a *central component* in the structure of his life as it demanded a great deal of time and energy. He was extremely productive during this era. His career provided him with an identity in the music industry. Levinson et al. (1978), divided this era into three developmental periods including the first adult life structure (entering the adult world); the age thirty transition and the second adult life structure (settling down).

6.2.3.1 The first adult life structure: entering the adult world (age 22 – 28)

According to Levinson et al. (1978), the major tasks in this period revolve around exploration and the creation of a stable structure. The exploratory stance requires that individuals keep their options open and avoid making strong commitments. The contrasting task presented requires that individuals take on adult responsibilities and make firm choices. There are many ways of trying to balance exploration and stable structure. A person may opt for stability in one part of his life and transience in another. According to Levinson et al. (1978), for most people, the life structure of the late twenties is incomplete and fragmented, major choices need to be made, and the direction of the person's life is uncertain or unsatisfactory.

6.2.3.1.1 1952 – 1955

For Charles the life structure began at age 22 after his separation from Eileen. In 1953, he started making records for *Atlantic* in New York. He formed a close bond with the Atlantic team, specifically Ahmet Ertugen and Jerry Wexler. They served a mentoring function similar to that of Jack Lauderdale. Ertugen and Wexler believed in him and provided opportunities for him to realize his *Dream*. At this time Charles lost the woman whom he considered as his second mother. Mary Jane had been sick for a long time and had died. Charles returned home for her funeral. He was saddened by this loss and he started longing for different things. He wanted his own house, a wife and children. It was evident that he was longing for a sense of stability. The researcher inferred that this need for stability was stimulated by his inner feelings associated with his tumultuous past in the loss of his brother, mother, father, the miscarriage and Louise.

While touring in Houston, Texas, in 1954, he met Della Beatrice. She was a singer and he liked her innocent qualities. He also liked the fact that she did not smoke or drink. He visited her whenever he had an opportunity and kept close contact while travelling. He did not remain faithful to her and she was unaware of his infidelity. He wanted to steal Della away from her family. This was proof that he was still hurt from his experience with Louise's family. When she fell pregnant he convinced her to move with him to Dallas. This move represented his attempt to remove her family's interference from their relationship.

In 1955 Charles and Della got married. He was honest about his previous relationships and that he fathered a daughter, named Evelyn. However, he wanted to keep his home life and professional life separate. This is evident in his desire for privacy at home, which was related to his heroin use. This assumption is also further supported in that a month after their wedding he started an affair with a singer, Mary Ann Fischer. His son Ray Jr. was born two months after the wedding. Having a wife and a child had been one of Charles' major longings and this need was fulfilled.

However, the researcher posited that getting married and having a child aroused his own feelings associated with abandonment. It is proposed that this affair represents the re-enactment of abandonment by his father. By having an affair Charles emotionally abandoned his family. This affair also represents re-enactment of the loss of his mother. The researcher was of the opinion that Charles' commitment to Della was conflicted and his affair reflected his fear of abandonment. Therefore, before Della can betrayed him, he abandoned and betrayed her (Levinson et al., 1978).

6.2.3.1.2 1955 – 1956

By this time Charles started performing with his own seven-piece instrument band. This enabled him to be in control of his creative process and impose his own musical discipline. Mary Ann became the first female vocalist he used in the band. This signifies his upward mobility within the industry. It is a reflection of his ambitious drive. He was willing to work hard and was determined to make a name as a musician. He achieved major success with his revolutionary incorporation of gospel and blues with the song *I Got a Woman*. His creative drive forged an innovative song that propelled him into the national consciousness. He had gone from an unknown to famous artist.

This reflects his desire to create something of significance that had value for him and society. The researcher was of the opinion that his desire to create stems from his awareness of the destructive forces in human life. However, he was not aware of the destructive forces within himself (Levinson et al., 1978). At this time, he did not feel that he was making enough money.

It appears that Della was his muse since *I Got a Woman* is a declaration of his love and appreciation for her support in helping him find his own musical style. It is proposed that Della was Charles' *special woman*. The *special woman* facilitates a man's entry into the adult world and his pursuit of the *Dream*. She does this through her efforts as teacher, guide and at a deeper psychological level she enables him to project onto her his own internal feminine figure who generates and supports his heroic strivings.

According to Levinson et al. (1978), a man is struggling to outgrow the little boy in himself and to become a more autonomous adult. The *special woman* can foster his adult aspirations while accepting his dependency, his incompleteness and his need to make her into something more and less than she actually is. It appears that for Charles there was a sense of urgency to pursue his *Dream*, become independent, get married and have children. This reflects his need to be less enslaved by the inner boy in himself who desperately wanted to be cared for and who is victimised by his inner ties to powerful, exploitative adults (Levinson et al., 1978).

Charles did not want Della to find out about his heroin use, but she did after his arrest in Philadelphia. This was described in section 5.2.3.1. She was very hurt by this discovery and wanted him to quit, but he refused. According to Levinson et al. (1978), a young man's efforts to establish an intimate marital relationship are complicated by his continuing sense of himself as a little boy in relation to a powerful maternal figure. His wife attracts him in part because she seems to lack the qualities he fears and resents in his inner maternal figure, and their relationship may actually contain these and other aspects of the mother-son interaction.

The researcher inferred that he largely experienced Della in maternal terms. Initially he was drawn to her because of her bashful qualities and the fact that she did not smoke or drink. The researcher posited that he experienced her as the pure, caring, nurturing mother figure. This explains his desire to keep his family life and life on the road separate. He did not want Della to find out about his destructiveness and his badness, but she did. It is proposed that her discovery of his heroin use and her request that he quit elicited feelings of his rejection from the maternal figure. Then she was experienced as restrictive, moralistic and forbidding (Levinson et al., 1978). In response to these feelings he reacted defiantly and refused to quit his self-destructive habit.

The arrest in Philadelphia did not impact on his career. Instead, it made him feel angry and more defiant against the authorities. It is possible that he felt

victimised and exploited by this experience. It was safe for him to project his anger at the law rather than himself.

6.2.3.1.3 1956 – 1958

From 1956 to 1958, Charles worked on his music relentlessly. He was ambitious, hard working and determined. He possessed an immense work ethic. He included the Raeletts in his touring act, as indicated in section 5.2.3.1. The Raeletts included Mary Ann and three girls, one named Margie Hendrix. He started an affair with Margie Hendrix and she replaced Mary Ann as his girlfriend on tour. Mary Anne was not prepared to share him with Margie and she decided to quit. This reflects how easy it was for Charles to move on from relationships that were considered serious. It also reflects the fact that the women in his life were replaceable.

During this time he moved his family to Los Angeles and Della gave birth to their second son, David. According to Levinson et al. (1978) being a husband and father contributes to a man's development and it is in part a developmental failure when a man is unable to function adequately in the family. Charles' extra marital affairs and his drug use hurt Della, but she was compliant by nature and accepted life on his terms. The researcher deduced that she felt abandoned and betrayed by him, but was fearful of the actuality of losing him. The emotional pain he caused her epitomizes his destructiveness. He was acting in ways that were damaging to his marriage and children. On the other hand, he was able to function as provider for his family. In this regard he was successful and this in itself is more than his own father had been able to do for him. The researcher believes that not having experienced a relationship with a father made it difficult for him to embrace this role.

Charles created a stable structure around his career, but he was unable to form a stable marriage. He devoted himself passionately to his occupational dream, but not to his family. Charles' marriage and family never occupied a *central component* in his life. Della supported his career, she believed in him

but there were aspects of his life as a musician that were very difficult for her to accept. These facets of his life could be seen as the major factors that made it difficult for him to make his family the central component in his life.

In his early twenties Charles' life structure had two primary elements. These were his career as a musician and his new marriage. By the age of 28 he had two children with Della, a successful career and other women who occupied an important role in his life. He also continued using heroin. He was not able to embrace his role as husband or father using music, women and drugs as an escape from family life. Charles did not form significant friendships and his social life centred on his career. He only developed close relationships with Jeff Brown (his band manager) and Fathead Newman (one of his band members and fellow heroin user).

It appears that he was satisfied with the major choices he had made and had established his identity as a revolutionary artist. Charles created a life structure that centred around his music and in Della he had a *special woman* who tolerated his dual lifestyle. Therefore he had no setbacks or difficulties in this period of his life. He had established his place in the adult world.

6.2.3.2 Age 30 transition: changing the first life structure (age 28 – 33)

A transitional period is required to terminate the past and start the future. According to Levinson et al. (1978), this period can be experienced as a time of developmental difficulty, depending on the possibilities, options and choices an individual makes at this time. Charles had no difficulty in maintaining his momentum in establishing his career. He did not experience any stress in his marriage and it is likely that this was attributed to Della's acceptance of life on his terms. An easy transition, without drastic change or turmoil, may occur primarily because a man's life is going well and needs only minor adjustments. On the other hand, the life structure may be seriously flawed, but he is unable to work at changing them. The illusions and unacknowledged difficulties often surface at a later time, when they exact a heavier cost. It is

possible that he was not able to acknowledge the flaws in his life structure (Levinson et al., 1978).

6.2.3.2.1 1958 – 1960

At the age of 28, Charles was using heroin daily, but he did not feel that it had a negative impact on his performance as he continued to work very hard. He was aware that Della, Jeff Brown, Ahmet Ertugen and Jerry Wexler disliked drugs and he respected that. In turn, he did not use heroin in front of them. He did not believe that heroin helped or hurt his music. Therefore, he was unwilling to quit. It is evident that music was more important than any person or relationship he had.

At the age of 29 Charles felt that all his dreams had been realized when he performed at Carnegie Hall. He released an album entitled *The Genius of Ray Charles*, which was successful as it climbed to number one on the charts. It is proposed that the realization of his dreams at such a young age and being called a genius would have contributed to his belief in himself as a powerful, accomplished, competent individual.

Charles continued his affair with Margie Hendrix and they were a formidable vocal presence on stage. In 1959 Margie fell pregnant. He agreed to support her financially. When she fell pregnant he started an affair with Mae Mosely Lyles. Mae played a significant role in his life for many years and some people referred to her as his New York wife. When his son with Margie, Charles Wayne, was born he did not spend much time with them. It is clear that a pattern emerged in Charles' life where he abandoned the women in his life as soon as they fell pregnant with his child.

By the end of 1959 he had changed labels and left *Atlantic* for *ABC*. They made him a lucrative offer, which Atlantic was unable to match. He felt that this decision was difficult but described this move as the smartest money decision of his life. Once again he was unafraid when making decisions that involved his career. His decision reflects his risk-taking, nothing-to-lose,

ambitious attitude. The data in section 5.2.3.2 revealed that Ahmet Ertugen and Jerry Wexler felt abandoned, betrayed and angry about his decision. It is apparent that Charles did not allow emotional attachments to influence his choices. The researcher was of the opinion that he invested little of his self in all of his relationships for fear of being hurt, abandoned and betrayed. He had the expectation that if he really became emotionally attached to a person, they would in some way abandon, betray and hurt him. In turn, he is the person that abandons, betrays and hurts those that love and care for him.

6.2.3.2.2 1960 – 1962

In 1960, Charles released *Georgia On My Mind*. He invested the lyrics with much of his own life, the longing for his childhood, Greenville, and his mother and he conveyed the universal yearning for home (Lydon, 2004). Music provided him with an emotional outlet. Through music he expressed his pain and emotional turmoil. He said “...my music had roots which I'd dug up from my own childhood, musical roots buried in the darkest soil” (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 174). *Georgia* reached number one on the charts and for Charles it was a major accomplishment. He enjoyed the growing size of his audiences and at this time it appears that he was satisfied with the money he was making.

Charles did not get directly involved with the civil rights movement. He liked what the Reverend Martin Luther King had to say and he felt a kinship with him. King was an ambitious person only a year older than him. According to Levinson et al. (1978), the struggle to remain true to his dream is never easy for a black man in this society. A black man with heroic aspirations draws upon himself with increasing intensity the destructive forces of individual and institutional racism.

In 1961 Charles made a stand against racial discrimination when he refused to perform at a segregated concert in Georgia. The promoter sued him, he lost the case and was banned from playing in the state of Georgia. He received wide coverage and positive reviews in the black press for making a

stand. The researcher inferred that this experience generated feelings of anger for being sued and banned, while also creating a sense of satisfaction for making a stand against the destructive forces in society.

That same year he was arrested for heroin possession in Indianapolis after police raided his hotel room. When he appeared in court for these charges they were dismissed because the police search was deemed illegal. This arrest turned his addiction from an open secret to a known fact. After this incident, in city after city police detectives showed up backstage at his shows, for no reason except that they were just checking. The researcher postulated that he felt a sense of shame that the whole world had found out about his drug use. It is proposed that he felt victimised and exploited. He continued using heroin despite these difficulties with the law. This reflects his defiance. He did not allow anyone to dictate what he should or should not be doing.

Joe Adams, close in age to Charles, emerged as a significant confidant, colleague and friend who was intimately involved in Charles' life. He respected Adams' forceful character, his ability to confront anyone and although they had fierce arguments, Adams could stand up to him. During this period Adams replaced Jeff Brown as his manager. Charles was convinced that Jeff had stolen from him, the details of which were described in section 5.2.3.2. This experience with Jeff mirrors earlier experiences with Gossie McGee and Lowell Fullson. It is proposed that this experience activated his belief that others would lie and take advantage of him. The researcher conjectured that he felt victimised and exploited by Jeff. It was apparent that his feelings were very powerful. In response to these feelings he rejected Jeff from his life, the same way he had rejected Gossie and Lowell. In later years this conflict was evident in his sense of being cheated as compared to white musicians.

At the age of 31, Charles became a father once again. Mae Mosely Lyles gave birth to their daughter and Della gave birth to their third son. He continued his relationship with Mae, but it appears that her importance in his life shifted to the sidelines as it had with Della. When he was at home with

Della, he was awkward with his children and he spent little time with them. He provided financial security for his family, but he could not provide emotional connectedness. He started having an affair with Sandra Jean Betts. Sandra fell pregnant, had his daughter and filed a paternity suit against him. He felt that it was legal blackmail and despite the pain or embarrassment this caused Della he refused to settle out of court. The researcher deduced that this experience elicited feelings associated with being victimised and exploited. One can thus posit that these feelings were at the driving force of his decision to pursue the court case, despite the implications it had for his wife.

Levinson et al. (1978) have proposed that individuals reappraise and question their life structures. The heroin charge and paternity suit could be viewed as a crisis, but did not result in any evaluation regarding Charles' life structure. It is evident that the theme during this transitional period was feelings associated with being victimised and exploited. He responded to these feelings defiantly, not allowing anyone to take advantage of him. The researcher posited that if he had succumbed to these feelings he would have been debilitated by a sense of helplessness, therefore becoming the victim that he was not allowed to be.

These experiences also added evidence of his badness and his stance against these issues reflects his need to disprove his badness. Questioning his drug use, his marriage to Della, his relationships with other women and his children required an ability to look within for his own part in it. The implications of re-evaluating his life would have required a dramatic shift in his goal-oriented attitude, a questioning of his past and a readiness to explore new ways of being, but he was not yet ready for this. He did not make any significant changes in his life structure.

6.2.3.3 The second adult life structure: settling down (age 33 – 40)

According to Levinson et al. (1978), the tasks presented during this period require that an individual becomes stable and secure within his societal role. The early settling down phase is devoted to building a life around initial

choices. The task is to establish one's niche in society. Entering the settling down period is accompanied by a great need to maintain a stable structure. The second task is to work at advancement. This tends to assume special strength in the late thirties, as early adulthood reaches the phase of *Becoming One's Own Man*.

6.2.3.3.1 1962 – 1965

By the age of 33, had Charles purchased two properties in Los Angeles, a home for Della and their children and an empty plot where he built his business. He started *Ray Charles Enterprises*, a publishing firm and his own record label *Tangerine*. This signified his upward mobility within the music business industry. His success enabled him to move his family from a middle class to an upper middle class neighbourhood. The researcher postulated that he felt a sense of pride and belonging in forming his business, providing for his family, and by being a valued and competent member in his enterprise. He achieved stability and security in his career and he was firmly established as a successful artist in the music industry.

From the age of 33 to 35, Charles was confronted with numerous life stressors, starting with the paternity suit that he lost against Sandra in 1963. During this time he fired Margie Hendrix, got arrested by Federal Agents, stopped touring, lost a paternity suit against Mae Mosely Lyles, experienced tension in his marriage, and a federal grand jury returned a criminal indictment against him on four narcotics charges. The information pertaining to these difficulties were described in section 5.2.3.3.

Levinson et al. (1978) propose that the activation of the boyish self during the thirties is part of normal psychosocial development. The efforts involved in this period activate the unresolved pre-adult conflicts. The intensified conflict becomes an inner source of difficulty. The researcher construed that the law was the restrictive and imposing authority that activated the little boy in Charles who felt intimidated, victimised and helpless (Levinson et al., 1978).

Although he was confronted with stressors in the *age thirty transition* he was not ready to evaluate his life until more serious outside events forced him to change his life. In previous periods he had responded to these conflicts as a self-defeating rebel, but the demands made on him at this time forced him to look within. He decided to quit heroin. His decision to quit was based on the real threat of losing his career and the possible humiliation he would cause his oldest son if he went to prison. He admitted himself to hospital, refused any medical assistance to ease the pain from withdrawal and received psychotherapy.

Charles was resistant to Dr Hacker's questions at first, but after some time he opened up about his childhood, his brother's death, going blind, St Augustine and his mother's death. This experience gave him an opportunity to confront his painful past. His emotional struggle continued after his release from hospital. He often burst into tears at the memory for his brother's death. This reflected that he was connected to the pain of this loss and was able to grieve for his brother's death. The researcher postulated that he was also grieving for his own loss of sight that was closely connected with the loss of his brother.

6.2.3.3.2 1965 – 1970

At the age of 35, Charles went to court. His drug rehabilitation and Dr Hacker's testimony made an impact. The Judge agreed to waive immediate sentence and continue the case after a year with the provision that Charles report to Government doctors at times designated by the Court. He never used heroin again. A year later he was cleared by Government doctors. When he appeared in court he was sentenced to a five-year probation and he paid a fine. His career enabled him to maintain his focus and direction in his life during this time. His music gave him the motivation to overcome the life stressors that he was exposed to during this developmental period. The structure of his life both changed and remained the same. He was able to remove heroin from the centre of his life, but did not succeed in putting his family at the centre of his life.

According to Levinson et al. (1978), during early settling down the maintenance of a stable structure is usually very important to a man and may result in him remaining in his marriage even though there are serious problems. Charles' life was chaotic and his need to have a form of stability during this period may have prevented him from evaluating his marriage. Their marriage did not strengthen and he still remained distant with his children. During this period he was the youngest member inducted into Playboy Magazine's Jazz Hall of Fame and he won a Grammy Award. In the midst of his chaotic life, the researcher inferred that these awards confirmed in him a sense of himself as a remarkably talented, worthy, successful person.

By the end of this period it was conspicuous that Charles was a senior member of his enterprise and he had greater authority by starting his own business. Levinson et al. (1978) propose that it is important for a man to become less dependent (internally as well as externally) on other individuals and institutions in his life. Independence had been a theme throughout his life although Charles had depended on people to assist him because of his blindness. However, he was in charge of his enterprise. Everyone in his life obeyed him on his terms. He was a respected musician, others had very little influence over his decisions and this had been the case for many years. He had always done what he considered as essential, regardless of the consequences. The overall sequence during settling down was primarily one of advancement within a relatively stable structure (Levinson et al., 1978). At the age of 40 he entered a new period in his life as he was moving from early adulthood to middle adulthood.

6.2.4 The mid-life transition: moving from early to middle adulthood (age 40 – 45)

The *mid-life transition* is a bridge between early adulthood and middle adulthood. Three major tasks are presented to the individual during this transition. The individual has to review his life and reappraise what he has done with it. The person can begin to modify the negative elements of the present structure and test new choices. Finally, the task is to deal with the

polarities that are sources of deep division in his life. The process of individuation continues as a sense of self evolves, as the individual gets older. In order to make significant changes in love relationships, occupation and other important aspects the person needs to become more individuated. This requires that the individual confront the great polarities that are basic divisions in the individual and society. Though he can never entirely overcome these divisions he finds new ways of being *attached/separate, masculine/feminine, young/old and destructive/creative* (Levinson et al., 1978).

6.2.4.1 1970 – 1975

Charles continued at the same steadfast pace he had had for years. By the age of 40 he was not producing any successful songs. However, when ABC, his record label, suggested that he make some changes, he refused. At the age of 44, he ended his 14-year partnership with ABC. At this time there was no improvement in his album sales, but his nine-month a year tour continued to be successful. This transition requires that a man reduce his heavy involvement in the external world. He must turn within to do the work of reappraisal. He has to discover what his turmoil is about. Having been overly engaged in his worldly struggles he needs to become more engaged with himself. He can draw more upon his inner resources and is thus less dependent on external stimulation (Levinson et al., 1978). Music enabled Charles to engage with himself, but he still remained heavily involved in the external world.

6.2.4.1.1 Attachment/Separateness

Levinson et al. (1978) stated that the professional creative artist (composer/novelist) at work is separate in that he is involved with his self, drawing upon his inner resources and trying to create a product that is aesthetically pleasing to himself. Since the writing of music is part of his occupation, he is also in a condition of attachment. He is trying to create a product that will provide him an income and a reputation. The creative artist thus works on the boundary between attachment and separateness. Through

music (words/art) the individual participates in society and is attached to society. To be creative, however, he must maintain some degree of separateness. His work must express and please himself and must be true to his own vision. Charles incorporated gospel and soul music while also producing jazz, country, pop and R&B albums, which represent that his work was true to his own vision.

At this time, it was apparent that there were external pressures that could have influenced Charles to change his music to please the commercial audience, but he remained true to his creative efforts and continued making music the way he wanted. Creatively, he was not willing to compromise. While he remained true to his vision, touring for nine months a year also reflects his fear of losing his reputation. Through touring he made his presence known to people across the world. The researcher conceived that he craved and needed the limelight. He needed recognition and acceptance. His hard work may also reflect his fear of returning to a life of poverty and struggle. No matter how much money he made it appears that it was never enough.

6.2.4.1.2 Masculine/Feminine

“Feelings about masculinity and femininity enter into a man’s gender identity – his sense of who he is as a man, who he wants to be, and who he is terrified of being” (Levinson, et. al, 1978, p. 229). A set of qualities associated with manliness is body prowess and toughness, the stamina to undertake long, gruelling work and endure severe bodily distress without quitting. The feminine is conceived as frail, weak, vulnerable to attack, not having the bodily resources needed to sustain a persistent effort towards a valued goal (Levinson et al., 1978).

In this regard Charles’ ceaseless, relentless drive to work stemmed from his fear of being weak. He needed to prove that his blindness did not take away his manliness. He needed to validate for himself and the world that he was a strong man capable of anything. A related meaning of masculinity is achievement and ambition. Charles was an extremely ambitious person.

Through his hard work he achieved immense success. He reached most of his goals by the age of 29. He was called a genius and received numerous awards for his accomplishments. He was successful as a provider for his family and the other children he fathered. His masculine strivings also presented a conflict.

It appears that he was also resentful in that he believed that he had to work hard to ensure the survival of his family and his employees. This is reflected in his attitude towards his children and employees. Charles had lived in poverty throughout his childhood and his struggle to make it in the music industry and to achieve the success he had may also explain his hardened attitude towards the people that worked with him.

The concern with power and weakness is yet another facet of the *masculine/feminine* polarity. The essence of masculinity is through a sense of power. For many men a sense of power is elicited by exercising control over others, being (and being recognized as) a person of strong will and a leader who is efficient (Levinson et al., 1978). Charles embodied all these qualities. There was no deviation in his life from the abovementioned masculine strivings. His need for power and success did not subside. He was not able to give of himself with less competitive rivalry. He did not exercise authority more compassionately and judiciously.

The data in section 5.2.4 revealed that his ceaseless drive made *Ray Charles Enterprises* a volatile place to work. Many artists idealized him and revelled in the opportunity to work with him, but if he did not like what he heard he would get angry with musicians until they were too scared to play. His valet had to be available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Band members experienced him as distant and secretaries often only lasted a month. Charles' relationship with Joe Adams was a significant part of his adult years and they shared a close bond. Charles depended on him and trusted him. He stands out as the only person that he was willing to relinquish power and control to. However, Charles was the patriarch of the enterprise.

A unifying theme in the masculine pattern is a concern with doing, making and having. The feminine is at the opposite pole. Levinson et al. (1978) proposed that the ultimate difference is in the way of creating. In this imagery the masculine form is to produce something by making it according to one's own design: planning, moulding, erecting and transforming raw material into a new product. The feminine form is to create life. Artistic creation is strongly feminine in this respect. Through music Charles allowed himself the expression of those aspects he considered feminine. He expressed his painful feelings, conflicts and emotional turmoil through a medium that was accepted within his culture.

His relationships with women represent his re-enactment of his inner conflict. In the early 1970s Charles started an affair with Susaye one of the Raelettes. Ruth Robinson was his mistress for 18 years and Norma for many years longer. For many women he was the only man in their lives. Charles believed in having options, if a woman ended their affair he would want to know two or three others who would take him in. As indicated previously, it was proposed that his mother served as a source of care and protection, but she also symbolised abandonment, loneliness and rejection. The researcher postulated that in one regard, women served as an expression of his feminine side. He allowed feelings of dependency, vulnerability and love into these relationships.

He had a wife and many intimate sexual relationships, but his fear of abandonment, loneliness and rejection prevented him from making a strong commitment to any one woman. The researcher inferred that he was fearful of being alone and he desperately needed to be cared for. The researcher believes that he made the women in his life feel special and needed. In this regard, his women may have experienced him as dependent on them. His need for these women may explain their commitment to him. He was not able to love the women for who they were, but rather for that which he could not accept within himself. He was a responsible financial provider for his family, but his children experienced him as unloving and distant. He denied his nurturing, caring self.

6.2.4.1.3 Young/Old

According to Levinson et al. (1978) during this transition the *young/old* polarity is experienced with special force. The researcher posited that through his work Charles expressed his youthfulness. He possessed the energy and capacity to work at the same pace he had maintained since his twenties. It is proposed that in one respect his need to maintain this pace of work symbolises his fear of ageing. He was not ready to come to terms with his own mortality or concern with success. He had made valued contributions that ensured his immortality. His legacy as a revolutionary artist was established, but his continual work reflects his desire to achieve more. Levinson et al. (1978) propose that the man who reaches his youthful goals often gets caught up in the excitement of success. Charles' life reflects this contention. Levinson et al. (1978) stated that he may need a few years to discover how little meaning his success has for him.

6.2.4.1.4 Creative/Destructive

Charles was verbal about racial issues in the media and a sense of bitterness and unfairness is evident in his attitude towards society. He expressed his anger about these injustices. This is reflected in his awareness and working through of the destructiveness in society. It is probable that it was easier for him to project his anger at society. He was not ready to acknowledge the anger he had against others and against himself that he had carried within himself since childhood. He still needed to learn, also, about the angers he had accumulated over the course of adulthood, building on and amplifying the childhood sources. At this time he did not work at recognizing and acknowledging his own destructive capabilities (Levinson et al., 1978).

According to Levinson et al. (1978), a man who attends more to the self, who becomes less oppressed by his ambitions, dependencies and passions can be involved with other individuals and perform his social roles in a more responsible way than ever before. He can respond more to the developmental needs of his offspring and other young adults if he is more in touch with his

own self and responding to its needs. In order to care more deeply for others, he must come to care more deeply for himself.

Caring means that he is mainly concerned with self-development and integrity rather than with material comfort or success. This implies that he will exercise authority with compassion and that he will gain satisfaction from creating a legacy, enjoying the intrinsic pleasure of work and having more individualized, loving relationships. It is conspicuous that Charles did not attend to the development of his self and he was not able to resolve his inner conflicts. He did very little questioning or searching during this transition. His life structure remained relatively the same as in previous structures with his career as the *central component*.

6.2.5 Era of middle adulthood (age 40 – 65)

After the *mid-life transition* early adulthood comes to an end and middle adulthood begins. Levinson et al. (1978) regard the *mid-life transition* and the tasks presented during the transition as part of this era. Charles was not able to confront the tasks of the mid-life transition and he did not experience a mid-life crisis. The crisis that confronted him occurred during the new structure building period, *entering middle adulthood*. This was a period of change and emotional turmoil. Despite big changes in his life he was productive during this era and he remained focused on his career.

6.2.5.1 Entering middle adulthood: building a new life structure (age 45 – 50)

Levinson et al. (1978) stated that the major task of this period is to build a new life structure upon which middle adulthood can evolve. By the age of 45 the man has had his allotted time for reappraising, exploring, testing choices and creating the basis for a new life. The main tasks now are to make important choices, give them meaning, commit to them and build a life structure around them (Levinson et al., 1978).

6.2.5.1.1 1975 – 1977

Charles was confronted with various external events that caused emotional turmoil during this period. Charles and Della had been married for 21 years and by 1976 their marriage was over. After a trial separation initiated by Della they officially divorced. He acknowledged that he was responsible for the collapse of their marriage as indicated in section 5.2.5.1. He also acknowledged that he was an absentee father. The researcher postulates that it was difficult for him to come to these realizations. At this time it is apparent that Charles recognized and accepted responsibility for his own part in the destruction of his marriage and family. He reflected on the past, his relationships with Della and his children, his drug uses, travelling and the paternity suits. There is a sense of regret and remorse. This reflected his ability to look within. He started working on the integration of the polarities that he had not been ready to confront in the *mid-life transition*.

By the time his divorce was finalised he had two children with two different women. He said that he would never get married again: *"I'll never live alone as long as I can help it, but my need for women doesn't match up with the demands and dilemmas that marriage puts in my way"* (Charles & Ritz, 1978, p. 285). The researcher believes that in some way he was aware of his fear of being alone, but was not willing, ready or able to change.

Charles agreed to collaborate on his autobiography with David Ritz. This provided him opportunities to reappraise his past. As Della forced him to look at his marriage by initiating the divorce, so did David Ritz force him to look at his past by initiating the autobiography. It is evident that he was heavily involved and engaged in the process. He considered the consequences and rewards involved in this undertaking. He considered whether he would be hurting himself or anyone else. He contemplated whether there was anything he felt ashamed of and he realized there was nothing he needed to censor.

The researcher is of the opinion that he was able to provide an honest account of his life. There is no indication of a sense of shame about his drug

use, love of women, sex or his difficulties with the law. The researcher deduced that it was both a rewarding and emotionally taxing undertaking. It is proposed that this process presented him with opportunities toward a new integration of each polarity.

While working on his autobiography he reflected that music allowed him expression of his feelings, but he felt that deep emotional pain would only be resolved with brain surgery. This indicated his awareness of the limitations in his music's ability to resolve his emotional turmoil. This also expressed his belief that certain painful experiences would never truly be resolved and worked through. Charles reflected on getting older and expressed his fear of death, the frightening thought of possibly dying of cancer and his spiritual beliefs. The researcher was of the deduction that his fear of death and his ability to reflect on this suggested his awareness of his mortality. On the one hand his hard work reflected his fear of confronting a meaningless existence without his youthful passions or creative effort. On the other hand, it is inferred that he was fearful of becoming obsolete and his hard work reflects his wish for a more substantial immortalizing legacy (Levinson et al., 1978).

6.2.5.1.2 1977 – 1980

By the age of 47, Charles had stopped selling records. No major record label was interested in his work. He went back to *Atlantic* and they agreed to sign him on. At the age of 48 he had to face up to the fact that the public was not interested in his work as his first album for *Atlantic* had failed. It had been many years since he had accomplished success with an album. The researcher is of the opinion that this experience was deflating for Charles. He was very effective in his work, but the result was not as monumental as the *young* man in him may have wished it to be (Levinson et al., 1978).

Approaching 50, the divorce, the failure of yet another album and working on his autobiography left Charles feeling bitter and angry. It was evident that external events and reappraising his life aroused powerful feelings. He was irritable and demanding, both professionally and personally. Performing to

half-empty audiences became unbearable and a bore. He was angry about the social injustice of racism and not earning as much as white singers. At times he would direct his anger at himself for not saving George. He vacillated between depressive self-blame and rage. Once again as in the *mid-life transition* his intense rage and bitterness was directed at society, but he was not yet ready to come to terms with his childhood sources of anger. It is apparent that he had not come to terms with his guilt for not saving George. The researcher postulated that he was so guilty about the damage he believed he caused George that he was not free to consider the problems of destructiveness more dispassionately and place them in a broader perspective (Levinson et al., 1978). He was unable to modulate his internal representation of himself as bad. He had not come to terms with his childhood grievances and guilts, his view of himself as both victim and villain (Levinson et al., 1978).

At the age of 48, his autobiography, *Brother Ray*, came out. The success of the book and the positive reviews helped to lift his spirits during this difficult period. At the age of 49, the *Georgia House of Representatives* proclaimed *Georgia on My Mind* the state song. Recognition from the state where he had been born fifty years before moved Charles deeply and the thunderous standing ovation he received did a lot to lift his spirits. These two events proved to have a positive effect on his emotional state. His need for recognition was fulfilled. It is evident that external events needed to prove to him that he was worthy and important. His love of music enabled him to remain focused during a difficult period that can be considered a developmental crisis. Levinson et al. (1978) propose that energy levels decrease during this time, but this was not the case with Charles, as he continued to reinvent his music, producing albums and performing.

6.2.5.2 The age 50 transition (age 50 – 55)

According to Levinson et al. (1978), this is an opportunity to evaluate the entry life structure and to explore the concepts of self and the world. In this period a man can work further on the tasks of the *mid-life transition* and can modify the

life structure formed in the mid-forties (Levinson et al., 1978). Developmental crises are common at this time, particularly for those who have made few significant life changes or who have made unsuitable life changes in the previous 10-15 years (Levinson, 1996).

6.2.5.2.1 1980 – 1982

In 1980 Charles released another album. The album sales were poor indicating that his music did not appeal to the commercial audience. He considered giving up on his *Dream*. The researcher proposed that he experienced this as failure. Failure was clearly intolerable as he considered giving up on his career. He was unable to modify the meaning of success and failure (Levinson et al., 1978). He gained enjoyment from the process and product he was creating, but he was also very concerned with success and recognition. He was unable to make success less essential and wanted to release another hit song. He decided to start performing with a symphony orchestra and this proved to be successful.

At the age of 51 Charles became a grandfather. He had not been able to adjust to his role as father and was unable to embrace his role as grandfather. His relationship with his children had always been distant and he was unable to form meaningful attachments to them. Ray Jr. at the age of 30 was still trying to establish a career. His middle son, David, was using drugs. He was arrested for sexual assault and got sentenced to 11 years in prison on two counts of rape. This event was traumatic for the family, but Della was especially hurt. She felt that she had failed as a mother. There is no indication in the literature covered by the researcher that Charles provided assistance, support or comfort to his family. Ray Jr. and his half sister Evelyn felt that Charles was selfish towards his children (Lydon, 2004). This suggested that his children experienced him as unsupportive and unloving. He was unable to respond with genuine care and wisdom to the needs of his children (Levinson et al., 1978).

Charles was disappointed in his children and he felt that none would ever match him in intellect, talent or ambition. His oldest son, Ray Jr., desperately wanted to work with him, but he continually rejected his son's efforts to establish himself in the business. He did not think that Ray Jr. could be entrusted with *Ray Charles Enterprises*. According to Levinson et al. (1978) if a person feels that they have lost or betrayed their own early *Dream*, they may find it hard to give their whole-hearted support and blessing to the dreams of young adults. Charles did not abandon his early *Dream*, but he was unable to support his children in the realization of their dreams. He did not facilitate Ray Jr.'s efforts to live out his *Dream* of working for his father. When his mother died Charles reflected that he had had to rely and depend on himself.

It is proposed that he felt resentful that he had to struggle to achieve what he had and through his efforts his children had benefited tremendously. Therefore, he was not going to make it any easier for them. The researcher deduced that he was unable to bestow his legacy and blessing upon his children because his paternal love was tarnished by pride and narcissistic self-indulgence (Levinson et al., 1978). He wanted to keep his power at the expense of love. Therefore, he did not find a balance between power and love (Levinson et al., 1978).

6.2.5.2.2 1982 – 1985

At the age of 53, Charles started experiencing difficulties with his hearing. He felt that he had stopped viewing his blindness as a handicap, but the thought of losing his hearing was unbearable. This experience, together with becoming a grandfather, highlighted that he was getting older. However, it did not result in him slowing down. At the age of 54 he made a controversial decision, in the eyes of the media, when he agreed to play *America the Beautiful* at Ronald Reagan's presidential inauguration. The criticism and his response to this were described in section 5.2.5.2.

The criticism hurt him and he responded angrily. He did not base his decision to perform on a sense of loyalty. He wanted to make money and he wanted to perform. This demonstrated once again that Charles would do whatever he wanted. It also reflected that money was a driving force in his life. As in previous periods, he directed his anger at society. He believed that black singers, himself included, still got paid less than white singers. There was no evidence to confirm or deny his belief.

Playing *America the Beautiful* on national television was a profound moment in his music career and in his relationship with his audience. Charles continued to be productive in his work and he received numerous awards during this period as described in section 5.2.5.2.

Charles continued to develop his career and was highly successful at this stage of his life. The researcher was of the opinion that during the *age 50 transition* he had still not been able to resolve the tasks of mid-life individuation. At this time he had not achieved a new integration of each polarity.

6.2.5.3 The culmination of middle adulthood: building a second adult structure (age 55 – 60)

According to Levinson et al. (1978) this period is analogous to *settling down* in early adulthood. The *culmination of middle adulthood* is a stable period that is devoted to building a second middle adult structure. This structure provides a vehicle for the realization of the era's major aspirations and goals and the completion of middle adulthood (Levinson, 1996). The decade of the fifties can be a time of great fulfilment for those who are able to rejuvenate their selves and enrich their lives (Levinson et al., 1978).

6.2.5.3.1 1985 – 1987

At the age of 55, Charles continued to increase his celebrity presence by appearing on television shows and he was inducted into the *Rock n Roll Hall*

of Fame. At this stage he agreed to give his son, Ray Jr., a job and a salary at *Ray Charles Enterprises*. He did not protect his son from Adams who would reject all Ray Jr.'s ideas for CDs, movies and television shows. It is clear that he was willing to help his son, but he did not appear to find any enjoyment in the fact that his son wanted to work with him.

According to Levinson et al. (1978), being a mentor with young adults is one of the most significant relationships available to a man in middle adulthood. Professionally, Charles did not play a clear mentoring role to any specific young adult, but he did include many young people in his band and these musicians admired him. The researcher believes that by allowing young musicians the opportunity to perform with him he facilitated their ambitions to become musicians. However, it was apparent that he was overly concerned with power since he was unable to develop a caring, nurturing attitude towards his children or the younger members in his band. At this time, he had still not been able to achieve a balance in his need of power in order to become more caring and loving. The researcher deduced that displaying feelings of care and love in a more meaningful way would only be possible if he was able to view himself as someone that was caring and loving rather than bad.

6.2.5.3.2 1987 – 1990

Charles received numerous awards during this period. When he received the *Kennedy Center Honors Medal*, America's most distinguished award for the arts, he was deeply moved. At the age of 57 he announced the formation of the *Robinson Foundation for Hearing Disorder* to help children with hearing difficulties. It is discernible that Charles became more concerned with charitable causes and he contributed a significant amount of money to this cause. The researcher posited that the establishment of this foundation served two purposes. On the one hand it represents his desire to do good, to show his caring and loving side. It also represented his desire to further his immortalizing legacy. At this time his legacy included his music, money, business, awards, television shows, autobiography and now the foundation.

At the age of 58, Charles ended his 18-year relationship with Ruth when he discovered that she had been seeing other men. He did not consider that he had been seeing many other women during the course of their relationship. The researcher inferred that this discovery activated his feelings of abandonment, loneliness and rejection. In response to these feelings he rejected her. The ease with which he ended this long-term relationship reflected that he had been using Ruth for that which he could not accept within himself (Levinson et al., 1978). He continued affairs with many women, but as this period came to an end, he became aware and scared of AIDS and ventured less often from the familiar women in his life.

6.2.6 The late adult transition (age 60 – 65)

The *late adult transition* marks the beginning of late adulthood. According to Levinson et al. (1978), the tasks of this period include reappraisal of the past and work on the goals that still remain to be achieved. It is a time of entering the last era of adult development and creates the foundation on which the era of late adulthood is begun.

6.2.6.1 1990 – 1995

At the age of 60, Charles experienced a renewed surge of fame when he appeared in a series of diet Pepsi advertisements. The campaign was so successful that diet Pepsi planned another series for the following year. Recognition, success, money and fame were very important for him. The researcher deduced that he needed these experiences to prove his worth. He continued working on his music, performing and touring as if his age meant nothing.

Ray Jr. had been working very hard for his father, but this did not lead to a promotion. This fuelled a destructive cocaine habit and Della was very worried about him. Joe Adams often kept Della away from Charles, especially concerning important matters. In terms of his relationship with his son the researcher posited that Ray Jr. felt abandoned and rejected by his father. He

was constantly trying to prove his worth as a son and a man, but Charles did not acknowledge his efforts and dedication. He could not acknowledge his own part in his son's destructiveness.

It is evident that Adams was still a very significant part of Charles' life. The researcher is of the opinion that he valued and respected Adams for his ability and dedication to his work, but also for his willingness to deal with issues that Charles did not want to confront. As indicated previously, it was proposed that it was difficult for him to place trust in relationships with men for his fear of being victimised and exploited. It is apparent that he was able to trust Adams.

Throughout this period he continued making music, but at the same time he continued to experience disappointing sales with his albums. Radio stations did not want to play his songs and the record buyers seemed not to be interested in his work. The same can be said for major record labels in the USA, as no one was interested in representing him.

His close friendship with Quincy Jones through the years resulted in him representing Charles on his own record label, despite feeling that his latest album was weak. These experiences may have deterred Charles from working and possibly made him consider retirement, but his music and his career were the most important aspects of his life. He was not prepared to accept defeat, the loss of his power or his success.

At the age of 65, Charles was hospitalised for back pain, but after one day he was released. This experience, together with the death of his first love Louise Mitchell would have confronted Charles with his own mortality. This is consistent with Levinson's (Levinson et al., 1978) proposal that many experiences during this time serve as reminders of ageing, death, decreasing vigour and capacity. However, the researcher was of the opinion that his hard work reflected his desire to ignore this awareness. His life structure in his sixties resembled the life he had created in the twenties and thirties. In his twenties he was still working on becoming a successful and distinguished

musician. By the age of 30 he had reached that and in his sixties he was working at remaining in that position.

6.2.7 Era of late adulthood

This era can be seen as a distinctive and fulfilling season in life. According to Levinson et al. (1978), during late adulthood the character of living is changed in fundamental ways as a result of biological, psychological and social changes. Levinson et al. (1978, p.35) stated: *“he is called upon, and increasingly calls upon himself, to reduce the heavy responsibilities of middle adulthood and to live in a changed relationship with society and himself”*.

6.2.7.1 1995 – 2000

Charles remained focused on his music, but there was a clear shift in that his work slowed down. He attempted to change the structure of his business by employing a younger manager. This indicated a realization of his ageing, which was described in section 5.2.7. However, this did not work out and was related mainly to Joe Adams. It appears that neither Charles nor Adams were actually willing to make any fundamental changes in the business or in the manner in which they worked. It is conspicuous that Adams was reluctant to relinquish his control and although this caused disagreements between them, in the end Charles accepted this. It appears that Charles was very comfortable with the structure of his life.

According to Levinson et al. (1978), a man in late adulthood can no longer occupy the centre stage of his world. Levinson et al. (1978) proposed that there will be serious difficulties if a man holds a position of authority at this time, because he will be in conflict with the generation in middle adulthood who need to assume greater responsibility. It is clear that Charles occupied the centre stage of his world and he was in a position of power and authority. The researcher deduced that his inability to relinquish his power and authority caused great difficulty for his son who wanted more responsibility.

In section 5.2.7 it was described that many artists idealized Charles while others working for him experienced him as distant and disdainful. According to Levinson et al. (1978), even when the person still has high levels of energy and skill, they are ill-advised to retain power in late adulthood, as they tend to be isolated leaders, in poor touch with their followers, and overly idealised or hated by them. It appears that Charles' life reflects Levinson's contention.

At the age of 69 he experienced difficulties with his voice, but continued performing despite his doctor's suggestion to take a break from singing for six months. Charles did not listen to medical advice therefore he chose to ignore his health. It appears that he was determined to live his life to the fullest despite any health concerns. He continued with his planned tour across Europe and performed 21 shows in 23 days. When Charles turned 70, David Ritz asked whether he would like to work on a sequel to his autobiography. Charles felt that there was nothing he would like to add and indicated that everything he needed to reflect on was in *Brother Ray*. This suggested that at the age of 70 he felt that his life had not changed in 22 years.

6.2.7.2 2000 – 2004

At the age of 73, there were significant changes in his life and this is directly related to his health, which is congruent with Levinson et al. (1978) stating that major changes occur in the individual's life during this period. Charles agreed to a motion picture deal about his life and he was also working on a duets album with various artists. At this time he started experiencing difficulties with his health and he stopped touring. This was the first time since his drug arrest in 1965 that he had not performed in public. He was diagnosed with terminal liver cancer, complicated by emphysema.

Charles contacted David Ritz and told him he wanted to add information to his autobiography. He reflected on his relationship with his mother, the past, his independent attitude and his self-reliance. He acknowledged that he was difficult to work with and became more loving towards the people in his life. The researcher believes that Charles worked on the tasks of individuation. His

illness and the confrontation with death enabled him to reflect on his life while at the same time connecting him to his more caring, nurturing self.

Through these months Charles often met with lawyers and accountants, settling his affairs and providing for his heirs. He had twelve children, twenty grandchildren, and five great grandchildren to leave it all to (Charles & Ritz, 2004; Lydon, 2004). He had always believed in God, but he was not deeply religious. During this time he reconnected with his spiritual self through the support of a close friend. He also started believing in Jesus. He seemed ready to make his peace with the world, to live with fewer illusions and to accept his death, although he did not give up fighting for his life (Levinson et al., 1978). At times he achieved a sense of contentment and was grateful for everything he had achieved in his life. Charles progressively got weaker and on 10 June 2004 he died.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter provided a discussion on Charles' life structure development according to Levinson's (1978, 1996) theory of adult development. The four eras of adult development proposed by Levinson et al. (1978) were used as the guideline in describing and identifying those aspects that made his life unique.

The researcher has attempted to present his life as a man who overcame hardship and lived his life in utmost dedication to his dream. In order to adapt to his early experiences he had to neglect parts of his self that he was only able to acknowledge by the time of his death. Throughout his life we can see how his inner conflicts recurred with powerful strength, presenting him with opportunities to evaluate and change his life. His life reflects the difficulty inherent in fully resolving inner conflicts that are a source of hurt, pain and anger. The final chapter will bring the thesis to a conclusion and further recommendations for research will be provided.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 Chapter preview

This final chapter provides a summary of the research and addresses the limitations of this psychobiographical research on Ray Charles. Thereafter, the value of this research is discussed and the recommendations for further research are suggested. This is followed by the final conclusions to this study.

7.2 Summary of the research findings

Levinson's (1978; 1996) conception of the life cycle, eras and periods in life structure development provided a framework for the study of Charles' life. The primary aim of this study was to explore and describe the development of Charles according to Levinson's theoretical framework. The objective was to explore and describe his psychological development through his life course, thus providing a better understanding of him as an individual. A secondary aim was to provide an understanding of Charles within the social, economic and historical context in which he lived. The aims of the study were accomplished.

Charles developed from a young boy in a poverty-stricken, racially segregated society into an exceptionally successful musician who worked productively until he died at the age of 73. Charles was not only a brilliant performer, musical pioneer and successful businessman completely in control of his career. His life also contained immense loss and tragedy. This study demonstrated that he acquired the learning, values and character traits that were required of him to adapt within his environment. His inner conflicts enabled him to aspire to greatness, but they also played a significant role in his heroin addiction, his failed marriages and relationships as well as his inability to be a caring, nurturing father.

The life structure development of Charles did not follow closely the time frame proposed by Levinson in the *early adult transition*. According to Levinson et al. (1978), the early adult transition starts at approximately age 17, but for Charles it started at age 15. This was the only deviation from the time frame noted in the study. However, it is important to note that Charles was confronted with significant life stressors that forced him to leave the pre-adult world earlier than one would have anticipated if it were not for his mother's death.

Levinson's (1978; 1996) theory provided limited detail regarding the era of pre-adulthood. This era stretches from birth to 17 years. This limitation was of concern to the researcher, especially since Charles experienced significant trauma and losses during his early years. The researcher proposed that Charles' inner conflicts stemmed from his early experiences. As an attempt to provide a discussion on his childhood development the process of individuation served as the theoretical foundation. The integration of the four polarities proposed by Levinson et al. (1978) includes: *attachment/separateness, masculine/feminine young/old, destruction/creation*.

According to Levinson et al. (1978), transitional periods provide opportunities for these polarities to be reintegrated in a form appropriate to their position in the life cycle. It was shown that inner conflicts accumulate over the course of adulthood, building on and amplifying the childhood sources. It was evident that the required developmental work of middle adulthood was different from that of youth, which is consistent with Levinson's findings. This study demonstrated that work on developmental tasks continues through middle adulthood and beyond.

Levinson et al. (1978) conceived of the powerful and pervasive role of the influence of the *Dream* in early adulthood. Charles' dream took shape in the era of pre-adulthood. He realized his *Dream* of becoming a great musician at the age of eight. Pursuing his dream took centre stage during the *early adult transition*, and was integrated within his adult life structure when he *entered the adult world*. In early adulthood he created a structure in which his Dream

was lived out and he attained the goals through which his dream was fulfilled. In middle adulthood Charles was unable to modify the importance of his Dream. He had achieved immense success at a young age and was unable to moderate his need for success and recognition.

Levinson et al. (1978) indicated that forming an occupation is never brief or simple. This was demonstrated in the study. The influences of society were also shown to play a significant role. With the start of the *settling down* period Levinson identified the importance of defining a work enterprise and a ladder to achieve one's strivings. Charles' life reflects significant upward mobility within his career. By the *settling down* period he had already accomplished much of his youthful aspirations, but it was also evident that he continued to define his enterprise and his goals. By the end of the settling period it is evident that Charles was a senior member of his enterprise. This is in contrast to Levinson's proposition that it is an important task of the *mid-life transition*. His career as a musician was the central component of his life from the age of 15 till the time of his death at the age of 73.

Levinson et al. (1978) identified various tasks and crises that the individual needs to work on throughout life structure development. Charles did not necessarily resolve or work on the significant tasks presented during certain periods and he did not necessarily experience a crisis during specific transitional periods. This was highlighted when considering that Charles did not experience crises during the *age thirty* or *mid-life transition*. He experienced difficulties in the subsequent structure building periods *settling down* and *entering middle adulthood*. Therefore, this study demonstrated that crises or stressors identified in Levinson's theory do not necessarily occur at the time frame he proposed nor do they necessarily influence or affect every individual at a particular time.

Levinson et al. (1978) identified several tasks related to love, marriage and family throughout life structure development. This study demonstrated the difficulty with which Charles was able to resolve his conflicts related to love,

marriage and fatherhood. Charles was unable to form an enduring, mutually valued marriage characterized by commitment and fidelity. He accepted financial responsibility for his family, but he was unable to derive satisfaction from marriage and fatherhood. His heavy involvement in his career, extra-marital affairs, his drug use and his avoidance of caring-feeling functions when at home obscured the strength of his investment in his family. By the *mid-life transition* it was evident that Charles did not develop interest in becoming a mentor to his children.

The fact that Levinson's theory focuses predominantly on adult development renders it vulnerable to criticism regarding its propositions on child development. Further information on childhood development could have perhaps opened up alternative doors for discussion and interpretation. However, despite this limitation the most enticing component of Levinson's (1978, 1996) theory is the interrelatedness of all the eras, structure building and transitional periods.

The researcher felt that Levinson's theory was highly applicable in creating some understanding of the unfolding of a personality stretching an entire life span. The fact that the study focused on Charles' life structure development and not merely a particular incident or period of his life aided the researchers' attempt to provide a holistic perspective on his life. Levinson's theory facilitated the generation of new interpretations and explanations of his life.

7.3 Value of the study

This study has provided the first psychological explanation on the life of Charles as it unfolded through the eras and transitional periods proposed by Levinson et al. (1978). This research has evaluated the theoretical content of Levinson's theory of adult development. It has studied the entire lifespan of Charles and has served to illustrate Levinson's proposal that the life structure of men can be divided into various eras and transitional periods according to a specific sequence and average time span. This study also demonstrated the importance of developmental tasks throughout the human life span. In this

regard Levinson's theory was put to the test by examining the applicability of his propositions to the life of Charles.

This research has attempted to highlight the significance of viewing every life as unique. The researcher considered and placed Charles' life within his social and historical context while also probing into his self, attempting to grasp his actions, desires, needs, torments and fulfilments. Applying Levinson's theory to an individual whose life stretched into late adulthood provided the researcher with the opportunity to detect patterns and make causal connections. This would not have been attainable if a specific event or time frame in Charles' life had been selected for study.

Although Levinson's theory has its flaws, it nevertheless provided a practical and comprehensive theory to be utilized for the purpose of this study. This study illuminated the life of Charles by describing his life experiences according to the time frame of Levinson's theory of adult development and adding to the biographical information available on his life.

One pertinent challenge to the field of psychobiography is the limited amount of psychobiographical research conducted at academic institutions in South Africa. This study, therefore, contributes to the psychobiographical research method in South Africa.

7.4 The limitations of this research

The preliminary methodological considerations pertinent to psychobiographical research were presented and discussed in chapter four of this study. To minimise the difficulties inherent in case-based research, specific considerations were taken into account during the research process and these were presented in section 4.3 of the methodology chapter.

The study on Charles has to be recognised within the limitation of the amount of information available to the researcher and within the constraints of a Master's treatise. Charles' life was recorded extensively. There was an infinite

amount of information on his music, awards and achievements and these were not explored in depth. The researcher was confronted with infinite data on his travels, relationships with women, his changing band members and musical style, the artists he worked with as well as his difficulties with the law. Additionally, there was not sufficient information regarding all the children he fathered and this was therefore not included in the study.

While undertaking this study, the researcher was very aware that the scale of this study does not do sufficient justice to the nature of the subject. The researcher utilised a developmental theory to explore and describe Charles' life in a holistic manner. However, a benefit that would have been provided by utilising other theoretical frameworks is that it would have enabled the researcher to test the accuracy of the assumptions and interpretations made in the study.

7. 5 Recommendations for future research

The primary recommendation for future research is to conduct a related study on a larger scale. As there was limited scope to study Charles, very little attention could be given to his music, with the result that valuable information has not been included in this study. This information would have been able to provide additional insight and would have possibly given further corroboration of his inner conflicts. It would have given evidence of his emotional struggles and life experiences from his past and what he was living through at a specific time.

A more in depth study such as a doctoral thesis could employ additional theoretical approaches to psychological development. In addition an in depth analysis of the music Charles produced is recommended. Additional theories and the analysis of his music would supplement the research already conducted in the course of this study. Furthermore, this would serve to accommodate further understanding and insight into his life.

The researcher proposes that the presented findings of this study be taken as a point of departure in the psychological analysis of Ray Charles. It should not be considered a final product with conclusive evidence. It should rather be considered a foundation on which one can build a more comprehensive and informative description of his personality.

7. 6 Conclusion

The parameters that are imposed sometimes create limitations to a study, yet at the same time, they supply the structure and act as a very necessary guideline to focus the research. These limitations should be viewed as a possibility to conduct new and improved research studies in the future. However, despite the limitations, the aims of this research have been achieved as the life of Ray Charles has been illuminated through the focus on the development of his life structure. The study has helped to understand the subject as an individual.

This research study is a good example of how psychological theory can be used to examine a human life. While bringing together theory and sources of information the researcher maintained her effort to demonstrate the unique life of her subject.

This study aimed to demonstrate how gaining a clearer psychological understanding of a person can facilitate the re-interpretation and understanding of that person. A psychological perspective on Charles' life has revealed new insights into his life. This psychobiography has therefore illustrated this theory and has added to the development of the psychobiographical method of research in South Africa.

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APPENDIX A
CONSENT FOR RESEARCH

Ilze-

Your request was forwarded to me from the offices of Ray Charles Enterprises.

The Ray Charles Marketing Group handles all of the licensing and publicity affairs for the Ray Charles Estate.

Your request to proceed with a psychobiographical research project on the life of Mr. Charles has been approved.

Good luck with this endeavor and please copy me on your completed work along with any grades and/or scores you receive regarding this research project.

Sincerely,

Tony Gumina

President

Tony Gumina

Ray Charles Marketing Group

3735 Middle Post Lane

Rocky River, OH 44116

Direct Phone: 440.331.8374

Direct Fax: 440.331.8310

Email: tony@raycharlesmg.com

APPENDIX B

TIMELINE REPRESENTING THE KEY WORKS IN CHARLES' MUSICAL CAREER

Over his lifetime Charles recorded approximately 65 albums and over 600 songs. The following table is a schematic representation of his key works in music (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004; www.raycharles.com).

Year	Levinson's Developmental Periods	Music
1949	Early Adult Transition (age 17-22)	Releases "Confession blues" his first record
1951	Early Adult Transition (age 17-22)	Enters the R&B charts for the first time with "Baby let me hold your hand."
1952	Early Adult Transition (age 17-22)	His Atlantic debut single, "Roll with me baby" is released.
1953	The first adult life structure (age 22-28)	Records Ahmet Ertegun's song "mess around"
1954	The first adult life structure (age 22-28)	Records his first hit, "It should have been me," the song reaches no. 7 on the R&B chart.
1955	The first adult life structure (age 22-28)	Releases "Blackjack", the song reaches no. 10 on the R&B charts. Releases "I've got a woman". He combined gospel and blues into this song, which became his first R&B no. 1.
1956	The first adult life structure (age 22-28)	"Drown in my own tears" is released. It became another R&B no. 1 hit song. "Hallelujah I love her so" is released, his second hit song to cross over into the white market.
1957	The first adult life structure (age 22-28)	Releases "What kind of man are you?" featuring Mary Ann Fisher. The single "Swanee river rock" reached no. 34 on the pop charts.

1958	The first adult life structure (age 22-28)	Releases the album <i>Ray Charles at Newport</i> from his live appearance at the prestigious Newport Jazz Festival. "The right time" a duet with Margie Hendricks is released.
1959	The age 30 transition (age 28-33)	Releases the mega-hit "What'd I say" . On the R&B charts it reached no. 1 and no. 6 on the pop charts. This became one of his signature songs.
1960	The age 30 transition (age 28-33)	The album, <i>The Genius of Ray Charles</i> reaches no. 17 on the album charts. "Georgia on my mind" lands at no. 1 on the singles chart and its accompanying concept album, <i>The Genius Hits The Road</i> becomes his first Top 10 pop album
1961	The age 30 transition (age 28-33)	The song "One mint julep" becomes another Top 10 hit. The groundbreaking soul-jazz album <i>Genius + Soul = Jazz</i> makes it to no. 4. One of his career-defining songs, "Hit the road Jack" reaches no. 1 on the pop charts. The album <i>Ray Charles & Betty Carter</i> is released.
1962	The age 30 transition (age 28-33)	The single "Unchain my heart" becomes another Top 10 hit. Releases <i>Modern Sounds in Country And Western Music</i> . Drawing on Country music material, it stays at no. 1 on the charts for 3 ½ months and includes "I can't stop loving you" and "You don't know me".
1963	The age 30 transition (age 28-33)	Releases the album <i>Ingredients in a Recipe of Soul</i> . The song "Busted" reached no. 4 on the pop charts.
1965	The second adult life structure (age 33-40)	Releases the album <i>Crying Time</i> and the ballad "Crying time" peaks at no. 6 on the pop charts. "Let's go get stoned" is the first release on his own Tangerine Records/ABC imprint

1966	The second adult life structure (age 33-40)	Releases the album <i>Ray's Moods</i>
1967	The second adult life structure (age 33-40)	His soulful theme song to the classic film <i>In The Heat of the Night</i> becomes another memorable hit. Releases the album <i>Ray Charles Invites You to Listen</i>
1968	The second adult life structure (age 33-40)	Releases the album <i>Portrait of Ray</i>
1969	The second adult life structure (age 33-40)	Releases two albums <i>I'm All Yours Baby</i> and <i>Ray Charles Doing His Thing</i>
1971	The mid-life transition (age 40-45)	Bolstered by the single "Feel so bad," the acclaimed album, <i>Volcanic Action of Soul</i> is released.
1972	The mid-life transition (age 40-45)	Releases the album <i>A Message from the People</i> and the song "America the beautiful" a song that was lobbied by many to become the national anthem.
1974	The mid-life transition (age 40-45)	Releases the album <i>Come Live with Me</i>
1975	The mid-life transition (age 40-45)	Releases the album <i>Renaissance</i>
1977-1979	Entering middle adulthood (age 45-50)	Releases the albums <i>True to Life, Love and Peace, Ain't it So</i> and <i>Ray is At it Again</i>
1983-1985	The age 50 transition (age 55-60)	Releases the albums <i>Wish You Were Here Tonight, Do I Ever Cross Your Mind and Friendship</i> . Records "We are the world" a star-studded hunger-relief charity single. It reaches no. 1 on music charts around the globe, raising millions of dollars to aid African famine. The single "seven Spanish angels" from the album <i>Friendship</i> reaches no. 1 on the country music chart.
1986-1989	The culmination of middle adulthood (age 55-60)	Released the albums <i>From the Pages of My Mind, Just Between Us and Would You Believe?</i>
1993	The late adult transition (age 60-65)	Releases the hit album <i>My World</i> with the track "A song for you".

1995	The late adult transition (age 60-65)	Releases the album <i>A Strong Love Affair</i> .
2002	Era of late adulthood (age 65+)	Releases the album <i>Thanks for Bringing Love Around Again</i> and <i>Live at the Montreux Jazz Festival</i>
2004	Era of late adulthood (age 65+)	Releases a duets album <i>Genius Loves Company</i>

APPENDIX C

TIMELINE REPRESENTING CHARLES' ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Charles received numerous awards during his career. The following timeline is a schematic representation of Charles' accomplishments (Charles & Ritz, 1978; Hackford et al., 2004; Lydon, 2004; www.raycharles.com).

Year	Levinson's Developmental Periods	Awards and achievements	Awarding Society
1960	Age 30 Transition (age 28-33)	4 Awards: Best Rhythm & Blues Performance; Best Performance By A Pop Single Artist; Best Vocal Performance Album, Male; and Best Vocal Performance Single Record Or Track, Male	Grammy Awards
1961	Age 30 transition (age 28-33)	Best Rhythm & Blues Recording	Grammy Awards
1962	Age 30 transition (age 28-33)	Best Rhythm & Blues Recording	Grammy Awards
1963	Age 30 transition (age 28-33)	Best Rhythm & Blues Recording	Grammy Awards
1966	Second adult life structure: settling down (age 33-40)	Best Rhythm & Blues Solo Vocal Performance, Male Or Female; Best Rhythm & Blues Recording	Grammy Awards
1968	Second adult life structure: settling down (age 33-40)	Becomes the youngest member inducted into the Jazz Hall of Fame	Playboy Magazine
1974	Mid-life transition (age 40-45)	Best R&B Vocal Performance, Male	Grammy Awards
1975	Entering middle adulthood: building a new life structure (age 45-50)	Best R&B Vocal Performance, Male First "Man of Distinction" award The Golden Plate Award for outstanding contributions. He was subsequently named to the Academy's board of directors.	Grammy Awards The National Association for Sickle Cell Disease American Academy of Achievement

1976	Entering middle adulthood: building a new life structure (age 45-50)	Honoured as Man of the Year Inductee Nomination for "I Got A Woman"	Beverly Hills Lodge of the B'nai B'rith The Songwriters Hall of Fame National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences Hall of Fame.
1979	Entering middle adulthood: building a new life structure (age 45-50)	Inductee	Georgia Music Hall of Fame.
1981	Age 50 transition (age 50-55)	Recognition for his artistic and humanitarian achievements	Star on Hollywood Boulevard's Walk of Fame
1983	Age 50 transition (age 50-55)	Hall of Fame Award and Best R&B Male Vocalist Award	NAACP
1986	Culmination of middle adulthood: building second adult structure (age 55-60)	Distinguished as one of the original inductees Made commander of Fine Arts and Letters Becomes the second youngest recipient of the coveted lifetime achievement award	The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. French Government Kennedy Center Washington, D.C.
1987	Culmination of middle adulthood: building second adult structure (age 55-60)	Announces the formation of the Ray Charles Robinson Foundation for Hearing Disorders, with a personal endowment of \$1 million.	
1988	Culmination of middle adulthood: building second adult structure (age 55-60)	Nominated for an Emmy Award for his performance on a TV special honoring Irving Berlin's 100th birthday.	Academy of Television Arts and Science
1990	Late adult transition (age 60-65)	Best R&B Performance By A Duo Or Group With Vocal	Grammy Award

		<p>Named as Star Presenter for his Diet Pepsi ads.</p> <p>Best Male Performer</p> <p>Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts</p>	<p>Advertising Age</p> <p>Clio Award</p> <p>University of South Florida, in Tampa</p>
1992	Late adult transition (age 60-65)	<p>Black History Month honoree</p> <p>Distinguished Service Medal in recognition of his outstanding contributions.</p> <p>Inductee</p>	<p>County Board of Supervisors</p> <p>Los Angeles County</p> <p>Florida Artists Hall of Fame</p>
1993	Late adult transition (age 60-65)	<p>National Medal of Arts</p> <p>Best R&B Vocal Performance, Male</p>	<p>President Bill Clinton</p> <p>Grammy Awards</p>
1994	Late adult transition (age 60-65)	<p>Lifetime Achievement Award</p> <p>Helen Keller Personal Achievement Award from the</p>	<p>Black Achievement Awards television show</p> <p>American Foundation for the Blind</p>
1995	Late adult transition (age 60-65)	<p>Horatio Alger Award given to distinguished American citizens who have succeeded despite adversity</p> <p>Governor's Performing Arts Award</p>	
1998	Era of late adulthood (age 65 +)	Polar Music Prize	Royal Swedish Academy of Music Award
1999	Era of late adulthood (age 65 +)	Honorary doctor of human letters	Wilberforce University, a private, historically black university in Wilberforce, Ohio
2004	Era of late adulthood (age 65 +)	His building, West Washington Boulevard is declared a historic landmark	

		5 Awards: Record Of The Year, Album Of The Year, Best Pop Collaboration With Vocals, Best Pop Collaboration With Vocals, Best Gospel Performance	Grammy Awards
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